

SHARING THE
HOPE
OF THE
GOSPEL
DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES





Bringing Christ to the Nations[®] — and the Nations to the Church



288

Staff
Members
Worldwide



1,800+

North American
Stations Airing
The Lutheran Hour[®]



75,000+

Engaged
Constituents



4,500+

LCMS/LCC
Churches Using
LHM Resources



60+

Countries
Reached by
Ministry



57,417

Annual Referrals to
Churches and Christian
Communities



968,086

Annual Responses to
Outreach Efforts



125 million+

People Reached with
the Gospel Globally
Every Week



121,771

People Trained in
Evangelism Last Year

BY THE NUMBERS

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Through the decades, God has continually used Lutheran Hour Ministries to bring messages of hope to the downtrodden, the lonely, and the lost. Each time, we have risen to the pressing challenges of that moment to proclaim the Savior with a world in need. If 2020 taught us one thing, it is that our mission to share the hope of the Gospel is more critical than ever.

As I look back on the last several years, I realize that God knew these days of chaos were coming. Nothing that happened in 2020 was a surprise to Him. But when we take a step back and look at things from that perspective, we can also look with great humility at what He has done through advanced technology and LHM.

I strongly believe He has called us to step forward during uncertain times such as these. People need what we provide, and it is clear that God was preparing us for this moment. When we look at the products, services, and the blessings that we have been creating for God's church, *for God's people*, and for those who do not yet know the message of Jesus Christ, He has prepared us perfectly to be bold in this time. LHM's global ministry model has allowed us to continue sharing the Gospel without interruption; we did not slow down our efforts or wait for the chaos to be over and things to return to normal.

As part of our global ministry family, you remain in my and our team's prayers now and always, that God might grant us a measure of comfort and lift us up in care and love for the sake of those who might be anxious, nervous, and scared.

Please explore this year's ministry impact report to see just a few of the ways God is working through you to allow hurting people, both Christian and non-Christian, to find hope, comfort, and relief in the Gospel. I hope you are humbled to see how He uses our talents and treasures to make His Gospel known. With your continued partnership, we can make an even greater difference in the lives of the lost and the hurting.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support, as we all continue walking together as God's family through these trying times.



Your Partner in HIS Mission,

KURT BUCHHOLZ
PRESIDENT & CEO
LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

A YEAR IN REVIEW

How Your Gifts Helped LHM Share the Gospel in 2020

Lutheran Hour Ministries witnessed exciting progress in 2020 for each of the four strategic ministry priorities outlined in our comprehensive five-year strategic plan. Following are some of the ways in which LHM was abundantly blessed by God during the last year thanks to your generous support.



Engage Communities in the Digital Mission Field

For years, LHM has been carving out digital spaces for open and honest conversations with non-Christians and those disengaged from the church about life, faith, and Jesus through **THRED**. By providing more “check-in” videos, using familiar voices in dialogue-centered videos, and pointing people to relevant and thoughtful Christian blogs on the website, THRED’s content has been adapted this year to meet people where they are. In just the first week of “stay-at-home” orders last spring, views and engagement were up more than 1,000 percent.

THRED’s new YouTube channel, *What Jesus Says About*, is just one platform that continues to build momentum. This channel has seen a significant increase in subscriptions and views over the past several months while people are spending more time at home. Prior to the pandemic, this channel was getting views in the hundreds; it is now in the thousands.

Members of LHM’s Digital Conversation Team (DCT) are helping those facing difficult life issues or asking spiritual questions. The DCT is currently enlisting caring individuals who can spare a few hours each week to serve others online.

THRED has proven that the thirst exists for discussions about topical content in the online space, and similar platforms have been developed in other places around the world such as Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Asia. In Latin America, our digital program, **Vivenciar.net**, connects all ministry centers in the region through digital activities and personal interactions through the platform. This has been an important outreach tool since in-person evangelistic work/activities have not been possible in most of these countries. We also developed a Vivenciar.net blog to be more dynamic by offering articles for quick reading about specific timely relevant topics.

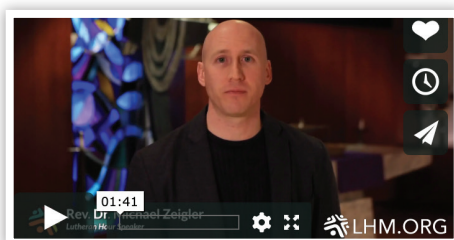
Energize, Equip, and Engage Laity for Outreach



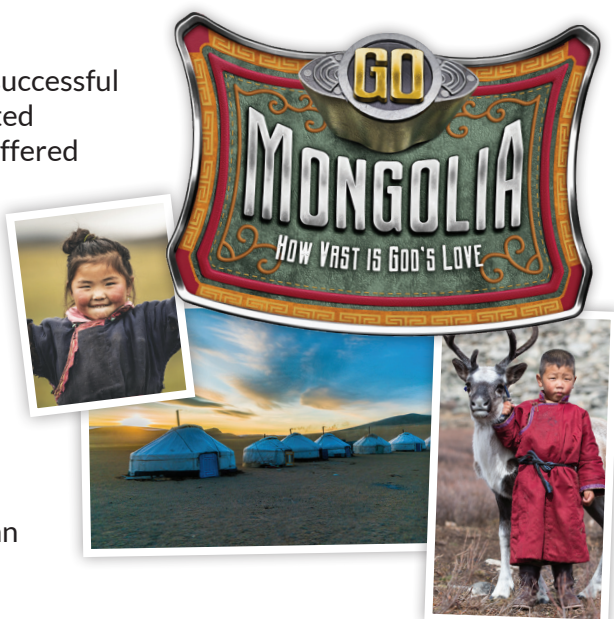
Our *Households of Faith* kit, based on year two of our three-year partnership with Barna Group, provided timely resources for nurturing faith with the spouses, children, parents, roommates, and even frequent visitors who spend time under our roofs. We also released the monograph for our third year of research with Barna titled *Better Together*. This research

seeks to understand Christians who love their neighbors and their neighborhoods and want to make a difference right where they live.

Our COVID-19 resources page offered ready solutions when individuals turned to digital resources while spending more time at home. A video series with the Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour**, Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, provided messages of hope and encouragement to viewers during uncertain times. Digital versions of **Project Connect** booklets brought messages of hope on relevant topics, three timely **LHM Learn** courses were made available to individuals without enrolling in the online learning platform, and **Daily Devotions** continued to be a popular resource for receiving daily messages of hope.



The second year of our successful **Gospel Adventures** visited Mongolia. *Go Mongolia* offered students in schools and in homes an interactive website with videos, two types of daily curriculum based on the children's age, theme music, and optional game and snack activities, all under an overarching biblical theme. More than 1,000 teachers, parents, and other educators registered for *Gospel Adventures: Go Mongolia*—giving nearly 35,000 students a firsthand look at how vast God's love is.



Last fall LHM and the Lutheran Laymen's League hosted the first LLL Virtual Event to allow members to connect, learn, and grow at in-person LLL events or online. More than 200 people participated, and plans are underway to offer these online events in the spring and fall each year moving forward.



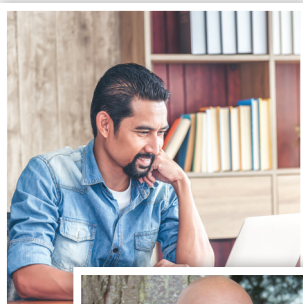
Grow God's Kingdom Through Expanded Media Outreach



On Oct. 2, we celebrated the 90th anniversary of the first airing of **The Lutheran Hour**. Today, the broadcast is heard on more than 1,800 radio stations in North America, combined with the American Forces Network, and touches the lives of one million listeners a week. LHM is constantly looking for new, effective platforms to expand the reach of this life-changing content such as iHeartRadio, Spotify, Amazon Alexa, Google Home, plus a Sunday morning timeslot on Sirius XM's Family Talk Channel 131.

This year's broadcasts featured several sermon series covering topics such as "Living with God: The Joseph Narrative," "The Exodus Sermon Series," "Households of Faith," "The Biblical Book of Daniel," and an Advent series titled "Loved and Sent." In addition, the Reformation Day weekend sermon was broadcast on *Main Street Living*, a television program airing in several upper Midwest states.

We have had good response to our podcast network including our newest podcast, **Speaking of Jesus**. Listeners mentioned they like hearing everyone on the panel's observations and insights within their conversations about life, Jesus, and what He means to them. Returning listeners come back each week because they know they will get something from each episode.



Para el Camino, our Spanish-language version of The Lutheran Hour, launched a new Facebook page. In just over two months, the page grew to more than 4,500 followers. **Sentido Latino**,

our Spanish-language outreach program, also continues to grow and gain more followers. Both of these programs release original content through weekly podcasts and dedicated web pages.



Bring the Gospel to the Unreached Around the World



All around the world, individuals are desperately searching for hope. This makes #HOPEABOUNDS a timely message since individuals around the world, both non-Christian and Christian, need to hear Christ's messages of hope, comfort, and love.



COVID-19 challenged our ministry centers around the world to adapt their outreach and program methods to include more mass media and digital offerings since many in-person events and gatherings were limited. While

changes were made to these traditional face-to-face ministry approaches, doors were opened to new methods that promise to increase our engagements after the pandemic subsides.



A new television series produced through our ongoing partnership with SAT-7 debuted in November and is shining the light of Christ into the lives of hurting people in the **Middle East and North Africa**. The program, titled *New Light*, airs four times weekly on SAT-7's Arabic channel and has the potential of reaching tens of millions of viewers in more than 20 countries.

LHM-Guatemala hosted a video conference workshop for parents, developed Facebook Live events in partnership with **LHM-Puerto Rico**, and transitioned its **Project JOEL** program to a digital format. Since students were not able to attend Project JOEL activities normally held in local schools, the LHM-Guatemala team implemented an online project called "Facebook Talks" with the goal of students learning about topics such as improving self-esteem, decision-making, improving relationships with parents, the dangers on the internet, dating, school stress, and more.



LHM-Latvia developed a project titled #WhatDoYouDoInThisTime for inclusion on its web page and Facebook and Instagram accounts. Since April, they have posted one or two stories per week about individuals, church members, or LHM contacts that feature their job, thoughts, and how they see God at work during these COVID-19 circumstances. These stories show how God is helping people in their everyday lives during these unprecedented times.

MAKING AN IMPACT

*How Your Gifts Helped LHM **Share Hope** in 2020*

As people around the world continue to navigate challenging times, Lutheran Hour Ministries' mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with a hurting world is even more urgent. Following are some of the ways that your gifts helped LHM share hope in five regions around the world through culturally relevant ministry efforts.



SHARING HOPE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



Oskars is a pastor who was interviewed for the #WhatDoYouDoInThisTime social media project produced by LHM—Latvia to show how God is at work in people's lives during these unprecedented times. He shared that at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed like there was more work than ever to be done. Since people were staying home and not able to attend regular worship services in person, his church recorded the services and broadcast them on Facebook. Each week, thousands of people watched the service videos.

Although Oskars feels like he has more work to do now, he uses every Monday as his “Pastor Sabbath” to have a day of rest. On Mondays, Oskars is home with his wife and son and tries to be fully present for them. His son is learning how to walk, and they are working on making adjustments within their apartment so he can safely walk around. As a family, they take walks outside to enjoy the fresh air and have planted a garden at the church with cherries, raspberries, and blackberries.

During this pandemic, Oskars has realized that a lot of the things filling our lives are not necessary. He thinks God is showing him that simplicity in life is good and relaxing. He realizes that society often encourages a consumer culture, but he has accepted the challenge of living a more simplistic life and appreciating what is most important, which is his relationship with God and his family. He shared with the LHM—Latvia staff member that he has come to understand that peace and perfection is only found in God and this pandemic is an invitation to put God above everything else. ♦

Abduaziz is in prison and participates in LHM—Russia's **Bible Correspondence Courses**. Through the power of God's Word, he became a Christian after completing the *Conversations about the Christian Faith* courses that had been translated into Russian. He felt the materials from the courses helped him understand Christianity in a way that he had not been able to understand before. He shared that the Bible courses helped him know God and he is thankful that he participated. Abduaziz asked his family to send him a Bible so he can read it every day and he is interested in joining a local church to nurture his faith once he is released from prison. ♦



Before the pandemic, **LHM—Liberia** held vocational training sessions for young women to learn practical skills, like sewing, and hear the Gospel message while they gathered. Once government regulations restricted large gatherings, LHM—Liberia began offering their classes at different times and days, for smaller groups of women, and moved the classes outside when possible. In addition to adapting the classes to have fewer women together at one time, the program made the switch from making shirts and dresses to making cloth facemasks. Since most people living in Liberia cannot afford imported facemasks, the niche business of making and selling cloth facemasks has become a way for women to earn some money for their families.



Korto is a graduate of the LHM—Liberia sewing school program and was able to get a job at a local tailoring shop since she had experience with sewing. She found confidence in herself after graduating from the program and now provides for her family during this time when her relatives are unemployed. Korto works with a small group of women who sew hundreds of facemasks each week that



they sell to locals. Not only is she using her skills to provide for her family, but she is helping the local economy by allowing people to buy masks locally instead of imported masks. She is grateful to LHM—Liberia for providing her the skills she needs and uses daily to provide for her family while also protecting members of her community from illness during this pandemic. ♦

With half the population in the Middle East and North Africa under the age of 25, attracting and influencing young adults is a priority for LHM in its ongoing partnership with SAT-7. A new television series produced through this partnership is shining the light of Christ into the lives of hurting people at a time when they need to hear this message more than ever. *New Light* is a 55-minute talk show that highlights a different topic or brings a Christian perspective to current affairs and matters affecting the target audience of viewers ages 18 to 30.



After watching *New Light*, a 22-year-old woman from Tunisia named Doudi contacted our social media page to say how much she enjoyed the interviews with real people and topical experts who gave real answers that are practical and life changing. She was especially intrigued by an episode called “Between 5 and 50” that provided guidance on how to bridge the gap in a parent-child relationship. Like many young adults, Doudi was struggling with this situation at home.

While chatting with her, LHM staff directed Doudi to understand how God accepts sinners and is patient with them and how we should deal with each other in patience and kindness. A testimony was shared with her about Jesus Christ, and what He did on the cross revealed to her the deep patience and love of God toward mankind. She was amazed by the love of Christ manifested through His sacrifice.

Doudi, who was hearing about Jesus for the first time, wanted to know more about Him and is searching for the truth. Providing a practical spiritual roadmap at the end of each episode of the program is positively touching people’s lives. Like Doudi, many others are contacting LHM staff to express their love for the program and are involved with all kinds of conversations due to the richness of topics that each episode provides. ♦



As the coronavirus spread around the world, India was hit especially hard with millions of cases of COVID-19. This led the government there to issue a complete lockdown. The people of India were not allowed to travel or hold any events during the summer months.



Fortunately, LHM's regional director for Asia had an idea to continue sharing the Good News with the people in India. She suggested translating the **LHM—India** daily devotions into the various regional languages so they could be shared on the social media platform "WhatsApp."

The idea was well-received by the LHM—India volunteers in different parts of the country who quickly began the process of translating them into Hindi, Marathi, and Gujarati languages.

In addition to translating the written devotions in three languages, it was decided to provide audio versions of the devotions in all three languages as well. The staff and volunteers believe that having the devotions available in audio formats is making a great impact since it is sometimes more convenient for people to listen to messages than read them every day.

Another benefit of sharing the messages on WhatsApp is that they will be stored on the platform, which allows listeners to go back and retrieve older messages that they missed or want to listen to again. The people in India are happy to have the devotions in audio formats so they can listen to the Gospel message from wherever they are. ♦

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, **LHM—Malaysia** partnered with a local outreach ministry called Starfish Malaysia Foundation to reach out to students in the remote town of Kapit, a river town only accessible by express boat that takes three hours one-way to reach. Despite its remote location, Kapit has many public schools and a few kindergartens run by the local church. Most people there are indigenous people who live in longhouses (a long, narrow, single-room structure) and the majority are below the poverty line.



Our partner, Starfish Malaysia, started a successful outreach program among the public schools in the district of Kapit through their education and sports programs. They have also built a community center called Lighthouse Kapit. Through the partnership, LHM—Malaysia supplies Starfish Malaysia with outreach materials and resources to be distributed to children in these remote areas.

Last spring, the LHM—Malaysia team hosted a campaign in two public schools located about an hour boat ride from Kapit. During the meeting in one of the Primary Residential Schools, 97 students were brought to faith in Jesus by the power of God's spirit.

Immediately after they became Christians, every student was given an LHM *Prayers for Children* booklet in Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language). They were taught how to pray and recite the Lord's Prayer as an immediate follow-up activity, which is very significant for them in their new-found faith.

In total, LHM—Malaysia has given out more than 1,100 children's prayer booklets in the Malay language and 360 booklets in English to the students in the region of Kapit through this new partnership. The response from these children was overwhelming and touching. They are so hungry for the Word of God and this booklet has really blessed them.

"We pray that this will bring about a spiritual revival in Kapit," says Gunya NaThalang, LHM's regional director for Asia. "We truly want to thank God that He is using these LHM resources to touch and make such a big difference in the lives of these children." ♦



SHARING HOPE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Since in-person events had to be paused during the pandemic, the **LHM—Uruguay** staff remained steadfast in their mission to share the Good News and looked for new ways to stay close to children. Estrellita, a character meaning “little star” that was created by the ministry center in 2008 to share the love and goodness of God, became an instant hit with children. Now she could virtually invite children into her “home” every Thursday for a time of connecting through YouTube videos.

The weekly videos are about Estrellita, a curious 7-year-old girl who is happy about life, loves her family, and is a close friend of Jesus. She tells viewers what is in her heart and how the Lord teaches her to be a better person through the stories she reads in her Bible. She learns in the Bible that Jesus loves her and forgives her for her sins. The audience was eager for this content and Estrellita’s videos provided hope for children during this difficult time.



In addition to providing hopeful content, the ministry center staff reached out to their audience offering a Bible as a gift to families who do not have one at home. More than 50 people contacted the office requesting one. It is clear that Estrellita continues to open doors for conversations with the people of Uruguay who desperately need to hear the Gospel message. ♦

Through partnering with a local church, **LHM—Mexico** is reaching individuals by sharing food and the Gospel message. *Project Bread*, a holistic support program, was created to give to the community through freshly made meals along with a biblical message.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals would gather in the church, receive a plate of food, and listen to a message from the church pastor. Due to health recommendations by the local government, LHM—Mexico and the church adapted the program by moving the food distribution table outside and prepackaging all the meals, creating a “take-out” style process. Volunteers and participating individuals wear facemasks and hand sanitizer is available to maintain a safe environment.



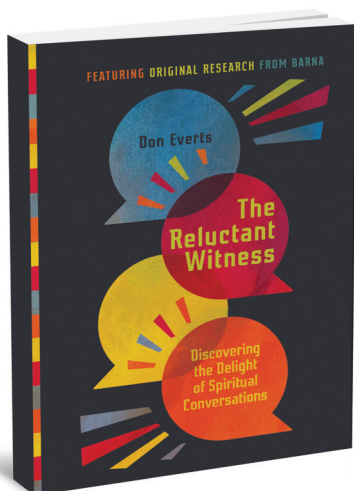
A group of volunteers, from the *Santísima Trinidad* Lutheran Church, in Matamoros, prepare fresh meals each week as a line forms outside the church of people ready to pick up their food package. When people get to the distribution table, they are greeted by Pastor Omar Garza, who invites them to the worship services and shares in a personal conversation with them. In addition to the freshly made meal, individuals are given a printed Bible message each week. They can then take the message home and share the Good News with their friends and family.

Each week, more than 100 individuals come to the church to receive a meal and Bible message. *Project Bread* has been a relief to the community especially during the pandemic when individuals have been affected financially. As more people hear about this program, the number of volunteers increases. Individuals look forward to the program each week and are grateful for the food assistance. ♦

LHM—Panama staff and volunteers have been hosting online workshops during the COVID-19 pandemic. Miguel has participated in several of the workshops and shared with the ministry center staff how much they have impacted his life. He shared that through strengthening his relationship with Jesus, he has improved his communication with his wife and children. He is thankful to be able to work on his relationships with his family members before they allow conflicts to get between them. Since the workshops have been so beneficial, Miguel makes sure to look for new LHM—Panama materials as soon as they are released. ♦



Rev. John Mehl, executive director of Mission of Christ Network and adjunct instructor at Concordia University, Nebraska, was not sure how to transition his Missional Leadership course online when COVID-19 forced the change. “It is a more hands-on class with guest speakers and going into the community to do asset mapping and other activities,” says Mehl. He says transitioning to virtual lessons was workable, but there is a different atmosphere when students are not together in the classroom.



When deciding on assignments that could be done at home, Mehl immediately thought of *The Reluctant Witness*, written by Don Everts, LHM’s content development manager. He quickly found a way to get copies of the book to his students working at home.

Mehl chose *The Reluctant Witness* as an assigned reading because, “Missional Leadership is a class that attempts to teach skills that make mission projection successful. It is the rare college student these days who has any experience in actually

bearing witness to their faith. They are afraid to give offense and address many of the other things that Don talks about in the book.”

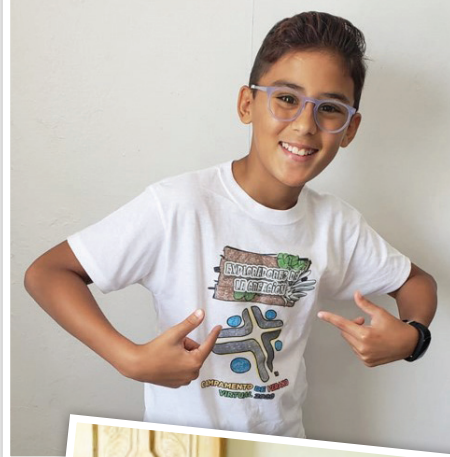
The students’ feedback about the book was good, and they enjoyed having the available research LHM developed in partnership with Barna Group to back it up. Mehl liked that the book “has a lot of empirical data that allows the students to know that they are not crazy or different, but most importantly it is giving students confidence that they can have spiritual conversations without being rejected. This book opens the door for the Spirit to work in and through them to give witness to the hope that is in them, as in 1 Peter 3:15.” ♦

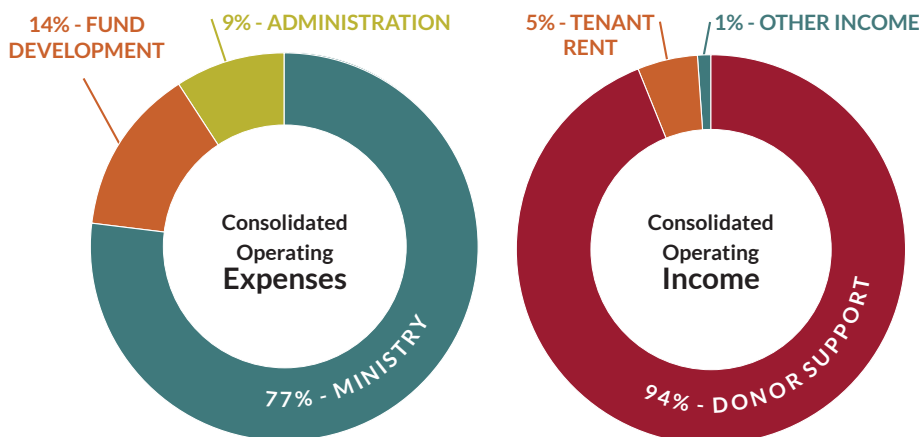
Last July, **LHM—Puerto Rico** worked in tandem with the island's LCMS missionaries to launch its much-anticipated virtual Vacation Bible School. Of the 40 children that participated in the program, only 10 of them are members of a church. The children enjoyed the program's content and the staff and volunteers who ran the event believe the program planted seeds for future sharing and learning with these children.

The virtual VBS program offered the same format each week, inviting participants to explore the grandeur of God's creation. A live call kicked things off with an introduction from the "research center" where the host went through a slideshow of photos the children sent in of their challenges and crafts during the week. The opening with the host was followed by a new pre-recorded video that the Puerto Rico team produced each week. At a certain point, the video was paused and the program returned to the live call for a pastoral discussion about the theme of the day. Then the rest of the pre-recorded video was played until the end when everyone returned to the live call for prayer and goodbyes.

"The cohesion and creativity of everyone working in Puerto Rico, both from LHM and the LCMS, really demonstrates what people can accomplish together for the sake of the Gospel," shared Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies, LHM's regional director for North America. "The virtual VBS is just one of many projects that see the team working together to reach people with the Good News during these unprecedented times."

Each program session was recorded and posted on YouTube to share with others in the mission field. The Puerto Rico team is thankful for the opportunity to connect and share the hopeful message of the Gospel with children even though they were not able to be together in person. ♦





International Lutheran Laymen's League and Subsidiaries Consolidating Statement of Activities (in thousands)

Year ended May 31, 2020, with comparative totals for 2019

OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE	INT'L LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE	LHM FOUNDATION	2020 CONSOLIDATED TOTALS	2019 CONSOLIDATED TOTALS
Donor support	\$31,893	\$110	\$32,003	\$29,569
Building tenant rent	1,542	-	1,542	1,427
Other income, net	242	199	441	(48)
Operating income	33,677	309	33,986	30,948
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Ministries	25,458	-	25,458	23,842
Building tenant services	1,165	-	1,165	975
Administration and Fundraising	7,977	90	8,067	8,933
Operating Expenses	34,600	90	34,690	33,750
Operating Income in Excess of Expenses	(923)	219	(704)	(2,802)
Endowment and other fund distributions	1,118	(1,118)	-	-
Change in Net Assets	195	(899)	(704)	(2,802)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	27,615	18,288	45,903	48,705
Net Assets, End of Year	\$27,810	\$17,389	\$45,199	\$45,903

Lutheran Hour Ministries is the registered d/b/a name for the International Lutheran Laymen's League.
A copy of the full audit report is available online at lhm.org/report.

The LHM Board of Directors and The Lutheran Hour Ministries Foundation want to thank you for being part of the LHM family in 2020. The work that we are blessed to do is only possible because of God's grace and the tens of thousands of passionate lay members and volunteers who partner with this ministry every day. Please continue to remember us in your prayers as we work to discern and follow the Lord's guidance for LHM.

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(As of December 2020)

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660 Mason Ridge Center Drive
St. Louis, MO 63141-8557
1-800-876-9880