

## On Calls during the Coronavirus

By President Allan R. Buss, Northern Illinois District LCMS

We have had several inquiries on the issuing of Calls during this season of life and ministry. In recent communication between District Presidents of the LCMS there is deep concern for the calling congregation, the Commissioned or Ordained worker, and the congregations/school/ministry from which a person is being called. This is especially significant for Pastors caring for a congregation and community.

**While there is much work to be done, it seems best that Calls from congregations not be issued at this time.** This is pertinent because larger gatherings are not to occur based on the Mandate of the Governor of Illinois, the CDC, and the request of the President of the United States. (The calling of a worker should not be done by a small group of people unless it is specifically stated in a congregation's constitution and by-laws as permissible. We still ask for restraint for the reasons mentioned above. All meetings to call should be in person following the example of Acts 1:12-26.)

This can be a great time to do the work of preparation, deliberation, and reflection before issuing a Call. As we all know there is much pre-call work that can be done. We might also be cautious scheduling interviews especially for those serving currently in some very high-stress situations. We do not want to be distracting from the service that worker is currently providing and add stress to workers and their families. This would be a very difficult time for a worker to consider a Call and may create a hardship for the place the worker is serving.

If a Call is in hand, I ask that all involved take extra time in deliberation and exercise patience and consideration for the benefit of our life in Christ and His Church. We must be prudent, vigilant, and patient as we watch how matters unfold. If you need guidance, please contact my office.

A Calling entity may reach out to a worker it is intending to Call and let them know of its intent, pending the approval of whatever body needs to extend the Call. In the case of a candidate from one of our Concordia Universities, who will be graduating this spring, please be in contact with the Placement Office of that Concordia before contacting the candidate to express your intent. They will help you with the next appropriate steps. Candidates from our colleges, universities, and seminaries receive their first Call through the placement of the LCMS Council of Presidents.

The seminaries will be having online Placement Services this spring with the Placement Director and the Seminary President present. We have several NID congregations that,

God-willing, will receive seminary graduates. The Placement Committee, of which I am a member, will be meeting in early April for initial slotting.