

## The Florida-Georgia District, LCMS

### The Process for Calling Commissioned Ministers of Religion

#### *Introduction*

These guidelines have been developed in an effort to assist congregations in the process of Calling qualified workers to serve with them in ministry. While we are involved in making business decisions, it is vital that those who have accepted the responsibility of securing workers for ministry, begin so with prayer that they might be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who guides and directs the process of Calling workers in His kingdom through people, on behalf of congregations. A Call comes from God through the congregation and is extended by God to the Called person. All rostered personnel are engaged by Call rather than contract.

In the Call process, the Synod (national church body) and its Districts assist congregations and workers, and maintain the integrity and orderliness of the process. A Call is extended by a single congregation, recognized service organization, Synodical board, district board, or any entity that has the authority to extend a Call by virtue of its representing LCMS congregations. The District becomes involved in the process when a Calling entity seeks to issue a Call, whether from the field or through placement. The District authorizes the installation of workers who have accepted Calls.

Calling entities seeking to Call a worker from the field should follow the steps below. Calling entities seeking the placement of a synodical university graduate should contact Placement Directors at schools in the Concordia University System. The names and contact numbers are listed in The Lutheran Annual. LCMS congregations should have a current copy in their church office.

#### **Steps for Calling Entities in the Call Process**

1. Read and follow the Constitution and Bylaws of your congregation. Typically, they will speak to such issues as how the Calling Committee is formed, the process for nominating candidates, the process for Calling a worker and the like.
2. Notify the Executive Director for School Ministries of the Florida-Georgia District that a vacancy exists. Request that he attend a meeting with the Call Committee in order to familiarize the committee with the Call process.
3. Prior to developing a list of candidates **for administrative positions**, Call Committees are to submit the following to the School Ministries Director at the District Office:
  - A paragraph that articulates the primary goal that the calling entity hopes to attain as a result of the work that the new worker will undertake.
  - A listing of three professional or ministry skills and three character or personality traits that the calling entity feels will be most important for the new worker to be successful in ministry with them.  
**Articulation of the primary goal and identification of the skills and traits should represent the consensus of the Call Committee and should be determined by including input from the School Board, pastor(s) and other appropriate church leaders, as well as faculty and staff.**
  - A description of the relationship of the school administrator to the School Board as outlined in the calling entity's Constitution and Bylaws.
  - A copy of the Role Description for the administrative position to be filled.

4. Following Step #3, you may either request that the District Executive develop a list of qualified candidates, or request access to the Lutheran Educator Information Form (LEIF) data base maintained on the Lutheran School Portal in order to conduct searches for candidates on your own.
5. Process the credentials of potential candidates and gather additional information by telephoning them to determine if they are open to considering a Call.
6. **Submit names of “short-list” candidates to the District Executive** who will validate them for consideration as Commissioned Ministers of Religion. This requirement is for the benefit and protection of the calling body.
7. Contact all references and other helpful sources as appropriate.
8. Official Call documents may be downloaded from Concordia Publishing House at no cost. **Call or email Cindy Hammerstrom at the District Office** for the username and password. Complete instructions accompany the documents. Complete the forms via computer. Do not complete them by hand. It is also helpful to include additional information regarding the congregation and community.
9. Interview the candidates by phone and/or in person. Onsite interviews are strongly recommended for all administrative positions. Calling entities pay expenses for personal interviews.
10. Review the process to be certain that each step has been properly addressed.
11. Following the congregation’s Constitution and Bylaws, a Call may then be extended.
12. Immediately following the Call meeting, telephone the individual to inform them of the congregation’s action.
13. Send a letter to the congregation being served by the Called person, assuring them of your prayers for them and for their ministry.
14. **Inform the District Executive** of the congregation's decision.
15. Give consideration to inviting the Called person, and spouse, to visit the congregation at congregation expense. This is especially advisable when filling leadership positions.
16. Remain in regular contact with the individual who has been Called while they are deliberating their decision. Offer your support and assistance in whatever way is helpful.
17. If the Call is accepted, **request permission from the District President** to install the Called person. If the Call is declined, restart the process at the appropriate stage. Contact Cindy Hammerstrom.
18. **Inform the District Office** of the installation date and installing official. Contact Cindy Hammerstrom.
19. Plan for appropriate welcome and orientation of the worker to the congregation and to their new role.

**Contact:** Don't forget to **invite the District Executive** to the installation!

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