

FOCUS: Church Workers



This month, the LCMS gives special thanks to God for church workers, who tend to the spiritual care of the Church in Christian love.

October 2014

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ ...

(Eph. 4:11-12 ESV)

Celebrating church workers

This month, the LCMS celebrates the sometimes-unsung servants of the Church by giving thanks for all of our professional church workers who serve the people of God in body and soul.

“One of the greatest blessings that our Lord Jesus gives to the Church is the gift of our full-time church workers,” said the Rev. Bart Day, interim LCMS chief mission officer. “These people give their lives to the Lord and to the Church. This is the greatest resource and asset the Church has in bringing the Gospel to the ends of the earth.”

The gamut of churchly vocations includes pastoral, educational, musical, mercy work and leadership positions across the Synod’s many parishes, schools and Recognized Service Organizations.

“Most everyone knows of the work

this year, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, marks its 175th year and Concordia University Chicago its 150th year preparing pastors and church workers.

Yet less than a third of LCMS school teachers are rostered, and the overall number of trained, rostered church workers has been trending downward by 4 percent over the past decade. Congregations increasingly rely on workers who lack LCMS theological training. This decline in formal training rooted in the Word of God and our Lutheran Confessions hampers our ability to proclaim the Gospel — but it is also an opportunity. Nonrostered church workers without this formal preparation have many options for receiving LCMS theological education and certification through our nationally ranked and accredited universities and seminaries.

“Our church needs workers who live and breathe Lutheran theology from the pulpit, at the bedside, in the classroom and in the world.”

— Rev. Bart Day

of pastors in the LCMS, but we have a host of other full-time, rostered, trained, professional workers who serve the Gospel and the teaching of the faith,” Day said. “We have directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family-life ministry and directors of parish music. We also have rostered, certified lay ministers; parish assistants; deaconesses and, of course, all of our Lutheran educators.”

Day acknowledges the importance of practical theological training for pastors and other rostered (ordained or commissioned) workers by the Concordia University System (CUS) and the Synod’s seminaries. Such training is especially vital given the many people and needs these workers are called to serve. Teaching the faith, preaching the Gospel, comforting consciences, spiritual leadership and caring for souls all have eternal implications.

Our Synod’s historic focus on theologically well-trained workers remains a hallmark of our life together. In fact,

“It’s critical for the future of the LCMS that we have pastors and other rostered workers who are specially trained,” Day said. “Our forefathers had the vision and strength to create an educational system for church workers that is second to none. As the world of ministry is changing, we need workers who are trained both professionally and theologically. An extended residential Lutheran education allows for the development of a genuine Lutheran ethos in the lives of our professional church workers. Our church needs workers who live and breathe Lutheran theology from the pulpit, at the bedside, in the classroom and in the world.”

The world-class instruction provided by our universities, colleges and seminaries shapes each individual in a holistic way for a lifelong career of service in the Church. However, today’s challenges of educational costs, family relocation and the urgent call for many more workers has brought about additional routes to ordination, distance-



The Rev. Augie Lubkeman (right) greets the Rev. Christopher Hull, senior pastor, after worship at Christ Lutheran Church in Normal, Ill.

learning opportunities and other unique ways to provide both classroom and hands-on learning.

This month also is focused on caring for our church workers. As the people of God in the congregations, schools and institutions of the LCMS, we promise to uphold and care for our church professionals, just as they have vowed to care for us in their service to the Lord. Did you know that in the LCMS Rite of Installation, every congregation promises to “show him/her fitting love and honor, and support ...”?

Soldiers of the Cross and Veterans of the Cross are two LCMS ministries specially designated to care for our church workers.

“The Soldiers and Veterans of the Cross ministry is a sound investment in the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual well-being of our church workers, who are at the forefront of the Synod’s Gospel proclamation ministries,” said the Rev. Dr. Carlos Hernandez, director of LCMS

Church and Community Engagement. “When we care for our church workers in financial stress, the care and compassion we offer in the name of Christ lifts the burden, re-energizes and frees them to carry out their Gospel-proclamation callings.”

“I hope people will take time to think about the church workers who’ve truly impacted and changed their lives — whether those were pastors who encouraged you, or Lutheran school teachers who helped shape and mold you, or directors of parish music who led you into a life of love for church music, hymnody and Bach,” said Day, a former parish pastor and Lutheran school headmaster. “We cannot forget how deeply these individuals impact us and our children in the day-to-day connections we have with them.”

To learn more, go to lcms.org/themes/october.

**TEACHING the faith,
PREACHING the Gospel,
COMFORTING consciences,
spiritual LEADERSHIP
and CARING for souls
all have eternal
implications.**

What makes LCMS church workers DIFFERENT

Each of our LCMS professional church workers is equipped with solid theological training in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. They are prepared to serve the people of God and are ready to care for them when life’s tough challenges come their way.



The Rev. Ryan Peterson, campus pastor and assistant professor of Theology, leads a Bible study at Concordia University in Ann Arbor, Mich.

WHO ARE church workers

Pastors, teachers, deaconesses, parish music directors and other church workers serve the Church in its vital ministries.

Photos:LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford



	ORDAINED Pastor	COMMISSIONED Deaconess	COMMISSIONED Teacher	COMMISSIONED Director of Christian Education	COMMISSIONED Director of Christian Outreach
Where do they serve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregation• Mission field• Institution (hospital, nursing home, prison)• Military• Lutheran school• College campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregation• Institution (hospital, nursing home, prison)• Recognized Service Organization• Mission field• Classroom• College campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lutheran preschool, elementary school or secondary school• Mission field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregation• Lutheran camp• Recognized Service Organization• College campus• Foreign mission field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregation• Recognized Service Organization• Mission field• College campus
What do they do?	<p>SOUL CARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preach• Teach• Administer the Sacraments• Lead worship• Visitation (visit church and community members)• Comfort and counsel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mercy work• Visitation• Church music• Christian education• Coordinate church or community programs• Assist the pastor• Serve as part of a congregation's ministry team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach academic subjects• Teach the faith• Plan lessons• Coach or direct sports, music, drama, etc.• Serve as part of a congregation's ministry team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead and plan parish education• Teach the faith to children, youth, adults, families, etc.• Organize youth programs, vacation Bible school, outdoor programs, etc.• Serve as part of a congregation's ministry team• Assist the pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outreach training• Develop and direct parish community-outreach efforts• Serve as part of a congregation's ministry team• Assist the pastor



“In the church, there are many vital roles that have to be played. We need people who have skills to help the church function. Without them the church won’t function at all. They put in unbelievable hours. They don’t get paid very well compared to the going rates in most places. And they deserve our great thanks and our love.”

— LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

Become a church worker

There are two paths to becoming a *commissioned or *ordained *rostered worker:

- 1 Graduate from one of the church-worker training programs through the Concordia University System (CUS) or an LCMS seminary.
- 2 Complete the *colloquy process.

Thinking of becoming a church worker?

- Talk to your pastor or another church worker.
- Pray about it. Ask God to help you discern His will for your life.
- Find out more about the church-worker programs offered by the CUS. (Download the 2014–15 CUS *Viewbook* at cus.edu/concordia-university-system-campuses/.)
- Attend a visit day at a Concordia university campus or one of the seminaries.

Get a church worker

How do you know if your congregation, school or institution needs a church worker? When possible, adding a member to your staff can greatly expand your capacity for ministry. All rostered church workers go through the call process. To call and receive a qualified church worker, contact your LCMS district office.

To call an experienced church worker, contact:
Your LCMS district office
lcms.org/districts

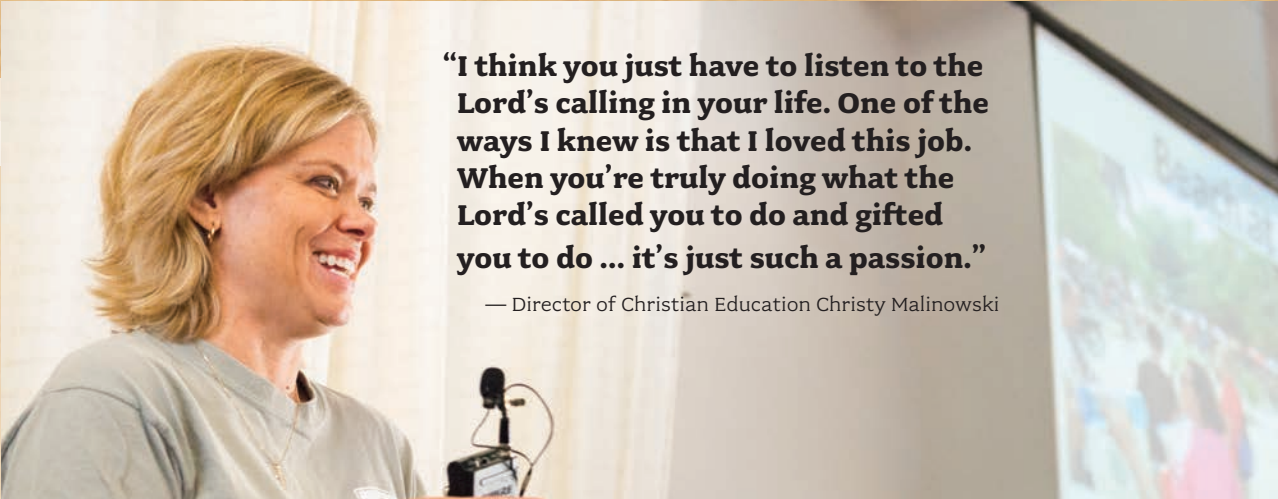
To call a new candidate, contact:
Your LCMS district office
lcms.org/districts



Concordia Seminary
csl.edu

Concordia Theological Seminary
ctsfnw.edu

Concordia University System
lcms.org/cus



“I think you just have to listen to the Lord’s calling in your life. One of the ways I knew is that I loved this job. When you’re truly doing what the Lord’s called you to do and gifted you to do ... it’s just such a passion.”

— Director of Christian Education Christy Malinowski

COMMISSIONED Director of Family Life Ministry	COMMISSIONED Director of Parish Music	COMMISSIONED Lay Minister	Missionary	*DEFINITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregation• Lutheran camp• Recognized Service Organization• Foreign mission field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregation• Foreign mission field• Recognized Service Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National or foreign mission field	<p>Colloquy: Commissioned ministry colloquy programs prepare men and women who are currently serving in ministry roles for membership in the Synod.</p> <p>(a) Colloquy programs ensure that those who seek to join the Synod have been educated in theology, have become oriented to service to the Synod, and have demonstrated the spiritual and professional attributes that the Synod expects of its members.</p> <p>(b) Qualified applicants are those who are competent workers in the field for which they seek colloquy (<i>LCMS Handbook</i> 3.10.3).</p> <p>Rostered: An LCMS rostered worker is a member of the Synod and, among others things, accepts without reservation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds, (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession ... the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord (<i>LCMS Handbook: Article II</i>).<p>Commissioned: A called, rostered worker, not a pastor.</p><p>Ordained: A called, rostered pastor.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate and lead family ministry• Visitation• Counseling• Serve as part of a congregation’s ministry team• Assist the pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead choirs, instrumental ensembles and soloists• Provide and coordinate music for worship• Organize music programs• Serve as part of a congregation’s ministry team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evangelism• Visitation• Christian education• Youth, family or senior ministry• Parish administration• Serve as part of a congregation’s ministry team• Assist the pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theological education (rostered)• Project management• Teaching (rostered)• Mercy work (rostered)• Communications• Church planting (rostered)• Business management• Strategic mission development (rostered)• Medical care	



“It’s easy to lose focus and simply treat my vocation as a ‘job.’ I talk about this with my pastors regularly. We encourage each other to remember that these gifts of Word and Sacrament are for us, even in the midst of something that may be considered ‘work.’”

— Director of Parish Music Paul Soulek

“You are often carrying the burdens of so many people, their lives and the challenges they’re facing, and thank goodness you are in the office of Christ. You are giving forgiveness to them, giving them comfort, unburdening their consciences.”

— Rev. Jonathan Huehn

Caring for those called to church careers

“Care for your workers. Love them. Support them. Share in their joys. Join in their sadness. Offer them opportunities of respite. Support them in getting the help they need.”

So said the Rev. Bart Day, interim LCMS chief mission officer.

The LCMS — its congregations, schools and members — must care for the health and wellness of its church workers. It is critical, Day said, for our life together.

“The truth is that many of our full-time workers are hurting,” he said. “These hurts come from many places, but in the end, they are suffering along with the entire Church. If one part of the body suffers, we all suffer. If we hope to revitalize the Church, it must begin with those men and women who have given their lives to it.”

The goal is for the entire Synod to come together in love and support of our workers.

How?

Through partnerships with other Synod entities and Recognized Service Organizations.

“Promoting and nurturing the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers” is an LCMS mission priority.

The Synod’s Office of National Mission continues to grant financial support to three key partners in this work: DOXOLOGY, Grace Place Lutheran Wellness Ministries and Shepherd’s Canyon Retreat. These unique RSOs play a major part in supporting LCMS workers.

Another partner is Concordia Plan Services, which offers a number of programs through its Employee Assistance Program.

The Synod also remains committed to its Soldiers and Veterans of the Cross ministries. Soldiers of the Cross and Veterans of the Cross are two LCMS mercy programs that help faithful pastors, teachers and other church workers in financial crisis.

Soldiers of the Cross provides financial support for the spiritual and physical well-being of current church workers. In partnership with the worker’s district, Soldiers of the Cross provides transitional or emergency financial assistance and pastoral care to current

church workers affected by health problems, employment interruptions and other emergencies.

Veterans of the Cross supplements low or inadequate pensions of retired church workers or their widowed spouses to help them afford the cost of necessities such as medication, food and utility bills. Veterans of the Cross is funded by the LCMS Office of National Mission and is administered by Concordia Plan Services.

“We want to invest in the well-being of our church workers and to lighten their load,” said the Rev. Dr. Carlos Hernandez, director of LCMS Church and Community Engagement, who receives requests and facilitates the granting process for Soldiers and Veterans of the Cross. “We want to relieve their worries about how to feed their families, provide them housing or buy their medications.”

Day said the LCMS Office of National Mission staff works to provide more resources to improve the health and wellness of our workers.

But it is key for churches, schools and members to also embrace their responsibility to act in love and mercy toward those they have called to serve.

“Together, we live this mission priority for the Church and the world,” Day said. “Healthy workers will, with the Lord’s blessing, reap a great harvest.”



- To learn more, visit:
- Soldiers of the Cross:**
lcms.org/SOTC
 - Veterans of the Cross:**
lcms.org/VOTC
 - LCMS Recognized Service Organizations:**
lcms.org/rso
 - Concordia Plan Services:**
concordiaplans.org
 - DOXOLOGY:**
doxology.us
 - Grace Place Lutheran Wellness Ministries:**
GracePlaceWellness.org
 - Shepherd’s Canyon Retreat:**
ShepherdsCanyonRetreat.com



10

ways to say

Thank you

to your church worker today

1

Send a thank-you card, note or flowers.

2

Sponsor a church worker appreciation day.

3

Provide free babysitting so couples can have a night out.

4

Recognize church workers on milestone ministry anniversaries.

5

Share baked goods, homemade food, and homegrown fruits and vegetables.

6

Gather a group of volunteers to help with needed home repairs and yard work.

7

Invite church workers to your home for a meal, family gathering or special event.

8

Give gift cards to a bookstore, Concordia Publishing House and/or ministry supply store to help offset the cost of the worker’s theological library and ministry vestments.

9

Give gift cards for shopping, restaurants, groceries, movies, sporting events, services, etc.

10

When a church worker goes above and beyond, say “thank you.”