**DISTRICT REPORT – LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER NAR**

**July 27-29, 2023 \* NAR Meeting – Mesa, AZ**

**District:** *Central*

**Presenting couple roster status:** We have*one clergy and another working on updates. Plus we have six lay couples in the Minnesota/Nebraska area. One couple in the eastern side of the district had to step away.*

**Good News:**

*The Nebraska Area has a clergy couple who has said “yes” to presenting and they have been given “Self” to start.*

*The Minnesota/Wisconsin Area hosted a virtual event in March with eight couples attending. We have another Virtual Event planned for Nov. 2023. We would like to co-sponsor an in-person event in the future with our Nebraska friends, but nothing is scheduled at this time. Clergy couple Rich and Miram Carter have expressed interest in updating their talks to be able to present in the future now that they have returned from full-time missionary service in Hong Kong. The five MN Area presenters will meet August 19 in-person for support and socializing.*

*The district has been hosting a monthly community journey group (virtually) for any and all encountered couples. The leaders rotate from month to month. The sharing has been great! It is on break for the summer and will resume the second Tuesday night in September, starting at 6:30 p.m. central time. Let us know if you want to be on the zoom link list.*

**Concerns:**

*Nebraska Area– getting schedules to align, getting people to be open and willing to carve out time for talk-refining (we know it won’t take long, it just needs to be prioritized). In losing the Larsons as our clergy couple, we’ve lost our compass in many ways. It is also likely that Andrews (3rd set) will retire after 40 years of presenting, too. In general, concerns revolve around energy level and commitment/prioritizing LME throughout that area.*

*The Illinois/Indiana/Missouri Area has been inactive and District leaders have expressed a desire to support them in getting a weekend going. We have some interaction in the monthly meetings with them, and there is a cooperative effort in planning a retreat/renewal in October in Iowa.*

*The Minnesota/Wisconsin Area is asking how God is calling us to continue LME ministry especially with very little response from couples in our area? We would like to resume in-person events, but we have lost the community support couples to enable us to organize in-person events. Although we have a very active and committed presenting team, it has been difficult to find/recruit non-presenting couples who want to continue their involvement with LME beyond their recent weekend or renew their previous involvement for the sake of others.*

**Forward direction: (plans, hopes, dreams)**

*Nebraska Area hopes to get a weekend scheduled in 2024, while needing to borrow a clergy couple. One proposal is to have a weekend in Sioux Falls, South Dakota as a co-op with our MN friends.*

*The Minnesota/Wisconsin Area plans to continue offering two virtual events in 2024 with one in the spring and one in the fall. Plus to work with Nebraska Area to offer an in-person event.*

*Our first District wide weekend retreat, open to any encountered couple, is planned October 14-15 in Iowa. Our hope is that this will foster some new relationships, increase community awareness/support and infuse some enthusiasm to the presenters.*

**What are the next steps in making any of these a reality?**

*Nebraska weekend--1) Assess energy/desire to do one. 2) Set aside time for talk-refining for those who want to continue. 3) Narrow down a weekend date and book a location.*

*Minnesota/Wisconsin event – 1) work on publicity for Nov. 3-5, 2023 event. 2) Set dates for Virtual Events in 2024. 3) Support the Nebraska Area in planning an in-person event and share in the leadership for that weekend.*

*District retreat--1) Get the invites done (perhaps snail-mail postcards in addition to email?). 2) complete the schedule for the event. 3) communicate with the facility for meals and other needs. 4) Invite again (and again and again).*

**How can we be supportive of you as you do that?**

*Pray, pray, pray! If the offer is still on the table, we would like for NAR to help with conference room and lunch for our retreat in October.*