



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021

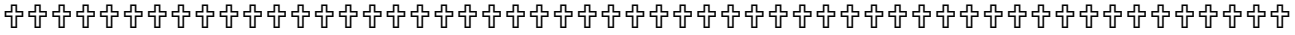


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He remembers His **Testament** forever,
the **Word** He appointed for a thousand generations
Psalm 105:8 (JP)

Rev. Thomas Cowell
Pastor
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'Telling the good News about Jesus-In Burt, Iowa, and the World'



On Considering a Call

Dear friends in Christ at St. John's Lutheran Church,

By the time this Parish Messenger is published, I would have already announced my decision whether I have decided to accept or decline the pastoral call to serve at another congregation. At the time of writing this letter, however, I have not yet found the answer to that question! Therefore, the following observations are as much for my present deliberations as they are for your future knowledge and understanding.

While many of you have much experience over the years with your pastors receiving, deliberating, and declining or accepting a pastoral call, this process does continue to seem to be surrounded by a sense of mystery and confusion. How does a pastor receive a call? Why does a pastor receive a call? How does a pastor decide to accept or decline a call?

The "how" question is the one I'd like to answer here. Practically speaking, there are many ways a pastor might go about discerning where he should serve God's Church when he receives a call away from his present congregation. A pastor could visit the calling congregation or speak with the congregations leaders on the phone. A pastor could write up comparative lists of each congregation as a way of helping him see where he could be of the most service to God's Church. A pastor could have conversations with his present members and receive their council and wisdom on the matter.

However a pastor goes about considering his pastoral call, there are a few rules that pastors in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, generally speaking, like to follow. Five of these rules have been articulated by the first president of the LCMS, C.F.W. Walther. I have attached the advice of Pastor Walther to this letter both so that you can see a little bit into the process a pastor takes to make a decision on a call, and also so that you can see the similarities, and especially the differences, between a divine call and a secular job offer.

As you read this article, please pray for all pastors in our Synod who are in the process of discerning calls to serve congregations across our country and world, that their decisions would be to the greatest glory of God and for the greatest benefit to the proclamation of the gospel to all people.

Joy in Christ,
Pastor Thomas Cowell
Feast of All Saints, Anno Domini 2021

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“When Considering a Call,” by C.F.W. Walther

Quoted from: *American Lutheran Pastoral Theology* by Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther; Professor of Theology at Concordia Seminary and Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation at the Same Place and President of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. From the new English translation published by Concordia Publishing House, 2017.

Retrieved from: steadfastlutherans.org/2016/12/advice-dr-c-f-w-walther-considering-call/

In answering the question of whether a preacher should allow himself to be relocated or accept another position offered to him, it depends particularly on observing the following five rules:

1. Let the preacher wait quietly for a call away to be issued to him and never himself seek to get away, least of all to obtain a higher salary or a more comfortable or an easier position (Jer. 23:21).
2. Let him not yield for the sake of the evil people in his congregation who make his life bitter (Rom. 12:21), unless it has to do solely with his frail person, and [unless] what is simply impossible for him on account of the poor personal relationship into which he has fallen with the greater part of his congregational members can therefore be accomplished by another orthodox preacher (2 Cor. 13:10).
3. It must be clear for all to see that the new ministry offered to him is not only a more important one in itself but also that precisely he could use his gifts in it for greater benefit to the Church than if he were to remain (1 Cor. 12:7).
4. Let him not decide easily on his own, but relinquish the decision to both his present congregation and the one calling him away, as well as to some experienced theologians (Prov. 12:15).
5. Let him not leave his congregation without its express consent, unless the latter absolutely withholds its consent manifestly before everyone out of pure stubbornness and in disregard for the well-being of the Church.

Commentary on Rule 3

(I) It is of course actually and certainly known to God alone in which place the preacher will create greater benefits, but it does not nearly follow from this that a preacher, in comparing his current and new call, should not rationally consider the circumstances of both calls and take into account where he will hopefully create the greater benefits for the Church, for otherwise he would have no other information [regarding] which call he should prefer.

The oft-mentioned theological opinion speaks much better about this: A called preacher should not proceed blindly and want to accept every single call with blind impetuosity for the sake of more pay, greater honor, and hoped-for peace with the objection: “God would simply have it this way”; rather,

he should diligently compare his current call with the new one sent to him, not looking at the income and honor and external conveniences, but at the duties of the call, that is, at the services of his call. He should see well which congregation needs him the most and in which place he can create the greater benefits for our God.

If he concludes that the edification and expansion of the kingdom of God can be furthered more in the new call than in the previous one, then he should follow it and make sure that he does not bury his pound, which is entrusted to him by God, for the sake of good days and income.

(II) Precisely from the ordered, regular call, one can get a good measure [regarding] in which place one can probably serve God the most.

The above-mentioned opinion, which was approved by the Tübingen theologians, speaks about this again: If God the Lord conveys a gift to some before others, then He desires that not just one place alone should use them, but rather that others should also enjoy them fruitfully, and after He notes that one [person] can create more benefit in this place, another in another place, then He arranges his call (nota) and sends him, especially when He notices in His omniscience that now, after much practice, he may not be unuseful in accomplishing something higher.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 - Lynda Heidecker
2 † Wendell Christensen, Jr.
2 † Rolland Peyman
3 - Halie Struecker
7 † Larry Behnkendorf
8 † Zachery Steven
9 † Mary Gilord
9 - Tess Twilliger
10 † Barb Schroeder
14 † John Smith
16 † Megan Crosser
17 † Kim Reutzel
18 - Richard Knoll
19 † Brynetta Lavrenz
23 † Gabrielle Kelly
24 † Donna Haase
25 - Brayton Borchardt
26 - Gary Person
26 † Bev Skadburg
30 † Eden Koestler
30 † Jerry Koestler

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 † Michael Bierstedt
1 † Nicolle Marlow
3 † Darrel Schmidt
3 † Derek Schutjer
4 † Gene Hanna
9 † Olivia Marlow
9 † Karla Schutter
18 † Vivian Lavrenz
18 - Maverick Smith
27 - Lisa Haase
27 † Chardonnay Lavrenz
28 † James Bowman
28 † Terry Tieman
28 † Wanda Tieman



SPECIAL SENIORS

November 2 -Rolland Peymann
November 14 - John Smith
November 24 - Donna Haase
November 26 † Bev Skadburg
November 30 - Jerry Koestler