



**Pacific Southwest District  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

**Calling A Commissioned Worker**

**A Manual for  
Congregations and Schools Engaged in the Call Process  
for Principal, Teacher, DCE, DPM, etc.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I: The Administrator, Teacher, DCE, and Educator Vacancy Support System.....	5
Section II: Key Terms You Will Hear and Use .....	6
Section III: The Call and the Relationship Between Worker and Congregation – Biblical Perspective.....	9
Section IV: The Process of Calling a Commissioned Minister .....	11
Section V: Call Process Steps .....	13
APPENDIX A: Helpful Information to Start Your Call Process.....	22
APPENDIX B: Call Process Checklist.....	27
APPENDIX C: Forming Your Call Committee.....	30
APPENDIX D: Congregation/School Information.....	34
APPENDIX E: Ministers of Religion – Commissioned – Guidelines for Calling a First – Call Candidate.....	36
APPENDIX F: Colloquy Completion Process Description.....	38
APPENDIX G: Commissioned Minister Candidate Nomination Form.....	39
APPENDIX H: Pre-Call Interviews.....	40
APPENDIX I: Behavioral Interviewing Guide.....	43
APPENDIX J: What not to ask on an employment application.....	51
APPENDIX K: Sample Interview Report to Congregation.....	52
APPENDIX L: Prayerfully Evaluating Candidates.....	53
APPENDIX M: Call Documents.....	55
APPENDIX N: For Commissioned Ministers: Communicating You Received a Call.....	56
APPENDIX O: Background Checks.....	57

# CALLING A COMMISSIONED MINISTER

A Manual for Congregations/Organizations Engaged in the Call Process

Dear Friends in Christ,

The calling and placing of Commissioned Ministers in the church involves the whole church. The Holy Spirit guides and directs the process of calling workers in His kingdom through people, on behalf of calling entities according to their constitutional processes. Each step of the process will always include prayer that God's will be done and that the Holy Spirit guides the process and decisions. A Call comes from God through the calling body or entity and is extended by God to the called person. Thus, congregations, schools, district officials, synodical officials, and college/university placement directors in the Concordia University System of the LCMS work together cooperatively to provide the church with workers who are qualified and capable to of carrying out the mission and ministry that the Lord has entrusted to His church. The information, procedures and resources in the following pages are intended to help you and the candidates for ministry respond to opportunities for mission and service within the church. In the Call process, the Synod and its Districts assist calling bodies/entities and workers to maintain the integrity and orderliness of the process.

Remember that the Divine Call (Call) into ministry is by definition and practice, a deliberate, prayerful, and Spirit-led process. It is the human means which God the Holy Spirit uses to place people into ministry positions. Congregations (schools) and calling bodies that walk together in practice and ethics with their sister schools and congregations, with Districts, and with the Concordia University System, are likely to have an advantage over those who walk their own ways as they attempt to fill vacancies by calling both through Placement and from the field. As congregations, schools, calling bodies and workers grow to understand the spiritual meaning of the Divine Call, workers grow in commitment to and dedication in ministry, and congregations/schools grow in respect for and support of the Commissioned Minister/Educator.

It is my prayer that this guide will assist you in the wonderful and exciting process of Calling a Commissioned Minister!

God's mighty blessings through Christ, our Master Teacher!

Rachel Klitzing  
Executive Director of School Ministries  
Pacific Southwest District – Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

**Section I**  
**THE ADMINISTRATOR, TEACHER, DCE, and EDUCATOR**  
**VACANCY SUPPORT SYSTEM**

When a congregation/school experiences the departure of one of its Christian educators, there are people who will come alongside the congregation to provide help and share their experience through the process. Look especially to the following:

**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRIES**

The Executive Director of School Ministries (School/Youth and Family Ministries) assists the congregation with three special responsibilities:

- Supports the school especially in the absence of an administrator.
- Assists in the process by which the congregation calls an administrator, teacher, DCE, etc.
- Provides the congregation/school with a list of Commissioned Ministers for call consideration (call list).

Your Executive Director of School Ministries is:

Rachel Klitzing  
[rachel.klitzing@psd-lcms.org](mailto:rachel.klitzing@psd-lcms.org)  
949.854.3232 ext. 223

Normally there are individuals in the district office from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Anyone can take your message.

Your contact at the office is:

Kim Violette  
Administrative Assistant  
949.854.3232 ext. 224  
[kim.violette@psd-lcms.org](mailto:kim.violette@psd-lcms.org)

The office of the Pacific Southwest District is located at:

1540 Concordia Drive East  
Irvine, CA 92612-3203  
Telephone: 949.854.3232 or 855.856.5350  
Fax: 949.854.8140

## Section II

### KEY TERMS YOU WILL HEAR AND USE

There are terms which you will hear and use during the time of your worker vacancy. While most of them are easily understood, it may be helpful to list them here:

#### **Call (Divine Call)**

The solemn agreement between a Commissioned Minister and a congregation designating the responsibilities that each undertakes in support of the other in fulfillment of Christ's mission.

Calls can be extended as either Non-Tenured or Tenured

#### **Non-tenured Call, Subject to Specified Renewal**

A call within a specified time frame, which mandates specified and formal decision on the part of the congregation and the worker to renew and continue the call or to terminate it on the terminal date of the call as stated in the document. (Appendix H)

#### **Tenured Call**

A permanent call, with no time limitations, which normally remains in force until the Lord calls a worker home to heaven, or to another ministry.

#### **call**

A general call to faith or service which all Christians receive.

#### **Calling Body (entities)**

May be a single congregation, a group of congregations, a recognized service agency, a synodical board, district board, or any other entity that has the authority to extend a solemn Call or otherwise engage a person by virtue of its representing (a) congregation(s) of the Synod.

#### **Call/Search Committee**

A committee of the congregation, usually appointed by and responsible to the church council or Board of Directors, charged with guiding and guarding the process of calling a Commissioned Minister. The committee does not make decisions for the ministry but ensures that members have full information about and access to the decisions rightfully belonging to the entire ministry. The committee will make recommendations, but the congregation/school/Board issues the call. The constituency and procedure of the call committee is often stipulated in the congregation's bylaws.

#### **Call Documents**

Documents which: (1) express the solemn nature of the agreement ready to be instituted between a congregation/school and worker and (2) state that each is ready to assume responsibilities for the good of the other and in support of furthering the mission Christ gives to the school/congregation.

#### **Calling from the Field**

Describes the process of issuing a call to a worker who is serving another congregation or is on "candidate" status.

### **Call List**

The list of candidates, including those nominated by the congregation—and those recommended by the District, from which the congregation will select and call a Commissioned Minister according to the process prescribed by the congregation's constitution and bylaws.

### **Call Meeting or Call Service**

The congregational meeting (service) at which the Commissioned Minister is chosen according to the process prescribed by the congregation's constitution and bylaws.

Normally the constitution and bylaws require that there be sufficient notice of such a call meeting, if applicable to your governance. This requirement should be faithfully observed.

### **Candidate/Candidate Status**

Is used to designate a Commissioned Minister in good standing on the Roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, currently not serving in a called position in a congregation or other LCMS ministry position, but eligible and available for such a call.

This term is also used in reference to a Concordia University graduate who is ready for his/her first call and placement through the process used by the Concordia University System and the Board of Assignments.

### **CMIF**

Commissioned Minister Information Forms – This is a professional record of service that each Commissioned Minister is to keep up to date. It also includes a set of 14 Ministry/Philosophy questions that will be beneficial to a Call committees determining if the worker has potential to be a good fit.

### **Colloquy Applicant**

A lay worker who has gone through the colloquy program and is now ready for their first Call.

### **Commissioned Minister**

1. Graduated from a synodical college following a synodically prescribed course of study (or colloquy) in the following specific categories: Teacher, Director of Christian Education, Deaconess, Director of Parish Music, Director of Outreach, Director of Family Life Ministry, Parish Assistant, and Lay Minister
2. Certified for ministry by the college faculty
3. Commissioned upon
4. Acceptance of a CALL issued through synodical Board of Assignments

Both male and female teachers should be called into ministry by the same process. Both male and female teachers should be called into ministry using the same official call documents. No differentiation between teachers should be made on the basis of gender, i.e., they should receive equal pay and benefits for equal work.

### **Commissioned Minister Classifications**

- Director of Christian Education
- Director of Christian Outreach
- Deaconess
- Director of Family Life Ministry
- Director of Parish Music

- Lay Minister
- Teacher

**Contract**

A binding agreement between two or more persons or parties. An employment contract should be in writing. Workers who are not eligible for a call should be employed by contract. Some congregations also choose to contract part-time workers.

**Diploma of Vocation**

The title of a Call document

**Executive Director of School Ministries**

The Executive Director of School Ministries is a District employee who gives oversight to congregations and schools and to the Commissioned Ministers on the Roster of Synod.

**Office of Public Ministry**

The office of public ministry is divinely established and referred to in Scripture as "shepherd," "elder," or "overseer." Within this office are contained all the functions of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the church.

**Ordained Minister**

A pastor who has been certified for parish ministry by the church-at-large (LCMS through its seminaries) and has been called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament by a congregation or agency of our church.

**Pastoral Ministry**

A Minister of Religion, Ordained who serves as pastor of a congregation; (sometimes referred to as a minister.)

**Public Ministry**

The service of a minister (ordained or commissioned) who has been Called by and serves a congregation in one or more specific functions of "The Office of Public Ministry".

**Roster of Synod**

The list of ministers (ordained and commissioned) who have been who have been certified by an LCMS college, university, or seminary, signed the Constitution of Synod, and have been recognized by the LCMS District President who has ecclesiastical supervision over him or her.

**Section III**  
**THE CALL AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKER AND**  
**CONGREGATION –**  
**A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**God calls His people through His Word to fellowship with Him and to serve in the world with the good news of the Gospel and the good life of Christian love.**

*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)*

*We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)*

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life -- the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us -- that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3)*

**God's people in a specific place, after sincere consideration and prayer, call a pastor or Commissioned Minister from the larger Christian family to inspire and equip them for their ministry. Specifically, the Commissioned Minister's focus:**

*Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lusius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)*

*His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ... (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

*...appoint elders in every town, as I directed you, choose a man who is blameless, the husband of one wife, whose children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate and insubordinate. For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled; he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it. (Titus 1:5b-9)*

**The Commissioned Minister, professionally competent and, above all, a person of faith, recognizes his/her Call by the congregation to be a Call from God and conducts his ministry with care, humility, and dedication.**

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy scriptures, the Gospel concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations, including yourself who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1-6)*

*Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which He obtained with the blood of His own Son. (Acts 20:28)*

*...even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28)*

*So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested, you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:1-4)*

**Members of the congregation hold their Commissioned Minister in high regard as God's servant, a gift of divine grace. They offer them and their family the best of their love, prayers and support.**

*This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1)*

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)*

*Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages". (1 Timothy 5:17-18)*

**Commissioned Minister and people consider each other as joyful partners in the Gospel, each making contribution to God's work according to their calling, ability and measure of faith.**

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:1-5)*

*Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. (Galatians 6:6)*

## Section IV

### THE PROCESS OF CALLING A COMMISSIONED MINISTER

In the life of every congregation and school, there arises the need to call a Commissioned Minister, whether for a Principal, Teacher, DCE, DPM, or other Commissioned role. Be comforted by the fact that yours is not the first to do so. The District President, Executive Director of School Ministries, and other district staff are here to help you through the calling process.

The help and wisdom available to you as you begin this process has been memorialized as part of the bylaws of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod:

***Bylaw 2.5 Calling Ministers of Religion by Congregations***

2.5.1 Congregations, school associations, agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations of the Synod shall seek the counsel of the appropriate district presidents when calling ordained or commissioned ministers.

*(as amended at the 2019 convention)*

The following process is a highly recommended call procedure, developed and refined over time within the Pacific Southwest District based on the experience of many hundreds of calling congregations and schools. Confident in the Lord's presence and provision, commit to follow through the process prayerfully and deliberately. Take the time and do the sometimes-challenging work of earnestly seeking the Lord's will for your congregation – go thoughtfully...go carefully...and go in prayer.

#### **When a Commissioned Minister Leaves: A Time of Transition**

Transition can be an emotional and anxious time. But, under the Spirit's guidance and blessing, this transition time can be a growing and strengthening experience for your school/congregation and its mission. **This is why deliberate, earnest, ongoing prayer is not optional – it is essential!**

Change is taking place. We are often not comfortable with change, but we know it happens. The transition typically has three phases:

1. **an ending** - letting go, saying "good-bye" in positive and healthy ways.
2. **a transition period** - an in-between time, a time for conducting self-study, reassessing your future in mission, and for reviewing your position descriptions and structure.
3. **a new beginning** – welcoming the new Commissioned Minister and a potentially new phase in ministry.

This transitional time can be one of great blessing and opportunity as the school/congregation reflects on the past and plans for its future mission and ministry. Many members in a congregation/school may be in a state of surprise when their Commissioned Minister decides to accept another call. Often there are natural questions:

- Why did our principal/teacher/DCE leave?
- Didn't he/she like us?
- Who will lead our school? Youth program?
- Who will teach my student?
- Can we continue as effectively as in the past?
- What about families who seemed deeply attached to the former worker? Will they continue their association with the congregation now that they are gone?

As those and many other questions arise, it is easy to be discouraged and anxious. But remember several great truths! You were all drawn into the relationship of faith by the One who sows the seeds of faith, God Himself. He will never leave you or forsake you. I will not abandon you; we are here to help lead you through the transition.

Also keep in mind that the decision to accept the call to another congregation, retire, or resign, generates many feelings and memories for your Commissioned Minister. Regardless of the circumstances of his/her leaving, a grieving process may begin for many. To help make the departing transition as pleasant as possible, an exit interview may be appropriate. This could be conducted by the Board of Christian Education or other group assigned to this responsibility. Such an interview can provide information valuable in future planning as well as helping to determine the gifts, abilities, and strengths of the worker to be called to fill the vacancy.

You probably have no real idea how strong you are as a school/congregation. Just because you haven't done certain things does not mean that you can't! Trust the One who has never failed you and begin the calling process confident that this process, surrounded by God's gracious care, will help you discover your next worker as you move into the wonderful future God has in store for your school/congregation.

For many Commissioned Minister vacancies, a new graduate may be a viable option. There is a specific process to designate and Call a candidate into their first Call. See [Appendix E](#) for more information. Additionally this tool, "Guidelines and Suggestions for Interviewing First-Called Candidates into Commissioned Ministries of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod" can be found using [this link](#).

## Section V: CALL PROCESS STEPS

See [Appendix B](#) for a Call Process Checklist based on these steps.

*NOTE: If your school/congregation's constitution and/or by-laws stipulates a specific call procedure different from what is provided below, follow what is stated in your constitution/by-laws.*

### STEP 1: NOTIFY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRIES OFFICE, AS SOON AS IT IS KNOWN THAT A COMMISSIONED MINISTER VACANCY WILL OR HAS OCCURRED

This can be done by email, phone call or letter.

If a Commissioned Minister has received and accepted a call to another congregation, he/she should:

- a) Notify our office and the district to which he/she is going (if different) of their decision. (pg 11& 13 of Call document)
- b) Ask the congregation for a peaceful release in writing from his/her call.

### STEP 2: MANAGE THE DETAILS OF CLOSING THE COMMISSIONED MINISTER-CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIP: EXIT INTERVIEW, FINANCIAL ISSUES, APPROPRIATE FAREWELL

**Exit Interview:** The Commissioned Minister who is leaving or retiring should not take an active role in choosing his/her successor or in directing the call committee in its work. It is wise, however, to seek his/her opinions on the strengths and challenges of the school before he/she leaves. The Executive Director of School Ministries can assist you in developing an appropriate exit interview with the departing worker.

**Financial Issues:** Are there financial issues which need to be addressed? Is there a down payment loan or other loan which must be repaid? What conditions are attached to that? Is the worker due compensation for vacation time? Has an orderly transition been planned so that health benefits will be covered by either the old or the new congregation during the transitional period? These and other financial issues need to be discussed and acted upon before the worker leaves.

**Plan an Appropriate Farewell:** When your Commissioned Minister leaves, an appropriate farewell or recognition of service can give people the opportunity to express their appreciation for this worker and to wish him/her God's blessings in their new ministry. In the case of a worker who is retiring, a more elaborate farewell may be planned and a special service of thanksgiving in recognition of their years of ministry is very appropriate.

**Communication:** Clear, open and frequent communication is critical during this time. Congregation/School community will want to be made aware as progression is made through the call process.

### STEP 3: ESTABLISH A CALL PROCESS (UNLESS THE PROCESS IS ALREADY SPECIFIED IN YOUR CONSTITUTION) AND A CALL COMMITTEE

Some schools and congregations have the call process clearly outlined in their constitution. If so, follow it. If not, determine whether there should be a special call committee, or whether the Board of Elders or the church council will serve in this capacity. [Appendix A](#) will give you helpful information on starting your Call process.

As part of the process, your congregation will want to answer certain questions like, “When will meetings be held?”, “What is our timeline?”, “Do we need to take this call to the Voter’s Assembly, Board of Directors, or other governing body?” and the like. Subsequent to the first meeting, the process for calling will be offered to the appropriate congregational group for adoption. Procedurally, from that time on, the congregation should be guided by whatever process its governing body has chosen. Spiritually, the congregation should be consistently and continually in prayer for God’s divine guidance through the whole call process. Calling a Commissioned Minister is not to be taken lightly but must be approached with the deepest level of spiritual conviction and fervor. [Appendix B](#) will be a helpful checklist here.

Assembling your call committee is one of the most important parts of your call process – be very prayerful for and mindful of whom you select. It is strongly recommended that the call committee be representative of the congregation (male, female, variety of years in membership, seniors, youth, parent(s), staff members. The call committee should not be comprised of a majority of present leadership, generally speaking. Commissioned workers may serve on the call committee provided they are not potential candidates and present no conflict of interest, and whose service will not impede your goal of representing your school/congregation as a whole. Your call committee should not include more than 9 or 10 people. Your pastor or an area pastor may certainly be a member (voting or advisory) of your call committee.

Be very wary of those who eagerly volunteer to serve on the call committee – they may have a hidden agenda that is not conducive to thoroughly and prayerfully going through the process. See [Appendix C](#) for tips on how to form your call committee, along with a sample questionnaire for prospective call committee members.

#### **STEP 4: RECEIVE CONGREGATIONAL NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONED MINISTER**

Unless otherwise stipulated in the constitution or bylaws of your organization, all communicant members and others have the right to nominate any worker in good standing on the Commissioned Minister Roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. See [Appendix G](#) for a sample nomination form. It is to be noted that though a worker may be "in good standing on the Roster of the LCMS" there may be circumstances known to the District President or Executive Director of School Ministries that would preclude a worker’s name from a call list. For example, workers who have served less than two years in their present ministry are generally not considered as viable candidates.

Establish a deadline for the congregation to submit nominations – a two-week period is recommended. (Additional nominations may be made at any time during the vacancy but they will not necessarily be considered for the call list if they are received after a published deadline.) After the nomination period ends, send a letter to each person who submitted a nomination acknowledging receipt and include the name(s) of the nominees they submitted.

***IMPORTANT - Please be sure to instruct the members of your ministry community to **nominate only those workers who possess the qualifications and experience necessary for the position.*****

## **STEP 5: FORWARD ALL NOMINEE NAMES RECEIVED TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRIES OFFICE**

Upon receipt of the list of nominees, the Executive Director of School Ministries will request a Commissioned Minister Information Form (CMIF) from each out-of-District nominee's Education Executive. This form is returned to the Pacific Southwest District and contains basic information about education, previous areas of service, family, areas of expertise, preferences for ministry, etc. These CMIFs are very informative to the call process but are to be treated confidentially for the call committee only. For nominees currently in the Pacific Southwest District, the information described above will normally already be available to the Pacific Southwest District office. The Executive Director of School Ministries will normally add additional qualified candidates to the congregation/school's call list.

**NOTE:** Any congregation wishing to consider calling a candidate who is a new graduate from a Concordia University, must contact the School Ministries office for instructions to access that request form.

## **STEP 6: RECEIVE YOUR CALL PACKET FROM THE DISTRICT**

After an evaluation of all the nominees, with the assistance of the other District staff, the Executive Director of School Ministries will prepare the call list. This process can take from 1-2 weeks. The length of time is determined by a number of factors, many over which the Executive Director has little or no control, e.g., the length of time it takes to receive information about workers from other Districts or how long a worker takes to update his CMIF.

The call list, along with the CMIF and resumes, will be sent to the administrator or call committee chair. *(Remember again: The CMIF documents are confidential and for the call committee's use only. They are NOT to be duplicated for the whole ministry or distributed electronically. All printed copies should be collected and destroyed after a worker accepts a call to fill the vacancy. The call committee is encouraged to write and publish a summary in preparation for the call meeting. See [Appendix J](#) for a sample summary.)*

*As mentioned before, workers who have served less than two years in their present ministry should not typically be viewed as viable candidates.* It is also not recommended to consider someone who "applies" or nominates themselves unless there are extenuating circumstances or unless you post your open position.

When the list of candidates is given to the call committee, the first reaction may be disappointment at the modest amount of information apparently available. Every ministry desires substantial facts to aid them in the consideration of candidates, and we endeavor to make as much information known to you as possible. Pre-call interviews and onsite visits are recommended to give you more insight and understanding, and to give greater clarity. See [Appendix H](#) for more information on handling interviews and onsite visits.

As a call list is prepared, factors to consider include:

- Proper academic preparation
- Expertise and/or experience commensurate with the needs of the position
- Spiritual health and vitality
- Physical wellness
- Responses to the questions on the CMIF
- Potential for success in the ministry

We are very careful that, at this level, the Spirit is not impeded or that information that might be injurious to the candidate's good name is not broadcast. However, sincere and honest attempts are made to ensure that all important information is always given to the congregation/school.

We also sometimes provide for you names of people who are not on the Commissioned Minister roster. In these cases, we will send you a resume rather than a CMIF.

You/we may continue to add additional candidates to your list throughout the process. Please give these “new additions” the same consideration as you do any workers on the original list.

## **STEP 7: PRAYERFULLY EVALUATE CANDIDATES AND KEEP YOUR SCHOOL/CONGREGATION, AND LEADERSHIP INFORMED**

When the call packet is received from the district office, ask the congregation/school to pray for the call committee as they evaluate the candidates towards the goal of narrowing the list to three or four names. Provide them with consistent and continuing communication regarding your process and timeline. **It is important, however, that the full list of names of candidates are NOT disclosed to the congregation at this point.** If names were disclosed, others in the congregation who are not part of the call committee will likely begin to do their own evaluations and make premature decisions in the absence of the information and discussions the committee has. This short-circuits what the call committee has been tasked to do.

A Behavioral Interviewing process for evaluating candidates is available in [Appendix I](#). Your Education Executive is also ready and available to provide consultation in this area. The major steps in the process are:

### **1. First Contact: Availability and Willingness**

After completing your initial evaluation of candidates based on the CMIF information, agree on the initial list of candidates you want to contact. The goal for this initial contact is determine their availability and willingness to engage with your congregation at this stage in the call process. It is proper to ask “Is there any reason why you could not, at this time, give serious consideration to a call?” and “Are you willing to be on a call list at this time?”

This initial contact should include a letter and some brief information on your congregation. See [Appendix A](#) for sample communications with candidates.

For candidates that respond that they are unavailable or unwilling to participate at this time, send a letter or email thanking them for their consideration and blessing them in their ministry.

### **2. Follow-up: Detailed Information and Scheduling Phone/Video Interviews**

For those candidates responding that they are available and willing to participate, provide them with a second packet of detailed information about your congregation. Provide materials that are applicable to understand your school/congregations and the position

to be filled. These materials could include the job description, your mission/vision/values, governance structure, and community information. Along with these materials, communicate your next steps and timeframe to the candidate. This will include scheduling phone or video interviews with candidates.

### **3. Interviews**

Your Education Executive strongly encourages Interviews. Make use of phone calls, video calls and face-to-face visits – these are tools available to help in seeking the Lord’s will. Interviews are encouraged based on the account of the filling of an apostolic vacancy by the first group of Christian believers as described in Acts 1:15-26 and based on the successful experience of many congregations who have chosen to follow this suggestion.

The goal of the phone/video interviews is to give you a fuller picture of the candidate, how he communicates and personally relates, his/her experience and perspective on ministry, success and challenges, etc., all leading to the development of your short list of candidates to bring on your campus for a visit. It’s also an opportunity for the candidate to learn more about your school and congregation ministry. See [Appendix I](#) for a Behavioral Interviewing Guide. Your Executive Director of School Ministry is also ready and available to provide consultation in this area.

It is very important that the call committee debrief as soon as possible after each interview, discussing their impressions and personal evaluation of the candidate. See [Appendix K](#) for information on prayerfully evaluating candidates.

### **4. Onsite Visits**

Once your call committee has conducted interviews and arrived at a short list, you will likely want to bring them to your campus for visits. These are important opportunities to meet staff, tour facilities and communities, and engage in conversation and Q&A with your leadership and call committee. See [Appendix H](#) for information on pre-call visits.

### **5. Background Checks**

See [Appendix N](#) for information on conducting background checks.

### **Be led by the Holy Spirit**

Remember that the historic position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on the question of calling workers is a theological position. We believe God has workers for our congregations and that, through the Holy Spirit, He will guide you to find this person for your school/congregation. For this reason, we always extend calls in the context of prayer for God's guidance. People of God have constantly recognized the limitations of their own human abilities to choose ministerial candidates correctly and have joyfully lived within the boundaries of that limitation, expecting God to act and speak through the minds of His people. Place no artificial barriers in the way of a Spirit-led process! Place no limitations on God's power to act!

Use every means available to develop as clear an understanding as possible of each candidate's unique qualifications – yes, the Holy Spirit works through means! But remember that even with in-depth personal interviews and the like, apparent failures may occur.

Even a study of past performance leaves much to be desired, for there is no assurance that the same conditions exist that will permit a repetition of that past performance. Nor will you always know the reason why, at another time and place, a worker did very well, or failed rather miserably. The facts of the past and face-to-face interviews are extremely important, when approached with

the prayer that God will speak to and through the school/congregation and its leadership in the calling process.

## **STEP 8: ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION AND CALL DOCUMENT PREPARATION**

Prior to the Call Meeting, the appropriate board or committee should establish the salary and other fiscal compensation, vacation, education benefits, specialized needs and expectations, and, of course, a ministry description. Questions of unique duties and other aspects should be considered before the call meeting as it applies to the respective candidates. There may be a need to make some individual adjustments, but the basic parameters should have been laid out. Appropriate allowances and provisions may be needed for specific areas of tenure and experience. See the District salary guidelines available from [www.psd-lcms.org/salary-guidelines](http://www.psd-lcms.org/salary-guidelines) to assist in determining appropriate compensation for church workers. Note that these are only guidelines for compensation – your particular context and situation may call for adjustments to the compensation package.

### **Call Documents**

Call documents should be completed before the call meeting. Prepare to have all signatories present at the call meeting, i.e. president of the congregation, chair of the call committee, etc. See [Appendix L](#) for information on obtaining and completing call documents. You should consider questions of salary, unique duties, and other questions before the call meeting as it applies to the respective candidates.

## **STEP 9: ESTABLISH THE DATE AND PROCEDURE FOR THE CALL MEETING**

Once the call list is received, the process for evaluating each worker's qualifications is completed, establish a date for a call meeting and make this date known to the congregation, along with the names to be recommended and their biographical information. Please remember that any procedures outlined in your constitution take precedence for assembling your list to bring before the voters at the call meeting. In some instances, the Call to a Commissioned Minister need not go through the Voters Assembly based on your form of governance. Rather, the Call may be issued by the Board.

Normally a written ballot should be used in the selection with the names of those being considered as clarified by your constitution or agreed upon in Step 3. *Voting by proxy is strongly discouraged. Absentee ballots should not be permitted.* The basic intent is that the activity of balloting should reflect the latest and best information disclosed at the meeting. In addition, balloting takes place within the context of Scripture readings and prayers.

When one candidate has a majority, unless otherwise stipulated by the constitution of the congregation, the balloting is complete. If this is not achieved on the first ballot, the candidate with the least number of votes should be dropped and a second ballot taken. If a third ballot is required to achieve a majority, your congregation may follow the same procedure and continue until the necessary majority is achieved.

At the conclusion of the balloting, it is recommended that a resolution be requested to make the selection unanimous. The chair of the call committee or president may say (while not required by our Constitution or Bylaws), "I would be very happy to receive a motion to make the ballot unanimous." The failure of such a resolution, by the way, would not invalidate the election. It is intended only as a sign of unity and commitment to a common cause.

## **STEP 10: IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE COMMISSIONED MINISTER-ELECT OF HIS/HER SELECTION AND SEND THE PROPER CALL DOCUMENTS**

The president of the congregation or chair of the call committee should attempt to notify the Commissioned Minister-elect of his/her election immediately by phone while the meeting is still in session. If some unforeseen circumstance indicates that the worker-elect cannot give serious consideration to the call, there would still be time to elect another.

Normally the Commissioned Minister-elect should be sent the Call Document and other supporting materials, documents and information within a day or two. (See [Appendix L](#).) Scanning and emailing a copy of the completed call documents after the meeting provides the worker an opportunity to begin deliberating the call right away but does not eliminate the need to send the hard copies in a timely fashion.

It is prudent to do a background check of your candidate, with the call extended pending a clear report. Provide the proper forms for the worker to complete in order to conduct the background check. See [Appendix N](#) for more information.

Once the call has been issued, the Commissioned Minister-elect (and family) can be invited for a post-call visit with all expenses paid by the congregation. Keep your worker-elect in your prayers and be prepared to do all within your power to assist him/her in their decision. Your District staff will do the same.

### **Contact those who were interviewed but not called**

As a matter of courtesy, the call committee should notify the individuals who were under consideration, but not called. Send a very simple note to thank them for their patience, openness and willingness to participate.

\*PLEASE NOTE – In the case of a First Call, Call Documents should be sent to the Placement Director at their graduating Concordia University. The Placement Director will clear the Call through Board of Assignments to ensure proper placement on the Roster of Synod, and then present the Call documents to the candidate.

## **STEP 11: NOTIFY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRIES THAT THE CALL HAS BEEN ISSUED**

Please phone or email the news to the School Ministries office. Keep the worker in your prayers and be prepared to do all within your power to aid in their decision. Your District School Ministries staff will do the same.

**Note for Workers:** It is important that you communicate well when you have received a call, especially if you are serving an existing congregation. See [Appendix M](#) for some information on how best to communicate that you have received a call.

## **STEP 12: THE CALL IS ACCEPTED OR DECLINED**

### **STEP 12a: IF THE CALL IS ACCEPTED, PLAN FOR ARRIVAL, INSTALLATION AND ONGOING MUTUAL MINISTRY**

When your candidate notifies you of his/her acceptance of the call, it is important that you be in touch with him/her to arrange for such things as moving schedule, transfer of responsibility for benefits plans, and a service of installation. Your District office can be of help in planning these things. Authorization for installation must be granted by the District President.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOOLS/CONGREGATIONS TO HELP NEWLY CALLED TEACHERS, DIRECTORS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, DCES, DPMs, ETC.:**

Moving to a new location to begin a new ministry is an exciting, spiritually uplifting experience. The joy of the transition can be enhanced, and the tensions diminished if leaders of the calling school/congregation make careful plans to help the new worker make the transition. The following outline of suggestions is offered as a planning aid.

### **I. BEFORE THE NEW WORKER ARRIVES**

- A. Pray for the new worker and the ministry you are about to share.
- B. Write a letter of welcome, appreciation, encouragement, and help. (Some items may be handled better by telephone)
  - 1. Determine an arrival date.
  - 2. Clarify and plan moving arrangements. Specify exactly how much the congregation will pay for specific moving expenses.
  - 3. Share accurate information about what it will cost to begin life in the area; i.e., housing costs, deposits expected, car insurance rates, etc.
  - 4. Remind the candidate to send acceptance information from the call packet to the District Offices.
  - 5. Make sure there is regular ongoing contact with the candidate after designation, assignment, and acceptance.
  - 6. Have other staff members make contact.
- C. Discuss and agree on a date for the commissioning and installation service. Call the School Ministries Office or District President's Office to get authorization for installation.

### **II. WHEN THE NEW WORKER ARRIVES**

- A. Help the worker to find housing if applicable
- B. Help the new worker feel welcome. (It doesn't happen by itself.)
  - 1. Get acquainted with fellow staff members. Be sure to include the pastor(s).
    - a. Introduce to each one individually.
    - b. Consider having one or more staff social events.
    - c. Pray for and with the new worker during staff devotions.
  - 2. Introduce a new teacher to school families. Consider:
    - a. An open house at the school for students and parents
    - b. Making home visits together
    - c. Having a housewarming or pantry shower
  - 3. Introduce the new worker to the congregation (if applicable)
    - a. Make the commissioning and installation service a well-publicized and memorable event.
    - b. Have a congregational potluck or reception after the service.
    - c. Introduce personally to lay leaders of the congregation.
- C. Take care of reimbursing moving expenses promptly as per agreement in call document.
- D. Introduce around the community. Help locate banks, doctors, dentists, hospitals, etc.

A recommended resource that provides important guidance for congregations on supporting their church workers is ***Holding Up the Prophet's Hands: Supporting Church Workers*** by Dr. Bruce M. Hartung. It's available from Concordia Publishing House (cph.org). This book presents the challenges church workers face daily, along with positive and encouraging strategies for how you and your congregation can support the church workers in your congregation. Come alongside your church workers to support them in body and spirit as they nurture the body of Christ.

**STEP 12b: IN CASE THE FIRST COMMISSIONED MINISTER YOU CALL DECLINES**

It is entirely possible, as you might realize, that the first worker you call may, after due consideration, decline to accept the Call. The call committee normally then consults with the Executive Director of School Ministries to form a recommendation about continuing with the current list of candidates or whether to pause in the process to add names to the list. It is also important for the individual members of your congregation to know that names may be offered to the call committee for consideration and reviewed by the District up to a stated deadline.

As you provide a communication to the declining worker acknowledging his/her decision, you may wish to ask the reasons they declined. This can be valuable information and perspective for you as you continue with the call process.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Helpful Information to Start Your Call Process**

#### **Calls, Schmalls, What Does This Mean? (Information for a Call Committee)**

A Call is much more than employment. In a Call, the Holy Spirit works through the congregation, the Call committee, and the worker to bring them together in the way that best serves the needs of the Church.

A Call implies much more than doing a job and getting a paycheck. It is a placement for ministry. It is a commitment on the part of both the congregation and the worker that goes beyond any employment contract. We have heard the terms, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, and Good Shepherd used to describe our God. You can add to that list the title of Holy Headhunter in describing the work of the Holy Spirit in the call process.

Persons eligible to receive a Call are pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of parish music, deaconesses, and directors of Christian outreach. They become eligible for a Call by receiving training at one of our Lutheran Synodical colleges, universities, or seminaries, either while obtaining a degree or by taking special classes (colloquy) and undergoing an examination process after graduating from a non-Synodical institution. Once a worker is eligible, a congregation issues a Call to that person. If the worker is a new graduate, the process is somewhat different, with the Synodical school actually placing the person in the congregation. However, even this process is initiated by the congregation.

As a Lutheran Church and School, you take your Calls and the filling of vacancies very seriously. That means the process may take longer than it would take a company to hire a new employee. Typically, in the Call process, the Call seeks the worker, rather than the worker the Call. A committee is formed to determine the needs of the congregation and the type of person best suited to fill those needs. A description of responsibilities and qualifications (i.e. a position description) is prepared. The board or committee then begins to gather names of candidates. Those names come from the district office (Education Exec), and perhaps other contacts. Once names are submitted, the district office supplies the Call Committee or Board with the biographical information, Commissioned Minister Information Form (CMIF), for each candidate. These forms are far more extensive than resumes, containing references, reviews, and various questions answered by the candidate. The questions cover educational and ministry issues. While the Call committee (or search team) reviews names and CMIFs from the district, you also solicit names from within the congregation if you wish to do so. As you receive those names, please email them to me or to Kim Violette, my assistant, immediately so that we can request the CMIF of that person and get it back to you quickly. When you do receive candidate names to consider, make sure you get their contact information and/or where they are currently serving.

After the Call committee or board reviews the biographical information on the candidates (CMIFs), it narrows the list down to those persons who appear best suited to the ministry position to be filled. The Call committee is encouraged to check all references listed for each candidate, including references which may not appear on the candidates list of references (such as their pastor or a teacher on staff.) This is an area that I can certainly assist you in if desired. Phone interviews may be conducted at this time with the candidates. You may also wish to conduct personal interviews, especially if the candidate is local.

After the interviews, depending on your constitution, the Call committee:

- 1) Makes a recommendation to Call a candidate (may need to be approved by the association assembly.) This person is usually invited to visit the school for more than a day to give the candidate, the staff, and the board the greatest opportunity to learn about each other. Or...
- 2) If the needs of the school and the qualities/gifts of the candidate seem to fit, the committee will recommend to the congregation that a Call be issued. In either case, the necessary paperwork is then prepared and sent to the candidate.

Although the Call does not have a time limit, usually the candidate will make a decision within two to three weeks. If the candidate accepts the Call, he or she will join you at a mutually agreed upon time. If the candidate declines the Call, the committee must start over, often picking up at the stage of the telephone interviews, but just as often going all the way to the beginning by soliciting a fresh set of names for consideration.

Please keep this important Call process in your daily prayers!

### **Sample Letter to Seek Openness/Availability to Participate in the Call Process**

Dear

Greetings!

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and it is my privilege to serve as (*insert position or area of responsibility*) at \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church and School in City, State. I am writing to invite you to prayerfully participate with us in discovering if you might be the person God has identified as the next principal for this new season at \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran School (and Preschool).

If you're thinking that you are perfectly happy where you are currently serving and don't have an interest in a new role, you are exactly the kind of person we are looking for. We believe that God will bring to us someone who is confident, fulfilled, creative, and totally dependent upon Him. Maybe that is you.

To assist you and the Principal Search Team in the first step of a discovery process, I have attached a *Quick Response Form*. This form contains the elements that we believe are descriptive of the Character/Type of Person and Capacity/Skill Set that we need for our next principal at \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran School. Please take a couple of minutes to open the Word document, fill in the blanks at the top of the form, and then highlight or circle the appropriate score for each of the items. Once you have completed the Quick Response Form, please save your changes and then return it to me via email no later than Sunday, \_\_\_\_\_.

We look forward to learning more about you and discovering what God has in mind for all of us. Praying with you!

In Christ,

### **Determining Availability Status of Candidates**

Effort and time are not productively used when conducting in-depth study of a candidate that is simply not able to consider a call at this time.

Phone contact by call committee members can ascertain a candidate's current availability. A basic script makes this contact simple and effective.

Possible items to include in the script:

1. Identify who you are and the school/congregation you represent.
2. Briefly describe the position(s) you are seeking to fill.
3. Ask the candidate if there is any reason why he/she could not consider a call at this time.
4. What next?
  - a. If the candidate is open to considering a call, explain that additional contact may be made to arrange for the next steps in your congregation's process (potential interviews, written questionnaire, etc.). Verify the best form of contact for future conversation...best phone number, e-mail address, fax number, etc.
  - b. If the candidate is not open to consider a call at this time, thank them for providing that information. Please share that information with the District Education Executive so that appropriate adjustment can be made to personnel records.
5. Thank the candidate for their time and offer God's blessings on their current ministry situation.

# PRINCIPAL SEARCH

Logo here

\_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church and School  
Address

Pastor or head of call committee    email address                      website

**NAME:**

**CURRENT POSITION:**

**CURRENT SCHOOL:**

**YEARS AT CURRENT SCHOOL:**

**TOTAL YEARS IN MINISTRY:**

**PERSONAL PHONE:**

**EMAIL:**

*These items are descriptive of the type of person and skill set that we are looking for in our next principal. On a scale of one to four (four being the highest), please rate yourself in the following areas of ministry. When you have completed the form, please return it to \_\_\_\_\_ via email. Thank you.*

## **I DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH AS I . . .**

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Walk personally with my Lord   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Model professionalism and excellence   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Demonstrate consistency and integrity in leadership, discipline, relationships | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. View my vocation as ministry   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Understand leadership and have the capacity to lead a team                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Act with wisdom and apply it appropriately                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Create and sustain a climate of welcome and attraction                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Love children  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Delegate appropriately   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Apply Law and Gospel to students, parents, and faculty                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. Appreciate traditions   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Like to have fun  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## **AS A LEADER I EFFECTIVELY . . .**

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Demonstrate visionary leadership –<br>the ability to lead from idea to sustainable fulfillment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Lead with experience and innovation in tech-based education                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Communicate with clarity and excellence  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Implement with a business mindset and marketing savvy  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Demonstrate with experience the capacity to build enrollment                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Keep current and stay knowledgeable in curriculum trends – including ECE                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Handle conflict resolution and parent issues proactively                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

8. Lead a faculty spiritually	1	2	3	4
9. Function with a combined church-school ministry perspective	1	2	3	4
10. Advocate for teachers and appreciate team members	1	2	3	4
11. Build, empower, and lead a team to accomplish vision and objectives	1	2	3	4
12. Hold a team accountable	1	2	3	4
13. Push, challenge, and differentiate in professional development	1	2	3	4
14. Efficiently make changes where and when needed (pull the trigger)	1	2	3	4
15. Understand special needs education and am able to identify the role our school can play in a student's life	1	2	3	4
16. Understand the California culture	1	2	3	4
17. Network with other schools and resources	1	2	3	4
18. Have the knowledge and financial capacity to create and manage a budget and spending plan	1	2	3	4
19. Pursue third source funding and grant writing	1	2	3	4
20. Value and am familiar with the accreditation process	1	2	3	4
21. Understand the issues of modern family dynamics	1	2	3	4

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Call Process Checklist**

**STEP 1: NOTIFY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRY AS SOON AS THE VACANCY OCCURS**

Should be:

- In writing/email
  - As soon as you become aware of the vacancy
  - From the Administrator or Pastor of the Congregation
- 

**STEP 2: MANAGE THE DETAILS OF CLOSING THE COMMISSIONED MINISTER-CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIP: EXIT INTERVIEW, FUTURE RELATIONSHIP, FINANCIAL ISSUES, APPROPRIATE FAREWELL**

You should:

- Conduct an exit interview with the worker
  - Clearly establish the departing worker's future relationship with your congregation
  - Resolve any financial issues and ensure a smooth transition
  - Plan an appropriate farewell
- 

**STEP 3: ESTABLISH A CONGREGATIONAL CALLING PROCESS (UNLESS THE PROCESS IS ALREADY SPECIFIED IN YOUR CONSTITUTION) AND A CALL COMMITTEE**

- Determine if your constitution includes a prescribed calling process and, if so, follow it.
  - If no calling process is prescribed, determine whether a special call committee, the Board of Education or church council will serve as the call committee.
  - Assemble your call committee, taking care to provide broad representation from the congregation but limiting to no more than 9 or 10 people.
- 

**STEP 4: RECEIVE CONGREGATIONAL NOMINATIONS FOR THE OPEN POSITION**

- See [Appendix G](#) for a nominations form sample.
  - Normally only communicant members may submit nominations – refer to your constitution.
  - Establish a deadline for the congregation to submit nominations – a two-week period is recommended.
  - Provide a letter to nominators acknowledging receipt of nominees after the nomination period ends.
- 

**STEP 5: FORWARD ALL NOMINEE NAMES RECEIVED TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRIES**

- Once your nominating period ends, send the list of nominees to the Executive Director's office as soon as possible.
  - The Executive Director will perform a search to add additional qualified candidates to the call list, evaluate nominees and compile comprehensive information on them to provide to the call committee for evaluation.
-

**☐ STEP 6: RECEIVE YOUR CALL PACKET FROM THE DISTRICT**

- The process for the District to compile a call list for your consideration takes 1-2 weeks.
  - The comprehensive candidate information compiled by the District will be delivered to the call committee by email. This information is confidential and for the committee's use ONLY, and is to be duplicated (except for the call committee) or distributed electronically. Once the call process is completed, the CMIFs that comprise this information are to be destroyed.
- 

**☐ STEP 7: PRAYERFULLY EVALUATE CANDIDATES AND KEEP YOUR CONGREGATION INFORMED**

- Request the congregation pray for the call committee as they begin evaluating candidates.
  - Conduct evaluation as follows:
    - Complete an initial evaluation based on the information provided, and determine which candidates you would like to consider.
    - Send a letter and some brief information on your congregation to the list of candidates you selected from the initial evaluation, asking for their availability and willingness to engage with you in the call process. Emailing this information in addition to the printed matter is also acceptable.
    - For those wanting to engage, send detailed information including the report from your congregational history, vision/mission/values, governance board description, community information, etc.
    - Schedule phone/video interviews. Debrief as soon as possible after the interviews.
    - Determine your "short list" of candidates to bring to your church for in-person interviews.
    - Schedule these visits to include meeting opportunities with leadership and church/school staff, community tours, and congregational meet-and-greet and Q&A forums.
    - After the visits, convene your call committee and discuss which candidate(s) to recommend to the congregation for vote.
  - In all of these matters, earnestly strive to be led by the Holy Spirit. Calls are always extended in the context of prayer for God's guidance.
- 

**☐ STEP 8: ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION AND CALL DOCUMENT PREPARATION**

- The appropriate board or committee should establish the compensation package prior to the call meeting, laying out the basic parameters of compensation. Individual adjustments may need to be made based on the situation.
  - Elements of the compensation package include salary, vacation, benefits, etc., and should be influenced by education, experience, special skills and expectations, ministry role, etc.
  - See [www.psd-lcms.org/salary-guidelines](http://www.psd-lcms.org/salary-guidelines) for salary guidelines.
  - Call documents should be completed prior to the call meeting (other than the called worker's specific information).
- 

**☐ STEP 9: ESTABLISH THE DATE AND PROCEDURE FOR THE CALL MEETING**

- Establish a date for the call meeting and publish to the congregation, along with recommended names and their biographical information.

- Follow any procedures outlined in your constitution related to the candidates to bring before the voters or the communication and conduct of the Call Meeting.
  - Use written ballots. Voting by proxy is strongly discouraged, and absentee ballots should not be permitted.
  - Balloting is complete when one candidate has a majority. Multiple ballots may be needed to arrive at a majority.
  - At the conclusion of balloting, it is recommended that a resolution be requested to make the selection unanimous. This is a sign of unity and commitment to a common cause, and for the called worker to know the congregation is united in calling him/her.
- 

**☐ STEP 10: IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE COMMISSIONED MINISTER-ELECT OF HIS/HER SELECTION AND SEND THE PROPER CALL DOCUMENTS**

- Notify the worker immediately of his/her selection by phone while the meeting is still in session.
  - Invite the worker (and family) for a post-call visit and be prepared to do all within your power to assist them in their decision. Your District is here to do the same.
  - Call documents should be immediately sent to the worker elect.
  - Complete background check. The call is extended when clear report is received.
  - Notify the individual(s) who were under consideration but not called thanking them for their patience, openness and willingness to participate.
  - Be open and prepared to engage in discussions and negotiations with the worker elect.
- 

**☐ STEP 11: NOTIFY THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT THAT THE CALL HAS BEEN SENT**

- Phone or email the news to the Executive Director of School Ministries' office.
- 

**☐ STEP 12: THE CALL IS ACCEPTED OR DECLINED**

- If the call is accepted, plan for the worker's arrival, installation and ongoing mutual ministry.
- If the call is declined, consult with the Executive Director of School Ministries to form a recommendation about continuing with the current list of candidates or pausing the process to add names to the list. You may wish to ask the declining worker the reasons they declined.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Forming Your Call Committee**

The congregation's constitution may prescribe appointment or election of a call committee. It is recommended that most of the members of the call committee will be persons not currently serving on the congregation council. The committee should intentionally reflect the makeup of the congregation regarding gender, age, and ethnic/racial identity, as well as various segments of the ministry of the congregation – worship, youth, seniors, school/preschool families, education, evangelism, missions, etc. The committee should include no more than 9 or 10 people.

Because of additional demands on the lay president of the congregation council during a pastoral transition, it is recommended that the lay president not be the chair of the call committee. It is a good practice, however, to have the president sit on the committee as an ex officio member and act as a liaison with your governing board or council.

#### **Questionnaire**

You may find it helpful to use a questionnaire when selecting possible call committee members (see sample below). In addition to helping you ensure the committee reflects your congregation as much as possible, it is helpful in gathering information on previous and current involvement in the congregation, perspectives on congregational health, and the gifts needed in your next worker.

Importantly, a questionnaire is also useful as an aid in discovering potential hidden agendas. Be very cautious about members who eagerly volunteer to serve on the call committee as they may have ulterior motives that aren't in alignment with seeking God's will for your congregation. You may also want to interview potential call committee members after receiving questionnaires to further delve into their viewpoints.

#### **Prayer**

Prayer is a critical activity for the call committee and the entire congregation throughout this process. Call committee members should commit themselves to pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation. Special prayer at worship and during other meetings of the congregation is encouraged. When the call committee is selected, the names of the members are made public, with request that special prayers be made on their behalf.

#### **Committee Structure**

The call committee chair can be appointed by the congregation board or council, or be elected by the committee itself. Committee leaders and roles include:

- Chair - convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, primary contact with candidates, single point of contact with the District office, oversees the call process and keeps it on-track.
- Recording Secretary - keeps minutes of call committee meetings for future reference, may be responsible for final preparation of the call documents.
- Communications - responsible for written communication between candidates and committee, sends copies of correspondence to the District office, may write newsletter articles, notes for bulletins, etc., to keep the congregation informed of the committee's progress.

- Hospitality – manages logistics and volunteers related to meals and activities during meetings, candidate visits, etc.
- Data Analysis – a person or team that leads analysis and findings from the self-study activities, including surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- Prayer – gathers and manages the call committee prayer list

### **Salary and benefits matters**

The congregation’s governing board or council will need to provide the call committee salary and benefit possibilities that the congregation can offer. Salary and benefit considerations are not matters to be negotiated between the candidate and call committee. The board or council also needs to authorize funding to the call committee for its use in carrying out its responsibilities. This is discussed under “Call Committee Budget” below.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality in the call committee discussions should be clearly agreed upon at the first meeting. It is recommended that your committee members sign a covenant that details the need for confidentiality, prayer and support for one another. Issues that are discussed about candidates need to be open and forthright among the members of the committee; however, these discussions should be kept in confidence among the call committee members.

***Confidentiality cannot be overemphasized in the task of calling a worker.*** Mention of specific candidates outside the call committee is inappropriate until the committee is ready with its recommendation to the congregation’s board or council. It is important to keep all names and both verbal and written information about prospective candidates within the confines of the committee. This means committee members will need to establish ground rules and boundaries, not only with the congregation at large, but also with those in their household or place of work.

### **Call Committee Budget**

One of the first tasks of the call committee is to establish a budget with the congregational board or council. Although some of these expenses are difficult to accurately determine ahead of time, every effort should be made to set aside the needed finances for the call process. Items to include in the budget:

- Travel/meal expenses for committee members
- Travel/meal expenses for candidate(s)
- Office expenses (i.e., photocopying, data entry, postage, etc.)
- Miscellaneous expenses

Note: Although the moving expenses for your newly called Commissioned Minister will not be the responsibility of the call committee, it should be noted to the congregational board or council and your congregation’s finance committee that the congregation is responsible for the moving expenses of your new Commissioned Minister unless other arrangements are made or the worker is local.

### **Openness vs. Holding Confidence**

Reporting regularly to council and congregation helps keep everyone on the same level of understanding about the process. As noted above, the call committee must keep all verbal and written information about each and every candidate strictly confidential. However, ***communication is very important!*** With the exception of confidential materials, there is no such thing as too much information.

Some options to be utilized to keep the members of the congregation informed about the call committee's work and progress include:

- Newsletter articles explaining the call process to the congregation, with follow-up articles each time another stage in the process is reached.
- Notes in the Sunday bulletin announcing that the call committee is meeting, reporting progress, communicating what will happen next, etc.
- Periodic talks or announcements by a member of the call committee, even if the report is that there have been no changes since the last report, “Nothing has changed from last week.” Remember there will likely be multiple audiences in your congregation who you will need to provide updates to at different times, i.e. multiple worship services, those who receive congregational emails and those who don’t, etc.

Points to include in communications:

- Description of process
- Status of progress, including what’s been done, what you’re currently doing, and what happens next
- List of actions taken
- The preferred process for communicating with the members of the call committee

Planning a comprehensive communications strategy and consistently communicating to the congregation will deliver many benefits, including:

- The congregation will clearly understand the process, including the roles of the District office, congregation boards or council, call committee, and congregation.
- Clear identification of the members of the call committee.
- Congregation members will have a clear understanding of the proper process for communicating with the members of the call committee.

#### **Point of Contact with the District**

It is important that there is only one point of contact between the District School Ministries office/Executive Director and the call committee. This should be the call committee chairperson. A single point of contact ensures clear, efficient lines of communication throughout the process.

#### **The Right Question**

It is not appropriate for a call committee to be guided chiefly by such questions as these: Will the congregation like this worker? Will it approve of the call committee’s choice of candidates? Will this person do for now until a better worker comes along?

***The foremost question for the call committee always is whether this is the person God desires this congregation to have as its worker.*** Human preferences and personalities never come before the mission to which God calls his church. That is why every meeting of the call committee will include prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

#### **The Significance of Service on a Call Committee**

Many people report that serving on a call committee turned out to be one of the most important things they ever did as members of the church. It allowed them to experience firsthand how the Holy Spirit works through committed Christians to help the church be faithful to its calling. It gave them an opportunity to see how the local church is vitally connected to the whole church. It let them participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their church as part of the history-long, worldwide Church of Jesus Christ.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR POTENTIAL CALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name:

Preferred Email:

Preferred Phone:

1. How long have you been a member of this congregation? Which worship service do you normally attend? How many times per month, on average?
2. In what types of church activities/service have you participated? Any previous call committee experience?
3. What do you think are the 3 best qualities of this congregation? How would you assess the current health of the congregation?
4. How would you describe this congregation's mission today and for the future? How would you describe the most important role of the next [worker], and the most important gifts or attributes that person will need?
5. In finding the next [worker], what do you think the primary focus of the call committee should be?
6. What do you think would be your most important contribution(s) in serving on the call committee? Any other comments you'd like to add?

## APPENDIX D

### Congregation/School Information

1. Please complete the following:

	Current	5 years ago	10 years ago
Average Attendance			
Baptized Membership			
Communicant Membership			
School Enrollment			
Preschool Enrollment			

2. An incredible, free tool to help you easily access powerful information on your context is Lutheran Church Extension Fund's (LCEF) MissionInSite. MissionInSite's PeopleView System uniquely integrates information about your congregants with demographic information to determine the best opportunities for advancing your ministry. To gain access to this information, simply contact Gail Kanneg in the District office at [gail.kanneg@psd-lcms.org](mailto:gail.kanneg@psd-lcms.org).

Please describe your community giving attention to ...

Size of community:

Economy:

Racial composition:

Growth projections:

General descriptions:

Does your congregation/school reflect the general population of the community? Explain:

3. If you have a preschool and/or day school, please provide a description of its current status and health. What is the financial situation? What are the enrolment trends? What are your accreditations?
4. What salary did you pay your last administrator? (Include housing in salary figure)
5. What salary do you plan to pay your next administrator? Give a figure or a range. (include housing in salary figure.)
6. Do you offer Concordia Plan Benefits? Describe coverage. If not, how do you make allowance for your worker's care?
7. Compare your compensation figures with the District guidelines. If your figures fall short, how will this impact your ability to call a new worker? (Note that a Commissioned Minister determines their housing amount, which can be included in the total. The worker is responsible to annually designate their housing amount, which should be recorded in the congregation/organization minutes for tax recording purposes.)
8. If possible, attach a missional history of the school, not just dates and names, but the story of significant attempts at mission and outreach. Share stories of how you shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with individuals and your community.
9. Attach a copy of your school's mission statement and/or vision statement.
10. If you have a list of your core values, please attach. If not, please answer the following question:

Any worker coming to serve this congregation/school should know the following things about us – for good or for bad: (List things like “we are a conservative/progressive/traditional congregation.” “We value diversity” We don't know how to handle conflict” We like to fight” “we like variety in our worship” etc.) Include a congregational history that describes your “DNA”.

## APPENDIX E

### Ministers of Religion—Commissioned

#### Guidelines for Calling First-Call Candidates Process Summary

- Information on Placement Requests can be found on this website [https://cus.edu/?page\\_id=58](https://cus.edu/?page_id=58)
- Calling entities submits a Candidate Request Form: <https://apex.cuw.edu/ords/f?p=152:14>
- Placement Directors send candidate credentials to calling entities for consideration
- Calling entities contact candidates of choice to inquire regarding interest and availability for interview
- Calling entities contact Placement Director to request that their final candidate of choice be designated for a Divine Call to their congregation
- AFTER a candidate agrees to designation, calling entity issues a Call, sending completed Call documents to their district president for review and approval.
- District President sends the signed Call document to the appropriate Placement Director

#### GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNATED CALLS

1. Calling entities (e.g. congregations, Lutheran High Schools, etc.) contact the Placement Directors of the Synodical colleges and universities to indicate their personnel needs.
2. Placement Directors share the name(s) and a brief description of candidate(s), if any, who may meet the needs of the Calling entity and send credentials if requested.  
**NOTE:** Names of the candidates will likely be shared with several Calling entities at the same time.
3. Calling entities make initial contact (usually by telephone) with candidate(s) who appear to meet their needs to share preliminary information about their position, to give candidates an opportunity to ask preliminary questions, and to determine if the candidate is interested in further consideration. Arrangements can be made for a more formal interview. **NOTE:** After review of prospective candidates, it is very helpful to the Placement Directors to inform them if a candidate from their institution will **not** be considered for the Call.
4. Inform the Placement Director prior to the scheduling of a formal telephone interview or an on-site interview. Emailing them is fine. Calling entities may prefer to interview on campus but must schedule these through the Placement Director. All interviews (telephone, on-site, compressed video transmission, or on-campus) are at the expense of the Calling entity. It is important that there is adequate planning and preparation prior to the interview to assure that this is done professionally. Contact the Placement Director for suggestions on appropriate interview questions. **NOTE:** After any contact with the candidate, it is very important that both the candidate and Calling entity are clear about the next steps in the process.
5. When Calling entities reach the point of “**designation**”, meaning that they are ready to extend a Call to a specific candidate, they must make certain through contact with the Placement Director that the candidate is available and willing to consider accepting designation. The Placement Director will counsel the candidate to determine that there is nothing apparent at that point to prevent due consideration of the Call when they receive it. Accepting designation is not an official decision on accepting the Call. That happens after the Call documents are in the hands of the candidate and they have formally (i.e., in writing) indicated a decision on the Call. Calls are not recommended to the Board of Assignments for ratification without that contact and the permission of the Placement Director to continue the designation process.

**NOTE:** Designation of a candidate (candidate accepts designation) means that the Placement Director has assigned that candidate to that particular Calling entity for consideration of their Call. Further search for a position for the candidate stops and notification is given to all other Calling entities that might be considering the candidate that the candidate is no longer available.

For the Calling entity, designation of a candidate to them means that any further search for candidates has ended until the candidate reaches a decision on the Call.

The Call process is complete when the candidate is Commissioned and installed upon approval of the respective District President. The Calling entity must confirm with the district office that the planned date for commissioning and/or instillation is authorized by the district president which confirms that all call/placement paperwork is complete and processed including the required paperwork sent to the candidate from the placement director.

**CALL DOCUMENTS FOR CANDIDATES PLACED FOR THE FIRST TIME, INCLUDING COLLOQUY CANDIDATES, MUST BE SENT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE RESPECTIVE DISTRICT NOT THE CANDIDATE.** (The call document software is available through your District Office.)

**NOTE:** Before Call documents are sent to the District President, please verify that the candidate's name is properly indicated and that all signatures are complete. It is helpful to inform the Placement Director when the documents have been sent. Once the District President has signed the Call documents, he will send them directly to the student's Placement Director. Placement Directors will send them on to the student and report the Call activity to the Concordia University System.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Colloquy Completion Process Description**

Upon completion of Colloquy including the final interview, the University Placement Director announces the candidate's completion of the Colloquy program by letter to the Chairman of the Colloquy Committee for the Teaching Ministry in St. Louis. Copies are sent to the District President, Executive Director of School Ministries, and the candidate.

The candidate's administrator arranges for the preparation of a call document through the church or RSO organization extending the call. This is considered a "first" call through the Board of Assignments in St. Louis.

The completed call document, signed by the authorized congregational/RSO representatives, is sent to the District President. The District President signs the document on p. 10 and sends the call document to the Placement Director at the university. The call document is sent from the Placement Director to the candidate with instructions on accepting the call, and where to send documents needed for processing and completion of the call.

The District President gives authorization for Commissioning and Installation when all required paperwork is received and processed in the Placement Office and the District Office.

Here is the above written in brief Steps:

#### Colloquy Completion Process

- Colloquy completion letter prepared by the Placement Director - Copies are sent to the District President, Exec. Director of School Ministries, and Candidate
- Preparation of Commissioned Minister Call Document by church/RSO organization including signatures
- Document is sent to the District President for review and signature
- Call Document is sent to the University Placement Director for review
- Call Document is sent to the Candidate
- Authorization for Commissioning and Installation is issued by the District President

**APPENDIX G**  
**Commissioned Minister Candidate Nomination Form**

We hereby nominate the following individual as a candidate for [position] call to:

---

(Name of Congregation) (City, State)

NAME:

PRESENT SCHOOL:

HOW LONG:

LOCATION:

PERSONAL: (Approximate age, marital status, number of children, state of health, etc.)

OTHER COMMENTS: (e.g. explain any relationship with this nominee, how long you have known him and under what circumstances.)

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H

### Pre-Call Interviews

*The following is based on information provided by the Council of Presidents.*

Pre-call interviews, visits and post-call visitations are not prohibited by the Holy Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions. In fact, we highly recommended that these elements are part of your candidate evaluation process. Each congregation has the right to determine procedures for reviewing candidates; however the congregation needs to function in such a way that the dignity and divine nature of the call is maintained. And it is important that the process remain the same for all candidates.

***Remember: the congregation is not simply “hiring an employee” but is seeking the full measure of the Holy Spirit’s guidance and insight in discerning the person to fill the office of Holy Ministry.***

Most congregations today are finding it helpful to conduct pre-call interviews and visits to assist the worker and congregation in learning more about one another. These interviews and visits enable the candidate and congregation to share a sense of their vision of ministry with each other and provide “first impressions” which may prove helpful in considering and deliberating about a potential call.

*Note that the pre-call interview or visit should never be the only impression of value – it is important that congregations consider all the information and credentials provided on candidates.*

#### **Benefits and Potential Risks**

The decision to call a worker is among the most important that a congregation ever makes. While pre-call interviews are neither commanded nor forbidden by Holy Scripture or the Lutheran Confessions, it is recommended that you make these interviews part of your call process. It is important to exercise care and understand potential risks.

Pre-call interviews are valuable ways to become more familiar with the candidate’s theology, interests, experience, skills, and leadership style so that the congregation can equip itself to make an informed decision at its call meeting. Telephone, video and face-to-face interviews provide both the worker and congregation insight into each other, and the potential fit between them.

Pre-call interviews can involve risks of which you should be aware. Answers during interviews may give a misleading picture - the worker and the congregation may not present themselves as they really are. It is imperative that interviews be based on honest, open and frank conversation, which is honoring to the Holy Spirit and each party involved as together they seek His will.

Personal interviews may also place undue emphasis on the outward aspects of the call (e.g. appearance of the sanctuary, the neighborhood, the community, the people, etc.) rather than on the challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry. Furthermore, personal interviews entail costs for lodging, meals, events, etc.

Considering the risks as noted above, pre-call interviews are important and recommended steps in the journey towards calling a pastor as the Holy Spirit leads.

## Guidelines

Following are some general guidelines regarding pre-call interviews. If you have questions about these guidelines, do not hesitate to contact your District Education Executive.

1. Congregations should wait to decide on whether or not to conduct pre-call interviews until after they have received their call list, reviewed the information provided by the Executive Director of School Ministries, and conducted an evaluation to determine who are the top candidates they would like to interview.
2. Pre-call interviews should only be conducted with those individuals who are named on the call list provided by the Education Executive. Also, at this point in the call process it is important that you do not add any last-minute candidates without the review and support of the Executive Director of School Ministries.
3. Congregations choosing to conduct pre-call interviews must be careful to maintain the dignity and divine nature of the call. When calling a worker, congregations are **not** hiring an employee, but asking God to send them a worker. The entire call process should be surrounded with fervent prayer.
4. The actual interviewing will normally be done by members of the Call Committee. (The Call Committee and the Interview Committee may be the same group of individuals or two different groups of individuals or a sub-committee of the Call Committee as the congregation directs or as the Call Committee structures itself for its work. Throughout this document, it is understood that references to 'the committee' speak of the group—whatever its title—that undertakes the interviewing task.)
  - a. If the congregation's constitution does not provide for a Call Committee, an enabling resolution should be adopted by the voters' assembly establishing both the make-up and the duties of the Call Committee.
  - b. The candidates for interview will be taken from the Call List as prepared by Executive Director of School Ministries.
  - c. Congregations should work closely with the Executive Director of School Ministries in conducting pre-call interviews, including requesting assistance in developing questions, determining the best process and inviting them to participate in the actual interviews.
5. After contacting your top candidates to inquire of their willingness and ability to engage in the call process, it is recommended that interviews with willing candidates occur in two phases:
  - a. Initial interviews - 60-90-minute interviews using video (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc.) to determine the list of candidates you would like to bring to your campus for onsite visits.
  - b. Onsite visits – Face-to-face meetings with the candidate and spouse over a weekend or 1.5-2.5 days during the week with staff, school faculty, meet-and-greet/Q&A with congregation, attending worship, touring the campus and community, fellowship etc. Make sure to be flexible and attend to the comfort of the candidate.

6. See below for a sample interview format. The Interview Committee will be careful to conduct each candidate interview in the same way. Questions should be formulated based on the needs of the position. The Committee should limit the number of questions addressed to the candidates, with the same questions asked of each of the candidates. The congregation can be given the opportunity to submit questions or subjects to the Call Committee to be touched upon in the interviews. "Trick" questions have no place in these interviews.
7. Ensure your interview questions can be covered adequately in the allotted time for the interview. As you formulate questions, evaluate them in three ways:
  - a. What does it have to do with the position?
  - b. Why do we need to know?
  - c. Would we be willing to answer the same question about ourselves?
8. Avoid "yes/no" or other short answer questions. Examples of good questions that focus on behavior include:
  - a. Tell us about a time when...
  - b. What do you want us to know about...
  - c. Give us an example of...
  - d. You say. . . about yourself. How has this been demonstrated?
  - e. Describe an experience where...
9. In conducting the interview, focus on how the worker functions rather than on the ideas and concepts expressed. Remember that the manner in which a person has handled a situation in the past may well indicate how he might act in the future given the same or similar circumstances. Note especially expressions of energy, conviction, enthusiasm, respect for acceptable differences and the way personal faith is shared. Listen carefully in order to ascertain how the worker draws naturally, winsomely, and confidently on the resources of his education, experience, and faith.
10. A written summary of each interview should be made and distributed to each member of the Call Committee. It is from these summaries that a report can be made to the congregation, and a candidate or candidates can be recommended. As the Holy Spirit leads, there may be only one candidate who the committee feels should be recommended, or more than one. A slate of three candidates from which the congregation makes their choice is a good target. Your congregation's constitution may provide guidelines. See below for a sample report to the congregation.
11. As a matter of courtesy, the call committee should communicate with each candidate who has been interviewed, expressing appreciation for his participation.
12. Remember that the committee does not act on its own behalf, but as the representative and servant of the entire congregation. Its agenda should be what's best for the congregation and not some private or individual agenda. At the same time, the committee is chartered to do this work on behalf of the congregation, and so should go about this important business diligently, thoroughly and confidently, seeking the Holy Spirit's leading and using the gifts God has provided each member to arrive at a God-pleasing recommendation.

**Appendix I**  
**Pacific Southwest District Behavioral Interviewing Guide**

\_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran School  
**Behavioral Interviewing Questions and Rubric**

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: _____
-------------

Interview Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** The goal of this interview is to get a complete picture of the candidate. The questions listed are designed to illicit a response of what the candidate has actually accomplished in the past. Follow up questioning, in order gain a more descriptive answer, is encouraged.

The questions are separated into teacher job description categories that are necessary for a successful teaching ministry. Each category will receive a score based on the answers given by the candidate. The "Rating Qualities" are provided to help you, as the interviewer, understand what to look for. The "Rubric" is provided to help you keep a consistent scoring method throughout the interview process.

Since this is a thorough method of evaluation, feel free to begin the interview with prayer and time to discuss introductions. Also, let the candidate know you will be looking for answers involving specific past behaviors.

**Exercise Faith**

Depends upon a strong and vital relationship with God; demonstrates a willingness to take Faith-risks

1. Describe how you exercise such disciplines as prayer, Bible Study, and personal devotion.
2. Tell me about a specific time when you shared your faith story.
3. Describe the principles of stewardship in your life (Time, talents, treasures)
4. How and when do you worship?

**Qualities**

- A. Actively attends devotion and Bible Study
- B. Has a personal devotion and prayer time
- C. Loves God
- D. Enjoys sharing faith

**Rubric**

*High (4-5)*

- A. Attends church often
- B. Has a set time for personal devotions
- C. Enthusiastic about faith
- D. Has many examples of sharing faith

*Medium (2.5 – 3.5)*

- A. Usually attends church
- B. Sometimes does devotions
- C. Joy for Jesus and faith not as evident
- D. Struggled to think of a faith sharing example

*Low (1-2)*

- A. Does not attend church often
- B. Usually does not do devotions
- C. Little joy
- D. Severe difficulty in thinking of a faith sharing example

**Resilience**

*Demonstrates the ability to overcome significant challenges.*

1. How do you keep yourself positive when the pressure gets tough?
2. Describe the most unproductive period in your life. What did you do to help yourself?
3. How have you dealt with constructive criticism?
4. Describe your most unproductive period in ministry or on a job. How did you change the situation?
5. Describe a time when your expectations were high, but the results were low. How did you react?

**Qualities**

- A. Handles stress well
- B. Able to “let go” of disappointments and failures
- C. Holds a positive outlook on challenges
- D. Appreciates constructive criticism

**Rubrics**

*High (4 – 5)*

- A. Handles stress well
- B. Able to “let go” of disappointments and failures
- C. Holds a positive outlook on challenges
- D. Appreciates constructive criticism

*Medium (2.5 – 3.5)*

- A. Handles stress adequately
- B. Has trouble with failure
- C. Not always positive
- D. Does not like constructive criticism

*Low (1 – 2)*

- A. Does not do well with stress
- B. Cannot “let go” of failure
- C. Usually negative
- D. Argues with criticism

**Intrinsic Motivation**

*Possesses the ability to be a self-starter; works with diligence to complete a task*

1. Describe a program or activity that you initiated and implemented.
2. Describe your most important accomplishment. How did you go about reaching your goal?
3. Describe your typical workweek. How much time and energy do you put in?

### Qualities

- A. Looks for projects that benefit the church/school
- B. Finishes projects on time
- C. Plans with the “end in mind”
- D. Works hard and smart

### Rubrics

#### High (4 – 5)

- A. Has completed projects for the church/school
- B. Has finished projects on time
- C. Able to complete a project with step by step planning
- D. Effectively uses time wisely and puts in the extra effort

#### Medium (2.5 – 3.5)

- A. Wanted to do church/school projects
- B. Has finished projects
- C. Able to complete a project with planning errors
- D. Works hard

#### Low (1 – 2)

- A. No projects
- B. Has difficulty completing projects
- C. Cannot plan
- D. Does not seem to work hard/lazy

### **Relationship Building (Classroom, Team)**

*Creates positive, cohesive groups; builds partnerships with others.*

1. Tell me about a time when you have had to get a group to work as one cohesive unit and describe the steps you took to accomplish that mission.
2. Not all teams work together effectively. Give an example of a team that you were a part of that was not effective. What did you learn about yourself from that experience?
3. Speak about a relationship you built and talk about the steps you took to build that relationship.
4. What steps have you taken in the past to help people (students, parents, colleagues, etc.) feel secure, trusting, and open with you?
5. Articulate for me how you help others develop positive relationships.
6. Tell me about a relationship you salvaged after a conflict or falling out with the person.
7. Describe how you have built the teacher-student and teacher-parent relationship in your classroom and how it has affected classroom discipline.

### Qualities

- A. Builds partnerships with parents and families
- B. Actively builds relationships with staff
- C. Has repaired relationships

### Rubrics

#### High (4 -5)

- A. Builds partnerships with parents and families
- B. Actively builds relationships with staff
- C. Has repaired relationships

#### Medium (2.5 – 3.5)

- A. Builds partnerships with some families
- B. Builds relationships with some staff members
- C. Has trouble with repairing relationships

Low (1 – 2)

- A. Does not look to build relationships
- B. Alienates himself/herself from staff
- C. Does not repair relationships

### **Flexibility/Adaptability**

*Demonstrates abilities to handle multiple pressures and to adapt to minute-by-minute demands; understands innovation*

1. You have your entire day planned, and then, life happens. Tell me how you have adjusted or adapted your plans when an emergency or unforeseen circumstance has arisen.
2. Describe a time when you disagreed with a group decision. How did you react?
3. When has your resistance to change proven to be counterproductive?
4. Describe a stressful last-minute change in the school day and how you handled it.

### **Qualities**

- A. Handles changes well with a good attitude
- B. Enjoys changing instruction for the “teachable moment”
- C. Works well handling changes with staff

### **Rubric**

High (4 – 5)

- A. Handles changes well with a good attitude
- B. Enjoys changing instruction for the teachable moment
- C. Works well handling changes with staff

Medium (2.5 – 3.5)

- A. Can change if necessary
- B. Will teach the “teachable moment”
- C. Can work with staff

Low (1 – 2)

- A. Does not like changes
- B. Tries to stay with the lesson at all times
- C. Complains about last minute change

### **Communication Skills**

*Possesses effective communication skills, including the use and management of technological skills*

1. Give examples of communication practices in your current or past ministry.
2. Describe a time you effectively used your listening skills.
3. Provide an example of poor communication and the steps you took to correct the problem.
4. How have you worked to improve your communication to students/families? What was the result?
5. Describe a recent conflict with a parent and list the steps you took to resolve it.
6. What was the most difficult parent-teacher conference you have had? What made it challenging?
7. List the things you have done to make communication with others a part of your daily schedule.
8. Tell me some strategies you have used to get responses from parents to notes or letters.

### **Qualities**

- A. Shows a high level of communication skills and uses them effectively
- B. Communicates effectively and frequently with all stakeholders
- C. Uses a variety of means to communicate and is technically savvy

- D. Is visible and available to give and receive praise and criticism and responds well to both.
- E. Solves conflicts to the benefit of all involved parties

### Rubrics

#### High (4-5)

- A. Consistently strives to understand, and then be understood
- B. Reaches out/communicates well with all stakeholders
- C. Is well-rounded in a variety of communication techniques
- D. Actively encourages communication from parents / students / staff
- E. Has solved difficult issues with parents/students/staff

#### Medium (2.5 - 3.5)

- A. Tends to want to talk first then listen
- B. Limited communication with a narrow group of people
- C. Uses only one means of communication and has limited technological experience
- D. Is available for questions / comments / concerns
- E. Sees conflict as something to be avoided

#### Low (1-2)

- A. Causes frustration by not listening to other's comments
- B. Infrequent communication to stakeholders (parents)
- C. Uses little communication
- D. Unable to handle criticism
- E. Causes conflict

### **Classroom Management**

*Demonstrates effective classroom management skills, including discipling, organization, and discipline*

1. Tell me how you have implemented your discipline policy. How did you react to your students' responses?
2. How have you modeled both Law and Gospel in your classroom?
3. Describe discipline plans/policies that you have implemented in the past. Tell us about a time when you adjusted a discipline plan to meet the needs of a particular student(s)/class.
4. Tell us about a time when you organized a project and the steps you used to complete it.
5. How have you used your organization skills to create an environment for learning in the classroom? (probing areas – homework distribution/collection, lesson plans, classroom prep, field trips)

### Qualities

- A. Shows a high level of understanding of discipline plans/policies
- B. Effectively communicates discipline policies to parents
- C. Exhibits an understanding of how to model Law and Gospel
- D. Shows a high level of organizational leadership
- E. Applies organizational skills to create an environment for learning in the classroom

### Rubrics

#### High (4-5)

- A. Consistently implements discipline plans/policies
- B. Is able to effectively communicate discipline policies to parents
- C. Shows a high level of understanding of how to model Law and Gospel
- D. Exhibits a history of organizational leadership.
- E. Maintains a high of level of organizational skills

#### Medium (2.5-3.5)

- A. Generally implements discipline plans/policies
- B. Has indicated some success in communicating discipline plan/policies to parents
- C. Shows understanding of how to model Law and Gospel
- D. Demonstrates some level of organizational leadership
- E. Displays some organizational skills

#### Low (1-2)

- A. Has trouble implementing discipline plans/policies
- B. Is hesitant in communicating discipline plan/policies to parents
- C. Does not display knowledge of ways to model Law and Gospel
- D. Does not demonstrate organizational leadership
- E. Lacks organizational skills

### **Educational Leadership**

*Understands and utilizes various instructional methods and differentiation; and demonstrates life-long learning?*

1. Articulate how you have met the diverse needs of your students in the past.
2. Talk about your favorite curricular area, and how you have supplemented that area with new ideas, activities, and teaching strategies.
3. How have you been successful in motivating your students to commit themselves to classroom goals?
4. Talk about someone who you have mentored. How did you go about helping that person?
5. Speak about how you have kept yourself up-to-date on educational principles and best practices.

### **Qualities**

- A. Uses a variety of instructional methods
- B. Successfully motivates students to want to learn
- C. Able to differentiate classroom instruction and evaluation based on student ability
- D. Reads educational journals regularly

### **Rubrics**

#### High (4 – 5)

- A. Uses a variety of instructional methods
- B. Successfully motivates students to want to learn
- C. Able to differentiate classroom instruction and evaluation based on student ability.
- D. Reads educational journals regularly

#### Medium (2.5 – 3.5)

- A. Uses a couple of instructional methods
- B. Students mostly like classes
- C. Does not like to differentiate instruction
- D. Seldom reads educational journals

#### Low (1 – 2)

Uses one method of teaching

- A. Students do not like class
- B. Will not differentiate instruction
- C. Does not read journals

### **Conflict Resolution**

*Possesses the abilities to bring about successful resolution to conflict understands group dynamics*

1. Describe how you have sought help in resolving a conflict.
2. Not all resolutions are successful. Tell me about a time when you were unsuccessful in resolving a conflict. What did you learn from the situation?
3. Tell me about a time when you confronted students who were causing conflict among classmates (or students undermining the unity of the entire classroom). How did you help the students to resolve the conflict and bring the class back into a unified relationship?
4. Describe a time when you helped two students resolve a conflict.
5. Share with us a time when you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you/or shared your point of view.
6. What action did you take when you felt "attacked" by a parent or a co-worker?

### **Qualities**

- A. Ability to listen
- B. Shows discernment in understanding of the conflict issue(s)
- C. Is able to identify/acknowledge their personal role in a situation
- D. Takes initiative to address conflict
- E. Maintains a high level of success in resolving conflicts

### **Rubrics**

#### **High(4-5)**

- A. Exhibits strong listening skills (eye contact, body language, rephrasing)
- B. Has the ability to see the BIG picture
- C. Consistently is able to identify/acknowledge their personal role in a situation
- D. Shows a high level of initiative in addressing conflict
- E. Maintains a high level of success in resolving conflicts

#### **Medium(2.5-3.5)**

- A. Exhibits listening skills
- B. Generally sees more than one side of the conflict
- C. At times is able to identify/acknowledge their personal role in a situation
- D. Demonstrates some level of initiative in addressing conflict
- E. Has success in resolving conflicts

#### **Low (1-2)**

- A. Generally exhibits few listening skills
- B. Has difficulty being able to see more than one side of a conflict.
- C. Does not identify/acknowledge their personal role in a situation
- D. Avoids conflict
- E. Relies on outside factors to resolve conflict.

### **Commitment to Ministry**

*Demonstrates an understanding of and a commitment to the total ministry of the church*

1. What actions have you taken to strengthen your commitment to ministry?
2. Define ministry. Tell me about a time you set a ministry goal. What steps did you take to reach that goal?
3. Tell us how you learned to be a generous person.

### **Qualities**

- A. Actively participates in church/school activities
- B. Understands the concept of ministry

### Rubrics

#### High (4 – 5)

- A. Enjoys being a part of the church/school community
- B. Actively leads church/school activities
- C. Understands the concept of ministry

#### Medium (2.5 – 3.5)

- A. Some participation in church/school community
- B. Participates in few activities
- C. Unsure of ministry

#### Low (1 – 2)

- A. Does not participate in anything outside his/her classroom
- B. Cannot define ministry adequately

### Wellness

*Maintains a healthy balance between worship, family, and work commitments*

1. How do you prioritize multiple demands on your time?
2. When things are out of balance, what steps do you take to restore balance?
3. What brings you joy?
4. Tell us why you are interested in this position.
5. Describe the ways you have used organizational skills in your life.

### Qualities

- A. Maintains a healthy balance of work and personal life
- B. Has skills to manage stress level
- C. Able to prioritize

### Rubrics

#### High (4 – 5)

- A. Maintains a healthy balance of work and personal life
- B. Has skills to manage stress level
- C. Able to prioritize

#### Medium (2.5 – 3.5)

- A. Work and personal life somewhat balanced
- B. Stress can be an issue
- C. Trouble with prioritizing

#### Low (1 – 2)

- A. No balance of work and personal life
- B. Life is frantic and too busy.
- C. Unable to prioritize

## Appendix J

### What Not to Ask on an Employment Application

In general, employers should not request the following information on employment applications:

- Social Security numbers. Because of Identity Theft is a good practice not to include Social Security numbers on applications unless access to the applications is restricted and care is taken with respect to their disposal by secure means.
- Date of birth, and dates of school attendance or graduation. Employers can ask if an applicant is over 16, over 18 or over 21 depending on job requirements. If the date of birth is necessary for a background check, it can be obtained during the background check process.
- Marital status, including maiden name.
- Race, ancestry or ethnic identity, including place of birth.
- Sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.
- Pregnancy status or number of dependents.
- Citizenship or immigration status.
- Disability or medical conditions.
- National origin or ancestry. An employer can ask about languages the applicant speaks, reads or writes if use of language other than English is necessary for the position.
- Dates or nature of military service or veteran status, but employers must permit applicants to include information about military service in the experience or skills section of the application.
- General questions about clubs, volunteer service, civic organizations, or societies unless it is stated applicants may omit organizations where the name of the organization may indicate a protected status.
- Criminal arrests and convictions. Employers cannot ask an applicant about arrests. With respect to convictions, most employers cannot ask about convictions which resulted in a referral to, and participation in, any pretrial or post-trial diversion program; have been judicially expunged, statutorily eradicated, dismissed after probation, or ordered sealed; or related to marijuana offenses that occurred two years prior to the application. Of course, there are always exceptions, including when the employer is required by law to obtain conviction information; when the applicant would be required to possess or use a firearm in the course of his or her employment; and when an individual who has been convicted of a crime is prohibited by law from holding the position sought by the applicant, regardless of whether that conviction has been expunged, judicially ordered sealed, statutorily eradicated, or judicially dismissed following probation.

There may be exceptions to these requirements based on the bona fide occupational qualifications of the position or the industry at issue.

*Jeanette R. Youngblood is of counsel and Cary G. Palmer is office managing shareholder in the Sacramento, Calif., office of Jackson Lewis P.C. (<http://www.jacksonlewis.com/>)  
Copyright 2015 © Jackson Lewis. All rights reserved.*

## Appendix K

### Sample Interview Report to Congregation

*(Provide information to the congregation that illustrates how the candidates you interviewed possess the gifts and attributes desired for the position. Include a photo if available.)*

#### **John Smith**

**Age:** 39

**Current School:** First Lutheran Church and School, Anytown, CA; 100 students enrolled

**Role:** Principal 2014. Pastor Smith has served schools in Big City, Florida, and Suburb, AZ, starting new church campuses in Florida and metro Big City.

**Education:** Concordia Irvine

**Family:** Mary [Jones] Smith (married 2003), 3 children, ages 8-12

**Strong Leader and Administrator** – Mr. Smith bases his ministry with transparency anchored in relationships as the foundation. He takes a proactive approach to problem solving with personal reconciliation as the basis for resolving conflict. He believes that the mission (sharing the fullness of life in Jesus) is more important than any one individual. First Lutheran centers their message in Worship, School Ministries and Life Groups. He oversees a full- and part-time school staff of 23 people.

**Church/School Bridge Builder** – First Lutheran School is the church's primary mission field. Mary Smith started the Children's Ministry as a bridge between the church and school and the team organizes 9 family events throughout the year. The school has grown to 160+ preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

#### **Ned Jones**

**Age:** 50

**Current School:** Faith Lutheran Church and School, Anytown, TX; 300+ students enrolled

**Role:** Principal since 2013.

**Education:** Concordia Nebraska

**Family:** Jenny [Brown] Jones (married 1995), 5 children ages 19-25

**Strong Leader and Administrator** – Mr. Jones provided skilled, effective leadership to his current school in the transition from long-time strong leadership to his own. He is not afraid to lead and challenge the school staff through current trends in education. He leads 40+ school staff.

**Church/School Bridge Builder** – Mr. Jones closely partners with the preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade school faculty and staff. 200 students are served at the school. Mr. Jones has only served congregations with a strong school ministry and strongly believes that the church and school must join in close partnership as one mission for the benefit of the families. He also serves on the Board of Directors of a mission to Kenya based at his congregation.

## **APPENDIX L**

### **Prayerfully Evaluating Candidates**

One of the critical tasks that the call committee is charged with is prayerfully evaluating candidates. It is helpful to have a commonly understood and employed process across your call committee so that you are able to have consistent discussion and points of comparison. Creating and agreeing on a process and tools will enable the call committee to more easily reach consensus on the candidates to 1) ask to engage in the call process with you, 2) conduct phone or video interviews with, 3) invite to your campus for visits and in-person meetings and interviews, and 4) put forward as the recommended candidate(s) for the congregational vote. Following are some best practices when evaluating candidates.

#### **Prayer is critical**

From the very first moment your call process starts, you and your call committee, along with your congregation, should be in earnest, consistent prayer asking for the Holy Spirit's leading. At each stage of evaluating candidates, whether during individual study time or when the committee meets as a group, prayer is the first step. Continually bring forward to your congregation requests for prayer as you progress through the different stages of evaluation.

#### **Individual and Group Evaluation**

Candidate evaluation includes each call committee member taking the time individually to pray, study information provided and document impressions. Then, each member is prepared and able to speak to their findings when the call committee comes together to discuss candidates as a group. The combination of individual and group evaluation provides beneficial and comprehensive perspective.

#### **First Round: CMIF Evaluation**

The first round of evaluations are based on the Commissioned Minister Information Forms (CMIFs) on worker as provided by the District on the call list. The goal after reviewing this information is to agree on a number of candidates that seem to meet your profile criteria and that you want to contact about engaging with you in the call process.

##### ***Evaluation Criteria/System***

Before beginning evaluation, discuss a system with the call committee that each committee member will use as they study the CMIF information. For example, you may want to use a 1-5 rating scale for quality or thoroughness of responses in the CMIFs, where a 1 would indicate a very weak response and 5 would indicate an incisive, informative and thorough response. There may be specific questions in the CMIF that you choose to use the rating system on based on their applicability to your candidate profile.

Another rating system would be an A-B-C model. Based on all the CMIF information provided, an A rating would indicate a candidate that meets or virtually meets all of your profile criteria, and that you definitely want to contact. B ratings would be for candidates meeting most of the criteria with a few areas of concern but you'd want to contact to learn more, and a C rating would indicate candidates who don't meet most of the criteria and for which there are several areas of concern, and whom you would not contact.

Whatever system you agree upon, your ratings will help guide you to those candidates the call committee feels should be contacted about engaging in your call process.

#### **Second Round: Phone/Video Interviews**

The second round of evaluations come from phone or video interviews with the candidates who indicated they would engage in your call process. These interviews should be 60-90 minutes in length, and should be conducted using the same method with all candidates. Before conducting interviews,

your call committee should develop and agree upon a set of questions to ask the candidate related to your profile, your mission and ministry, and your context. It's a good practice to assign different call committee members specific questions to ask, and then allow for follow-up questions from any call committee member.

Allow time after each interview for the call committee to discuss their impressions. Assign a notetaker to ensure your discussion is captured. These notes will prove useful as you complete interviews and discuss the candidates with whom you would like to move forward.

Once all of your phone/video interviews are complete, the call committee then will need to discuss and decide which candidates you would like to bring to your campus for visits. The number of candidates to bring onsite is up to you, but more than three is expensive and difficult to manage. You also may only have one candidate you feel is strong enough to meet face-to-face.

Ensure the candidates you select to visit are a strong fit for your position. Provide information to the congregation on the candidates whom will be visiting that aligns with the position description (see [Appendix J](#) for sample information.)

### **Third Round: Onsite Visits**

The third round of evaluations come from your face-to-face experience with candidates during their visits. In addition to time spent in further interviews with your call committee, these visits should include time with church and school staff and leadership, meet-and-greets, and preferably a community tour.

Once visits are complete, the call committee should meet soon after and decide which candidates to recommend to the congregation to vote upon for issuing a call. This may be one or two candidates. More than two is not recommended as it would likely be difficult to arrive at a clear majority vote.

### **Ask for assistance**

During the evaluation process, if you have questions or would like guidance or input, do not hesitate to contact the Executive Director of School Ministries.

## **APPENDIX M**

### **Call Documents**

The call committee should be acquainted with the call documents and be prepared to complete the documents and have them signed on the occasion of the call meeting or immediately on the following day. It is recommended that they be scanned and emailed to the Commissioned Minister-elect along with being mailed so they can immediately begin deliberating. The documents should be sent by registered mail. In the case of a first Call the documents need to be sent directly to the Placement Director at their Concordia University and NOT to the candidate.

Accompanying materials may include:

- Recent newsletters and bulletins
- Pictures of the church/school property
- Information about the community and area, as well as real estate information
- Current school budget for Administrators
- Demographic study of community, i.e. MissionInSite report from LCEF
- A letter of explanation & encouragement from the Pastor, School Administrator, and/or School Board Chair as applicable.

**NOTE:** Always send copies of pertinent communications to the Executive Director of School Ministries. Of course, be sure to retain a copy of all communications and pertinent materials for the congregation's files.

#### **Obtaining Call Documents**

The call document can be obtained online at the Holybytes website. You will need a username and password to access the Call Document for Ordained Ministers, acquire this by contacting Ellen Pratt or Kim Violette in the School Ministries office – [ellen.pratt@psd-lcms.org](mailto:ellen.pratt@psd-lcms.org) or [kim.violette@psd-lcms.org](mailto:kim.violette@psd-lcms.org).

Please read through the “Instructions for Call Document” for complete step by step instructions on how to complete the form. A completed call document will consist of the following parts:

1. Diploma of Vocation (must be printed on parchment paper)
2. Supplement to the diploma (4 pages)
3. Church information section (5 pages)

## APPENDIX N

### For Commissioned Ministers: Communicating You Received a Call

#### **What to Do When You Receive a Call**

Call your School Administrator or Pastor soon after you get the phone call and tell them that you have received a call and that the call documents are coming. Do not announce to your school that you have received a call without the call documents.

Inform your school/congregation community of your Call in a manner agreed upon by you and your pastor/school administrator. Announce that you have two calls from God: one to serve them and one to serve these other people. You will be considering both of them, praying about it, and would welcome their advice and prayers. You will make a decision and announce it in a few weeks. 2-3 is preferable.

Send a letter of acknowledgment to the calling school/congregation. Ask for their prayers and advice also. Inform them, too, of the deadline. If possible and you are serious about accepting the call, arrange a visit to the calling school/congregation. Don't hesitate to arrange for phone calls with the calling school/congregation as well.

#### **Announcing Your Decision**

If you absolutely need more time than anticipated to make a decision, announce that to your current school/congregation. Do not delay for more than a week, however. When you have reached a decision, send a letter to the calling school/congregation with your announcement. If there will be a duration of time between their receiving the letter from you and your announcement to your current school/congregation, ensure the calling congregation understands that and knows to keep your decision confidential until you announce it to your current school/congregation.

#### **If You Accept the Call**

Leaving is not easy. Communicate that even though it breaks your heart to leave, you think this is the right decision and God wants you there. Express thankfulness for your time with them, and that you will keep them in prayer. Your announcement should include what is your last day.

#### **If You Decline the Call**

Express your gratitude to the calling school/congregation. Thank them for the care and kindness they showed to you during the calling process. Give the calling school/congregation a reason for declining. Be gracious and straightforward. If there is a problem, such as low salary, substandard housing, or even obvious trouble in the school/congregation, they need to hear it clearly as it will assist them in the next round of their calling process. If it is because of your current family situation or needs, there is no problem with telling them that as well. Whatever it is, explain it, so they have an opportunity to address it as needed.

## **APPENDIX O**

### **Background Checks**

The LCMS recommends two companies for background checks, AAIM Employers' Association and Protect My Ministry. You can access their information using this link

<https://www.lcms.org/group-purchasing-agreement/product-and-service-discounts>

Each listing has contact information including an account representative for assistance.

Currently the PSD uses AAIM Employers' Association to process background checks but has used Protect My Ministry in the past. We would recommend either company.

Individual churches or schools would need to contact the chosen company to establish an account and obtain password information. The Pacific Southwest District cannot run background checks for individual churches or schools.