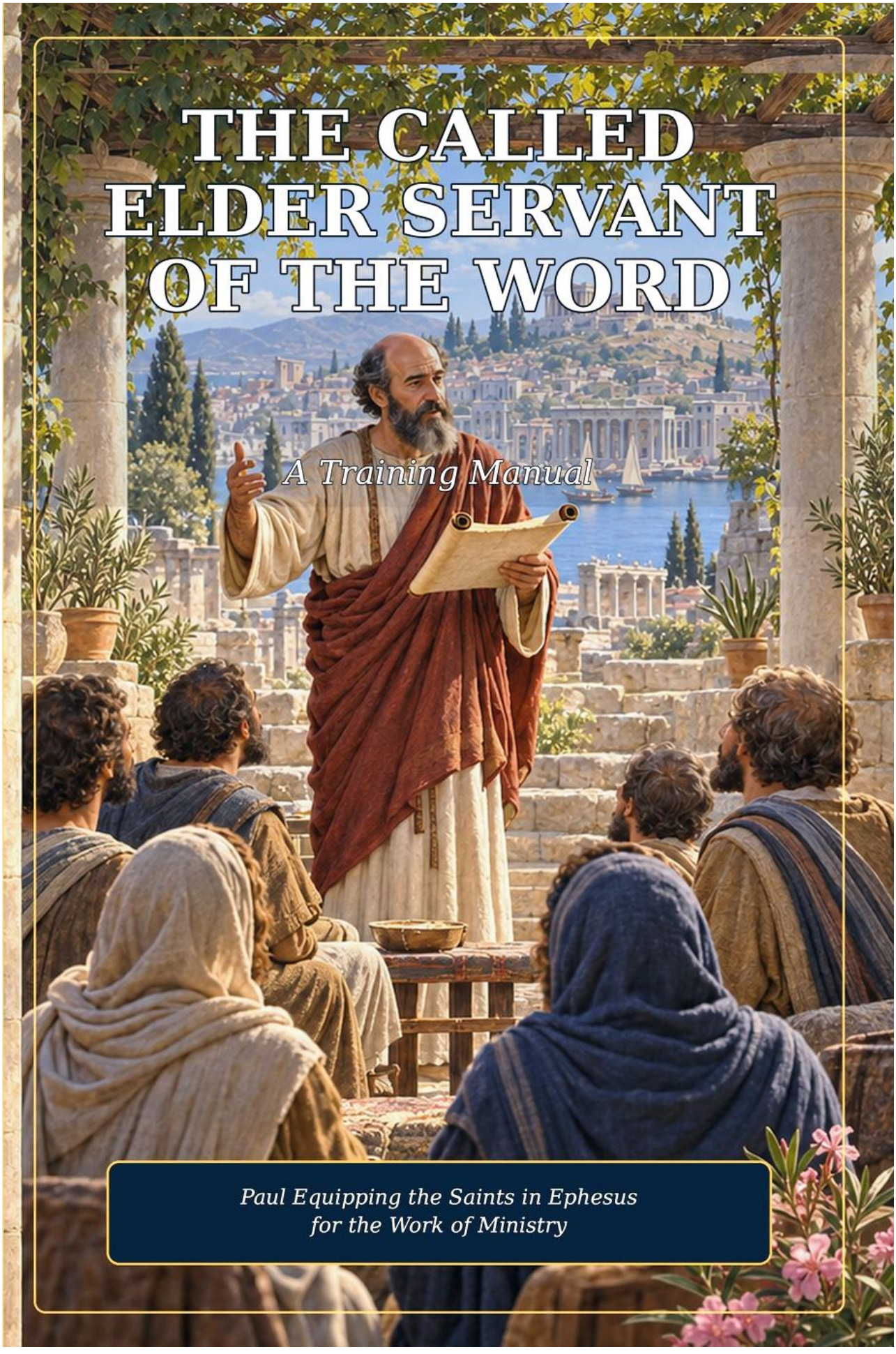
THE CALLED ELDER SERVANT OF THE WORD

A Training Manual



Paul Equipping the Saints in Ephesus for the Work of Ministry

The Called Elder Servant of the Word

Produced by the CLC Elder Minister Training Committee: Mr. Allen Durham, Mr. Daniel Pfeiffer, Missionary Bruce Naumann, Prof. Paul Naumann, and Pastor Aaron Ude.

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According to the resolutions of the 2026 CLC Convention, the Elder Ministry Training Program seeks to provide education for qualified laymen to carry out special functions of the public ministry as needed in a congregation, in a temporary capacity, while under the guidance of a CLC clergy member. This manual is intended to be a “how-to” guide for these duties. We pray that it will be of help to you in serving the LORD’s people.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

When a congregation is without a resident pastor, faithful Christian men may be called to assume additional responsibilities under the guidance of a supervising pastor. This manual offers biblical foundations and step-by-step help for conducting worship, assisting with Holy Communion, teaching, visiting the sick and homebound, leading during a pastoral vacancy, and encouraging outreach.

Additional resources address calling and installing an Elder Servant of the Word, using recorded music in worship, conducting private Communion, and using brief Christ-centered devotions in personal ministry.

The power lies in God's Word, not in the person delivering it.

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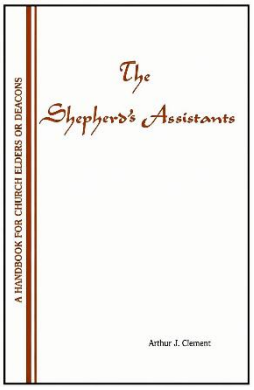
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CLC Elder Ministry Training Program (EMT)

Introduction

The acronym "EMT" usually refers to Emergency Medical Technicians. These are the first responders who administer immediate medical aid to victims of a health crisis or accident, until the patient can be treated by a regular doctor.



Because of the current shortage of seminary-trained pastors, many of our CLC churches need a different kind of immediate help. They need their Elder(s) to take on more responsibility until a regular pastor can take up the work. This manual is designed to help with this work. It may also be used by those who wish to be an able assistant to an on-site regular pastor.

Another very helpful resource is a book published by Northwestern Publishing House entitled *The Shepherd's Assistants* by Arthur J. Clement. It is available from Northwestern Publishing House at online.nph.net/shepherds-assistants.html. There are footnotes to *The Shepherd's Assistants* throughout this manual, for additional helpful reading.

To the Calling Congregation[1]

> *He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.* (Eph. 4:10-13)

The regularly-called pastor to a CLC congregation is a gift from Christ for the work of the church. In our synod he is a man who has been seminary trained, and who has been received by the church body as a clergy member. He is called by the Holy Spirit through the congregation. The time of his service in a given church is left open to the Lord's will. In time, he may be called to another church, he may retire, or might otherwise leave the ministry in that congregation.

During the time of a pastoral vacancy the congregation may have the benefit of regular pastoral services from a called vacancy pastor. In some cases this is not possible, so the congregation may find that it is beneficial to call on a qualified layman to provide certain services to the church, in the absence of a regular pastor. This has sometimes been done on an informal basis, for instance when certain men are asked to conduct the worship services, and they serve on a volunteer basis. In these types of situations we have the following recommendations:

- Any arrangements for such service are to be done with the approval of the supervising pastor, if there is one. If not, it is best to seek the guidance of the Conference Visitor.
- It will be a blessing for everyone concerned if the local man or men who are called to serve in certain areas of ministry are given a **formal call** by the congregation. [See the sample call letter in Appendix 1 of this manual, page 31.] This call will be different from a regular pastor's call in these ways:
    a. It will be temporary in nature, normally until a regular pastor is called and begins his work in the congregation.
    b. The services will be done under the guidance of the supervising pastor.

[1] Arthur J. Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants: A Handbook for Church Elders or Deacons (1989), 2, 7–9.

c. It will be limited in scope. In its call letter the congregation should spell out exactly which services it expects the Elder Minister of the Word to provide. This is different from the regular pastor's call, because a pastor with a regular call has overall responsibility for the souls of the church and for the full range of pastoral services.

- It will likewise be a blessing if the Elder Servant is formally installed in a worship service. This will impress upon the members that this is not simply volunteer work, but that the Holy Spirit has called this man to serve in these areas. It will also impress upon the Elder Servant that his calling for these duties comes from God. [See the sample rite of installation in Appendix 1 of this manual, page 31.]

- In many cases the Elder Servant is happy to provide his services without pay. However, it would be appropriate for the church to consider providing a stipend, and/or to reimburse the Elder Servant for expenses related to his work. *"The laborer deserves his wages."* (1 Timothy 5:18)

It is our prayer that the Lord of the Church will provide your congregation with a full-time public servant of the Word to fill your pastoral vacancy! Meanwhile, please be encouraged to faithfully gather around the Word and Sacrament, for the building up of the members and for a light to shine in your community.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9)

To the Called Elder Servant of the Word[2]

During a pastoral vacancy you may be called upon to serve the church in one or more of these areas:

1. **Worship Services** (Conduct the Sunday service, read a prepared sermon, serve the Lord's Supper)
2. **Bible Study Classes for Groups** (Sunday or weekday Bible class, ladies' group, other meetings)
3. **Instruction for Youth and Adults** (Sunday school, Catechism classes, adult membership classes)
4. **Shut-in Ministry and Hospital/Hospice Ministry** (Visit sick and shut-in members, conduct private devotions, administer the Lord's Supper)
5. **Congregational Leadership** (With guidance from a called pastor, provide leadership in congregational meetings and among the members, seek wayward members, etc.)
6. **Local Outreach / Evangelism** (Make your church more visible to the community, encourage members to share their faith and invite friends to church or Bible study)

In this manual you will find resources for each of these areas of service, with step-by-step instructions wherever they may be needed. This manual, along with links to other resources, will also be available through the www.elders.clclutheran.org website.

You may be asking yourself, "Am I qualified for this work?" The answer is "yes," assuming that:

1. You have a call from your congregation to serve in this capacity.
2. You have a heart of love for the Lord and the Gospel of Christ crucified for sinners.
3. You have a working knowledge of the Bible and its teachings.
4. You have the kind of qualities that are described for pastors and elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (however, note that no one meets all of these standards perfectly, including regular pastors).
5. You are willing to serve under the guidance of a supervising CLC pastor (this could be the vacancy pastor who is serving from a distance, the Conference Visitor, or other qualified man with whom you stay in contact in person, by phone, or by electronic communication).

[2] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 16–24, 10–16, 8–9, 3–7, 27–28.

6. You have trust in the Lord to guide and equip you for this service. If you are in any doubt, seek your assurance for the ability to serve in these promises of God:

   "Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God…" (2 Corinthians 3:4-5)

   "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

While this manual can be used as-is for guidance in your work, it is also very beneficial to increase your own knowledge of Scripture, as it relates to pastoral service. That is why we are also offering guided studies in the areas of Dogmatics (advanced Bible teachings), Bible History, Law and Gospel, Hermeneutics (principles of correct Bible interpretation), Christian Education Methods (how best to conduct youth and adult instruction), and possibly other subjects. These can be done via correspondence with a seminary-trained pastor to monitor and comment on your studies. To request a mentor/guide, contact Missionary Bruce Naumann via email at brucenaumann@gmail.com. Certain beneficial courses are also offered in video format, as conducted by Professors at ILC. See the chapter entitled "Resources for Ongoing Study" for more information.

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:15, *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."* Please be encouraged to be this kind of worker, for God's glory and as a blessing to the members of your church!

✞ ✞ ✞

Worship Services

The Sanctity of the Divine Service[3]

When God's people gather for worship, they come to praise and thank him—and he comes to serve them. Why do we call it a *service*? Service is the English translation of the Greek word *leitourgia,* from which we also get *liturgy*. It refers to work or service performed for others. In the Divine Service, God ministers to his people through his Word and Sacraments, forgiving sins and feeding souls with the grace of Christ.

When Martin Luther dedicated the chapel at Torgau, he described what takes place in worship: The Lord speaks to us through his Holy Word, and we respond to him with prayer and praise. This is why the service is holy. God is at work among his people. "*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*" (Matthew 18:20).

As an elder called by your congregation to conduct the service, you get to be part of that work. It is not just your congregation calling you; it is God calling you through your congregation. If you feel inadequate or unworthy, remember that **the power lies in God's Word, not in the person leading the service.** You bring that Word to God's people so that, by his power, they may be made *"wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 3:15) and sustained in the faith until they receive the *"crown o life."* (Revelation 2:10)

[3] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 16–18.

Sermon and Bulletin Help

Your congregation may already have a good source of trustworthy sermons and worship materials. Perhaps a former pastor left sermons for you to use, or your supervising pastor provides them. If, however, you are looking for sermons for a lay-led service, Ministry by Mail publishes a sermon each week, along with a matching bulletin in three formats: without a liturgy, with a liturgy, and with music for the liturgy. These materials are published a week in advance so that elders have time to read through them and become familiar with the service before leading it. Each mailing includes the sermon as a PDF and in a booklet format for printing. It also includes bulletins as PDFs and editable Word documents, along with links to the general prayer and Communion liturgy.

To subscribe to the free weekly email, go to eepurl.com/i0CozY and enter your email address, first name, and last name. You may also request a subscription by emailing editor@lutheransermons.org.

You can also find a bulletin maker on the Worship Resources page of the Elder Ministry Training Website. Use it to prepare a bulletin with the elements desired by your congregation—for example, a liturgy with or without a gradual. Click on the bulletin maker, select the elements you would like to include, and enter the service date, hymn numbers, Scripture readings, sermon information, and any announcements. It will produce an editable Word (.docx) bulletin for you.

Please note: the liturgy provided by Ministry by Mail and used in the bulletin maker is based on the traditional Lutheran liturgies found in the Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church (1917–1918), the Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-book (1912), and Music for the Liturgy: In Conformity with the Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-book. The wording and music may differ slightly from what your congregation is accustomed to, but these source materials are in the public domain.

Conducting the Worship Service[4]

In the bulletins provided by Ministry by Mail and the Elder Ministry Training website, "L" marks the leader's parts, and "C" marks the congregation's parts. Directions in parentheses, such as "The congregation rises," are instructions and should not be read aloud. The arrows indicate which way the leader should face: an up arrow (▲) means face the altar, and a down arrow (▼) means face the congregation.

Before the service, read the entire bulletin and sermon aloud at least once. Mark the places where the congregation stands or sits, and arrange with the musician or the person handling recorded music when each hymn and sung portion begins. [See Appendix 2 if you need help with recorded music.] Have the sermon, general prayer, and any announcements at hand. Arrive early enough to check that the correct bulletin has been printed, that the hymn board numbers are posted, and that the music and everything else is ready.

A prayer before the service:

> *Lord Jesus Christ, You have called me through Your people to serve them with Your Word today. Forgive my sins, quiet my fears, and keep me faithful to what You have given me to say. Open our ears to Your Word, strengthen our faith, and receive our prayers and praise. Let Your people hear Your voice and take comfort in Your promises. Amen.*

[4] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 16–18.

Follow the order printed in the bulletin:

1. **Opening hymn and invocation**: Begin with the opening hymn. After it, ask the congregation to rise if needed, then speak the invocation: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

2. **Confession of sins and absolution**: Read the leader's invitation and responses at an unhurried pace, leaving room for the congregation's replies. Lead the confession, then speak the printed absolution. These words direct the congregation to God's forgiveness in Christ.

3. **Psalm and songs of praise**: Lead the responsive Psalm of the Day, allowing the congregation to speak its portions. Continue with the *Gloria Patri, Kyrie,* and *Gloria* as printed. Coordinate the sung portions with your musician or person handling the recording.

4, **Collect and Scripture readings**: Say, "Let us pray," and read the Collect for the Day. Introduce and read the First and Second Scripture Readings as printed. Read clearly enough for people to hear and follow the words; there is no need to hurry through them.

5. **Creed, hymn, and sermon**: Join the congregation in confessing the Apostles' Creed, then proceed to the hymn. Introduce and read the sermon. Become familiar with it beforehand so you can communicate its meaning naturally. At its conclusion, follow the bulletin's direction for the congregation to rise and speak the printed words of peace.

6. **Offertory** (this is the brief hymn verse that follows the sermon) **and offering**: Continue with the Offertory. Then invite the congregation to sit. Follow your congregation's practice for collecting the offering or directing people to the offering plate.

7. **Hymn and prayers**: Proceed to the next hymn. Read the General Prayer, including any appropriate local petitions that have been prepared. Then lead the congregation in the Lord's Prayer.

8. **Communion**, when scheduled: The Lord's Supper may be celebrated at this point. Ministry by Mail provides an order of Holy Communion, or you may use the order your congregation has chosen. Follow your congregation's arrangements for administering the Sacrament. The next section of this manual will address Communion in detail.

9. **Final hymn, benediction, and announcements**: Lead the final hymn. Ask the congregation to rise if needed, and speak the benediction printed in the bulletin. Give the announcements afterward, as shown in this order of service.

If you lose your place, pause and find it. A calm pause does no harm. Your task is to place God's Word before his people clearly and faithfully; its power does not depend on a flawless performance.

Conducting the Lord's Supper[5]

Read through your congregation's Communion order before the service. Arrange ahead of time who will serve, who will usher communicants forward, whether individual cups and a common cup will be offered, and how many people will commune at once. Check that there is enough bread and wine, and that every vessel containing bread or wine to be distributed is on the altar when the Words of Institution are spoken. If another person will assist you, walk through the distribution together beforehand.

Note that Communion wine is available in most liquor stores; many churches use Mogen David Concord Grape. If you do not know of a local store that sells Communion wafers, they can be ordered online at www.christianbook.com.

Step 1: Prepare the altar before worship. Place the bread and wine in the Communion vessels according to your congregation's practice, and cover them. If you will offer individual cups, have the filled cups in their tray. Keep the vessels covered until the Communion service begins.

Step 2: Announce the congregation's Communion practice. This can be done before the service or before the Communion liturgy. Speak warmly and plainly, especially for visitors. For example: "We welcome all our guests to worship with us. Because receiving the Lord's Supper together is also a confession of unity in faith, our congregation practices close Communion. We ask that those who have not expressed their agreement with our teaching through membership here or in a sister CLC congregation speak with an elder before coming forward to receive the Sacrament." Make sure the usher knows whom to direct forward.

Step 3: Make ready during the hymn before Communion. While the congregation sings, remove any outer veil covering the Communion ware and arrange the plate, cups, and any individual cup tray so you can reach them without difficulty. Leave lids or other covers over the bread and wine until you are ready for the Words of Institution. If your congregation has a different established practice for uncovering the vessels, follow it.

Step 4: Following the General Prayer and Lord's Prayer, have the congregation rise. Announce, "We now continue with the order of service for Holy Communion, found in your bulletin [or hymnal] on page __."

Step 5: Lead the Preface ("The Lord be with you," etc.) and Sanctus ("Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth," etc.) In the Ministry by Mail order, face the congregation for the opening exchange and face the altar for "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God" and the prayer that follows. The congregation then sings or speaks the Sanctus ("Holy, holy, holy"). If you use the TLH service, follow its printed Preface and Sanctus.

Step 6: Follow the order you are using (either the TLH or the provided bulletin) before the Words of Institution. The Ministry by Mail Communion order places its Exhortation after the Sanctus; face the congregation and read it as printed. The provided worship bulletin has already included the Lord's Prayer, so it's not needed here. In the TLH Communion service, follow the printed placement of the Lord's Prayer after the Sanctus. Check the whole service beforehand so that the Lord's Prayer is neither accidentally repeated nor omitted.

Step 7: Speak the Words of Institution. Remove the covers from the bread and wine. Take the plate with the bread in hand, face the congregation, and say:

> "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

[5] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 17–18.

Set down the plate, take the cup in hand, and say:

> "In the same manner also he took the cup after supper; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"

These are the words in the Ministry by Mail order. If you are using the TLH service, read its printed Words of Institution instead.

Step 8: Speak the peace and lead the Agnus Dei. Face the congregation for "The peace of the Lord be with you always" and allow its response. The congregation then sings or speaks the Agnus Dei ("O Christ, the Lamb of God..."). An usher may begin directing communicants forward when that portion is finished, according to your congregation's practice.

Step 9: Give the bread. Take the plate and move along the communicants in an orderly manner. Give a piece of bread or a wafer to each person. Your congregation's custom may be to place it in the person's outstretched hand or to place the wafer on the lower lip of an open mouth. As you give it, say the words printed in your order, such as: "Take and eat; this is the true body of our Lord Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins." Continue with the rest of the printed distribution words if your congregation uses the full form. Take time to give each communicant the bread securely before moving to the next person.

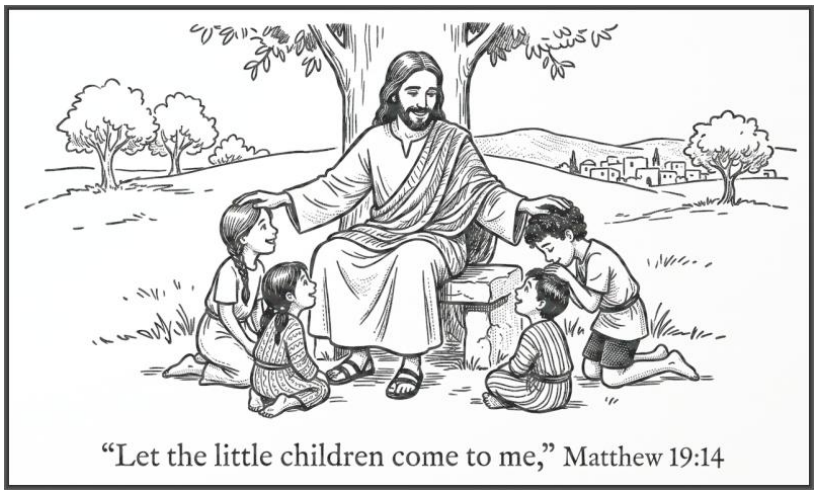
Step 10: Offer individual cups first, if your congregation uses them. Carry the tray steadily and allow each communicant who chooses an individual cup to take one. Have an assistant handle the tray if that makes the distribution easier and more orderly. If you are not using a common cup at all, speak the "take, drink" words as you go.

Step 11: If you also use a common cup, return with it, and speak the words for the wine. As each person receives the wine—whether from the individual cup already in hand or from the common cup—say: "Take and drink; this is the true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, shed for the remission of your sins." Where the custom is to hand over the common cup, place it securely in the communicant's hands and be ready to receive it back. Where the leader holds it, hold it firmly and bring it to the communicant's lips. Let the communicant help tip it while your hand remains steady, like a hinge; do not pour it into the person's mouth. Follow your congregation's practice for wiping and turning the rim between communicants.

Step 12: Dismiss each group. Once everyone in a group has received both the bread and the wine, speak the dismissal printed in your order. The Ministry by Mail order says: "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and his precious blood strengthen and preserve you in true faith to everlasting life." Follow your congregation's practice for collecting used cups. The usher may then direct the next group forward. Repeat the distribution until all communicants have received it. If you yourself are communing, arrange beforehand to have another Elder serve you.

Step 13: Cover the vessels and conclude the liturgy. When all have communed, return the vessels to the altar and reverently cover the remaining bread and wine. Invite the congregation to rise for the Nunc Dimittis ("Lord, now You let Your servant depart in peace"). Then lead the Thanksgiving and its prayer. If using the Ministry by Mail order, return to the regular bulletin for the final hymn and benediction. If using the TLH Communion service, continue with its remaining responses and benediction as printed. Follow your congregation's arrangements for caring for the remaining bread and wine after worship.

Move carefully, and give yourself time. If something unexpected happens, pause and attend to it calmly. Christ's promise rests in his words and gifts, not in the speed or smoothness of the distribution.



Instruction for Youth and Adults

The weekly worship service is the core function of a Christian congregation, where the members gather to be served with the Word of God, and to offer their praise and thanksgiving to their LORD. We also have a scriptural mandate to support each other in the Christian education of our children, and to edify one another through Scripture study:

> *[The] things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.* (Psalm 78:3-4)
>
> *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom...* (Colossians 3:16)

The Sunday School

It is vitally important for children to learn about their Savior and his Word. While the primary responsibility for this Christian education lies with the parents, Lutheran churches have long had the excellent practice of assisting the parents by conducting weekly Sunday school lessons. This prepares them for a lifelong love of the Word of God, and also is important preparation for their confirmation instruction. Your congregation may already have a Sunday school program, but if not you can begin one, using the CLC *God's Hand in Our Lives* curriculum, found at www.godshand.clclutheran.org.

Here is a brief, step-by-step guide for teaching a Sunday school lesson. It is also helpful for training Sunday school teachers for their important work.

A Plan for Teaching a Sunday School Lesson

You have JOYFUL work to do as you follow Jesus' command! Matthew 19:14 says, ***"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."*** Let your joy show as you teach the children about Jesus.

1. **PRAY.** You will be bringing the Word of God to young listeners. You need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wisdom from God's Word, and the ability to reach the hearts of the children.

2. **STUDY**. Look up the story in the Bible itself and think about the meaning, verse by verse. Look up other Bible passages that teach about the same things. If the story is repeated in another part of the Bible (like another of the Gospels), be sure to compare both. Use a good teacher's guide or other helps if they are available. Helpful teachers' notes for many Old and New Testament stories can be found within the *God's Hand in Our Lives* curriculum.

3. **PLAN.** You will want to organize your thoughts so that your students will receive the best message and remember what they have learned. After studying the story, ask and answer the following questions:

   A. **What is the <u>OUTER aim</u>?**
   The "outer aim" is the FACTS about what happened in the story. For example, "Jesus showed his power as the Son of God when he fed 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish."

   B. **What is the <u>INNER aim</u>?**
   The "inner aim" is the MEANING of the story for each Christian. For example, "Because Jesus has the power to feed 5,000 people, he has the power to take care of all MY needs, especially my need for a SAVIOR from sin."

   C. **What is the message of the <u>LAW</u> in this story?**
   The LAW is what God expects from us, and the punishment that comes from breaking his Law. The Law shows us that we are guilty of sin.
   "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. . . .*" (Romans 3:23)



   D. **What is the message of the <u>GOSPEL</u> in this story?**
   The GOSPEL is the good news about what God has given to us in Jesus. By grace He has given us full forgiveness of all our sins and the promise of eternal life. All this is only because of Jesus' death in our place and his resurrection. *". . . and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* **(**Romans 3:24)

   E. **What does this story teach us about <u>FRUITS</u> of faith?**
   Because of God's love to us in Christ, the Christian now wants to live a life that pleases God. What does the story tell us about the life we should now live as God's children? *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5)

   F. **Be careful** that your lesson focuses on LAW and GOSPEL first, with the most emphasis on the GOSPEL. The biggest mistake that teachers make is when they only teach the children about rules and morals. For example: "God wants you to be good children. Here is a Bible story that shows you how to be a good child. God loves children who are obedient." Instead, show the children God's LAW – his commandments, our guilt, and the punishment for sin. This prepares a child's heart to hear the GOSPEL – God's free gift of forgiveness and life through faith in Jesus. Only the GOSPEL brings faith to a child's heart. God's great love because of Jesus will then provide the best reason for the children to show real FRUITS of faith in their lives.

4. **TEACH** the class, step-by-step: (Note that these are suggestions; not every class will follow this exactly in this order)

   A. Open with a prayer and a Christian song for children.

   B. Review the lesson from the previous week. Ask the students questions about what they learned. Have them recite the memory passages that you gave them, and say them aloud together.

   C. Tell a story as an introduction. Use a different Bible story, or an imaginary story that explains the same lesson as your "INNER aim" (see above). Tell the children that they will learn the same lesson from today's Bible story.

   D. Tell the Bible story to the children.

      - You need to know the story well enough that you can TELL it in a good way, including all the details as they are found in the Bible. Speaking to the students directly is much better than just reading the story. Look at each of the children, not just the ones who are paying attention.
      - You want them to remember the FACTS about what happened (the "OUTER aim," see above).
      - As you tell the story, ask the children QUESTIONS about things you just said, making sure they know WHO was involved, WHAT happened, etc.

   E. Have the students tell the story back to you. Repeat the beginning of the story, then ask a student, "What happened next?" or "What did he say then?" etc. Ask WHY questions: "Why do you think he did that?" or "Why did she say that?" etc. During this review you are trying to teach the children the "INNER aim," (see above).

      Another way to review the story is to have the students present it as a play. For example, have one student take the part of Jesus, others act the part of disciples, etc., and help to lead them through remembering the story that way. Ask the WHY questions as you go.

   F. Finish the lesson by asking the students about the FACTS of what happened (the "OUTER aim"). Then ask them about the MEANING of the story (the "INNER aim"). Then tell them what Christians now want to DO because of this good lesson - this will be the FRUITS of faith (the way we ought to live as God's children).

   G. The students can now do a coloring page or a craft based on the story, if you have these materials.

   H. Give the students one or more Bible passages to memorize for the next class. Read the passages out loud together and explain the meaning.

   I. End the Sunday school class with a Christian song and a prayer.

WORKSHEET for Sunday School Preparation

Title of the Bible story and location in the Bible:

What is the <u>OUTER</u> aim?

The outer aim is the FACTS about what happened in the story.

What is the <u>INNER</u> aim?

The inner aim is the MEANING of the story for each Christian.

What is the <u>LAW</u> in this story?

The LAW is what God expects from us, and the punishment that comes from breaking his Law.

What is the <u>GOSPEL</u> in this story?

The GOSPEL is the good news about what God has given to us in Jesus.

What are the <u>FRUITS</u> of faith that God wants to see in his children after they hear this story?

The fruits of faith tell us about the life we should now live as God's children

Confirmation Class

A common definition of the word *confirm* is to "establish the truth or correctness of something." When a young person is confirmed in a Lutheran church this means:

- They have received instruction in the basic teachings of the Bible and are able to show that they have learned these things.
- They can declare their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and promise to dedicate themselves to live their lives as faithful children of God.
- They can show that they understand the true meaning and value of the Lord's Supper, and that they are able to examine themselves (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) in preparation for Holy Communion.
- They are now becoming an adult member of the church. As a child they learned about Jesus and attended church because their parents made these choices for them. As they become an adult, the Holy Spirit leads them to make these choices for themselves. They are then able, with the help of God, to promise to be faithful to Jesus and his Word for their whole life.

In this way the congregation, through its pastor, trains young people so that they are ready to *confirm* the faith which the Holy Spirit has given them in their baptism, and strengthened through his Word. It is true that the primary responsibility for instructing the young belongs to their parents, as we read in Ephesians 6:4, *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* But the congregation assists the parents by instructing young people so that they can become adult church members who are able to "examine themselves" for the Lord's Supper.

> *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.* (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

When a congregation is experiencing a pastoral vacancy, **it is highly recommended that the supervising pastor should be the one to conduct confirmation instruction.** If he is not available for in-person classes, perhaps he can conduct the class through an online video call. If this is not possible, and the need still exists for confirmation instruction, then the called Elder Servant of the Word may be asked to conduct the class. This should only be done with the approval of the supervising pastor.

The standard textbooks for each student in the class are a Bible, the Sydow edition of Luther's Small Catechism, and its accompanying workbook. The Sydow Catechism and Workbook can be ordered from the CLC Book House – www.clcbookhouse.org – 715-836-6623.

In cases where you may be called upon to teach the class, you may find a step-by-step guide to teaching the Catechism in the "Instruction for Youth and Adults" section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org.

Adult Bible Study

Whether group Bible study takes place on Sunday morning (for instance, during the Sunday school hour) or on a weekday, tremendous blessings will come to the people of your congregation when they supplement weekly worship with interactive Bible study. As a called Elder Servant of the Word, you may be asked to lead this kind of study. There are many courses, authored by CLC pastors, from which you can choose. These include both a

leader's guide (with suggested answers and helps) as well as student guides. You may download these resources in the "Instruction for Youth and Adults" section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org.

Here is an excerpt from the Leader's Guide on the Gospel of Luke, which is a good place to start. The introductory page includes a step-by-step format for conducting the class.

Excerpts from the Teachers' Guide for a Bible Study on the Gospel of LUKE

This study guide is provided to help pastors or laymen conduct a weekly Bible study on Luke's Gospel. Answers to the questions are provided as an aid to the teacher. However, it is very important for the teacher himself to prepare for each class by studying the Gospel of Luke. You will then be able to do a good job of leading the discussion, and can answer other questions as they come up. It may be helpful to note that it is desirable to have the space for the class arranged so that participants can be facing each other (such as seated around a table or tables). You will get much better participation from the learners that way. Here is a plan for how to present this Bible study:

1. Begin with prayer.
2. Briefly review the topics from the previous week's class.
3. Look at the questions for each section. You may want to ask the questions before reading the verses associated with them, so the students will be looking for the answers.
4. Ask someone to read the current selection of Luke from their Bible.
5. Go back through the questions, for those that have not yet been answered. If no one can answer a given question, explain the passage.
6. Be sure to have someone in the class read the related passages from other books of the Bible that are listed. For example, "See John 3:16."
7. From time to time, ask the class if anyone has other questions or comments. Sometimes questions or comments are offered that are non-biblical or otherwise strange/untrue. If you have a ready answer, you can reply *"Thank you for that interesting point; let's see what the Bible has to say about that."* Or, if you're stumped, you can say *"Thank you for that interesting point. Let me do some research on it, and we'll come back to that."* Then make a note so that you can respond in the future.
8. Go on to the next section, using the same method.
9. Have a closing prayer at the end of the class.

INTRODUCTION to the Gospel of LUKE

The New Testament has four biographies of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

- MATTHEW: A Jewish man who wrote for Jews. Theme: "*Jesus, the Fulfillment of Prophecy"*
- MARK: A Jewish man writing for Christians in Rome. Theme: "*Jesus, the Powerful Son of God"*
- LUKE: A Gentile (non-Jewish) man writing for other Gentiles. Theme*: "Jesus, the Savior of ALL"*
- JOHN: An elderly apostle writing to all Christians. Theme: "*Jesus, the Divine Word Made Flesh"*

Luke wrote to Greeks, a civilization that represented culture, philosophy, beauty, and education. He was a companion of the Apostle Paul on his missionary journeys. Paul referred to Luke as a physician (Col. 4:14). Luke's interest in medical phenomena is evident in the high profile he gave to Jesus' healing ministry. Luke is also the author of the Book of Acts. Luke's Gospel is a beautiful, orderly presentation of Jesus as the Savior of everyone, the Redeemer of all.

Luke: Questions for Each Section, with Answers for the Teacher

1. An Angel Tells Zechariah That His Son John Will Prepare People to Meet Jesus, the Savior, Luke 1:1-25

Introduction: God had made many promises over the centuries to send his Son, Jesus, to pay for the sins of the world so we can go to heaven. The start of Luke's Gospel is the story of how God began to fulfill these promises. It begins with the story of the birth of John the Baptist, who would go ahead of Jesus to announce his arrival.

1:1-4 How can we tell that Luke was careful to find out the truth about Jesus and write it down correctly?
Luke says that he was careful to find out exactly what happened. He spoke with those who saw these things. This probably included the virgin Mary.

Many books have a "dedication page" that mentions a person well-known to the author. Who does Luke dedicate his book to?
Luke "dedicated" his Gospel to a man named Theophilus. We know very little about him, but he might have been an important man who helped Luke to copy and publish his Gospel.

1:5-7 What good things does Luke report about Zechariah and Elizabeth? What was a sad burden for them?
Zechariah and Elizabeth were believers in the true God and did their best to follow God's Word in their lives. But they were unable to have any children. In those days this was considered to be a terrible curse.

1:8-12 What special privilege did Zechariah have on the day that the angel spoke to him?
He went into God's temple in Jerusalem to offer the sweet-smelling incense, which was a symbol of the prayers of the people to God. Only the chosen priest was allowed into the temple.

Why was Zechariah so frightened by the angel?
It was a shock and a surprise to see the glorious angel. In many places in the Bible, when people see the glory of God or his angel, they are afraid. This is because we know we are sinners, and God is holy.

1:13-17 How many times do you think Zechariah had prayed for a child? How long did he have to wait for an answer?
No doubt both Zechariah and Elizabeth had prayed for a child <u>many</u> times, for <u>many</u> years. Sometimes the Lord allows <u>us</u> to wait for answers to our prayers – but he always does answer in the best way, in his good time!

What would the work of this child be, when he grew up?
He would be the forerunner of Jesus, the Messiah. He would turn people's hearts from disobedience to repentance and faith in the one true God. He would get people ready to meet Jesus.

1:18-20 Why did the angel become angry with Zechariah? What were the consequences?
The angel was angry because Zechariah doubted God's promises. He would be unable to speak until the birth of his son, John.

1:21-25 How did the people know that a miracle had happened to Zechariah?
They could see that Zechariah was unable to speak, and had seen a vision in the temple.

Why was the miracle of John's birth such a blessing for Elizabeth?
It was a disgrace to her that she was unable to have a child. God took away her disgrace when she became pregnant.

Final remarks: For a very long time, ever since Adam and Eve, God's people had waited for the promise of the Savior to come true. In the Old Testament, God had prophesied that a special messenger would come to announce the Savior. That special messenger was John the Baptist. His birth was a miracle, because his parents were already very old. He would grow up with the power of the Holy Spirit to call people to repentance, and to point to Jesus as the Savior from sin.

2. An Angel Tells Mary That She Will Be the Mother of Jesus, Luke 1:26-38

Introduction: God sent the angel Gabriel with a special message for the young woman who would be the mother of Jesus. We will find out what the promises in this special message were.

1:26 Who sent the angel to Nazareth? To whom did the angel give the message?
God sent the angel Gabriel to a young virgin named Mary.

1:29 How did Mary feel when she first heard the angel's greeting?
She was troubled, but also curious.

1:31 What did the angel say should happen to Mary? What name should Mary give her son?
She would become pregnant, even though she was a virgin. She would give birth, and she would name the boy JESUS.

1:33 What kind of a king was Jesus?
He would be a descendant of King David, but Jesus would not be an earthly king. He would reign in heaven forever!

1:35 How would Mary have a baby if she had not slept with a man?
This would happen by a miracle of the Holy Spirit. Jesus would not be Joseph's natural Son; He would be GOD's.

This is a sample page; the full Teacher's and Students' Guides for this study are found in the "Bible Study Resources " section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org

Shut-in Ministry and Hospital/Hospice Ministry[6]

Purpose: To help laymen offer dependable Christian fellowship, patient listening, Scripture, prayer, and connection to the congregation. Visits help supplement—not replace—the pastoral care provided by the called pastor if the congregation has one.

"*Encourage one another and build one another up*." (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

The Heart of a Shut-In Visit[7]

A shut-in visit is not merely a social call. It is an opportunity for one member of Christ's body to remember another, listen with patience, share the comfort of God's Word, pray together, and assure the person that he or she remains part of the congregation.

Quick Visit Pattern

1. Prepare: confirm the time, review what you know about the shut-in, and select a short devotion.
2. Arrive warmly: introduce yourself and ask how the person is doing.
3. Listen: invite memories, interests, spiritual and earthly concerns, and prayer requests.
4. Share: read Scripture; offer a brief devotion and familiar hymn when appropriate.
5. Pray: include the person's stated concerns and the promises of Christ.
6. Close: state when contact will happen again.

Before the Visit[8]

How often should a shut-in be visited?

- A dependable goal is at least once each month, with more or less frequent visits when circumstances, loneliness, illness, or the individual's preferences call for it. The congregation should use a schedule so no one is unintentionally overlooked.
    - Monthly is a practical minimum for regular contact.
    - Every other week may be ideal for some individuals.
    - Do not assume that a person with memory loss does not benefit because the visit may later be forgotten. The comfort received in the moment still matters.

When is the best time to visit?

- Ask the person, family, or care facility. In general, avoid meals, therapy, bathing, medical rounds, and the evening dinner hour. The suggested times are late morning (about 9:00–11:00) or early-to-mid afternoon (about 1:30–4:00), but the individual's routine takes priority.

Should I call ahead?

- Usually, yes—especially for a private home. At a nursing or assisted-living facility, learn the person's schedule and the facility's visitor rules. Some regular visitors may have permission simply to come, but do not assume that arrangement applies to everyone.

[6] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 20–23.

[7] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 21–23, 35–44.

[8] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 21–23.

How long should a visit last?

- Long enough to be present, but not so long that the person becomes tired. Many visits can be meaningful in 20–40 minutes. Watch for fatigue, discomfort, confusion, or scheduled care. A shorter visit offered faithfully is better than a long visit that overwhelms the person.

What should I bring?

- Bring a Bible, the hymnal or familiar hymn texts, and a short devotion.
- Photos, a church bulletin, congregation news, or something connected to the person's interests can help begin conversation.
- See "May I Bring Communion?" below. Offer private Communion only if you are authorized to do so by the supervising pastor.

During the Visit[9]

How should I begin?

- Greet the person by name and briefly identify yourself and the congregation. Ask whether it is a good time, even if you made advance arrangements to visit. A short opening prayer can set a calm, Christian purpose for the visit, though conversation may naturally come first when the person needs to speak.

What should we talk about?

- Begin with the person rather than a prepared speech. Ask about family, former work, hobbies, music, church memories, and current activities at the residence. People often appreciate remembering times when they were more active, and sharing things they look forward to:
    - "What kind of work did you do?"
    - "What did you enjoy doing when you were younger?"
    - "Which hymns have always meant the most to you?"
    - "What has your week been like?"
    - "What activities are being planned at the facility?"
    - "Is there something you would like the congregation or pastor to know?"
    - "What may I include in our prayer today?"

What if the person is quiet or conversation is difficult?

- Be prepared to carry more of the conversation without turning the visit into a monologue. Use simple, concrete questions. Photos, familiar music, a bulletin, or an object connected to the person's life may help. Yes-or-no questions can be useful when speech or cognition is limited, but allow time for an answer and do not rush to fill every silence.

What if the person wants to complain or vent?

- Listen without scolding or immediately correcting every detail. Acknowledge the hurt or frustration without joining in gossip or reinforcing bitterness. When the person is ready, gently return to what is true and comforting in God's Word. If the complaint involves abuse, neglect, self-harm, or immediate danger, follow the reporting guidance in this manual.

[9] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 35–44.

How do I keep the visit Christ-centered without making it feel forced?

- Let Scripture answer an expressed need. If the person is lonely, grieving, afraid, guilty, or discouraged, choose a clear passage, if possible, that gives Christ's promise rather than a long lesson. If you don't have a passage in mind, share what you know about what Scripture says.
- Keep the devotion brief, apply the Gospel personally, and avoid turning the visit into a debate.

Should we sing a hymn?

- Offer rather than assume: "Would you like to sing or hear a hymn?" Familiar, simple hymns often work best. The person may choose a favorite. Singing can come near the end and lead naturally into prayer.
- If you don't feel comfortable singing, bring a recording to listen to. If you have a laptop or capable phone, you can find a large variety of favorite TLH hymns, in four-part harmony with on-screen lyrics, at www.youtube.com/@TheLutheranQuartet.

How should I pray?

- Pray simply and specifically. Thank God for his mercy in Christ, include the concerns the person shared, ask for comfort and faithful care, remember family and caregivers, and close in Jesus' name. Note that suitable prayers are provided with each "Minute Meditation," referenced below.

Scripture and Spiritual Care[10]

Which Scripture passages are helpful?

- Choose short, familiar passages and match them to the person's needs. Read slowly and clearly. A few dependable choices include:

    - Psalm 23 — the Lord's shepherding care.
    - Psalm 46:1–3, 10–11 — refuge in trouble.
    - Isaiah 43:1–3 — the Lord has redeemed and called his people by name.
    - Matthew 11:28–30 — Christ's invitation to the weary.
    - John 10:27–30 — Christ holds his sheep securely.
    - John 14:1–6 — Christ's comfort and promised home.
    - Romans 8:31–39 — nothing separates us from God's love in Christ.
    - 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 — present affliction and eternal glory.
    - 1 Peter 5:6–7 — cast every anxiety on Him.
    - Revelation 21:1–5 — God will make all things new.

- "Minute Meditations," by CLC Pastor Walter Schaller, is an excellent resource if you would like to read a devotion and prayer. They are available at elders.clclutheran.org/shut-in.html. (See a sample at the end of this chapter.)

May I bring Holy Communion?

- Again, bring Private Communion only in consultation with the supervising pastor.
- Communion may be given if the shut-in is a communicant member of the CLC.
- Be aware that a person's cognitive abilities may exclude them from receiving Communion if they are unable to examine themselves.
- Ask the shut-in if they would like to receive Communion from you, or wait for the supervising pastor.

[10] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 38–44.

- See Appendix 3 or www.elders.clclutheran.org/shut-in.html for an Order of Service for Private Communion.
- If your church keeps a Communion registry, make an entry for the person and date.
- If you need a private Communion kit, selections are available at www.christianbook.com or www.concordiasupply.com.

What if the person raises a serious spiritual concern?

- Listen carefully and do not pretend to have every answer. Share clear Scripture when you can, but consult the supervising pastor when the person expresses persistent guilt, despair, fear of death, doctrinal confusion, a desire for confession and absolution, questions about Communion, or a request for pastoral counsel.

Memory Loss, Dementia, and Limited Communication

See below for a link to a Journal of Theology article called "Ministering to the Victims of Alzheimer's Disease and Their Families" written by Pastor Ted Barthels.

- *https://journaloftheology.org/jtheo_arch/jt-2001-vol-041-num-04.pdf* (or click HERE)

How should I visit someone with dementia or significant memory loss?

- Enter the person's present situation with patience. Do not test the person's memory or repeatedly correct harmless confusion. Let the person talk and gently bring the conversation back to the present when possible.
    - Introduce yourself each time without showing frustration.
    - Use one thought or question at a time.
    - Speak slowly, warmly, and at eye level.
    - Use familiar Scripture, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and simple hymns.
    - Help turn pages or point to the words when the person wants to follow along.
    - Expect shorter attention spans and shorten the visit as needed.
    - Remember: even if the details are forgotten, reassurance, dignity, and Christian comfort can still be received in the moment.

What if the person says something that is not accurate?

- Correct only when safety or an important decision is involved. For harmless inaccuracies, avoid arguing. Acknowledge the feeling behind the words and redirect gently: "That sounds important to you. Today I came to sit with you and read one of your favorite psalms."

What if hearing or vision is limited?

- Face the person, reduce background noise, speak clearly without shouting, and make sure hearing aids or glasses are available if staff can assist. Use large print and strong contrast. Describe what you are doing before touching, moving a chair, or handing over an object.

Boundaries, Safety, and Confidentiality[11]

What information should remain confidential?

Treat personal, medical, family, and spiritual details with care. Share only what is necessary with the supervising pastor. Do not repeat stories as conversation material, post about the visit, or share photos without clear permission. Never promise absolute secrecy when safety or mandatory reporting may be involved.

What boundaries should a visitor keep?

Be warm without becoming the person's sole source of support. Do not manage money, borrow or lend funds, accept significant gifts, sign documents, give medical or legal advice, transport the person without approval, or make promises on behalf of the church. Follow the congregation's safeguarding policy, including any two-person or check-in requirements.

What if the person appears sick or the facility has restrictions?

Follow posted infection-control rules and staff instructions. Reschedule when you are ill. Ask before bringing food, flowers, or gifts because of allergies, diets, oxygen use, or facility rules. In an urgent medical situation, alert staff or call emergency services first; then notify the pastor or coordinator.

What concerns should be reported promptly?

Contact the supervising pastor when you observe a marked decline, repeated falls, severe loneliness, spiritual distress, a request for Communion or pastoral counsel, inability to obtain necessities, concerning caregiver behavior, or a major change in residence. Follow civil law and church policy for suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, self-harm, or immediate danger.

After the Visit[12]

What should I record?

- Record useful ministry information: date, whether Scripture/prayer/hymn were included, requested follow-up, and any concern that must reach the supervising pastor.

How should I end the visit?

- Watch the time, ask whether there is anything else to include in prayer, and close warmly. If possible, give a realistic expectation for the next contact: "I plan to visit again next month," or "I will ask Pastor _____ to call on you." Do not promise what you cannot control.

How can additional helpers be supported and trained?

- If you have another volunteer for this work, accompany him or her for the first visits. Give them a copy of this section of the manual. Training should include listening, dementia awareness, confidentiality, emergency response, and the congregation's Communion and safeguarding practices.

[11] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 35–44.

[12] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 21–23, 35–44.

One-Page Visit Checklist

Before

☐ Confirm the time and location.

☐ Review the person's needs, interests, and previous follow-up.

☐ Choose a short devotion or Scripture passage, a prayer, and possible hymn.

☐ Know whom to contact if a concern arises.

☐ Do not visit if you are ill.

During

☐ Ask whether it is still a good time.

☐ Listen more than you speak.

☐ Include the person's interests and memories.

☐ Share Scripture and the Gospel.

☐ Offer a familiar hymn if appropriate.

☐ Ask for prayer requests and pray together.

☐ Watch for fatigue, discomfort, or care interruptions.

After

☐ Record the visit in the approved system.

☐ Relay pastoral, practical, or safety concerns promptly.

☐ Complete any promised follow-up.

☐ Schedule or communicate the next contact.

Remember, your task is not to solve every problem. Be present, listen patiently, bring the comfort of God's Word, and connect the person with the supervising pastor.

Sample 30-Minute Visit

0–5 minutes | Welcome

Greeting, settling in, and a simple question about the week

5–15 minutes | Conversation

Memories, family, interests, current activities, and concerns

15–23 minutes | Scripture

A short reading and a brief Gospel-centered application

23–27 minutes | Hymn

One familiar stanza or listening together, if desired

27–30 minutes | Prayer and close

Specific prayer, confirm follow-up, and a warm farewell

Sample of a "Minute Meditation" Devotion

"A Friend in the Highest"

Find the complete collection at elders.clclutheran.org/shut-in.html.

TEXT – *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13)

MEDITATION – Need a friend? Jesus Christ showed himself to be our greatest friend when he laid down his life to atone for our long history of violence and rebellion against God. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. But that's not all. Jesus, the Son of God, who became one with us in our humanity, continues so. But now he no longer walks the earth in humble garb, subject to the laws of nature and of men. He is at the Father's right hand. God the Father raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. Now, for most, the right hand is the strongest hand. For that reason, to be at the right hand has come to refer to a position of power and authority. Jesus Christ is not only beyond the reach of death, his authority and influence surpasses every other. He who ate and drank, walked and talked with us, now rules over all for the sake of those who trust in him. When we feel helpless and powerless in the face of life's events, then we need to remember that we have a friend in the highest place of all.

PRAYER – *Almighty Father, we confess that Christ teaches us that greatness is found in receiving and serving the least. Pardon us when our love grows cold, selective, and impatient when service becomes costly. We praise You because Jesus loved us to the end, laid down his life for his friends, and welcomed the outcast. In mercy, teach us to receive the forgotten, defend our neighbor, and serve without demanding repayment. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whose name we also pray together... (the Lord's Prayer)*

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Congregational Leadership[13]

When the congregation asks you to be its called Elder Servant of the Word, you will be taking on a certain degree of responsibility for leadership in the congregation. Your areas of service should be defined by the call letter, and made public during your installation in a worship service (see Appendix 1 for sample documents). Your leadership duties will also be limited by the following considerations:

- You should always defer to the called supervising pastor and be in regular communication with him for guidance.
- If you are not the President of the congregation, your responsibilities should not overlap with his. See the church's Constitution and confer with the Chairman about your differing roles.
- You serve at the call and direction of the congregation. This means that you will follow the direction of the church's voters, and give regular reports to them about your activities and the state of the congregation.

[13] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 8–9, 16–24.

Congregational Meetings[14]

Your church probably already has a familiar format and order for meetings of the voters, elders, committees, etc. If this is working well, there is no need to change it. Below is some advice if you are new to this, or otherwise need some guidance:

1. The President of the congregation usually chairs the voters' meeting.
2. It is always helpful to have a printed agenda. This serves to cover all the needed topics in an orderly way. It also helps the Secretary, who should record and keep the minutes of the meeting. If you can publish the agenda (in print or electronically) before the meeting, this helps people to prepare. A sample agenda:
    a. Opening devotion and prayer
    b. Approval of the previous meeting's minutes (read by the Secretary)
    c. Reports from officers, boards or committees
    d. Old business (items held over from the previous agenda, including "action items" assigned previously)
    e. New business (elections, if any – also ask members if there are any new items or proposals)
    f. Review and assign action items, for reporting at the next meeting
    g. Close with prayer
3. Your meetings might typically be informal – for example, several Elders or voters have a friendly discussion and concur on various decisions. That's fine, but if topics come up where there is a difference of opinion, and people are talking over each other, it can be helpful if everyone agrees to use a basic form of "Robert's Rules of Order." To do this you only need four core principles to keep meetings running smoothly and fairly.
    a. One speaker at a time: The chair (leader) recognizes one person to speak; no interrupting or side conversations.
    b. Motions drive action: Nothing is discussed or voted on unless someone makes a specific proposal, called a motion (e.g., "I move that we spend $500 to recover the pews"). Another person must say "I second the motion" before the group talks about it.
    c. Debate fairly: Once a motion is seconded, the group discusses it. The person who made the motion usually speaks first. Other speakers then indicate that they would like a turn. They speak when the chairman says it is their turn. Everyone gets a fair turn, without being interrupted, before anyone speaks a second time.
    d. Vote to decide: After debate winds down, the chair calls for a vote (usually "Ready to vote? All in favor say aye, opposed say nay"), and the majority decides the matter.

[14] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 219–225.

Meetings for Calling a Pastor

When the voters meet to call a pastor, it is always best if the supervising pastor can be present, in person, to conduct the meeting. If this isn't possible, try to arrange for him to attend the meeting by video call or speakerphone. If this isn't possible, see the "Sample Agenda for a Voters' Meeting to Call a Pastor" at our CLC Elders website. You may also find a sample Call Form which you can download and customize. Both of these resources are available in the "Congregational Meetings" section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org

Dealing with Conflicts[15]

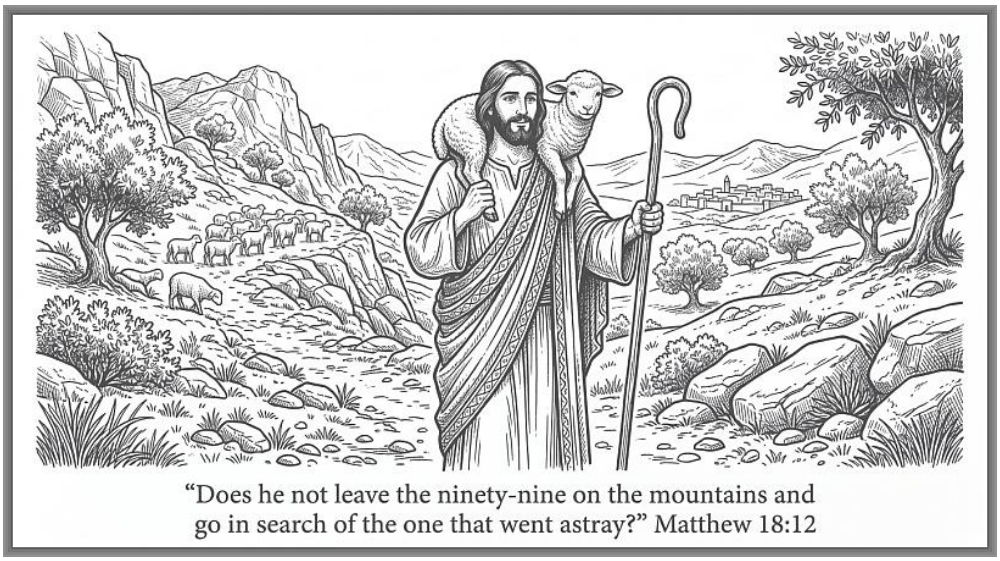
Christians still have a sinful flesh, and personalities sometimes clash. Even the Apostle Paul had to help resolve such issues:

> *I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.* (Philippians 4:2-3)

If you find the need to help resolve disagreements between members, here is some helpful advice:

1. As always, seek the guidance of the supervising pastor.
2. If you have a personal interest in the matter, someone else should be the mediator, not you.
3. Listen closely to both "sides" of a dispute, prior to making any conclusions.
4. Always do your best to get all parties together, face-to-face, to resolve any conflict. If at all possible, avoid debating anything by email, texting, etc. People write things to each other that they would never say in person.
5. Open the meeting with prayer, and remind all concerned of the Gospel of Christ crucified that we share in common.
6. Invite both "sides" to present their case in a Christian manner, and ask that they do not interrupt each other. Point out common ground, and suggest ways that they might reach agreement and harmony.
7. If you are tempted to state a conclusion or make an accusation, it is always best to **ask a question** about it and listen carefully to the answer. For example, instead of saying *"How could you SAY something like that!",* ask *"Is it true that you said that?"* This helps to keep things calm.
8. A key verse to share with people in dispute is Ephesians 4:31-32, *"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **as God in Christ forgave you**."*
9. If there is no resolution, do not pronounce your own judgment. Tell the people that you will be seeking guidance from the supervising pastor and/or elders, and ask for their permission to do so. After that consultation, reschedule another meeting.

[15] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 45–58, 70–80, 35–44, 75–80, 117–119.



"Does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?" Matthew 18:12

Seeking the Lost Sheep[16]

Note that the primary responsibility for seeking out wayward church members normally falls on the regular pastor, who is assisted in this by the church's elders. **During a pastoral vacancy this work should only be done at the direction of the supervising pastor.** This needs skill in administering God's Law and his Gospel at the proper time. As the called Elder Servant of the Word, you and the other elders may be the "men on the ground," and so you need to know some of the principles involved on the subject of church discipline.

Christian congregations have a special obligation to love their own members enough to seek them out when they are living in open, impenitent sins. Because we are all sinners, it is important to understand this distinction: *penitent* sinners bring their guilt and shame to Jesus for forgiveness and want to be free from their sins, while *impenitent* sinners remain in their sins on purpose. This can be happening secretly in a person's life, and none of his fellow church members may be aware of it. However, when a church member is *openly impenitent,* that is another matter. In that case he is obviously living in a sin on purpose (for example, living together as man and wife, but without being married). It is then that his fellow Christians have an obligation to do their best to help him.

A person cannot remain in their sins on purpose and belong to Jesus at the same time. The Bible is clear on this:

> *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.* (Hebrews 10:26-27)

[16] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 45–69, 70–87, 48–58, 80–87.

Because Jesus has special care and concern for those who have gone astray, so should we:

> *What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.* (Matthew 18:12-14)

Our purpose is not to condemn, but to rescue:

> *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.* (Galatians 6:1)

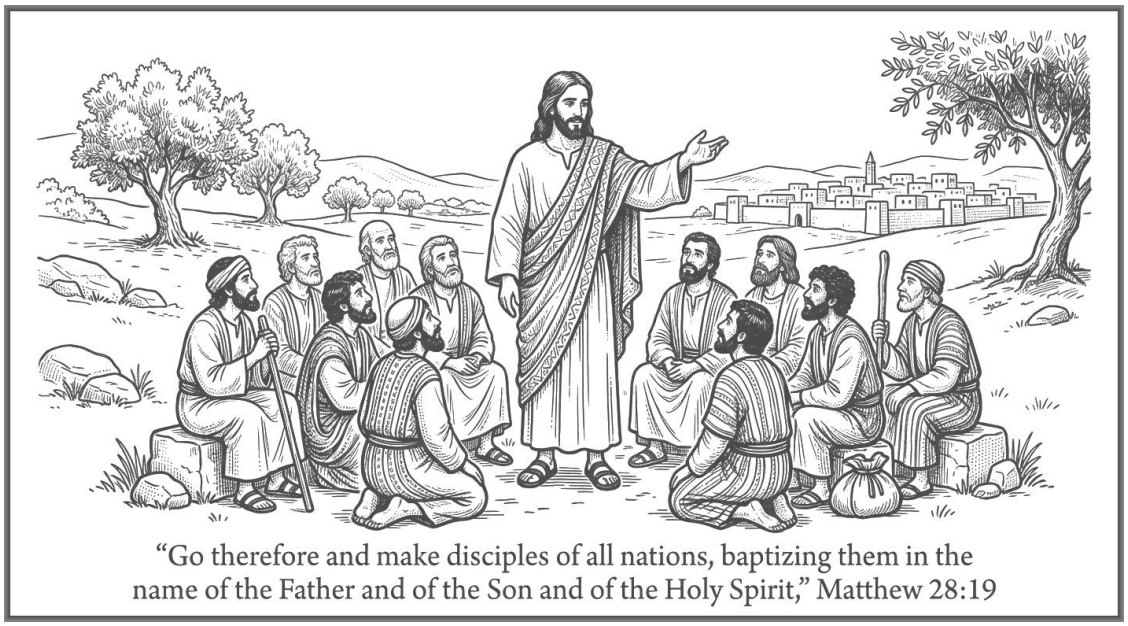
Jesus gives us instructions about dealing with an impenitent member in Matthew 18:

> *If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* (Matthew 18:15-18)

To summarize:

- The church member who is first aware that another is living in sin on purpose should admonish him or her, one-to-one and in person.
- If the person won't listen and continues in the sin, two or three should admonish the individual.
- If the person won't listen and continues in the sin, the congregation (normally the voters) should be informed and should admonish the impenitent sinner.
- If the person rejects the admonition of the congregation, the congregation should excommunicate him or her. By this the church is saying, *"You are no longer a member here, and you don't belong to Jesus anymore, as long as you do not repent."* This is strong medicine, intended to bring about a change of heart. When it is done in loving concern and according to Matthew 18, this is not just the congregation's action; according to Matthew 18 it is also God's own judgment in heaven.

When the well-being of souls is at stake, problems like this can't simply be ignored because there is a pastoral vacancy. However, as stated above, **this kind of rescue mission should only be undertaken at the direction of the supervising pastor, and with his guidance.**



"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," Matthew 28:19

Local Outreach and Evangelism

Your local congregation serves its own members by building up each other's faith, as you speak to one another *"in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ "*(Ephesians 5:19-20). This is a fine purpose, but it is still important for your congregation to fulfill our Savior's commission to GO with the light of God's Word to the people in your community and abroad. This may be challenging during a time of pastoral vacancy. Still, in your role as Elder Servant of the Word you can provide leadership to advance Jesus' kingdom through personal and congregational outreach. This chapter provides an outline of advice and activities for your use. May God bless your efforts!

Make Outreach an Ongoing Concern[17]

Your members are probably aware that personal and congregational outreach is important. Sometimes, though, very little is done if the subject is not regularly in front of them. As a leader you can help them do more. It is very beneficial for the church to have a dedicated Outreach Committee. If this isn't practical, then you can accomplish the same thing by always having "Outreach" on the agenda for your elders and/or voters' meeting. Print out this chapter to get the ball rolling. Pray for zeal and opportunities for the Lord to open doors with the Gospel. Discuss all the options and opportunities, and assign action items to capable people. At the next meeting, ask for reports on the assigned action items, and continue the process. God will bless your efforts!

[17] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 20–21, 99–103.

Encourage Personal Evangelism[18]

Experienced pastors consistently report the same thing: the main avenue for growth in the congregation comes from personal contacts from the current members when they share their faith with family, friends, and acquaintances. For an excellent Bible study and workbook on personal evangelism topics. See "Let Your Light SHINE," by S. Kurtzahn, available in the "Outreach and Evangelism" section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org.

Raise Your Church's Profile

People in your community will not visit your church unless they know that there is an active congregation there. Here are some practical suggestions for making your congregation known in the community:

- Have a prominent church sign in front that lists service times, contact information, and website address.
- Maintain an informative, regularly updated church website and social media pages. If there is no one available in your church with the skills for this, you may contact CLC Pastor Aaron Ude at aaronude@gmail.com or 715-225-1993. He can refer you to people who are willing to help.
- Livestream your services on Facebook, YouTube, or other streaming services. Again, for assistance contact Pastor Aaron Ude.
- Publicize service times, community activities, and special events, using local noticeboards, newsletters, posters, and community newspapers.

Think Outside the Box

Ascension Lutheran of Tacoma, WA assembled a large collection of outreach ideas and materials, entitled the "Tacoma Outreach Menu." You may see both the table of contents and the full manual in the "Outreach and Evangelism" section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org. Have your Outreach Committee (or Elders) peruse the manual, and note ideas that warrant discussion for your church's use.

Be Ready to Inform

Hopefully, the people who are new to your church will want to find out more about what you have to offer, and what your church and the CLC teaches. There should be a tract rack in the narthex or entryway to your church, with devotional and informational pamphlets about your congregation and the CLC. Often this rack has the last few issues of *The Lutheran Spokesman* on it. A variety of helpful tracts are available in the "Outreach and Evangelism" section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org.

[18] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 20–21.

Follow Up on Contacts

When a visitor attends services, it is very important that they feel welcomed, but not smothered. Do your best to get contact information through your church guest book or by personal inquiry. Be sure that a follow-up contact is made in the near future, preferably by phone or regular mail, or if necessary, by email or text message. For more tips on follow-up, see the "Let Your Light SHINE" document referenced above.

Promote CLC Missions

Your members should be aware that their witnessing work for the Lord Jesus is not only done locally, but also through the CLC. Their prayers and contributions for our joint mission work further the Gospel in our own country and around the world! For information and resources see www.lutheranmissions.org.

Leave the Growth to God

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus gave his disciples and us a Great Commission to spread the Gospel throughout the world:

> *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* (Matthew 28:19-20)

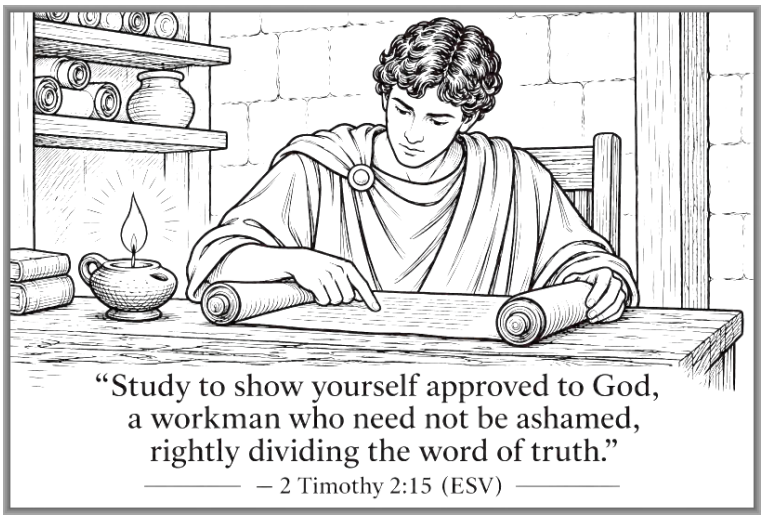
It is clear that Jesus expects us to be earnest about this work of spreading his kingdom. At the same time, it is important to remember that the work of actually changing hearts so that they rely on Christ is not ours, but rather the work of the Holy Spirit. Remembering this will serve to keep us from being proud when our efforts show success, and will also give us confidence and hope when results may seem to be lacking. Our job is to plant the seed of his Word. He is the one who will bring the growth, in his own time and way!

> *The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.* (Mark 4:26-29)

> *What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.* (1 Corinthians 3:5-6)

May God bless your work in the interest of his harvest of souls!

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Resources for Ongoing Study[19]

Serving as an Elder Servant of the Word may awaken a desire to grow in your knowledge of Scripture and prepare for additional service. This may be for your own personal growth in knowledge of God's Word, which can assist you in serving God's people in your temporary capacity during a pastoral vacancy. The following resources to help with this worthy goal are available:

Self-Study or Guided Study

The CLC Missions website has a series of online study courses at www.onlinetheologicalstudies.org. These were originally written for pastoral training of overseas theology students. Among the courses available are:

- Confirmation Class
- Dogmatics (advanced Bible doctrine)
- Church History
- Hermeneutics (Biblical Interpretation)
- Homiletics (sermon preparation and preaching)
- Missiology
- Old and New Testament Survey
- Law and Gospel

You can benefit from these courses through self-study, or request a remote mentor to guide you through the course and check your progress. **Please note** that these studies are for your personal enrichment. They do not, however, lead to any certification for pastoral ministry. To request a mentor/guide, contact Missionary Bruce Naumann via email at brucenaumann@gmail.com.

[19] Clement, The Shepherd's Assistants, 3–7, 27–28.

ILC Limited Ministry Program (LMP)

The Self-study and guided study courses explained above can benefit anyone, and will be very helpful for the Called Elder Servant who is temporarily filling in during a pastoral vacancy. However, they do not result in any certification for limited pastoral duties. If your desire is to become qualified to serve with pastoral duties in an ongoing way, ILC's **Limited Ministry Program** (LMP) may be the next step for you.

What is the Limited Ministry Program?

The LMP prepares experienced laymen for a defined area of pastoral service under the continuing supervision of a CLC pastor. Depending on the congregation's call and the man's preparation, this service may include:

- Assisting with worship, Bible classes, and confirmation instruction.
- Visiting the sick and shut-in and bringing them the comfort of God's Word.
- Helping a pastor who serves several congregations.
- Serving in vacancy work, outreach, or a mission setting.

"Limited" refers to the scope of training, responsibility, and the call. The work may be full-time, but it always remains under pastoral supervision. Completing the LMP prepares a man for consideration for this supervised service; it does not qualify him for an unrestricted regular pastoral call.

Who should consider the program?

LMP is open to male communicant members of the CLC who are at least 30 years old. It may be especially suitable for a man considering a second career or greater service during retirement.

Along with a desire to serve, an applicant should possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. Faithfulness, humility, patience, and willingness to receive guidance are essential. Your pastor can help you consider how your gifts and circumstances may fit this work.

What does the training involve?

The program includes three years of college and seminary coursework, with the final two years taken in residence at ILC. Students study Scripture, Christian doctrine, the Lutheran Confessions, church history, and the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Practical instruction includes preaching, teaching, worship, pastoral care, counseling, and evangelism.

Two supervised internships in separate CLC congregations, ordinarily totaling twelve weeks, provide practical experience. Prior knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not required for admission. Introductory Greek is included in the program; Hebrew is not required.

Some coursework may be arranged online or through approved distance study. The full program still requires the two years in residence, successful internships, and the necessary faculty and church approval for eligibility for a call. Full-time LMP students are eligible for tuition grants and other financial aid.

Can I strengthen my training without completing the whole program?

Yes! Many ILC courses are available online, making further study possible while you continue serving your congregation. Especially helpful are the eight semesters of college religion courses available through ILC's online learning site:

- **Old Testament — Religion 101–102:** Study Genesis through Malachi, tracing God's promises and his gracious dealings with his people.
- **New Testament — Religion 203–204:** Study the life and work of Christ in the Gospels, followed by Acts and the Epistles.
- **Lutheran Confessions — Religion 305–306:** Become better acquainted with the creeds and confessional writings that express our Lutheran faith.
- **Christian Doctrine — Religion 407–408:** Study the teachings of Scripture and their application to Christian faith and life.

Another valuable option is **Religion 411, Distinguishing Law and Gospel**, which is also available online. This study can help you apply God's Word more carefully when teaching, sharing a devotion, or comforting someone in distress.

You do not need to commit to the full LMP to benefit from these courses. Taking even one course can deepen your understanding and strengthen your service. Ask about auditing for personal enrichment or enrolling for credit. Current offerings and credit options vary; consult ILC's academic dean about a suitable course and how it might fit future study.

How do I take the next step?

Begin by talking with your pastor or Conference Visitor. Together, consider whether an online course or the full LMP would best fit your gifts, responsibilities, and opportunities to serve.

For information, contact **Academic Dean Paul Naumann at paul.naumann@ilc.edu**, or visit ILC's website. Questions about the full LMP and seminary coursework may also be directed to the seminary dean. LMP applications are due June 15 and require recommendations from the applicant's pastor and Conference Visitor.

Whether you begin with one online course or pursue the full program, further study is a worthwhile investment in serving Christ's people. Prayerfully consider how the Lord might use this opportunity to equip you for the work he places before you.

Appendix 1 - Resources for Calling an Elder Servant of the Word

NOTE: Edit this letter as needed before delivery

Sample Call Letter for a Called Elder Servant of the Word

Download an editable copy of this in Word format in the "Congregational Leadership" section of our Elder Ministry Training website: elders.clclutheran.org.

[Date]

Dear Brother in Christ:

In a regular meeting of our congregation we, the members of _____ Lutheran Church, have called you to serve in various areas of the ministry of God's Word among us, during this time when we are without a regularly-called pastor. We ask you to do this according to the needs as specified in this document, or as may be resolved and mutually agreed upon from time to time. We are entrusting these duties to you, dear brother, with the understanding that you will be guided in your work by our vacancy pastor, **[Name: _____]**, when he is absent from us: **[or – by our Conference Visitor, Name: _____].** We are issuing this call with the understanding that your time of service in these areas will be complete when the Lord brings a regularly-called pastor to serve among us.

It is fitting that you should be reminded of the solemn duties we are asking you to do, so that you may carry them out in a manner that is fitting for a faithful servant of Christ. We are asking you to: **[edit the items below, or circle all that may apply]**

- Conduct our regular worship services and deliver an edifying sermon,
- Administer the Lord's Supper in our worship services according to our customary schedule,
- Visit our shut-in members, the sick and those hospitalized to give them scriptural devotions for their spiritual strengthening and comfort,
- Lead our Sunday or weekday Bible class for our instruction in the Word of God,
- Supervise our Sunday School program, giving guidance to those who teach,
- Conduct Catechism classes for our youth, preparing them for communicant membership in our church,
- Give your aid and scriptural counsel to those who request guidance from the Word of God,
- Lead us in outreach efforts for the growth of God's kingdom among us,
- Report regularly to our Church Council and voters about the state of the congregation and its members
- Have in your heart and in your prayers at all times the spiritual welfare of every soul whom you serve.

You are to devote yourself to the meditation and study of the Scriptures, and to carry out your duties in conformity with the Word of God. You are to be an example to others in godliness and Christian living, putting no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that the ministry of this congregation will not be harmed.

On our part we promise, if the Lord moves you to accept our call,

1. To receive, honor, and love you as our called Elder Servant of the Word;
2. To support your work among us with our prayers and personal assistance;

3. To provide a regular stipend of $_____ per month of service, as well as reimbursement for expenses that have to do with your church work. This includes a mileage rate of ___ cents per mile for church-related driving.

May the Lord lead you to recognize this call as coming from him. Should he lead you to accept this call, may he bless your service among us 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.

In Christ, on behalf of the members of _____ Lutheran Church,

_____ [first sign, then print NAME], President



Rite of Installation for a Called Elder Servant of the Word

Download an editable copy of this in Word format at elders.clclutheran.org/leadership.html

This installation shall be administered under the guidance of the supervising pastor. If he cannot be present, the congregation's President or another church elder can conduct. Please be sure that the man or men who are being called are given a copy of this, so that they are clear beforehand about what will be asked of them in public, including the items which are checked below. A suggested time for the installation is during the worship service, after the Lord's Prayer and prior to the Benediction. The person conducting shall ask the candidate to come forward and shall say:

Dear Brother(s): ***[plural if more than one man is being asked to serve]***

You have been called by this congregation to serve in various areas of the ministry of God's Word among us during this time when we are without a regularly-called pastor. We are entrusting these duties to you, dear brother, with the understanding that you will be guided in your work by our vacancy pastor when he is absent from us: [Name: _____] [or – by our Conference Visitor, Name: _____]

It is fitting that you should be reminded of the solemn duties we are asking you to do, so that you may carry them out in a manner that is fitting for a faithful servant of Christ. We are asking you to: ***[circle and read all that may apply]***

- Conduct our regular worship services and deliver an edifying sermon,
- Administer the Lord's Supper in our worship services according to our customary schedule,
- Visit our shut-in members, the sick and those hospitalized to give them scriptural devotions for their spiritual strengthening and comfort,
- Lead our Sunday or weekday Bible class for our instruction in the Word of God,
- Supervise our Sunday School program, giving guidance to those who teach,
- Conduct Catechism classes for our youth, preparing them for communicant membership in our church,
- Give your aid and scriptural counsel to those who request guidance from the Word of God,
- Lead us in outreach efforts for the growth of God's kingdom among us,
- Report regularly to our Church Council and voters about the state of the congregation and its members, and

- Have in your heart and in your prayers at all times the spiritual welfare of every soul whom you serve.

You are to devote yourself to the meditation and study of the Scriptures, to carry out your duties in conformity with the Word of God. You are to be an example to others in godliness and Christian living, putting no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that the ministry of this congregation will not be discredited. The Apostle Paul writes in Titus 1:6-9,

> (An elder) *is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

I ask you, therefore, dear brother, in the presence of God and this congregation:

Are you willing and ready to assume this responsibility and to faithfully carry out these duties of service to our congregation? If so, then answer "**I am**."

Will you preach and teach the pure Word of God in accordance with the Confessions of this Evangelical Lutheran Church, and will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do? If so, then answer "**Yes, with the help of God**."

[Address the congregation]

And now, to the members of [Name of the church: _____], You have heard the solemn promise given by the man you have called to be your Elder. I admonish and urge you, therefore, to receive him as a servant of God's Word among you, in the capacity to which he has been called. Keep both him and this congregation in your daily prayers, and give to him the honor and respect of which the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verses 12-13, *"We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves."*

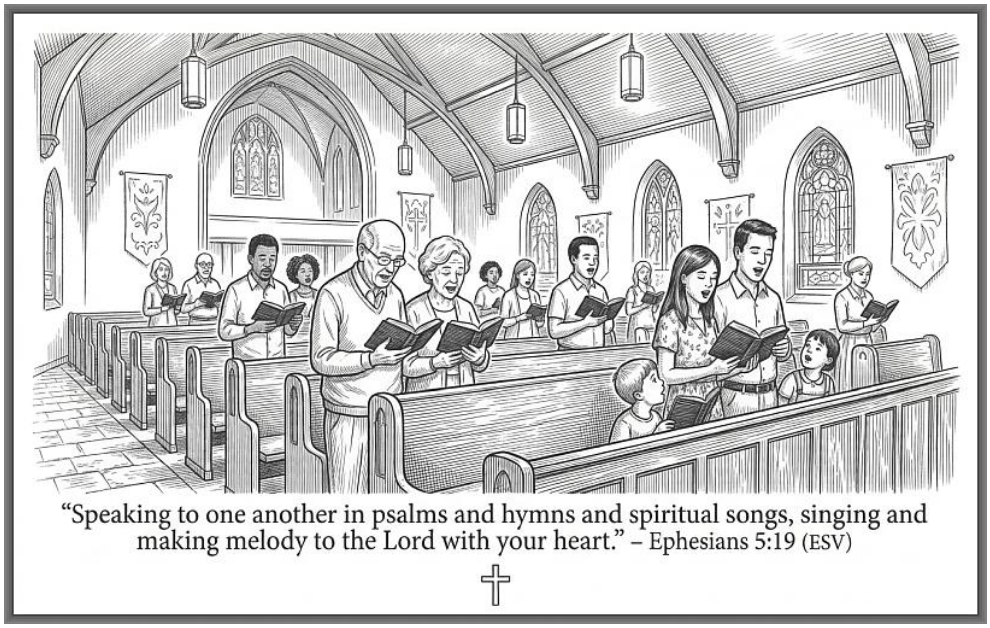
[Address the applicant]

And now, dear brother, by virtue of your call to serve in these areas, I now install you as a called Elder servant of God's Word for this congregation in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A men.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in you what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[Address the congregation]

Let us pray: Merciful God and Father, you have graciously promised that through the preaching of the crucified Christ those who believe in him will be saved. By your Holy Spirit grant grace to your servant whom you have given to serve this congregation in its time of need. Grant him readiness and steadfastness in his service. Give him patience, understanding, and great zeal. Support and strengthen him in your service that by your Word your Church may be built and increased; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Appendix 2 - Recorded Music for the Worship Service

A congregation without an organist can still enjoy music that supports its worship. With a smartphone, a suitable speaker, and a little preparation, recorded hymns and liturgy can be simple to use. Once everything is ready, operating the music during the service usually requires only **Play, Pause, and Volume**.

As the one conducting the service, you may choose to control the music yourself. You may find it easier, however, to recruit a capable church member to handle playback while you concentrate on leading worship.

What equipment do we need?

- **A smartphone** with the service's music saved on it.
- **A Bluetooth speaker** powerful enough for your worship space. A small speaker may serve a small church well; a larger room may require a larger speaker. Test it from the back of the church to make sure everyone can hear clearly.
- **MP3 recordings of hymns and liturgical music**, available from Professor Paul Naumann at paul.naumann@ilc.edu.
- **A music-player or jukebox app** that plays MP3 files saved on your phone and lets you arrange them in a playlist. Pi Music Player for Android is one example.

How should I prepare the music before Sunday?

Create a separate folder or playlist for the service, named something like "Sunday, October 11" or "Current Sunday." Include only the selections you will need, arranged in the exact order of worship. For example:

1. Prelude or preservice music, if desired.
2. Opening hymn.
3. Liturgy.
4. Pre-sermon hymn.
5. Offertory.
6. Post-sermon hymn.
7. Communion liturgy, when needed.
8. Triple Amen after the benediction, if used.
9. Closing hymn.

Adjust this list to match your congregation's order of service. If the liturgy consists of several recordings, place each selection where it belongs.

A playlist lets you arrange the music without changing your original MP3 files. If you prefer a folder, numbering the filenames can help keep them in order: **01 Opening Hymn**, **02 Liturgy**, and so on. Confirm that your app displays them in that order.

Turn off Shuffle and Repeat. Also check what happens when a recording ends. If the app automatically plays the next track, disable that feature if possible. Otherwise, the operator must be ready to pause before the next selection begins. Test this before worship.

How do I connect and position the speaker?

1. Turn on the Bluetooth speaker.
2. On your phone, open **Settings → Bluetooth** and select the speaker.
3. Play a few seconds of a hymn to confirm that the sound comes through the speaker.
4. Place the speaker where the congregation can hear it clearly, keeping the phone within reliable Bluetooth range.
5. Set the volume high enough to support congregational singing without overpowering it.

Check that both the phone and speaker are fully charged. Keep chargers nearby if practical.

How can I prevent calls or notifications from interrupting worship?

Before the service:

- Enable **Do Not Disturb** and check for any exceptions that still allow calls or notifications.
- Turn off any alarms scheduled during worship.
- Keep **media volume on** so the recordings remain audible.
- Open the Sunday folder or playlist and leave the first selection ready.

Do not assume that silencing the ringer also silences alarms or every notification. Check your phone's settings and test them beforehand.

What do I do during the service?

Have the order of service beside you so you can follow along.

- When a selection is needed, confirm the correct track and tap **Play**.
- When it ends, stop or pause playback as needed to prevent the next track from starting.
- Select the next item and leave it paused, ready for its place in the service.
- Adjust the volume only when necessary.

If another member operates the music, agree beforehand on the cues for starting each selection. A brief practice together can make Sunday morning much smoother.

The goal is simple: during worship, you should normally need only **Play, Pause, and Volume**.

Can we play hymns directly from a website?

Recorded hymns may also be played from the TLH 1941 hymn website on a phone connected to the speaker.

For regular use, however, keeping the MP3 files on the phone is usually more dependable because playback does not require an Internet connection. Whichever method you choose, test it in the church before Sunday.

What should I check on Saturday?

A short rehearsal can prevent most difficulties:

- Connect the phone and speaker.
- Open the Sunday folder or playlist and verify the order.
- Play part of every selection to confirm that it is the correct hymn or liturgical recording.
- Check that the hymn recording matches the verses planned for the service.
- Confirm that Shuffle and Repeat are off.
- Practice stopping after a selection so the next one does not begin unexpectedly.
- Check the volume from several places in the church.
- Verify that calls, notifications, and alarms will not interrupt playback.
- Charge both devices and leave the first selection ready.

The setup may feel unfamiliar at first, but it soon becomes routine. A little preparation allows the music to serve its purpose: supporting the congregation as it sings God’s praise and hears his Word.

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Appendix 3 - Order of Service for Private Communion

We begin our service of Holy Communion in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, amen.

Dear friend in Christ - it is your desire to receive the Sacrament of the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, the strengthening of your faith in him as the Savior, and the grace to serve him with a God-pleasing life. In order that these blessings may be yours, we should remember the words recorded by St. John in his first epistle:

> *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

I now ask you therefore before God, who searches the heart: Do you confess the sins which you have committed in thought, word, and deed? Do you repent of them, believe on Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and do you intend, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to lead a godly life going forward? If so, then answer "YES."

Upon this your confession, I announce the grace of God unto you, and by the command of my Lord, Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. We join in the LORD'S PRAYER...

[WORDS OF INSTITUTION] - Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup, after supper, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” And may the peace of the Lord be with you always!

O Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us and grant us Your peace.

[WORDS OF DISTRIBUTION] - Take and eat. This is the true body of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins. Take and drink. This cup is the true blood of our Lord Jesus, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

And now may this true body and true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in the true faith, unto life everlasting. We pray:

O God our Father, You are the source of every good and perfect gift. In loving kindness You sent Your only-begotten Son in the flesh to be our Savior. We thank You that, because of Him, You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament. We ask You never to forsake Your children, but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Personal prayers may be inserted here.] Amen.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.