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# Diploma of Vocation

*Print the first page, The "Diploma of Vocation" on parchment paper.  
Once the original Call Documents have been completed, printed, and signed, make 2 copies of all pages.  
Keep one copy for your records and send the other copy to the district president.  
Mail the original call documents by certified mail to the pastor elect.*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE + SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

To \_\_\_\_\_  
of \_\_\_\_\_

Having called on the Lord, our God, for guidance and in the exercise of the authority with which He has vested His church on earth, we, the members of \_\_\_\_\_

of \_\_\_\_\_

have elected you to the office of \_\_\_\_\_

and herewith extend to you this formal notification of your solemn call.

In the name of the Triune God and by His authority we ask you to assume the responsibilities of the office to which we have called you and faithfully to perform all the duties of your office according to the word of God and the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as derived from the Sacred Scriptures and found in the Book of Concord. We ask you to do this according to the needs as specified in the accompanying document or as may be resolved and mutually agreed upon from time to time. To the end that you may be enabled to do this, we pledge you our wholehearted and continuing cooperation and support in word and deed and in our prayers to God in your behalf.

We pray God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has moved us to extend our call to you, to convince you by His Holy Spirit that it comes from Him; to induce you to accept it; to conduct you safely to your field of labor; and to bless your ministrations to the glory of His holy name, the building of His church, the temporal and eternal welfare of many people, and your own great joy and blessing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - Congregational Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - Pastor

(Signatures to be affixed during the public ceremony of installation)

# Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation

**In the name of the Triune God and by His authority, in order that we might carry out His mission to the world, we hereby authorize and obligate you:**

To administer to us the Word of God in its full truth and purity as contained in the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and as set forth in the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord;

To administer the holy sacraments in accordance with their divine institution;

To demonstrate the mind and spirit of Christ as you serve the members of the congregation and equip them for Christ's mission to seek and save the lost;

To equip and enable the members of the congregation to serve one another and those outside the fellowship of the congregation;

To perform the functions of a pastor in an evangelical manner; to aid, counsel, and guide members of all ages and social conditions; to visit the sick and the dying; to admonish the indifferent and the erring; to support the members of the congregation as they extend that evangelical ministry to others;

To guard and promote faithfully the spiritual welfare of the members of this congregation, in particular to see to the instruction of the catechumens, both children and adults, in the Word and thus prepare them for communicant membership in the church;

To guide the congregation in applying the divinely ordained discipline of the church according to the Word of God and to assist and lead the members of the congregation in practicing the forgiven life with one another;

To promote and guide the mission activity of the congregation as related to the local community and to endeavors of the Synod and its Districts, in particular to train workers and guide them in evangelism and to enlist the support of the congregation for mission work;

To serve as a resource and guide for members of the congregation as they participate in the ministry of Christian education, and to train parents to teach the Christian faith to their children;

To assist the congregation in adopting administrative policies and procedures that will help it carry out the mission of a Christian congregation;

To serve the congregation as an example of Christian conduct; to endeavor earnestly to live in Christian unity with the members of the congregation, fellow workers, and sister congregations of the Synod; and by the grace of God to do everything possible for the edification of the congregation and the building up of the church in Christ.

**As the baptized people of God we partner with you to accomplish His mission to the world, and we hereby obligate ourselves:**

To receive you as a minister, to give you the honor and love and obedience that the Word prescribes, to aid you by word and deed, and to support you with our diligent, faithful assistance and prayers;

To make faithful and regular use of the means of grace;

To work with you to equip God's people to glorify Him and extend His kingdom by living out our baptism;

To make appropriate arrangements for your continuing education as a professional person in the ministry of the Gospel;

To provide for your proper maintenance according to our ability and to review your salary, housing arrangements, and all allowances periodically, beginning with the following arrangements.

# Compensation Information

(Please note: The congregation is encouraged to consult your District's Salary Compensation Guidelines prior to completing the following sections.)

## Salary Information

Basic cash salary for 12 months (do not include any other payments to the pastor which are designated below): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Salary paid:

If other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

## Housing Information

Does the congregation own a parsonage?

(If a parsonage is provided, complete the following section. If a housing allowance is provided, proceed to the Housing Allowance Information section below.)

### Parsonage/Utilities Information

(Please note: It is recommended that the congregation pay all costs associated with providing a parsonage and basic utilities such as heat, electricity, water, sewer, and telephone.)

Description of parsonage: \_\_\_\_\_

Average annual parsonage utility cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities paid in full by congregation?

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing equity provided by the congregation?  Annual amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Please note: Any additional amount which the congregation gives to the pastor for "housing equity" is taxable income.)

Pastor has the option to receive a housing allowance to purchase or rent a home instead of living in the congregation-owned parsonage?

### Housing Allowance Information

(Please note: Pastors are eligible to apply for a Lutheran Church Extension Fund [LCEF] housing loan.)

Annual amount or percentage of housing allowance (including utility allowance) paid to the pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

(Do not include the amount entered here in the "Basic Cash Salary" listed above)

Is a down payment loan available to the pastor from the congregation?

If yes, maximum amount of a down payment loan that is available to the pastor: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Rate of interest for the down payment loan to the pastor: \_\_\_\_\_ %

What are the provisions for repaying the down payment loan?

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Housing Information

\_\_\_\_\_

### Auto Information

Are both a car and operating expenses provided by the congregation?

Mileage reimbursement paid to the pastor (instead of a car allowance)?

If yes, rate of mileage reimbursement per mile: \_\_\_\_\_ IRS rate or \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Maximum amount of mileage reimbursement per year: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual car allowance paid to the pastor?

If yes, annual amount of car allowance paid to the pastor: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual amount for car replacement paid to the pastor?

If yes, annual amount paid to the pastor for car replacement: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Benefits Information**

Does the congregation provide a benefit package for the pastor through Concordia Plans?

If yes, which Plan package is provided?

**The Church's Plan**

- Concordia Health Plan (CHP)
- Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP)
- Concordia Disability & Survivor Plan (CDSP)
- Concordia Retirement Savings Plan (CRSP)\*

**Package 2**

- Concordia Health Plan
- Concordia Retirement Plan
- Concordia Disability & Survivor Plan

**Package 3**

- Concordia Retirement Plan
- Concordia Disability & Survivor Plan

**Package 4**

- Concordia Health Plan only  
(Limited to Specific Closed Employer Group)

\*The Concordia Retirement Savings Plan may be added to Packages 2 or 3.

Date the congregation will begin providing benefit coverage: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: For newly placed graduates early enrollment may be available through Concordia Plans. Please review the Plan requirements.

If the congregation provides one of the packages that includes the Concordia Health Plan (CHP) which coverage level option, or options, (if you offer worker choice) are currently provided?\*

*"Copay" plans reflect a traditional PPO plan, and "HSA" plans are qualified high deductible plans that are paired with a Health Savings Account. Dental & vision benefits are unbundled in all plans except closed grandfathered plans. For plan details, please contact Concordia Plans.*

- |                         |                             |                           |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Healthy Me Copay A      | Healthy Me HSA A            |                           |
| Healthy Me Copay B      | Healthy Me HSA B            |                           |
| Healthy Me Copay C      | Healthy Me HSA C            |                           |
| Healthy Me Copay D      | Healthy Me HSA D            |                           |
| Healthy Me Copay E      | Healthy Me HSA E            |                           |
| Whole Health (Copay)*** | Whole Health1000 (Copay)*** | Whole Health2000 (HSA)*** |
| Select HMO-C***         | Select HMO-C 2000***        |                           |

\*\* If uncertain, contact Concordia Plans before completing this form.  
\*\*\*Plans available in select geographic areas only. If uncertain, contact Concordia Plans before completing this form.

With the above plan options, how will the congregation be providing dental benefits?

- Non-Contributory – Workers do not share in the cost
- Contributory – Workers do share in the cost
- Voluntary – Congregation does not share any of the cost

With the above plan options, how will the congregation be providing vision benefits?

- Non-Contributory – Workers do not share in the cost
- Contributory – Workers do share in the cost
- Voluntary – Congregation does not share any of the cost

The following grandfathered plans can only be offered by a congregation already offering the plan to existing workers. Dental and vision benefits are bundled and included with these plans.

- Option A
- Option B
- Option C
- Option D
- Option E
- Option HDHP

If the congregation provides the CHP, for whom does the congregation pay premiums?

(Please note: It is common for the congregation pay for health care for the entire family. Concordia Plans requires that the employer pay at least 50% of the contribution for out-of-pocket costs. In order to comply with non-discrimination laws, cost sharing must be on a non-discriminatory basis for all enrolled workers.)

Does the pastor share in any of the cost of the Concordia Health Plan?

If yes, the amount or percentage of the Concordia Health Plan to be paid for by the pastor: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

If the congregation does not provide the Concordia Health Plan, is another health care plan provided?

Healthcare provider and additional information

\_\_\_\_\_

If the congregation provides another health plan, for whom does the congregation pay premiums?

Does the pastor share in any of the cost of this health care plan?

If yes, the amount or percentage of the health care plan to be paid for by the pastor: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

**Benefits Information (continued)**

Does the congregation participate in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA)?

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the congregation participate in a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA)?

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the congregation provide a Health Savings Account (HSA) if it offers an HSA compatible plan?

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the congregation pay for/help offset any of the annual individual/family deductibles?

Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the congregation participate in a Cafeteria Plan?

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

If the congregation does not provide The Church's Plan package, does it provide the CRSP with another package?

If the congregation provides The Church's Plan package (or has added the CRSP to another plan package), does the congregation provide an employer match?

If yes, what amount is matched by the congregation:

If the congregation does not provide a match to the CRSP, does it provide a flat contribution?

If yes, what is the amount of the flat contribution? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information \_\_\_\_\_

If the congregation doesn't provide a package that includes the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan (CRSP), does it provide another plan or additional retirement benefits in the form of another 401k, etc.?

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Is additional income paid to the pastor to enable him to pay a portion of his self-employment tax?

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information regarding the benefits package offered by the congregation:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Moving Information**

Personal travel expenses paid when moving to the new location?

Is there a maximum amount of personal travel expenses paid by the congregation?

If yes, maximum amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Personal moving expenses paid when moving to the new location?

Is there a maximum amount of moving expenses paid by the congregation?

If yes, maximum amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Moving arrangements (professional moving company, U Haul, etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there an additional amount given to the pastor as a Relocation Grant to cover misc. moving expenses?

If yes, amount of relocation grant: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information regarding moving:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Miscellaneous Information**

If calling a seminary graduate, will the congregation support his involvement in a post-seminary support program (e.g., PALS program, District mentoring program, etc.)?

Is the congregation willing/able to assist the pastor in the reduction of his educational debt?

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Continuing education allowance:

If yes, annual amount for continuing education /graduate school: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how much time does the congregation grant to the pastor per year for continuing education/graduate school purposes?

Does the congregation offer a sabbatical leave?

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Maximum amount of reimbursement for professional expenses (books, periodicals, memberships, vestments, etc.): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Days off per week \_\_\_\_\_

Annual days of vacation, including the number of Sundays (should be based upon the pastor's total years of service in the ministry): \_\_\_\_\_

Does the congregation follow the District's salary compensation guidelines?

If no, describe the salary compensation guidelines used by the congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_

By: (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

on behalf of

\_\_\_\_\_

District:

**ACCEPTANCE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, after prayerful consideration hereby accept this call and with the help of Almighty God agree:

To assume willingly the obligations stated above and the responsibilities of this office as specified in this call document or as may be resolved and agreed on periodically;

To perform faithfully all duties of this office in accordance with the Word of God and the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as drawn from the Sacred Scriptures and found in the Book of Concord;

To exemplify the Christian life in all that I do and say, working in concert with all others in order that my ministry in your midst may be a blessing to many people, to our church, and especially to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A. D. \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Additional Congregational Information for

(Complete Name and Address of Congregation)

In the interest of forming a strong, healthy relationship with our new pastor, we share the following information with you to tell you who we are, what our current ministry practices are, the resources we bring to the partnership, and a brief missional history of our congregation. Our hope is that together we may establish a healthy working partnership that enables us to grow in our relationship with God and one another and to strengthen our witness and service in the community.

## A. Description of the Community

1. Approximate size of community (check one):

- Isolated rural
- Rural
- Town (2,500-5,000)
- City (5,001-10,000)
- City (10,001-25,000)
- City (25,001-50,000)
- City (50,001-100,000)
- City (100,001-200,000)
- Large city (200,001+)
  
- Inner city
- Urban
- Suburban

2. Population trend (check one):

- Growing
- Static
- Declining

3. Sociological information:

- a. Major industries: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Predominant vocations: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Racial/ethnic composition: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Educational opportunities: (check all that apply)

- Elementary schools
- High schools
- Universities
- Other institutions. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Names and baptisms of other Lutheran churches and distance from church

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Major denominations represented:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. General description of climate:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Description of the Congregation:**

- 1. Year organized: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Baptized membership: Present \_\_\_\_\_ 3 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_ 5 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Confirmed membership: Present \_\_\_\_\_ 3 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_ 5 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Average Sunday church attendance: Present \_\_\_\_\_ 3 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_ 5 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Sunday school:
  - a. Enrollment: Present \_\_\_\_\_ 3 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_ 5 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Average attendance: Present \_\_\_\_\_ 3 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_ 5 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Number of teachers: Present \_\_\_\_\_ 3 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_ 5 yrs. ago \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Other salaried staff positions in congregation:

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7. Description of church facilities:

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8. Total annual current operating budget in dollars: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amount committed to:

- a. General congregation expenses: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Work-at-large: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

9. Total capital debt and amount of annual amortization payments:

- a. Debt: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

10. Average tenure of pastors during the last 20 years: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Length of present pastoral vacancy: \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**C. Description of the Membership:**

- 1. Age profile by percentage (should equal 100%)  
\_\_\_\_\_ % 0-18 \_\_\_\_\_ % 19-25 \_\_\_\_\_ % 26-45 \_\_\_\_\_ % 46-65 \_\_\_\_\_ % 66 +
- 2. Major occupations of members by approximate percentage (should equal 100%)  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Professional \_\_\_\_\_ % Business \_\_\_\_\_ % Labor \_\_\_\_\_ % College Students \_\_\_\_\_ % Farming \_\_\_\_\_ % Retired
- 3. Racial/ethnic composition by approximate percentage:

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**D. Significant parish events in the last five years:**

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**E. Congregational Activities:**

1. Outreach/evangelism

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2. Social ministry

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3. Community involvement

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**F. Christian Day School/Preschool/Daycare (own a school, member of a school association, grade levels, provide tuition assistance to members, interest in starting a school, etc.):**

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**G. Bible study program (who leads Bible studies, when they are held, type of studies in the past, etc.):**

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**H. Worship practices (style of worship, chanting, hymnal[s] used, use of special liturgy, printed orders of service, use of children's messages, use of multimedia equipment, use of acolytes, crucifix, torchbearers, collectors, ushers, Public Address [PA] System, etc.):**

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**I. Administration of the Sacraments:**

1. Baptism (preparation, sponsors, follow up, etc.)

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2. The Lord's Supper (frequency, assistance in distribution, who may commune, etc.)

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**J. Facilities:**

1. Church

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2. School

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3. Church Office (location, equipment provided, etc.)

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4. Pastor's Study (location, equipment provided, etc.)

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**K. Staff:**

1. Church secretary (availability, hours worked, duties performed, compensation, etc.)

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2. Other staff (please describe)

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**L. Role of women (suffrage, positions of leadership, limitations, etc.):**

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**M. Current congregational policies:**

1. Weddings for non-members

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2. Funerals for non-members

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3. Other policies

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**N. Pastoral approach desired in our pastor regarding addressing issues and making changes in the congregation:**

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**O. Team Ministry (lines of accountability, division of responsibilities, etc.):**

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**P. Challenges facing the congregation:**

1. At the present time

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2. In the future

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**Q. Special pastoral qualifications needed in our next pastor:**

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**R. Special concerns:**

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S. Other helpful information regarding the congregation:

Lined area for providing additional information regarding the congregation.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

- 1. Congregation (specify group or individual):
2. Vacancy pastor: Email Address, Cell Phone No:
3. Circuit visitor: Email Address, Cell Phone No:
4. Contact person: Telephone No, Email Address, Cell Phone No:

NOTE: When a pastor is called from the field, the original (signed) and one copy of the complete call document ("Diploma of Vocation," "Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation," "Compensation Information," and "Additional Congregational Information") is to be sent to the person called. One is to be forwarded to the District President, one is to be sent to the Circuit Visitor, and one is to be kept by the Calling Body. Upon acceptance, one copy, duly completed and signed by the person called, is to be returned to the calling body with a personal letter. Upon declination, both copies are to be returned to the calling body together with a proper letter of declination. A copy of the letter accepting or declining the call should be sent the District President(s).

When calling a seminary graduate through the Board of Assignments, the original (signed) complete call document ("Diploma of Vocation," "Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation," "Compensation Information," "Summary Page for pages 1-6," "Additional Congregational Information," and "Summary Page for pages 7-11") should be forwarded to the District President for his signature. Once he has signed the document, one copy will be returned to the calling body, one will be retained by the District President, and the original will be forwarded to the Board of Assignments.

Signature of District President (If request is for a seminary graduate)