

**Raymond
Rosenberger-
Minette Baum
2016 Awardee
Rev. James Keller,
LAMB Ministry**



Rev. Jim Keller helps Adam Husein and his wife Ju Mi La and son, Aslan Husein, schedule a doctor's appointment for Husein on a recent Thursday afternoon.

Annually the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation has the privilege of nominating the Raymond Rosenberger - Minette Baum Awardee. The recipient is nominated by the Foundation Board. PNC Financial Services manages the Raymond Rosenberger Trust, and annually selects the finalist and distributes a financial award to the recipient and/or their charitable organization(s).

To be considered for this award, the nominee shall have performed diligent and faithful service for an Exempt Charitable Organization which is organized and operated to (I) alleviate human suffering or enhance the quality of life of a persons afflicted with illness or injury, or (II) promote wellness through prevention of illness, disease or injury so that they are advancing the mission of the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation and the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

Reverend Jim Keller was sure when he gave up a teaching career to go to the Concordia Lutheran Seminary he would be an overseas missionary. Little did he know his dream would be realized right here, on Fort Wayne's south side.

For almost 17 years Jim has helped the Burmese refugee population of Fort Wayne. While a student at the

seminary in 1999, he was asked to minister among the Burmese who were being relocated here as they fled the military regime in Burma. While Jim was doing field training at New Life Lutheran Church, the congregation began praying for guidance about what to do for the Burmese families. Their prayers were answered.

"They literally began showing up at the church," Jim said.

New Life Lutheran Church asked him to do outreach that summer among the Burmese. Jim and his family would pray before setting out, and then Jim would load up the family and head for the south side of town. They would target the Burmese markets.

"My son who was about 3 years old would pray, 'Dear Jesus let us meet a Burmese,' and we met the same guy every time," Jim said with a laugh.

He quickly realized there was a huge language barrier but he was able to befriend a Buddhist monk at a local temple who wanted to better his own English. In exchange Jim learned Burmese.

The church quickly realized he was the only one who spoke Burmese and they needed him to stay in Fort Wayne. He was appointed Vicar and then Associate pastor at New Life Lutheran Church. In 2002 he began a separate worship service in Burmese. In 2003 he traveled to Burma for a week.



Reverend James Keller; his wife, Annette and their nine children, Gwendolyn, 22, Peter, 20, Felicia, 17, Parker, 15, MaryJane, 14, Glory, 12, Jessica, 10, Elizabeth, 9, and Anna, 6, in the sanctuary of New Life Lutheran Church.

“In the book of James it says what good is it if you see someone who is cold, hungry and shivering and you say “be well fed Jesus loves you,” if you leave them that way?” -Reverend Jim Keller-

So Jim began providing physical care for the Burmese and in 2003 he created a 501(c)(3), Lutheran Agency for Missions to Burmese. LAMB provides and raises money to pay Jim and his two-person staff. They are primarily outreach, although they do have an apartment at Autumn Woods that they use. On a typical Thursday afternoon, Jim can be found at the apartment. Somedays the line of people spills out the front door. Other days, the line merely stretches to the back of the small living room.

Currently LAMB works with over 1,100 clients annually. They arranged healthcare for 1,200 individuals in 2014 and 900 in 2015. Jim and his two assistants provided transportation and accompanied clients on 1,888 visits in 2014 and 637 visits in 2015. They also provided in-home education and support to 120 fami-

Jim makes this possible by raising \$150,000 annually to operate LAMB. While Jim is quick to praise his staff and their diligent efforts, he is humble about his own generous deeds and the selfless number of hours he puts in seven days a week.

Last year Jim was walking down a hospital hallway when he heard a Burmese man cry out for help. He entered the room and met Mr. O. The man asked Jim for help, as he had no family to help him. He lived with his wife who suffered from PTSD. Jim gave Mr. O his business card and instructed him to call him when he got out of the hospital. So began a connection between Jim and Mr. O that lasted through Mr. O’s illness, recovery, and would eventually lead Jim to help his wife and family when she suffered a stroke.

Jim is a graduate of Concordia Chicago, River Forest IL, in 1987. He graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in 2001 with a MA in exegetical studies and was ordained in 2001. Keller, his wife, Annette and their nine children, ranging in ages from 22 years to 6, live in a much-loved home provided through the generosity of their church on Fort Wayne’s south side.

We are pleased to introduce Reverend Jim Keller as the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation’s 2016 Minette Baum Award recipient because of his tireless dedication to the Burmese Immigrants of Fort Wayne.