

Recruitment Strategy

Core Strategy: Culture, Conversations, Care

This strategy represents a congregation's long-term commitment to cultivating a culture in which full-time ministry is honored, thoughtfully considered, and faithfully supported. Through a Bible-centered culture, intentional conversations, and support for those preparing for ministry, we aim to encourage every person to consider how the Lord might use their gifts in his service.

Raising a single church worker from our congregation is a profound blessing. We are guided by three key pillars: a culture that promotes spiritual growth and servant leadership, conversations that nurture gifts, and care that supports those preparing for full-time service. Through these, we seek to make the possibility of church work a natural and joyful topic of discussion.

In partnership with the broader ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), we strive not only to receive the gospel with joy but also to send preachers, teachers, and staff ministers so that others may hear and believe.

Pillar 1: Culture

An Encouragement Coordinator in Your Church

This is a great way for any male or female with the gifts of encouragement to serve as a volunteer. This person would assist the congregation and work with the WELS Ministry Recruitment Counselors to help encourage prospects toward full-time ministry.

Pray for Church Workers Monthly

Mention seminarians, teachers, and staff ministry candidates in the Prayer of the Church monthly. Pray for young men and women from the congregation, that the Lord may use them to further his kingdom — even if no one from church is currently studying for ministry.

Youth Service

Students participate in this service with children's message, usher/AV/readings/as musicians, make and serve snacks, or cleaning that week. During this service, present devotion books (age 4), Bibles (age 7), and prayer journals (age 10) as visible reminders of growth in the Word. These gifts reinforce that spiritual growth is important and celebrated in the congregation. Repetition each year strengthens culture.

Congregational Leadership

Encourage members to pray for future workers. Focus on the need for future church leaders. Invite high school students to sit in on portions of leadership meetings (when appropriate) or take an active role in youth ministry.

Showcase Seminary and Martin Luther College (MLC)

Even if no one is currently enrolled, keep brochures visible, display photos of students from your congregation, include updates from Martin Luther College or Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in publications/newsletters. Draw attention to them. Invite a student to come preach/teach.

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Pillar 2: Conversations

Annual Meeting with Pastor

Every year the pastor meets personally with each high school student for a spiritual check-in. These conversations include encouragement in faith, discussion of gifts and interests, and an explicit invitation to consider pastoral or teaching ministry.

Church Leadership Alignment

Twice per year at the leadership meeting, add to the agenda: "Which young men/women should we intentionally encourage toward public ministry?" Assign someone from leadership to specifically ask the named individuals, "Have you considered how you can serve?" Ask all leadership to pray regularly for each prospect.

Parent Conversations

Parental hesitation can close doors. Consistently have conversations — or have the encouragement coordinator have conversations — about the blessing of church work, financial realities, and how our church supports students. Normalize openness without pressure. Offer FAQs for parents.

Pillar 3: Care

Immediate Encouragement Plan

Do not let interest fade from lack of follow-up. Provide additional service opportunities (usher, helping with events, organize a teen event, or go on evangelism calls). In addition to job shadowing at the current congregation, set up a job shadowing with a nearby pastor (if available) to give additional touchpoints to ministry. Connect the student's family to an encouragement coordinator or ministry recruitment counselor.

Financial Support

Leadership will review opportunities such as Congregational Partnership Grants through Martin Luther College and determine appropriate scholarship or financial support for students preparing for ministry. Consider adding a congregational scholarship in support of ministerial education.

Ongoing Care

If a student enrolls, talk to the encouragement coordinator to help youth leadership or other members put together regular care packages. Invite current students to help with ministry during the summer. Have students give an annual update about their college experience in person.