

1 **To Study How to Amend the Practice of Issuing “Divine Calls” to**
2 **Positions Not in the Direct Service of the Proclamation of the Gospel and**
3 **the Administration of the Sacraments**

4 **Overture 1-01**

5 WHEREAS, The Augsburg Confession (AC) Article V “The Ministry” states, “So that
6 we may obtain this faith [that our sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake, in Article IV], the
7 ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted;”¹; and

8 WHEREAS, AC Article XIV “Order in the Church” states, “Our churches teach that no
9 one should publicly teach in the church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly
10 ordered call;” and

11 WHEREAS, “The Power and Primacy of the Pope” (The Treatise), states, “The Gospel
12 assigns those who preside over churches the command to teach the Gospel [Matthew
13 28:19], to forgive sins [John 20:23], to administer the Sacraments, and also to exercise
14 jurisdiction;” and

15 WHEREAS, The Smalcald Articles Part III Article X teach that “...[the bishops] do not
16 even want to be true bishops, but worldly lords and princes, who will neither preach,
17 nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the Lord’s Supper, nor perform any work or
18 office of the church;” and

19 WHEREAS, The Constitution of the Synod accepts these confessions as a true and
20 unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God; and

21 WHEREAS, The office ministry is rightly called a divine office because it was divinely
22 instituted by Christ [Ephesian 4:11, Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23], and other offices not instituted
23 by Christ but instituted by men, which the Church has freedom to create by human
24 arrangement [Treatise, ¶¶ 60-82], should not be called divine offices; and

25 WHEREAS, A number of “called” positions within Synod and its auxiliaries do not
26 require teaching the Word or administering the Sacraments; and

27 WHEREAS, The practice of issuing calls to positions that are not in the direct service
28 of the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments conflicts with
29 the referenced portions of the confessions, and creates confusion regarding the nature of
30 the call; therefore be it

31 *Resolved*, That the Montana District Convention memorialize the LCMS convention
32 in 2026 to direct the President of the LCMS to appoint a committee consisting of at least
33 one (1) theological professor from each seminary and one (1) district president to study
34 how the practice of issuing calls, (Bylaw 3.11.1) to positions without direct involvement
35 in the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments may be
36 amended to comply with the confessions; and be it further

Resolved, That by July 30, 2026 this committee make its recommendations to the LCMS Board of Directors (BOD) regarding LCMS practice on the calls it issues; and be it finally

Resolved, That these recommendations, together with the BOD response to the recommendations be reported to the LCMS convention in 2029.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Sidney, Montana

¹All references from *Concordia The Lutheran Confessions, A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* Second Edition, as cited (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 3

To Support the Acquisition of a Parsonage for the Congregations at Wolf Point, Plentywood, and Glasgow

Overture 1-02

WHEREAS, The Montana District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod committed at its 2003 convention to give 25% of all funds received from congregational pledges to the synodical budget “for the work of the kingdom” (2003 Montana District Resolution 3-01); and

WHEREAS, The Montana District has a three-point parish located in Wolf Point, Plentywood, and Glasgow which serves about one tenth of the state of Montana; and

WHEREAS, This parish recently lost its pastor of 13 years because of ill health; and

WHEREAS, The previous pastor had his housing needs met outside of the compensation he received from the parish; and

WHEREAS, Good housing is essential to the parish's ability to call and provide for a pastor; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Office of National Mission has offered a potential \$20,000 toward the cost of a parsonage; and

WHEREAS, The actual cost of a suitable parsonage will approach \$300,000 (Letter of President Forke to Pastors of the District, 11/8/24); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montana District Board of Directors memorialize the District Convention to authorize it to assist in the location and purchase a parsonage for the Wolf Point/Plentywood/Glasgow parish; and be it further

Resolved, That the funding for this purchase be provided by the potential \$20,000 grant from Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the district as well as individual members thereof, be invited to participate in supporting the purchase of a parsonage for these congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That further necessary funding be provided by reducing the district pledge to the synod to 20%, beginning in fiscal year 2025, until the mortgage is fully paid; and be it finally

Resolved, That the district pledge to synod return to 25% once the mortgage is fully paid.

The Montana District LCMS Board of Director

To Support and Clarify the Prior Approval Process

Overture 2-01

Preamble

Since the 2013 Convention, appointments to theological faculties at all universities and seminaries, as well as all college, university, and seminary presidential appointments, have been subject to the prior approval process. While the convention in 2013 amended the bylaws to delegate the responsibility for prior approval to specific groups (see bylaws referenced below) the bylaws did not, and still do not, stipulate how the process of prior approval should be carried out. Over time this has led to questions as to the standards used to evaluate candidates as well as the process utilized by the prior approval panels. In the hopes of building trust and relieving any undue criticism of the panels and the process, the following overture aims to increase transparency for the process and standards used by the panels as well as ensuring clear communication between the panels, the candidates, and the Synod.

WHEREAS, One of the expressed purposes of Synod is to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth” (Art. III.3); and

WHEREAS, Synod has the responsibility to oversee that training; and

WHEREAS, Synod has designated that responsibility to the prior approval panels outlined in various bylaws (3.6.6.1, 3.10.5.7.3, 3.10.6.8.2, 3.10.6.9.2); and

WHEREAS, Those panels have responsibility not only to work in behalf of the Synod but also are responsible to the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Those under consideration for theological professorships and other such positions as require prior approval have ordinarily been ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry or have been commissioned and/or consecrated into an auxiliary office of the Church; and

WHEREAS, Those under consideration for aforementioned positions have also been examined and approved for service on the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, Those individual members of Synod have, by virtue of their membership in the Synod, agreed to the confessional basis as outlined in Art. II, as well as recognize and affirm the validity of Bylaws 1.6–1.8; therefore be it

Resolved, That the District in convention give thanks to the Lord of the Church for using the Synod and its agencies to preserve and enlarge the workers of the harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention give thanks to those engaged in the various prior approval processes for being engaged in difficult and important work; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to do the same; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to require that process used by the various panel to carry out the responsibility entrusted to it by the Synod be made transparent and publicly available; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod to stipulate that unless those under consideration by the prior approval panels are found to be in violation of their ordination, commissioning, consecration, or installation vows that their approval be assumed; and be it further

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if those under consideration are thought to be in violation, that the candidate be given every opportunity to clarify their position to the panel; and be it finally

Resolved, That District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention to stipulate that if such a violation be found that the panel would, with the appropriate District President as that individual's ecclesiastical supervisor, engage in the appropriate processes to restore the erring brother or sister so that one deemed unworthy to teach at one of the Synod's institutions not be permitted to remain on the roster or serve a congregation and thus lead that congregation to err or become out of step with Synod.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Kalispell, Montana

To Amend Montana District LCMS Bylaw 1.3.2 (m-r)

Overture 2-02

WHEREAS, THE Commission on Constitutional Matters in its 2022 review of the Montana District Bylaws recommended that Bylaw 1.3.2 (m-r) be amended, saying, “MT Bylaw 1.3.2 (m-r): For elections other than that of the district president and vice-presidents, the procedure of (Synod) Bylaw 4.7.3 should be used;” therefore be it

Resolved, that Bylaw 1.3.2 (m-r) be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Conventions, Elections, and Conferences

1.3.2 Nominations and Elections

m. The Election of the Secretary

The Nominations and Elections Committee shall propose the names of Ordained Ministers for the office of Secretary, and the election shall take place following the above procedure (j.4).

n. Election of the Circuit Counselors (See Synodical Handbook)

The election of the Circuit Counselors shall take place at a Circuit Forum not less than four months prior to the District Convention. The slate of Circuit Counselors shall be ratified at the District Convention which shall constitute election.

o. Election of Board of Directors

The Nominations and Elections Committee shall propose names for each director to be elected, and the election shall take place following the above procedure (j.4) for ordained and commissioned minister members, and by majority vote for lay members.

p. Election of the Nominations and Elections Committee.

The Elections committee shall propose names for each position to be elected, and the election shall proceed according to the above procedure (j.4).

q. Election of Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Synodical Handbook.

The election of Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Synodical Handbook.

r. Election of Advisory Delegates to the Convention Synod

The election of advisory delegates to the convention of Synod shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Synodical Handbook.

s. For elections other than that of the district president and vice-presidents, the procedure of (Synod) Bylaw 4.7.3 should be used.

The Montana District LCMS Board of Directors

**To Reject the Use of AI Created Sermons in All Montana District
Congregations.**

Overture 3-01

WHEREAS, The capabilities and regular use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) have dramatically increased in recent years; and

WHEREAS, These tools are being experimented with and now commonly used in many industries and across many vocations; and

WHEREAS, These tools are advertised to Pastors as time-saving devices for the writing of sermons; and

WHEREAS, Pastors are called to spend more time in God's Word not less; and

WHEREAS, It has pleased God to call flesh and blood men, created in His image, baptized and redeemed in the blood of Jesus, to search for lost sheep, to call sinners to repentance, to announce forgiveness of sins in Jesus' Name, and to be His preachers and teachers in this world, (Mt. 28:18-20, Jn. 20:19-23, Acts 1:8, AC V and XIV); and

WHEREAS, It is contrary to God's establishment of the Office of the Ministry and His design and plan for His church to be served by an AI created in the image and likeness of men (Eph. 4:4-15); and

WHEREAS, The primary duties of the called and ordained pastor are the in-person preaching of the Lord's Word to the congregation(s) entrusted to his care, the visitation of the sick and dying, and the administration of the Lord's Sacraments according to the Lord's institution, (2 Tim. 4:1-5); and

WHEREAS, No AI can replace this incarnational, relational, in-person work; and

WHEREAS, Those pastors who would use AI and LLMs to craft a complete sermon are turning away from the very work of the ministry that they have been called to do; and

WHEREAS, Those pastors who would use AI and LLM's to craft a complete sermon espouse - knowingly or unknowingly - a functional view of the Office of the Ministry, deny the incarnational reality of the Lord's ministry among His people, while not walking in concord but walking apart from their brothers in the Office of Ministry who labor at faithful preaching and administration of His sacraments; therefore be it

Resolved, That the elders and other leaders of each congregation in the Montana District recognize the wolf in technological clothing and discuss with their pastor the great dangers of the use of AI for creating a complete sermon; and be it further

Resolved, That the elders and other leaders of each congregation in the Montana District declare without equivocation that the congregation will not accept AI created sermons preached from their pulpits under any circumstances; and be it further

Resolved, That each pastor in the Montana District reject every public and private temptation to make use of this and other such tools in the delivery of God's Law and Gospel to His people; and be it finally

Resolved, That the MT District in convention ask the LCMS in convention to adopt and make this resolution their own that the Synod can walk together on this issue.

The Montana District LCMS Dual Circuit Conference

1 **To Request an Apology for the Publication of *Luther's Large Catechism***
2 ***with Annotations and Contemporary Applications (LLCACA)* and to**
3 **Republish it in Modified Form**

4 **Overture 4-01**

5 WHEREAS, Romans 16:17 says, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause
6 divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them;"
7 and

8 WHEREAS, 1 Timothy 2:12 says, "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have
9 authority over a man, but to be in silence;" and

10 WHEREAS, Galatians 5:9 says, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump;" and

11 WHEREAS, *LLCACA* was created in response to a request by the Synod in
12 convention, tasking the CTCR (Commission on Theology and Church Relations) with
13 producing a new edition of the Large Catechism with explanations to aid
14 understanding; and

15 WHEREAS, According to online advertising for *LLCACA*, it was "Developed and
16 written primarily for Lutheran pastors, church workers, and seminary students."
17 (Amazon.com product description 1/29/2025 *); and

18 WHEREAS, The introduction in *LLCACA* says, "Luther's Large Catechism itself,
19 together with the annotations and essays that follow, seeks to teach the baptized. This
20 is not a book primarily for pastors, though we hope it will be a helpful resource for all
21 called church workers, including pastors. This is for the whole church – for the ordinary
22 layperson who wants to grow deeper in faith and understanding and be able to give 'a
23 reason for the hope that is in you' (1 Peter 3:15). It is the goal of this book both to edify
24 or build up readers with a deeper understanding of God's Word and to equip them
25 with knowledge so they can respond to challenges to the confession of the Lord's truth
26 in our culture." (General Introduction by John T. Pless and Larry M. Vogel, Editors).
27 *LLCACA* is therefore a Catechetical book for laity as well as clergy, teaching everyone
28 and anyone the faith taught in our Catechism; and

29 WHEREAS, A number of people have defended and upheld the publication of
30 *LLCACA*, including the Rev. President Matthew Harrison, who said, "I have had time to
31 re-evaluate the controverted sentences and found that while some things might have
32 been expressed more clearly, nevertheless, there is nothing in the content of the volume
33 promoting critical race theory (CRT), confusion of sexuality issues, or any theological
34 position at odds with biblical and confessional Lutheranism. The Lutheran Church—
35 Missouri Synod's doctrine is established only by the Scriptures and confessed in
36 the *Book of Concord*. By God's grace we remain steadfast in this eternal truth and
37 confession as we await the return of our blessed Savior Jesus Christ. Frankly, I think
38 each reader will be astounded at the content and quality of the volume.;" and

39 WHEREAS, There was nonetheless an indiscriminate use of authors to teach our
40 clergy and lay people; and

41 WHEREAS, Women teachers contributed to *LLCACA*, and were thus put in the
42 position of catechizing our lay people, seminarians, and pastors (whether the ladies'
43 content is good or not); and

44 WHEREAS, Because *LLCACA* is intended to teach our people the true faith, it is
45 especially a very serious cause of offense that at least one author from outside our
46 Synod who is known to be a false teacher was allowed to catechize our people by
47 writing essays in *LLCACA*; and

48 WHEREAS, This individual, Steven Paulson, who is an ELCA pastor, has denied
49 the substitutionary atonement, thereby following the teachings of Gerhard Forde, who
50 also taught that the death of Christ was not a payment made for our sins, when in an
51 essay he said, "Forde Lives!" Paulson also said, "The stupefied atonement question -
52 Why could God not just up and forgive? - is answered simply: He did!" (*The Essential*
53 *Forde: Distinguishing Law and Gospel*, eds. Nicholas Hopman, Mark C. Mattes, and
54 Steven D. Paulson, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019, p. 29); and

55 WHEREAS, Paulson rejects the so-called "legal scheme" of the vicarious
56 satisfaction throughout his book *Lutheran Theology*, thereby rejecting vicarious
57 satisfaction as confessed in many places in the Book of Concord; and

58 WHEREAS, Paulson also teaches antinomianism, as convincingly demonstrated
59 and refuted by Dr. David P. Scaer, "Is Law Intrinsic to God's Essence?" *Concordia*
60 *Theological Quarterly*, volume 82, Number 1-2, January / April 2018; and

61 WHEREAS, Even though Paulson does not appear to explicitly teach these things
62 in *LLCACA*, he does however teach about the Third Commandment, so antinomianism
63 surely colors some of what he says, most importantly with what he neglects to say; and

64 WHEREAS, Additionally, the denial of the substitutionary atonement must always
65 color everything a man teaches, even if it is not referred to; and

66 WHEREAS, Paulson, as a teacher in the ELCA, officially stands with the official
67 teachings of the ELCA, including denying the inerrancy of Scripture, acceptance of
68 women and gay clergy, etc.; and

69 WHEREAS, Perhaps most dangerously, even if Paulson's words in *LLCACA*
70 happen to be orthodox by themselves, by using him as a teacher in an official
71 publication, laymen may be unsuspectingly led to assume that the Synod endorses him
72 and that there is nothing wrong with his theology thereby leading them to read more of
73 his harmful materials; and

74 WHEREAS, Those authorities who have now publicly endorsed or supported the
75 publication of *LLCACA* include 1) the CTCR by producing it, 2) Concordia Publishing
76 House (CPH) by publishing it, 3) the Synod President by praising it; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montana District in convention memorialize the Synod in Convention that those entities who have publicly endorsed or supported the publication of *LLCACA* give public apology for their part in endorsing, supporting, and/or publishing catechetical material by false-teaching and/or inappropriate authors; and be it further

Resolved, That CPH cease the sale of *LLCACA* as it currently exists; and be it finally

Resolved, That a new version containing only the Large Catechism portion of *LLCACA* be published which does not include the essays.

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Stevensville, Montana

*https://www.amazon.com/Luthers-Catechism-Annotations-Contemporary-Applications/dp/0758672519/ref=sr_1_5?adgrpid=1229255023055252&dib=eyJ2JlJoiMSJ9.ugGWRRJc5g5oY51kCXG-vxPc0r4KdN7umZl23LRWpQN8pc7Dp-URg8AZ1eA7oSdu4wRgMUbBkRObZ8DNcDbXCraOArpExXGAR-6b_3LSnhvEgAuNkHjc9D4RqXgW8MkLd2-QoKiORkdZyLGDBVlb17Zyob9SigbpMNAtyxGn0wCotn8S6vuwNOYdXZ8sSNGz._K2O4a5yqJh-PR8bTpAdphtGVI3cHlIDyo8aSc7cUHo&dib_tag=se&hvadid=76828570703145&hvbmt=bp&hvdev=c&hvlocphy=110189&hvnetw=s&hvmqmt=e&hvtargid=kwd-76828721486314%3Aloc-190&hydadcr=16765_13528482&keywords=large+catechism+with+annotations&msclickid=17a586a2b4c919859525e1382545863b&qid=1738185356&sr=8-5

To Condemn the Stone Choir Podcast

Overture 5-01

WHEREAS, Twitter/X personalities Corey J. Mahler (@CoreyJMahler) and Ryan Dumperth (@treblewoe) began releasing episodes of the *Stone Choir* podcast on Oct. 19, 2022, to tackle issues relevant to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) that, in their judgment, the pastors and leadership of the LCMS were not addressing, leaving Mahler and Dumperth to function as “the very stones” who must “cry out” because the clergy are silent (Luke 19:40); and

WHEREAS, The issues about which the *Stone Choir* accuses the pastors and leadership of the LCMS of remaining silent on include the supposed necessity of the reintroduction of racial segregation; the supposed sinfulness of interracial marriage; the supposed pernicious nature of the Jewish race today; and the supposedly fictitious nature of the Jewish Holocaust perpetrated by the National Socialists during World War II; and

WHEREAS, None of *Stone Choir*’s positions on these aforementioned issues is taught in Holy Scripture, and indeed their positions on these issues cause great offense to many Christians of good will; and

WHEREAS, *Stone Choir* hosts Mahler and Dumperth are active on Twitter/X, and *Stone Choir* listeners are likely to be influenced not only by what Mahler and Dumperth teach on the *Stone Choir* podcast, but also by what they post on Twitter/X; and

WHEREAS, On Twitter/X, Corey Mahler and Dumperth, among other outrageously offensive behaviors, openly praise Adolf Hitler, call for the deportation of Jews, Muslims, and blacks from the United States, and condemn as sin the practice of interracial marriage and adoption, causing great offense to Christian consciences; and

WHEREAS, Through their activity on the *Stone Choir* podcast and on Twitter/X, Mahler and Dumperth have sought to associate confessional Lutheranism with devotion to Adolf Hitler, opposition to the Jewish race, and a desire for segregation of blacks from white society; and

WHEREAS, Mahler and Dumperth have publicly denounced all pastors of the LCMS as “either apostate or derelict” and on their podcast and on Twitter have attempted to turn their listeners against their pastors; and

WHEREAS, Mahler and Dumperth are not currently active members of any LCMS congregation and are therefore beyond the reach of church discipline; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Divide Circuit of the Montana District memorialize the District in Convention to publicly condemn the *Stone Choir* podcast and its hosts, Corey J. Mahler and Ryan Dumperth, for the offense they cause by their public devotion to Adolf Hitler, their stirring up of antipathy toward our Jewish and black neighbors, their denunciation as sin of that which God has not called sin, and their open hostility toward the pastors and leadership of the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That the Divide Circuit of the Montana District memorialize the District in Convention to warn the laity of the Montana District against the *Stone Choir* podcast and its

hosts, and that the pastors of the Montana District be encouraged to admonish members of their congregations whose approval of *Stone Choir* and its hosts has become known; and be it further

Resolved, That the Divide Circuit of the Montana District memorialize the District in Convention to encourage the Montana District President to bring under discipline pastors of the Montana District who may be found to be promoting the *Stone Choir* podcast or its hosts for the offense they cause thereby; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR and seminary faculties of the LCMS be encouraged to examine the teachings of *Stone Choir* according to the norm of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, demonstrating from clear and firm testimonies of the same how *Stone Choir* is in error; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention be memorialized to condemn the Stone Choir podcast and its hosts and followers and to take action against pastors who promote the same.

The Montana District LCMS Divide Circuit Forum

To Amend Montana District Bylaw 2.2.2.2

Overture 5-02

WHEREAS, The bylaws of the Montana District currently call for a vacancy in the office of the Second Vice-President of the district to be filled on the basis of number of nominations at the previous convention; and

WHEREAS, This practice does not follow the Synodical prescription that “matters determined by a convention are to be determined by a majority vote”ⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, The current Montana District bylaw does not reference previous votes, but instead previous nominations; therefore be it

Resolved, That Montana District LCMS Bylaw 2.2.2.2 be amended as follows:

~~PRESENT~~/PROPOSED WORDING

District Vice-Presidents

2.2.2.2 Vacancies

A vacancy in the office of First Vice-President shall be filled by the Second Vice-President. ~~A vacancy in the office of Second Vice-President shall be filled by the individual member of the District receiving the highest number of nominations for Second Vice-President at the previous convention~~ A vacancy in the office of Second Vice-President shall be filled by appointment of the Board of Directors of the Montana District.

The Montana District LCMS Board of Directors

ⁱⁱCCM Opinion (20-2941)

Regarding Bylaw 3.01 (d), the commission notes that requiring a vacancy to be filled by appointment of a candidate receiving a minority of votes in the past election does not reflect the will of the majority of the convention. The position should be filled by appointment, not by a determination made by less than a majority of the district convention. Matters determined by a convention are to be determined by a majority vote. (Const. Art. VIII C). See Synod Bylaw 3.3.2.4, in which a vacancy in the office of vice-president is filled by the president in consultation with elected representatives of the region. (CCM Op. 17-2862)