



RSVP 2003

Church Worker Recruitment Initiative





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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, deacons 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

With Great Boldness *RSVP 2003*

FOCUS STATEMENT: With great boldness we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and with great boldness we identify, recruit and train professional church workers who will lead the Church in fulfilling our Lord's great mission.

On Sunday, January 19, Lutheran Church–Canada will continue its ongoing Synod-wide recruitment initiative which attempts to identify and encourage our future church workers. As you can see from this year's focus statement we want to be bold in identifying and recruiting future church workers. Pastors and laity alike play a key roll in identifying, encouraging and supporting those whom the Lord may be calling into full-time ministry in the church.

RSVP has been an ongoing recruitment program of Synod for the past five years. Here is a summary of how the Lord has blessed this initiative.

Year	Congregations Participating	Number of Names Received
1998	27	88
1999	18	73
2000	20	66
2001	14	65
2002	15	89

We want to thank the pastors and congregations that have participated over the past five years. Your efforts have identified individuals with whom our university college and seminaries keep in contact. Please continue to encourage the individuals whom you and your congregation have nominated.

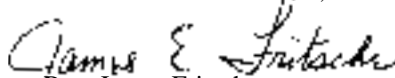
This year's resource materials for *RSVP* Sunday, January 19 focus on how all members of the congregation, especially those working with youth, can identify those who would serve the Lord well as a future pastor or deacon. **Please send in all names nominated, even if they were nominated in previous years.** Receiving a nomination two or three years in a row can be a tremendous encouragement for a prospective church worker.

When children or youth are nominated, parents should be advised of their nomination and be present during the interview with the pastor. 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 at www.lutheranchurch-canada.ca/RSVP

Thank you in advance for participating in this very important part of the work we do together as Synod. 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

The *RSVP* Recruitment Initiative

RSVP, Lutheran Church–Canada’s recruitment initiative is a process of **Invitation, Response and Reward**. It is the invitation to consider the call of God in one’s life, the response of acting on that call, and the reward of knowing that we are acting on God’s will.

We are asking the people of God, those sitting in the congregation, the ones who know the discussions around the dinner table, who know the need for church workers better than we ever will, to nominate or bring forth the names of individuals who they might feel are possible (or potential) candidates for church work vocations. It is through our preaching, prayers and sharing of our call that we can put in the high consciousness of people the need, and their responsibility for promoting and supporting pastoral and church work vocations.

THE PROCESS

RSVP contains four stages:

PREPARATION

PREACHING

NOMINATION

FOLLOW UP

STAGE ONE: Preparation

In the *RSVP* booklet we have included bulletin inserts and resources for reproduction and use in worship. These are to help prepare the congregation. You will be asked to read a letter from President Mayan regarding church work vocations, and include in your prayers intercession for the Lord of the harvest to provide labourers.

STAGE TWO: Preaching

Through the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our preaching we reflect in a very personal way our own call, our response and the reward of responding to God’s call. This booklet includes a sermon focusing specifically on leadership and the role the congregation plays in identifying full-time church workers.

STAGE THREE: Nomination

Following the sermon on January 19 we ask the people of God to reflect and look around the parish to see whom they think may consider church work. The members of the congregation are asked to fill in a nomination form and return it to the pastor. It is a simple process. The nomination form can be distributed again the following Sunday and returned that Sunday with the offering. A prayer of thanksgiving is included in the prayers.

STAGE FOUR: Follow-up

This is the most critical of the stages. The first contact from the pastor of those nominated can make or break the nomination. This will take place during February. In our positive response we can help that spark of potential seen by one of the parishioners, grow into a flame. Once the pastor has made contact with the individual and they respond in a positive manner, then the pastor sends an evaluation form to Synod.

THE RESULTS

Lutheran Church–Canada continues to benefit from *RSVP* on many different levels. First and most important, it has raised the awareness of God’s people to the need to identify and encourage individuals to respond to His call to church work, either through LCC or in the local parish.

Second, through the grace of God, we now have more than 380 potential church workers who are in contact with our university college and seminaries. As the number of young people in the teenage years increases over the next few years, we will have an increase in the number of men and women seriously considering the Pastoral Office, Director of Parish Services and other church work opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Imagine if each of the 328 congregations in Lutheran Church–Canada identified *ONE* potential church worker! That would mean more than 300 men and women would be affirmed in the gifts and talents God has given them—more than 300 believers to whom God the Holy Spirit may be saying: *I want you to serve my people as a worker in Lutheran Church-Canada.*

We ask *With Great Boldness* and believe there will be a response to God’s invitation to service—*RSVP*

With Great Boldness – RSVP 2003

Schedule

January 12

- read letter from President Mayan to congregation Page 8
- distribute bulletin insert (three choices) Page 9
- make verbal announcement regarding the initiative

January 19

- use alternate lessons and suggested hymns Page 12
- conduct adult Bible study from the materials provided Page 13
- conduct youth Bible study from the materials provided Page 17
- distribute bulletin insert/nomination form Page 19
- collect completed nomination forms in offering
- use litany Page 20
- preach sermon Page 21
- use Prayer of Thanksgiving Page 12

February

- interview nominees and complete interview form Page 26

March

- send completed interview forms to Synod office in Winnipeg

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Once again congregations across our Synod set aside the 2nd Sunday in Epiphany to celebrate Synod's recruitment initiative—*RSVP*. I am pleased your congregation will join in that celebration.

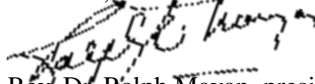
We have so much to celebrate. Only two weeks ago we celebrated the reenactment of the Saviour's birth and were led in worship to marvel at the grace and love of God given in the Child born in Bethlehem. And now in this season of Epiphany we celebrate the Good News that God's gift is not just for a few, but for the whole world and that we, His children, have the privilege of sharing that Good News *With Great Boldness*.

To assist the church in accomplishing this, our Lord instituted the Office of the Public Ministry and continues to give gifts to the church of pastors, deacons and other church workers. He gives them birth in the local congregation and He gives to us the privilege of identifying and preparing them for service in the Kingdom.

Next Sunday you will have the opportunity to participate in this latter task. We will ask you to consider whether there are any in your church family whom you believe God may be calling to serve as a pastor or deacon. (Why not take a look right now?) You will be asked to write that name or names on a special form to be provided and to pass it on to your pastor. After he has had the opportunity to speak with those identified regarding their nomination, he then, with their permission, will pass their name on to me so that together as congregation, pastor and Synod we can nurture and God willing, prepare them for service.

So join me in praying that God will bless next week's special recruitment Sunday throughout our Synod. May He give us the eyes to see His future gifts in our midst. And may He continue to use all of us, no matter what our calling, so that the Good News of His grace and love in Jesus is always proclaimed *With Great Boldness*.

In Christ,



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

Check your pew!



Do you see a young person who is

- intelligent
- healthy
- of strong character
- active in serving
- relates well to others
- loves the Lord and His church
- sincere about the Christian faith

You may have identified a future full-time church worker!

On **Sunday, January 19**, share that person's name with your pastor.



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Replacement for the pastor?



Your pastor is a gift from God. He serves your congregation because you have called him. Before attending seminary and becoming ordained, he was a member of a congregation. Perhaps it was someone like you who recognized his gifts and talents and said “You’d make a good pastor.”

Look around your congregation. Do you see young men in whom you see the potential to become a pastor? Take the time to encourage him. Tell your pastor about him.

On Sunday, January 19 you will have the opportunity to submit his name. The pastor will follow-up with an interview and then send his name to Lutheran Church–Canada. He will begin receiving encouragement from LCC’s university college or seminaries to seriously consider how he can serve God in full-time church work. Who knows, one day he could be your pastor!



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Made you look!



Over there, did you see? That young person...the one who is perhaps involved with the youth, friendly, sincere, maybe helps in Sunday school and VBS. The one who seems to really love the Lord. You may be looking at a future full-time church worker— a pastor or deacon.

How about giving a word of encouragement? How about sharing that person's name with the pastor on **Sunday, January 19**? That's when Lutheran Church–Canada congregations across the country will participate in *RSVP Church Worker Recruitment Initiative*.

You will receive a bulletin insert for you to fill in the name of the person who has caught your eye. The pastor will follow up with a visit and pass along word of your encouraging nomination.

But first you have to look. Go ahead. Right now. Look around your congregation and see if there is someone whom God may be calling to consider full-time church work.



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Worship Resources

January 19, 2003

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Lessons for January 19

Psalm 67, 1 Samuel 3:1-10, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:43-51

In Psalm 67 the psalmist asks that the Lord would be gracious to His people so that “Your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.” When that happens the nations will “be glad and sing for joy” and “the land will yield its harvest.”

The Old Testament and Gospel lessons speak of hearing and responding to God’s call to serve in ministry. Samuel was aided by old Eli to discern the call of God. Philip, having heard the Lord’s call, was instrumental in bringing Nathanael into the Lord’s service.

The Epistle is very clear about what those who follow the Lord must leave behind as they seek to serve Him.

Hymn suggestions: 339 (*LW*), 318 (*LW*), 316 (*LW*), 879 (*HS98*), 882 (*HS98*)

Prayer for January 19, 2003

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Dear Lord, we thank You, for You continue to call faithful labourers into Your harvest. Bless all those whose names we are receiving today that they may be led to consider the call to serve You as future pastors and church workers. Grant them the wisdom to understand Your will for their lives. 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 19, 2003

Nurturing the future church worker

Hymn 318 (LW) “Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling”

Prayer - page 130 (LW) “For the Increase of the Holy Ministry”

It began in the home

1) Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

The Christian home acknowledges, the Christian’s God, the God of the Bible, the one and only true God. This is the God we fear, love, and trust above all things. This is the God for whom the Christian home grows young servants , recruits sons for full-time pastoral ministry and every person for the deaconate ministry of the Church. This is the God who calls for our allegiance.

2) How is the true God described in the text? See v.4 (Hebrew: YAH WEH)

3) Review the First Commandment in Luther’s Small Catechism ..pages 55-60

“That which has first place in our hearts and lives is truly our God”. Discuss other deities that frequently call for our allegiance: piety, money, popularity (young people are particularly led by the God of popularity. This god’s name is also *macho*. Young people want to ‘fit in’, be ‘one of the crowd’ or just ‘be cool’. Not be labelled a *nerd*). Sports (we force kids into a game they may not even like, because we want them to be another Gretzky). There are other gods like success, logic — (I don’t know what the Bible says, but I think ...).

All these deities boil down to one. . . self is the only false God.

The text in Deuteronomy is an important historical announcement. It is the Hebrew Creed, similar to what we call our Apostle’s Creed.

“Hear O Israel: The Lord Our God, The Lord is ONE.”

This is known as the SHEMA (pronounced Sheh-mah) *hear, listen and remember...* not just in one ear and out the other; let it stick, sink in, compute and become part of your very bones.

4) In what sense is our God unique? In what sense jealous?

5) Discuss the command given in verse 5. What does God require and deserve? (Compare Deut. 10:12; Joshua 22:5; Mark 12:30) Why do you think this is regarded as the greatest commandment? Explain and discuss “heart”, “soul”, “strength.”

We love Him because He is the God of our: *creation*—He provides and protects and *redemption*—In love He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, in Whom alone we have forgiveness of sins and new life (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). Our respectable middle-class lifestyle does not save us. Calvin Kleins and Corvettes do not deliver the good life. “Being cool” does not guarantee eternal fellowship with the One True God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is also the God of our *sanctification*. By His Spirit through Word and Sacrament He called us to faith and empowers us to live the Christian life (see Gal. 2:20).

6) How are we to receive these commandments? (Compare Ps. 119:1; Luke 2:51; Rom. 10:8; Col. 3:16)

7) How are these commandments to be communicated? vv 7-9, (Pr. 22:6; Eph. 6:4). Engage in spiritual talk. (e.g. Emmaus disciples, Luke 24:19)

8) Christian education begins in the home. It is an ongoing process. When it is done faithfully, how might it encourage and excite our sons and daughters to train for professional church work?

9) Read 2 Timothy 1:1-7 and discuss these questions:

a) What role did the home play in Timothy's spiritual journey?

b) "Fan into flame the gift of God." What does this say to you about recruiting church workers?

c) What confidence and assurance are Church workers given in v.7?

10) Read Mark 1:14-20

a) "the time has come." In what sense is there an urgency to "enlist" future church workers?

b) Who really calls (recruits) church workers?

c) “At once they left and followed Him.” Notice the willingness on the part of those who followed. But also notice, there was no objection to the “call of Jesus” on the part of father Zebedee. What objections do parents, and even those who may be called have to full-time church work?

Closing hymn and prayer

Suggested Hymn #316 (LW)

In your prayer thank God for His Word on the importance of the Christian home and its vital role in recruiting church workers. Pray that God might move, inspire, more homes (parents) to encourage their sons and daughters to seriously consider serving the Lord and His church—*full-time!*



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Youth Bible Study

Sunday, January 19, 2003

What has your family done for you lately?

When you read the title above, did you say to yourself, “Lots! My family provides me with food, protection, love, support, education, clothes and all sorts of stuff. I mean, if it wasn’t for my family, how would I get to hockey practice or to this weekend’s concert?” Or did you think more along the lines of: “Not much. We spend more time yelling at each other than listening, no one understands me, and what I say, do or look like is never good enough. Sometimes I would rather have no brothers or sisters and maybe a different set of parents.”

Okay, whichever scenario you find yourself in (or if it is somewhere in between depending on the day) this Bible study is for you. One of my favourite things about the Bible is that it does not tell us about a bunch of perfect people whom we are supposed to act like. No way! It tells about the lives of people who sinned, especially in family situations. Thankfully, God’s Word also tells us about how He forgave people for the stuff they were sorry for, and He promises to do that for us today. So, let’s look at some specific situations in the Bible and in our own lives.

First, some examples of family problems in the Bible. Review the rivalry in Joseph’s family beginning at Genesis 37:2. First of all, his dad played favourites so that ticked his brothers off. After a series of events, we read that instead of killing him, the brothers sell Joseph into slavery. (Genesis 37:18-28) A few chapters later, Joseph is second-in-command over all of Egypt and he could take some serious revenge on his brothers. What does he do instead, and why? (See Genesis 45:1-15.)

Read about Moses, Miriam and Aaron in Numbers 12. (Yes, the whole chapter! It is only 16 verses!) Wow! You would think that Moses would get defensive but instead he asks God to have mercy on his sister. Not our usual reaction when one of our siblings gets jealous and starts bad-mouthing us, or cutting down our friends or the choices we make.

Even Jesus had problems with His family. In John 2:1-5, Mother Mary volunteers Him (without asking first) to help out with a wine shortage at the wedding in Cana. His brothers thought He was “out of His mind” in Mark 3:20-21.

Try to think of two more instances in the Bible where families were having a rough time. Be sure to figure out how God made something good come of the situation in the end.

Now let's shift gears to a couple of positive family examples in the Bible. After all, families were God's idea in the first place! Flip in your Bible to the book of Ruth and read through the first chapter. In verses 15-17 we see how strong a family tie had become, and how Ruth is converted to her mother-in-law's faith in God. The story ends well; Ruth marries again and has a baby boy who will be the grandpa of King David, which places them in Jesus' family tree.

Our most important family for today's Bible study is Timothy's. In the Apostle Paul's second letter to a young pastor named Timothy, he says, "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also" (2 Timothy 1:5). This passage tells us of the greatest gift that family can share with one another. Most likely Tim's mom and grandma not only talked about God's love, they must have lived out their faith in very obvious ways for Timothy to take hold and want to become a pastor. God had given the gift of faith to Timothy and blessed him with a family life where he grew in the understanding and exercising of his faith.

Look up the words of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 where God gave His people instructions to show how important it was to pass on to the next generation the love of God and His commandments. What a huge task God gave to our parents. Some of you might be parents in the next 10 years and this will be your job. Scary thought maybe!

Finally, take a look at your family when you go home today. Instead of asking the question that began this Bible study, ask, "What can I do for my family, for my church, and for others to express my thanks to God?" Please pray for your parents and brothers and sisters. Find ways to express your repentance, forgiveness and love to them. Look at the faith that is (or is not) shared by members of your family and take an active role in being a Christian brother or sister to your family members. Encourage others when they show God-given talents. Don't hide your gifts, use them in a way that gives thanks to God. Maybe even plan to serve in some way at your church this week and in the years to come because you are loved by God more than you can imagine. We need each member of the body of Christ to tell others of the forgiveness and hope that we have for families, friends and those we will never meet in this lifetime.

Close with prayer!



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Faith & Family Word Search

O C u P s e v e i l e b J e s u s p u H
 N c v Q l P z d P b p y P b M h t i a f
 T X e O J m F w D e u t e r o n o m y π
 W H z l L H s s e n t i w l s e v o l H
 w C i y p i h s r o w E F r e P C f b r
 f s t h U P C D y l i m a f s H a y B b
 o i p S W H U Σ β Σ O p z u l a β u n r
 r s a e A g p Á Q t s Z e g U L p v l o
 g t b x g l † h J χ Σ K β s F B i Σ n t
 i e P Á S L d L q Q W A F O s i h F a h
 v r Y X g r a n d p a r e n t s s T c e
 e n e r d l i h c e L o i s A m r i o r
 n T o b b Y c k u h G K F W o r e m n U
 e U r h d a e c i n u E ú i n i d o f j
 s B l n e C h g o o r l Á B B c a t i j
 s R u t h Á e g a r u o c n e G e h r f
 f r i e n d s L j t J o s e p h l y m i
 Z L l S t t s C i S F y o F w O l p a g
 B v h l π d p a r e n t s l b i D C l H
 b I L e e r u t a m R H e j C G n R M t

Deuteronomy	Timothy	faith	love
Eunice	baptize	family	mature
Jesus	believe	fight	parents
Joseph	brother	forgiveness	sister
Lois	children	friends	teach
Moses	confirm	grandparents	witness
Paul	encourage	leadership	worship
Ruth			

Beyond shovelling snow



WE THANK GOD for those in our congregations who take care of the little things like clearing the snow, mowing the lawns and keeping God’s house clean. These dedicated volunteer church workers serve their Lord as time allows.

But the church also has full-time church workers—unfortunately not enough.

These are the **pastors** who lovingly serve God’s people through Word and Sacraments, visitation, counselling, and guiding members through life’s milestones. And the **deacons** who teach in our Lutheran schools or join in parish team ministry as Directors of Parish Services. Others serve as Parish Nurses. Each is a full-time servant of the Gospel. And each began as a member of a congregation.

Today you are invited to look around your congregation and see if there is a young person whom you believe has the gifts and talents God could use in full-time church work. Maybe you have noticed their love for the Lord and other people, how they enjoy serving and helping, their involvement with youth or young adults, their intelligence.

The form below gives you the opportunity to share that young person’s name with your pastor. He will follow up with a visit and then pass the name along to Lutheran Church–Canada so that our university college and seminaries can continue the encouragement.

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.

Litany for Epiphany 2

(Based on the lessons for the day)

Melody.....Dix (*LW 75: As With Gladness Men of Old*)

L: May all the peoples praise You, O God;

C: **May all the peoples praise You.**

**Gracious Lord, You bless us well. Shine Your face that we may tell
All Your ways—may they be known Your salvation fully shown
So that nations everywhere May Your praise and love declare!**

L: Heavenly Father, in the darkness of this world You shine the light of Your truth and Your love.

C: **May Your truth and love never grow dim, but be proclaimed through all ages.**

L: You called young Samuel into Your service.

C: **May our youth today also hear and respond to Your call.**

**Lord, Your people need Your Word When the lamp of faith grows dim
Send us workers who have heard Your great call, and then send them
So that nations everywhere May Your praise and love declare!**

L: Lord, Your people face daily the temptations of the world, and the pastors and deacons of Your church are also tested.

C: **Sustain all Your people, O Lord. Lead us not into temptation and guard us from all spiritual dangers.**

L: Grant us the strength of Your Holy Spirit

C: **That our lives may reflect the goodness and purity You desire.**

**In temptation lead us, Lord That we may not bring You shame
We were bought with Your own blood and set free from guilt and blame
So that nations everywhere May Your praise and love declare!**

L: Gracious Lord, the message of forgiveness, life and salvation must be proclaimed in all the earth

C: **For that reason You called disciples to follow You.**

L: Through their witness You would reveal Yourself as the Son of Man to all people.

C: **Continue to raise up workers who will spread the Good News throughout the world.**

**“Follow Me,” You told them, Lord. And they did with one accord,
Learning to believe in You And to witness boldly, too.
So that nations everywhere May Your praise and love declare!**

Sermon for January 19, 2003
Text: 2 Timothy 1:1-7
Theme: God calls leaders through people

The entire Bible is a record of God providing leaders for his people—leaders in the home, leaders in the church, leaders in the community. Because God is a gracious and a caring God He knows that His people flounder if they do not have good leadership. God continues to provide leaders for His church today in order that His plan of salvation can be carried out. It is the will of God that all people everywhere will know His love and the undeserved forgiveness of sins that comes through the blood of Jesus Christ. It is part of God's plan that this message is carried by people—human flesh and blood people—who themselves know the weight of sin in their lives and also know the joy of having Jesus as the One who died for them and who gives them the sure hope of life forever after death

Throughout the Scriptures we see how God has used different methods to raise up leaders. He called Moses with a burning bush. He used a large fish to recruit Jonah as a missionary. He appeared to Saul (Paul) in a blinding light. At times He used dreams and visions. It is an interesting record in the Scriptures about the various ways God used to call individual people to serve as leaders for His people. In all these different ways, God also used other people. After the blinding light on the road to Damascus it was necessary for Paul to meet with people for a time in order to learn about the Christian faith. God still uses this method to raise up people today. In our text for today, the Apostle Paul says he is an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will. Paul also says he serves with a clear conscience as his ancestors did. The ancestors of Paul were an influence in his life. He refers to Timothy as his son in the faith. Somehow God used Paul as an instrument to help Timothy to grow in his faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins. There are also references to Timothy's grandmother and his mother Eunice. So, in the life of Timothy there were a number of people involved who helped him not only to develop in his faith, but also then to be called into the ministry of the church. There are references in the text to the laying on of hands. At some time in the life of Timothy the larger church recognized that God had called him to serve as a leader, and set him aside, or consecrated him to serve as a leader in the church.

[At this point in the sermon you can mention the people who influenced you in becoming a pastor or deacon in the church.]

(In my own life certainly the greatest influence for me was my father who was a pastor and my grandfather who was a pastor, as well as my uncle and older brother. Seeing these people in the ministry, travelling around with my father as a young boy when he visited people and gave them private communion, certainly was a great influence in my life. But besides the family, there were other people who would make comments to me and say that I should consider becoming a pastor.)

Today it is important that in every congregation, members look around and identify people who are potential leaders for the church, either pastors or deacons.

Every Christian is called by God to faith. This call comes through the working of the Holy Spirit in the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This call for all Christians to be servants comes through their baptism and is reaffirmed constantly in the body and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion. Every child of God is called by God to serve Him and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Every one who has been called into the faith also has to ask the question, “Does God want me to serve as a leader in the church?” Every Christian needs to ask themselves that question and we need to ask each other this question. Does God want you to serve as a leader in the church—either as a pastor or a deacon? Not every one is able to answer ‘yes’ because not everyone is called to be a leader, but the question should be asked of everyone.

What are the qualifications a person should look for in himself or herself, or in other people? It would be a mistake to look for special abilities and intelligence. In fact, it almost seems as though one of the qualifications necessary to be a leader in the church is to be convinced you are not qualified and your own abilities do not give you the right to become a leader in the church. What is really essential for anyone to be a leader in the church is that they recognize their own sinfulness, their own unworthiness and their total dependence upon the blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. This is necessary because the real mission of the ministry of the church is to proclaim this beautiful sweet Gospel of Jesus Christ. Moses certainly wasn’t qualified to be a leader. In fact, he said he couldn’t speak. Saul (Paul) hated and killed Christians. Certainly he was not qualified. Jonah ran away. Isaiah was a man of unclean lips. In our text for today Paul says it is the Spirit who gives us power, love and self-control. If there is anything we need to look for in a person to be a leader, it is that the spirit of God has given him or her the strength and the power to serve, and a tenderness of love and care for other people, as well as some self-control. In leadership it is very important to have the help of the Holy Spirit to be able to control ourselves in time of panic or depression or passion.

How do I know if God has called me to be a leader in the church? I am not sure if there is any time when one who serves as a pastor or deacon in the church can be absolutely, positively sure God wants them to be a leader in the church. In fact, it seems as though all of our ministry is filled with some doubt and apprehension and we need to be convinced time and again by God that it is His will that we serve in leadership positions in the church. Certainly one way of finding it out is to test it. If the Spirit of God has laid upon your heart the call to become a leader in the church, then you should talk about it with other people and test it out to see if they affirm it or not. The second test would be to take the training offered by the Church. The final test comes

when we are actually in the ministry and can determine whether God uses us to communicate the Gospel to other people.

In our text for today, Paul says he is thankful to God for having called Timothy to be a leader in the church. It is important in all our congregations that we publicly express our thanks and praise to God whenever He provides us with a pastor or deacon to serve in the church. This attitude of thankfulness for the office of the public ministry encourages more people to want to consider whether God is calling them into service in the church. Of all the things we can do with our life, there is really nothing that has more honour or is more of a privilege than spending our whole life proclaiming to other people the powerful message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—changing people’s lives by proclaiming to them the name of Jesus in a caring way.

It is the very nature of faith itself that it comes from outside of us as a gift from God. It never comes up from within us. This faith is brought to others through people speaking to them the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. To have the privilege of being an instrument of God in bringing the most powerful thing into the lives of other people is certainly an honour and a privilege. It is something that should be considered by everyone who has been called by God into the Christian faith. The whole purpose for God in raising up leaders is so that the good news can be proclaimed. We do not teach people ten ways of how they can be saved. It is not a message ‘if you believe in Jesus you will be saved.’ It is the message ‘You have been saved, believe it!’ When Christ on the cross said, “It is finished,” He meant that it is finished. The total price has been paid for the forgiveness of our sins. So now we proclaim to people something that has been completed and done. Your sins have been forgiven. Believe it because it is true.

There are people on this earth who do not know their sins have been forgiven. There are people who know and do not believe their sins have been forgiven. For both of them, they need to hear again and again the message of the love of God that is unconditional and unending, that comes through His Son, our Lord and Saviour.

Everyone called by God through the Spirit to this faith is now sent to speak this to others. However, it is necessary that there be those called to be leaders in the public ministry in order to proclaim this on behalf of the whole church and in order to equip all the members to be missionaries proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is essential for the life and the mission of the church that there be those who are called and placed into the public ministry. It is not an optional matter for the church to have pastors and deacons. It is essential to the mission and ministry of the church that there be those called and placed into this position through the laying on of hands. We live at a time in our church when there is a real shortage of leaders in the public ministry. There is

no doubt that our church is suffering because of this lack of leadership. At this time, as at any time, it is essential for those of us in the church—mothers, fathers, grandparents, those of us already in the office—to look at those we know in the church and encourage them to consider the call from the Holy Spirit to serve as leaders in the kingdom of God.

Prayer is an essential part of the process. Our Lord Jesus says the harvest is great, pray that there be more labourers. It is essential in our personal life, and in our public life, that we constantly include prayers to the throne of God, that Jesus who sits at the right hand of the Father would continue to carry out His ministry of sending pastors and teachers and evangelists for the equipping of the saints to carry out the mission of the church.

Pray for yourself. Pray that God would make it clear to you whether or not you should consider the call into the public ministry. If God has provided you with a faithful pastor, be sure to thank God and to thank him. If God has called you into this ministry, also thank God, because it is by His grace and His mercy that any of us are allowed to serve in this wonderful privilege of being partners with God in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you have been called by God, you cannot wait until everything is in place, or before you have all the abilities, before you accept the call. It is important that when the call comes, you accept it and say, “Yes Lord, here I am, send me, send me.” God never asks us to do something without also providing us with the means to do it. God never called anyone into the ministry of the church without also providing them with the strength, the power, the love and the self-control that is necessary for them to carry out their leadership roles. God very seldom provides this ahead of time, but He provides these gifts and He keeps His promises as we serve Him and as we accept the call.

May the Holy Spirit move all of you to consider a call from God to serve as a leader in the church. May the Holy Spirit also move you to look around, if you have not been called by God, that you would identify someone in the congregation who should consider a call from God to serve in the church. God will answer our prayers as He has since the Lord Jesus lived and walked on this earth, He will always raise up leaders because He will not leave His people helpless, floundering around without leadership. God will do this, not because we deserve it, but because He truly wants to carry out His plan of salvation. He will continue to do it the way He has always done it, and that is through people in His church—all this so that more people can know His love, the forgiveness of sins and the sure hope of life forever in Jesus Christ.
Amen

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 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.

With Great Boldness – RSVP 2003 Interview Evaluation Form

Date of Interview: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Age: _____ Current education level _____

Home church: _____

Pastor: _____

1. Is 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, second vice-president, Lutheran Church–Canada on behalf of the Council of Presidents

Sermon: Rev. Dr. Roy Holm, president emeritus , Lutheran Church–Canada, Central District

Adult Bible study: Rev. Murv Kentel, seniors'/visitation pastor, First Lutheran Church, Kelowna, B.C.

Youth Bible study: Henrietta Schaeffer, deacon (DPS), Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Kitchener, Ontario

Design and Layout: LCC Communications

All elements of this booklet are available in Adobe Acrobat format on the Internet at:

www.lutheranchurch-canada.ca/RSVP03

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



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