



CHURCH WORKER RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

Report to the Synod President

and other significant collaborators and stakeholders

The Office of LCMS Pastoral Education – Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck

August 2021

Key Summary Points this Month

1. An overarching name and messaging for the Church Worker Recruitment Initiative is in development.
2. Subject Matter Experts for the three-stage development program have confirmed their participation in the initiative.
3. A bulletin insert for October 2021 Church Worker Recognition Month is being developed.

Naming and Messaging

“Church Worker Recruitment Initiative” is an initial preliminary brand for this initiative. This phrase has already become recognized and used throughout Synod. The first strategy of this initiative is to “Establish church worker formation as a long-term, Synodwide initiative.”

The first objective under this strategy is to “Create a brand identity and message platform as a foundation for communication, toolkits, resources, etc.” In an initial step, interviews were conducted with several stakeholders across Synod around the messaging of this initiative. Next steps include:

- Pastoral Education, Communications, and Standing Partnership brainstorming an overarching name for this initiative moving forward. We will arrive at the top 2-3 names by August 17, 2021.
- After 1-2 names are selected, we will field test the name and talking points/messaging of the initiative through a survey developed by Standing Partnership and LCMS Rosters and Statistics, sent out to a comprehensive list of stakeholders representing the influencers of our youth.
- For the foreseeable future, a tagline like “Church Work Recruitment” will be attached to the overarching name of this initiative.
- Upon naming this initiative, a logo and communication templates will be developed that will convey its overall look, tone, and feel.

Subject Matter Experts

A major component of the Church Worker Recruitment Initiative is the writing of resources for influencers and youth for each of the three age groups (Infant Baptism-6th grade, 7th-8th grade, 9th-12th grade). Subject matter experts committed to the project at this time are:

Infant Baptism – 6th Grade

- Dr. Drew Gerdes – Early Childhood Principal, Concordia International School, Shanghai
- Dr. Lynn Gehrke – Chair of Undergraduate Teacher Education, Concordia St. Paul, MN
- Rev. Nathan Sherrill – David’s Harp, St. Paul’s, Council Bluffs, IA

- Dr. Rebecca Schmidt – Director of LCMS School Ministry, St. Louis, MO
- Rev. Jeffrey Hemmer – Assistant to the LCMS President, St. Louis, MO
- Mrs. Myrna Baneck – Lutheran School Teacher, Our Savior, Fenton, MO
- Dcs. Mary Laesch – Author of EDU Resources, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO

7th-8th Grade

- Denise Rice – Director of Educational Resources, LEA, River Forest, IL
- Rev. David Peterson – Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Ft. Wayne, IN
- Jolene Siebarth – DCE, Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Charles, MO
- Dr. John Pless – Professor, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN
- Crysten Sanchez – Conference Executive of Higher Things, Solon, IA
- Lisa Clark – Editor, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO

9th-12th Grade

- Dr. Tami Seddon – Principal, Sierra Lutheran School, Carson City NV
- Dcs. Jane Obersat – Teacher, Faith Lutheran High School, Paige, TX
- Mr. Glenn Rollins – Principal, Lutheran High School, Springfield, IL
- Rev. Mark Kiessling – Director, LCMS Youth Ministry, St. Louis, MO
- Dr. John Brandt – Emeritus Educator, Saginaw, MI
- Dr. Peter Jurchen – Editor of Curriculum Resources, CPH, St. Louis, MO
- Rev. Harrison Goodman – Pastor, Mt. Calvary, San Antonio, TX and Higher Things

The next step with subject matter experts is to schedule a 3-hour zoom meeting, which will include (1) getting acquainted with one another, (2) presenting a history and overview of the initiative, and (3) discussing the scope of their work and specific assignments.

Church Worker Month

While the plan is to expand Church Worker Recognition Month in 2022, we are developing a bulletin insert for October 2021 to recognize our many church workers and call attention to the church worker recruitment initiative. This insert will include a brief description of the various church work vocations and ways to show appreciation to the church workers in our lives.

Research

Each month, I will include a piece of information we gathered from our research done by Aslanian Market Research (*EducationDynamics*), LCMS Rosters and Statistics, or other findings.

The survey question below is to understand who was the early or perhaps the most remembered influence in the decision to become a church worker. Responses point decisively to the role that pastors can play, but also includes teachers and parents.

This insight helped us understand the important roles pastors play in formation of the next generation of church workers. In the months to come you will see resources and tools developed to help pastors identify high potential young people in their congregation and assist in having conversations about a future in church work.

Thinking about your own decision to become a church worker, how did the idea begin to form?	
My pastor or another church worker was inspiring and I wanted to emulate him.	35.9%
My pastor personally encouraged me to consider church work.	34.3%
Another church worker personally encouraged me to consider church work.	29.7%
During family discussions about my vocation including the possibility of becoming a church worker.	25.4%
Discussions with one or more of my school teachers.	22.6%
One or both of my parents were church workers.	21.2%
The youth group leader provided opportunities to serve.	15.0%
I never really heard anyone talking about church work as a career. It was more happenstance.	12.7%
My peers	12.4%
Attending the Youth Gathering	10.9%
Something else. Please describe.	31.8%