



OVERTURES

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REGARDING THE LETTERING AND NUMBERING OF OVERTURES

The reason for the three pairs of numbers, i.e., OV 01-25-01: the first pair of numbers refers to the floor committee number (Bylaws in this example), the second to the year, and the third to the number of the overture.

What you see printed in this workbook are the original overtures that were submitted for consideration. These will undergo review by the respective floor committee prior to the beginning of the convention.

Witness (WI) – 01

OV WI 01-25-01	To Expand District Support for the SMP Program
OV WI 01-25-02	L.C.M.S. To Adopt and Implement and Aggressive Ministry Recruitment Plan
OV WI 01-25-03	L.C.M.S. To Adopt a Fresh Church-Planting Model in the U.S.A and Allow for Its Funding
OV WI 01-25-04	To Recognize and Give Thanks for The Southeastern District Lay Deacon Training Program
OV WI 01-25-05	To Support Tentmaker-Pastor and their Congregations

Wellness (WE) – 02

OV WE 02-25-01	To Celebrate and Encourage Lay Service
OV WE 02-25-02	To Celebrate and Encourage Lay Service
OV WE 02-25-03	To Encourage More Development and Cooperation Among Congregations on A Circuit Level
OV WE 02-25-04	To Study and Recommend Strategies in the Advancement of Congregations-based Older Adult Ministries in the Southeastern District LCMS
OV WE 02-25-05	To Support Tentmaker-Pastor and their Congregations

Bylaws & Governance (BG) – 04

OV BG 04-25-01	Based on Iowa West Resolution #3-08 To Amend Southeastern District Bylaw, Article IV, Duties of Officers re Allowing the District President to Serve as a Pastor of a Congregation
OV BG 04-25-02	To Remove Presidential Term Limits
OV BG 04-25-03	To Continue to Ask the Synod to Grant Lay Vote to Every Congregation at District Conventions
OV BG 04-25-04	To Change the Size Requirements for Electoral Circuits in the Synod
OV BG 04-25-05	Proposed Resolution By Redeemer Lutheran Church, Burlington, NC, For the District Convention of the Southeastern District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, May 2025
OV BG 04-25-06	To Change to a Four-Year Convention Cycle
OV BG 04-25-07	To Grant Commissioned Church Workers the Right to Vote Under Bylaw 2.1.2(c)
OV BG 04-25-08	To Grant Commissioned Church Workers the Right to Vote Under Bylaws 2.12(c)

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OV BG 04-25-9	Establishing a New Voting Structure Including Rostered Workers
OV BG 04-25-10	To Bring Southeastern District Bylaws Into Harmony with the Constitution, Bylaws, And Resolutions of The Synod Floor Committee: #04 – Bylaws Convention Year: 2022

Theology & Practice (TP) – 05

OV TP 04-25-01	To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process
OV TP 04-25-02	To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process
OV TP 04-25-03	To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process
OV TP 04-25-04	To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process
OV TP 04-25-05	To Affirm and Strengthen Distance Learning Opportunities Leading to Ordination
OV TP 04-25-06	To Affirm and Strengthen Distance Learning Opportunities Leading to Ordination
OV TP 04-25-07	To Affirm and Encourage the Use of Gluten-Free Hosts as a Proper Element of the Lord’s Supper
OV TP 04-25-08	To Affirm and Encourage the Use of Gluten-Free Hosts as a Proper Element of the Lord’s Supper
OV TP 04-25-09	To Expand Appropriate Nomenclature
OV TP 04-25-10	To Adopt the Dual Title of “Bishop and President” in the Southeastern District LCMS
OV TP 04-25-11	To Normalize SMP CQ Call Eligibility
OV TP 04-25-12	To Normalize SMP CQ Call Eligibility
OV TP 04-25-13	To Normalize SMP CQ Call Eligibility
OV TP 04-25-14	To Normalize SMP CQ Call Eligibility
OV TP 04-25-15	To Normalize SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) CQ (Colloquy) Call Eligibility
OV TP 04-25-16	To Meaningfully Recognize the Authority and Voice of the Laity

FLOOR COMMITTEE 01: WITNESS (WI)

OV WI 01 25 01 TO EXPAND DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR THE SMP PROGRAM

WHEREAS, There is a severe shortage of pastors and church workers anticipated in the near future; and,

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, gathered in Convention in 2007, created another path to ordination with the Specific Ministry Pastor Program thus enabling more men to become ordained as Specific Ministry Pastors; and,

WHEREAS, the Specific Ministry Pastor Program has already enabled three congregations of Circuit 15 of the Southeastern District to benefit from the Specific Ministry Pastor Program. One congregation has an ordained SMP sole pastor. Another has an ordained SMP associate pastor, another has a SMP vicar assisting the Senior Pastor.

WHEREAS, there are not enough eligible students preparing for church work in the current Seminary program to meet the current, much less future needs of the church; and,

WHEREAS, many congregations are currently without pastors or other needed church workers; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Circuit Forum of Circuit 15 of the Southeastern District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod hereby petitions the 2025 Convention of the Southeastern District to reaffirm the importance and value of the SMP program in providing ordained SMP pastors for the future needs of its member congregations and other ministries; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the 2025 Convention of The Southeastern District expand recruitment of SMP students and provide additional funding for SMP students as needed, so that no one will be deprived of entering or completing the SMP program due to financial hardships, and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern District petition the Synod to form an expanded partnership with the districts to meet the future needs of its congregations and ministries with the church workers that will be needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Ronald Wiese, Circuit 15 Visitor

Mark Kiser Circuit 15 Secretary

OV WI 01 25 02 OVERATURE TO THE 2025 SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT CONVENTION

1 **FROM GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH CALLAO, VIRGINIA FOR**

2 **L.C.M.S TO ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT AND AGGRESSIVE MINISTRY RECRUITMENT PLAN**

3 WHEREAS, over the past three decades the LCMS has experienced a dramatically growing shortage of parish pastors and
4 other church workers; and

5 WHEREAS, our seminaries and prep schools have had declining numbers of students preparing for church vocations; and

6 WHEREAS, these two shortfalls have been recognized and bemoaned by both local parishes and districts, but no across-
7 the-synod, systematic program is in place to address these needs; therefore be it.

8 RESOLVED that Synod IMMEDIATELY create and AGGRESSIVELY IMPLEMENT a program of church ministry
9 recruitment; and be it further

10 RESOLVED that Synod immediately allocate funds to develop and distribute these recruitment materials for synod,
11 district, circuit and parish use; and be it further

12 RESOLVED that the program formally encourage all synodical departments, districts, circuits and parishes to conduct
13 events, AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR, that hold up ministry as an important vocation, to young and mature alike, using these
14 materials; and be it further

15 RESOLVED that each Circuit be asked to set a goal of having at least one person, every 5 years, (male or female, for
16 pastoral or other ministry vocations) commit to a vocation and make a start in training, and be it finally

17 RESOLVED that Circuits, Districts and Synod track and report recruitment progress, then using such data, adjust the
18 program as needed, to make it as effective as possible.

19 NOTE: According to the 2023 LCMS Annual, LCMS has 626 Circuits, which could yield, at a minimum, 1,252 new
20 ministry candidates in 10 years.

21 Good Shepherd (Callao, Virginia)

22 Ted Hobson -Congregational President

23 Cathy Kohli -Council Secretary

FROM GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHREAN CHURCH CALLAO, VIRGINIA

FOR L.C.M.S TO ADOPT A FRESH CHURCH-PLANTING

MODEL IN THE U.S.A AND ALLOW FOR ITS FUNDING

WHEREAS, many church facilities in the USA communities have been closed and are up for sale, due to an aged/passed parish membership and/or population movements; and

WHEREAS, many of these USA communities have experienced renewal, repopulation and expansion, and are, again, ripe for renewal evangelistic outreach and congregational services; and

WHEREAS, many of these church facilities are offered at very low prices (many of which also include a parsonage); and

WHEREAS, reusing these facilities often help revitalize an area, preserves community identity and history, as well as generates interest and good will; therefore be it

RESOLVED that congregations and districts of synod constantly evaluate renewed and repopulated areas within their purview for fresh evangelistic outreach and congregation planting opportunities; and be it further

RESOLVED that in those areas deemed ripe for such church planting efforts, before starting a fresh building program, congregations and districts, consider church facilities offered for sale; and be it further

RESOLVED that synod officially adopt this church planting approach as one of her outreach models and encourage congregations and districts of synod to consider it prior to undertaking new construction; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the financial assistance agencies of synod be empowered to underwrite loans for the purchase and renovation of such facilities by congregations and districts of synod.

Good Shepherd (Callao, VA)

Ted Hobson – Congregational President

Cathy Kohli – Council Secretary

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2025 SED Convention

WHEREAS, the Christian Church exists in an increasingly secular and post-Christian world; and

WHEREAS, small, faithful congregations can find themselves, for a variety of reasons, in the circumstance of needing a pastor, but unable to pay a full salary; and

WHEREAS, a quarter of the Churches in Circuit 18 are served by pastors who have, for most of their ministry to those congregations, worked bi-vocationally (often called tentmaker-pastors}; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul himself provided for his physical needs as a tentmaker (Acts 18: 1-4) while he served the Church in Corinth, thereby establishing bi-vocational ministry as a viable and honorable manner in which clergy may continue to serve the congregations to which they are called, without bringing personal hardship to themselves or their families; and

WHEREAS, the process of beginning and sustaining tentmaker-pastoral ministry carries many challenges that are daunting to pastors and congregations, including obtaining employment, managing family responsibilities, creating balance between careers, serving the community, being a faithful witness to our confessional faith, and prioritizing Word and Sacrament ministry; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District, in convention, adopt this resolution to increase support for tent-maker pastors and their congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the district encourage our seminaries and young men, including at the recruitment level, to obtain degrees, diplomas, certifications, or other means that can be used to supplement and/or complement the pastoral ministry, should the need arise; and be it further

Resolved, That a database of resources be compiled, to include current and retired tentmaker pastors, who can provide wisdom and encouragement from their experiences; and be it further

Resolved, That the district and circuits work with potential tentmaker-pastors to identify career options that will utilize their talents in ways that will supplement their ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the district provide and help identify aid for additional training or education needed to help tentmaker-pastors; and be it further

Resolved, That the district provide resources to support congregations, especially the lay leadership, as they experience challenges related to their pastor having additional employment; and be it further

Resolved, That the district utilize and, if necessary, modify their current health and wellness program to address mental health and trauma issues that often accompany such a need to work as tentmaker-pastors; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southeastern District present this resolution to the Synod at convention so that they may aid all districts in supporting tentmaker-pastors and their congregations.

The Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word

Florence, SC

FLOOR COMMITTEE 02: WELLNESS (WE)

OV WE 02 25 01 To Celebrate and Encourage Lay Service

Although God has established the Office of the Holy Ministry so as to ensure the public proclamation of the Gospel and proper administration of the sacraments, the establishment of that office does not invalidate the gifts and service of the priesthood of all believers, including those who have not been called into the Office of the Holy Ministry. This resolution seeks to celebrate, affirm, and encourage the service of those who, while they may fulfill a function of the office as the needs of the congregation dictate, are nevertheless not in the Office of the Holy Ministry.

WHEREAS, "It is to the true church of believers and saints that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and it is the proper and only possessor and bearer of the spiritual, divine, and heavenly gifts, rights, powers, offices, and the like that Christ has procured and are found in His church" (CFW Walther, *Church and Ministry*, Thesis IV); and

WHEREAS, "All Christians, that is, all who have come to faith in Christ, are spiritual priests and thus have the call to preach the Gospel" (Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, III, 440); and

WHEREAS, "After we have become Christians through this Priest [i.e., Christ] and His priestly office, incorporated in Him by Baptism through faith, then each one, according to his calling and position, obtains the right and the power of teaching and confessing before others this Word which we have obtained from Him. Even though not everybody has the public office and calling, every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and wherever necessary." (Luther, "Psalm 110," *Luther's Works*, AE: 13:333); and

WHEREAS, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope were written by, and first subscribed to, by laity; and

WHEREAS, "Christ Himself instituted the office of the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Many functions belong to this office: evangelizing, preaching, teaching, shepherding, supervising, admonishing, disciplining, and administering. Because it is often difficult or impossible for one person to perform all the functions of the ministry, the church may entrust various functions of this office to a number of persons." (CTCR, *The Ministry in Relation to the Christian Church*, 1973); and

WHEREAS, "A distinction must be made between 'office' and 'function.' Failure to make this distinction results in confusion. For instance, when a congregation is temporarily without a man to fill the office of the public ministry in its midst, it may ask a properly supervised teacher or a lay leader to perform some functions of the office of the public ministry. This is done in an emergency situation and not as a mere convenience. However, performing such functions does not make those who do them holders of the office of the public ministry. Even in such emergency situations a congregation properly requests a man who does hold the office of the public ministry and is serving as pastor in a neighboring congregation to assume that office for them as 'vacancy pastor' or 'interim overseer.' Thus the oversight and account ability remain with one whom the church has called and designated as a pastor and who supervises those who temporarily perform some pastoral functions. Such practices are common and reveal a 'folk' understanding of the ministry even if the root of such practices is not consciously analyzed. (CTCR, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 16); therefore, be it

Resolved, That the District in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the entire priesthood of believers, especially the laity, in fulfilling his mission to seek and save the lost; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention give thanks to those members of the laity who serve in positions that aid in carrying out the functions of the public ministry as needs arise within the context of a local congregation; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention affirm and encourage the laity as they exercise their gifts in service to the local congregation, recognizing the such service does not obscure or confuse the office of the public ministry but aids and supports the work of the public ministry and that carrying out specific functions of the ministry does not put them into the office; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention affirm each congregation's right to utilize the laity in accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; and be it finally

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to do likewise.

Submitted by Trinity Lutheran Church, Lexington Park, MD

OV WE 02 25 02 TO CELEBRATE AND ENCOURAGE LAY SERVICE

Whereas, “it is to the true church of believers and saints that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and it is the proper and only possessor and bearer of the spiritual, divine, and heavenly gifts, rights, powers, offices, and the like that Christ has procured and are found in his church” (cfw walther, *church and ministry*, and

WHEREAS, “All Christians, that is, all who have come to faith in Christ, are spiritual priests and thus have the call to preach the Gospel” (Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, III, 440); and

WHEREAS, “After we have become Christians through this Priest [i.e., Christ] and His priestly office, incorporated in Him by Baptism through faith, then each one, according to his calling and position, obtains the right and the power of teaching and confessing before others this Word which we have obtained from Him. Even though not everybody has the public office and calling, every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and wherever necessary.” (Luther, “Psalm 110,” *Luther’s Works*, AE: 13:333); and

WHEREAS, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope were written by, and fast subscribed to, by laity; and

WHEREAS, “Christ Himself instituted the office of the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Many functions belong to this office: evangelizing, preaching, teaching, shepherding, supervising, admonishing, disciplining, and administering. Because it is often difficult or impossible for one person to perform all the functions of the ministry, the church may entrust various functions of this office to a number of persons.” (CTCR, *The Ministry in Relation to the Christian Church*, 1973); and

WHEREAS, “A distinction must be made between “office” and “function.” Failure to make this distinction results in confusion. For instance, when a congregation is temporarily without a man to fill the office of the public ministry in its midst, it may ask a properly supervised teacher or a lay leader to perform some functions of the office of the public ministry. This is done in an emergency and not as a mere convenience. However, performing such functions does not make those who do them holders of the office of the public ministry. Even in such emergency situations a congregation properly request a man who does hold the office of the public ministry and is serving as pastor in a neighboring congregation to assume that office for them as “vacancy pastor” or “interim overseer.” Thus, the oversight and accountability remain with one whom the church has called and designated as a pastor and who supervise those who temporarily perform some pastoral functions. Such practices are common and reveal a “folk” understanding of the ministry even if the root of such practices is not consciously analyzed. (CTCR, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 16); now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the District in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the entire priesthood of believers, especially the laity, in fulfilling his mission to seek and save the lost; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention give thanks to those members of the laity who serve in positions that aid in caring out of the functions of the public ministry as needs arise within the context of a local congregation; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention affirm and encourage the laity as they exercise their gifts in service to the local congregation, recognizing such service does not obscure or confuse the office of the public ministry but aids and supports the work of the public ministry and that caring out specific functions of the ministry does not put them into the office; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention affirm each congregation’s right to utilize the laity in accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; and be it finally

Resolved, That District in convention memorializes the synod in convention to do likewise.

(Originator (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church)

Signatures

[Jennifer Gross, Chair of the Board]

Revised 2024-12-05

**OV WE 02 25 03 TO ENCOURAGE MORE DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION AMONG CONGREGATIONS ON
A CIRCUIT LEVEL**

Whereas, God’s Church is one body with many members (First Corinthians 12:12-13); and

Whereas, God has so fashioned bodies to come together through participation at multiple levels (molecules, cells, organs, and systems) (Philippians 1:1), and

Whereas, it seems that in the New Testament and Early Church the most significant of those levels of church participation was the level of the city, so that the Apostles named and addressed the church by the city (Romans 1:7, First Corinthians 1:1-2, Rev. 1:11), and

Whereas, congregations within the same city are neighbors in working relationships, diverse in style and tradition, and are therefore, as much as district or synod, the level at which synodical unity is achieved or fails (Philippians 4:14-20), and

Whereas, Circuit 15 of the Southeastern District has found great agency, unity and cooperation stemming from its Circuit Forum of Charlotte area congregations, and attendant retreats and projects, including a new church plant (Ephesians 4:15-16), therefore be it

Resolved, that the Southeastern District investigate, encourage, invest in and foster the development of cooperation and identity among congregations on the circuit level, and be it finally

Resolved, that recommendations include an annual circuit retreat, shared ministries, a circuit account for supplementing congregational or ministry needs, a shared website, and anything else that seems good for living out the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) at the level of the community.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Ronald Wiese, Circuit Visitor

Mark Kiser, Circuit Secretary

FLOOR COMMITTEE 03: BYLAWS & GOVERNANCE (BG)

OV BG 04 25 01 Based on Iowa West Resolution #3-08 To Amend Southeastern District Bylaw, Article VI, Duties of Officers re Allowing the District President to Serve as a Pastor of a Congregation

Whereas, Ecclesiastical supervisors and bishops have historically continued to serve congregations in Word and Sacrament ministry; and

Whereas, The current Synodical President models leadership serving in a parish while serving the larger church; and

Whereas, Earlier practice within the Southeastern District was to permit a District President to serve in a congregation while holding the office; and

Whereas, District presidents have on account of their ordination (as do all ordained pastors) power of the order, that is the ministry of Word and Sacraments, and the power of jurisdiction (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII, *Of Ecclesiastical Power*:12-13); and

Whereas, District presidents have been ordained into the pastoral office of the holy ministry and are thus equal to every pastor in the essence of this Word and Sacrament ministry; and

Whereas, There are districts in the LCMS today where the district president serves a parish in addition to serving as the chief executive office of the district; and

Whereas, The LCMS by-laws do not place any restrictions or prohibitions on district presidents serving congregations; and

Whereas, The Scriptures give charge to all pastors, including those serving as ecclesiastical supervisors by human right, to do the work of a pastor (2 Timothy 4, 1 Peter 5); and

Whereas, The Scriptures charge pastors, “Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you (1 Timothy 4:14); therefore be it

Resolved, That Article VI, Duties of Officers be amended as follows, to allow the District President to serve as a pastor of a congregation:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

Article VI

1. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the District and serves as a voting member of the Board of Directors. The President shall also perform the duties of a District President under the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod. ~~The President shall be a full time, salaried official of the District, and the President (except one called to fill an unexpired term of less than 18 months) may not serve as a Pastor of a congregation.~~

Rev. Michael Merker, Circuit Visitor 13

2025 SED Convention

*By unanimous decision of
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Burlington, NC
Congregation Meeting, December 8, 2024*

FLOOR COMMITTEE 05: THEOLOGY & PRACTICE (TP)

OV TP 05 25 01 To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process

WHEREAS, one of the expressed purposes of Synod is to "recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth" (Art. 111.3); and

WHEREAS, Synod has the responsibility to oversee that training; and

WHEREAS, Synod has designated that responsibility to the prior approval panels outlined in various bylaws (3.6.6.1, 3.10.5.7.3, 3.10.6.8.2, 3.10.6.9.2); and

WHEREAS, those panels have responsibility not only to work in behalf of the Synod but also are responsible to the Synod; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for theological professorships and other such positions as require prior approval have ordinarily been ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry or have been commissioned and/or consecrated into an auxiliary office of the Church; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for aforementioned positions have also been examined and approved for service on the roster of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, those individual members of Synod have, by virtue of their membership in the Synod, agreed to the confessional basis as outlined in Art. II, as well as recognize and affirm the validity of Bylaws 1.6-1.8; therefore be it

Resolved, That the District in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the Synod and its agencies to preserve and enlarge the workers of the harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention give thanks to those engaged in the various prior approval processes for being engaged in difficult and important work; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to do the same; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to require that process used by the various panel to carry out the responsibility entrusted to it by the Synod be made transparent and publicly available; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to stipulate that unless those under consideration by the prior approval panels are found to be in violation of their ordination, commissioning, consecration, or installation vows that their approval be assumed; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if those under consideration are thought to be in violation, that the candidate be given every opportunity to clarify their position to the panel; and be it finally

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if such a violation be found that the panel would, with the appropriate District President as that individual's ecclesiastical supervisor, engage in the appropriate processes to restore the erring brother or sister so that one deemed unworthy to teach at one of the Synod's institutions not be permitted to remain on the roster or serve a congregation and thus lead that congregation to err or become out of step with Synod.

Circuit Visitor, Circuit 10

OV TP 05 25 02 To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process

Since the 2013 Convention, appointments to theological faculties at all universities and seminaries, as well as all college, university, and seminary presidential appointments, have been subject to the prior approval process. While the convention in 2013 amended the bylaws to delegate the responsibility for prior approval to specific groups (see bylaws referenced below) the bylaws did not, and still do not, stipulate how the process of prior approval should be carried out. Over time this has led to questions as to the standards used to evaluate candidates as well as the process utilized by the prior approval panels. In the hopes of building trust and relieving any undue criticism of the panels and the process, the following overture aims to increase transparency for the process and standards used by the panels as well as ensuring clear communication between the panels, the candidates, and the Synod.

WHEREAS, one of the expressed purposes of Synod is to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth” (Art. III.3); and

WHEREAS, Synod has the responsibility to oversee that training; and

WHEREAS, Synod has designated that responsibility to the prior approval panels outlined in various bylaws (3.6.6.1, 3.10.5.7.3, 3.10.6.8.2, 3.10.6.9.2); and

WHEREAS, those panels have responsibility not only to work in behalf of the Synod but also are responsible to the Synod; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for theological professorships and other such positions as require prior approval have ordinarily been ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry or have been commissioned and/or consecrated into an auxiliary office of the Church; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for aforementioned positions have also been examined and approved for service on the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, those individual members of Synod have, by virtue of their membership in the Synod, agreed to the confessional basis as outlined in Art. II, as well as recognize and affirm the validity of Bylaws 1.6–1.8; therefore be it

Resolved, That the District in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the Synod and its agencies to preserve and enlarge the workers of the harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention give thanks to those engaged in the various prior approval processes for being engaged in difficult and important work; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to do the same; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to require that process used by the various panel to carry out the responsibility entrusted to it by the Synod be made transparent and publicly available; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to stipulate that unless those under consideration by the prior approval panels are found to be in violation of their ordination, commissioning, consecration, or installation vows that their approval be assumed; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if those under consideration are thought to be in violation, that the candidate be given every opportunity to clarify their position to the panel; and be it finally

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if such a violation be found that the panel would, with the appropriate District President as that individual’s ecclesiastical supervisor, engage in the appropriate processes to restore the erring brother or sister so that one deemed unworthy to teach at one of the Synod’s institutions not be permitted to remain on the roster or serve a congregation and thus lead that congregation to err or become out of step with Synod.

Submitted by Trinity Lutheran Church, Lexington Park, MD

Approved by Congregation 12/08/2024

OV TP 05 25 03 To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process

WHEREAS, one of the expressed purposes of Synod is to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth” (Art. III.3); and

WHEREAS, Synod has the responsibility to oversee that training; and

WHEREAS, Synod has designated that responsibility to the prior approval panels outlined in various bylaws (3.6.6.1, 3.10.5.7.3, 3.10.6.8.2, 3.10.6.9.2); and

WHEREAS, those panels have responsibility not only to work in behalf of the Synod but also are responsible to the Synod; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for theological professorships and other such positions as require prior approval have ordinarily been ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry or have been commissioned and/or consecrated into an auxiliary office of the Church; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for aforementioned positions have also been examined and approved for service on the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, those individual members of Synod have, by virtue of their membership in the Synod, agreed to the confessional basis as outlined in Art. II, as well as recognize and affirm the validity of Bylaws 1.6–1.8; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the Synod and its agencies to preserve and enlarge the workers of the harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention give thanks to those engaged in the various prior approval processes for being engaged in difficult and important work; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to do the same; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention memorialize the Synod to require that process used by the various panel to carry out the responsibility entrusted to it by the Synod be made transparent and publicly available; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention memorialize the Synod to stipulate that unless those under consideration by the prior approval panels are found to be in violation of their ordination, commissioning, consecration, or installation vows that their approval be assumed; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if those under consideration are thought to be in violation, that the candidate be given every opportunity to clarify their position to the panel; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if such a violation be found that the panel would, with the appropriate District President as that individual’s ecclesiastical supervisor, engage in the appropriate processes to restore the erring brother or sister so that one deemed unworthy to teach at one of the Synod’s institutions not be permitted to remain on the roster or serve a congregation and thus lead that congregation to err or become out of step with Synod.

St. John’s Lutheran Church-Alexandria, VA

James Burroughs – Congregational President

Angela Schulze – Church Council

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OV TP 05 25 04 To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process

WHEREAS, one of the expressed purposes of Synod is to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth” (Art. III.3); and

WHEREAS, Synod has the responsibility to oversee that training; and

WHEREAS, Synod has designated that responsibility to the prior approval panels outlined in various bylaws (3.6.6.1, 3.10.5.7.3, 3.10.6.8.2, 3.10.6.9.2); and

WHEREAS, those panels have responsibility not only to work in behalf of the Synod but also are responsible to the Synod; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for theological professorships and other such positions as require prior approval have ordinarily been ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry or have been commissioned and/or consecrated into an auxiliary office of the Church; and

WHEREAS, those under consideration for aforementioned positions have also been examined and approved for service on the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, those individual members of Synod have, by virtue of their membership in the Synod, agreed to the confessional basis as outlined in Art. II, as well as recognize and affirm the validity of Bylaws 1.6–1.8; therefore be it

Resolved, That the District in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the Synod and its agencies to preserve and enlarge the workers of the harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention give thanks to those engaged in the various prior approval processes for being engaged in difficult and important work; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to do the same; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to require that process used by the various panel to carry out the responsibility entrusted to it by the Synod be made transparent and publicly available; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to stipulate that unless those under consideration by the prior approval panels are found to be in violation of their ordination, commissioning, consecration, or installation vows that their approval be assumed; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if those under consideration are thought to be in violation, that the candidate be given every opportunity to clarify their position to the panel; and be it finally

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if such a violation be found that the panel would, with the appropriate District President as that individual’s ecclesiastical supervisor, engage in the appropriate processes to restore the erring brother or sister so that one deemed unworthy to teach at one of the Synod’s institutions not be permitted to remain on the roster or serve a congregation and thus lead that congregation to err or become out of step with Synod.

Circuit 9B Forum, Mark Shaltanis

OV TP 05 25 05 To Affirm and Strengthen Distance Learning Opportunities Leading to Ordination

OVERTURES

2025 SED Convention

WHEREAS, The congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have been blessed with pastors and teachers who have been prepared for their service in a variety of ways over its history

WHEREAS, The seminaries of the LCMS are currently offering, beyond the residential Master of Divinity program, a variety of routes for pastoral formation which take into consideration the needs, desires, and context of the students, including the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS), Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program, SMP to General Pastor Certification (typically an 8 year program), the Residential Alternative Route, and the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center at Concordia University, Irvine (CUI); and

WHEREAS, the need for ordained ministers of the Gospel to serve in the congregations of the LCMS will only grow greater as retirements increase; and

WHEREAS, the need for faithful servants to expand further mission and ministry will also continue to grow; and

WHEREAS, Academic training has taken advantage of technology to offer distance education and it has become a standard of delivering training in many contexts in our culture; and

WHEREAS, It has become increasingly difficult and prohibitive for prospective LCMS seminary students to leave homes, family, employment, and ministry context to move cross-country to enroll in a four-year residential Master of Divinity program; Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District memorialize the 2026 Synod convention to enhance the ability of our alternate routes to ordination to meet the increasing demand for pastoral candidates by removing current restrictions on enrollment, geographic location, and ministry context and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries of the Synod be encouraged to study different education models of training general pastors; and be it finally

Resolved, That the seminaries and the Districts of the Synod consider how they can work together to increase the number of students preparing for general ministry through the existing distance study program opportunities (EIIT, SMP, CUI, CHS), hybrid models like Cross-Cultural Ministry Center, and residential programs including the Residential Alternate Route to provide more general pastors for the mission of the Gospel.

Submitted by Circuits 9A/B

Central Region, Southeastern District

October 17, 2024

OV TP 05 25 06 To Affirm and Strengthen Distance Learning Opportunities Leading to Ordination

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2025 SED Convention

WHEREAS, The congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have been blessed with pastors and teachers who have been prepared for their service in a variety of ways over its history

WHEREAS, The seminaries of the LCMS are currently offering, beyond the residential Master of Divinity program, a variety of routes for pastoral formation which take into consideration the needs, desires, and context of the students, including the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS), Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program, SMP to General Pastor Certification (typically an 8 year program), the Residential Alternative Route, and the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center at Concordia University, Irvine (CUI); and

WHEREAS, the need for ordained ministers of the Gospel to serve in the congregations of the LCMS will only grow greater as retirements increase; and

WHEREAS, the need for faithful servants to expand further mission and ministry will also continue to grow; and

WHEREAS, Academic training has taken advantage of technology to offer distance education and it has become a standard of delivering training in many contexts in our culture; and

WHEREAS, It has become increasingly difficult and prohibitive for prospective LCMS seminary students to leave homes, family, employment, and ministry context to move cross-country to enroll in a four-year residential Master of Divinity program; and therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District memorialize the 2026 Synod convention to enhance the ability of our alternate routes to ordination to meet the increasing demand for pastoral candidates by removing current restrictions on enrollment, geographic location, and ministry context and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries of the Synod be encouraged to study different education models of training general pastors; and be it finally

Resolved, That the seminaries and the Districts of the Synod consider how they can work together to increase the number of students preparing for general ministry through the existing distance study program opportunities (EIIT, SMP, CUI, CHS), hybrid models like Cross-Cultural Ministry Center, and residential programs including the residential Alternate Route to provide more general pastors for the mission of the Gospel.

St. John's Lutheran Church-Alexandria, VA

James Burroughs – Congregational President

Angela Schulze – Church Council

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WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ gave “us Christians to eat and drink (Small Catechism)” of His true body and blood under the bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar (Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 1 Cor. 11:23–26) ; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 1% of the population has celiac disease (beyondceliac.org), an autoimmune condition triggered by the consumption of gluten (contained in wheat, barley or rye), causing damage to the lining of the small intestine resulting in nutritional malabsorption and other significant adverse health effects (mayoclinic.org); and

WHEREAS, “Even the slightest amount [of gluten] will trigger an immune system reaction that can damage [the] small intestine (*Dietary Changes for Celiac Disease* hopkinsmedicine.org)”; and

WHEREAS, The scriptures are silent regarding the type of grain used in the bread at Jesus’ institution of the sacrament, and the scriptures and Lutheran Confessions are silent regarding which grain should be used for the continuing practice of the Lord’s Supper; and

WHEREAS, Dr. C.F.W. Walther considered it “an adiaphoron whether the bread be leavened, whether it be rye, wheat, barley, or oats bread, and whether it have this or that form, so long only as it is baked of grain flour and water. (Pastoral Theology)”; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR has spoken on the issue of non-wheat hosts, “it may be baked from the flour of wheat, rye, barley, or other grains. (Theology and Practice of the Lord’s Supper 1983)”; and

WHEREAS, The legitimacy of “non-wheat hosts” has been called into question at the 2023 Synod Convention as one of the “concerns” that the Commission of Theology and Church Relations was “instructed to take up (2023 Res. 5-15)”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District affirms and encourages the use of gluten-free hosts as a proper element of the Lord’s Supper; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention submit this resolution as an overture for adoption by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod at its 2026 Convention.

St. John’s Lutheran Church – Alexandria, VA

James Burroughs – Congregational President

Angela Schulze – Church Council

OVERTURES

2025 SED Convention

1 **OV TP 05 25 08 To Affirm and Encourage the Use of Gluten-Free Hosts as a Proper Element of the Lord's Supper**

2 WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ gave “us Christians to eat and drink (Small Catechism)” of His true body and blood under the
3 bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar (Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 1 Cor. 11:23–26)
4 ; and

5 WHEREAS, Approximately 1% of the population has celiac disease (beyondceliac.org), an autoimmune condition triggered by the
6 consumption of gluten (contained in wheat, barley or rye), causing damage to the lining of the small intestine resulting in
7 nutritional malabsorption and other significant adverse health effects (mayoclinic.org); and

8 WHEREAS, “Even the slightest amount [of gluten] will trigger an immune system reaction that can damage [the] small intestine
9 (*Dietary Changes for Celiac Disease* hopkinsmedicine.org)”; and

10 WHEREAS, The scriptures are silent regarding the type of grain used in the bread at Jesus’ institution of the sacrament, and the
11 scriptures and Lutheran Confessions are silent regarding which grain should be used for the continuing practice of the Lord’s
12 Supper; and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. C.F.W. Walther considered it “an adiaphoron whether the bread be leavened, whether it be rye, wheat, barley, or
14 oats bread, and whether it have this or that form, so long only as it is baked of grain flour and water. (Pastoral Theology)”; and

15 WHEREAS, The CTCR has spoken on the issue of non-wheat hosts, “it may be baked from the flour of wheat, rye, barley, or other
16 grains. (Theology and Practice of the Lord’s Supper 1983)”; and

17 WHEREAS, The legitimacy of “non-wheat hosts” has been called into question at the 2023 Synod Convention as one of the
18 “concerns” that the Commission of Theology and Church Relations was “instructed to take up (2023 Res. 5-15)”; therefore be it

19 *Resolved*, That the Southeastern District affirms and encourages the use of gluten-free hosts as a proper element of the Lord’s
20 Supper; and be it finally

21 *Resolved*, That the Southeastern District in convention submit this resolution as an overture for adoption by the Lutheran Church -
22 Missouri Synod at its 2026 Convention.

23

Circuit Forum 9B, Mark Shaltanis

24

OV TP 05 25 09 To Expand Appropriate Nomenclature

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The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) is facing significant challenges, both within its congregations and in the broader mission of the church. Among the most pressing of these challenges is the need of pastors to shepherd congregations, administer the sacraments, and faithfully proclaim the Word of God. This issue congregations, which often struggle to find and retain ordained clergy.

In response to these growing needs, the LCMS established and ordained SMP CQ Pastors as a pathway to equip and deploy men for pastoral ministry. The program has produced many faithful pastors who, despite their demonstrated effectiveness in pastoral office roles, have been wrongfully designated as a second-class pastor and ineligible for a Call as based on recent poorly written and unspiritual guideline by a small group of pastors during a prior convention. This human imposed constraint limits Pastor CQ ability to serve congregations in a long-term, stable capacity and, more broadly, restricts the church's ability to meet its critical pastoral needs; prevents the feeding of the sheep, which stands in direct contradiction of Scripture and Jesus' command to "feed my sheep".

The SMP CQ pastors in question have completed rigorous theological training, adhered to the doctrinal commitments of the LCMS, served faithfully for many years, and been licensed to preach the Word and administer the sacraments. In fact, do conduct all the functions of the Pastoral Office. Despite this, they are "technically" barred from Call eligibility, resulting in an unnecessary burden on congregations and, perpetuating the pastoral shortage and creating an unhealthy environment of setting a comparison environment between pastors and hence, some feeling that there can be superior pastors and inferior pastors, when all have been qualified by the Holy Spirit for a Call.

This overture seeks to address this imbalance by affirming the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors. By doing so, the LCMS would not only be recognizing the valuable service of these men but also taking decisive steps toward meeting the needs of the wider church. We must be faithful stewards of the gifts and training God has provided and make full use of every pastor He has called into service. Not bicker about how many classroom hours a pastor has done, or whether they have lived in St. Louis or paid high tuition. As we look to Scripture, we are reminded of the importance of recognizing the potential in others who have completed several advanced degrees, have experience in leadership, and a demonstrated commitment to Word and Sacrament, as Barnabas did for Paul, and ensuring that the work of Christ's church is not hindered by human-imposed barriers.

In light of these realities and the biblical imperative [Jesus own command] to provide pastoral care for the flock of Christ, this overture calls for the LCMS to remove the restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility and open the door for these pastors to serve congregations in a more permanent capacity.

WHEREAS, there is a demonstrated need for SMP CQ Call Eligibility due to the fact that SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) CQ pastors have faithfully served (been ordained) multiple congregations, have a combination of theological education, confess doctrinal agreement, have fulfilled colloquy committee requirements since five years, are licensed for the administration of the sacraments, and have completed a series (10+ college level courses, including) of seminary-designed Biblical studies courses in exegesis, confessional writings, and systematics;

WHEREAS, the intensive training and coursework of the SMP CQ program was approved by the LCMS with the express purpose of developing pastors aligned with the character, doctrine, and mission of the LCMS;

WHEREAS, these courses were taught by LCMS pastors and professors, ensuring the instruction was rooted in sound Lutheran theology and practice;

WHEREAS, the SMP program was established as an official pathway for men to step into pastoral roles, providing them with real-world ministry experience and opportunities to grow in their calling. It is necessary that these men be granted Call eligibility to serve the church in its time of need;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ are fully credentialed and have had an inspirational and faithful history of service of five years or more, beloved by the congregations served,

WHEREAS, the District President has the authority to add and remove names from a Call List,

WHEREAS, in the Book of Acts, Barnabas opened the door for Paul's Ministry, recognizing his potential despite prior opposition, so too has the SMP CQ program successfully prepared men to be fully equipped, LCMS-Qualified, and licensed to distribute Word and Sacrament;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors have already been serving in the roles of the pastoral office for more than 5 yrs;

WHEREAS, recognizing and affirming the potential in others, as seen in Barnabas' support of Paul (Acts 9:26-27), serves as a biblical example that spiritual leaders must be willing to acknowledge the readiness of SMP pastors who have undergone this

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training. These men, have completed over ten theological courses and faithfully served in Pastors who ministry for at least five years, adhered to sound Lutheran LCMS teaching and instruction, are beloved by the congregations they serve (d) should not be overlook but rather affirmed through Call Eligibility;

WHEREAS, Jesus commands pastors to “feed my sheep” (John 21:17), it is contrary to Scripture to prevent trained, equipped, and licensed SMP CQ pastors from receiving a Call to serve congregations. Denying such eligibility undermines the church’s mission, stands in contradiction of Jesus’ command, and withholds vital qualified pastoral care from congregations (withholding care should not be tolerated);

WHEREAS, the human-imposed barriers preventing SMP CQ pastors from being Call-eligible are contrary to the principle of sola scriptura, one of the core tenets of Lutheran theology. This also results in the neglect of congregations in need, as the means of grace are not being fully provided, when such can be easily provided when SMP CQ are Call eligible;

WHEREAS, studies have shown many LCMS congregations are currently without pastoral office support, further emphasizing the need for SMP CQ Call eligibility to fill these pastoral vacancies;

WHEREAS, studies have shown many LCMS congregations are currently without pastoral office support, further emphasizing the need for SMP CQ Call eligibility to fill these pastoral vacancies;

WHEREAS, the LCMS has experienced a decline in membership, schools, teachers, and pastors, as documented by Dr. Alan Klass’ Clergy Shortage Study (1999) and the Task force on Synodical Harmony Report (2011). It is evident that the current restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility certainly contribute significantly to this decline;

WHEREAS, the theological concept of homo incurvatus in se (humanity turned inward on itself) can be observed in the reluctance to allow SMP CQ pastors Call eligibility. This reflects an inward focus on human achievements and status rather than on primary adherence to the Call of the Holy Spirit in the lives of SMP CQ pastors, to Christ’s mission; and expectation of the ordained to serve His people;

WHEREAS, as Lutherans, we understand that greatness is not measured by how much education or how many classes, after a certain level, a pastor has taken, but by how well we love and serve those around us. SMP CQ pastors, with their more than five years of pastoral service, have already proven their commitment to love and serve as God would have use, namely AGAPE, in service to congregations;

WHEREAS, and SMP CQ Pastors has a Bachelors degree, and has a Masters degree, and in some cases has a Doctorate degree, has completed LCMS authorized course-work in theological studies,

WHEREAS, LCMS leadership must refocus on honoring Christ rather than human achievements. Any boasting should be directed toward the glory of God rather than emphasizing the quantity of classes taken;

WHEREAS, God does not call people to His service based on their qualifications or abilities but instead equips and qualifies those whom He calls. This truth is supported throughout Scripture, including in the example of Moses, who felt inadequate to speak but was empowered by God to lead the Israelites (Exodus 3-4);

WHEREAS, the church has an urgent need to address the pastoral shortage, and restricting SMP CQ Call eligibility perpetuates this issue rather than resolving it;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors provided essentials ministry services in congregations, including preaching, administering the sacraments, and offering pastoral care. Denying their Call eligibility deprives congregations of qualified pastoral leadership, especially in smaller or rural churches that are struggling to find ordained clergy;

WHEREAS, the SMP CQ program reflects a viable, faithful, and sustainable model for ministry, especially given the economic and geographical challenges many congregations face. Making SMP CQ pastors eligible for Calls would strengthen the church’s outreach and provide stability to congregations in need of a long -term pastor;

WHEREAS, congregations are continuously asking the Synod for pastors, SMP CQ Pastors are trained and qualified; on church Roster and are licensed to administer Word and Sacrament,

WHEREAS, congregations go through several cycles of the Call process:

WHEREAS, the Call process should reflect the spiritual readiness of a pastor, rather than hinge solely on differences in a large number of credits hours, especially when SMP CQ pastors have undergraduate degrees, graduate level degrees, and in some cases advanced doctoral degrees. Many SMP CQ pastors bring valuable life and ministry experience, along with deep theological

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96 understanding, to the service of the church; such evidence of training and education and the Holy Spirit, must be recognized
97 through Call eligibility;

98 WHEREAS, the church is called to be faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to it, including the spiritual
99 gifts and pastoral training of SMP CQ pastors. By affirming their Call eligibility, the LCMS would be fully utilizing these God-
100 given resources to the benefit of the church as a whole and to millions of people, potentially resulting in the growth of the LCMS
101 church once again;

102 THEREFORE, be it resolved that the LCMS adopt this overture to affirm the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors have
103 theological, doctrinal, and pastoral experience, knowledge, training, and inspiration to serve as a Servant Leader, thereby
104 recognizing their valuable contribution to the church and addressing the current clergy shortage.

105 First St. John's Lutheran Church

OV TP 05 25 12 To Normalize SMP CQ CALL ELIGIBILITY

Preamble [An overture/resolution may offer a preamble before the actual rationale begins, either in classic or in rationale form.]

The Lutheran Church – Missionary Synod (LCMS) is facing significant challenges, both within its congregations and in the broader mission of the church. Among the most pressing of these challenges is the need of pastors to shepherd congregations, administer the sacraments, and faithfully proclaim the Word of God. This issue has been documented through multiple studies, and its effects are felt most acutely by smaller and rural congregations, which often struggle to find and retain ordained clergy.

In response to these growing needs, the LCMS established and ordained SMP CQ Pastors as a pathway to equip and deploy men for pastoral ministry. The program has produced many faithful pastors who, despite their demonstrated effectiveness in pastoral office roles, have been wrongfully designated as a second-class pastor and ineligible for a Call as based on recent poorly written and unspiritual guideline by a small group of pastors during a prior convention. This human imposed constraint limits Pastor CQ ability to serve congregations in a long term, stable capacity and, more broadly, restricts the church's ability to meet its critical pastoral needs; prevent the feeding of the sheep, which stands in direct contradiction of Scripture and Jesus' command to "feed my sheep".

The SMP CQ pastors in question have completed rigorous theological training, adhered to the doctrinal commitments of the LCMS, served faithfully for many years, and been licensed to preach the Word and administer the sacraments. In fact, do conduct all the functions of the Pastoral Office. Despite this, they are "technically" barred from Call eligibility, resulting in an unnecessary burden on congregations and perpetuating the pastoral shortage and creating an unhealthy environment of setting a comparison environment between pastors and hence some feeling that there can be superior pastors and inferior pastors, when all have been qualified by the Holy Spirit for a Call.

This overture seeks to address this imbalance by affirming the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors. By doing so, the LCMS would not only be recognizing the valuable service of these men but also taking decisive steps towards meeting the needs of the wider church. We must be faithful stewards of the gifts and training God has provided and make full use of every pastor He has called into service. Not bicker about how many classroom hours a pastor has done, or whether they have lived in St. Louis or paid high tuition. As we look to Scripture, we are reminded of the importance of recognizing the potential in others who have completed several advanced degrees, have experience in leadership, and a demonstrated commitment to Word and Sacrament, as Barnabas did for Paul, and ensuring that the work of Christ's church is not hindered by human-imposed barriers.

In light of these realities and the biblical imperative [Jesus own command] to provide pastoral care for the flock of Christ, this overture calls for the LCMS to remove the restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility and open the door for these pastors to serve congregations in a more permanent capacity.

WHEREAS, there is a demonstrated need for SMP CQ Call Eligibility due to the fact that SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) CQ pastors have faithfully served (been ordained) multiple congregations, have a combination of theological education, confess doctrinal agreement, have fulfilled colloquy committee requirements since five years, are licensed for the administration of the sacraments, and have completed a series (10+ college level courses, including) of seminary-designed Biblical studies courses in exegesis, confessional writings, and systematics;

WHEREAS, the intensive training and coursework of the SMP CQ program was approved by the LCMS with the express purpose of developing pastors aligned with the character, doctrine, and mission of the LCMS;

WHEREAS, these courses were taught by LCMS pastors and professors, ensuring the instruction was rooted in sound Lutheran theology and practice;

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WHEREAS, the SMP program was established as an official pathway for men to step into pastoral roles providing them with real world ministry experience and opportunities to grow in their calling. It is necessary that these men be granted Call eligibility to serve the church in its time of need;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ are fully credentialed and have had an inspirational and faithful history of service of five years or more, beloved by the congregations served,

WHEREAS, the District President has the authority to add and remove names from a Call List,

WHEREAS, in the Book of Acts, Barnabas opened the door for Paul's ministry, recognizing his potential despite prior opposition, so too has the SMP CQ program successfully prepared men to be fully equipped, LCMS-qualified, and licensed to distribute Word and Sacraments;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors have already been serving in the roles of the pastoral office for more than 5 years;

WHEREAS, recognizing and affirming the potential in others, as seen in Barnabas' support of Paul (Acts 9:26-27), serves as a biblical example that spiritual leaders must be willing to acknowledge the readiness of SMP pastors who have undergone this training. These men, having completed over ten theological courses and faithfully served in pastoral ministry for at least five years, adhered to sound Lutheran LCMS teaching and instruction, are beloved by the congregations they serve(d) should not be overlooked but rather affirmed through Call eligibility;

WHEREAS, Jesus commands pastors to "feed my Sheep" (John 21:17), it is contrary to Scripture to prevent trained, equipped, and licensed SMP CQ pastors from receiving a Call to serve congregations. Denying such eligibility undermines the church's mission, stands in contradiction of Jesus' command and withholds vital qualified pastoral care from congregations (withholding care should not be tolerated);

WHEREAS, the human-imposed barriers preventing SMP CQ pastors from being Cal-eligible are contrary to the principle of sola scriptura, one of the core tenets of Lutheran theology. This also results in the neglect of congregations in need, as the means of grace are not being fully provided, when such can be easily provided when SMP CQ are Call eligible. It is almost as if the church is back 500 years and Martin Luther is trying to ensure that people are effectively being given the Word of God, Jesus wars against leading His "little ones" into harm (Matthew 18:6), all effort should be done to ensure pastors can serve God's people – especially would by normalizing Call eligibility;

WHEREAS, studies have shown that approximately 6000 LCMS congregations are currently without pastoral office support, further emphasizing the need for SMP CQ Call eligibility to fill these pastoral vacancies;

WHEREAS, the LCMS has experienced a decline in membership, schools, teachers, and pastors, as documented by Dr. Alan Klass' Clergy Shortage Study (1999) and the Task Force on Synodical Harmony report (2011). It is evident that the current restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility certainly contribute significantly to this decline;

WHEREAS, the theological concepts of homo incurvatus in se (humanity turned inward on itself) can be observed in the reluctance to allow SMP CQ pastors Call eligibility. This reflects an inward focus on human achievements and status rather than on primary adherence to the call of the Holy Spirit in the lives of SMP Pastors CQ; to Christ's mission; and expectation of the ordained to serve His people;

WHEREAS, as Lutherans, we understand that greatness is not measured by how much education or how many classes, after a certain level, a pastor has taken, but by how well we love and serve those around us. SMP CQ pastors, with their more than five years of pastoral service, have already proven their commitment to love and serve as God would have use, namely AGAPE, in service to congregations;

WHEREAS, a SMP CQ Pastor has a Bachelors degree, and has a Master degree, and in some cases has Doctorate degree, has completed LCMS authorized course-work in theological studies,

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WHEREAS, LCMS leadership must refocus on honoring Christ rather than human achievements. Any boasting should be directed towards the glory of God rather than emphasizing the quantity of classes taken;

WHEREAS, God does not call people to His service based on their qualifications or abilities but instead equips and qualifies those whom He calls. This truth is supported throughout Scripture, including in the example of Moses, who felt inadequate to speak but was empowered by God to lead the Israelites (Exodus 3-4);

WHEREAS, the church has an urgent need to address the pastoral shortage, and restricting SMP CQ Call eligibility perpetuates this issue rather than resolving it;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors provided essential ministry services in congregations, including preaching administering the sacraments, and offering pastoral care. Denying their Call eligibility deprives congregations of qualified pastoral leadership, especially in smaller or rural churches that are struggling to find ordained clergy;

WHEREAS, the SMP CQ program reflects a viable, faithful, and sustainable model for ministry, especially given the economic and geographical challenges many congregations face. Making SMP CQ Pastors eligible for Calls would strengthen the church's outreach and provided stability to congregations in need of a long-term pastor;

WHEREAS, congregations are continuously asking the Synod for Pastors, SMP CQ pastors are trained and qualified; on the church Roster and are licensed to administer Word and Sacrament,

WHEREAS, congregations go through several cycles of the Call process and many remain vacant;

WHEREAS, the Call process should reflect the spiritual readiness of a pastor, rather than hinge solely on differences in a large number of credits hours, especially when SMP CQ pastors have undergraduate degrees, graduate level degrees, and advanced doctoral degrees. Many SMP CQ pastors bring valuable life and ministry experience, along with deep theological understanding, to the service of the church; such evidence of training and education and the Holy Spirit, must be recognized through Call eligibility;

and

The last preamble clause is specially terminated:

WHEREAS, the church is called to be faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to it, including the spiritual gifts and pastoral training of SMP CQ pastors. By affirming their Call eligibility, the LCMS would be fully utilizing these God-given resources to the benefits of the church as a whole and to millions to people potentially resulting in the growth of the LCMS church once again;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Southeastern District recognizes and encourage the vital ministry of the SMP CQs within the congregations of the District; and be it

THEREFORE, the Southeastern District be an advocate for the calling and placing of SMP CQs within congregations of the District; and be it

THEREFORE, the Southeastern District adopt this resolution to affirm the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors who have had theological, doctrinal, and pastoral experiences, are ordained and authorized for Word and Sacrament, thereby recognizing their valuable contribution to the church and addressing the current long-term clergy shortage; and finally

THEREFORE, that the Southeastern District in convention sends this resolution to the LCSM 2025 Convention.

David Kummer, Pastor Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church

OV TP 05 25 13 To Normalize SMP CQ CALL ELIGIBILITY

PREAMBLE

Preamble! An overture / resolution may offer a preamble before the actual rationale begins, either in classic or in rationale form. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) is facing significant challenges, both within its congregations and in the broader mission of the church. Among the most pressing of these challenges is the need of pastors to shepherd congregations, administer the sacraments, and faithfully proclaim the Word of God. This issue has been documented through multiple studies, and its effect are felt most acutely by smaller and rural congregations, which often struggle to find and retain ordained clergy. In response to these growing needs, the LCMS established and ordained SMP CQ Pastors who, despite their demonstrated effectiveness in pastoral office roles, have been wrongfully designated as a second-class pastor and ineligible for a Call as based on recent poorly written and unspiritual guideline by a small group of pastors during a prior convention. This human imposed constraint limits Pastor CQ ability to serve congregations in a long- term, stable capacity and, more broadly, restricts the church's ability to meet its critical pastoral needs; prevent the feeding of the sheep, which stands in direct contradictions of Scripture and Jesus' command to... "feed my sheep".

The SMP CQ pastors in question have completed rigorous theological training, adhered to the doctrinal commitments of the LCMS, served faithfully form many years, and been licensed to preach the Word and administer the sacraments. In fact, do conduct all the functions for the Pastoral Office. Despite this, they're "technically" barred from Call eligibility, resulting in an unnecessary burden on congregations and perpetuating the pastoral shortage and creating an unhealthy environment of setting a comparison environment between pastors and hence some feeling that there can be superior pastors and inferior pastors, when all have been qualified by the Holy Spirit for a Call.

This overture seeks to address this imbalance by affirming the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors. By doing so the LCMS would not only be recognizing the valuable service of these men but also taking decisive steps toward meeting the need of the wider church. We must be faithful steward of the gifts and training God had provided and make full use of every pastor He has called into service. Not bicker about how many classroom hours a pastor has done, or whether they have lived in St. Louis or paid high tuition. As we look to Scripture, we are reminded of the importance of recognizing the potential in others who have completed several advanced degrees, have experience in leadership, and a demonstrated commitment to Word and Sacrament, as Barnabas did for Paul, and ensuring that the work of Christ's Church is not hindered by human-imposed barriers.

In light of these realities and the biblical imperative [Jesus own command] to provide pastoral care for the flock of Christ, this overture calls for the LCMS to remove the restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility and open the door for these pastors to serve congregations in a more permanent capacity.

Option A: CLASSIC FORM

WHEREAS, there is a demonstrated need for SMP CQ Call Eligibility due to the fact that SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) CQ pastors have faithfully served (been ordained) multiple congregations, have a combination of theological education, confess doctrinal agreement, have fulfilled colloquy committee requirements since five years, are licensed for the administration of the sacraments, and have completed a series (10+ college level courses, including) of seminary-designed Biblical studies courses in exegesis, confessional writings, and systematics.

WHEREAS, the intensive training and coursework of SMP CQ program was approved by the LCMS with the express purpose of developing pastors aligned with the character, doctrine, and mission of the LCMS.

WHEREAS, these course were taught by LCMS pastors and professors, ensuring the instruction was rooted in sound Lutheran theology and practice;

WHEREAS, the SMP program was established as an official pathway for men to step into pastoral roles, providing them with real-world ministry experience, and opportunities to grow in their calling. It is necessary that these men be granted Call eligibility to serve the church in its time of need;

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WHEREAS, SMP CQ are fully credentialed and have had an inspirational and faithful history of service of five years or more, beloved by the congregations served.

WHEREAS, the District President has the authority to add and remove names from a Call List;

WHEREAS, in the Book of Acts, Barnabas opened the door for Paul's Ministry, recognizing his potential despite prior opposition, so too has the SMP CQ program successfully prepared men to be fully equipped, LCMS-qualified, and licensed to distribute Word and Sacrament;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors have already been serving in the roles of the pastoral office for more than 5 yrs;

WHEREAS, recognizing and affirming the potential in others, as seen in Barnabas' support of Paul (Acts 9:26-27), serves as a biblical example that spiritual leaders must be willing to acknowledge the readiness of SMP pastors who have undergone this training. These men have completed over ten theological courses and faithfully served in pastoral ministry for at least five years, adhered to sound Lutheran LCMS teaching and instruction, are beloved by the congregations they serve(d) should not be overlooked but rather affirmed through Call eligibility;

WHEREAS, Jesus commands pastors to "Feed my Sheep" (John 21:17), it is contrary to Scripture to prevent trained, equipped, and licensed SMP CQ pastors from receiving a Call to serve congregations. Denying such eligibility undermines the church's mission, stands in contradiction of Jesus' command and withholds vital qualified pastoral care from congregations (withholding care should not be tolerated);

WHEREAS, the human-imposed barriers preventing SMP CQ pastors from being call-eligible are contrary to the principle of sola scriptura, one of the core tenets of Lutheran theology. This also results in the neglect of congregations in – need, as the means of grace are not being fully provided, when such can be easily provided when SMP CQ are Call eligible;

WHEREAS, studies have shown that approximately 6000 LCMS congregations are currently without pastoral office support, further emphasizing the need for SMP CQ Call Eligibility to fill these pastoral vacancies;

WHEREAS, the LCMS has experienced a decline in membership, schools, teachers, and pastors, as documented by Dr. Alan Klass Clergy Shortage study (1999) and the Task Force on Synodical Harmony report (2011). It is evident that the current restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility certainly contribute significantly to this decline;

WHEREAS, the theological concept of homo icurvatus in se (humanity turned inward on itself) can be observed in the reluctance to allow SMP CQ pastors Call eligibility. This reflects an inward focus on human achievements and status rather than on primary adherence to the Call of the Holy Spirit in the lives of SMP Pastor CQ; to Christ's mission; and expectation of the ordained to serve His people;

WHEREAS, as Lutherans, we understand that greatness is not measured by how much education or how many classes, after a certain, level, a pastor has taken, but by how well we love and serve those around us. SMP CQ pastors, with their more than five years of pastoral service, have already proven their commitment to love and serve as God would have us, namely AGAPE, in service to congregations;

WHEREAS, a SMP CQ Pastor has a Bachelors degree, and has a Master degree, and in some cases has a Doctorate degree, has completed LCMS authorized course-work in theological studies,

WHEREAS, LCMS leadership must refocus on honoring Christ rather than human achievements. Any boasting should be directed toward the glory of God rather than emphasizing the quantity of classes taken;

WHEREAS, God does not call people to His service based on their qualification or abilities but instead equips and qualifies those whom He calls. The truth is supported throughout Scripture, including in the example of Moses, who felt inadequate to speak but was empowered by God to lead the Israelites (Exodus 3-4);

OVERTURES

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WHEREAS, the church has an urgent need to address the pastoral shortage, and restricting SMP CQ Call eligibility perpetuates this issue rather than resolving it;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors provided essential ministry service in congregations, including preaching administering the sacraments, and offering pastoral care. Denying their Call eligibility deprives congregations of qualified pastoral leadership, especially in smaller or rural churches that are struggling to find ordained clergy;

WHEREAS, the SMP CQ program reflects a viable, faithful, and sustainable model for ministry, especially give the economic and geographical challenges many congregations face. Making SMP CQ pastors eligible for Calls would strengthen the church's outreach and provide stability to congregations in need of a long-term pastor;

WHEREAS, congregations are continuously asking the synod for pastors, SMP CQ pastors are trained and qualified; on the church Roster and are licensed to administer Word and Sacrament,

WHEREAS, congregations go through several cycles of the Call process and many remain vacant;

WHEREAS, the Call process should reflect the spiritual readiness of a pastor, rather than hinge solely on differences in a large number of credit hours, especially when SMP CQ pastors have undergraduate degrees, graduate level degrees, and in some cases advanced doctoral degrees. Many SMP CQ pastors bring valuable life and ministry experience, along with deep theological understanding, to the service of the church; such evidence of training and education and the Holy Spirit, must be recognized through Call eligibility;

and

The last preamble clause is specially terminated:

WHEREAS, the church is called to be faithful steward of the resources God has entrusted to it, including the spiritual gifts and pastoral training of SMP CQ pastors. By affirming their Call eligibility, the LCMS would be fully utilizing these God-given resources to the benefit of the church as a whole and to millions of people, potentially resulting in the growth of the LCMS church once again;

THEREFORE, the Southeastern District be an advocate for the calling and placing of SMP CQs within congregations of the District; and be it

THEREFORE, the southeastern district adopt this resolution to affirm the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors who have had theological, doctrinal, and pastoral experience, are ordained and authorized for Word and Sacrament, thereby recognizing their valuable contribution to the church and addressing the current long-term clergy shortage; and be it finally

THEREFORE, that the Southeastern District in Convention send this resolution to the LCMS 2026 Convention.

Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church

Parkton, Maryland

OV TP 05 25 14 To Normalize SMP CQ CALL ELIGIBILITY

PREAMBLE

Preamble! An overture / resolution may offer a preamble before the actual rationale begins, either in classic or in rationale form.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) is facing significant challenges, both within its congregations and in the broader mission of the church. Among the most pressing of these challenges is the need of pastors to shepherd congregations, administer the sacraments, and faithfully proclaim the Word of God. This issue has been documented through multiple studies, and its effect are felt more acutely by smaller and rural congregations, which often struggle to find and retain ordained clergy.

In response to these growing needs, the LCMS established and ordained SMP CQ Pastors as a pathway to equip and deploy men for pastoral ministry. The program has produced many faithful pastors who, despite their demonstrated effectiveness in pastoral office roles, have been wrongfully designated as a second – class pastor and ineligible for a Call as based on recent poorly written and unspiritual guideline by a small group of pastors during a prior convention. This human imposed constraint limits Pastor CQ ability to serve congregations in a long-term, stable capacity and, more broadly, restricts the church’s ability to meet its critical pastoral needs; prevents the feeding of the sheep, which stands in direct contradiction of Scripture and Jesus’ command to...“feed my sheep”.

The SMP CQ pastors in question have completed rigorous theological training, adhered to the doctrinal commitments of the LCMS, served faithfully for many years, and been licensed to preach the Word and administer the sacraments. In fact, do conduct all the functions of the Pastoral Office. Despite this, they are “technically” barred from Call eligibility, resulting in an unnecessary burden on congregations and perpetuating the pastoral shortage and creating an unhealthy environment of setting a comparison environment between pastors and hence some feeling that there can be superior pastors and inferior pastors, when all have been qualified by the Holy Spirit for a Call.

This overture seeks to address this imbalance by affirming the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors. By doing so the LCMS would not only be recognizing the valuable service of these men but also taking decisive steps toward meeting the needs of the wider church. We must be faithful stewards of the gifts and training God has provided and make full use of every pastor He has called into service. Not bicker about how many classroom hours a pastor has done, or whether they have lived in St. Louis or paid high tuition. As we look to Scripture, we are reminded of the importance of recognizing the potential in others who have completed several advanced degrees, have experienced in leadership, and a demonstrated commitment to Word and Sacrament, as Barnabas did for Paul, and ensuring that the work of Christ’s Church is not hindered by human-imposed barriers.

In light of these realities and the biblical imperative [Jesus own command] to provide pastoral care for the flock of Christ, this overture calls for the LCMS to remove the restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility and open the door for these pastors to serve congregations in a more permanent capacity.

Option A: CLASSIC FORM

WHEREAS, there is a demonstrated need for SMP CQ Call Eligibility due to the fact that SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) CQ pastors have faithfully served (been ordained) multiple congregations, have a combination of theological education, confess doctrinal agreement, have fulfilled colloquy committee requirements, since five years, are licensed for the administration of the sacraments, and have completed a series (10+ college level courses, including) of seminary-designed Biblical studies courses in exegesis, confessional writings, and systematics.

WHEREAS, the intensive training and coursework of the SMP CQ Program was approved by the LCMS with the express purpose of developing pastors aligned with the character, doctrine, and mission of the LCMS.

WHEREAS, these courses were taught by LCMS pastors and professors, ensuring the instruction was rooted in sound Lutheran theology and practice;

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WHEREAS, the SMP program was established as an official pathway for men to step into pastoral roles, providing them with real-world ministry experience, and opportunities to grow in their calling. It is necessary that these men be granted Call eligibility to serve the church in its time of need;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ are fully credentialed and have had an inspiration and faithful history of service of five years or more, beloved by the congregations served,

WHEREAS, the District President has the authority to add and remove names from a Call List;

WHEREAS, in the Book of Acts, Barnabas opened the door for Paul's ministry, recognizing his potential despite prior opposition, so too has the SMP CQ program successfully prepared men to be fully equipped, LCMS-qualified, and licensed to distribute Word and Sacrament;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors have already been serving in the roles of the pastoral office for more than 5 yrs;

WHEREAS, recognizing and affirming the potential in others, as seen in Barnabas' support of Paul (Acts 9:26 -27), serves as a biblical example that spiritual leaders must be willing to acknowledge the readiness of SMP Pastors who have undergone this training. These men, have completed over ten theological courses and faithfully served in pastoral ministry for at least five years, adhered to sound Lutheran LCMS teaching and instruction, are beloved by the congregations they serve(d) should not be overlooked but rather affirmed through Call eligibility;

WHEREAS, Jesus commands pastors to "feed my sheep" (John 21:17), it is contrary to Scripture to prevent trained, equipped, and licensed SMP CQ pastors from receiving a Call to serve congregations. Denying such eligibility undermines the church's mission, stands in contradiction of Jesus' command and withholds vital qualified pastoral care from congregations (withholding care should not be tolerated);

WHEREAS, the human-imposed barriers preventing SMP CQ pastors from being call-eligible are contrary to the principle of sola scriptura, one of the core tenets of Lutheran theology. This also results in the neglect of congregations in – need, as the means of grace are not being fully provided, when such can be easily provided when SMP CQ are Call eligible;

WHEREAS, studies have shown that approximately 6000 LCMS congregations are currently without pastoral office support, further emphasizing the need for SMP CQ Call Eligibility to fill these pastoral vacancies;

WHEREAS, the LCMS has experienced a decline in membership, schools, teachers, and pastors, as documented by Dr. Alan Klass Clergy Shortage Study (1999) and the Taskforce on Synodical Harmony report (2011). It is evident that the current restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility certainly contribute significantly to this decline;

WHEREAS, the theological concept of homo incurvatus in se (humanity turned inward on itself) can be observed in the reluctance to allow SMP CQ pastors Call eligibility. This reflects an inward focus on human achievements and status rather than on primary adherence to the Call of the Holy Spirit in the lives of SMP Pastor CQ; to Christ's mission; and expectation of the ordained to serve His people;

WHEREAS, as Lutherans, we understand that greatness is not measured by how much education or how many classes, after a certain, level, a pastor has taken, but by how well we love and serve those around us. SMP CQ pastors, with their more than five years of pastoral service, have already proven their commitment to love and serve as God would have use, namely AGAPE, in service to congregations;

WHEREAS, a SMP CQ Pastor has a Bachelors degree, and has a Master degree, and in some cases has a Doctorate degree, has completed LCMS authorized course-work in theological studies,

WHEREAS, LCMS leadership must refocus on honoring Christ rather than human achievements. Any boasting should be directed toward the glory of God rather than emphasizing the quality of classes taken;

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WHEREAS, God does not call people to His service based on their qualification or abilities but instead equips and qualifies those whom He calls. This truth is supported throughout Scripture, including in the example of Moses, who felt inadequate to speak but was empowered by God to lead the Israelite's (Exodus 3-4)

WHEREAS, the church has an urgent need to address the pastoral shortage, and restricting SMP CQ Call Eligibility perpetuates this issue rather than resolving it;

WHEREAS, SMP CQ pastors provided essential ministry service in congregations, including preaching administering the sacraments, and offering pastoral care. Denying their Call eligibility deprives congregations of qualified pastoral leadership, especially in smaller or rural churches that are struggling to find ordained clergy;

WHEREAS, the SMP CQ program reflects a viable, faithful, and sustainable model for ministry, especially given the economic and geographical challenges many congregations face. Making SMP CQ pastors eligible for Calls would strengthen the church's outreach and provided stability to congregations in need of a long-term pastor;

WHEREAS, congregations are continuously asking the synod for pastors, SMP CQ pastors are trained and qualified; on the church Roster and are licensed to administer Word and Sacrament,

WHEREAS, congregations go through several cycles of the Call process and many remain vacant;

WHEREAS, the Call process should reflect the spiritual readiness of a pastor, rather than hinge solely on differences in a large number of credit hours, especially when SMP CQ pastors have undergraduate degrees, graduate level degrees, and in some cases advanced doctoral degrees. Many SMP CQ pastors bring valuable life and ministry experience, along with deep theological understanding, to the service of the Church; such evidence of training and education and the Holy Spirit, must be recognized through Call eligibility;

and

The last preamble clause is specially terminated:

WHEREAS, the church is called to be faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to it, including the spiritual gifts and pastoral training of SMP CQ pastors. By affirming their Call eligibility, the LCMS would be fully utilizing these God-given resources to the benefit of the church as a whole and to millions of people, potentially resulting in the growth of the LCMS church once again;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Southeastern District recognize and encourage the vital ministry of the SMP CQ's within the congregations of the District; and be it

Therefore, the Southeastern District be an advocate for the calling and placing of SMP CQs within congregations of the Districts; and be it

THEREFORE, the Southeastern District adopt this resolution to affirm the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors who have had theological, doctrinal, and pastoral experience, are ordained and authorized for Word and Sacrament, thereby recognizing their valuable contribution to the church and addressing the current long-term clergy shortage; and be it finally

THEREFORE, that the Southeastern District in Convention send this resolution to the LCMS 2025 Convention

Advent Lutheran Church

OV TP 05 25 15 TO NORMALIZE SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) CQ (Colloquy) CALL ELIGIBILITY

Preamble

WHEREAS, The Lutheran church –Missouri Synod (LCMS) is facing significant challenges, both within its congregations and in the broader mission of the church, among the most pressing is the need of pastors to shepherd congregations, administer the sacraments, and faithfully proclaim the Word of God; and

WHEREAS, the issue has been documented through multiple studies, noting that its effects are felt more acutely by smaller and rural congregations, which often struggle to find and retain ordained clergy; and

WHEREAS, SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) CQ Pastors have been ordained and have faithfully served congregations, having a combination of theological education, confessed doctrinal agreement, fulfilled colloquy committee requirements, are licensed for the administration of the sacraments, and have completed a series (10+ college level courses) of seminary– designed Biblical Studies courses in exegesis, confessional writing, and systematics, and

WHEREAS, The program has produced many faithful pastors who, despite their demonstrated effectiveness in pastoral office roles, have been limited in their opportunities to serve and be eligible for a Call, based on a guideline introduced by a small group of pastors during a prior convention; and

WHEREAS, This constraint limits Pastor C! ability to serve congregations in a long-term, stable capacity and, more broadly, restricts the church’s ability to meet its critical pastoral needs; prevents the feeding of the sheep, which stands in direct contradiction of Scripture and Jesus’ commands to “feed my sheep”, and

WHEREAS, The SMP CQ Pastors in question have completed rigorous theological training, adhered to the doctrinal commitments of the LCMS, served faithfully for many years, and been licensed to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, and, in fact, do conduct all the functions of the Pastoral Office in limited and restricted capacities, i.e. serving vacancies and supply preaching, yet, who, despite this, are “technically” barred from Call eligibility, resulting in an unnecessary burden on congregations and perpetuating the pastoral shortage and creating an unhealthy perception of their being different classes of pastors, when all have been qualified by the Holy Spirit for a Call; and

WHEREAS, The District President has the authority to add and remove names from a Call List; AND

WHEREAS, Denying their Call eligibility deprives congregations of qualified pastoral leadership, especially in smaller of rural churches that are struggling to find ordained clergy

WHEREAS, Addressing this dilemma by affirming the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors would not only serve to recognize both the qualifications and valuable service of these men, but also working toward meeting the needs often wider church, being faithful stewards of the gifts and training God has provided and making full use of every pastor He was called into service; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern District recognize and encourage the vital ministry of the SMP CQs within the congregations of the District; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern District be an advocate for the calling and placing of SMP CQs within congregations of the Districts; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern District adopt this resolution to affirm the Call eligibility of SMP CQ pastors who have had theological, doctrinal, and pastoral experience, are ordained and authorized for Word and Sacrament, thereby recognizing their valuable contribution of the church and addressing the current long-term clergy shortage; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Southeastern District of The Lutheran Church –Missouri Synod petition The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, meeting in convention in 2025, to remove the restrictions on SMP CQ Call eligibility, thus opening the door for these Synodically deemed qualified pastors to serve congregations in a more permanent capacity.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (Bowie, MD)

OV TP 05 25 16 To Meaningfully Recognize the Authority and Voice to the Laity

WHEREAS, “It is to the true church of believers and saints that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heave, and it is proper and only possessor and bearer of the spiritual, divine, and heavenly fits, rights, powers, offices, and the like that Christ has procured and are found in His Church” (CFW Walther, *Church and Ministry*, Thesis IV); and

WHEREAS, “After we have become Christians through this Priest [i.e., Christ] and His priestly office, incorporated in Him by Baptism through faith, then each one, according to this calling and position, obtains the right and the power of teaching and confessing before others this Word which we have obtained from Him. Even through not everybody has the public office and calling, every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and wherever necessary.” (Luther, “Psalm 110,” *Luther’s Works*, AE: 12:333); and

WHEREAS, the Augsburg Confession, the apology of the Augsburg Confession, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope were written by, and first subscribed to, by laity; and

WHEREAS, a key role of the pastor is to equip the saints to serve; and effective equipping is not dependent upon the physical presence of the equipper but rather equipped saints are ministry – oriented and prepared to share and serve with wisdom; and

WHEREAS, the number of congregations experience pastoral vacancies is increasing while the availabilities and affordability of called pastors is decreasing; but congregations with pastoral vacancies are still attended to, advised and encouraged by their Circuit Visitor and other pastoral advisors, and

WHEREAS, congregations with pastoral vacancies have more need than ever to be knowledgeable about and involved in the decision – making that impact their ministries; yet congregations without a pastor lose a vote in many circuit and District decision – making gatherings, be it therefore

RESOLVED, That Christ’s gifts to and investments in the laity be meaningfully recognized and affirmed in his Church as we do ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a congregation with a pastoral vacancy be notified of and counseled by the Circuit Visitor, or his appointee, on issues that will be voted upon in an upcoming circuit or district forum; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That if a congregation has a pastoral vacancy, a layperson authorized by the congregation be allowed to cast the vote that would normally be reserved for the pastor so that the voice, perspective and wisdom of that congregation is not shortchanged.

Submitted by Bera-Baltimore MD

Nikki L. Rochester – President

Bettie Thomas- Wright – Secretary

December 12, 2024