

## **How to Address LCMS Exclusiveness with God's Extended Family**

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### **Why is This Important to Us?**

Close Communion:

- ◆ It pushed people away
- ◆ Visitors are “turned off”
- ◆ People don't feel welcome
- ◆ It's the lack of communication regarding closed communion that is the problem
- ◆ People think that we think we're the only saved sinners
- ◆ Some pastors discourage participation
- ◆ First impressions (10-15 minutes) of visitors are very important!
- ◆ Communication is the key!

“Go, make disciples ...”

- ◆ We do not “go” out to the world outside our church – we wait for them to come to us. So how do we reach the unchurched?
- ◆ Visibility of our actions in community service projects shows our faith is a living, active faith.

### **Assets on Which to Build**

Close Communion:

- ◆ We do educate our children and they do know what we believe.

“Go, make disciples ...”

- ◆ We do have individuals and organizations within the church that are available.

### **Other Discussion of Significance**

#### Close Communion:

- ◆ Seminaries are teaching “exclusiveness.”
- ◆ In the 70's, the church split and another synod (ELCA) was formed
- ◆ LCMS is a dying Synod at this point
- ◆ 911 prayer was devastating to LCMS – so how do we pray with others? If we cannot pray with those who do not belong to LCMS, how can we reach out to others????
- ◆ Need a better altar invitation
- ◆ First impressions are important.

“Go, make disciples ...”

- ◆ We do some, but we need “to keep doing what we're doing.”

### **Recommendations**

#### Close Communion:

- ◆ Educate pastors in communication
- ◆ Written explanation in bulletin of our belief and why (communion)
- ◆ Elders be trained, responsible, and available to answer questions of visitors, new members, etc.
- ◆ Encourage individual communication in every day language
- ◆ Encourage individual prayer and Bible study daily
- ◆ During the call process, you can find out what a pastor practices

“Go, make disciples ...”

- ◆ Encourage joint efforts with other LCMS churches and/or other churches for community service opportunities and outreach.
- ◆ Combine churches for VBS
- ◆ Pastors join Ministerial Alliance or initiate one.
- ◆ Encourage individual, group and congregational prayers and Bible studies