

THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT-LCMS



"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have"

1 Peter 3:15

Dear Presidents, Treasurers and Boards of our Southern District Congregations:

I am writing to you to obtain your congregations financial support for your Professional Workers to attend the 2017 Professional Workers Conference, January 30, 2017 to February 4, 2017. As you may know, attendance at professional development conferences is required by synodical resolutions. I am writing to encourage you to support this endeavor.

As you may have heard, this conference is also a five day cruise on the Carnival ship the Triumph with ports of call in Cozumel and Progreso. Obviously this raises the very legitimate question of, "why a conference cruise"?

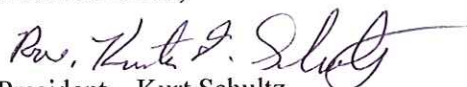
The answer is twofold. First, every ten years or so, the planning committee, tries to plan a longer conference so professional workers can get away and truly decompress while also learning new valuable skills. Make no mistake this is also a learning conference. A one or two day conference is more of an interruption to schedules than a time of renewal. The extended conference has proven to refresh, regenerate and provide a time for renewal and refocusing of the professional worker. The new perspective received from stepping back for five days is truly amazing. The second reason for doing a cruise is, it is very cost effective. Five nights in a decent hotel plus food for 15 meals and tips would cost much more than the basic cruise. A conference cruise also forces one to "un-plug" from the demands of e-mail, cell phones and the like. Please understand, the planning committee has looked very carefully at the stewardship and economics of a conference cruise versus the payoff of a regenerated church worker. We feel this is a great investment in your professional worker.

How much are we asking for? In the past we have used required assessments (per-communicant fees) to fund professional workers conferences. This time, we are asking you to pledge to your professional worker to provide ; (1) a professional fee of \$125.00, (2) a cabin sailing fee medium cost of \$650.00, (3) travel to New Orleans and back (4) a \$100.00 hotel cost in new Orleans if needed and (5) strongly encourage you to fund their spouses cabin sailing fee also with a median of \$650.00. There are slightly less expensive options and more expensive options.

The planning committee skipped two required assessment in anticipation of asking in love for your congregation to generously fund this event. If you need a hard recommendation, **the committee would ask for \$1,000.00 per professional worker and further ask for \$500.00 for the spouse.** The breakdown is, \$813.00 for single person cabin plus the \$125.00 professional fee plus \$52.00 for travel and misc. Please remember this is in lieu of assessments. Obviously with cabin selections running from \$474.00 per person to \$1,559.00 per person there are many variables. **Our recommendation is each congregation, regardless of size, pledge \$1,000.00 per professional worker and we strongly recommends gifting the spouse \$500.00 toward the sailing fees.** We urge this in love and concern for all our professional workers. We also urge you also to be as generous as possible with the retired workers in your congregation. They are a source of great inspiration to our active workers and are also worthy of support.

Please, talk openly with your professional worker about sailing choices and realize that deposits are due now. **SIGN UP IS ON-LINE ONLY AND PASSPORT NUMBERS ARE REQUIRED.** This means the worker needs to do the sign-up but will require your assurance that your congregation will cover the fees. Payments may be made throughout the year so the full amount is not immediately due.

Yours in Christ,


President, Kurt Schultz