2023 MINISTRY REPORT

LEADING FOR TOMORROW

A look back at 2023 and forward in 2024

CONCORDIA PLANS

THE CONCORDIA PLANS

RETIREMENT | HEALTH | DISABILITY & SURVIVOR | MINISTRY SOLUTIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LEADING FOR TOMORROW

- Our Commitment 3-4
- Board of Directors 5-6
- Executive Staff 7-8

SERVING MINISTRIES AND CARING FOR WORKERS

- Working Together As Allies 9-10
- Addressing Mental And Emotional Health 11
- Focusing On Customer Service 12-13
- Strengthening Our Offerings 13-14
- Supporting You Beyond Benefits 15-16

LOOKING AHEAD

- Our Strategic Goals 17-18

MISSION

Serve Ministries … Care for Workers …
So that the Word of God spreads!

VISION

Healthy and engaged workers serving in thriving ministries

PROMISE

Following the example of the early church (Acts 6), Concordia Plans serves LCMS ministries by providing affordable, quality employee benefits and business solutions, freeing up ministry leaders to focus on spreading the Word of God.

CONCORDIA PLANS

Dear Partner in Ministry,

We are excited to bring to you the 2023 Ministry Report from Concordia Plan Services. In it you will find highlights of some of the ways CPS continues to transform in order to meet the changing needs of ministries and workers.

CPS, as an agency of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has been charged with the task of managing the Concordia Plans, which were first established in 1965. Clearly a lot has changed since then, and the rate of change continues to accelerate.

Accordingly, CPS continues to adapt and evolve with the changing environment.

What does not change is our commitment to our mission of serving the ministries of the LCMS and providing care to workers and their families.

In the follow pages, you will see examples of how the CPS team has worked to navigate these challenging times – working towards improved outcomes for members while exercising good stewardship of the resources entrusted to our care.

We want to thank you for your partnership in caring for workers. May God continue to bless your ministry!

To God Alone be the Glory!

Robert P. Lesko
Chairman of the Board

James F. Sanft
President & Chief Executive Officer

WE ARE BLESSED WITH LEADERS AND STAFF AT ALL LEVELS WHO ARE NOT ONLY EXPERTS IN THEIR AREAS OF FOCUS, BUT ALSO DRIVEN BY OUR COMMON MISSION TO SERVE MINISTRIES AND CARE FOR WORKERS SO THAT THE WORD OF GOD SPREADS.

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*** Non-voting member*

CPS EXECUTIVE STAFF

JIM SANFT

President and Chief Executive Officer

For over 15 years, Jim has served as President and CEO of CPS, following nearly 10 years of executive leadership within the organization. As a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries (FSA) and a Member of the American Academy of Actuaries (MAAA), he also brings 10 years of experience in the group insurance and employee benefit industry to his work. In 2022 Sanft was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Concordia University Nebraska, where he previously earned a bachelor's degree in education. He also earned a Master of Science in Mathematics and Statistics from the University Nebraska – Lincoln. A leader in the church benefits community, Jim serves as Chair of the Church Alliance and frequently meets with lawmakers and regulators to discuss the unique concerns of church benefit plans and the members that they serve. Jim frequently shares leadership insights through speaking engagements and recently authored a book "Leading by Faith: Practical Insights for Christian Leaders" that is scheduled to be released by Concordia Publishing House in May 2024.

ROB BOUCHÉ

Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer

Rob Bouché is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Purchasing Manager (CPM) with more than 30 years of total experience. Rob oversees finance & accounting, information technology, human resources, and data analytics & reporting. He spent 20 years in public accounting and the corporate world managing diverse areas including accounting, finance, strategic planning, system implementations, purchasing and sales before moving into the non-profit, faith-based sector more than 10 years ago. Rob now joyfully dedicates his experience to aligning financial and administrative functions with the vision and mission of Concordia Plans. He has a Bachelor of Science in accounting from Southern Illinois University–Carbondale.

BRIAN GARDNER

Vice President and Chief Investment Officer

Brian Gardner joined Concordia Plans in September 2012. Brian is responsible for overseeing the investment activities for Concordia Plans. His career spans more than 20 years in various finance, treasury and investment positions. He previously served as an investment consultant at Mercer Investment Consulting. Brian obtained both a Master of Business Administration and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Saint Louis University.

KEVIN HERWECK

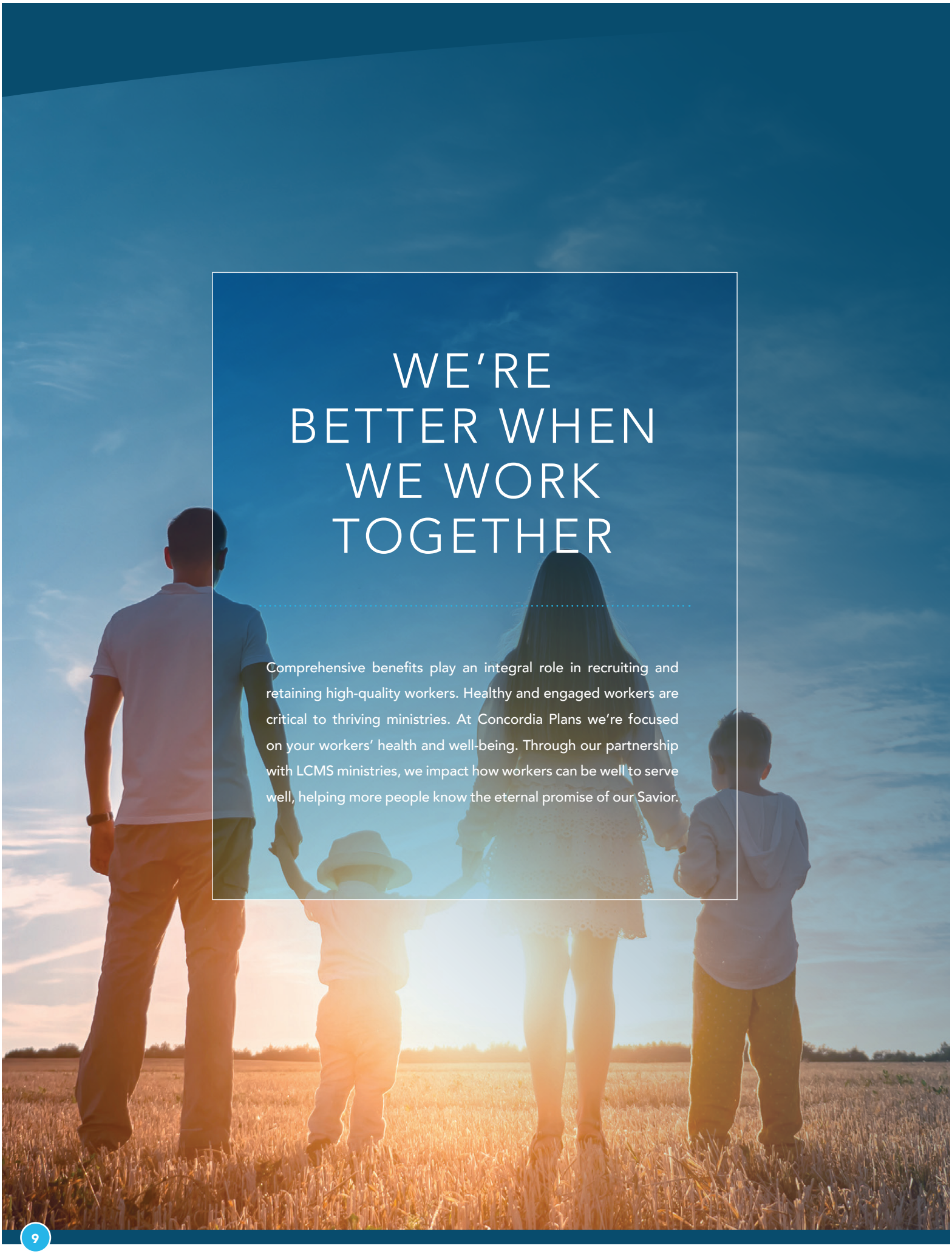
Vice President and Chief Product Officer

Kevin Herweck is responsible for defining vision and driving execution for health, life, disability and retirement products, as well as risk management services. Kevin brings more than 25 years of experience in strategic leadership and organizational effectiveness in various industries, and most recently served in the property and casualty insurance industry. Past roles have included oversight of project management, process improvement, strategic alignment and execution, and organizational change management. Kevin graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology with an emphasis in business from Saint Louis University.

ANN STILLMAN

Vice President and General Counsel

Ann Stillman has worked closely with LCMS agencies for over 35 years, for many years as external legal counsel. In 2011, Ann joined CPS as Vice President and General Counsel. Ann's specialties are in non-profit organization and employee benefits law. She is secretary of the Church Alliance, a coalition of leaders from 35 church benefit programs. As secretary, Ann advocates with Congress and regulators, for clergy, lay workers, and their families in the area of employee benefits – including retirement and health care. Ann has a Juris Doctorate from Saint Louis University and a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Missouri–Columbia.



WE'RE BETTER WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER

Comprehensive benefits play an integral role in recruiting and retaining high-quality workers. Healthy and engaged workers are critical to thriving ministries. At Concordia Plans we're focused on your workers' health and well-being. Through our partnership with LCMS ministries, we impact how workers can be well to serve well, helping more people know the eternal promise of our Savior.

WORKING TOGETHER AS ALLIES FOR HEALTHY WORKERS AND THRIVING MINISTRIES

Your ministry plays an essential role in church worker care by offering comprehensive employee benefits. We value walking alongside you to fulfill this promise.

By participating in the Concordia Plans, you're offering your workers access to resources typically only available to the largest companies. These high-quality benefits support LCMS workers throughout their ministry and into retirement, creating positive health outcomes and financial security that enhances their ability to serve God and care for their families.

And you can rest assured that as part of the church, we have your ministry and workers' best interests in mind in everything we do. We take our responsibility to care for workers to heart – keeping stewardship, faith and values at the forefront when evaluating our products and services, defining benefits, and determining costs. As your ministry partner, we listen to you and act to support you and your workers' needs – never satisfied with the status quo, continually improving our offerings and our service to you.

OVERALL PARTICIPATION STATS

- **CPS** SERVES APPROXIMATELY -

6,000
MINISTRIES

85,000
WORKERS & DEPENDENTS

25,000
RETIREES & SURVIVING SPOUSES

RECEIVING BENEFITS FROM THE CONCORDIA RETIREMENT PLAN PENSION

We are proud that through our work thousands of ministries come together to support those who are doing His work. It's a blessing to serve and support your ministry and workers!

LEADER SPOTLIGHT

LEE HYATT
Assistant Vice President, Product Solutions

Lee joined Concordia Plans in June 2023, moving from Dallas, Texas to St. Louis, Missouri, to lead product solutions for the Concordia Health Plan and Concordia Disability and Survivor Plan. He has a bachelor's degree in communications from Texas A&M University and more than 15 years of experience in the employee benefits, insurance and healthcare industries. Lee's deep understanding about the dynamics of church plans is thanks to his eight-plus years of experience in strategic product management in church plan design and delivery. Passionate about identifying and building health, life, disability and ancillary product solutions for LCMS ministries, he serves to support church workers and their families as they work to spread God's Word and bring more people to know Jesus.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK IMPACT THOSE THAT CPS SERVES?

"I consider myself a product nerd, always trying to answer one key question: what problem does the customer have, and how can I help solve it? My team's goal is to understand LCMS workers so we can build products and services that meet their needs. They have specific challenges, difficulties and opportunities. They work hard to further the mission of the church and sometimes suffer from things like burnout, compassion fatigue or health struggles because of their commitment to that mission. It's my job to understand that, to understand the employee benefits and healthcare industries and to find solutions that meet those unique needs. Health care and insurance in the U.S. are complicated, and I get to spend my career and use my experience helping church workers navigate that complex system, so they can focus on what Christ has called them to do."

KEEPING A PULSE ON AN IMPORTANT WORKER-CARE CONCERN

At Concordia Plans we care for the well-being of LCMS church workers and their families in many ways, including providing resources to address their mental and emotional health needs. In 2023, we expanded those resources with more coming in 2024.

- We made it easier for our members to find Christian mental health counselors through our Cigna Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which provides free one-on-one counseling sessions to all members of the Concordia Health Plan (CHP). We received feedback from members who wanted to speak with someone aligned in faith, and now it's easier than ever to find an in-network Christian counselor.

- For those specifically seeking a Lutheran counselor, we've updated the mental health section of our website to address that need. A list of Lutheran counselors includes contact information along with a designation of whether they're contracted with the Cigna EAP.

The importance of MENTAL HEALTH resources was recognized across our Synod in 2023, most notably at the summer's 68th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

MEMBERS CAN FIND A LUTHERAN COUNSELOR ON

CONCORDIAPLANS.ORG/MENTALHEALTH

- Two resolutions, 1-07 and 3-03A, addressed worker mental health. In these resolutions our EAP was identified as a valuable mental health resource (1-07), and our participation in a Synod collaboration focused on worker mental and overall health was recognized (3-03A). These resolutions show the collective responsibility of congregations, District leaders and others in caring for mental health, and we're thankful for the emphasis and collaboration.

- The group recognized in Resolution 3-03A is the Worker Well-being Alliance, a cross-organizational collaboration of Concordia Plans, the LCMS and several District presidents. Our Chief Product Officer Kevin Herweck and our Director of Worker Wellness Steve Gruenwald serve on the Alliance.

- The Alliance is planning ways these organizations will collaborate with other Synod entities and recognized service organizations to provide and promote resources for all aspects of church worker health. They'll also focus on the importance of LCMS lay people recognizing the health needs among church workers serving in their own ministry and supporting those workers.

CPS will keep up the momentum around mental health support in 2024 by further enhancing our programs and providing a new level of care.

The activity in 2023 led to a significant increase in the number of CHP members using the EAP, a positive sign that more LCMS workers and their families are seeking guidance to get the help they need.

- In Spring 2024, we plan to introduce our expanded mental health solutions by Evernorth Confide. Evernorth Confide will be a new enhanced EAP with navigation for your workers' mental health needs. Evernorth Confide will make it easier for members to get care by matching them with a care navigator to find a mental health clinician who is a good fit or to find the right digital tools for self-guided support. The care navigator also will provide follow-up support throughout the journey to ensure a member's needs are being met.

- The new enhanced EAP will provide 24/7 immediate care and has a broad spectrum of professional help available no matter what challenge the member is facing. Details will be shared with CHP members this spring, and we hope ministry leaders will encourage workers who need additional mental and emotional health support to take advantage of this resource.

THE NEW ENHANCED EAP

MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE 8 FREE SESSIONS
PER TOPIC - PER COUNSELOR

EVALUATING HOW WE SERVE BECAUSE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND YOUR EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Managing employee benefits as a ministry or even using employee benefits as a member can be complicated sometimes, and at CPS we're equipped to help. Our experienced team is available to answer questions, navigate situations and provide a high level of service when needed. In 2023, we made important changes to improve the way we serve. Here are a few highlights:

- In past years we've had one or two members of our Ministry Engagement team devoted to serving the unique needs of our smaller ministries. However, because of the large number of smaller ministries, we couldn't provide responses as quickly as we wanted, so we changed our service model.

  Questions and calls from smaller ministries are now first addressed by our Customer Care team, the group that answers when you call the main CPS phone number. This team has been able to solve the issue for approximately 80% of those calls without the need to transfer to another person. Our Ministry Engagement team still has a team member dedicated to smaller ministries, and with fewer calls coming her way, she can provide more in-depth service and devote more time to the more complicated issues.

> By having these teams join forces in their commitment to serve, **we're providing faster and more in-depth service to our thousands of smaller ministries.**

- The benefits needs of a ministry can be quite different depending on its type, size and location. We understand a "one-size-fits-all" model can be overwhelming and confusing. To provide the best service, plan options and resources to ministries, we're strengthening our focus on understanding the needs of different types of ministries and then delivering tailored solutions aligning with those needs. We're hopeful you'll find this more purposeful approach to benefit package offerings helpful and less daunting.

- Members who are considering retirement have a lot to consider. Beyond picking the date, they'll need to make sure they're financially prepared for what comes next. So now when they call to request a retirement packet, we ask follow-up questions about their retirement preparation. Many are connected with our Financial Education team, which is comprised of financial professionals who can walk them through important considerations. This consultative approach has already benefited pre-retirement workers who lacked information to make the best decisions.

ENCOURAGE YOUR WORKERS TO ACCESS RETIREMENT CONNECTION THROUGH THE MEMBER PORTAL OR DIRECTLY AT RETIREMENTCONNECTION.EHR.COM.

WE ENHANCED RETIREMENT CONNECTION, THE ONLINE TOOL INTRODUCED MORE THAN A DECADE AGO THAT WORKERS IN THE CONCORDIA RETIREMENT PLAN CAN USE TO PREPARE FOR RETIREMENT. **WORKERS CAN NOW:**

- Easily see the retirement pension benefits their ministry is providing.
- View the different types of benefits they're earning and the savings they're accumulating.
- Model different retirement scenarios and income to assist with planning.
- Initiate their retirement benefits.
- Access tools and resources for financial and retirement planning.

The service we provide ministries and members reflects the positive work culture and experience we've created for our talented staff. In 2023, Concordia Plans was named a "Top Workplace USA," a national recognition for companies that prioritize a people-centered culture. The award is based on internal staff survey results that also qualified us for special recognitions for "Purpose & Values," "Employee Well-Being," the "Non-profit Industry" and more.

We care about those we serve (and of course, each other) and work together to support you as you spread the Word. Many of our staff say their favorite part of working at CPS is living our mission and caring for LCMS workers and ministries. We thank our ministry partners for being a driving force in making CPS a great place to work!

LEADER SPOTLIGHT

CHERYL JOHNSON
Assistant Vice President, People Strategies

Having joined CPS in 2019, Cheryl leverages her 32+ years of human resources experience to foster an award-winning culture at CPS where employees feel valued, rally around our mission and serve with a sense of purpose. She has worked for biotech startups, global organizations, Fortune 50 companies and non-profit organizations, specializing in talent acquisition, performance management, strategic planning, and compensation. With a master's degree in human resources management from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, Cheryl is a member of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) and holds its Senior Certified Professional certification (SHRM-SCP).

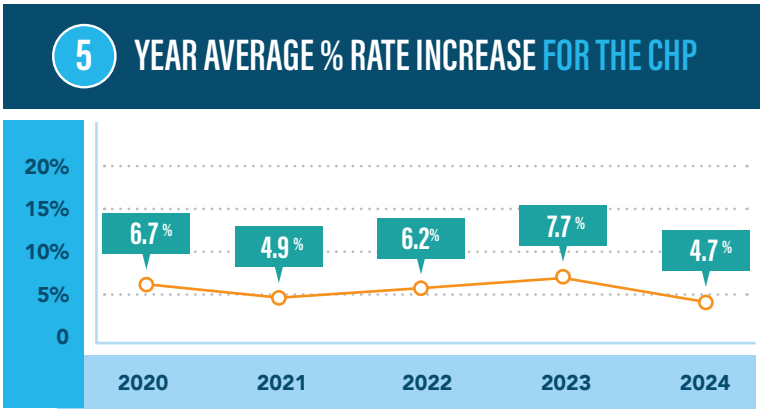
HOW DOES YOUR WORK IMPACT THOSE CPS SERVES?

"My HR team's mission is to walk with our employees to foster success, professional growth and well-being so they can serve and care for our members and ministries. Our Employee Solutions team, comprised of team members across the organization, provides us with great input about what we can do better to support one another. Our success is reflected in awards we have achieved at the regional and national level, with results based on employee surveys. When reviewing the survey responses, I have two sections I like to read first. In 'What three words describe our culture,' the words typically reflect our values of compassion, integrity and stewardship, as well as mission. But in 'Why employees love their job,' they say they love our mission to serve our ministries and members and appreciate the fulfilling work they do here. I feel blessed to be working with an amazing, caring and compassionate team. And yes, I do cry when I read their comments because I am touched, and it reminds me of why I love my job!"

In 2024, we're excited to kick off our Ministry Advisory Council, comprised of representatives from more than 20 LCMS ministries of various types, sizes and geographies. This Council will meet quarterly and provide important input and feedback on current or proposed CPS initiatives and projects. We're thankful to those ministry contacts who are serving on the Council, and we're certain the results of our time together will improve the way all ministries and members are served.

REVIEWING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES LEADS TO SAVINGS AND CHANGES FOR 2024

Despite increasing costs and a projected 9.9% trend increase[1] in the healthcare industry, **we kept the 2024 rate increase for the CHP at a 4.7%[2] aggregate**, due in part to the planned changes with our vendor partnerships and offered solutions. These changes provide better cost control with a higher quality of care and lower administrative fees without diminishing services for CHP members.



6.0% **The average rate increase for the CHP over the last five years (2020-2024) was 6.0%.**

Our team diligently works to keep rate increases as low as possible because we understand how important contribution dollars are for LCMS ministries.

[1] *The medical trend rate was 10.7% in 2023 and projected to be 9.9% in 2024. (Source: WTW Global Medical Trends Survey). Note: Just as food and other necessities are impacted by inflation, so is the cost of health care. Healthcare inflation, or "trend," is the increase in cost of paying for health care, year-over-year. Unfortunately, in the U.S., healthcare costs tend to increase faster than other expenses.*

[2] *Per the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), employers anticipated a 7% rise in healthcare costs for 2024 based on data from the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans, the second consecutive year employers projected a 7% increase.*

Much of 2023 was spent evaluating our vendor partners and the plan design for the Concordia Health Plan (CHP). Top-of-mind considerations included improving efficiencies, identifying the right solutions for quality outcomes and optimizing our customers' experiences. Through the diligent research of our Product Solutions team and consultants, we finalized recommendations and proceeded with implementations to be ready for 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 CHP CHANGES INCLUDE:

- Introducing a new service, **Quantum Health, a healthcare navigator** that will be the best "first call" for members for all healthcare-related questions, including those about medical and prescription benefits, claims, in-network providers, required authorizations, and which solutions are right for their healthcare needs.
- Introducing a new resource, **Healthcare Bluebook**, where members can compare the cost and quality of medical facilities and providers. When they opt to receive care from a recommended provider within 12 months of their initial search, members become eligible for incentives.
- Moving to new network and claims administrators, Anthem and Ameriben for BCBS plan options and Allegiance for Cigna plan options.
- Consolidating telehealth options to **Teladoc** for most members.
- Enhancing the services available to support members with type 2 diabetes and the often-associated health complications of high blood pressure and weight management.
- Negotiating a new agreement with Express Scripts as part of the Pharmacy Benefit Coalition of the Church Benefits Association.

Visit our website to learn more about the CHP and wellness solutions to help workers be well to serve well!

In addition to reviewing the CHP, disability benefits under the Concordia Disability & Survivor Plan (CDSP) were thoroughly evaluated. The CDSP provides workers with peace of mind, knowing income replacement is available if they miss work due to a disability, including pregnancy. Changes were recommended and implemented for 2024 that help strengthen the plan and care for workers in their time of need.

$86.2 MILLION

The groundwork completed in 2023 for the CHP and the CDSP is projected to save the trusts approximately $86.2 million over the next three years.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 CDSP CHANGES INCLUDE:

- Reducing the amount of time a member must wait from the onset of the disability before benefit payments can begin (called the "Elimination Period") from 14 to seven days.
- Updating the healthcare coverage and associated waiver of contributions policy (for CHP members).

To see more details about CDSP benefits, visit the disability section of our website.

ENHANCING EFFORTS TO SUPPORT MINISTRIES AND MEMBERS BEYOND BENEFITS

Concordia Plans has been providing employee benefits for nearly 60 years. During that time, we've expanded benefit offerings and rolled out resources and programs to meet the changing needs of LCMS ministries and members, continually looking for ways to help those we serve. Through conversations and survey feedback, we learned that people want more assistance, information and guidance from a trusted resource—and we're here to help!

> We looked for opportunities to lend a hand, share information and alleviate stressors for ministries and members where we could.

- Our Worker Wellness team expanded its wellness education efforts. Comprised of a health and wellness educator, as well as six financial educators, this team presents at LCMS conferences and other events; hosts monthly webinars on a variety of wellness topics; coordinates the Wellness Champion program and resources; leads pre-retirement workshops; works directly with seminaries, universities and students in church work programs; and provides complimentary financial, one-on-one sessions with members.
  - *The team conducted 1,318 one-on-ones to help members with financial planning – a 27% increase from 2022.*
  - *Two of our financial educators have Accredited Financial Counselor® certifications, offering additional expertise in helping individuals set and achieve personal financial goals.*
- We "soft-launched" a new service called **MyAdminPartner™ (MAP)** administered by our Ministry Solutions team. CPS understands many ministries are struggling to fill administrative roles, so MAP was created to serve as an extension of a ministry's staff to help with day-to-day, administrative tasks such as bookkeeping, payroll services and benefits plan administration. Ministries can choose the level of support that best fits their needs. We'll be working with select districts throughout 2024 to introduce MAP and onboard more ministries.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, THE WORKER WELLNESS TEAM ENGAGED WITH 18,627 MEMBERS ON:

- Financial, mental and physical wellness topics through live presentations.
- Live webinars.
- One-on-ones.
- E-mail campaigns and recorded webinars.

*That's a **91% increase** in engagements over 2022, demonstrating the appetite and appreciation for wellness education.*

Thirteen ministries began using MAP during our limited rollout with three more scheduled for early 2024 implementations. We're looking forward to helping more ministries focus on their mission by easing their administrative burdens.

QUOTES FROM MAP PARTICIPANTS:

I always feared that some important detail would be missed with W2 information that would get me or our congregation in trouble for inadvertently doing something incorrectly. Now, I'm approaching our tax year with the reassurance of MyAdminPartner behind us to know we're ready.

– Rev. Joel Brandt, Cross Lutheran Church

MyAdminPartner has allowed me the freedom to put the organization's benefits administration out of the forefront of my mind and to spend my brainpower on other things that keep LutheranFCU operating and growing. [Our MAP representative] has become an extension of our Team. The trust that I now have in our benefits services through our partnership with CPS and knowing that our Team is taken care of appropriately is an awesome feeling!

– Amanda Walker, President and CEO, Lutheran Federal Credit Union

LEADER SPOTLIGHT

DESMOND KITTELSON

Director, Ministry Engagement Team

Desmond joined CPS in 2015 as an Account Manager serving the medium- and large-sized ministries in the Texas, Oklahoma, Mid-South and Southern Districts. Today, he leads a team of 12 Account Managers. After earning his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Oklahoma, Desmond spent 23 years managing school portrait territories for Lifetouch National School Studios in Austin, Nashville, San Antonio and St. Louis. Managing and selling in a profit-and-loss environment taught him the importance of listening to his clients to provide them the best possible product and service.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK IMPACT THOSE CPS SERVES?

"I am a lifelong LCMS member and consider it a blessing to serve those who work to spread the Word of God. Now I lead our team of Account Managers whose role is to support our LCMS ministries. We assist them with managing their worker benefits, providing benefits education for their workers and finding the right products and business solutions to care for their workers, save money and be more efficient."

- We introduced Shareboard, a free, online LCMS community created specifically to support ministry lay leaders such as congregation presidents, school board members, volunteer coordinators, board of elders members and more. Nearly 450 people signed up to use Shareboard to ask questions, access resources and share information, experiences and best practices with one another. In addition to being a discussion forum, Shareboard is a place where leaders can access a library of helpful resources such as policies, templates, surveys, presentations and papers on a variety of topics. Encourage your ministry's lay leaders to join at CPShareboard.com.

One of the most popular Shareboard resources downloaded in 2023 was about mentoring new board members.

- Our Ministry Engagement team members, who act as account managers, continued offering personalized support to help ministries navigate benefits administration and their online portal, open enrollment activities, business needs, benefit education and more. We also have designated team members who assist each district office and cover district events such as conferences, conventions, workshops and more. In addition to service support throughout the year, the team:
  - *Attended 780 meetings with ministries.*
  - *Gave 110 presentations centered around benefits administration or plan offerings.*
  - *Led 131 benefits presentations for workers at their ministries.*
- We formed a new team, Ministry Relations, focused on building relationships and serving ministries. It includes a dedicated school relations consultant who is ready to listen and help schools work through their challenges regarding recruitment and retention, business solutions, benefits, budgeting and more. It also includes a retirement solutions consultant who connects with ministry leaders and others to help them understand the value of CPS retirement solutions, particularly the Concordia Retirement Plan (pension), so they are better equipped to discuss the benefits and express their value in recruitment and retention efforts.
- We published our first Stewardship Report in the summer, providing operational insights as well as transparency regarding plan participation, trust assets and benefits paid.
- We played an interactive role at the 68th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, offering:
  - *Six, complimentary, lunch-and-learn sessions on various topics including ministry solutions, financial wellness, the new Quantum Health navigation service, and physical and emotional health.*
  - *One-on-one, financial education sessions and other consultative benefit support at our exhibit booth.*
  - *Morning walks with convention attendees to help start the day with physical activity and fellowship.*

WE'RE EXCITED TO BRING YOU THE SPEAKERS BUREAU, BEGINNING IN 2024.

This new resource will spotlight specific areas of expertise and dynamic presenters. It will also provide a convenient way for interested ministries and organizations to request a speaker for their events. In addition to speaking about benefits and worker care, we're looking forward to helping ministries with topics such as leadership, human resources, communications and starting new ministries.

More information about the Speakers Bureau will be shared directly with ministries during 2024.

LOOKING AHEAD, KEEPING OUR EYE ON THE HORIZON

Our five-year strategic goals were introduced in Serve, the 2022 Ministry Report, and they continue to guide our work in service to you. Aligned within these strategic goals, we'll continue to strengthen CPS and how we serve and support you.

LEADER SPOTLIGHT

ANDREA HART
Assistant Vice President, Retirement Solutions

Andrea joined CPS in 2019 and oversees the strategy and design of the retirement program. Andrea is an Associate with the Society of Actuaries and is on the roster of active Enrolled Actuaries administered by the Joint Board (a board formed by appointees from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, U.S. Department of Labor, and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation). She has more than 30 years of experience in the retirement industry as an actuary. Much of her career was spent at actuarial firms Aon and Willis Towers Watson. Her experience includes advising Fortune 100 companies with plan design and retirement financial management and consulting on benefit administration. Andrea is the Chair of the Church Benefits Association Retirement Committee.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK IMPACT THOSE CPS SERVES?

"I work closely with the Concordia Retirement Plan pension actuaries and the CPS Board to ensure, to the extent possible, that the CRP will continue to be a thriving sustainable program that helps ministries attract and retain talent and provides meaningful retirement income to members for many decades to come. Our team also works with best-in-class vendors to educate members on financial wellness, provide tools for retirement planning, and enable and encourage members to save efficiently through the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan 403(b) so that they can be ready for retirement. My experience as a treasurer for Christian ministries helps me to better understand the unique challenges LCMS ministries face and has reinforced my alignment with CPS values. Much of my career has been spent solving problems, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to bring solutions that can further the Kingdom."

OUR GOALS

1. **Ensure financial viability and long-term sustainability of the Concordia Plans Trusts and Concordia Plan Services.**

We are blessed to have expertise – internally through our finance and investments staff and externally through best-in-class advisors – as we plot the financial future of the Concordia Plans. Delivering on the promises made to active and retired LCMS workers is critical to our mission, and the best long-term outlook for the Plans is achieved when ministries stay together and unite to care for LCMS workers.

2. **Increase impact, value and outcomes for our customers and our LCMS stakeholders.**

At CPS we serve those who are doing the Lord's work, and we are focused on growing and improving as we serve. The LCMS and individual ministries entrust us with a great responsibility, and we strive to increase the impact of our work.

3. **Optimize and align resources to support and sustain the strategy.**

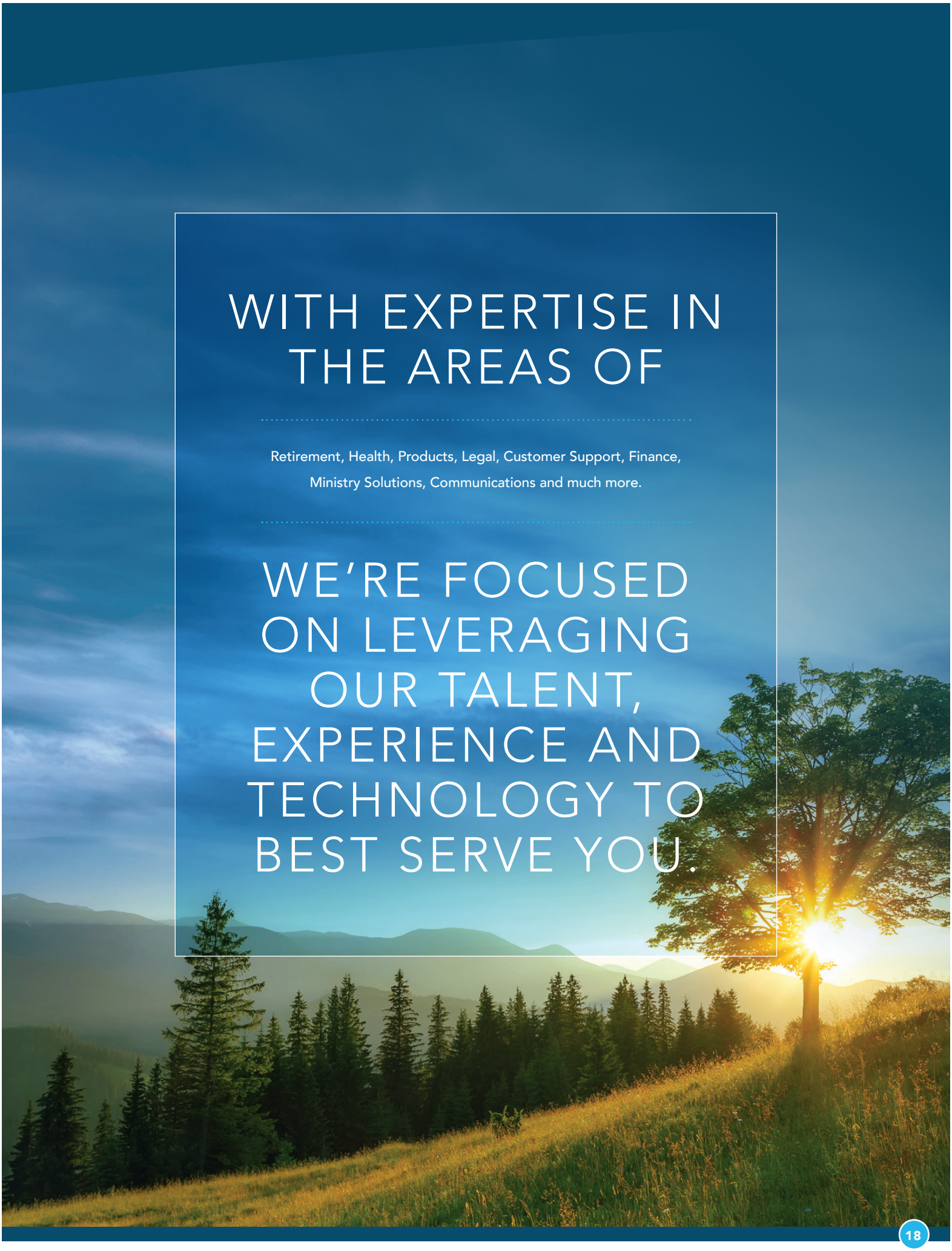
Being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us is critical. Our staff is dedicated to serving LCMS ministries and workers, and as an organization, we're dedicated to placing our team members in the best positions to serve.

4. **Establish path to leadership and organization continuity.**

CPS has been serving LCMS ministries and workers for nearly six decades, and we're thankful for those who came before us to put our organization in a strong position to serve. Likewise, we're thankful for those who will come after us to fulfill promises made, so we're doing all we can today to put those future leaders in the best position to succeed.

While new initiatives will come, and sometimes go, after they've achieved their stated objectives, we are – and will remain – committed to serving your ministry.

May God bless the important work of your ministry and all those you're caring for through the benefits and services of your Concordia Plans. We enjoyed our opportunities to engage with ministries, members and the LCMS community throughout 2023 and thank you for your partnership!



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