

# Enhancing Ministry Through Church Administration Software



## Serving servants of the Word...

Dear Partner in Ministry,

Since joining the Concordia Technology Solutions team it has been my honor to speak with pastors, secretaries, church treasurers and volunteers who sincerely wish to share the Gospel and expand the Kingdom of our Lord. Oftentimes, these wonderful servant leaders find themselves restricted by cumbersome processes and frustrating daily tasks. Time and energy that could've been used ministering to their communities is frequently stolen by the heartache of managing information and juggling mailings.

While software isn't considered standard in most ministry toolboxes, the right program can make your ministry more effective, increase your contact with congregation members, connect you with your community and help you deepen your life-long ministry to individuals and families.

And it can help take care of those never ending details: membership directories, Sunday School attendance, Church Registry, birthdays, anniversaries, newsletters, attendance tracking, room scheduling, contribution campaigns, church body reports, payroll, check book reconciliation, and financial statements to name a few!

The Bible clearly promises that if we follow in faith, our ministry of the Gospel will increase. Software programs can help you handle the ever-increasing depth and scope of your calling. Ideally, software is a tool that will not only help keep you from being overwhelmed with details, but will also open new ministry doors, and renew hearts for the Lord.

This white paper shares a few ideas for using software to deepen your ministry. No matter which program you purchase, my prayer is that your congregation will continue to grow in understanding and love for the Lord.



**Deepen the impact of your ministry through effective and efficient church management software.**

Most Sincerely,  
Brad Wheeling, Manager  
Concordia Technology Solutions

### Time Saving Ideas...

- Save mailing label templates in your Report Library. This drastically reduces the time it takes to assemble a mailing.
- Work in batch mode to allow volunteers to work from home.
- Mail-merge features are essential when producing holiday and seasonal letters.
- Export email addresses to your Mail software and create congregation specific email distribution lists.

## Responding To Tragedy

Tragic national events, such as the recent terrorist attacks, draw normally "unchurched" people to your services. These events stretched many congregations far beyond their normal ministry capacity. Pastors and administrators alike were challenged to answer the needs of their own congregation while welcoming these new friends to their church families. By creating dynamic subgroups in your *Attendance* module these event-inspired visitors can be differentiated easily. Your ministry teams can then provide targeted contact, additional support and fellowship to these seekers. This same system can be applied to identify holiday-only attendees.

## Member Care

Using the Selected Events Report in the *Membership* module enables your church to reach out to existing members showing appreciation and affirming their value. The following story is a great example. A church elder took it upon himself to send everyone in his ministry group a card on their birthday. Frequently people approached him thanking him for remembering them with a card. Over the next year, the church secretary began to track attendance and contributions by elder ministry group. The elder sending the cards had far and away the highest percentage of people assigned to him attending and contributing. The pastor then required the other elders to send birthday cards also. Over the next year the church realized an increase in their attendance, not only at Sunday worship but at other church events as well.



**Connect and care for your church family**

Another great ministry use of the *Attendance* module is to identify a regular attendee who has been missing from regular Sunday attendance.. In a small church this can be done by sight but in a large church it is far too easy for these brothers and sisters to slip through the cracks. By recognizing who is missing you can make calls and visits and find out if there are issues your ministry can address.

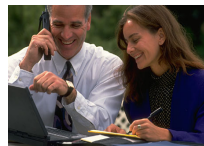
## Evangelism and Visit Teams

Visits are an ever important part of ministering to a congregation. Whether it is a visit to the hospital to encourage or provide communion to an ailing member, or a welcome call on church visitors, the *Membership* module can help organize your schedule, and record important notes and details for further reference. These notes can prove invaluable in communicating pertinent, confidential information to all members of your ministry team.

- In conjunction with the *Attendance* module, you can manage your welcome or visitor evangelism programs: identify prospects, track attendance patterns, schedule visits, conduct mailings, schedule follow-up contacts and evaluate effectiveness of program.
- You can track visits by person or by household, allowing your team to develop individual ministry plans for each member.
- Pre-defined reports allow you to quickly assess your visit schedule; print an 'info' sheet on the person or family being visited; and track visit patterns across your entire congregation.
- Security features allow you to restrict the ability to view and read visit notes, allowing for confidential records to be stored in the computer for future reference. This is especially helpful in bringing new ministry team members 'up to speed'.

## Pledge Drives

Pledge drives are much more effective when the *Contribution* module is used to its full capability. Whether you are funding a youth mission trip to Mexico, or initiating a building fund, this module will help you determine membership giving patterns. You can then focus particular attention to those people with a propensity towards giving to those specific funds. You can easily see which members you would send a fund-raising mailing to, and to which members a personal visit would be wise. Once the contributions are made, monies can be assigned and tracked directly into the *Finance* module. Increased efficiency saves time and increases the total dollars raised!



*Combine care and visit ideas to aid your Welcome Teams in helping new members become familiar with their new church home and feel welcome among their new faith family.*

## Newsletters and Mailings

Even while the world grows more connected by the Internet, direct mail is still one of the most common means churches use to stay in touch with their members, visitors and friends.



**Direct Mail is still one of the most effective ways to communicate with your congregation**

Whether your most common mailings are church newsletters (By Household; for All Households), youth activity fliers (By Person; for Subgroup—Youth Group/Interest; Name—Nickname, Last Name) or donor solicitations (By Household; for Subgroup—Corporate Donors), you can enter these settings once and have them available every time you use Mailing Labels Report in *Membership*.

Many churches have a wide variety of mailings they send out on a regular basis, and just as wide a selection of individuals who do—and don't—want to receive them. One simple method of adding power to your sorting is to use one of the Optional fields available under the Household or People Option Tabs. By assigning one of these fields to “oversee” your mailing lists, you can easily modify existing Subgroups to track people who should or shouldn't be included in mailings.

## Volunteer Coordination

With the Ministry Position Manager found in the *Membership* module, finding the perfect candidates for any ministry position is a snap! A specific name can be assigned for an job that has required activities, skills or training assigned. Only those people fitting the profile will be listed in the results and a subgroup can be attached which will further qualify by age, gender, years of church membership, etc. The end result is a list of members truly qualified for the open position. What a time saver!

## Ministry Routes

If your congregation has invested a considerable amount of money in a church bus or van, you may have an untapped ministry resources. Vehicles can be used for more than rides to the Sunday service!

The Ministry Route Manager, found in the *Scheduler* module can help the church organize and operate ministries involving transportation. These include shuttles to Mid-week programs or VBS, Senior or Shut-in shopping days, Neighborhood evangelism planning, Homeless/sheltered shuttling and scouting, Holiday Food Baskets, and Meals on Wheels.

## Tutor and Mentor Programs



Tutoring and Mentoring is a terrific intergenerational ministry opportunity. Congregations can create programs which connect working and retired adults with the youth of the church and community. These programs can be used in addition to, or in place of more organized after-school programs and can take place at the church campus or in the student's homes. Use the *Membership* module to identify, contact and register eligible students and adults. The Ministry Position Manager mentioned above will match students groups with your adult volunteers. You could even use the Ministry Route Manager to shuttle your students to and from study groups and special events!

*Help volunteers use their Time and Talent more effectively.*

*Coordinate spiritual gifts with congregation service opportunities.*

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## Choosing the right software....

The Concordia Technology Solutions team sincerely wants you to find the software solution that best fits your church's needs. We encourage you to carefully evaluate your software needs. In addition to lots of prayer, we encourage you to:

1. Form a committee to evaluate different software options. If possible, include representatives who will be using the software, ministry or outreach coordinators, volunteers, and someone with computer 'know-how.' It can be overwhelming to try out so many software programs. Extra hands (and eyes) make the process more manageable.
2. Consider what you're doing now to manage ministries, and what you might want to do. Software should be an investment for the future.
3. Assess all associated expenses. Be sure to include any new equipment you will need, training, manuals, and support. Project how much money the software will cost you in the year's to come (upgrades and support); include this number in future budgets.
4. Once you've narrowed your search, have the people who will be using the software make several 'get-to-know-you' calls to the support line. Support personnel should be knowledgeable, responsive, professional and friendly.
5. Allow for 'learning-curve' time. Schedule your move to the new software carefully and give your staff plenty of time to become adjusted to the change. Its perfectly reasonable to install the new software and learn it, while still using the older software for day-to-day operations. Remember, even the best programs only work

## Shepherd's Staff Software

Shepherd's Staff Software is developed, sold and supported by Concordia Technology Solutions, the technology division of Concordia Publishing House (CPH). CPH is a self-supporting, non-profit corporation located in St. Louis, Missouri, in the same neighborhood founded by our German predecessors.



**Serving you as you serve your  
Congregation.**

We are pleased to offer several versions of the software, designed to meet a variety of church sizes and needs. We try to help each church find just the right solution, and are very willing to arrange special packages and pricing.

We also fully develop and support our software. In response to customer requests, we have completely re-staffed and re-organized our software team to effectively and gratefully serve our ministry partners.