

*Fan into Flame*

®

*Gift  
Solicitation  
Manual*

## LCMS WORLD MISSION



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Dear Friends in Christ,

Those of us who know Jesus Christ as the sole Savior of the world share joyfully in His promise of eternal salvation. Sadly however, there are many living in our world today who do not. Every minute, around the globe, some 83 people die without Christ, a troubling statistic that demands an immediate response from the faithful.

Martin Luther spoke of that response when he said, "Christ desires nothing more of us than that we speak of Him." And St. Paul urged Timothy to boldly testify:

*"For this reason I remind you to **Fan into Flame** the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God." (2 Tim.1:6-8)*

Commissioned by Christ, each of us is called to share the Gospel message in our own neighborhoods, across our nation, and around the world. Paul's words resonated within the 2004 Synod convention when it turned aside timidity and adopted and affirmed the *Ablaze!* mission to reach 100,000,000 unreached or uncommitted people by 2017. I can think of no more important work with which to concern ourselves as we prepare to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

In order to secure the funding necessary for vital *Ablaze!* mission outreach efforts at home and abroad, the 2004 Synod Convention authorized the **Fan into Flame** campaign. As a leader in your congregation, I am asking you to join with me in actively supporting this historic effort to raise \$100,000,000 to benefit local, national, and global mission programs. Campaign leaders and volunteers will play a crucial role in explaining to fellow Church members how their gifts will make a difference in the lives of millions who do not yet know Christ.

*Your involvement is the key to the success of this endeavor.* The activities you and your congregation undertake before, during, and after the active phase of **Fan into Flame** will have a significant impact in sharing Christ in your community and around the world. As we work together in service of His holy kingdom, know that you are in my prayers. May the Lord's hand guide you during this campaign to help ignite the world with His love.

In His service ... and yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Roegner".

Rev. Dr. Robert M. Roegner, Executive Director, LCMS World Mission

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As part of its mission to reach 100 million uncommitted or unchurched people by 2017, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has launched the largest capital fundraising initiative in its history. *Fan into Flame* is designed to include the mission needs of the Synod, districts and each participating congregation. New missions and ministries will significantly influence the success of *Ablaze!* Through the *Fan into Flame* campaign, we have an opportunity to provide our people and the communities we serve with the resources needed to reach those so desperately in need of the message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Each participating congregation within the district and across the Synod is asked to take part in *Fan into Flame*. Volunteers who ask for gifts play a vital role in the success of *Fan into Flame* in each congregation. This manual describes the methods of fundraising that have proven successful in LCMS congregations to invite fellow members to participate. Throughout your fundraising effort, you will receive additional suggestions, memoranda, and publicity materials from the Campaign Office. Your enthusiasm, leadership, and inspiration will encourage volunteers and fellow members to support this historic effort.

In order to maximize the financial potential in any church campaign, we offer proven plans based on the following solid fundraising principles:

*Members give to members.*

*Members give because they are asked.*

*Members give in relation to the person who asks.*

*Members are generous.*

*Giving is contagious.*

*Previous donors are our best prospects.*

*Keep your sights high.*

*Suggest a specific gift plan.*

Gift request techniques are described in detail within this manual, but it is important to remember that a successful appeal relies on the following sound principles of fundraising:

- **Prayer**

Prayer is a vital component of every appeal and is the key to overall success through His blessings. As we move forward with this historic endeavor please remember to keep *Fan into Flame* in your prayers.

- **Phased Approach**

Just as the district and Synod campaigns are being conducted in phases, so too can each local campaign. The campaign office has developed sound approaches that have been specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

A phased approach encourages larger gifts to be requested first. This approach builds momentum, provides credibility, creates enthusiasm, and ensures the maximum number of gifts are attained.

- **Pledged Commitments**

All gifts to *Fan into Flame* are encouraged to be paid over a three to five-year period. This allows members in each congregation an opportunity to make a gift that they may not ordinarily be able to consider. Pledges of \$5,000 or more may be paid over a five-year period. All other gifts are asked to be paid within three years.

- **Proportionate Gift Requests**

Each member cannot give at the same level; therefore each should not be asked for the same gift. *Fan into Flame* subscribes to the ideals of Christian stewardship, which calls for equal sacrifices - not necessarily equal gifts.

- **Member to Member Solicitation**

Members give to members. What is more, people give to people they know and respect. Personal visits by the pastor, congregation leaders and fellow members provide opportunities to discuss *Fan into Flame* in detail and request generous and sacrificial support. All those involved in making personal requests will be offered training by *Fan into Flame* staff and provided with the appropriate materials.

**Early Gifts set the pace for activity. As an appeal volunteer, you play a vital role in the success of your congregation's campaign.**

There are specific steps one can take to conduct a successful visit.

We should approach each member as professionally as possible. We need to prepare our case very carefully and present it convincingly without apology. There is a step-by-step process for conducting a visit, which, if implemented effectively, will lead to a successful appeal.

Common mistakes include not asking for the gift specifically and leaving it up to the donor to be “inspired” to make a gift. As a result, many well-intentioned volunteers are puzzled when they do not secure the gift they were seeking. With assistance from the campaign office, this and other common mistakes can be avoided.

**Keys to a successful campaign visit are:**

- Prepare for the visit;
- Present the Case Statement;
- Ask for the gift;
- Listen;
- Respond; and
- Follow-up.

This manual will take you through detailed instruction in each of the above steps. Your congregation's *Fan into Flame* advisor is always available to answer questions or assist you as you begin your campaign visits.

### **Prepare for the Visit**

There are three essential steps a volunteer can take in preparing for a visit to increase chances of success:

- Make your own gift first;
- Schedule the visit; and
- Be prepared to answer questions.

### ***Make Your Own Gift First***

The most important step before asking anyone else for a pledge is making a decision about your own financial commitment to *Fan into Flame*. Your conviction in the appeal and service as an advocate for your church, demonstrated through your sacrificial pledge, will make you more effective to enlist a fellow member's support.

### ***Schedule the Visit***

Telephone the potential donor to schedule a convenient day and time to meet. Be careful not to discuss details about the fund-raising effort during your call. Remember: personal visits are the key to your success.

- When making the appointment, identify yourself as a volunteer from your church, representing the congregation's leadership;
- Arrange a personal meeting at a private, comfortable setting such as the family home or after worship service. Try to stay away from offices or restaurants to avoid interruption.
- Refrain from talking too much about the appeal over the phone. It is too important to be explained in a phone conversation.
- Your goal of the initial telephone call is simply to schedule an appointment.
- Plan 30-45 minutes for the visit.
- Do not mail the brochure and request letter in advance of your visit. These materials are effective tools for your use during the request visit and left behind for prospective donors to review.
- If appropriate, visit in pairs to make the visit more comfortable and effective. Role-play with your partner prior to the visit as well.

### ***Be Prepared To Answer Questions***

Before your visit, review all campaign material. Although you are not expected to have every answer, try to be familiar with the information regarding the plans of your congregation, district and LCMS World Mission. If there are difficult questions during the request, note them and bring them to the attention of your professional advisor. The following materials are provided for your use:

#### ***Campaign Brochure:***

Details LCMS World Mission and district objectives of *Fan into Flame*.

#### ***Case Statement:***

Describes the needs of LCMS World Mission, the district and your congregation to be addressed through the campaign.

#### ***Request Letter:***

Personalized letter requesting the family to consider a specific gift.

This will be given during the visit.

#### ***Gift Plan Card:***

Several versions of a card exist that will help break down the gift level you are asking members to consider.

#### ***Question & Answer Guide:***

One page document with the most frequently asked questions.

### **Present the Case Statement**

In the first few minutes, engage in small talk to become more familiar and comfortable with the person(s) you are visiting (if you don't know them). Explain your own involvement with the campaign and talk about why the project is so important to you, while giving the person you have come to see an opportunity to share his or her thoughts.

Using the campaign brochure and Case Statement as your tools, give a brief overview of the campaign and highlight areas of particular interest to the family.

- Review the material prior to your visit and explain the needs in your own words.

- Be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the purpose and objectives of the campaign.
- Present an overview of the different areas of the case:
  - World Mission - National and International
  - The *Ablaze!* goals and objectives of your district which will be addressed through *Fan into Flame*
  - Your congregation's local case for mission support
- As part of your presentation, emphasize the particular aspects of the case you endorse strongly. Talk to them about why you chose to support *Fan into Flame*. Your conviction will encourage others.
- It is important that your approach is personal and positive at all times. For instance, it would not be appropriate to say, "*Mr. Jones, you may not be interested in this program,*" but rather, "*Tom, I hope you will be as convinced of the tremendous need for this campaign as I am.*"

### **Ask for the Gift**

After presenting the case, it is important that you remain straightforward and specific, and that you make the request very personal and without apology.

*"Joe and Mary, obviously I do not know what your financial situation is, but I do know that this campaign must be successful, and that you are fellow members of our congregation who are totally committed to supporting the Ablaze! goal of reaching 100 million new people with the Gospel. I hope that you will listen to this request made on behalf of our congregation and give it your most prayerful consideration."*

### **Be sure to ask for the pledge specifically.**

*"Joe and Mary, I am here on behalf of our congregation and on behalf of our church to invite you to join with me and support this effort with a gift of \$1,000 this year and \$1,000 for each of the next four years for a total gift of \$5,000. Is this something you might be able to consider?"*

Present the request letter from your pastor along with the campaign brochure to the prospect.

### ***Count to 10.***

After your request, remain silent and wait for the donor to add to his or her first reaction.

**Avoid the temptation to jump right in with a response.**

If the donor says, “*Gee, that's a lot of money,*” and you respond immediately, you will be dealing from a negative. Wait for ten seconds; the prospect will probably continue and say something positive.

He or she might say, “*Gee, that's a lot of money.*” (pause) “*I know it's important and I do want to help. Can you tell me more about what LCMS World Mission plans to do internationally through **Fan into Flame** and our local needs here in the congregation?*”

### ***Listen!***

The prospect's response can (and will) be varied.

Once again it is important to listen to what the person says. The reply could range from, “*I'd be glad to;*” to “*I don't have that kind of money.*” In most cases however, the prospect will want to take some time to think about it.

The prospect may, by this time, have questions for you. The prospect may ask questions about specific case elements (“*Can you please tell me more about the Ablaze! Connection?*”), the prospect may ask questions about ways of giving (“*Does the campaign accept gifts of appreciated securities?*”), or the prospect may want to share general thoughts on the congregation and Synod. It is important the prospect has an opportunity to ask any or all of these questions.

### ***Respond***

Build your case with the prospect's words.

*“I’m glad you want to help and I recognize that this is a very significant request. That’s why I came to you early in our appeal. I knew that you would listen, recognize how important this is, and give the request your full consideration. I am confident of your support for Ablaze! and **Fan into Flame**.”*

*The prospect will respond to the request in one of four ways. The solicitor should be prepared to respond to each. Suggested responses follow.*

**1. “Yes, we can do that. We will pledge the amount requested.”**

Thank the donor. Accept the pledge gratefully. **Ask the donor to consider the suggested down payment of 10 percent.** Ask the donor to complete the pledge form carefully. Explain that LCMS World Mission will provide a payment reminder as requested (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually). Payments should be made to *Fan into Flame*.

**2. “We would like to think it over before making a decision.”**

This is a good sign. It shows interest on the part of the potential donor. Such a request should be accepted, and a return visit within one week should be arranged. The visitor must maintain control and suggest the date and time of the return visit. For example, *“That is fine. I would like to come back and see you next week. Would Wednesday evening at 7:00 be convenient? Is there anything I can provide to you before we meet next week?”*

**Don’t leave the pledge card! Doing so will encourage an impersonal response, not a sacrificial one.**

**3. “We would like to make a lesser gift.”**

Recognizing the strategic importance of establishing a high level of giving in this pace-setting phase of our appeal, all donors are encouraged to subscribe to a sacrificial multi-year pledge, hopefully of \$75 monthly. The donor may need three to four days to prayerfully consider the request that has been made. You

might say, *“I did not come here today expecting your answer. Please take some time and pray over your decision. We really need some gifts at this level to be successful. We can talk again in three or four days. Is Thursday evening at 7:00 convenient for you?”*

#### **4. *“We cannot give. We are not interested in the campaign.”***

This is the least common response. However, some members may not be inclined to support the campaign at this time. Please remember that those who initially decline a gift may eventually commit to the campaign. An effective visitor will respond in a manner that will “keep the door open.” A reply might be, for example, *“I understand your concerns and respect that you are unable to help at this time. Perhaps your situation will change in the future; if so please keep the Ablaze! movement and our appeal in your prayers.”*

### **Follow-up**

If no gift decision is finalized during the visit, schedule a follow-up visit within 4-6 days before ending the initial meeting. This will allow the family ample time to prayerfully consider their decision and also create urgency and underscore the importance of the timely receipt of their gift. Experience demonstrates that when weeks are allowed to elapse between the request and the decision, the necessity and significance of the effort is lost and the campaign receives a lower gift amount. This may be the most critical step in the request process. Careful, well-timed follow-up helps ensure a gift at the level requested.

***Before the end of the meeting, schedule a brief follow-up visit.***

*“Joe and Mary, may we get together again briefly next Wednesday evening at 7:30 so I may receive your gift? I ask for your decision by then so you may help to provide our campaign critical early momentum while raising the sights of other members who will be asked to join us.”*

## KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL VISIT

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A strategy in scheduling the follow-up timely may be to stress upcoming campaign events/milestones/meetings and holidays that will encourage participation as you requested. Some ideas include:

- Campaign events such as the public launch, next report meeting, campaign newsletter deadline and a goal of raising \$\_\_\_\_\_ by next week
- Holidays or church events (“I'd love to have your decision before our congregation's Mission Fair this Sunday...”)

If you are unable to schedule a follow-up visit at the end of the request meeting (prospect does not have their schedule handy etc.), ask the prospect if you may call back the following day to schedule your next brief conversation to receive their decision. *“Since you do not have your calendar handy, may I call back tomorrow evening to schedule a time next week? Is it more appropriate to call before or after dinner?”*

In conclusion, the positive outcome that any visitor expects as a result of their hard work during the request conversation lies in this strong follow-up strategy.

### **Before the Visit:**

- Make your own pledge first.
- Prepare for the visit.
- Think positively. A confident and enthusiastic mental attitude leads to successful results.
- Keep your sights high.
- Make personal visits only. Please refrain from explaining your congregation's appeal over the telephone.
- Arrange a meeting in the potential donor's home.

### **During the Visit:**

- Begin with casual conversation.
- Use the brochure as your tool to explain the needs.
- After discussing the needs sufficiently, ask for a specific pledge and refer to the suggested gift plans.
- Always request a specific gift amount.
- Do not ask the potential donor to "give what you can."
- Stress the opportunity to pledge over five years. Secure the pledge by asking the donor to sign a pledge card.
- Ask for a 10 percent down payment and thank the donor.
- Do not leave the pledge card with the potential donor.
- If no decision is reached, schedule a follow-up meeting after the visit.
- Careful, well-timed follow-up better ensures a gift at the level requested.
- Turn all pledge cards in to the congregation weekly.





## LCMS WORLD MISSION

The Global Gospel Outreach of  THE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Missouri Synod

### LCMS WORLD MISSION SUPPORT

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# Ablaze

Praying to the Lord of the Harvest,  
LCMS World Mission, in collaboration  
with its North American and worldwide partners,  
will share the Good News of Jesus with  
100 million unreached or uncommitted people  
by the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.  
—LCMS World Mission Statement