

PowerPoint Presentation Talking Points — For Congregations

- Slide 2: Purpose and Goals
 - Immediately increase fruitful engagement between youth and influencers on individual journeys toward professional church work vocations.
 - Significantly increase the number of individuals enrolled in church worker formation/ educational tracks at our Concordia University system institutions and LCMS seminaries so that the Synod's congregations and schools are adequately served in the coming decades.
- Slide 3: Stakeholder audiences
 - We delineated our audience into three age groups to help us frame when we need to engage young people, how we need to engage them and who they need to engage with. The critical and supportive influencers are the most important “channels” to carry a very simple message.
 - The basic conversation can be simple: “You can serve God and your neighbor by working full-time for the church. Let me help you think about what that would look like.”
 - We know that our initial steps, current work and even future efforts will not solve every issue affecting us. When facing a complex challenge, we believe it's best to take focused, decisive action that has a long-term impact and continue to build on those solutions.
- Slide 5: Key Research Findings
 - The Synod has researched church work formation and recruitment to understand the primary motivations for young people to pursue church work.
 - It focuses on encouraging children and their families as young as infants, with an emphasis on middle school and early high school, since 60% of young people make a career decision by early high school.
 - Middle school is the time of greatest potential influence due to Confirmation instruction.
 - Only half of church workers across the Synod are having intentional conversations with our youth. Our greatest opportunity is to create a culture of intentional formation in our congregations.
 - Only 50% of pastors are currently talking with our youth about church work. This number should be higher, since most people cited their pastor as a vital factor in their consideration of church work.
- Slide 6: Key Research Findings
 - It's important for you, the pastor, to talk intentionally to your youth about opportunities to become church workers.
 - You are the most influential person to encourage young people to consider church work.
 - Just look at the research - pastors and commissioned church workers comprise of more than 60% (source: Aslanian Research Findings commissioned by the LCMS) of those who can be most influential in guiding youth to church work vocations.
 - Pastors and church workers play a significant role in influencing the youth of the church – but recall that only half are having these important, intentional conversations.

SET APART TO SERVE

LCMS CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT

- We have heard from so many church workers – both ordained and commissioned – that personal encouragement and conversations were important to helping them see a future in a church work vocation. Look for opportunities to share encouragement and personal connections with youth; we know those interactions can go a long way in terms of them thinking about church work as a vocation.
- We understand you already have a lot to manage leading a church and congregation, but the culture pastors set for their church is crucial.
- Christ provides workers for His church. Part of the work of the church in every generation is to raise up church workers to proclaim the Gospel to the next.
- Slide 7: Enrollment statistics
 - Our Concordia University programs and seminaries are seeing the real-world implications of our lack of intentionality to encourage church work.
 - Enrollment has declined across all the Concordia University programs and seminary programs since 2004.
 - Decreased enrollment means the gap in the number of new pastors and church workers and the need of our congregations will continue to grow.
 - Being able to turn these numbers around as soon as we can is crucial for the next generation.
- Slide 8 and 9: All active Ordained
 - 46% of all active ordained pastors are over the age of 55.
 - Studies show that the significant number of pastors reaching retirement age, we result in the number pastors declining from 6,000 to 3,000 over the next 15 years. The same studies show a 50–70% decrease in commissioned workers. These retirements are happening as enrollment in church work programs and our seminaries continues to decline.
- Slide 11: Key talking points
 - As you go back to your church, we ask that you tell your congregation about *Set Apart to Serve* and use the coming resources to help build a culture formation within your church.
 - We ask that you actively seek out youth in your church and encourage them to think about church work.
 - You are not alone: While you are one of the most influential person in your church to guide youth to church work, your congregation can play a large role in helping shape youth to prepare them for a potential church work vocation.
 - *Set Apart to Serve* will develop tools and resources to help you and your congregation engage young people about church work and talk to them about what the path looks like when choosing to pursue church work.
- Slide 12-13: Common questions and answers
 - Your church will most likely have questions about *Set Apart to Serve*. Here are a few examples of what you might hear.