

What is the *Congregational Treasurer's Manual*?

The question is often raised, “What is the Congregational Treasurer’s Manual?” This annual resource has really gained popularity over the years for its complete details covering a wide range of administrative and tax issues benefiting staff and boards.

Did you know the resource has over 175 pages of information? The Manual is now divided into two volumes and has 23 chapters regarding employment issues, federal and state tax matters, accounting and finance chapters and more!

Did you know that housing allowance is an exclusion for income tax for ministers of the Gospel, but is not excluded from self-employment tax? Chapter 2 includes housing (parsonage) allowance information including limitations on housing allowance and sample housing allowance resolutions. The Manual also states “At year-end, the treasurer prepares the W-2 by deducting the housing allowance from the gross salary, reporting the net salary in Box 1 and the housing allowance in Box 14 and any unused housing allowance reported on Form 1040.”

Did you know that Concordia Health Plan lets the employer define the number of hours worked for full time employment (more than 20, 25, or 30 hours)? Chapter 4 outlines benefit summary, administration, tax aspects, and group term life insurance details.

Did you know that churches should withhold FICA taxes for organists? Chapter 7 includes a number of payroll topics including characteristics of employees vs. self employed thus clarifying year end tax documents (W-2 vs. Form 1099-Misc).

Did you know that a contribution to a benevolence fund or scholarship fund supporting a specific project or individual is NOT tax deductible? Chapter 10 explains contribution details including “a contribution designating a desired recipient will not be deductible since the intent of the donor is to make a transfer of funds directly to a particular individual rather than to a charitable organization.”

Did you know that sales tax is required for churches but schools are exempt in Iowa; also churches and schools are exempt from federal unemployment tax? Chapter 12 includes tax related details.

Did you know that every congregation of the Synod should be incorporated? Chapter 13 explains the importance of incorporation to protect the church from legal liability. Churches will be able file the next biennial report online January 2011. More information from the Iowa Secretary of State office can be found at www.sos.state.ia.us.

Did you know that several van line agreements are in place for all members of your congregation and are not only limited to church workers? Chapter 15 outlines the LCMS Group Purchasing Agreements providing discounts to churches on several products and services.

Did you know that you must save minutes from council meetings and voters meetings permanently? An excellent summary of “record retention” is listed on page 23-6 (Chapter 23, page 6).

Did you know you could save thousands of dollars a year by not completing a full audit, but going through a “Guide for Financial Review?” Chapter 25 lists many questions for an in-house financial review by the leadership, thus saving dollars for an annual audit by Certified Public Accountants.

Did you know that workers compensation is required coverage and general liability policy limits should be at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence coverage. Chapter 26 explains risk management and insurance to assist congregations with daily operations, decision making, and with the annual insurance renewal.

Did you know the back of the Treasurer’s Manual includes resources, glossary, and several blank forms? Several excellent resources are listed, plus sample blank forms for payroll, tax, IRS, and Concordia Plan Services.

I hope this information may have given you a better understanding of this valuable resource. Besides the printed manual, the Congregational Treasurer’s Manual is available for quick reference online at www.lcms.org/ctm. You can also purchase a complete book and CD for \$10; contact Roger Curtis at the District Office.

