



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

# Minnesota South District

*... cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God*

## THE PROCESS FOR CALLING COMMISSIONED MINISTERS OF RELIGION

These guidelines have been developed in an effort to assist congregations in the process of calling qualified workers to serve with them in ministry. Whether you are looking for a teacher, deaconess, director of Christian education, director of Christian outreach, director of family life ministry, director of parish ministry, lay minister, or a parish assistant, this information will help you find candidates with the experience and interests you need. 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 Divine Call comes from God through the congregation and is extended by God to the called person. All rostered personnel are engaged by Divine Call rather than contract.

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

Calling entities seeking to call a worker from the field should follow the steps below. Calling entities seeking the placement of a new synodical university graduate should use the form found here: [Placement Request Form \(cuw.edu\)](https://www.cuw.edu/placement-request-form)

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### STEPS FOR CALLING ENTITIES IN THE DIVINE CALL PROCESS

#### 1. Get ready to extend a Divine Call.

- a. Inform the Assistant to the President—Education and Commissioned Ministers (Hereafter referred to as the “Education Executive”) that the congregation may be calling a commissioned minister.
- b. Affirm the need and purpose for the ministry position.
- c. Read and follow the constitution and bylaws of your congregation regarding calling a commissioned minister. Typically, they will speak to such issues as to how the calling committee is formed, the process for nominating candidates, the process for calling a worker, and the like.
- d. Create, review, and/or update the job description of the position.

- e. Develop potential interview questions.
- f. Complete the “Intent to Call” form from the District office and return it to Debbie Borchardt with a job description and salary base scale. Once received, the Minnesota South District will release Commissioned Minister Information Form (CMIF) search rights, providing 60 days of access to the database to the person named on the form. The District may provide additional CMIFs of potential candidates that might fit the needs of the congregation.

## 2. Search and vet potential commissioned ministers.

- a. Utilize the search tool of the CMIF database system to match ministry needs to available commissioned ministers. Process the credentials of potential candidates, determining those that are worthy of moving forward. Develop a master list of CMIF profiles.

This tool is designed to help LCMS districts and call committees from congregations, schools, and other LCMS-related entities search for commissioned ministers to fill open calls. **The information obtained by this search may be used solely for the purpose of filling a vacancy. The information must be handled as confidential.** When the selection process is complete, all information must be properly disposed of (i.e., shredded) and all records must be permanently deleted. By accessing this information, you understand and agree to the intended use of the materials.

- b. Contact the top candidates by telephone or email to determine if they are open to considering a Divine Call.
- c. Interview the top 3-10 candidates by phone, in-person, or through video chat (Skype, Facetime, etc.). The calling entity should pay expenses for personal interviews.
- d. Scrutinize the final 1-4 candidates (“short-list”).
  - i) Contact all references and other helpful sources as appropriate.
  - ii) Submit names of “short-list” candidates to the Education Executive, who will validate their eligibility for a Divine Call. This requirement is for the benefit and protection of the calling body.
  - iii) If the call is for a DCE, the calling entity will complete a background checks as required by statute 604.20 before the congregation can proceed with calling. Contact Christina Krentz if you have questions or need assistance with this process.

## 3. Extend a Divine Call following the constitutionally mandated process (usually a vote).

- a. Immediately following the call meeting, telephone the individual to inform them of the congregation’s action. Inform any other finalists regarding their status.
- b. Official Call Documents may be downloaded at no cost. Email Christina Krentz at the District office for the username and password. Complete the instructions that accompany the documents. Complete the forms via computer. Do not complete them by hand. It is helpful to include additional information regarding the congregation and community.

- c. Consider sending a letter to the congregation being served by the called person, assuring them of your prayers for them and for their ministry.
  - d. [Inform the Education Executive](#) of the congregation's decision.
  - e. Consider inviting the called person and their spouse to visit the congregation at the congregation's expense. This is especially advisable when filling leadership positions.
  - f. 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.
4. If the Divine Call is accepted, [inform the District office and request permission from the District President](#) to install the called person, providing the installation date and installing official. Don't forget to [invite the Education Executive to the installation!](#)
  5. If the Divine Call is declined, restart the process.
  6. Plan for appropriate welcome and orientation of the worker to the congregation and to their new role.

#### Teacher Background Checks

- Minnesota Statute 123B.03 "Background check required. A school hiring authority shall request a criminal history background check from the superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension on all individuals *who are offered employment* in a school and on all individuals, except enrolled student volunteers, who are offered the opportunity to provide athletic coaching services or other extracurricular academic coaching services to a school, regardless of whether any compensation is paid." This statute applies to Lutheran K-12 schools.
- Teachers called or contracted for early childhood (pre-K) must complete a background study through their licensing agency or complete a Background Screening through the District if the program is exempt from licensing.
- Additionally, [schools](#) and [congregations](#) may utilize the district to do a background check through Protect My Ministry or utilize another background check service. Contact Christina Krentz | [christina.krentz@mnsdistrict.org](mailto:christina.krentz@mnsdistrict.org) | 952-223-2162 for more information.

#### Contacts:

Assistant to the President—Education and Commissioned Ministers:

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