

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Instructions for Call Cover Letter

Date: _____

Dear Pastor _____,

1. Begin by expressing your congregation's confidence, joy, etc.:

Example: We extend this call to you unanimously and with great confidence and joy. We believe God has led us to extend this call to you and that he has given you the spirit and abilities to fulfill it, should he lead you to accept it. We are eager to have a full-time shepherd to serve here to teach us and to lead us.

2. Include some congregation history:

Beginnings, building, expansion programs, length of service of previous and current called workers, etc.

3. Provide some current "history":

Membership numbers, average Sunday service attendance and school enrollment, indebtedness figures, projects underway, recent significant voter resolutions/decisions

4. Mention things peculiar to or challenges facing the congregation:

Still using the "old" hymnal or King James Version of the Bible? Bound to it? Regular budgetary shortfalls? Recent congregation problems? Former pastor living in the congregation? Changing neighborhood?

5. Give a description of your area:

Is population growing or declining? Is neighborhood changing? In what way(s)? Rapidly or slowly? Provide some evidence, such as nearby area of new home construction, factory expansion/closure, etc. (Example: Smithville is a 150 year-old community of about 50,000 people. It is still experiencing some growth, as are most of nearby communities. However it is fast becoming land-locked. Located in the far-west suburbs of the Chicago area, its population is predominantly white collar. Downtown Chicago is about a 40 minute drive. Nearby sister congregations are...)

6. List congregation groups, programs, materials:

Choir, Pioneers, Bible classes, teen group, OWLS, preschool, stewardship, evangelism efforts, etc. How they are going, and what has been/will be the pastor's role in them? (Note: Some congregations have annual reports that detail this very nicely, and if you include such a report with the call material, your letter would only need to note where there may have been changes since the report was issued.). If your congregation has a Web page, you might mention that and include the link in the letter.

7. Mention any plans/needs the congregation has:

Land, facilities, program, staff, new hymnal, etc. In the case of an associate pastor call, provide a job description, if you have one.

Be sure you are speaking for at least the church council, not just for yourself here! You may want to have the church council review your letter before it is sent.

Your district president may send a copy of the pre-call survey along. If you have any other similar information that would help the candidate understand your circumstances, include it.

8. Give information on congregation structure:

Council, boards, committees, etc. This might also be done by simply including a copy of the constitution and bylaws with the call material.

9. Describe the facilities and equipment:

Church, school, parsonage, number of rooms, their distance from one another, where the study/office is, whether there is a church-owned computer. Consider having your wife or another woman of the congregation write the paragraph(s) about the parsonage.

10. Describe the ministry support:

Is there secretarial help? Is it paid or volunteer, full or part-time? Are there expectations the congregation may have of the new pastor's wife, based on roles that were filled by the previous pastor's wife?

11. Elaborate on compensation/benefits:

Offer to pay moving costs. You should say more than just "synod code." Include the specific salary and all the benefits connected with it, such as medical at what deductible, payment of synod pension, one-half of the federal self-employment tax, compensation for certain medical benefits not covered by the synod plan because of the deductible, how many weeks of paid vacation, mileage reimbursement, etc. There should not be any surprises.

12. Reimbursement for travel expenses connected with moving:

Will the congregation do it? For mileage at what rate? For actual gas and toll expenses? On how many vehicles? For lodging? For meals?

13. List people and best times to contact:

You will want to give phone numbers for the chairman and any other lay people who could represent your church well. Give numbers for the vacancy pastor and circuit pastor.

14. A concluding paragraph:

Once again remind the candidate that you will pray for him and his family during this time. Express confidence that Jesus will bring him to a decision that will benefit his kingdom.

In Jesus' name,

_____ Evangelical Lutheran Church

(Sign your name), President

Other possible materials to send with the call:

Chamber of Commerce Information

Maps of the area

Yearbook , picture directory

Pictures of church, parsonage, etc.