



SUBJECT: *Participating in Building a Culture of Church Work Formation and Recruitment*

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matt. 9:37-38); and

WHEREAS, Since 1847, the LCMS adopted resolutions in nearly every convention to the present to form and recruit pastors, teachers, and other commissioned church to preach, teach, and share the Gospel of Jesus for eternal salvation in these full-time vocations; and

WHEREAS, These convention resolutions urged church worker formation and recruitment intentionally take place in every LCMS congregation and school by pastors, teachers, commissioned church workers, and laity; and

WHEREAS, These convention resolutions urged *districts and congregations* to have an active committee focused on forming and recruiting our youth and adults to consider full-time church work; and

WHEREAS, The pastoral office is the one divinely mandated office by our Lord (John 20:19–23; Rom. 10:14–15; Eph. 4:11–16) and the seven LCMS commissioned church work vocations have been established in love to support the Office of the Holy Ministry (Lutheran teachers, directors of Christian education, director of family life ministry, deaconesses, directors of parish music, directors of church ministries, director of Christian outreach) (*LSB Agenda*, p. 210 and 218); and

WHEREAS, In the last several years, approximately twice as many LCMS congregation pastors are exiting the pastoral office (retirement or death) compared to new called and ordained pastors in the last five years; and

WHEREAS, In April 2024, there were 51 unfilled calls of congregations calling a seminary candidate, 406 congregations calling sole pastor, 56 congregation calling a senior pastor, 67 congregations calling an associate pastor, and 529 non-calling congregations for various reasons; and

WHEREAS, In 2023 there was a request to our Concordia universities for 455 new teachers by our LCMS schools but only 84 graduated from LCMS Concordia universities; and there was a request for 79 other LCMS commissioned workers to be placed but only 64 graduated from LCMS Concordia universities; and

- WHEREAS,** *Set Apart to Serve* began with the 2019 LCMS Convention with the overarching goal to develop a culture of church work formation and recruitment in every LCMS congregation, school, and entity; and
- WHEREAS,** *Set Apart to Serve* is in full partnership and collaboration in this church work initiative with our two seminaries (including Christ Academy and Vocatio), all the Concordia universities, all 35 districts, Concordia Publishing House, Lutheran Church-Extension Fund, LCMS Youth Ministry, LCMS School Ministry, LCMS Colloquy, LCMS Worker wellness, LWML, Higher Things, Lutheran Educator’s Association (LEA), National Association of DCEs, Black Clergy Caucus, Hispanic Missionary League, Chinese Lutherans in Mission Building (CLIMB), Concordia Plan Services, LCMS Foundation, and more; and
- WHEREAS,** Through comprehensive research, *Set Apart to Serve* has identified pastors, Lutheran school teachers, DCEs, all other commissioned workers, parents, and laity as the primary influential adults who form, recruit, and encourage youth (conception through grade 12) to consider full-time church work; and
- WHEREAS,** *Set Apart to Serve*, especially through the partnership with our pilot congregations representing all 35 LCMS districts, has developed quality and quantity resources for pastors, commissioned church workers, laity, and districts as they form, recruit, and encourage our youth to consider full-time church work (<https://resources.lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve>); and
- WHEREAS,** The most essential experiences of youth that have an impact and influence youth to consider church work are in regular attendance in the Divine Service to receive Christ’s Word and Sacraments (Rom. 10:17, “faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ”), authentic relationships with influential adults, opportunities for age-appropriate service in the church, participating in like-minded communities (youth group, LCMS Youth Gathering, Higher Things, Christ Academy at Concordia Theological Seminary Ft. Wayne, Vocatio at Concordia Seminary St. Louis, LCMS camps), and engaged in conversations about godly vocations and church work vocations; and
- WHEREAS,** *Set Apart to Serve*, in partnership with Concordia Publishing House, has made a church work formation and recruitment curriculum (early childhood – adult) available at no cost to LCMS schools and congregations (compliment to LCEF and the Concordia universities); therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District establish a *Set Apart to Serve* church work recruitment committee (working group, task force), to lead and assist LCMS congregations, schools, and church workers in their efforts of church work formation and recruitment; and be it further

- RESOLVED,** That all congregations establish a *Set Apart to Serve* committee (working group, task force) to form, recruit, and encourage their youth (from conception to grade 12) and adults to consider a full-time church work vocation; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That all pastors, Lutheran teachers, commissioned church workers, and laity intentionally form, recruit, and encourage youth to consider a full-time church work vocation; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That LCMS congregations, schools, and entities make use of the tested quality and quantity *SAS* resources at <https://www.lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve> and the CPH *SAS* curriculum ([church work recruitment curriculum](#)); and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That both district and congregation leaders and committees enhance their financial support of individuals who are enrolled in LCMS church work programs at our Concordia universities and seminaries; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That both district and congregation leaders intentionally address the compensation and over-all wellness, love, and appreciation of all ordained and commissioned church workers in the district congregations, schools, and entities.

**Respectfully submitted,
The Mid-South Board of Directors
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**