

# **MINISTRY IN DAILY LIFE**

## **Ideas from ELCA Congregations**

Here are a number of ideas about ways congregations can nurture ministry in daily life, as reported in a survey conducted by the Division for Ministry of the ELCA.

These suggestions are not just theoretical. The congregations have used them in practice. They occur within existing congregational structures and programs (e.g., confirmation, worship, adult education) and are not “add-ons.” For further information, contact Sally Simmel, Division for Ministry, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631-4195, e-mail [ssimmel@elca.org](mailto:ssimmel@elca.org), phone 800-638-3522, ext. 2874.

### **1. Confirmation**

Have an ongoing mentoring program for confirmands that lasts throughout the confirmation period. Adult mentors are trained and they and their confirmand partners go into the mentor’s workplace, to the confirmand’s workplace, to a neo-natal unit and to a cemetery. Sharing faith stories is central - e.g., police officer mentor talks with confirmands about “Thou shalt not steal.” Mentor is part of confirmation service along with baptismal sponsor.

Ask confirmands to make a confirmation stole, with 3 symbols of faith on one side, 3 symbols of activities in daily life on the other.

### **2. New Members**

Conduct interviews with all new members to discern their gifts, leading to specific “callings” to areas of ministry where they want to grow.

Use “Monday’s Ministers” by William Diehl in member classes to help new members recognize their callings to ministry in daily life.

Offer “Discipleship education” for all new members, after which trained consultants sit down with graduates to discuss how and when they want to serve.

Introduce new members to the congregation along with the location of their ministries in daily life.

Set explicit expectations for new members, including ministry in daily life.

### **3. Worship**

Use material from workplace visits for examples in sermons.

Have as a regular part of worship a “Mission Minute”, a presentation (perhaps by video) of someone’s ministry in daily life.

Select a “minister of the week” who talks about his or her ministry during worship, and then that person’s ministry is prayed for during the week. Include children as well as seniors.

During Lenten services have members give talks about a connection between a beatitude and daily life or between a scriptural practice and daily life. This compels lay members to reflect on the intersections between their faith and daily life.

On certain occasions during the year worship can center on an occupation which is recognized and affirmed - e.g., Festival of St. Luke might feature health care, or on Labor Day, members’ occupations recognized - “love in work clothes.”

### **4. Workplace Visits**

Have the pastor do regular workplace visits to affirm laity and link Sunday to the workplace.

Some pastors who do workplace visits regularly say about them:

“People listen more intently because they know I care.” “As you get to know the people, you find out how important their work is, so it is natural to visit them at work.” “I am intentional in touching ‘everyday life’ for people and not leaving them so alone.”

### **5. Vision, Mission, Logos, (consciousness raising)**

Vision statements and stewardship emphasis can be vehicles for focus on ministry in daily life. Consider a year’s theme of “Everyone a Minister,” with banners, T-shirts, etc.

Have a map of the community with pins showing where members spend their time - “Where in the world is St. Paul’s Church?”

Make a slide show of the daily life ministries of members.

“Duck Award” - a duck head on a plunger is given monthly to someone who sticks his or her neck out in faith in some activity in the world.

Begin meetings with “What exciting thing happened in your ministry this week?”

Use “SPLASH” materials and “Connections: Faith and Life” (Augsburg-Fortress) with the congregation.

## **6. Structure**

Reflect ministry in daily life in the congregation’s mission statement, e.g.: “The Holy Spirit empowers us for ministry in daily life.”

Where possible have a Director of Member Ministries who helps people identify their gifts, visits workplaces and works with staff to emphasize MIDL in all the congregation’s work.

Have a Shared Ministries Committee to include all members in some area of extended ministry.

Job descriptions of congregational staff and their evaluations should include focus on their support of members’ ministries in the world.