“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19–20).

Making Disciples for Life (MDFL) is the name of the LCMS’ new triennial theme that will assist God’s people as they bear witness to Christ.

God endowed the church with gifts beyond our imagination, so that she might be a bright and shining light amid the darkness and despair of this fallen world. More than ever, it is time to engage our mission, to embrace the moment and the opportunity. Therefore, MDFL is not a program; it’s the name given to a series of new initiatives intended to help us support one another in Christ’s mission.

Working with districts, congregations, pastors and the lay leaders of the Synod, MDFL will provide resources, training and the opportunity for God’s people to connect and share resources domestically and around the world. In addition, MDFL will put field-tested, theologically solid resources at the fingertips of God’s people 24 hours a day.

The LCMS Office of National Mission (ONM) has conducted focus groups, interviewed key leaders and surveyed congregations of the Synod to ascertain the key areas in which they need resources and support. The results were surprisingly consistent. While the Holy Spirit alone provides growth to His church, we need to use the gifts He’s given to create a culture of mutual support and cooperation in the LCMS.
Our congregations asked for:
- Resources to plant new congregations;
- Help reaching out to the lost;
- Help in multicultural outreach;
- Aids to help retain the faithful;
- Support for their workers when the burdens get heavy; and
- Encouragement for current congregations as they engage the world through Word and Sacrament.

MDFL aims to provide for these needs through:

**Internet Resource Center (IRC)**

The LCMS is creating resources and making tried-and-true tools available in an Internet Resource Center (IRC). More than a webpage, the IRC gets smarter and more effective the more it gets used. What’s more, it gives resource seekers the chance to speak with experts one on one.

**Regional Conferences**

Conversations and interaction play a major role in the future of MDFL. This is the church working together. A series of regional conferences will provide opportunities for clergy and laypeople to dialogue with each other and with the Synod’s subject area experts (e.g., youth, revitalization, witnessing, church planting, etc.) to share resources and to contribute to the creation of new helps that grow out of the expressed needs of those in the trenches. The first MDFL conference was held January 2020 and was a great success. The possibility of holding a fall/winter MDFL hybrid conference is being explored. Watch for more information.

**Grants**

Church-planting grants, multi-ethnic church grants and training will help congregations reach beyond their doors to new neighbors. Internal studies have shown that many of the people who have “left” the LCMS still believe they are Lutheran theologically — they simply can’t find an LCMS congregation where they live. New resources should make it easier to identify and reach out to those who are looking to reconnect with our churches. Congregations are already volunteering as testing partners to field-test new programs and aids. None of the resources will be created in a bureaucratic vacuum.
Timely Information
The Making Disciples for Life (MDFL) Internet Resource Center, is a key MDFL component put in place to make resources readily available to congregations, workers and laity. Located at makingdisciples.lcms.org, the Internet Resource Center is intentionally dynamic, as it is continually being changed and updated in response to the needs and input of the church.

Easy to Use
The Internet Resource Center’s search function is designed to return results under a variety of key terms, including Witness and Outreach, Worship, Stewardship, Lutheran Education and more. The user may enter a term in the search field at the top of the page or browse all the resources under a specific category farther down the page. The search function also invites the user to indicate whether he or she is looking for resources for individual or congregational/school use and whether he or she is a church worker or lay leader.

Get Started!
To access available Bible studies and other COVID-19-related resources, as well as a variety of other church and ministry resources across a wide range of topics, visit makingdisciples.lcms.org.