

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
CONGREGATION AND PASTOR

THE PASTORAL CALLING PROCESS

Church of the
Lutheran
Brethren

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I. Introduction

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Church. It is He who calls His servants and sends them forth. (Matthew 4:18-20, 9:37-38; John 15:16; Acts 9:15; 2 Corinthians 1:27-29.)

The Scriptural record of the early church gives us a number of pictures of God's calling and guidance concerning the places of ministry. In Acts 10 we have a wonderful story of God's guidance to both those who needed a preacher and to the preacher. Cornelius, the seeking centurion of Caesarea, was given direction through a vision to send for Peter to come from Joppa. In the meantime the Lord was also preparing Peter through a vision to receive the visitors and respond to their request to come to Caesarea.

In Acts 13 we have the story of the Spirit of God directing the leaders of the church in Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Paul for the work to which He was calling them. Luke, in reporting this event, does not indicate the specific ministry to which they were being called. However, as the story unfolds these men seemed to know their calling was to bring the gospel to other cities. They went out preaching, moving from city to city as they found open doors.

Later, in Acts 16 we find that God was leading Paul and his companions by means of closing doors. As they went from one community to another they found the doors closed. Thus they found themselves driven towards the coastal area and then Paul received the vision of the "Macedonian call." (See Acts 16:6-10.)

How do these illustrations translate into application for the process of calling a pastor to serve a church today? First of all, Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Church yesterday, today and tomorrow. He does guide in the affairs of the Church as we seek His direction. The above examples reveal that God's guidance is manifested in multiple ways. God is sovereign and it is not for us to dictate how that guidance should come to us. The counsel of Jesus in Matthew 7:7-8 is applicable for both pastor and church. "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

Secondly, the placement of pastors within Lutheran Brethren churches has followed the custom of the congregation extending a call to the pastor

of their choosing. This is the most common way of pastoral placement and has served our congregations and pastors very well throughout our history.

The Board of Elders exercises a very important leadership role in the calling of a pastor. Because the elders work very closely with the pastor they should have a good understanding of the congregational expectations of the pastor and what gifts may be most essential for the future ministry of the congregation. Their input in the calling process, along with the added responsibilities of coordinating the congregational ministries during the time the congregation is without a pastor, requires a major additional leadership commitment from them.

In many congregations the call committee is made up of the Elder Board and additional representatives from the congregation. The call committee has the responsibility to evaluate the future needs of the congregation as it plans for future pastoral leadership. A thoughtful evaluation of those needs will help the committee determine the type of pastoral gifts the next pastor must possess to effectively lead the congregation in fulfilling its ministry.

Because the calling of a pastor is so critical to the well being and fruitfulness of a congregation, the Church of the Lutheran Brethren has in recent years made an effort to provide helpful resources to both congregation and pastor as they engage in the calling process. Because both churches and pastors have experienced the pain of a “bad match,” both parties have become more deliberate in doing all they can to avoid the repeat of such an unfortunate experience. The President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, the Director of Operations, Regional Pastors and the Regional Chairperson are prepared to consult with the call committee as they go through the calling process. These persons can provide helpful guidance in evaluating the needs of the congregation and in suggesting possible candidates.

The Spirit of God does guide pastors, call committees and congregations in the process.

As a congregation and a pastor approach this process seeking Divine direction and wisdom, we are confident that He will guide. After all, He is the Lord of the Church and who is more concerned than He?

The following paragraphs will provide helpful guidelines for calling committees and pastors.

II. From the Congregation's Perspective

A. The pastor's resignation

When a pastor submits his resignation to the congregation it should be accepted as final. Only in an unusual situation should the pastor be challenged to reconsider. To challenge the pastor's decision often proves to be divisive. The congregation, at a legally called business meeting, receives the resignation. To receive the resignation is not an item for pro or con discussion. Rather, it is an opportunity to accept the resignation and respond with appreciation for the services of the pastor.

Some constitutions specify that a pastor's resignation becomes effective three months after his resignation. The termination date however, should be open to negotiation between the Board of Elders and the pastor. When a pastor resigns under duress it is advisable, for his sake and the congregation's, to conclude his ministry as quickly as possible. Both congregation and pastor need to work together to ease a difficult situation. Under such unfortunate circumstances the congregation should plan to provide a reasonable severance package in addition to whatever vacation time has accrued. The Office of the President can provide assistance in working out such details.

When a pastor resigns it should be done through a letter to the congregation. The pastor should deliver the letter to the Board of Elders in person prior to mailing it. This letter should be mailed early in the week so that all members and friends are informed of the resignation before the next worship service.

B. The call committee

The congregational meeting at which the resignation is received is a logical time to activate the call committee. The local constitution will specify how that committee is constituted.

When the constitution identifies the Board of Elders as the call committee it is common for additional persons (officers or elected members) to be added to the call committee, thereby providing broader congregational representation.

Pastoral transition is a critical time in a congregation's life as well as in the life of the pastor and his family. Therefore it is very important that the Board of Elders/call committee make an extra effort to keep the entire congregation well informed throughout the process.

It is also imperative that this entire process be saturated with the prayers of the congregation. The selection of a new pastor should be made a part of the Sunday worship prayer focus as well as at congregational prayer gatherings. The scheduling of special prayer meetings to focus on this issue is also appropriate.

C. Interim pastorate

When a pastor who has served the same congregation for many years leaves or if the congregation has become divided as a result of a troubled pastor/congregation relationship and the pastor leaves, it is often very wise to consider securing an interim pastor to serve for several months. The interim pastor should be a Lutheran Brethren pastor. It is very helpful to have an interim pastor who is familiar with Lutheran Brethren policies and procedures for the local congregation as well as issues relating to the synodical offices. The Regional Chairman or the Office of the President will be able to assist in securing an interim pastor.

When an interim pastor follows a long tenured pastor it serves to help the congregation get used to the reality that their pastor has gone. Everyone should know that the interim pastor is temporary and not available for call. Therefore he is not as likely to be measured against the functioning of the previous pastor. The interim pastor will help the congregation get used to a different person and when a newly called pastor does assume the position it will be with a sense of excitement that a new pastor has been secured and there will be a greater readiness to move forward under new leadership.

In the case of a congregation that has been experiencing conflict, an interim can come in with a special mission of orchestrating reconciliation and healing within the group. The interim pastor can provide for the day-to-day ministry needs which may be very critical given the fact of a conflict-ridden church. Furthermore, because he does not have a long range plan for the congregation he can focus on the critical need of healing the church body, thereby preparing the way for the called pastor to begin his ministry with a unified congregation that can focus on the ministry before them.

D. The selection of a candidate

The calling of a new pastor is a good occasion for the Board of Elders to lead the congregation in a process of congregational evaluation. The Office of the President is prepared to assist the congregation in a self-evaluation process. The following may be very timely questions:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation's life and ministry?
- What are the critical needs of the congregation at this time?
- What is the ministry vision for the next five years?
- What ministry gifts are most necessary to realize that vision?

Answers to questions like these will help to give focus to the kind of ministry gifts that need to be evident in the pastor the congregation proposes to call. No pastor has all the gifts. Some pastors are quite focused in their gift areas. Others are more generalized in their pastoral functioning.

Congregations should remember that the pastor is first of all the shepherd of the flock who will declare the message of God to them. Proclaiming the Word of God, and rightly dividing that Word, law and gospel, is his first duty. Does he have a passion and love for the Word of God? Does he have a deep desire to set forth the Word of Life so that all the people of the congregation are fed the life-giving Word? Only as a congregation is satisfied that this primary duty will be filled should it consider the secondary gifts that will benefit the congregation in its future ministry. Are administrative gifts most critical? Evangelism? Pastoral care? Teaching? One important dimension in seeking an answer for these questions is to consider what gifts are available within the congregation at present. What are the gifts of the elders who currently serve? What other gifts are available within the congregation that may supplement the pastor's gifts?

As the congregation, through the leadership of the Board of Elders/Call Committee, develops a profile of the pastoral gifts and style needed to lead the congregation in its future ministry, the next step is to seek available pastors. The Office of the President or the Regional Chairman can assist in providing names of potential pastors that may fit the needs of the congregation. Since the local call committee often does not know many of the Lutheran Brethren pastors nor those who may be open to relocation it is important to seek this assistance. As the call committee receives the names of pastors who might be available they will establish a review process whereby they prayerfully seek to determine who best meets their envisioned need. This preliminary step may involve requesting a resume and having a pastor respond to a questionnaire prepared by the call committee. The call committee may choose to do a preliminary interview by telephone. When feasible, two or three call committee members may visit the church where a candidate is currently serving.

It is strongly recommended that the call committee work through this process so that they present the congregation with one pastor recommended for call. Past experience has shown that when a call committee presents more than one recommendation to the congregation there is a great risk of causing division within the church family. Such a process also creates the potential of an uncomfortable situation for the pastors under consideration.

When the call committee is satisfied that they have a pastor to recommend for the congregation to consider they will invite the pastor to visit the congregation. This visit will afford the congregation and the candidate an opportunity to meet each other. The call committee and other church leadership persons will interview the candidate and give him an opportunity to preach, preferably at the Sunday worship service.

The call committee and other church leaders will meet with the visiting pastor to help determine their potential for working together and the degree to which they share a mutual vision and approach to ministry. This meeting of the pastor and the congregational leaders, when done properly, is really the most important part of the pastor's visit. It is in this setting that both parties have the opportunity to find out if they are really tracking together in the sense of mission and in their approach to ministry.

It is not advisable to have pastoral candidates nominated from the floor at a congregational meeting. If a member wishes to recommend a particular pastor for consideration he/she should make such a recommendation to the call committee. The call committee may invite members to submit names of possible pastors at the beginning of the calling process.

E. The extension of a call

After a candidate has visited, the call committee will meet to make their recommendation to the congregation. The call committee will meet together with the Trustee Board (or Property and Finance Committee) or those responsible to work out the details of the compensation package and other necessary financial details that will make up the letter of call. In some cases the Trustee Board is assigned the responsibility to work out all of these details. Often, however, it is very advisable to work together with the call committee so that special concerns and details may be properly addressed. A recommendation to extend a call is always voted upon by the congregation at a legally

called meeting. The church's constitution usually stipulates voting requirements for the extension of a call.

The details of the call letter should be made known to the congregation. When a call is approved by the congregation, the letter of call should be issued as quickly as possible (Appendix B has sample call letters which incorporate items that should be included in the letter of call). Because we live in a day of instant communication it is highly recommended that the call committee chair or the congregational chair telephone the candidate to notify him that the call has been approved. Thereby the candidate receives the information from an official of the congregation rather than some other source.

F. Background checks

Some states have established laws that make a church and its board members liable to legal action if they cannot show that they have exercised due responsibility in making background checks of a prospective pastor or youth worker. The background check with previous "employers" asks for information about any actions that could be considered inappropriate sexual behavior. Minnesota law requires that a new "employer" contact the candidate's previous "employer/s" where he worked during the past five years. The particular concern addressed by the Minnesota statute relates to the issue of sexual abuse or molestation. The Office of the President can assist with providing the necessary release of information forms and other related information.

G. Closure for the call committee

When a candidate accepts the extended call, the major work of the call committee is completed. Depending upon the decision of the congregation or Elder Board, the committee may serve a further role in facilitating the pastor's move to their community and arrange for the official welcome of the pastor to the congregation. Upon completion of their work the call committee will turn over all minutes and correspondence to be filed for future reference.

III. From the Pastor's Perspective

A. Receiving a letter of call

When a pastor is confronted with a letter of call, or an invitation to enter into conversation about his availability to consider a call, all kinds of questions and emotions will be triggered. The first step for the pastor and his wife is to place the matter before the Lord, seeking a spirit of openness and honesty in considering the call or the possibility of a call. A couple of questions he must ask are:

- Are there credible reasons to believe that this might be an appropriate time for him to conclude his ministry at the current place of service?
- Does the proposed call have a compelling mission that he sees himself able and qualified to accomplish?

Obviously there is always more work to be done in every setting but the question is whether God is calling him to another place of service.

- As the pastor prays and reflects upon the Word and the work, does he sense the Holy Spirit directing him towards a change?
- What is the state of his current church's leadership and the relationship of the pastor to them?
- How about his relationship to the congregation?
- Are there people that might seriously suffer if the pastor left?
- Is the work progressing effectively or does it seem to have plateaued?
- Are there issues related to the pastor's own family which will be critically impacted by a move?

There are more questions that relate to the call that has been received. Assuming that the pastor has visited with the calling congregation, he needs to ask many more questions.

- Is this a group of people with whom he is compatible?
- Was there a sense of kindred spirit as he met with the congregation and its leaders?
- Is this a group of people who have a vision and ministry approach that is compatible?
- Are his pastoral gifts the gifts most necessary for their ministry at this time?
- Are there family concerns related to this call such as housing, schools, special needs for children, or financial concerns that require special attention?

If a pastor knows in his own spirit after visiting with the congregation that he would not be able to accept a call to serve, he should promptly convey his decision to the call committee chair so as to save the congregation the time and energy of issuing a letter of call and causing further delay in their process of securing a pastor.

B. Responding to the letter of call

Upon receiving a letter of call the pastor should promptly acknowledge its reception. If there are issues that are unclear it is appropriate to seek clarification as soon as possible.

Most call letters will request a response within two or three weeks. This is a reasonable period of time to arrive at a decision. Consideration of a call merits the most serious attention and prayer on the part of the pastor and his wife. At what point this issue is shared with the children is largely determined by their age. It is certainly in order for the pastor to inform his elders that he has received a call, to seek their insight, and invite them into his confidence to pray together for God's guidance. Elders must be very careful not to break that confidence. This is in harmony with the advice of Solomon in the Proverbs (12:15, 15:22, 20:18). If they have enjoyed a very close working relationship, the pastor needs to understand that it may be very hard for them to discuss this issue with a great deal of objectivity.

When the pastor arrives at a decision to accept the letter of call he should then write his letter of acceptance. A resignation letter will also need to be drafted. Several pastors have stated that they often write the acceptance letter and then purposely lay it aside for a day or two to allow a time of further testing of their own decision. Having arrived at a final decision the pastor mails the letter of acceptance to the congregation and telephones the chair of the call committee informing them of his decision. The letter should indicate the date he expects to begin his service with them.

C. Declining a letter of call

When a pastor has determined that a particular call is not for him he may follow the suggestion mentioned above in writing his letter declining the call and leaving it for a day or two to further test his own spirit. Having determined that this call is to be declined the pastor should immediately mail the letter and then, as a matter of courtesy, follow up the letter with a telephone call to the call committee chair informing him of that decision. It is usually not wise to give specific reasons for declining the call lest it lead to misunderstanding.

D. The resignation letter

The pastor's letter of resignation should be addressed to the congregation. The pastor should deliver that letter to the chairman of the Board of Elders or ask the Board of Elders to meet together prior to its being mailed to the congregation. As stated previously, the letter should be mailed to members and friends of the congregation early in the week so all persons receive the letter before the next Sunday service. This letter should include a suggested effective date of resignation. If a pastor is resigning because of discouragement or under duress, the resignation letter should not detail specific issues. If there are issues that need to be discussed it is best that this be done with the Board of Elders.

E. Concluding a parish ministry

As mentioned previously, pastoral transitions are often stressful times. The pastor's mind is inevitably turned towards the future place of ministry and the congregational leadership shifts its focus towards securing a new pastor. These shifting focuses sometimes are so evident that it becomes somewhat disconcerting. Effort needs to be made by both pastor and congregational leadership to try to avoid tension-developing situations. The pastor needs to give full attention to fulfilling the usual ministry needs of the congregation.

Special projects that he may have been working on should be completed. Where that is not possible he should seek to arrange with the elders for someone to carry the project to completion. The pastor must make arrangements together with the elders to provide for the ministry needs of those who are sick or have other special needs. This becomes critically important when there is a longer period of time before the new pastor is placed.

Often the pastor who is spiritually, emotionally and verbally "commending the congregation to God and the Word of his grace," picturing a good future for them, will have wonderful ministry opportunities during these weeks. Often people will sense how deeply is his concern for them and realize their opportunities to receive pastoral care are limited and will be open to ministry which they have resisted prior to this time.

The resigning pastor needs to disassociate himself from the process of seeking a successor for the ministry he is leaving. Obviously he should manifest interest, support and provide "generic type" information but only when asked. The call committee, when needed,

should seek assistance from the Office of the President. If a candidate pastor visits, it is best for the pastor and family to arrange to be gone that weekend or at least not attend the events related to the candidating process. If the pastor is living in a parsonage, he and his family should plan for the candidate pastor to visit the parsonage. The call committee must clear this request with the current pastor and his wife.

As the pastor concludes his ministry *he severs his pastoral ties and responsibilities to the congregation*. That does not mean he severs friendships but *he does sever the pastoral role*. It does mean that he should not accept invitations for special pastoral events such as baptisms, weddings, or funerals after the new pastor is in place. If special reason warrants his participation, it should be done only if approval is secured through the Board of Elders and pastor. The former pastor must resist any attempt by a church member to air frustrations about the succeeding pastor. Likewise the new pastor must resist any efforts by a member to air their frustration with the previous pastor.

If problems develop in the congregation and a member contacts the previous pastor, the pastor must resist hearing the complaint and strongly encourage that person to talk to the pastor or elders. If that is not feasible, he shall refer that person to the Regional Chairman or to the Office of the President. Matthew 7:12 states, “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets.”

It is very important that the former pastor encourage the people to give the new pastor the support he needs to minister through his special gifts. When a pastor leaves a church under pressure it is important that he encourage those who were loyal to him to continue in the fellowship and to give their full support to the incoming pastor.

Appendix A

Guidelines for a candidate pastor/congregation interview

When a congregation is engaged in a pastoral search one of the most important parts of the process is the formal interview session. The participants in this event include the candidate pastor, possibly his wife, the call committee, any elders who may not be on the call committee, and possibly other key leaders. Care should be taken not to make this group so big it becomes unwieldy. Other opportunities should be provided for the congregation-at-large to meet the candidate such as a coffee fellowship or a dinner following the worship service.

Ideally, the candidate weekend should involve a number of different types of settings. It is best to begin with a social event that provides a get acquainted time for the candidate and his wife together with the elders and/or the call committee. There should be a more formal interview meeting with the call committee and elders. At some point there should be opportunity for all of the congregational family to meet the candidate. Perhaps a potluck or coffee hour reception following the worship service at which the candidate has preached.

The candidate and his wife should also be given the opportunity to see the community in which they might live. Schools, clinics, shopping areas, etc. may be of particular importance. Remember that you are expecting them to live as well as work in your community. If there is a parsonage they should have the opportunity to walk through the house.

The interview opportunity is likely the most important part of the entire weekend for both the candidate pastor and for the congregation. It is here, through the questions and issues discussed, that both pastor and congregation will likely determine whether or not they truly share a common vision for ministry and gifts that can be used together in advancing the gospel work of this congregation.

Questions that the call committee may wish to ask the candidate pastor:

1. Tell us the story of your own spiritual journey and your call to ministry.
2. What is your greatest joy in the work of pastoral ministry? (for a veteran pastor)
3. What do you see as your greatest strengths in ministry?
4. What has been the most difficult aspect of ministry for you?
5. (For a seminarian) How has seminary shaped you? (The most difficult part of your training? The most enjoyable?)
6. What patterns have you established to nurture your personal spiritual growth and health?

7. Give us an approximate idea of a typical weekly schedule that you follow in your present ministry?
8. What has been your greatest joy/accomplishment in your present ministry?
9. What do you consider to be your spiritual gifts?
10. How does your understanding of spiritual gifts shape your approach to ministry?
11. What are your views as to how a church should do evangelism? Community outreach? Visitation? Relate to the community?
12. How have you handled the issues of contemporary and traditional worship styles?
13. Is there some aspect of congregational ministry about which you have a deep concern and, if given the opportunity, you would want to institute change?
14. If you become our pastor how would you like to have other people assist you in the day-to-day work of the church?
15. In what area of congregational ministry do you feel you are most dependent upon someone else assisting you?
16. What is your view as to the local congregation's involvement in Church of the Lutheran Brethren missions?
17. How do you handle criticism?
18. How have you been balancing the ministry responsibilities with those of your family?
19. How have you fostered the development of private and group prayer and Bible Study among your people?
20. Are you making it on your present salary and is our proposed salary workable?
21. What policies have you established regarding personal pastoral care, pre-marriage preparation, marriage of divorced persons, handling conflict?

Questions that the candidate may wish to ask of the call committee:

1. How long have you been a part of this church and what do you like about it?
2. If you could see one thing changed in this church, what would it be?
3. What is the most important happening in this church during the past five years?
4. What do you believe to be the priority needs of this church in the next three years?
5. What are your expectations of the pastor?
6. What expectations do you have of the pastor's wife and family?
7. How do you want your pastor to work with the leadership of the church?

8. What is the mission of this church? How is this mission shaping what you are doing presently and what you envision happening in the next five years?
9. In what ways is the congregation impacting this community?
10. What does your community think of your church?
11. How do you think the church should relate to the community?
12. Are you comfortable inviting your friends to your worship service? Why or why not?
13. How would you characterize the relationship of the congregational leaders to the rest of the congregation?
14. In your opinion, what are the greatest strengths of this congregation? Where does it need help?
15. How does this congregation/you handle change?
16. Does this congregation have dreams for the future?
17. What has been your practice in bringing in and incorporating new members?
18. What should this congregation look like ten years from now?
19. What kind of visitation expectations do you have of your pastor?
20. What is the deepest spiritual need of this congregation?
21. Tell me something about your own personal spiritual journey.
22. What motivated you to accept a leadership role in this congregation?

Appendix B

Sample Letter of Call - 1

Date

Name

Address

Dear Pastor _____,

Grace and peace in Jesus Christ.

Name of congregation of city and state/prov., has, after discussion and prayerful waiting upon God, voted at a congregational business meeting held on date to extend to you this Letter of Call to serve as our pastor beginning date.

In extending this call to you, we as a congregation promise to:

1. Support you diligently in prayer.
2. Work wholeheartedly together with you to accomplish the mission of this congregation.
3. Respect and honor you as our pastor and leader.
4. Gratefully hear and seek to obey the Word of God as proclaimed in harmony with the Statement of Faith of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
5. Provide financial support for you as follows with the understanding that this will be reviewed annually.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| a. Salary | _____ |
| b. Housing Allowance | _____ |
| c. Synod Health/Benefit | _____ |
| d. Social Security | _____ |
| e. Pension | _____ |
| f. Car Allowance | _____ |
| g. Continuing education | _____ |
| h. Other | _____ |
| Total | _____ |

(Insurance and pension contributions will be paid to the CLB plan on your behalf.)

6. Provide for moving expenses in an amount not to exceed _____.
7. Provide you with four weeks of paid vacation each year.
8. Provide time and expenses for you to attend the CLB Biennial Convention and Regional Biennial Convention.

9. Provide you freedom to accept outside speaking engagements and/or attend pastoral enrichment opportunities up to two weeks per year. Such plans shall be cleared with the Board of Elders as far in advance as possible.
10. Upon completing seven years of service the congregation will provide for a sabbatical leave for a time period to be determined by the Board of Elders.

As we commit ourselves to you in the above stated provisions, as a congregation, we will expect the following of our pastor:

1. As our pastor your greatest ministry to us will be expressed through your own spiritual life and example. Therefore we shall expect that you will:
 - a. Practice a disciplined personal devotional life.
 - b. Have a disciplined program for prayer, study, visitation, administration, counseling and other ministry responsibilities assigned to you.
 - c. Plan and make known scheduled office hours.
 - d. Plan one day each week that is free of all ministry duties (emergencies excepted) to be with your family.
 - e. Strive diligently to be a healthy family model for the congregation and the community.
 - f. Plan to attend at least one pastoral Continuing Education type program annually.
2. As our pastor, we require that you:
 - a. Preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments in harmony with the constitution of this church and that of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.
 - b. Serve privately and publicly, by example as well as by precept, to edify the believers and to win the lost to Christ.
 - c. Provide spiritual care for the sick, aged, and hurting; teach, encourage, and guide those seeking spiritual help.
 - d. Nurture, disciple and encourage the believers.
 - e. Work with the leadership of the congregation to promote unity and effectiveness in planning and executing the ministry plan.
 - f. Provide assistance, leadership, and discipleship training to enable more people to serve in the task of fulfilling the mission of the church.
 - g. Live a life of Biblical moral excellence.

If you accept this call it shall be understood that the termination of this call, whether by decision of the pastor or the congregation, shall follow the provisions set forth in the local constitution which states: (quote the section of the constitution governing this matter. If the constitution does not state a policy, the following statement

may be used.) *“The pastor’s resignation takes effect two months following the announcement of his resignation, or at a time mutually agreeable to both parties. If the pastor’s services are terminated (for reasons other than a violation of ordination vows) by action of the congregation his services may be concluded immediately with a minimum severance pay equal to two months salary up to a maximum of four months. If another placement or equivalent employment is secured before the severance termination date the severance may be concluded earlier.”*

This Letter of Call is committed to the Lord of the Church for His direction to you as you prayerfully consider this call. We request that you respond to this call by date. If you have questions please call the chair of the congregation as listed below.

Sincerely in Christ,

_____ Chair _____ Secretary
Telephone _____
E-mail _____

Sample Letter of Call - 2

Date

Name

Address

Dear Pastor _____,

We the members of name of congregation of city and state/prov., have, after prayerful consideration, voted at our business meeting held on date, to extend to you a call to serve as our pastor.

We require of our pastor that he preach and teach the Word of God without reservation as to its authority, truth, and application to life. We expect that you are in agreement and will support the confessional statement and constitution of our congregation and that of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

As our pastor we expect that you will provide leadership, support, counsel, and encouragement for the varied ministries of our congregation to the end that we may in unity and joy accomplish the ministry goals and purposes that have been and will be established as God unfolds His ongoing purposes for our congregation.

We ask that, in addition to giving primary attention to the preaching of the Word of God, you will also take an active role in developing the gifts of grace within the congregation, both the young and the older, through teaching, discipling and helping to provide opportunity for service for the enlargement of our ministry effectiveness. We ask that you give special attention to ministering to the sick, the aged, the distressed and struggling. We ask that you work together with our congregation in a serious effort to reach out to our community in winning lost souls to Christ.

We ask that you will through word and deed, in public and in private, seek to be a Biblical model for our families as you live out the Christian life in today's world.

We will pledge to you our support through prayer, cooperation and encouragement both in the good times and in the hard times. We will work together with you in the accomplishment of the ministry God gives to us to do.

As our pastor, the congregation will provide the following financial provisions for you.

We also promise to annually review your salary package.

Salary	_____
Housing Allowance	_____
Synod Health/Benefit	_____
Social Security	_____
Pension	_____
Car Allowance	_____
Continuing Education	_____
Other	_____
Total	_____

We will pay moving expenses in an amount not to exceed _____.

You will be allowed four weeks of paid vacation per year. You will also be granted up to two weeks per year for outside speaking engagements and/or attendance at continuing education events. Time and expenses will be provided for you to attend the CLB Biennial Convention and the Regional Biennial Convention. Vacation

time and other scheduled engagements shall be arranged together with the Board of Elders as far in advance as possible.

If you accept this call it shall be understood that the termination of this call whether by decision of the pastor or congregation shall follow the procedures set forth in the local constitution which states: (quote the section of the constitution governing this matter. If the constitution does not state a policy, the following statement may be used.) *“The pastor’s resignation takes effect two months following his resignation, or at a time mutually agreeable to both parties. If the pastor’s services are terminated (for reasons other than a violation of ordination vows) by action of the congregation his services may be concluded immediately with a minimum severance pay equal to two months salary up to a maximum of four months. If another placement or equivalent employment is secured before the severance termination date the severance may be concluded earlier.”*)

We would like that you plan to begin your ministry with us by date. We request that you respond to this Letter of Call by date. If you have questions please contact the chairman of the congregation as listed below.

We commit this Letter of Call to the Lord of the Church to guide you into His will as you prayerfully consider this call.

Sincerely in Christ,

_____ Chair _____ Secretary
Telephone _____
E-mail _____

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN BRETHREN
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