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## Focus on Workers of the Church

THE LUTHERAN  
CHURCH Missouri Synod



### Focus on the Workers of the Church

#### Encouragement for Busy Church Leaders

*"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."  
Philippians 4:4 (ESV)*

#### Vacations

Part of the value of vacations, retreats, workshops, etc. is that we can set aside our habitual assumptions, ways of thinking and feeling and open to a new, fresh perspective, a new view of ourselves, others, God, the world. These activities help us pull out of stagnation. Movies, reading, travel, whatever helps you step outside your worldview, are important parts of self-care. But they don't necessarily work either; it depends on how we do it. You can't call the office every day on a vacation and really get away. You can't just engage in more of the same type of activity, just in a different location. Some people spend vacations fulfilling family obligations. That may be important, but it may not let us step outside our worldview. When planning vacations and other deep breaks, it is helpful to ask "what type of experience do I most need in my life right now?" and let that guide our planning. When doing so, just planning and anticipating the vacation can bring a smile. This is one reason why it is helpful to know when your next vacation will be.

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#### On a Mission

A young pastor began his ministry in a small, rural congregation. He quickly set out a calculated plan designed to increase attendance and enlarge the membership. But for all his doing, the congregation stayed becalmed in a sea of traditions and troubles. He initiated grandly conceived evangelism programs and education efforts and stewardship campaigns - and they hardly put a puff of spirit in the congregation's sail.

And then, gradually, things started to turn around. A gritty farmer named

Mac joined the church. At first, he seemed no asset. Often coming to early service right from the barn, he lent a certain aura of reality to the gathering. His gruff talk was loud and almost crude speech irritated and embarrassed the pastor. Often he wished this unbecoming newcomer would find some other congregation to attend.

And yet, people started to come. It turned out that Mac had a broken down van that he'd rebuilt. He began using it on Sunday's to pick up the older folks for church and a gang of children for Sunday school. The clanking contraption would heave into the parking lot every Sunday morning and disgorge a gang of gleeful children right in the middle of the closing prayers of the early service. And the second service swelled with the town's elderly and disabled.

Somehow, in the passing months, the congregation became full of new faces, full of those eager to learn and spiritually alive. The church council sailed into new programs for the elderly, set up new agencies for families and children, and planned new worship opportunities almost faster than the young pastor could keep up with them.

And in his deepest moments of reflection, the pastor knew that it was Mac who was making it happen. Mac was doing it - unqualified, unkempt, loud and irritating Mac.

"How do you do it, Mac?" the pastor asked him one day. "How do you manage to bring all of these people in?"

"How?" Mac was puzzled. "I don't know. I just know I must do it, Pastor. These are my people. They're just like me. I see myself in everyone. How could I not invite them?"

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### **Resources for Improving Financial Literacy**

The Good \$ense Budgeting pilot program is live! <http://elearning.lcms.org>. In a grace-filled manner, this resource deeply integrates biblical principles with day-to-day financial management. Those who take the course leave with a Personal Spending Plan in their hand, the knowledge in their head to implement it and the motivation in their heart to follow through.

Have you ever wondered, "How much debt is too much?"

The level of debt one can reasonably manage is related to the level of income. Obviously, the higher your income the more debt you might reasonably expect to manage.

The Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support (CMGS) has recently added a [Debt-to-income Analysis Calculator](#) to their web site. To get a rough idea of your own level of financial balance, click on the link, insert your financial information in the boxes and click on "calculate" to receive information about your own "financial balance."

Check out the [Consumer Purchase Payment Calculator](#). Click on the link, put in the information requested, then calculate to get an idea of the monthly payments for a larger purchase. Also, find out what the total cost of the item will be when including the interest charged for the loan.

Visit the CMGS Website (<http://cmgs.lcms.org>) for more information about healthy living!

These brief words of encouragement are offered to the professional church workers of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod with the prayer that God would renew and strengthen us all in the various dynamics of healthy relationships. In truth, all of the skills and all of the knowledge of human relationships are meaningless unless applied in the realities of day-to-day interaction.



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