

# ALL TO THE GLORY: THE DIVINE CALL



Whatever you do, do it all to the glory  
of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

**OCTOBER 15, 2023**



## WHAT IS A CALL?

In our church body, pastors and teachers are “called” to their positions. Jobs that include regularly and publicly teaching God’s Word and administering the sacraments (pastors) are directed by the Holy Spirit. The Call process is how we attempt to do what the Holy Spirit asks in an orderly way.

When our teachers and pastors graduate from Martin Luther College and the Seminary, they are assigned to a Call. Usually they will be in this first role for three or four years, and then they are eligible to receive Calls from other churches or schools. Calls “from the field” are not assignments; the pastor or teacher can choose to go or to stay where they are. Receiving a Call is not optional, though. After accepting a Call to a different ministry, pastors will be ineligible for other Calls for four years and teachers for three. Teachers can receive up to two Calls per year between October and April, at least six weeks apart. Pastors are eligible six months after returning a Call. Please note that these are guidelines only. Due to variations in needs, some called workers will receive more or fewer Calls from the field.

When a congregation needs a pastor or teacher, they contact their district president who works with them to determine the needs of the vacant position. The district president will provide a list of names of called workers who are eligible to receive Calls and the congregation will then vote on which person to Call. If that person accepts the new Call, the process ends. If not, the congregation gets a new list.

Teachers who did not go through Martin Luther College can be Called to teach in our schools. They need to take some classes for synod certification. Similarly, MLC-trained teachers who have been out of the classroom for an extended period should “re-certify” if they return.

## OUR PRAYER for this ministry:

Heavenly Father, thank you for providing called workers for our church and school. Please guide and bless calling congregations and those who deliberate calls. Amen.

## Next up:

### Stewardship: Using our Time for Jesus

Did you miss an insert? You can find past issues on the church website [PeaceGreenLake.com](http://PeaceGreenLake.com) in the Resources section.

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## THE CALL: BONUS FAQs

While the concept of the Call is scriptural, the process as our church body does it is not laid out specifically by God. Different called workers and congregations will handle details within the process differently.

### **HOW WILL WE KNOW IF ONE OF OUR CALLED WORKERS GETS ANOTHER CALL?**

Typically, a pastor or teacher will write a letter to their congregation to inform them of their call. It is read out loud after church and included in church communications (email newsletters, social media). When the called worker reaches a decision, they write another letter that is read in the same way.

There is no "official" way this must be done; the goal is to keep the congregation informed while not creating unnecessary tiers of knowledge. The called worker's spouse and the church council or president may be informed in advance.

### **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO DECIDE?**

Ideally a decision is reached and announced within 3-5 weeks, though again there is no rule. The called worker wants to give the decision a respectful amount of consideration and that should not be rushed. It can also take time for information from the calling congregation to come in.

### **HOW DO CALLED WORKERS MAKE THESE DECISIONS?**

A lot of prayer and often some tears. Some of it is typical "job offer" considerations - cost of living, schools for kids, spouse's career, medical care, proximity to extended family. The bulk of it is about how their gifts are being used where they are and how they might fit the calling church body. Sometimes they feel they have more to give their current congregation. Sometimes they look at how a different person's talents might propel the ministry in a way they have not been able to.

Deliberating between two calls is never easy for the called worker, their family, or either congregation. The opportunity to evaluate and prayerfully consider one's gifts and weaknesses is clarifying, though, and can benefit everyone involved. The goal is always to accept or return the Call in order to pursue a positive, not flee or avoid a negative. All involved trust that all things work to the good of those who love God.

#### **How to encourage a called worker as they deliberate:**

- Remember that there is no right or wrong answer; God's will is done either way.
- Prayerfully consider and discuss with the person what Peace needs and how they fit or could grow with those needs.
- Pray for them.