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Dear Partners in the Mission Fields,

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8*

It has been my joy to lead fourteen **FANTASTIC FESTIVAL** circuit orientations this spring to educate people on *Ablaze!* and **Fan into Flame**. Dedicated laity and church workers from 112 Nebraska District congregations gathered to hear about the mission opportunities God is placing around them, and many left energized and excited to be a part of this movement.

In fact, participants were very thankful for the opportunity these festivals provided to hear more about missions and gain valuable information about *Ablaze!* and **Fan into Flame**. Those who attended learned about the mission fields in which the LCMS and the Nebraska District are engaging, and the new opportunities that exist in the communities of Nebraska, in the United States, and around the world.

If you or your congregational leadership did not make it to a **FANTASTIC FESTIVAL**, there are circuit coordinators who have the same information and would be pleased to come and share more about **Fan into Flame** with your congregation. Circuit coordinator names and contact information are available on the District website, [www.ndlcms.org](http://www.ndlcms.org).

One of the pieces of information shared at these festivals was the Nebraska District Case for Support – the mission plan the Nebraska District has developed to explain how **Fan into Flame** gifts will be used to support ministry in Nebraska. In partnership with the Synod's *Ablaze!* goals, the following four mission areas provide a pathway to achieve the goals of the Nebraska District's strategic plan.

### **1. Renew District Congregations and Schools - \$525,000 minimum goal**

The revitalization process aids congregations and schools in identifying their values for ministry to help them develop a mission plan. **Fan into Flame** will help gather financial resources to support revitalization for 80 District congregations and schools by 2017, train professional church workers to serve in the identified mission fields, provide stewardship education, train biblical peacemakers, and provide other revitalization resources.

### **2. Plant New Churches and Schools - \$500,000 minimum goal**

Nearly half of Nebraska's population is not regularly attending any church, with others worshipping at non-Christian churches. New mission starts and schools are needed to minister where population shifts have changed the community makeup or where various ethnic groups have moved. **Fan into Flame** gifts will be used to provide funding for new mission starts through a mission loan/repayment process that allows the same money to be loaned out time after time to start new ministries. Funding may also be available for Genesis Studies to initiate new schools.

### **3. Provide Lutheran School and Church Worker Scholarships - \$525,000 minimum goal**

As our Lord blesses **Fan into Flame**, the Nebraska District will provide scholarship money to ethnic immigrant, African American, Anglo, and Native American students to attend

Lutheran schools in the district, as well as training church workers and church planters at synodical universities and seminaries.

#### **4. Plant and Support Ethnic Ministries - \$450,000 minimum goal**

The Lord is bringing people from around the world to Nebraska, creating a mission field on our doorstep. With God's blessings, support of ethnic ministries will lead to planting at least one new ethnic mission congregation or school each year. Ethnic ministry opportunities include: Hispanic, African immigrant, Asian, and Muslim ministries.

As committed partners in the mission field of **Sudan** through the coordination of LCMS World Mission, a portion of the "LCMS World Mission – Ends of the Earth" gifts gathered will be designated for work with the emerging Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan.

To fully fund this mission plan, gifts of \$2 million in addition to the continued support of the mission and ministry efforts of the Nebraska District is required. Fifteen percent (15%) of net unrestricted gifts offered by members of the Nebraska District through congregation appeals will be allocated to the mission plan to reach this goal. Additionally, campaign leaders will be seeking individual major gift commitments to fund these specific strategies to bring the Good News of Jesus to those who have not yet heard of His saving love.

Enclosed with this letter is a brochure that will be useful in sharing this information with the members of your congregation. As your church begins planning your congregational ***Fan into Flame*** appeal, this brochure is a valuable tool to educate your members on the ***Ablaze!*** movement and the ***Fan into Flame*** effort.

Circuit coordinators have copies of these brochures for congregations to distribute. Please feel free to contact your circuit coordinator to request brochures for your congregation. Coordinator names and contact information are available on the District website, [www.ndlcms.org](http://www.ndlcms.org).

The ***Ablaze!*** movement can move us out of the walls of our churches and homes with the magnificent message of salvation by grace through faith, and to share it with those who have not yet heard. ***Fan into Flame*** helps support those efforts in our communities, regions, nation, and all around the world. I am excited for the opportunity for Nebraska congregations to be a part of this unique mission effort.

Partnering with you in the Lord's mission fields,

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld  
Nebraska District President

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