

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 an action of the Board of Assignments working exclusively with the placement directors of the colleges/universities of the Concordia University System and the two Concordia seminaries, individual district presidents (and/or their designees), and calling entities in placing candidates in their initial positions 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 3.10.1.3). 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 a Synod colloquy program.
- A **Call** is a request by a calling entity which has been extended to an individual who has been declared qualified by an authorized Synod 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 eligible to extend calls to ministers of religion—commissioned who perform duties set forth in Bylaw 2.11.1, namely:
 - 1) A congregation of the Synod;

- 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 Synod educational institution for a faculty or professional staff member position;
 - 7) A national inter-Lutheran agency referred to in Bylaw 1.3.8 for an executive or professional staff member position;
 - 8) An auxiliary referred to in Bylaw section 6.1 for an executive or professional staff member position;
 - 9) A recognized service organization referred to in Bylaw section 6.2 for an executive or professional staff member position;
 - 10) An elementary or secondary educational institution recognized by the Synod for an executive or professional staff member position.
- A **Candidate** is an individual who has been declared qualified and is eligible 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 ministry (Bylaws 2.7.1–2.7.2, 2.8.1–2.8.2). 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.)

- **Colloquy** – minister of religion-commissioned colloquy programs prepare men and women who are currently serving in ministry roles for membership in the Synod. Colloquy programs ensure that those who seek to join the Synod have been educated in theology, have become oriented to service to the Synod, and have demonstrated the spiritual and professional attributes that the Synod expects of its members. Qualified applicants are those who are competent workers in the field for which they seek colloquy. Colloquy candidates demonstrate satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study at a Concordia University entity and satisfactory completion of an examination interview with the faculty colloquy examining committee. Upon approval from the faculty, the candidate is eligible for a first call through the placement director from that campus.
- **Designate** or **Designated** - The calling entity announces its intent to call a specific individual. This individual is, then, considered to be “spoken for” or designated.
- **Diploma of Vocation (Call Document)** – An official Synod document which is to be used when extending a call to a minister of religion—commissioned. These documents are available from your district office.
- A **District** is one of the 35 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 the 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 or graduates from Synod-affiliated schools who have not applied for membership in 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 or university in the Concordia University System who is responsible for recommending candidates to the Board of Assignments and for assisting candidates to complete the call process for assignment or first placement satisfactorily (Bylaw 2.9.1 [a]).

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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).
- For the purposes of the Synod's roster, all rostered personnel engaged by contract should be regarded as having 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 bylaws or policies in a spirit of Christian love and concern for the worker.

The Synod

- Biographical data on all ministers of religion—commissioned is gathered on the Commissioned Minister Information Form (CMIF) and entered into a national database from which districts or representatives of district-approved entities can search for candidates for call lists. The CMIF also asks for information on educational philosophy, needs, and evaluative data. The educator will update these data annually.
- The minister of religion—commissioned shall promptly report a change of location to the appropriate districts. (Bylaw 4.4.7 [c]).

The District

- The district, its president or his designee, serves congregations and calling entities in the calling process.
 - ❖ 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 and the two Synod seminaries.
 - ❖ 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.

- ❖ Upon request Districts send the CMIF evaluations, produced by ecclesiastical supervisors, to calling entities in their district and to other district offices.
- ❖ The district president transfers a worker to another district upon the worker's request.
- The district, its president or his designee, serves the worker in the calling process.
 - ❖ 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.
 - ❖ The districts send CMIF forms to other districts.
 - ❖ The district education executive promptly enters into email 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 (Bylaw 4.4.3 [e]).

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 districts.
- A commissioned minister who has been declared qualified by an authorized Synod 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 CMIF 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.
- The district official shall provide, insofar as possible, a current (within the school year) CMIF on requested personnel to the calling entity/district.
- Commissioned ministers complete forms by typing or using a computer (no hand-written 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 forms) 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 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 insofar 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 shall indicate their need for a minister of religion—commissioned by completely filling out the candidate request form posted on the Concordia University System website (Bylaw 2.9.1[a]). The calling entity shall provide a brief “job description” or a similar document

identifying the nature of the position as well as its responsibilities and duties. The completion and submission of the candidate request form (record) notifies the district president (through the district education executive) and placement directors of the selected Concordia campuses that the calling entity is seeking a candidate. (Bylaw 2.9.1[b]).

- Placement director(s) will respond to the calling entity by providing the names and credentials of candidate(s) to the calling entity. A candidate's name may be shared with more than one calling entity at a time. If no candidates are available for the requested position the placement director(s) will notify the calling entity.
- 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. Interviews are conducted at the expense of the calling entity.
 - ❖ After any contact with the candidate, it is the responsibility of the calling entity to communicate a timeline for decision making to the placement director.
- 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. Calling entities should continue to keep open communications with placement directors as they move forward in their call process.
- When a calling entity is ready to request placement of a candidate through the Board of Assignments, it contacts the placement director to request a candidate be designated and the entity terminates any further searching for 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 accepted designation and 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 contacts its district office to obtain the call documents and prepares the minister of religion—commissioned documents used in the first placement process for its candidate. The calling entity sends the signed call documents to the calling entity's district president. Once the district president signs the call document, he forwards the document to the placement director. The placement director signs and forwards the documents 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 Concordia University System office, which will process that information for presentation to the Council of Presidents, serving as the Board of Assignments, for assignment.
- 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 by sending a certificate indicating approval for installation. 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

Congregation / School Seeking First Placement Candidate (Including Colloquy Candidates)

- ___ Formulate the position or job description.
- ___ Advise the district president or education executive that you are going to request a candidate from one of the Concordias.
- ___ Go to http://cusapps.cus.edu/PlacementEntry_Home.aspx to complete the Candidate Request Form in its entirety and submit the record.
- ___ Placement directors will send the calling entity information on the candidate(s). Calling entities can interview candidates.
- ___ Select the candidate of choice.
- ___ Request your candidate of choice to be designated to the placement director.
- ___ Upon receiving notification of acceptance of designation, contact your district office to obtain call documents. Prepare call documents.
- ___ Sign and 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 and notifies Concordia University System staff of the designated call.
- ___ Candidate informs calling entity of acceptance of the call.
- ___ Assignment is made and approved by the Board of Assignments.
- ___ Director of placement notifies the District that the candidate has completed all requirements and is now approved for commissioning and installation.

When a First Placement Candidate Accepts a Call

- ___ Candidate informs calling entity and placement office of decision
- ___ Placement director informs district president
- ___ Candidate applies for Synod 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.
- ___ Obtain transfer of communicant membership to new congregation
- ___ District president authorizes commissioning and installation
- ___ Candidate is commissioned and installed into public ministry

Congregations/Schools Seeking a 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 at the beginning of a person's church service)

Congregations/Schools Seeking 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

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