



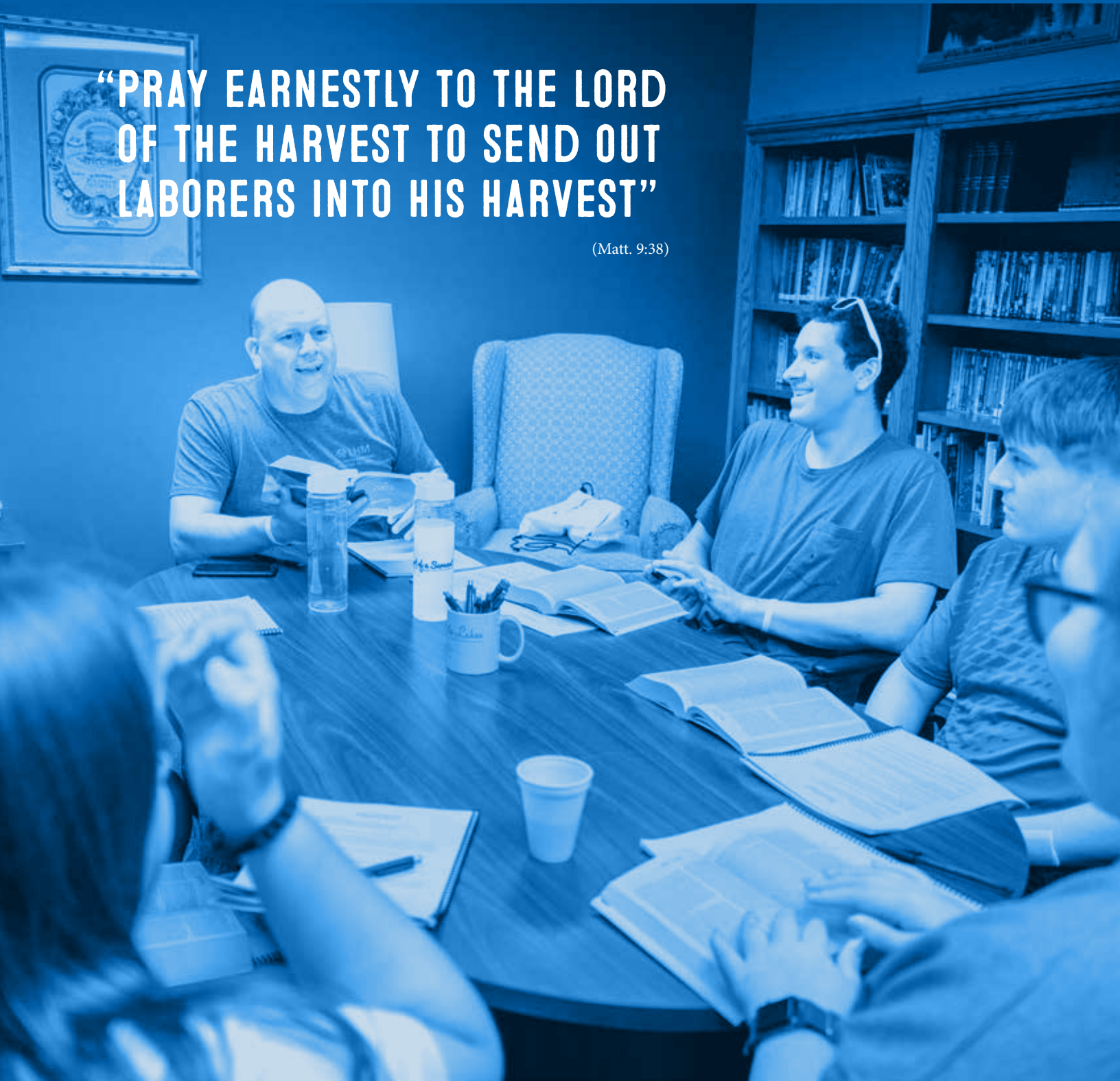
2023

LCMS CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT
ANNUAL REPORT

SET APART TO SERVE 

**“PRAY EARNESTLY TO THE LORD
OF THE HARVEST TO SEND OUT
LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST”**

(Matt. 9:38)





Dear Friends in Christ,

2023 was a very productive year for *Set Apart to Serve* (SAS), The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's (LCMS) church worker recruitment initiative. We especially celebrate and give thanks for the whole-hearted collaboration and support of individuals and entities across the Synod. Everyone is playing a major role and working together in responding to our Lord's words in Matthew 9:37–38:

*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.*

Pastors and commissioned church workers, parents and grandparents, LCMS entities and laity — all desire that God's people know Jesus Christ, who gives us eternal life and salvation. Each of us in our various vocations has the freedom and joy of telling the Good News of Jesus Christ to family, friends and neighbors. However, we are also committed to forming and recruiting workers to send into the Lord's harvest, who dedicate their lives to the full-time service of preaching, teaching and sharing God's Word, that all may know and have forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

This annual report provides you with SAS's progress and achievements during 2023. You will also learn about our collaborative vision and plans for church worker formation and recruitment in 2024 and beyond. We humbly ask for your active participation in forming, encouraging, supporting and recruiting youth and adults to become full-time church workers. Together we can prepare the next generation so that they may be *Set Apart to Serve*.

In the name of Jesus,

Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LCMS PASTORAL EDUCATION



Overview

Goals and Strategies

Set Apart to Serve (SAS), a major initiative of the LCMS, seeks to create an intentional culture of church worker formation and recruitment in every LCMS congregation, school and entity. 2019 Resolution 6-01, “To Support and Participate in the Comprehensive Church Worker Recruitment Initiative,” launched SAS’s effort to support congregations as they intentionally encourage young people to consider and pursue full-time church work vocations for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ until His return. 2023 Resolution 6-01, “To Affirm and Strengthen *Set Apart to Serve* in Word and Action,” confirmed ongoing endorsement, advocacy and engagement with SAS by all congregations, schools, key influential adults and primary agencies of the Synod.

Three Focus Areas

SAS is focused on forming and recruiting church workers involving three major audiences:

1. Youth (infant Baptism to 18+ years old)
2. Second-career adults
3. International church partners

Goals

SAS seeks to fulfill two primary goals:

1. Immediately increase fruitful engagement between youth influencers and youth who might embark on journeys toward professional church work vocations.
2. Significantly increase the number of individuals enrolled in church worker formation or other educational tracks at our Concordia University System institutions and LCMS seminaries to ensure that the LCMS continues to proclaim and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our congregations and communities in the coming decades.

Methods

SAS will raise up a new generation of church workers through influential adults¹ who directly engage with potential church workers. SAS will support influential adults as they identify, form and encourage potential church workers — both youth considering a career in church work and adults considering a career change — in their congregation and/or school. Using its research on influential adults and potential church workers, SAS will intentionally design resources and experiences for youth (from infant Baptism to 18+ years old) and adults. Through consistent touchpoints and intentional conversations, potential church workers will learn about how they can extend the work of the church through future generations for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ until His return. In partnership with the Office of International Mission (OIM), SAS will share research, strategies and resources with international church partners that could be useful in their own church work formation and recruitment efforts.

¹ SAS research identified “influential adults” — adults who help potential church workers consider a church work vocation — as LCMS pastors, LCMS commissioned church workers, parents and family, and congregational laity.

Message Testing

Message testing was conducted to ensure that the key messaging for the SAS initiative resonated with its two target audiences: potential church workers and key influential adults. These results provided important insight into how the audience received the message points, what wording resonated most with the audience, and how the messaging can be adjusted to be more effective. Survey questions reflect what SAS strives to learn each year so that it can continue to develop this Synodwide church work formation and recruitment initiative. No information is available for cells left empty.



Summer Youth Survey	2023	2022	2021
Responded to the survey	850	141	198
Distribution method	LCMS youth list	LCMS youth list	Distributed to congregations
Male/female percentage ratio	48/52	50/50	47/53
School grade range	1-12+ Evenly represented	1-12+	1-12+ (78% 9-12 grade)
Attend Lutheran school	21.8%	20%	13%
Relative is a church worker	53.6%	48%	
Attends weekly worship	70.3%	71%	71.1%
Involved in congregation's youth activities		63%	
Baptized or confirmed LCMS member	95.7%	80%	
Planning on becoming a full-time church worker	3.4%	5.8%	
Would consider becoming a full-time church worker, but have not yet decided	23.2%	26.6%	
I have not thought about becoming a full-time church worker	29.9%	26.0%	
No, I am not interested in becoming a full-time church worker	43.4%	41.6%	
Likely to somewhat likely to attend a Concordia university	20%	24%	
Unlikely to not at all likely to attend a Concordia university	39.4%	47.9%	
Not sure or don't know to attend a Concordia university	40.6%	28.2%	
Have heard about the <i>Set Apart to Serve</i> initiative	9.8%	11.2%	5%
Adequate information is available to you about church work vocations	37.7%	40.4%	37%
In the past year, an ordained or commissioned church worker spoke to you about considering a church work vocation	29% (71% did not)	31% (69% did not)	
Correlation between a church worker talking to a youth about church work and the youth then considering it	49%	58%	
Most effective resources for encouraging church work (according to youth)	Relationship building Intentionality Information about church work	Financial information, youth group discussions, job shadowing, personal conversation with a current church worker	

Of the youth considering a full-time church work vocation, the following is the vocation they would most consider by percentage.

Church Work Vocation	2023	2022	2021
Lutheran school teacher	53.4	50	
Director of Christian Education	35.6	29.2	
Pastor (boys only responded)	76.8	72.0	
Director of Parish Music	19.2	20.8	
Director of Christian Outreach	13.7	16.7	
Deaconess (girls only responded)	20.8	21.7	
Director of Family Life Ministry	10.5	16.7	
Director of Church Ministries	9.6	12.5	

Winter Adult and Congregation Survey	2023	2022	2021
Total responses to the survey	1,687	1,019	
Ordained responses	33%	32%	
Commissioned worker responses	4%	10%	
Lay person responses	62%	58%	
Distribution method	Distributed to congregations	Distributed to congregations	
Male/female percentage ratio	49/51		
Districts represented	All	All	
Pastors aware of <i>Set Apart to Serve</i> by percent	71.3	45.0	
Commissioned workers aware of SAS by percent	50.7	30.0	
Laypeople aware of SAS by percent	18.1	11.0	
Responses from laypeople: <i>In the past year, have you heard your congregation talk about...</i>	By percent		
Church work vocations in kid's Sunday school	8.9		
Church work vocations in Lutheran school	4.9		
Importance of church workers	59.0		
Role you, as laity, play in encouraging church work	40.1		
Responses from pastors: <i>In the past year, have you heard your congregation talk about...</i>	By percent		
Church work vocations in kid's Sunday school	19.3		
Church work vocations in Lutheran school	16.9		
Importance of church workers	65.0		
Role you, as clergy, play in encouraging church work	54.9		
<i>How is your congregation encouraging church work?</i>	By percent	Answers submitted	
Individual conversations	14.9	Personal relationships,	
Financial aid	10.1	Individual conversation,	
Sunday school and confirmation instruction	8.4	Mentioning in sermons	
Encouragement	5.9	and confirmation instruction,	
Not doing anything	13.8	providing financial assistance, prayer	
Respondents talked to at least one youth about considering a church work vocation	39%		
<i>Most desired resources to help start a conversation with a youth about considering church work</i>	By percent	Answers submitted	
A way to provide financial resources for church work students	55.4	Youth group leader materials, Sunday school materials, day school curriculum, bulletin inserts, scholarships, talking points for parents, social media helps	
Current church work students visit and present on their experience	36.7		
Youth group discussions/discussion guides	32.7		
A job shadowing program	25.3		
Videos of church workers talking about why they became church workers	24.2		

Fall Influencers Survey	2023				2022
Number of respondents	494				292
Percent of congregations producing one or more church workers (of those responded)	59%				52%
Percent of congregations producing one or more church workers with worship attendance under 80	31%				24%
Percent of congregations producing one or more church workers with worship attendance 81-149	42%				24%
Percent of congregations producing one or more church workers with worship attendance 150-299	69%				33%
Percent of congregations producing one or more church workers with worship attendance at 300+	86%				37%
Awareness of SAS among pastors	89%				61%
Awareness of SAS among commissioned workers	68%				47%
Awareness of SAS among lay youth workers	42%				33%
<i>Pastors feeling better prepared to talk about church work opportunities to youth</i>	52%				
Commissioned workers feeling better prepared to talk about church work opportunities to youth	48%				
<i>Lay youth workers feeling better prepared to talk about church work opportunities to youth</i>	47%				
Top five things congregations (producing two or more workers) are doing to encourage church workers	One-on-one conversations Giving scholarships Modeling church work Opportunities to lead or serve Encouragement				Building relationships Financial assistance Encouragement Opportunities to lead or serve Visit a Concordia university
Pastor spoke to at least one youth about church work	32%				26%
Commissioned worker spoke to at least one youth about church work	26%				25%
Lay youth worker spoke to at least one youth about church work	19%				24%
Pastor spoke to large group of youth about church work	18%				12%
Commissioned worker spoke to large group of youth about church work	26%				18%
Lay youth worker spoke to large group of youth about church work	25%				16%
Pastors talking to youth about church work	Baptism- Grade 6	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-12	Beyond Grade 12	
Commissioned workers talking to youth about church work	24%	54%	65%	28%	
Lay youth workers talking to youth about church work	35%	53%	77%	33%	
	21%	33%	81%	40%	
Pastor spoke to at least one adult about second-career church work	40%				35%
Commissioned worker spoke to at least one adult about second-career church work	23%				21%
Lay youth worker spoke to at least one adult about second-career church work	25%				22%



Synodwide Collaboration

Set Apart to Serve is a Synodwide church worker formation and recruitment initiative. Every major LCMS entity is partnering in the effort to raise up a new generation of church workers for the ongoing proclamation of the Gospel. The following highlights Synodwide collaboration during 2023.

Entity	Collaboration
Best Practices Ministry Conference	Attended/displayed at Best Practices in Arizona
Black Clergy Caucus	Invited to present at the Black Clergy Caucus
Chinese Lutherans in Mission Building (CLIMB)	Invited to present at CLIMB conference Invited to present to CLIMB leadership
Concordia Plan Services	Invited SAS to present at staff meeting Partnering with LCMS Office of National Mission in worker wellbeing alliance (SAS is represented on the alliance)
Concordia Publishing House	Development of SAS curriculum for early childhood to adults
Concordia University System	Planning joint recruitment effort for the exhibit hall at the 2023 Synod convention Development of Concordia university/seminary SAS website resource (lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve) Connecting with CUS church work program directors Planning SAS Concordia Day at all Concordia universities in 2024
Higher Things	Invited to present and display at Higher Things conferences SAS endorsing Higher Things devotional book for youth considering church work
KFUO Radio	SAS featured every Friday on KFUE Coffee Hour (kfuo.org/tag/set-apart-to-serve)
LCMS Deaconess Ministry	Invited to present to the leadership of Concordia Deaconess Conference Partnering in LCMS Deaconess Summit with deaconess leaders at Concordia University Chicago (CUC), Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSWF) and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL)
LCMS Communications	Developed SAS website (lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve) Edited/designed SAS pilot program resources (lcms.org/sas-resources) Produced several SAS videos for website, pilot program, resource hub Developed Concordia university/seminary resource webpage (lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve) Developed Church Worker Appreciation Month resources Developed second career bulletin insert
2023 Synod Convention	Assisted Floor Committee 6 in writing 2023 Res. 6-01, "To Affirm and Strengthen Set Apart to Serve in Word and Action"
LCMS Districts	SAS invited to present updates at quarterly Council of Presidents meetings SAS invited to participate in annual Missouri District College Fair at CSL Invited to present at Missouri District Church Workers Conference Invited to present at Missouri District Circuit Visitors Conference All district presidents nominated congregations and schools for pilot program Invited to present at the following district boards/committees: California-Nevada-Hawaii, Mid-South, New Jersey, Montana, Michigan, Ohio, Florida-Georgia Invited to District Education Executives Conference, Las Vegas Partnering in development of district SAS website kits, district committee resources, and presentations to congregations and schools
LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF)	Assisting MAF with second-career resources
LCMS Mission Advancement	SAS national and district LWML grant writing Develop SAS mission advancement projects for pilot program, curriculum, second career focus, and general <insert MADV giving site here>

Entity	Collaboration
LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM)	Invited to present to Asia missionaries and church partners SAS developing SAS presentation to Eurasia region Invited to present to OIM regional directors
LCMS Office of National Mission	Invited to attend Y4Life Conference in Washington D.C. Discussion on SAS and Specialized Spiritual Care Ministry Invited to present at LCMS U Conference
LCMS Rosters, Statistics, Research	Provided consultation on second-career research Developed and executed annual SAS youth survey Developed and executed annual SAS adult survey
LCMS School Ministry	Developing second-career focus concerning teacher colloquy Invited to present at School Leadership Development (SLED) conference Invited to present to a Lutheran high school Invited to present to adults and YouthLead at LCMS Youth National 2024
LCMS School Organizations	Invited to present at CONFEDEx (Education Execs Conference with Concordia Placement Directors) Invited to present at ALSS Fall Heartland Conference at Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP) Invited to present at LCMS Iowa East District Teachers Conference Invited to present at LCMS Pacific Southwest District Lutheran Education Conference, San Diego
LCMS Seminaries (CTSFW and CSL)	Participating in monthly SAS leadership meeting Partnering in the full development of the SAS Second-Career Focus, including joint publicity on weareyourseminaries.org/ Invited SAS to present and teach at CSL's Vocatio and CTSFW's Christ Academy programs Invited SAS to CSL's "Under the Fig Tree" podcast Invited SAS to annual new student orientation Planned joint recruitment effort for 2023 Synod onvention exhibit hall Development of Concordia university/seminary SAS website resource Invited to present at CSL admissions and recruitment personnel
LCMS Youth Ministry	Discussion with LCMS Youth Ministry about SAS involvement in 2025 Youth Gathering and "Vocation" Bible study Invited to present at YouthLead conference
Lutheran Church Extension Fund	LCEF is providing a large gift to fund the SAS CPH curriculum, providing all LCMS schools, from preschool to high school, the curriculum at no charge Highlighted SAS in Fall 2022 <i>Interest Time</i> journal
Lutheran Women's Missionary League	LWML voted \$100,000 mission grant (#10) at 2023 LWML convention District LWML grants have been received and newly submitted for SAS partnership Partnering with LWML for Church Worker Appreciation Month
National Association of DCEs	SAS published an article in NADCE summer journal SAS invited to NADCE conference in 2024
National Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Association (NLOMA)	Invited to send SAS materials for summer camps Developing strategy for 2024 collaboration
Office of LCMS First Vice-President	Development of second-career focus regarding colloquy
Pilot Program Congregations, Schools and Camp	35 pilot sites tested, evaluated and helped develop SAS resources through monthly Zoom meetings and Discord messaging platform
Wittenberg Academy (RSO)	Taught online class on the development of a church worker



Youth Focus

The SAS Youth Focus began with the adoption of 2019 Res. 6-01, “To Support and Participate in the Comprehensive Church Worker Recruitment Initiative,” which called for a collaborative, comprehensive, long-term church worker recruitment initiative. This youth phase focuses on:

- Forming, identifying, encouraging and supporting young boys and girls for church work vocations.
- Instilling in youth that church work vocations are honorable, sacred and joyful vocations.
- Developing the whole person throughout this lifelong formation process, which includes their spiritual, family, character, confessional, physical, emotional, intellectual and Synodical development.
- Caring for existing church workers, who are servants of Christ, and helping them be healthy advocates of next-generation church workers.

Pilot Program

In February 2023, SAS launched a pilot program to develop and test resources that congregations, schools and LCMS entities can use to provide youth with the essential

experiences they need to successfully consider and pursue church work. These resources are designed to support and equip influential adults (pastors, commissioned church workers, parents and family, congregation leaders and laity) to identify, nurture and encourage youth to consider a full-time church work vocation.

Pilot program participants came to the International Center in St. Louis for a two-day, in-person training session to learn about SAS and their role in the pilot program. They were also trained to use Discord, a private instant messaging and collaboration tool to communicate with each other and with the SAS leadership team.

From February through September, participants evaluated SAS resources, providing feedback and helping fine-tune them, even submitting resources to add to the SAS resource hub. Feedback was provided through daily Discord conversation and monthly Zoom meetings.

With the help and support of all 35 district presidents, the following participated in the pilot program:

District	Name	Congregation/School	Location
AT	Dcs. Raquel Rojas	Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church	Bronx, N.Y.
CID	Mrs. Robinette Flach	Altamont Lutheran Interparish School	Altamont, Ill.
CNH	Rev. Josh Woodrow	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Hayward, Calif.
EA	Rev. John Zimmerman	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Scranton, Pa.
EN	Albert Amling	Hales Corners Lutheran Church and School	Hales Corners, Wis.
IDW	Rev. Jonthan Riggert	Trinity Lutheran Church	Cherokee, Iowa
IE	Rev. Dr. Gerald Kapanka	Valley Lutheran School	Cedar Falls, Iowa
IN	Rev. Samuel Wirgau	Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School	Ossian, Ind.
KS	Mr. David Goldammer	Trinity Lutheran Church	Salina, Kan.
MDS	Rev. Andrew Abraham	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Crossville, Tenn.
MI	Rev. Daniel Burhop	Trinity Lutheran Church and School	Reese, Mich.
MNN	Rev. Paul Dare	Zion Lutheran Church and School	Alexandria, Minn.
MO	Rev. Michael Pottschmidt	St. Paul Lutheran Church and School	Concordia, Mo.
MT	Rev. Brian Lee	Trinity Lutheran Church and School	Kalispell, Mont.
ND	Rev. Jonathan Walla	Bethel Lutheran Church and Martin Luther School	Bismarck, N.D.
NE	Dcs. Jennifer Ruwisch	Grace Lutheran Church	Nashua, N.H.
NEB	Rev. Paul Rempfer	St. John's Lutheran Church	Columbus, Neb.
NID	Mr. Tom Kalal	St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School	Lombard, Ill.
NJ	Rev. Steve Vera	King of Kings Lutheran Church	Mountain Lakes, N.J.
NOW	Rev. Daniel Weber	Community of Christ–St. Luke's Lutheran Church	Federal Way, Wash.
NWD	Mr. Robert Johnson	St. Paul Lutheran Church and School	Bonduel, Wis.
OH	Rev. Ryan Kleimola	Trinity Lutheran Church and School	Toledo, Ohio
OK	Rachell Highley	First Lutheran Church and School	Ponca City, Okla.
PSW	Cheri Selander	Christ Lutheran Church and School	La Mesa, Calif.
RM	David Spurgeon	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Albuquerque, N.M.
SD	Marli Ockander	Sioux Falls Lutheran School	Sioux Falls, S.D.
SED	Rev. Scott Johnson	St. John's Lutheran Church	Conover, N.C.
SELC	Rev. Samuel Schick	St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School	Oviedo, Fla.
SO	Rev. Russ Gipson	Grace Lutheran Church and School	Huntsville, Ala.
SWD	Rev. Christopher Conkling	Trinity Lutheran Church and School	Mequon, Wis.
TX	Rev. James Woelmer	Faith Lutheran Church and School	Plano, Texas
WY	Rev. Marcus Baikie	Our Savior Lutheran Church and School	Cheyenne, Wyo.
MI	Mary Oldenburg	Camp Concordia	Gowen, Mich.

Town Hall and Resource Hub

The culmination of the pilot project was the release of the first major deposit of resources for LCMS congregations, schools and LCMS entities at the SAS Town Hall on Sept. 27, 2023. These resources, along with a recording of the town hall, can be found at lcms.org/sas-resources.

Resources are specific to pastors, parents, church workers and laity. Resources can be further delineated by youth age (birth–12, 12–14, 14–18+). Resources include:

- Introduction to Set Apart to Serve
- FAQs about Set Apart to Serve
- Talking to young people about vocation
- Encouraging future church workers
- Messaging templates for influential adults
- General bulletin insert
- Bulletin insert focusing on second careers in church work
- Presentations for congregations and for teachers
- Essential Experiences Workbook and Individual Tracker Presentation



“I have been looking through the materials SAS has to offer for a few days. I just want to say thank you for all you are doing with this initiative. You and your team have done a fantastic job researching and creating practical, usable material.”

—Kristin Nistler, Director of Family Life Ministry, Zion Lutheran Church, Bismarck, N.D.

- Journey Maps for each age group
- Bible Study (Vocations and Church Work Vocations)
- Guide to Mentoring Future Church Workers
- Guide to Job Shadowing for Future Church Workers
- Conversation Guides for Parents
- SAS promotional materials
- Video testimonials from LCMS church workers and students

Next Steps for the SAS Youth Focus

SAS is developing an actionable activation plan to be executed in partnership with LCMS Communications for 2024. This plan will include the following:

- 1. Program Feedback Support:** The culmination of the pilot program was the release of several resources in a resource hub (lcms.org/sas-resources). Feedback support will encompass the development of a response strategy concerning these resources.
- 2. Content Development:** SAS will assess what new content is needed based on Synod feedback. These materials will be developed and added to the resource hub.
- 3. Onboarding Support:** SAS will develop a plan to provide assistance to congregations and schools who request personal assistance in the use of SAS strategy and resources.



Second-Career Focus

In December 2022, SAS began its Second-Career Focus with a meeting. Participants included:

Rev. Kevin D. Robson, LCMS chief mission officer

Rev. Dr. Thomas Egger, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL)

Dr. Benjamin Haupt, associate provost at CSL

Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr., president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW)

Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, assistant vice president of admission at CTSFW

Rev. Peter K. Lange, LCMS first vice-president and chairman of the LCMS Colloquy Committee

Dr. Bernard D. Bull, president of Concordia University, Nebraska

Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, president of Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP)

Dr. Mark Koschmann, associate vice-president of Faith and Ministry at CSP

Dr. Alan Freeman, director of LCMS School Ministry

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Leininger, campus pastor of Concordia University Chicago

Rev. Keith Boheim, executive director of the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation

Rev. Dr. James Baneck, executive director of the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education

Glenn Rollins, manager of Set Apart to Serve

DCE Robyn Armbrust, administrative coordinator for the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education

Nick Sargent, vice president, Standing Partnership

Andrea Shea, vice president, Standing Partnership

The SAS Second-Career Focus will turn its attention to the vocations where church workers are most needed: Lutheran school teachers and pastors. Like the SAS Youth Focus, the second-career focus began with comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research to understand what goes into the decision to become a second-career pastor or teacher. Categories for feedback included mindset, drivers, trends in previous occupations and potential barriers to a second career. Insights gathered from this research will be used to develop effective messaging and a strategic plan to improve awareness of second-career opportunities and foster a culture of second-career pastor and teacher recruitment.

To conduct this research, SAS secured the services of Ingenium Research.

Key findings for second-career pastors include:

- Those who most influenced men to consider a second career in the pastoral ministry were a mentoring pastor and spouse.

- Key drivers that led men to a second career as a pastor were a sense of calling, affirmation from family and friends, encouragement from the pastor and personal experience as a lay leader.
- Main barriers were cost, relocation, leaving a full-time job and time commitment.
- Considering a second career as pastor starts with spiritual formation and requires encouragement from the pastor and spouse.
- It generally takes years (not months) for a man to make the decision to pursue becoming a pastor as his second career.
- For a man considering the pastoral ministry as his second career, helpful tools include serving in a leadership role in the congregation; information about health care, retirement and housing benefits; testimonials from those who went through the process of pursuing a second career; Bible study; and information from the Concordia universities and seminaries about all the steps and requirements necessary for this new vocation.
- The reasons for making the decision to becoming a pastor as a second career include love for God's Word, the opportunity to preach and administer the Sacraments, and the joy of serving and loving God's people.

Key research findings for second-career Lutheran school teachers includes:

- The greatest factor in an established teacher's decision to pursue a second career as a Lutheran school teacher was the opportunity to teach where their children attend school. Influencers include teachers currently teaching at a Lutheran school, other church workers, family and friends.
- Other key drivers include a need for an environment supportive of their faith, and a desire to respond to the need for more teachers at Lutheran schools.
- Main barriers were lower salary (on average 30% less than public school teachers), work-life balance (more is expected of a teacher in a Lutheran school) and the need for additional education or certification.
- Those considering a second career as a Lutheran school teacher often show these attributes: desire for belonging, helping others, being close to their children and working in a safe and respectful environment. This consideration to become a second-career Lutheran school teacher requires the family's support and full knowledge of economic implications.
- Helpful tools to a person considering teaching in a Lutheran school as a second career include information about

health care, retirement and housing benefits, clear, upfront communication about education requirements, knowledge of what it means to be a rostered teacher and explanation of expectations of service beyond the classroom.

- The reasons for making the decision to become a Lutheran school teacher were not solely practical; the decision was also motivated by faith and the commitment to a vocation (second-career pastors articulated the same motivation).

2024 Strategic Plan for the SAS Second-Career Focus

- Goal: Build an intentional culture of church work formation for those who might pursue it as a second career.

- Strategies and Tactics

- *Develop stakeholder engagement:* Develop journey mapping; partnership with the Concordia universities, seminaries, LCMS districts, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces and LCMS School Ministry; educate those who have the greatest influence on second-career church workers.
- *Clarify benefits and process:* Communicate compensation and benefits information; create scholarships and other financial support; communicate about the routes to ministry, the colloquy process, and admissions and education requirements; help share why residential formation is valuable and essential.
- *Develop additional tools to build a culture of recruitment and provide opportunities* to gain experience: Support development of job board/career portal; explore programming and communications to ethnic individuals and communities; develop Bible study for those considering a second career in church work; explore mentor program during seminary; create webinar to educate on teacher colloquy; track pipeline of teaching graduates; conduct small pilot program; leverage and tailor job shadowing toolkits; partner with the LCMS Church Worker Wellness alliance group.
- *Build awareness of second-career roles:* Develop content strategy for second-career church work; partner with LCMS groups on organic social campaign; produce video testimonies from second-career individuals; add second-career church workers to annual baseline surveys.
- *Engage and educate spouse, family and influencers:* Develop a Bible study for families of those considering a second career in church work; better communicate support services for wives and families; develop FAQs to help address questions and barriers.
- **Metrics:** Develop a dashboard that measures and reports on these strategies.

Additional Resources

Concordia University and Seminary Web Resource

SAS developed a website (lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve) to help potential church workers easily research each of the eight LCMS church work vocations. Each vocation has a designated webpage which describes the vocation and lists which Concordia universities and seminaries offer programs of study for this vocation. The webpage also specifies the cost of tuition, room and board, and fees at each institution, links to each of these institutions' websites, and lists contact information for their director of church work programs and their admissions counselor.

The Lutheran Witness

In 2023, *The Lutheran Witness* featured a monthly SAS column. These articles address frequently asked questions and issues surrounding church work formation and recruitment. This is an excellent resource for Bible studies, church meetings or small group discussions.

January	Overview of SAS
February	Sacred and Joyful Vocations
March	Who's Influencing our Children?
April	What Can We Do to Get More Church Workers?
May	Our Residential Seminaries: Rich Preparation for Ministry
June/July	The Cost of Supplying Church Workers
August	Who Follows in His Train?
September	Appreciating our Church Workers
October	Second-Career Focus
November	With SAS Resources in Hand ... LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!
December	A Christmas Message from Set Apart to Serve

Reporter

Reporter is the official newspaper of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Content is prepared by LCMS Communications. To keep the SAS church work recruitment initiative before the constituents of the LCMS, an SAS article was submitted each month. These articles can be found at lcms.org/reporter.

January	Introducing the Pilot Program
February	Second-Career Phase
March	Synodwide Support and Collaboration
April	Pilot Program Launches
May	Too Joyful Not to Tell
June	What to Expect at Synod Convention
July	CUS/Seminary SAS Website Resource
August	Upcoming SAS Townhall
September	SAS Convention Highlights
October	Pastoral Education Insert, "Thank You" to Church Workers
November	SAS Day at Concordia University Campuses
December	SAS goes to Asia
January	Deaconess Summit

KFUO Coffee Hour

KFUO is the official broadcast voice of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. KFUEO airs *The Coffee Hour* each day at 9:00 a.m. (CT). Hosts Andy Bates and Sarah Gulseth discuss stories about the intersection of Lutheran life and the secular world. They invite guests to share real-life stories of mercy work of the LCMS and partners, updates from missionaries across the ocean, and practical talk about how to live boldly Lutheran. Since June 2022, *Coffee Hour* features *Set Apart to Serve* most Fridays, telling the stories of church work formation and recruitment from a variety of guests on several topics. All the programs are recorded and can be heard at kfuo.org/tag/set-apart-to-serve. This is an excellent resource for individual or group listening, youth groups, Bible class and more.

2023	Guest	Topic
Jan. 20	Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District President	Journey into Church Work
Feb. 3	Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW)	Church Worker Formation at Concordia Theological Seminary
Feb. 10	Dr. Jeffrey Blerch, Professor of Music at Concordia University, Nebraska (CUNE)	Formation as Church Musician at Concordia, Nebraska
Feb. 17	Rev. James Cleland, associate pastor at St. Mark Lutheran Church and School in Houston, Texas	From Educator to Pastor
Mar. 3	Dcs. Raquel Rojas, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bronx, N.Y. and Rev. Jonathan Walla, pastor at Bethel Lutheran Church and Martin Luther School in Bismarck, N.D.	Pilot Program in Urban and Rural Context
Mar. 10	Rev. John Zimmerman, pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Scranton, Pa. and Marli Ockander, teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, S.D.	Pilot Program to Encourage Church Work
Mar. 17	Rev. Dr. Thomas Egger, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL)	Formation at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
Mar. 24	Drew Oswald, fourth-year student at CSL	Pastoral Formation as a Fourth-Year Seminarian
Mar. 31	Dr. Shanna Opfer and Macy Gebhardt, CUNE	Lutheran Teacher Education at CUNE
April 14	Myrna Baneck and Brett Mueller, teachers at Our Savior Lutheran School in Fenton, Mo.	Preschool and Middle School Lutheran School Teachers
April 21	Rev. Joshua Brakhage, associate pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Edmond, Okla.	From Broadcast Media to Pastoral Office
April 28	Dr. James Baneck, executive director of LCMS Pastoral Education and SAS	The Set Apart to Serve Initiative
May 5	Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, assistant vice-president of admission and director of Christ Academy at CTSFW and Rev. Micah Glenn, director of recruitment at CSL	Summer Formation Experience in Christ Academy at CTSFW and Vocatio at CSL
May 12	Rev. Brian Heller, Manager of LCMS Specialized Spiritual Care Ministry	Specialized Spiritual Care Ministry (Chaplaincy)
May 19	Rev. Steve Law, pastor of Wollaston Lutheran Church in Quincy, Mass. and chairman of Chinese Lutherans in Mission Building (CLIMB)	Church Work Recruitment in Chinese Lutheran Communities
May 26	Dr. Nabil Nour, pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Harford, S.D. and LCMS fourth vice-president	From Nazareth to South Dakota in Second-Career Ministry
June 2	Rev. Sam Schick, pastor of St. Luke's in Oviedo, Fla., and SAS Pilot Program participant	SAS Pilot Program in Oviedo, Fla.
June 9	Rev. Bryan Roberts, pastor at Zion Lutheran Church and military chaplain	From Military to Ministry, Transitioning from Career to Seminary
June 16	Linda Dehn, teacher and principal at Our Savior Lutheran School in Fenton, Mo.	From Accounting Industry to Lutheran Elementary Teacher
June 23	Rev. Dr. Mark Wood, managing director for Church Planting, Renewal and Support with the LCMS Office of National Mission	Transitioning into the Pastoral Vocation
June 30	Mike Schlemann, Principal of Bethany Lutheran School in Parma, Ohio	Formation as Lutheran School Principal
July 7	Bill Schranz, Director of Education and Synodical Careers and Director of Colloquy at CUNE and Lead Placement Director for CUS	Church Worker Formation and Placement
July 14	Lisa Clark and Jonathan Schultz, Concordia Publishing House	SAS Curriculum Resources for Churches and Schools
July 21	Erica Sorensen and Rev. Harrison Goodman, Higher Things	Encouraging Church Work at Higher Things
July 28	Rev. Gregory Todd and Rev. James Hopkins, U.S. Navy chaplains	Serving as Navy Chaplains
Aug. 11	Rev. Doug Griebenaw, KFUO	Second Career Pastoral Vocation
Aug. 18	Dr. Thaddeus Warren and Maria Davenport, DCEs	Serving as Director of Christian Education
Aug. 25	Rev. Juan Zamore, Hispanic Missionary League	Hispanic Ministry in the United States
Sept. 1	Rev. Dr. James Baneck and Michael Ten Clay (Standing Partnership)	SAS Town Hall for Resources and Tools
Sept. 8	Rev. Dr. Kurt Taylor, Concordia University Wisconsin	Serving as a Director of Church Ministries
Sept. 15	Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray, Director of LCMS Black Ministry	Black Ministry and the Black Clergy Caucus
Sept. 22	Dcs. Pamela Boehle-Silva (RN)	Mercy Work at Home and Abroad
Sept. 29	Jennifer Glicker, Principal	Commissioned and Rostered Worker through Colloquy
Oct. 6	Dr. Alan Freeman, Director of LCMS School Ministry	Appreciating Lutheran Teachers
Oct. 13	Dr. Russell Dawn, President of Concordia University Chicago	Forming Church Workers in Truth, Integrity, and Excellence
Oct. 20	Robert Finch, pre-seminary student at Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP)	Pre-seminary Formation at Concordia University, St. Paul
Oct. 27	Rev. Dr. Charles Gieschen (CTSFW) and Rev. Dr. Ronald Mudge (CSL), provosts	Rigorous Pastoral Education and Formation

Concordia Publishing House (CPH) SAS Curriculum

SAS is partnering with CPH in the development of a church worker formation and recruitment curriculum. This curriculum is written for several audiences — the Lutheran day school, Sunday school, VBS, youth group, Bible class and more. This curriculum addresses four themes:

- What is the church?
- Who are our LCMS ordained and commissioned church workers?
- Caring for our church workers.
- Developing a culture of church work formation and recruitment in our LCMS congregations, schools and entities.

These themes will be developed for early childhood, grades 1–3, 4–6, 7–8, high school and adult. This curriculum will include leader guides, student sheets, posters, letters to the family, and school and family activities. Due to a generous gift from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and gifts from each of the Concordia universities, this curriculum will be sent to every LCMS school, from early childhood care to high schools, at no charge. We expect to begin distribution in spring 2024.

Monthly President's Report

SAS provides a monthly report to the Synod president and over 400 significant SAS collaborators and stakeholders. These reports include SAS updates on progress, events, research, significant news, goals and long-term vision.

Church Worker Appreciation Month

Since 2019, SAS has designated October as Church Worker Appreciation Month. During this month we recognize our church workers who serve God and His people in full-time sacred, honorable and joyful vocations. The individuals who serve in these vocations specifically carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the life and salvation of God's people. The Office of the Holy Ministry is commanded by God to preach and teach Christ and His Word, administer the Sacraments and provide pastoral care to God's people. The seven commissioned vocations have been established in love by the LCMS to support the Office of the Holy Ministry and to assist the faithful in their God-given vocations. For these vocations and for this faithful, selfless service, we give thanks and praise to God. In Christian love, we also give thanks and express appreciation to these servants who serve us with the Gospel.

Each year, SAS develops *resources for Church Worker Appreciation Month*. New resources in 2023 included:

- A letter to the district presidents and district executives thanking them for partnering with SAS to encourage our congregations and schools to celebrate Church Worker Appreciation Month.
- A letter to the leadership of every LCMS congregation and school, encouraging them to celebrate Church Worker Appreciation Month by providing them with ideas for how to do so.
- A letter to school administrators, asking them to distribute an SAS letter to school parents, informing them of Church Worker Appreciation Month and providing ideas for them and their children to show appreciation to their child's teacher.
- A Church Worker Appreciation bulletin insert on behalf of SAS.

Church Worker Wellness

2019 Resolution 6-01 states that the fourth objective of the church worker recruitment initiative is to “support, encourage, and care for existing church workers for the welfare of the workers, for the proclamation and witness of the Gospel, and for workers to be healthy advocates of next-generation church workers.”

As baptized children of God in Christ Jesus, we love our neighbor and honor those in authority over us. This includes the general love and care for those who serve God's people full-time with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the initial research of hundreds of LCMS church workers done in 2019–2020, it was reported that only 50% of all church workers encourage youth to consider a full-time church work vocation. One of the reasons cited was the decline of church workers' physical and emotional health due to compensation concerns and sinful treatment from the laity.

During this year, the Office of National Mission and Concordia Plans Services partnered in the creation of an LCMS Church Worker Wellness alliance. While the alliance operates independently of SAS, SAS is represented on the alliance committee. SAS will work closely with the alliance to genuinely care for our ordained and commissioned workers and develop healthy advocates for church worker formation and recruitment.

Cross-Functional Advisory Council

SAS is developing an advisory council that will consist of a cross-section of LCMS stakeholders who advise SAS based on their experiences as church workers, educators and/or

influential adults in the lives of potential church worker candidates. This advisory council will meet 3–4 times per year and will consist of up to 12 members. This council will provide in-depth feedback, perspective and insights gained from working as and/or with church workers. The council will review success metrics and provide guidance on:

- Cultivating champions for SAS;
- Informing worker journey maps;
- Highlighting opportunities for increased awareness and engagement;
- Speaking candidly about what works and what doesn't in recruiting church workers;
- Delivering longitudinal feedback that adds in-depth feedback to surveys; and
- Influencing resources and messaging.

This guidance will impact SAS by

- Guiding resource improvements;
- Establishing priorities for the future;
- Learning about pain points and obstacles;
- Identifying new guides and trainings; and
- Clarifying and updating messaging.

Standing Partnership

Standing Partnership is a St. Louis-based communications and marketing firm. Since 2019, Standing Partnership has been collaborating with SAS to drive our goals and strategies. Through 2023, Standing Partnership has been instrumental in the following:

- Developing initial SAS communications strategy, plans and messaging;
- Assisting in the development of the SAS Youth Focus, including brand identity, message platform, three age group development plan, resources for influential adults, Synodwide collaboration, CPH curriculum, collaboration with LCMS Mission Advancement, SAS project management, youth pilot project, and content and materials for the SAS resource hub; and
- Assisting in the initial development of the SAS Second-Career Focus including the research stage and roadmap.

SAS is an LCMS initiative that has no end date; rather, formation and recruitment of church workers is a continual task of Christ's church. Jesus commands us to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest (MATT. 9:38). This command, like SAS, will come to completion when the Lord returns, but not until then. Therefore, SAS is developing a long-term strategy plan with Standing Partnership which focuses on the following areas:

- **Long-term stakeholder plan**, which will include strategic planning, ongoing brand messaging, communications, executive level stakeholder engagement, awareness plan and execution, mission advancement, development and measurement of journey maps, and succession planning.
- **Youth Focus**, which will include youth messaging, an activation plan, updating resources, identifying and developing new resources, maintaining the CPH curriculum, and the education of stakeholders and groups.
- **Second-Career Focus**, which will include second-career messaging, an activation plan, updating youth resources for second-career audiences, identifying and developing new resources, and the education of second-career stakeholders and groups.
- **International Focus**, which will include the development and building of stakeholder relationships, the development of an SAS strategy with Office of International Mission regional directors, and consultation with necessary partners on resources (i.e., modifying, translating and identifying resources based on unique contexts and needs).
- **Multi-cultural Focus**, which will include the development and building of stakeholder relationships, learning context and needs, and consulting with necessary partners on resources.
- **Well-being Focus**, which will include SAS's collaboration with the Office of National Mission and Concordia Plan Services on the LCMS Church Worker Wellness alliance. SAS has a vested interest in wellness measurement, church worker compensation and benefits, and the overall spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of all LCMS ordained and commissioned church workers. SAS does not oversee the Church Worker Wellness alliance, but it does oversee the annual Church Worker Appreciation Month.



Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (MATT. 9:38)

Who can you encourage to consider a full-time church work vocation?



THE
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lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve