

***Admission to the  
Pastoral Ministry of  
The Lutheran Church—  
Missouri Synod by  
Colloquy***

*Bylaws and Policies*

*Colloquy as a “General” Pastor of the Synod*

*2017*

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# ***Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by Colloquy***

## ***Preface***

*For an overseer [e.g. bishop or pastor], as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. Titus 1:7-9*

*... what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2*

In our churches no one takes up the office of pastor simply of his own volition. A man must be formed and trained as a pastor, examined by the church as to both his character and his ability to teach the Word of God faithfully, called by God through the church (most often through a congregation) and, because our congregations are not independent franchises but members of a confessional fellowship, we also seek to recognize in a public way through the participation of the wider church that a pastor is properly called. Ordination is the public rite of the church, living in Christ, that proclaims openly all these elements.

In our Synod there are several means for all of this to take place. Our two seminaries each have various programs (with varying levels of formal education) by which men are formed as pastors and then examined by a theological faculty to be found to be of good character and, most importantly, “able to teach.” In addition, the Synod has, throughout its history, provided colloquy as a route by which men prepared in various ways outside of the formation that takes place at our seminaries may also be examined and certified for call and placement. However, no matter the means by which the church forms, examines and certifies men, all are called by God through the church to the one pastoral office and recognized by the wider church (by means of the rite of ordination or subsequent installation rites) that they are properly called and placed into the office.

The church has freedom both to establish different means and levels of training or formation as well as to provide, by human right, different levels of supervision within the one pastoral office (e.g. our distinction between “general” pastors and “specific ministry” pastors). But in all cases, pastors are formed, trained, examined, certified for ministry, called and publicly placed into office. Whatever the level of training or supervision, all are pastors and are to be recognized as such.

**The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance to the members of the Synod and to applicants for colloquy regarding the processes by which qualified men are examined by the church and certified by colloquy for call and placement. This manual refers to men applying for colloquy as “general” pastors in the Synod.** Licensed Deacons applying for colloquy to the SMP roster are to consult the separate manual prepared for that purpose.

# ***Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by Colloquy***

## ***Bylaws and Policies***

### ***Colloquy as a “General” Pastor***

#### ***Bylaws of the Synod Governing Colloquy***

***Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry*** (*Bylaws 3.10.2ff; 2.7.2; 2016 Handbook. See also Bylaws 2.8.1; 2.8.2 and 2.9.1 regarding the placement of men certified by the colloquy committee.*)

3.10.2 The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry shall be responsible for the reception and processing of applications for individual membership in the Synod through colloquy.

3.10.2.1 The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry shall consist of the First Vice-President of the Synod as chairman, a district president appointed by the Council of Presidents, and the presidents of the seminaries or their representatives.

3.10.2.2 The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry shall establish and monitor academic, theological, and personal standards for admission to the office of the pastoral ministry by colloquy after consultation with the faculties of the seminaries.

(a) In consultation with the President of the Synod, it shall develop all necessary policies to govern eligibility and the process to be followed to determine qualifications and suitability for pastoral service in the Synod.

(b) Decisions to declare applicants qualified for the pastoral ministry and to certify for placement shall be at the sole discretion of the committee.

(c) Every applicant whom the committee declares qualified shall be assigned his first call by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments.

3.10.2.3 Applicants for the ordained ministry recommended by the respective district president who are eligible for colloquy under the Colloquy Committee’s published policies may make application to the committee. Other applicants for the ordained ministry, such as Ministers of Religion—Commissioned, laymen of a special ethnic or linguistic group, and laymen who have fulfilled at least ten years of significant service in a congregation, may make application to a seminary for the Residential Alternate Route or any other appropriate program.

3.10.2.4 The LCMS laymen and commissioned ministers who receive a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree from a non-LCMS seminary may seek certification for call and placement in the Synod by participating in the Residential Alternate Route program of one of the seminaries of the Synod, if otherwise eligible for admission to the seminary.

3.10.2.5 All men desiring the ordained ministry who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the foregoing bylaws shall be directed to the seminaries for consideration in other programs.  
[3.10.2.3 to 3.10.2.5 are new bylaws adopted by the 2016 Convention of Synod]

***Placement in a First Call (Bylaw 2.7.2, 2016 Handbook)***

2.7.2 Candidates who have satisfactorily completed an approved colloquy program of the Synod for the ordained or commissioned ministry must be declared qualified for a first call and be recommended by the appropriate colloquy committee (see Bylaws 3.10.2ff. and 3.10.3ff.) before the effective date of the first call to service in the church as assigned by the Board of Assignments as provided in Bylaw section 2.9.

***Emeritus Pastors from Other Church Bodies (Bylaw 2.7.5, 2016 Handbook)***

2.7.5 A pastor emeritus from another church body, after having completed an approved colloquy program of the Synod, may be placed on the roster of the Synod without call by action of the Council of Presidents on the basis of policies adopted by the Council of Presidents.

- (a) Such placement shall be acknowledged by a rite of recognition in a worship service, preferably of the congregation of the Synod where he holds membership.
- (b) Such rite is to be authorized by the district president.

## **General Policies Governing Colloquy**

### ***Definition***

A colloquy in its simplest form is a conversation, in this case, a theological and moral conversation held to examine certain applicants, in order to declare them qualified for a first call (or not), and to certify them for placement in the pastoral ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

### ***The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry***

The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry established by the Bylaws of the Synod consists of the First Vice-President of the Synod as Chairman, the Presidents of the two seminaries of the Synod (or their representatives) and a member of the Council of Presidents elected by the Council of Presidents to serve in this capacity.

### ***Meetings of the Colloquy Committee***

The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry shall meet at the call of the chairman (the Synod's First Vice-President) as often as he deems it necessary to consider adequately the applications received. Normally there shall be at least four meetings of the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry per year.

### ***Interview Panels***

The chairman, at his discretion, may appoint other ordained men to serve on interview panels on an *ad hoc* basis as needed. The executive for pastoral education appointed by the President of the Synod may be asked to participate in the work of the committee as an advisor.

## *Regional Colloquy Committees*

By means of 2016 Resolution 13-02A the Synod authorized the creation of several regional colloquy committees operating under the supervision of the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry and its chairman, the First Vice President of the Synod. The purpose of these regional committees is to interview and certify Licensed Lay Deacons of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to the roster of Specific Ministry Pastors (Bylaw 2.13.1). *Please reference a separate policy manual for specific information regarding the Resolution 13-02A process: “**Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by Colloquy to the “Specific Ministry Pastor” Roster (for Licensed Lay Deacons).**”*

## *Eligibility for Colloquy*

### ***General Requirements***

Applicants for colloquy must be male, men of good moral character who have been prepared for the pastoral ministry in some manner **apart from** the various routes leading to ordination existing within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. An applicant must *“be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”* (1 Timothy 3:2-7; See also 4:1-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 1:5-9, etc.). The

Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry will, as it considers each applicant, be the final authority for determining eligibility according to these Biblical requirements.

### ***Specific Requirements for Eligibility for Colloquy***

To be eligible to apply for colloquy, applicants must fit into one of the four categories listed below (the applicant will indicate under which category he is applying, but the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry is responsible for the final determination of the category in each individual situation):

- 1) **Active Pastors from Other Christian Church Bodies:** Men who, at the time of application are in good standing and in active service as pastors in another Christian Church body/denomination may apply for colloquy. Such applicants must be graduates of a program of study that leads to ordination, from an accredited institution\* (see \*Note below after #3), with no fewer than 60 semester hours (90 quarter hours) of required academic credit. Such applicants must also have served at least three years in a recognized ministry of their church body, and must supply suitable documentation of their active status and good standing in their current church body/denomination. Pastors of congregations that are not affiliated with a church body/denomination (are “non-denominational” or “independent”) also may apply, but must supply suitable references and documentation of their authorization to perform pastoral ministry. In all cases the academic requirements will apply. (Category One)
- 2) **Men from Other Christian Church Bodies Who Have Prepared for Pastoral Ministry but, at the Time of Application, Are Not in Active Service as Pastors:** Such applicants must be graduates of a program of study that leads to ordination, from an accredited institution,\* with no fewer than 60 semester hours (90 quarter hours) of required academic credit. Applicants with prior pastoral service must provide the date (month and year) and the reason (e.g. retirement, resignation, dismissal) their active service ended. References and suitable documentation will be required. Such an applicant also must have been a communicant member in good standing in a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for at least two years\* immediately prior to the time of application. This category does NOT apply for LCMS members who while members of LCMS congregations have obtained Master of Divinity degrees outside the LCMS (see below). (Category Two)
- 3) **Currently Licensed Lay Deacons in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who have served at least ten years:** Men who have been licensed by the president of a district of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to carry out, as a licensed deacon, the full responsibilities of the pastoral ministry in (a) congregation(s) of the Synod, and who have carried out these responsibilities for at least ten years,\* (see \*Note below) may apply for admission to the pastoral ministry by colloquy. In all cases, such applications also must be accompanied by the recommendation of a congregation that holds membership in the Synod, on the basis of that congregation’s observation of and experience with the applicant. The application must also include written documentation from the congregation and the district president that the applicant actually has been responsible for carrying out the full responsibilities of the pastoral ministry for at least ten years. Finally, to be considered by the committee, the application must be accompanied by the congregation’s written commitment to extend a divine Call for the applicant to become its pastor once the colloquy process has been completed. (Category Three).\*

- **Note:** Should the sponsoring district president be convinced that the Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry ought consider, on the basis of an applicant’s special circumstances, an exception to one of these specific eligibility requirements (asterisked above), the sponsoring



district president must furnish with the application a written recommendation detailing the special circumstances and the rationale for the recommended exception. The Colloquy Committee, however, retains the responsibility and authority for deciding to grant or to decline the exception. The decision of the Colloquy Committee shall be regarded as final by all parties to the colloquy application.

- 4) **Currently Licensed Lay Deacons in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who are required by the Synod to apply for colloquy as a Specific Ministry Pastor:** Policies and procedures for this category of colloquy, as well as exceptions allowed, are detailed in the *separate manual* entitled: ***“Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by Colloquy to the “Specific Ministry Pastor” Roster (for Licensed Lay Deacons).”*** In essence, Resolution 13-02A is a temporary measure adopted by the 2016 Convention of the Synod for “those deacons currently licensed for and serving in Word and Sacrament ministry” (that is, publicly preaching and administering the sacraments on a continuing and consistent basis). Under the provisions of this resolution these men shall have until July 1, 2018 to: 1) apply to one of the seminaries for admission to the alternate route program, 2) apply for entrance into a seminary SMP program, or 3) apply to the regional colloquy committee for admission to the SMP roster, unless granted a waiver through the process laid out in the resolution. This provision, according to Resolution 13-02A, is for “current licensed lay deacons (LLDs) who are 50 years of age or older and who have been preaching the Gospel and/or administering the sacraments publicly on behalf of the church for the past 2 years (*de facto* pastors), so that these servants of Christ can be called and ordained according to the order of the LCMS and be rostered as pastors with SMP status.” *Again, the policies for this category are detailed in a separate policy manual. (Category Four)*

### **Others**

Please note that other applicants for the ordained ministry as “general” pastors, such as commissioned ministers of religion, laymen of a special ethnic or linguistic group, and laymen who have fulfilled at least 10 years of significant service in a congregation, will participate in special theological education (“alternate routes”) under the direction of the seminaries. LCMS laymen and commissioned ministers who receive a Master of Divinity from a non-LCMS Seminary will also participate in an “alternate route” at one of our LCMS seminaries. All individuals who do not fit these specific categories open for colloquy are to be directed to one of the seminaries of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## *Application through the District President*

Applicants for colloquy shall be directed to the president of the district where the applicant resides. The district president shall have responsibility to help the applicant prepare a complete and thorough application package.

- (1) The district president shall personally interview the applicant to ensure that he meets the requirements for eligibility to apply for colloquy (both general and specific, see above, pp. 4-5, 7-9, below, pp. 10-11).
- (2) Upon receipt of the application, the district president shall make an initial determination whether the applicant is eligible for colloquy to the roster of “general” pastors or whether the individual should be directed to the appropriate regional colloquy committee for certification, call and placement on the roster of specific ministry pastors. The process for colloquy as a “general” pastor (see Bylaw 2.13.1) is described below. The process for LLDs to apply for colloquy to the SMP roster is described in a separate manual prepared for that purpose.
- (3) The district president shall refer the applicant to the District Interview Committee (the committee that also interviews seminary applicants), who shall give a report and recommendation to the district president. The report form on pages 18f below lists suggested questions for this preliminary interview in the district. Please use this form to convey the results of the district interview to the Colloquy Committee.
- (4) Upon successful completion of an interview with the District Interview Committee, the district president shall recommend qualified applicants to the chairman of the colloquy committee.
- (5) Such recommendation shall be processed according to the policies and procedures adopted by the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry as herein set forth.

### ***Criteria for Determining Which Colloquy Path is Appropriate***

The ***district president*** of the applicant has the responsibility initially to determine the category appropriate for each applicant. Where there are any questions regarding this issue, the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry will make the ultimate decision. Following are the basic criteria for the decision:

- (1) Applicants who are ordained pastors active in another church body at the time of application or an applicant who has prepared himself for ordination in another church body but is not now serving as a pastor (in which case he must have been a member in good standing of an LCMS congregation for at least two years) *must* make application through the district president to the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry for “general” pastor status (Categories One and Two).

- (2) Commissioned ministers of the Synod are directed to a seminary alternate route residential program if they wish to become “general” pastors of the Synod. Please note as well, by the terms of Bylaws 3.10.2.3-3.10.2.5, commissioned ministers of the Synod and/or life-long members of congregations of the Synod who obtain Master of Divinity degrees from seminaries outside the Synod are normally not eligible for colloquy to the roster of “general” pastors of the Synod, but shall be directed to apply to one of the seminary alternate route residential programs should they wish to become “general” pastors. In unusual situations, the committee may make exceptions, at the request of the sponsoring district president (in the case of commissioned ministers who are also licensed lay deacons applying for SMP colloquy, see the separate manual prepared for this purpose since licensed lay deacon status takes precedence).
- (3) Qualified licensed lay deacons who have served at least 10 years with the full pastoral responsibility of word and sacrament ministry *may* make application through the district president to the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry for “general” pastor status (Category Three).
- (4) Licensed lay deacons who are 50 years of age or older who have been preaching the Gospel and/or administering the sacraments publicly on behalf of the church for the past two years (as *de facto* pastors) *must*, by July 1, 2018, in consultation with his district president, apply to one of the seminary alternate route residential programs, or apply to the seminary regular SMP program, *or* make application to one of the regional colloquy committees for colloquy to the SMP roster. Such application is made through the district president to the office of the First Vice-President, who will forward the application to the appropriate regional colloquy committee. Once certified by the Colloquy Committee (upon the recommendation of the regional colloquy committee), such men are called by their congregation, placed in that call by the Council of Presidents, ordained and placed on the roster of specific ministry pastors (SMP). Exceptions to these requirements as to age and years of service may be granted by the appropriate regional colloquy committee with the approval of the respective district president and the plenary of the Council of Presidents (*See the separate manual entitled: “Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by Colloquy to the “Specific Ministry Pastor” Roster (for Licensed Lay Deacons).”* (Category Four).
- (5) All other licensed lay deacons who desire to serve in a pastoral capacity (unless a specific waiver is granted by the plenary of the Council of Presidents and the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry under criteria established by 2016 Resolution 13-02A) shall apply to the seminary for a residential program, or shall apply for the regular seminary SMP program.

### **Contents of an Application Package for Colloquy to the Roster of “General” Pastors**

The applicant shall prepare or obtain, as appropriate, all materials required for a complete application (See Bylaws 3.10.2; 3.10.2.2; 2.7.2; 2.8.1; 2.8.2; and 2.9.1; 2016 Handbook). This application package shall be assembled by the applicant and the district president and shall include the following (see also the checklist below on pages 15ff):

- 1) The applicant shall authorize the district president to request a complete background check through “Protect My Ministry.” The applicant shall tender payment for all “Protect My Ministry” fees with the completed authorization form to the district in which application is being made (See *Appendix Two* for more detailed information – fees are established by each district). A copy of this report (minus the Social Security Number) shall be provided as part of the application package.<sup>1</sup> Please explain in a separate document any anomalies in the background check.
- 2) The applicant shall complete the form “Application for Admission to the Pastoral Colloquy Program...” The applicant (plus, if married, the applicant’s wife) and the district president shall sign the application where indicated, or the application will be returned. The district president needs to indicate whether or not he would like the applicant to be placed in his district.
- 3) In addition to the information required to complete the application form, the applicant shall prepare an **autobiographical statement** setting forth clearly the applicant’s background and reasons for seeking admission to the Synod’s *ministerium* by colloquy.<sup>2</sup> The applicant will also prepare **two theological essays** of approximately 1500-1800 words each on topics assigned in the application form.
- 4) The applicant shall arrange for written testimonials, sent directly to the district president, which assess the applicant’s Christian character and life, personality, abilities (especially in pastoral ministry), and previous service. These testimonials shall come from no fewer than three competent references who have known and observed the applicant for at least the two years immediately preceding his application.
- 5) If the applicant is actively serving in pastoral ministry or has previously served as a pastor, one of these testimonial letters must come from the applicant’s ecclesiastical supervisor; if not, one of the letters shall come from the applicant’s pastor. If applicable, the testimonial from the applicant’s ecclesiastical supervisor shall assess the applicant’s

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<sup>1</sup> This is sensitive information and will be treated with great care. However, it is necessary for the application process. The applicant may wish to check his credit report himself through one of the three US credit bureaus.

<sup>2</sup> Non-US Citizens will be required to provide proof of legal residency in the United States of America.

current or past pastoral service under his oversight, together with a declaration of the applicant's standing in the church body/denomination in which the supervisor holds membership.

- 6) The district president shall arrange for an interview of the applicant and his wife (if married) with an interview committee within the district. The report of the interview committee is to include a detailed assessment of the applicant's suitability, and a recommendation whether the applicant should be declared qualified (or not) for a pastoral call in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod upon completion of the colloquy process. This report shall follow the form provided on pages 18f. A written copy of this report shall be included in the application package.
- 7) The applicant shall arrange for transmission to the district president of official (original) transcripts from all colleges and seminaries he has attended. The applicant also shall furnish evidence of earned continuing education units (CEUs) and of other non-credit academic and professional experiences completed. The colloquy committee reserves the right to seek independent validation of credit.
- 8) The district president shall attach a cover letter to the application package which declares his strong endorsement and sponsorship of the applicant. The district president shall make sure all requested information has been provided and shall send the completed package with appropriate signatures, to the First Vice-President of the Synod as Chairman of the Pastoral Colloquy Committee.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The applicant (plus, if married, the applicant's wife) and his sponsoring district president must sign the application form where indicated or else it will be returned.

**Once completed, the district president will transmit the entire application package to the office of the First Vice President for consideration by the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry.**

## *Public Notice Policy*

Normally the colloquy committee shall publish notice of its intent to interview an applicant in an official periodical of the Synod. Under extenuating circumstances, the applicant may, for valid reasons, request that the committee make an exception to this requirement, so that such notice would be delayed until after his interview.

- (1) If no valid objection is received by the committee within 30 days after the publication of such notice, the application process may proceed. No final certification shall take place until after the close of this publication cycle.
- (2) If the applicant was interviewed first, notice shall then be published and upon publication 30 days given for valid objections to be received before the applicant may be finally declared qualified (or not) and certified for placement in the pastoral ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- (3) The committee, in its sole discretion, shall decide whether an objection is valid. Its decision shall not be the subject of any appeal.
- (4) All regional colloquy committees shall report all of their actions to the Office of the First Vice-President who will make the proper notices in the official periodicals of the Synod.

## *Interview and Criteria for General Colloquy*

The colloquy committee shall arrange for a personal colloquy interview, or discussion, with qualified applicants. The committee's final decision on each applicant shall be made on the basis of such colloquy examination and shall be the sole prerogative of the colloquy committee. The criteria by which the colloquy committee shall determine an applicant's readiness for certification are based on the following standards, including but not limited to

- (1) areas of general education;
- (2) understanding of and agreement with the scriptural and doctrinal positions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod;
- (3) familiarity with the history and polity of the Synod;
- (4) studies in theology assuring a well-rounded education in the major fields of theological discipline;
- (5) positive experience in the work of the pastoral ministry; and
- (6) demonstrated moral character ("above reproach").

The colloquy committee, at its sole discretion, shall determine the content and amount of academic work, personal study programs, or supervised ministry that may be required prior to certification. To this end, the committee may request the assistance of the seminary faculties or of qualified pastors or teachers in other locations to serve as instructors or mentors. The committee, at its sole discretion, may require a second colloquy interview following the completion of such study and/or supervised ministry programs.

## *Certification and Placement*

The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry shall:

- (1) receive reports of the actions of the regional colloquy committees and transmit them to appropriate authorities as outlined in the checklist below.
- (2) declare qualified and certify for placement those applicants who have satisfactorily completed the colloquy interview and any other requirements as assigned by the colloquy committee;
- (3) report this action to the chairman of the Council of Presidents Placement Committee for the Pastoral Ministry, to the Office for Pastoral Education of the Synod, and to the appropriate district president; and
- (4) publish a report of its favorable action in an official periodical of the Synod.

Every applicant whom the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry declares qualified and certifies for placement in the pastoral ministry shall be assigned his first call by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments (Synod Bylaw 2.9.1). *Appendix One* includes a checklist showing the action steps to be taken for the placement of Colloquy Candidates for the Pastoral Ministry (Ministers of Religion—Ordained).

## *Specific Procedures and Checklists*

### **INITIAL DETERMINATIONS BY THE SPONSORING DISTRICT PRESIDENT:**

Colloquy Application Packages are prepared by the colloquy applicant with the assistance of the sponsoring district president. As part of this preparation, before transmitting a Colloquy Application Package to the Office of the First Vice-President, the **sponsoring district president shall:**

1. \_\_\_\_ Determine that the man is an ordained pastor actively serving a congregation of another church body (Category One) **or**
2. \_\_\_\_ Determine that the applicant is not at the time of application an active pastor in another church body but that he is ordained and has been a member of an LCMS parish for at least two years\* (Category Two) **or**
3. \_\_\_\_ Determine that the applicant is not ordained, but has received a Master of Divinity Degree or equivalent from an accredited seminary\* (a Master of Arts is not normally equivalent to the Master of Divinity) and has been a member of an LCMS parish for at least two years\* (also Category Two).

4. \_\_\_\_ If the individual is a commissioned minister of the Synod\* (who has been on the roster 10 years), the bylaws direct him to apply to one of our two seminaries for an “alternate route” or Master of Divinity track if he wishes to become a “general” pastor (a licensed lay deacon who is also a commissioned minister serving as a *de facto* pastor may fit under item #6 below).
5. \_\_\_\_ If the individual is a life-long lay member of (a) congregation(s) of the LCMS or commissioned minister of the Synod who has obtained a Master of Divinity Degree from the seminary of another church body\*, the bylaws direct him to apply to one of our seminaries for an “alternate route” to certification for call and ordination.
6. \_\_\_\_ If the applicant is presently a licensed lay deacon serving as a *de facto* pastor, the sponsoring district president shall determine whether or not he is eligible for colloquy to the “general” pastor roster or if he must apply for colloquy to the “specific ministry pastor” roster.
7. \_\_\_\_ If the licensed lay deacon has been engaged in the full responsibilities of the pastoral ministry (preaching and administering the sacraments for a congregation) for at least 10 years\* and the congregation is willing to call him, he may apply to the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry for colloquy to the “general” pastor roster (Category 3 above).
8. \_\_\_\_ Should the sponsoring district president be convinced that the Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry ought consider, on the basis of an applicant’s special circumstances, an exception to one of these specific eligibility requirements (*asterisked above\* in items 2, 3,4,5 & 7*), the sponsoring district president must furnish with the application a written recommendation detailing the special circumstances and the rationale for the recommended exception. The Colloquy Committee, however, retains the responsibility and authority for deciding to grant or to decline the exception. The decision of the Colloquy Committee shall be regarded as final by all parties to the colloquy application.
9. \_\_\_\_ If the licensed lay deacon (50 years of age or older) has been serving in a pastoral capacity, preaching and administering the sacraments on a consistent basis for at least two years, and a congregation is willing to call him as its pastor, he must, by July 1, 2018, apply through his district president to the office of the First Vice-President to one of the regional colloquy committees for colloquy to the “specific ministry pastor” roster (e.g., if he does not apply to one of the seminary programs). Any exceptions to these requirements for licensed lay deacons are dealt with in the separate policy manual referenced below (Category 4 above).
10. \_\_\_\_ If the application is for colloquy to the “general” pastor roster, the sponsoring district president shall determine that all the parts of the application package listed in the checklist under #11 below are present. If the application is for colloquy to the “specific ministry pastor” roster, the sponsoring district president shall refer to the separate policy manual for ***“Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by Colloquy to the “Specific Ministry Pastor” Roster (for Licensed Lay Deacons).”***



## CHECKLIST FOR “GENERAL” PASTOR APPLICATIONS

11. \_\_\_\_ The sponsoring district president shall determine that the application package for colloquy to the “general” pastor roster (Categories 1, 2 &3) includes all of the following items (incomplete application packages will not be considered until they are complete):
- a. \_\_\_\_ A completed copy of the form “Application for Admission to the Pastoral Colloquy Program.” Make sure all sections are completed and are legible. Please, if possible, use the electronic form available on the Synod web site.
  - b. \_\_\_\_ If married, the applicant’s wife must complete and sign her portion of the form.
  - c. \_\_\_\_ Both the applicant and the sponsoring district president must sign the form. The district president must indicate whether or not he wishes the applicant to be placed in his district.
  - d. \_\_\_\_ Full copy of the report from “Protect My Ministry.”
  - e. \_\_\_\_ Autobiographical statement as explained in the Application Form.
  - f. \_\_\_\_ Theological Essay on why the “six chief parts” of the Catechism are fundamental to Lutheran theology.
  - g. \_\_\_\_ Theological Essay on the “theology of the Word of God, the person of Christ, justification by faith,” etc. (See Application Form).
  - h. \_\_\_\_ At least three written testimonial letters from no fewer than three references who have known and observed the applicant as to his Christian character and life, personality, abilities in ministry, etc.
  - i. \_\_\_\_ If the applicant is actively serving as a pastor (Category One) or has previously served as a pastor (Category Two), one of these testimonial letters must come from the applicant’s ecclesiastical supervisor.
  - j. \_\_\_\_ If the applicant has never served as a pastor, one of the letters shall come from the applicant’s pastor.
  - k. \_\_\_\_ Full written report of the district interview committee including a detailed assessment of the applicant’s suitability and a recommendation whether or not the applicant should be declared qualified for a call. Please use the Report Form below beginning on page 18.
  - l. \_\_\_\_ Official transcripts from all colleges and seminaries the applicant has attended.
  - m. \_\_\_\_ If the applicant is a “ten year licensed lay deacon” the package must include a letter from the congregation he serves indicating their intent to extend a call to him once he is certified.
  - n. \_\_\_\_ A cover letter from the sponsoring district president declaring his strong endorsement and sponsorship of the applicant.

- o. \_\_\_\_ Send the completed application package to the Office of the First Vice-President for consideration by the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry.

### **CHECKLIST FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT**

Upon receipt of any Colloquy Application Package, the office of the First Vice-President shall:

12. \_\_\_\_ Determine that all parts of the Application Package are present (incomplete applications cannot be considered until they are completed).
13. \_\_\_\_ Confirm the proper category under which the particular application is being made.
14. \_\_\_\_ If the application belongs in one of the “general” pastor categories (Categories 1, 2 or 3), he shall bring the application to a regular meeting of the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry for consideration.
15. \_\_\_\_ If the application is from a licensed lay deacon applying for colloquy to the “specific ministry pastor” roster, he shall assign and transmit the application to the appropriate regional colloquy committee.

## District Interview Report

The requirement of a written report from the district interview committee shall use the following format:

### INTERVIEW REPORT FORM District Interview Committee

**Applicant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Synod District:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview Committee Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number of Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

### QUESTIONS FOR DISTRICT INTERVIEW COMMITTEES TO POSE TO APPLICANTS FOR COLLOQUY AS A "GENERAL" PASTOR OF THE SYNOD *(Please include in report).*

1. Describe, in detail, your pilgrimage as a pastor, especially your service in your current/previous denomination.
2. Why do you want to enter the ministerium of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod?
3. Have you read the Book of Concord? What do you understand is the heart and core of Lutheran teaching?
4. How familiar are you with the culture, polity, and practices of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod? Please identify some areas where they differ from your current/previous

denomination. What is your understanding of the confessional position of the LCMS as outlined in Article II of our constitution?

5. Are you willing/prepared to complete further requirements as may be determined by the Synod's Pastoral Colloquy Committee such as mentoring, vicarage, additional education, etc.?
6. Our assumption is that your wife will be making the change in denomination with you? How does she feel about that change?
7. If you are certified for placement on the clergy roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, are you willing to serve anywhere? Are you willing to serve as a worker-priest?
8. Have you ever been arrested, charged, or convicted of a crime?

**COMMITTEE SUMMARY**

**Strengths Observed:**

**Concerns Observed:**

\_\_\_\_\_ We recommend this man for admission to the LCMS by colloquy.

\_\_\_\_\_ We do not recommend this man for admission to the LCMS by colloquy.

The Sponsoring District President will return this form with the colloquy application package to:

The Office of the First Vice-President  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
1333 South Kirkwood Road  
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

## *Report to the Synod*

The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry shall report to the Synod in convention.

*Revised February 2017*

## **Appendices**

### *Appendix One*

#### **INSTRUCTIONS AND CHECKLIST FOR THE PLACEMENT OF COLLOQUY CANDIDATES INTO THE PASTORAL MINISTRY AS “GENERAL” PASTORS** *(For the use of the District Office. See Bylaws 2.10.1-2.10.4, 2016 Handbook)*

**Note:** *A man certified for pastoral ministry by the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry is not eligible to receive a call by placing the man’s name on a traditional call list, since he is not a member of the Synod. Instead, he must be placed into his first call by the Council of Presidents serving as the Board of Assignments. Consequently, the sponsoring district president, after consultation with the colloquy applicant, should approach an appropriate congregation and ask the congregation to consider calling the man. If the congregation agrees to do so, the process to be followed is similar to that used in the calling of a seminary graduate. Colloquy Certification is valid for three years (Council of Presidents Policy). If the man has not received placement in a call after three years, certification must be renewed by the Colloquy Committee or this requirement waived by resolution of the Council of Presidents.*

The following action steps are to be taken after:

- A colloquy candidate has been declared qualified for pastoral ministry and certified by the Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry of the Synod for placement. (Inclusion on the Synod’s roster takes place after the candidate has been placed in a first call and he has been installed in that call), and
- A letter has been received by the district president and the colloquy candidate informing that the colloquy committee has declared qualified and certified the candidate for placement.

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1. \_\_\_\_ Following the completion of all colloquy requirements, a “Colloquy Certification Letter” will be sent by the First Vice-President of the Synod to the Synod’s Office for Pastoral Education and the district president who submitted the application for colloquy with copies sent to the Chairman of the COP Placement Committee and Synod’s Rosters and Statistics Department.
2. \_\_\_\_ If the colloquy candidate has been certified for placement on the clergy roster with emeritus status, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring district president to submit a

resolution to the Council of Presidents requesting that his name be placed on the emeritus roster. If the resolution is approved by the Council, the sponsoring district president shall complete and submit a Form I to the Department of Rosters and Statistics. "Such placement shall be acknowledged by a rite of recognition in a worship service preferable of the congregation of the Synod where he holds membership" (Bylaw 2.7.5 (a). "Such rite is to be authorized by the district president" (Bylaw 2.7.5 (b).

3. \_\_\_\_ The district president, where the colloquy application originated, contacts calling congregations within his district regarding the possible placement of the colloquy candidate. If no suitable sites are available in his district, the district president can share the candidate's name and appropriate information with other district presidents.
4. \_\_\_\_ If a calling congregation determines to extend a call to the colloquy candidate, the Call Document for Ordained Ministers is prepared and submitted to the district president for his review and signature.
5. \_\_\_\_ Once the district president has signed the call document and has made a copy for the district file, he mails the original document to the Synod's Office for Pastoral Education. When submitting a call for a colloquy candidate, please include:
  - A cover letter that informs the Office of Pastoral Education that this is a call for a colloquy candidate.
  - A copy of the letter that states that the candidate has met all requirements and was declared qualified and certified for pastoral ministry by the colloquy committee on a particular date.
  - The completed and signed call document.
  - The address where the document should be sent when approved. If this is not included, the documents will be returned to the district office.

The Pastoral Education Office will then verify that the:

- Candidate has completed requirements and was declared qualified and certified for pastoral ministry.
- COP Placement Committee has granted placement.
- Document was mailed to the candidate and the district office.

**Reminder:** DO NOT send commissioned minister calls (teachers, DCE, DCO, etc.) to the Office of Pastoral Education. Commissioned minister calls go directly to the placement office at the Concordia college or university by which such individual has been colloquized or from which the individual is graduating.

**NOTE:** Interim placement can be requested, in writing or by email, if placement is not close to the time of a regular meeting of the Council of Presidents.

6. \_\_\_\_ Once interim placement approval has been received by the Synod's Office for Pastoral Education from the Chairman of the Council of Presidents Placement Committee, the Synod's Office for Pastoral Education notifies the district president that the call documents are being sent to the colloquy candidate at the address provided by the district.
7. \_\_\_\_ The colloquy candidate accepts the call, in writing, to the entity which issued the call and includes a signed copy of page six (6) of the call document indicating acceptance of the call. A copy of the acceptance letter and page six (6) are also to be sent to the district president.
8. \_\_\_\_ The district president sends the colloquy candidate a new member packet, which contains the following items necessary to complete the membership process:
  - \_\_\_\_ Application for Membership Form.
  - \_\_\_\_ Request for Ordination or Commissioning Form.
  - \_\_\_\_ Pastor's Information Form (PIF)
  - \_\_\_\_ Self Evaluation Tool (SET) (<http://www.holybytes.com/COP/Docs>)
9. \_\_\_\_ The colloquy candidate applies for membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as a minister of religion—ordained by completing the “Application for Membership” form and forwarding it to the district president of the district in which the calling entity is located.
10. \_\_\_\_ The colloquy candidate requests ordination and/or installation in the entity which has issued the call by completing the “Request for Ordination or Commissioning” form and forwarding it to the president of the district in which the calling entity is located well in advance of the installation date.

(If the colloquy candidate has already been ordained, a second ordination is not necessary.)
11. \_\_\_\_ The colloquy candidate continues communication with the calling entity and the district president, as needed, including copies of all correspondence as appropriate. He shall take special care to:
  - a. \_\_\_\_ Confirm the arrival date, installation date, and other plans with the appropriate individuals.
  - b. \_\_\_\_ Check that the district president has authorized the installation.



- c. \_\_\_ Work with the circuit counselor who is responsible for planning the installation service.
  - d. \_\_\_ Confirm his “moving” plans with the calling entity, if applicable.
  - e. \_\_\_ Confirm his housing needs, if applicable.
  - f. \_\_\_ Confirm with the calling entity the starting date for his salary and health benefits.
12. \_\_\_ The district president’s office completes Form I and mails it to the officiant(s) authorized to conduct the ordination/installation. Following the ordination/installation service, the officiant signs and returns the form to the district president (along with a copy of the worship service folder for inclusion in the colloquy candidate’s file).
13. \_\_\_ When Form I has been returned to the district president, make three copies of the form.
14. \_\_\_ Mail the original Form I to the Department of Rosters & Statistics at the LCMS International Center. The individual is now officially on the roster of the Synod.
15. \_\_\_ Distribute the copies of Form I as follows:
- \_\_\_ District president’s file (District president’s copy)
  - \_\_\_ Colloquy pastor’s personnel file (File copy)
  - \_\_\_ Colloquy pastor (Member’s copy)
16. \_\_\_ Create a record for the new pastor in the district’s contacts database and add his name to the record of the church where he has been called to serve.
17. \_\_\_ Create a record for the new pastor in the centralized PIF database. Enter the information that you have available into the record.
18. \_\_\_ Import the colloquy pastor’s SET into the centralized SET database.
19. \_\_\_ Send a “welcome to the district” letter to the new pastor.

Revised February 2016

## Appendix Two

### QUESTIONS REGARDING BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Clergy, Call, and Roster Committee (CCRC) of the Council of Presidents has prepared “Frequently Asked Questions” regarding the process of background checks for Commissioned Minister colloquy applicants. Background checks are also required for pastoral colloquy applicants. Therefore, the following items adapted from the FAQs provided by the CCRC are applicable to the pastoral colloquy application process.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions regarding Background Checks for Colloquy Applicants**

##### **What background checks need to be done on Colloquy Applicants?**

The Council of Presidents has determined that all background checks need to be done through **Protect My Ministry**, a service provider which has a national contract with the Synod. While Protect My Ministry is able to provide a number of different background checks, the Council of Presidents has determined that the following six (6) searches are mandatory for all colloquy applicants:

- County and Statewide Court Searches
- Credit History Report (if allowed by state law)
- Motor Vehicle Search
- National Criminal Database Search
- National Sex Offender Registry Search
- Social Security Trace

##### **Is there a fee involved for doing the background checks?**

Yes. **Protect My Ministry** has a standard fee associated with each of the searches mandated by the Council of Presidents. Various counties and states charge fees in addition to those charged by Protect My Ministry. The district president can inform you of the cost based on the counties and states which need to be contacted to complete your background checks. The current fees charged by Protect My Ministry for the six (6) required searches ranges from \$31.00 - \$100.00.

##### **Who pays for the background checks?**

The colloquy applicant is responsible for the cost of the background checks. The applicant will need to pay for the background checks at the time he submits the signed authorization form which is needed to conduct the background checks.

### **When do the background checks need to be done?**

The mandatory background checks are the first step in the colloquy process following the submission of an application for colloquy.

Once an individual has submitted an application for colloquy, he should contact his district president to make arrangements for the mandatory background checks to be done.

### **Who does the background checks?**

District presidents are responsible for completing the background checks as part of the colloquy process. Each district president has designated someone in his office who is authorized to arrange for the Protect My Ministry background checks to be done.

### **Who initiates the background check process?**

The applicant is responsible for contacting the appropriate district president's office to arrange for the background checks to be done.

### **How long does it take to complete the background process?**

The results for most Protect My Ministry background checks are normally available within 72 hours.

### **How long are the background checks valid?**

The background checks which are completed through Protect My Ministry, like any background check, are a snapshot. They reflect what is known at the time the background check is done. The background checks will be considered valid for a period of one year.

### **Will the background checks be retained? If so, who will have custody of them?**

Yes. The background checks which are done as part of the colloquy process will be retained indefinitely by the district president. In the case of pastoral colloquy applicants, copies of the background check reports with the social security number blocked out will be sent to the Colloquy Committee with the application. This is part of the normal work of the Council of Presidents in partnership with the Colloquy Committee (by consensus of the COP in September 2011).

### **Where are the background check reports sent?**

The results of the background checks will be retained by the district president. Copies will not be shared with other entities (but see above with respect to the work of the Pastoral Colloquy Committee). Verification that the background check has been done, and information relevant to the colloquy process, will be shared with those entities which need this information.

**What about colloquy applications which are already “in the pipeline?” Do background checks need to be done on them?**

The decision to require background checks on all colloquy applicants was adopted by the Council of Presidents in November 2008. Therefore, it does not apply to those who had submitted their application for colloquy prior to November 2008.

**How will those colloquy applicants who have already been certified but who have not yet been placed be handled?**

The decision to require background checks on all colloquy applicants was adopted by the Council of Presidents in November 2008. Therefore, it does not apply to those who have been certified but not yet placed.

**How do congregations or the district subscribe/work with Protect My Ministry?**

Congregations, schools, and Districts can subscribe to use the services of Protect My Ministry. Additional information regarding this service provider is available at: <http://www.protectmyministry.com/lcms>. All background check requests, as well as the results, are handled via the Internet.

Clergy, Call, and Roster Committee (2-09)  
Adapted by the Pastoral Colloquy Committee (12-11)  
Slightly Revised (11-16)