



Church Worker Recruitment Initiative





Church Worker Recruitment Initiative

Prayer for Church Workers

Oh God
who has chosen us
to make disciples of all nations and
who by Baptism
has called us to build up your church,
we earnestly implore you to choose
from among us, your children,
many pastors and church workers
who will love you with their whole heart
and will gladly spend their entire lives
making you known and loved by all.
In Christ's name we pray.
Amen

Foundations for Service

Nurturing the Future Church Worker

Focus statement: *God prepares future pastors and deacons for action in professional church work through a process that begins in the home, continues in the local congregation and culminates in centres of higher education at the church's university or seminaries.*

On Sunday, January 21, Lutheran Church–Canada will continue its three-year Synod-wide recruitment effort to identify and encourage our future church workers. As the focus statement says, we want to stress that the call into church work is normally a process. It begins in the home, continues in the congregation where the future church worker is nurtured in the faith and culminates in the church's institutions of higher education. The three-year recruitment plan follows from this statement:

January, 2000 The Christian Home Grows Young Servants

January, 2001 The Christian Congregation Nurtures Growing Servants

January, 2002 The Church's Schools Prepare Strong Servants

This year's emphasis is on the role of the congregation in nurturing growing servants. The third Sunday after Epiphany is an excellent time to consider this theme. The Epistle lesson (1 Cor. 12:12-21, 26-27) emphasizes the unity of the body of Christ, each part having a vital purpose for the strengthening of the whole body. The Gospel lesson (Luke 4:14-21) shows Jesus preaching in His hometown synagogue.

We are pleased to send to you materials for *RSVP 2001*. Over the last three years, more than 230 young men and women have been identified as possible future church workers from 63 congregations. We are grateful for all who submitted names and also for those congregations who participated in the initiative even though no names were nominated.

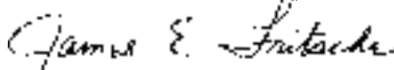
The materials this year include bulletin announcements and inserts, Bible studies, sermon resource materials and follow-up instructions and forms. Once again, we ask that interviews be made during February and names sent to President Mayan at the end of the month. **Please send in all names, even if they were nominated in previous years.** Receiving a nomination two or three years in a row can be a tremendous encouragement for a prospective church worker.

We once again we advise that when children or youth are nominated, their parents should be advised of the nomination and be present during the interview. The initiative should be fully explained so that parents are fully informed.

RSVP materials from previous years are available from the LCC national office or on line at www.lutheranchurch-canada.ca/RSVP/

Thank you in advance for participating in this important project. The harvest is great, but the labourers are few. Let us pray and work together to identify, recruit and nurture those labourers whom the Lord has chosen to work in His kingdom.

Yours in service to Christ,



Rev. James Fritsche, project coordinator

Prepare for Action

RSVP 2001

Schedule

	PAGE
Sunday, January 14	
• read letter from President Mayan to your congregation	6
• distribute bulletin insert: Listening to God’s call through His people	7
• include RSVP bulletin announcement	8
• make a verbal announcement regarding the initiative	
Sunday, January 21	
• include bulletin announcement	8
• use the worship resources	9
• include Prayer for Nominees	9
• conduct prepared adult Bible study	10
• conduct prepared youth Bible study	13
• distribute bulletin insert: Church work Vocations	20
• distribute bulletin insert: Nomination Form	21
• collect nomination forms with offering	
• use Litany for church workers	22
• preach sermon	23
February	
• interview nominees	27
• complete interview form	29
March	
• send completed interview forms to Synod office in Winnipeg	

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

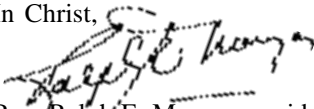
Grace and peace to you in this season of Epiphany

Congregations around our Synod are setting aside next Sunday, the third Sunday in Epiphany, to remember and give thanks to God for the special gifts that Christ has given to his church: the gifts of apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They will be praying that God would continue to bless His church with a rich supply of church workers who love the Lord and His Word and have a heart to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am so pleased that your congregation will also participating. “The fields are white, but the labourers are few ...”

In addition to a time for prayer and thanksgiving, this special Sunday, “Synod’s Recruitment Initiative Sunday,” provides an opportunity for the members of the congregation to again prayerfully consider whether there are any in their midst whom they believe God may be calling to serve as a pastor or church worker in His church. We will be asking you to identify these individuals to your pastor through the forms provided. The pastor, after discussing the opportunities of ministry with them, will forward these names to me so that together as pastor, congregation and Synod we can nurture and God willing, ultimately prepare these individuals for service.

May God bless this special Sunday of prayer and thanksgiving. May He give you the eyes to look around and see His gifts and may He continue to use all of us, whatever our calling, in such a way that the Good News of His grace and love in Jesus Christ is shared with the world.

In Christ,



Rev. Ralph E. Mayan, president
Lutheran Church-Canada

Listening to God's call through His people.

Hannah dedicated her child **Samuel** to the Lord and he became a great prophet of God. (I Sam. 1:22b)

Philip's four **daughters** were among those who spread the Good News of Jesus. (Acts 21:9)

An **uncle** recently encouraged his **nephew** to become a pastor and he is now studying for the ministry.

A **grandmother** spoke to her **grandchildren** and prayed faithfully for them to serve the Lord and one became a teacher and later, a missionary in His service.

What **son, daughter, grandchild, niece, nephew** or **member** of your congregation can **you** encourage to prayerfully consider studying to become a full-time servant of the Lord as pastor, deacon, or missionary?

There may be young people in your family or in your congregation who:

- display a love of the Lord
- show love toward people
- desire to serve their church
- help in Sunday school or VBS
- are active in the youth/young adult group
- are intelligent and fun-loving

Speak to them, encourage them to consider that God's will for their lives may be full-time service in His kingdom.



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Bulletin announcements

January 14

Cheer for the home team!

Isn't it great to receive encouragement, to know that someone is interested in what you are doing? Joining you in worship today are young men and women whom God may be calling to full-time service in Lutheran Church–Canada. You probably see them most Sundays, but have you thought that your word of encouragement may start them thinking about how they can serve God? Your next pastor, church worker or lay leader may be a member of your congregation. He or she may need to hear a word of encouragement from you!

The need for workers throughout LCC is great. Currently, there are 40 parishes without pastors. Many parishes are looking for additional church workers to help in youth, young adult and seniors ministries and to assist in visitation. God calls workers from among His own people, including the members of YOUR PARISH NAME HERE. Ask God who you can encourage to consider serving Him in full-time church work and be prepared to share that name next Sunday.

January 21

Listen to the Spirit.

Today we are asking members of YOUR PARISH NAME HERE to bring forward the names of young men and women whom you feel God may be calling to full-time church work. The nomination form in today's bulletin outlines the qualities you look for in a potential church worker. Following the sermon you will be given the opportunity to fill in the form and then place it in the offering plate.

Since our Synod's recruitment initiative began in 1998, more than 230 future church workers have been identified in 63 congregations including NAMES SUBMITTED FROM YOUR PARISH from this congregation. Each person was interviewed and he or she receives encouragement from the pastor and LCC's university and seminaries.

God calls workers from among His people. As a young man, our pastor was nurtured and encouraged in his home congregation. Today is your opportunity to ensure that when parishes need pastors or church workers, there is someone ready to accept the call. Ask God who you can encourage to consider serving Him in full-time church work. Fill in the nomination form, place it in the offering plate, and remember those people in your prayers as they consider God's plan for their lives.

Worship Resources

January 21, 2001

Theme: The Christian congregation nurtures growing servants

Suggested Lessons:

Lessons for the 3rd Sunday after Epiphany — Series C

Old Testament: Isaiah 61:1-6

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26-27

Gospel: Luke 4:14-21

Suggested Hymns:

O Christ Our Light, O Radiance True	314 (LW)
Praise The One Who Breaks The Darkness	881 (HS)
Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling	318 (LW)
Send Now, O Lord, to Every Place	316 (LW)
“Come, Follow Me” Said Christ, the Lord	379 (LW)

Prayer for Nominees

January 21, 2001

Dear Lord, we thank You, for You continue to call faithful labourers into Your harvest. Bless all whose names we receive today that they may be led to consider the call to serve You as future pastors and deacons. Grant them the wisdom to understand Your will for their lives. Strengthen our congregation in its responsibility to support and encourage those who desire to serve as workers in your Church. And, if it be Your will, lead them to respond to the call to full-time service in Your church, to the glory of Your Holy Name, and for the expansion of Your Kingdom; for You alone are the Lord, and with the Father and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever. Amen

Adult Bible Study

Sunday, January 21, 2001

The Christian congregation nurtures growing servants

Read I Corinthians 12:1-13

The Epistle for today, I Cor. 12: 1-13, should be read in the larger context of chapters 12-14 which have been central to the charismatic movement. From a biblical perspective, why is every Christian a “charismatic?” What is the difference between gifts of the Spirit, and fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22-23?

The discovery and exercise of spiritual gifts runs the risk of detachment from the Father’s grace toward sinners and the Son’s work of redemption. Please note:

- the introductory reminder of the Corinthians’ conversion to Jesus Christ. vv.1-3
 - In the original Greek, the word gifts (*charismata*) comes from the root word grace (*charis*). We are what we are and have what we have by the grace of God.
- 1 How does the above help to avoid feelings of inferiority and superiority discussed in vv. 14-26?
 - 2 In the church there is both unity and diversity. What is the difference between unity and conformity?

The diversity of gifts sent by the Father (Romans 12), the Son (Eph. 4), and the Spirit (I Cor. 12) may not be exhaustively listed in the Scriptures and may also be possessed by the individual in varying combinations. Therefore, it is not essential to know with certainty which specific gift one possesses. But the following process is helpful in discovering and practicing one’s giftedness.

- EXPLORE the various possibilities of gifts
- EXPERIMENT with as many gifts as possible.
- EXAMINE one’s feelings of satisfaction in using a particular gift.
- EVALUATE one’s effectiveness as gifts are used and experimented with.
- EXPECT confirmation from fellow Christians in regard to gift use.

- 3 Might this same process be used in discovering whether one is gifted for the office of the public ministry?
- 4 According to the pastoral letters what is the one single attribute that distinguishes a pastor from the laity? I Tim. 3:2, II Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:9
- 5 What is to be the content of the teaching implied in these verses? Rom. 1:16, I Cor. 1:17, I Cor. 2:2, II Cor. 4:5, II Cor. 5:20, I Tim. 4:13, I Tim. 5:17.
- 6 Discuss: Since the essence of the office of the public ministry is the communication of the Gospel, deep appreciation for one's own salvation is a major asset for communicating that Gospel effectively.
- 7 Is sincerity important to the unbelieving world?
- 8 Why is Gospel ministry both humbling and exalting?
- 9 What opportunities for Gospel communication within the congregation can be given to potential candidates for professional ministry? Is there a place for a properly prepared and pastorally supervised witness of the laity within the worship service? cf. Psalm 66:15, I Cor. 14:26-32
- 10 Does Paul anywhere in vv. 1-12 have the pastoral office in mind?
- 11 Do any of these gifts apply uniquely to the pastoral office?
- 12 What gift do many modern-day pastors seem to lack? One person suggested administration. Why is pastoral administration and leadership important in the light of Eph. 4:11-12, II Tim. 2:2?
- 13 What opportunities can a congregation give to a potential candidate for professional ministry to discover and grow in the gift of administration and leadership?
- 14 Pastors play a key role in recruiting candidates. (Remember Paul and Timothy.) How can a pastor encourage a candidate to prepare for professional ministry?
- 15 Can pastors do this effectively if they are discouraged, burnt-out, and lacking in job satisfaction? How can congregations help their pastors be confident, joyful, and enthusiastic in their ministry?

16 What is appealing about the office of the ministry? Assign values 1-5.

1. job security
2. leadership opportunity
3. preaching
4. teaching
5. saving souls
6. being held in esteem
7. helping the needy

What would you add to the list?

17 Rank the concerns of a prospective student in order of intensity.

1. Do I have the necessary gifts and ability?
2. Is this what God wants me to do?
3. Can I afford the education costs?
4. Will my spouse adapt to my new vocation?
5. Do I have enough faith and love to make the sacrifices?

What reassuring answers might you give to each of these questions?

18 True or false. Congregations with a service mentality are more likely to produce professional ministers (servants) for the church.

Read Matthew 9:37-38 and conclude with prayer.



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Youth Bible Study

Sunday, January 21, 2001

Leader's Guide

Introduction:

This Bible study is written as part of our church's **RSVP 2001** church worker recruitment initiative—a recruitment effort to encourage more people to enter full-time church work professions. This encouragement is largely the responsibility of our congregations. We can all identify and encourage those around us whom God has gifted for professional ministry.

We are in the middle of the RSVP program's three-year plan. Last year, the focus was on the role of the family in nurturing church workers. This year's focus is on the role of the congregation in this process. Next year, the focus will be on our church's institutions of higher education (our seminaries and university college).

This Bible study is written for the young people of our congregations, specifically those between the ages of 13 and 18. As the youth leader, you have a unique position. You spend time building relationships with the young people in your group. You see their God-given gifts. Please keep your eyes open for opportunities to encourage your young people. Remember the different church professions: pastor, teacher, and director of parish services (DPS). Talk about them and pray for your young people if you see that God might be gifting some of them to enter the full-time professional ministry of our church.

Study Objectives:

By exploring God's Word in a collaborative setting, each youth will...

- know that God has brought each of us into His body (the church) through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- understand that all of us in the church are important and need each other.
- realize that some of us are called to be leaders in the church.
- identify ways we can support each other as we work to build up the body.

Materials needed:

Bibles
Blindfolds
Masking Tape
Large Paper
Markers
Post-It Notes

The Week Before the Study:

Telephone or e-mail each young person in your group and let them know that you hope to see them at the Bible study. Arrange any rides that might be needed.

Before They Arrive for the Bible study:

On each *Post-It Note*, write the name of a body part (i.e. arm, elbow, biceps, chin, eye, little toe, finger nail, knee, heart, liver, eyebrow, ear, shoulder, wrist, nose, hair, etc. Make sure there is one for each person in your group.

On the large piece of paper, draw the outline of a person's body and hang it on the wall with masking tape. You may choose, if your time with the young people is longer, to actually trace someone's body in the class time with those who arrive early or just before you read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.

Think about the obstacles the groups will have to navigate around in the Body Challenge. These obstacles may be a route around the church, a maze of masking tape, or around furniture (or any combination of the above). You should also have a task during the obstacle which the hands have to perform. Examples: shake someone's hand, open a door, or (for the more ambitious) tying a shoe.

If possible, talk to the pastor or church secretary to get a list of the youth and their baptismal birthdays.

Pray that the ears and hearts of your young people will be open to hear God's Word, and that He will use you to accomplish His will in the lives of all who attend.

As They Arrive:

Welcome each person by name as they come in, and find out something exciting or interesting that happened to them during the week. Did they see any movies? Have any tests in school? Work at a job? Show interest in their lives. Also, put a body part *Post-It Note* on the **back** of each person.

Part 1: The Body is Brought Together

Opening activity:

Once all the youth arrive, their task is to figure out what their assigned body parts are by asking yes/no questions of each other. They should keep track of how many questions they have to ask before they figure out their identity.

Introduce the topic:

Today we're going to be talking about body parts. God's Word describes the church as the body of Jesus. We're going to look closely at what God's Word has to say about this. First...

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

How many bodies are there? One body.

How did we become part of the body? Through our baptism.

Be sensitive if there are young people there who haven't been baptized. God brings people into His body through faith, which is a gift at baptism, but faith is also worked in our lives through the hearing and believing of God's Word - Romans 10:17. This is your opportunity to really hit home the fact that God loved each of us enough to chose us to be part of His body, not because of what we do, but because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Activity:

Have all the youth, with a favourite coloured marker, write the year (and date, if you have the list) they were baptized or came to believe in Jesus on the large body outline. They can do it on the body part they were given when they walked in, or they may choose another, as long as they can tell the group why.

Read Ephesians 4:15

Who is the head of the body? Christ.

Activity:

Have a volunteer put the name of Jesus around the head of the body outline.

Part 2: The Body Works Together

Activity:

Form groups of 4 or 5. If you don't have even groups, you can either vary the tasks, or repeat the activity with different groups, making sure all youth participate at least once:

1. The brain: he/she is blindfolded, and can't use hands, but can talk to and hear any of the other three team members.

2. The eyes: This person can talk to the brain, but can only tell what he/she sees. This person cannot use hands.

3. The hands (two people): These people are blindfolded and can only use their hands when the brain tells them what to do. One person should be the left hand, and the other the right. If you prefer groups of 4, have one person be both hands.

4. The feet: This person is blindfolded. The group can only walk where this person leads them. The feet will lead the group only in the direction the brain says.

Objective: To navigate the obstacle set out by the leader. There should also be some task for the hands to accomplish.

Follow up questions:

What made this activity a challenge?

Why was each member of the team important?

Who was most important? (No one was, but let them debate it and come to this conclusion.)

If all members of the team were brains, hands, feet, or eyes, could you have accomplished the task?

Could you have accomplished the task if you were missing one of the team members?

(Make sure that the youth realize that although the team members were different, they all needed each other to accomplish the task. No one is more important than another.)

Let's see what God's Word says about this. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 (either use provided script or have group read straight from scripture)

Questions:

Who made the parts of the body how they are? (God did. It's His plan).

When one part of the body is stronger, the whole body is better for it.

Give an example of how we as a church are stronger because one member has special gifts.

What are the rest of us suppose to do when one part of the body (the church) receives special honour? (rejoice!)

What would Satan want us to do? (become jealous and tear the other down to make us look better.)

Why did God give us our gifts? What are we suppose to do with them?

Ephesians 4:12 We serve together to build up the body, which is a transition into Part 3.

Part 3: The Body Builders

Activity:

Take a marker and write your name somewhere which represents how God might be able to use you. For example: write your name by the mouth if you like calling people on the telephone to remind them about youth class, or your hands if you can draw well and make posters, or with your feet if you can play basketball well and can be a positive role model on your team.

Questions:

How do our bodies stay healthy? (good food, exercise, sleep)

How does the Body of Christ stay healthy?

John 6: 26-27 and 35 (Feast on God's Word and sacraments)

Hebrews 12:1 (Exercise = running the race, using our faith and our gifts to help build up the whole body.)

Psalm 46:10 (Resting in God and His promises.)

How can we make sure we are staying personally healthy in our faith lives?

What are some personal habits we can develop to keep ourselves grounded in God? (Personal devotion time/prayer time/regular worship/sacraments etc.)

How can we make sure we are helping each other stay healthy in our faith lives? (Provide mutual encouragement and accountability.)

If someone doesn't show up for youth, what can we do? If someone has bad habits, how can we help in a loving way?

How can my gift help build up the church? (Answers depend on gifts, but help them see how they can fit into the ministry of the congregation.)

How might you know if God is calling you to full time church work? (God sometimes calls people to become full time workers in His church. Our church has pastors, teachers and directors of parish services who work full-time in the church to help others know more about Jesus.)

How do I know if that's for me? (God gives gifts which fit the job, a desire in our hearts to do the job, and He uses other people to encourage us.)

Closing prayer:

Thank God for making us all part of the body and ask God to make clear to us how He might use us to build up the church.

Youth Bible Study
Sunday, January 21, 2001

BODY BUILDING

PART 1: THE BODY IS BROUGHT TOGETHER

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13

How many bodies are there?
How did we become part of the body?

READ EPHESIANS 4:15

Who is the head of the body?

PART 2: THE BODY WORKS TOGETHER

THE BODY CHALLENGE

What made this activity a challenge?
Why was each member of the team important?
Who was most important?
If all members of the team were brains, hands, feet, or eyes, could you have accomplished the task?
Could you have accomplished the task if you were missing one of the team members?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26 AND EPHESIANS 4:12

Who made the parts of the body (Christians) how they are?
When one part of the body is stronger, the whole body is better for it.
Give an example of how the church is stronger because one member has special gifts.
What are the rest of us suppose to do when one part of the body (the church) receives special honour?
What would Satan want us to do?
Why did God give us our gifts?
What are we suppose to do with them?

PART 3: BODY BUILDERS

How do our bodies stay healthy?

How does the Body of Christ stay healthy?

John 6: 26-27 and 35, Hebrews 12:1 and Psalm 46:10

How can we make sure we are staying personally healthy in our faith lives?

How can we make sure we are helping each other stay healthy in our faith lives?

How can my gifts help build up the church?

How might you know if God is calling you to full-time church work?



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LUTHERAN CHURCH–CANADA

Church Work Vocations

Pastor

A candidate for the pastoral ministry begins his journey as an active member of a Lutheran Church–Canada congregation or a partner church, showing evidence of his commitment to Christian ministry, being of good character, enjoying satisfactory health, and demonstrating pastoral suitability.

Upon completion of a three- or four-year undergraduate degree in any discipline, students apply to a seminary for their pastoral education. The four-year seminary program for Lutheran Church–Canada is offered at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, and Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines.

Students wishing to enrol in a seminary find it helpful to take a broad liberal arts program at the university/college level. Courses to include are English, speech, humanities, philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences, and psychology. Introductory courses in Greek and Hebrew prior to seminary are also needed.

Prepared pastors—servants called and sent by the Holy Spirit—witness to salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus and serve in God’s world.

Deacons

Director of Parish Services

Serving in a team ministry with the pastor, staff, and members of a congregation, a director of parish services offers skills in evangelism and outreach, parish education, hospital and elderly visitation, and youth/young adult ministry.

To become a director of parish services, a student enrolls in the Director of Parish Services program at Concordia University College of Alberta, Edmonton. He or she completes a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Religious Studies and a minor in Parish Services, together with certified practical experiences and a year of internship.

Teacher

Elementary and secondary school teachers are prepared for service in Lutheran Church–Canada through the Bachelor of Education (After Degree) program at Concordia University College or the Lutheran Teacher Colloquy program. Teachers are equipped to work in Lutheran schools where the primary goal is educating and nurturing children within the context of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Parish Nurse

Registered nurses can take a Parish Nursing course through Concordia University College to teach them how to minister to the health and spiritual needs of members of a congregation. The parish nurse works with the pastor as part of a team ministry.

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Prepare for Action – RSVP 2001

Qualities to look for

To give some idea of the kind of person who might respond well to Christ's call as a professional church worker, please keep these qualities in mind:

1. Intelligence and health

The Church looks for people of average to excellent intelligence and good health. One who can appreciate and communicate the Gospel of Christ. One who possesses the energy and ability to continue the mission of Jesus.

2. Integrity

The Church looks for people of strong character and virtue. One who demonstrates honesty in relationships and in work. One who possesses sound moral values.

3. Service

The Church looks for people who are interested in, or are already involved in service to others. One who shows an interest in people and cares about the welfare of others, especially those in need. One who can relate well to others.

4. Love of Christ and the Church

The Church looks for people who are willing to express their love through prayer and service. One who demonstrates an interest in the Church and relies on God in his/her own personal life.

After prayerful consideration, I believe that this person has the qualities needed by a future church worker. Perhaps Jesus is calling him/her to this particular path of discipleship.

NAME: _____

Please supply additional information if it is known.

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ **AGE:** _____

YOUR NAME: _____

Please place the completed form in the offering plate.



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Litany for Church Workers

O God, the Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all:

Have mercy upon us.

O God, the Son, Who is the Saviour of Mankind, and Head of the Church:

Have mercy upon us.

O God, the Holy Spirit, Who has brought us to faith through Baptism and the Word:

Have mercy upon us.

We humbly confess, O Lord, that we have not always appreciated the gifts of pastors and deacons which You have given to Your church:

Forgive us Lord.

We humbly confess, O Lord, that we have often relied on others to identify and encourage prospective workers for Your vineyard:

Forgive us Lord.

We humbly confess, O Lord, that we have not always sought to nurture and encourage those whom You may be calling to consider professional church work:

Forgive us Lord.

Quicken our hearts, O Lord, to remember Your great love for us and all mankind which moved You to provide salvation and peace in Your Son, Jesus Christ:

Move us by your Spirit, Lord.

Open our eyes, O Lord, to the great need for workers to lead Your church in bringing this Good News to all people:

Move us by your Spirit, Lord.

Broaden our vision, O Lord, to ways in which we can strengthen and support those who are considering serving in your church:

Move us by your Spirit, Lord.

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves. Make us Your servants for Jesus' sake. Use us in Your service to the praise of Your holy name.

Amen.



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Sermon for January 21, 2001

Title: "All for One and One for All!"

Text: I Cor. 12:12-21,26-27

Alexandre Dumas wrote a tale that has been retold and parodied in print and movies over the years called *The Three Musketeers*. These three heroes were bold and brash, brave and bawdy. They came to the aid of those in society who were easily preyed upon by the rich and powerful. Their motto, which became a rallying cry as they went up against their enemies, was: "All for one and one for all." Each of these men, while individuals, was united in their cause for justice. If one Musketeer was in trouble, the other two would race to his rescue. If two were being held captive, the other one would try to free them. "All for one and one for all!"

This is also a good motto for Christians to adopt. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are united into His body called the church through baptism. The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians in our text: **"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."** Members of Christ's body, the church, can never stand alone. We all have different gifts and abilities that we use to build up the rest of the body and to proclaim the Gospel to those who have not yet heard it. This is a fitting word-picture to assist us today as we renew our efforts to recruit future pastors and church workers. As we encourage and nurture these future leaders from our own congregation, we are truly, "All for one and one for all."

The Apostle Paul needed to remind the Corinthians that their life in Christ's church was a team effort. Many of these believers at Corinth were jealous of those who had been blessed by God with the more impressive spiritual gifts—healing, performing miracles, prophesying, speaking in tongues, and interpreting tongues. They suffered from bruised egos, for they reasoned that these more spectacular gifts should bring them more individual status and recognition in the church than they would receive by exercising the more "ordinary" gifts. And of course, people with "ordinary" abilities in the Corinthian congregation developed what could be termed a "false sense of modesty," feeling that there was no sense in contributing such puny gifts to Christ's church. As a result, they allowed their God-given gifts and abilities to lie dormant. "All for one and one for all" meant nothing to these Corinthians because they were only concerned about themselves and not the rest of the body of Christ.

As members of Christ's body, the church, we fail to realize our need for other Christians, as well as failing to recognize the contributions we can make to the church. Sometimes our reasoning goes like this: *"I don't need help from my brothers and sisters in Christ because then I would have to admit to them my problems and shortcomings. It's none of their business what I'm going through. They will probably just gossip to others about me. I don't see any contradiction in being a 'Lone Ranger' Christian. I can manage without their help, thank you very much. Or why should I be on the lookout to help other Christians? Surely somebody else can give them a hand and do even a better job than I could!"*

And then there are those of us who suffer from a false sense of modesty. Others may see God's gifts and abilities with which He has blessed us but we can't see them, nor do we want to try to use what He has given us. We think, *"I could never serve on Church Council or that church board or committee because I don't have what it takes. Who are they kidding by telling me that I've got the 'knack' for visiting people in their homes? They must be crazy thinking that I'd be a good pastor. I could never take the hours or the salary as a full-time church worker! I respectfully submit that my fellow Christians are wrong when they think that I would be a good leader in the church. 'All for one and one for all'—no thanks! I'll just stick to my little corner of the church and mind my own business!"*

The Apostle Paul would not agree with such thinking: "For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body."

Just try sometime walking in a straight line with your eyes closed, or writing your name with a pen in your toes. All the parts of your body need to function properly. Stop and think for a moment what really happens when someone steps on your toe, or you accidentally whack your thumb with a hammer. Your whole body is affected: your eyes twitch or water; your nose contorts as the pain causes you to breathe heavily; your mouth opens and lets out a cry from your throat. And then for hours or days later, the nagging discomfort of your sore thumb or toe leaves you feeling miserable.

We are individuals, to be sure, but we are individuals who contribute our individual God-given skills for the strengthening of the body of Christ. We are, in a very real sense, "All for one and one for all." Jesus made us individual members of His Body—the church. He claimed us as His own, making us one in His body even from the moment of our baptism. The Apostle Paul

writes in our text: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” No matter what our ethnic background or social status, no matter what gifts or abilities God has given us, the Holy Spirit has brought us into the one body of Christ through our baptism. Through that blessed Sacrament of water and Word, our sins are washed away and new life is ours, all because of what our Saviour did for us through His perfect life, innocent suffering, atoning death, and triumphant resurrection. We are never just baptized, but we are all baptized *into* the body of Christ. That washing with water and God’s Word brings us into an intimate relationship as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Apostle Paul agrees when he writes: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

Since we are *in* Christ, we are also incorporated or brought into a special relationship with His church. We are definitely now, “All for one and one for all.” We rely on one another and each other’s gifts in the church, just as the human body relies on each of its members.

“If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.”

As Christians we rely on each other in the body of Christ—the church—in order that it be healthy and function properly. When one member of the body experiences pain through sickness, or sadness through death, we all feel it in the body of Christ. But Christ’s love, which He first showed to us, is something that we can now use to comfort one another in our distress. And when one member of the body of Christ is honoured or singled out for praise, we rejoice with them for we know that they have used their gifts and abilities for the strengthening of the entire body.

As a member of the body of Christ, God may not have blessed you with the skills to be a preacher. But He may have given you the ability to encourage others to be pastors. You may not have been blessed by God to be a teacher, or director of parish services, giving your service full-time to the Lord. But He may have blessed you with the ability speak to those in whom you see

these abilities in your congregation. God may not have blessed you with the desire to go to a foreign land and be His missionary. But He may have given you the financial resources to assist those who have been called. God may not have blessed you with qualities to serve Him and His church full-time, but you can pray that “the Lord of the harvest would send out labourers into his harvest.” You may not *think* you are qualified for full time service in the church. But you may want to reconsider the comments and encouragement of others who have seen qualities in you that they believe would make you a true servant for Christ.

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

Today we truly thank God for the gifts He has given to the individual members of the body of Christ. As we use the gifts He has so generously given to us, we do so to His glory and for the building up of His church. As we rely on each other’s God-given gifts, we can do no more precious work than telling others of Jesus’ love. Amen!

Prepare for Action – RSVP 2001

Pastor's Interview and Evaluation Form

One of the key elements in identifying and encouraging future church workers is the follow-up by the pastor. There are two important aspects of the pastor's follow-up:

- 1) an interview with each person suggested on the nomination forms, and
- 2) the submission of those names to President Mayan for referral to the appropriate institution for future follow-up.

Pastor's Interview

After you have received the nomination forms, take a moment to thank God for each name submitted and ask for His guidance during your interview. The following are suggestions to help you in the interview:

1. Phone to set up the appointment. The person may already be aware that the congregation has been asked to submit names of future church workers. Inform the person that he/she has been identified by fellow church members as a possible future church worker and that you would like to meet to discuss this with him/her. **(In the case of children or youth who are nominated, parents should be advised of the nomination and be present during the interview. The initiative should be explained so that parents are fully informed.)**

2. A good place to begin is with the four qualities (see nomination form) which others have seen in this individual which have led them to suggest his/her name as a future church worker. You might want to ask: "Do you see yourself in this way?" "Have you ever considered a church work career?" "Are there areas here at church where you would like to become involved?" (e.g. teaching Sunday school, helping with VBS, acolyte, hospital visitation, lector, altar guild, etc.)

3. Share with the person some of your own joys in the ministry. What pastoral tasks do you enjoy? What has been truly rewarding? How have you seen others grow in faith? When was a time when you felt you really made a difference in someone's life? Help them to see different opportunities for ministry as a pastor, a teacher, a director of parish services, a missionary, etc.

4. Ask for permission to share their name with Concordia University College or one of our seminaries: "I'd like to let our seminaries know that you have been identified as a possible future church worker. Is that okay with you?" (Explain that they would receive information from the seminaries or college.)

5. Before you leave, take a moment to pray with the individual, giving thanks to God for the opportunity to discuss the work of the church with this person.

Submission of Names

Following your interview, please fill out one *Evaluation Form* for each person you interview. (Please photocopy additional forms as needed.) The evaluation forms then should be sent to President Ralph Mayan by March 1 (if possible). It would also be appropriate to phone those who submitted names, thanking them for their participation and letting them know that you interviewed the person they suggested.

We thank you for your participation in this effort. The task of recruiting future church workers is not the task of the pastor alone, but of all God's people. It is our prayer that we can help all our people accept greater responsibility in identifying, encouraging and supporting our future professional church workers.

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Interview Evaluation Form

Date of Interview: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address _____

Phone: _____ Age: _____

Home church: _____

Pastor: _____

1. This person's level of interest: (circle one) Low Medium High

2. For which church work profession is this person most suitable?

3. What impresses you about him/her?

4. How do you see this person in his/her relationship...

a. to the Lord?

b. to the church?

5. Please include any other matters you would like to share.

Return this form to:

Lutheran Church–Canada, 3074 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3K 0Y2

This recruitment initiative is based on a program *Called By Name* developed by the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

Project Coordinator: Rev. James Fritsche, third vice-president, Lutheran Church–Canada on behalf of the Council of Presidents and the Board for Higher Education

Sermon: Rev. Thomas Prachar, president, Lutheran Church–Canada, Central District

Adult Bible study: Rev. G. (Mickey) Rentz, emeritus, Westbank, B.C.

Youth Bible study: Todd Hennig, principal, Beautiful Savior Lutheran School, Winnipeg, Man.

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All elements of this booklet and previous years' material are available in Adobe Acrobat format on the Internet at:

www.lutheranchurch-canada.ca/RSVP/

For further information call 1-800-588-4226.



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