



Resolution 04-03-25

- SUBJECT:** **Extend an Overture to the 2026 LCMS Convention Concerning Specific Ministry Pastoral (SMP) Training**
(Reference Overture 04-03-25 printed on page 196 of Convention Workbook)
- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in Convention in 2001 passed Resolution 3-08B, “To Address Needs and Opportunities for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations”; and
- WHEREAS,** Resolution 3-08B provided for Licensed Lay Deacons to continue to be trained under supervision (Resolution 3-05B, Wichita Convention, 1989); and
- WHEREAS,** Synodical Resolution 13-02A, (2016) “Regularized Licensed Lay Deacon” ministries toward ordination consistent with *The Book of Concord* (Augsburg Confession, XIV and Apology, XIV); and
- WHEREAS,** Resolution 13-02A provides several options toward ordination of existing Licensed Lay Deacons, including Regional SMP Colloquy, General Colloquy, SMP Seminary track, Alternate Route seminary training, and general ministry seminary track; and
- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Convention in 2007, passed Resolution 5-01B “To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program”; and
- WHEREAS,** Resolution 5-01B, 2007, provided for SMP candidates to receive “preordination curriculum, and post-ordination curriculum, covering two two-year segments of the seminary education”; Ordination vows may be taken prior to the conclusion of a complete course of study provided that the ordained has received a preparation sufficient to preach and teach the Gospel rightly, administer the Sacraments correctly, and take his vows with integrity. (p. 134. LCMS 2007)

Step 2: Preordination Curriculum

Upon entrance into the Specific Ministry Pastor Program, the student will be assigned as a vicar in a specific locality but normally will not be authorized to administer the



Sacraments. He will preach sermons prepared in collaboration with and approved by his supervisor. At this point, he will participate in courses and seminars comparable to those offered to residential seminary students designed to prepare him in the following areas:

- Catechism, hermeneutical principles, God and Christ, work of Christ, the Sacraments, worship, the Book of Concord, and preaching
- Possible residential seminars: intro to pastoral formation; issues in pastoral ministry
- Possible field seminars: basic mission planter training, etc.

Step 3: Certification/Call/Ordination

After demonstrating competence in the preordination areas, the student must apply for an examination hearing by the seminary in order to be certified for call and ordination. Each student will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The examination hearing shall include a review of the student's portfolio, vicarage reports, an interview by the faculty, and recommendations by the district president and circuit counselor.

After certification, call, and ordination according to the usual order, the student is placed on the pastoral roster of the Synod as a "specific ministry pastor." He now may preach and administer the Sacraments under supervision in a specific locality.

Step 4: Post-Call and Ordination Curriculum

Upon call and ordination, the student shall complete the remainder of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program. The following areas are intended to continue development of the foundational competencies necessary for serving as a specific ministry pastor:

- OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions
- Residential seminars, possibly including pastoral formation, issues in pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation
- Field seminars, possibly including basic mission planter training, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training and

WHEREAS,

Steps 3 and 4, approved by Resolution, provided that a certification, Call and Ordination be allowed after completion of two years of successful preordination studies; and



WHEREAS,

Step 5, approved by Resolution, provided that the post-ordination curriculum includes “OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions, residential seminars, including pastoral formation, issues of pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation. Field seminars included basic mission planting, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training;” and

WHEREAS,

Step 4 also included the caveat that “Refusal [or inability] to complete the Specific Ministry Program would result in the pastor’s removal from the Synod roster, at which point he is not eligible for a Call;” and

WHEREAS,

The provision of ordination after two years, with the proviso that the rostered worker completes the two more years of formal, required education, has led to men being removed from the LCMS roster, and created confusion about the Office of Holy Ministry: therefore, be it

RESOLVED,

Currently enrolled SMP students (preordination and post-ordination) continue in the SMP track of two years toward ordination and two years of required post-ordination requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod submit an overture to the LCMS 2026 Convention that would modify the program requirements of the SMP program, originally passed in Resolution 5-01B, 2007, which allowed a student to be certified for call and ordination prior to the completion of the SMP program, and to require students admitted to the SMP program after the 2026 academic year be required to finish all academic requirements of the SMP program before ordination and placement on the LCMS roster; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That students who have completed the second academic year be designated as vicars, and may conduct specific and approved services under supervision of their local pastor, and approval of the respective seminary program director and District President; and be it finally



RESOLVED,

That the vicar may receive compensation under the vicarage agreement with the congregation and seminary program, but without admission to the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Rev. Kevin Conger

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