

RUBRICS GOVERNING CALL AND PLACEMENT PROCEDURES FOR MINISTERS OF RELIGION—COMMISSIONED

Preamble

The calling and placing of ministers of religion—commissioned 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 guide the process and decisions. A call comes from God through the calling entity and is extended by God to the called person. Thus, congregations, district officials, officials of the Synod, and college/university placement directors in the Concordia University System of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod work together cooperatively to provide the church with ministers who are qualified and capable of carrying out the mission and ministry that the Lord has entrusted to His church. The following procedures are intended to help the church and candidates for ministry respond to opportunities for mission and service within the church. In the call process the Synod and its districts assist calling entities and workers to maintain the integrity and orderliness of the process.

The following rubrics will guide the calling process and the conduct of the Synod, districts, calling entities, and workers. Please note, for the sake of clarity, that "district" or "district office" as used in these rubrics refers to the district president or his designee, unless stipulated otherwise.

Definitions

Assignment or first-placement is the result of the action of the Board of Assignments working together with the placement directors of the colleges/universities of the Concordia University System, individual district presidents (and/or their designees), and calling entities in placing candidates in their initial position in an educational or other ministry of the church. (Bylaw 2.9.1)

The Board of Assignments is the Synod's Council of Presidents. (Bylaw 3.10.2.1) The council, acting as the Board of Assignments, formally makes and approves the assignment of "first placement calls" to qualified graduates from the Synod's Concordia University System, including those qualified through the Synod's colloquy program.

A call is an accepted request which has been extended to an individual who has been declared qualified by an authorized synodical institution and is eligible to become or currently is a member of the Synod.

Call Document – see Diploma of Vocation

A calling entity of the Synod is a body that extends calls to ministers of religion—commissioned who perform the duties set forth in Bylaw 2.11.1, namely:

- 1) A congregation of the Synod;
- 2) 2) A congregation which is not a member of the Synod if the call is approved by the president of the district where the congregation is located and such approval is granted on the basis of policies adopted by the Council of Presidents;
- 3) The Synod itself for a position as an elected officer, executive, professional staff member, missionary, military chaplain, institutional chaplain, or a specialized ministry;
- 4) An agency of the Synod (defined in Bylaw 1.2.1 (a), including a district) for a position as an elected officer, executive or professional staff member.
- 5) A district for a position as a missionary, military chaplain, institutional chaplain or specialized ministry;
- 6) A synodical educational institution for a position as a faculty member or professional staff member;
- 7) A national inter-Lutheran agency referred to in Bylaw 1.3.8 for a position as an executive or professional staff member;
- 8) An auxiliary referred to in Bylaw section 6.1 for a position as an executive or professional staff member;
- 9) A recognized service organization referred to in Bylaw section 6.2 for a position as an executive or professional staff member;
- 10) An elementary or secondary educational institution recognized by the Synod for a position as an executive or professional staff member.

A candidate is an individual who has been declared qualified for a first call and who is assigned a first call in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod. He/she has successfully completed a degree program and has the approval of a college/university of the Synod for his/her respective ministry. (Bylaws 2.71-2.72, 2.81-2.82) The commissioning of ministers of religion occurs prior to first placement installation in accordance with forms and practices developed by the Synod for that purpose.

(The term candidate can also refer to a member of the Synod who is eligible to perform the duties of any of the offices of ministry as specified in Bylaw 2.11.1 but who is not currently an active member or an emeritus member.)

Diploma of Vocation (Call Document) – An official document of the Synod that is to be used when extending a call to a minister of religion—commissioned. These documents are available from your district office.

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The district is one of the thirty-five separate districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Candidates for first placement will be assigned by the Board of Assignments to serve a calling entity located in or operating from one of those districts.

The district education executive is usually the individual delegated and appointed by the district president and/or the district's board of directors to assist the district president in administering the call process for ministers of religion—commissioned in his district. District presidents normally exercise their responsibilities in the call process through district education executives. The specific title given to a district education executive will vary from district to district.

The district president is the chief executive officer of a district (Bylaw 4.4.1). He functions as the ecclesiastical supervisor of all members of the Synod in his district, i.e., congregations and all ministers of religion—ordained (i.e., pastors) and all ministers of religion—commissioned (i.e., teachers, directors of Christian education, etc.) whose names are entered on one of the rosters of the Synod. The district president administers the call process within his district. (Bylaw 4.4.3) (also Bylaws 2.9.1 (b), 2.10.3)

Lay workers are individuals who have been graduated from colleges and universities not affiliated with the Synod. They accept positions by hire in congregations or church-affiliated institutions and are under the supervision of their employer. They are not rostered or listed by the Synod. Included in this category are teachers who have not been Synod-trained and who are contracted by congregations and school associations. They may participate in the colloquy program of the Synod and thereby become better qualified to teach and become qualified for roster status in the Synod.

Ministers of religion—commissioned includes teachers (and school administrators), directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of parish music, deaconesses, certified lay ministers, directors of family life ministry, and parish assistants. (Constitution Art. V) All commissioned ministers on the roster of the Synod who serve a legitimate calling entity are considered by the Synod and the Internal Revenue Service to be called and self-employed, regardless of the terminology used.

The placement director is the official of a college/university in the Concordia University System responsible for recommending candidates to the Board of Assignments and for assisting candidates to complete the call process for assignment or first placement satisfactorily. (Paragraph (a) of Bylaw 2.9.1)

Calling Ministers of Religion—Commissioned from One Call to Another

Introduction

These rubrics lay down principles, guidelines, and procedures to be followed in the call process when a calling entity, as defined above, is calling a minister of religion—commissioned from another calling entity. These rubrics also apply to the calling of an individual who has been returned to active roster status, after a period of time during which the individual had been off the minister of religion—commissioned roster, and is now eligible to receive a call. Rubrics relating to the first placement or assignment of candidates are provided in another section of this document.

The Call

A call may be issued for a limited period of time, although every call is extended with the intention, given the continuing need, of an ongoing relationship between the calling entity and the one who is called.

All active rostered personnel should be engaged by call, rather than by contract. (Bylaw 2.5.3)

All rostered personnel engaged by contract are, nevertheless, considered to have a call.

A call ordinarily is continuing, but the worker or the calling entity may terminate it.

The worker terminates the call by accepting another call, resigning, or retiring.

A calling entity may terminate a call, under the provisions of the entity's constitution and bylaw or policies, in a spirit of Christian love and concern for the worker. (See Bylaw 3.8.3.8.7 which speaks of the termination of faculty positions at colleges, universities, and seminaries of the Synod. See also the guidance provided by the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations in its report to the 58th Regular Convention of the Synod, Pittsburgh, PA, July 10-17, 1992, p. 67.)

The Synod

Biographical data on all Lutheran school educators is gathered on a Personnel Information Form (PEIF) and entered into a national database (MPSA) from which districts or representatives of district-approved entities can search for candidates for call lists. The educator will update these data annually.

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A Lutheran Educator's Information Form (LEIF) asks for information on educational philosophy, needs, and evaluative data. This form is to be updated and submitted by every educator every year and a new one completed every three years. LEIFs will be kept in the educator's district office and sent to other district offices at the request of the other district offices.

All location changes of educators will be promptly reported to the districts.
(Bylaw 4.4.7)

The District

The district, its president or his designee, serves congregations and calling entities.

The district becomes involved in the call process when a congregation seeks to issue a call, whether from the field or through the placement process at colleges/universities of the Concordia University System.

The district educates congregational leaders and called workers on the appropriate call process. (Bylaw 2.5.1)

The district validates legitimate calling entities and processes.

Calling entities may announce positions available through their district office. The district will share the positions available with other districts and with district schools.

The district's role as it assists calling entities is to guide the calling entity through the call process. Provide appropriate personnel information.

Districts send LEIFs to calling entities in their district and to other district offices by district request.

The district president transfers a worker to another district upon the worker's request.

The district, its president or his designee, serves the worker.

The district becomes involved in the call process when a rostered person seeks a change of position.

The role of the district as it assists workers is to support the worker.

Guide the worker through the call process.

Districts send PEIF and LEIF forms to other districts.

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The district education executive promptly enters into e-mail to the national and district offices information about called workers coming into their district or leaving the district to a known location.

The district president shall install or authorize the installation of workers who have accepted calls. (Paragraph (e) of Bylaw 4.4.3)

Calling Entities

Calling entities shall seek the advice of the respective district president when calling ministers of religion—commissioned. (Bylaw 2.5.1) In doing so, calling entities will request from the district president information on all call list candidates, as well as references which they may contact regarding the worker's recent employment. The calling entity may also wish to schedule interviews with those individuals under final consideration.

Calling entities should notify the district president or his designee when a call is extended and to whom it is extended.

Calling entities may announce positions available through the district office. The district will share the positions available with other districts and with district schools.

Calling entities in all activities must act in accord with their constitutions and bylaws and the constitutions and bylaws of both the Synod and their respective district.

A commissioned minister who has been declared qualified by an authorized synodical institution, but who has never been placed on the roster of ministers of religion—commissioned, is only eligible to accept a call by going through the placement process. Similarly, a commissioned minister who has left the roster of commissioned ministers is only eligible to accept a call after being reinstated to the roster.

Commissioned Ministers

If workers wish to consider a call to a new location, workers may contact the district office to ask that their PEIF/LEIF forms be shared with other districts.

Commissioned ministers on the roster of Synod are officially transferred to other districts by request of the worker.

Individuals use forms designated for use in the call process, including an evaluation and signature by a district official (i.e., the district president or his designee) in order to be considered for a call.

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The district official shall provide, in so far as possible, a current (within the school year) LEIF on requested personnel to the calling entity/district.

Commissioned ministers complete forms by typing or using a computer (no handwritten forms will be circulated).

Workers who accept a call into another ministry should request and be granted a peaceful release from the entity where they are currently serving, and if, necessary, a transfer to the district where the calling entity is located.

Workers—after being released from the entity where they are currently serving—are advised (in the directions and on the acknowledgement cards) to inform the district office of their status change.

Individuals may express a desire to be considered for specific positions through the district office.

Placement of Candidates for Ministers of Religion-Commissioned Roster Status

Introduction

These rubrics lay down principles, guidelines, and procedures when a candidate who is declared qualified to be rostered as a minister of religion—commissioned is assigned to his/her first call. Usually, this occurs upon graduation from one of the relevant educational programs offered by the colleges/universities of the Concordia University System. (Bylaw sections 2.7-2.9)

The principles, guidelines, and procedures outlined above in the section on “Calling Ministers of Religion—Commissioned from One Call to Another” apply also to this section in so far as they are applicable to the unique circumstances of initial placement.

Calling Procedures for First Placement Candidates

First placement for ministers of religion—commissioned is an ongoing process which takes place throughout the year.

Calling entities may contact the placement director of a college/university of the Synod to indicate their need for a minister of religion—commissioned. (Paragraph (a) of Bylaw 2.9.1) The calling entity will provide the placement director with a “job description” or a similar document identifying the nature of the position as well as its responsibilities and duties. The calling entity will notify the district president through the district education executive that it will be contacting a placement director as it seeks a candidate for the position it needs to fill. (Paragraph (b) of Bylaw 2.9.1)

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The placement director responds to the calling entity by providing the names and brief descriptions of potential candidates who appear to meet the needs of the calling entity. If requested, the placement director may send a fuller description of a candidate's credentials to the calling entity. A candidate's name may be shared with more than one calling entity at a time.

Calling entities may then contact the candidate(s) to share information about the vacant position it is seeking to fill, to give the candidate(s) an opportunity to ask questions, and to work together with the respective placement officer to determine further interest in the position. Arrangements may be made for a more formal interview. If a calling entity determines that the candidate is not suitable for its needs or if the candidate indicates that the position is not of any further interest, the calling entity will notify the placement director.

Calling entities may interview candidates but such interviews should be scheduled through the placement director. Such interviews are conducted at the expense of the calling entity.

After any contact with the candidate, it is very important that both the candidate and the calling entity are clear about the next steps in the process, including some indication about the length of time in the process.

Calling entities are expected to offer a candidate a compensation package (salary and benefits) that is in keeping with the district's suggested compensation guidelines.

When a calling entity is ready to request a candidate through the Board of Assignments, it contacts the placement director to request a candidate. The placement director will counsel with the candidate to determine whether there are any significant obstacles (i.e., salary, benefits, ministry expectations, location, etc.) to consideration of that particular call. If not, or when any such issues are resolved, the placement director informs the calling entity that the candidate has been designated for its call. The placement director then stops further searching for a position for the candidate and notifies other calling entities that the candidate is no longer available for consideration.

The calling entity prepares the necessary call document established for use in the first placement process for its candidate and sends them to the calling entity's district president. Once the district president signs the call document, he forwards the document to the placement director who gives it to the candidate.

Once the placement director receives the call document from the district president, the placement director will forward the necessary information regarding the call to the Board for University Education, which will process that information for presentation to the Council of Presidents, serving as the Board of Assignments, for ratification.

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Candidates may consider only the assignment made by the Council of Presidents serving as the Board of Assignments. Candidates will notify the calling entity directly of their decision to accept or decline the assignment. Candidates shall not decline an assignment they have accepted in order to make themselves available for another assignment.

After accepting a call, a candidate applies to the district president (of the calling body) for membership in the Synod and admission to the Synod's official roster of ministers of religion—commissioned. The candidate's placement director will verify to the district president that the candidate has completed all graduation requirements. Upon installation by the calling body and admission to the Synod's roster of ministers of religion—commissioned, the candidate has officially entered the church's public ministry. (Bylaws 2.10.1-2.10.3)

The calling process for ministers of religion—commissioned is governed by the Handbook of the Synod and policies established by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments. Those policies may be modified or altered at any time.

Checklists for Securing Personnel

First Placement Candidate

- Formulate position or job description
- Advise the district president or education executive that you are going to contact the placement director
- Prepare call documents (identify candidate and school)
- Send call documents to district president
- District president signs the call document
- District president sends call documents to placement director
- Placement director delivers call documents to candidate (if candidate is not eligible or available, call is returned)
- Board for University Education is notified of the designated call
- Assignment is made and approved by the Board of Assignments
- Calling entity and district notified by the placement office
- Candidate informs calling entity of acceptance of call

When First Placement Candidate Accepts Call

- Candidate informs calling entity and placement office of decision
- Placement director informs district president
- Candidate applies for synodical membership
- Candidate, in consultation with calling entity, seeks authorization for commissioning and installation
- If candidate desires commissioning to take place in a location other than the location of the call, candidate obtains permission of the calling entity, the candidate's district president, the host pastor, and the host congregation
- Confirm arrival date, commissioning/installation date, relocation plans, etc.
- Provide the calling entity and district president with photograph and biography
- Obtain transfer of communicant membership to new congregation
- District president authorizes commissioning and installation
- Candidate is commissioned and installed into public ministry

Candidate Already in Ministry

- Formulate position or job description
- Inform and seek advice from district officials
- Prepare call documents
- Send call documents directly to person
- Inform district president as to who has been called
- When call is accepted, request authorization to install
- Install called person (commissioning occurs only at the beginning of a person's service in the church)

Engaging a Lay Teacher

- ___ Prepare offer to engage
- ___ Send offer to engage to the person
- ___ Induct person into office (optional)
- ___ Inform district office
- ___ Encourage worker to seek placement/reinstatement/colloquy