

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION to the Pastoral Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

NOTE: This application form is to be filled out in Microsoft Word. Type your responses in the gray boxes. They will expand as needed. Once this form is complete, please print and submit it, along with the other required elements, to your LCMS district office.

I – OVERVIEW OF THE COLLOQUY APPLICATION PROCESS

The following list is intended to serve as an overview of the entire application process so that the applicant and district office can understand the steps necessary for submitting an application for a colloquy candidate. A detailed checklist of the essential elements that the applicant should provide to the district office is included in Section XII at the end of this application. District offices can find their detailed checklist in the Policy Manual, available at lcms.org/pastoral-colloquy-policy-manual.

- a. The applicant *may* wish to read the policies and guidelines governing colloquy. The Policy Manual for Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (Policy Manual), is available at lcms.org/pastoral-colloquy-policy-manual.
- b. The applicant shall discuss with his district president his desire to become a rostered member of the ordained clergy of the LCMS. The district president must *fully and strongly* endorse the applicant, as the applicant will normally serve in that district following colloquy certification. Both the applicant and the district president contribute elements to the application package.
- c. The applicant shall authorize the district office to request a background check through AAIM Employers' Association (AAIM), using the authorization form provided by the district office. The applicant shall tender payment for all AAIM fees, along with the completed authorization form, to the district in which application is being made. Fees are established by each district. A copy of this report, minus the Social Security Number, shall be provided by the district to the Office of First Vice-President (OFVP) as part of the application package.
- d. Along with the completed authorization form for an AAIM background check, the applicant shall also submit to the district office a completed and signed *Supplemental Information Form*.¹ The district office will also provide this form to the applicant. Please note that **the applicant must fully and completely disclose all information which he**

¹ This form, which is intended as a supplement to the authorization form for background checks, was adopted and instituted by the Council of Presidents in September 2019.

feels may surface in a background check. Failure to do so may result in delay of the colloquy process, or denial of acceptance of the application.

- e. The applicant shall complete this entire application form.
- f. Non-U.S. citizens will be required to provide proof of legal residency in the United States.
- g. The applicant shall arrange for transmission of **official (i.e. original) transcripts** from all colleges and seminaries he has attended. These documents are to be sent from the institution directly to the district office. The applicant also shall furnish evidence of earned continuing education units (CEUs) and of other non-credit academic and professional experiences completed. The colloquy committee reserves the right to seek independent validation of credit.
- h. The applicant shall prepare an **autobiographical statement** (as indicated in the instructions in Section VIII of the application), setting forth clearly the applicant's background and reasons for seeking admission to the Synod's ministerium by colloquy.
- i. The applicant will prepare **two theological essays** of approximately 1500-1800 words each (as instructed in Section IX of the application form).
- j. The applicant shall arrange for written testimonials to be sent directly to the district president. These letters must assess, in writing, the applicant's Christian character and life, personality, abilities (especially in pastoral ministry), and previous service. These testimonials shall come from no fewer than three competent references who have known and observed the applicant for at least the two years immediately preceding his application.
 - i. Category 1 Applicants (the applicant is **actively serving** in pastoral ministry): One of these testimonial letters must come from the applicant's current ecclesiastical supervisor. The testimonial shall assess the applicant's current pastoral service, together with a declaration of the applicant's standing in the church body.²
 - ii. Category 2 Applicants (if the applicant has **previously served** as a pastor): One of these testimonial letters must come from the applicant's former ecclesiastical supervisor at the time he left his previous church body. The testimonial shall assess the applicant's prior pastoral service, and provide a declaration of the applicant's standing in the church body at the time of his departure.²
 - iii. All Category 2 Applicants: One of the testimonial letters must come from the applicant's current LCMS pastor.
- k. The district president shall arrange for an **interview of the applicant and his wife**, if married, with a district interview committee. The report of the interview committee will include a detailed assessment of the applicant's suitability, along with a recommendation of whether or not the applicant should be declared qualified for a pastoral call in the LCMS upon completion of the colloquy process. The district is responsible to provide a written

² If the applicant has a very good reason, he may request an exception to this requirement and provide the committee a testimonial letter from an alternate reference. This alternate must hold/have held membership and a supervisory position in the applicant's church body and be able to attest to the same criteria above. Both the request for exception by the applicant, including his substantive rationale, and the letter from the alternate reference must be included in the application packet.

copy of this report which shall be included in the application package. No handwritten copies will be accepted. Please use the *District Interview Report* form created for colloquy, which can be found here: lcms.org/pastoral-colloquy-district-interview-report-form.

Further instructions for the district president regarding this step can be found in the [Policy Manual](#).

- l. The applicant, his wife (if married) and the district president must sign the application where indicated, and both the district president and the applicant must indicate placement preference in the sponsoring district as directed (see Sections X and XI).
- m. Once the district president has read the application elements provided by the applicant and ascertained that all requested information has been provided by both the applicant and the district, he shall write and attach a cover letter to the application package which declares his strong endorsement and sponsorship of the applicant, then send the completed package to the OFVP.

II – ELIGIBILITY FOR COLLOQUY AS A GENERAL PASTOR³

Only applicants who meet the requirements for eligibility as specified in the Policy Manual for Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will be considered for admission to the pastoral ministry by colloquy. A valid application must identify the category under which the application is being made in order for it to be considered by the Pastoral Colloquy Committee.

Please consider the following two categories:⁴

- 1) Active Pastors from Other Christian Church Bodies:** Men who, at the time of application, are in good standing and in active service as pastors in another Christian church body may apply for colloquy. Such applicants must be graduates of a program of study that leads to ordination, from an accredited institution⁵, with no fewer than 60 semester hours (90 quarter hours) of required academic credit. Such applicants must also have served at least three years in a recognized ministry of their church body, and must supply suitable documentation of their active status and good standing in their current church body. Pastors of congregations that are not affiliated with a church body (e.g., are “non-denominational” or “independent”) also may apply but must supply suitable references and documentation of their authorization to perform pastoral ministry. In all cases the academic requirements will apply.

- 2) Men from Other Christian Church Bodies Who Have Prepared for Pastoral Ministry but, at the Time of Application, Are Not in Active Service as Pastors:** Such applicants must be graduates of a program of study that leads to ordination, from an accredited institution (see footnote 5 below), with no fewer than 60 semester hours (90 quarter hours) of required academic credit. Applicants with prior pastoral service must provide the date (month and year) and the reason their active service ended (e.g., retirement, resignation, dismissal). References and suitable documentation will be required. Such an applicant also must have been a communicant member in good standing in a congregation of the LCMS for at least two years immediately prior to the time of application (re. the two years, see footnote 5). This category does not apply to LCMS members who while members of LCMS congregations have obtained Master of Divinity degrees outside the LCMS (see footnote 4).

³ As opposed to a specific ministry pastor. See *Policy Manual for Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of the LCMS*.

⁴ There are numerous potential situations for which general pastoral colloquy is not designed or intended. Ministers of Religion—Commissioned and laymen of special ethnic or linguistic groups are two such examples. LCMS Bylaws 3.10.2.3-5 address these situations and offer alternatives to colloquy. These bylaws are cited near the beginning of the *Policy Manual for Admission to the Pastoral Ministry of the LCMS*.

⁵ Should the sponsoring district president be convinced that the Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry ought to consider, on the basis of an applicant's special circumstances, an exception to this specific eligibility requirement, the sponsoring district president must furnish with the application a written recommendation detailing the special circumstances and the rationale for the recommended exception. The Colloquy Committee, however, retains the responsibility and authority of deciding to grant or to decline the exception. The decision of the Colloquy Committee shall be regarded as final by all parties to the colloquy application.

Having considered the qualifications explained above, please check one of the two categories listed below and supply the requested information. For all dates, list both the month and year. For places of service, list both the name of the congregation and the city and state where it is/was located. (Please click on the gray box, then type.)

_____ **1) I am at the time of this application a pastor in good standing and in active service in a denomination other than the LCMS.**

Church Body: _____

Date of Affiliation with Church Body: _____

Current Place of Service: _____

Date Service Began: _____

_____ **2) I am not at the time of this application in active service as a pastor and I am a member of an LCMS congregation.**

Church Body in which pastoral credentials were held: _____

Date of Affiliation with Church Body: _____

Last Place of Service: _____

Date Service Ended: _____

Reason for End of Service (Retirement, Resignation, etc.): _____

I am a communicant member of the following LCMS congregation: _____

Date Membership Began: _____

III - PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address, City, State, Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Location: _____

Date of Baptism: _____

Location: _____

Date of Confirmation: _____

Location: _____

Married: Yes: No:

When: _____

Location: _____

Wife's Name: _____

Present Church Membership: _____
(congregation and denomination)

Are your children baptized? Yes: No:

Names and ages of children:

_____	Age:
_____	Age:
_____	Age:
_____	Age:
_____	Age:
_____	Age:

If more space is needed, please attach an additional sheet.



IV – EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Schools Attended **Location** **From-To (Years)**

Elementary:

_____ _____ -
_____ _____ -

Secondary:

_____ _____ -
_____ _____ -

College(s) (undergraduate):

_____ _____ -
_____ _____ -

Please list all undergraduate majors and degrees received:

Postbaccalaureate:

_____ _____ -

Please list all postbaccalaureate majors and degrees received:

Other education:

_____ _____ -

If more space is needed, please attach an additional sheet.



V - EXPERIENCE

Present church body membership: _____

From-To: _____ - _____ Total Number of Years:

If this is a non-denominational church, please check here:

If there have been any changes in denominational affiliation in the past 10 years, please specify:

List pastorates, teaching positions or business positions:

Where: _____

When:

Where: _____

When:

Where: _____

When:

Where: _____

When:

Where: _____

When:

If more space is needed, please attach an additional sheet.



VI – MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Before recommending that a person be declared qualified and certified for public ministry in the church, the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry must have assurance that the candidate is above reproach. Also, one of the objectives of the Synod is to “provide protection for the congregations, pastors, teachers and other church workers in the performance of their duties and maintenance of their rights” (LCMS Constitution, Article III 9). Your response to the following questions will help the committee fulfill its responsibilities in making its recommendation. If your answers require more space, please attach additional sheets.

1. Have you ever been suspended or expelled by any educational institution? Yes: No:

If so, identify the institution and state the reason for such action:

2. Have you applied for admission to a program at any Synod institution? Yes: No:

If so, provide the name of the school, date and disposition of your application:

3. Are you presently in good health? Yes: No:

If not, please comment:

If you answer “Yes” to any of questions 4 through 13 below, state on a separate sheet the specifics related to each instance. This should include dates, facts, organizations and individuals that may have been involved.

Are you or have you been:

4. Party to a divorce? Yes: No: How many times?

Marriage annulment? Yes: No: Legal separation? Yes: No:

5. Charged with fraud? Yes: No: Sexual immorality? Yes: No:

Improper or dishonorable conduct of any kind in any type of legal proceedings? Yes: No:

Any convictions? Yes: No: Filed for bankruptcy? Yes: No:

6. Involved in any homosexual activity? Yes: No:

7. An alcoholic? Yes: No: Involved in use of illegal drugs? Yes: No:

8. Suspended, disqualified, censured or had disciplinary or ouster proceedings instituted against you as a member of any profession or organization? Yes: No:
9. A party (plaintiff or defendant) to any action, civil or criminal? Yes: No:
10. Arrested, charged or convicted of a crime, or subpoenaed, or requested to appear before any legal proceeding or investigatory agency? Yes: No:
11. Under guardianship, declared a ward of the court, or declared incompetent because of mental illness or condition, or committed, confined or treated in any institution for mental illness? Yes: No:
12. Dismissed or asked to resign from any employment or position you have held? Yes: No:
13. Are you aware of anything else in your personal background which could jeopardize or disqualify you for the pastoral ministry? Yes: No:
14. a. If you are applying as a Category 1 applicant (currently active pastor in non-LCMS denomination): Why do you wish to leave your present church affiliation?

- 14.b. If you are applying as a Category 2 applicant (former pastor, currently LCMS member): Why did you wish to leave your former church affiliation?

15. Are you now or have you ever been under discipline in any church body? Yes: No:
Explain: _____
16. Why do you wish to be certified for the pastoral ministry of the LCMS?

17. What parts of the Book of Concord have you read?

18. Are you ordained? Yes: No:
In what church body are you ordained? _____
19. Why are you seeking admission to the ministerium of the Synod *through the colloquy*

program as opposed to entering the seminary?

20. What are your plans for financing any education that may be necessary in the colloquy process?

VII - WIFE'S STATEMENT

The following section must to be completed by the wife (if married), not the applicant.

1. Are you a member of an LCMS congregation? Yes: No:

If not, are you willing to become a member of an LCMS congregation? Yes: No:

2. What are your thoughts about your husband becoming a pastor in the LCMS? _____

3. List any concerns you may have: _____

Signature of wife **(required)**:

Date

Signature of Wife

VIII - AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Set forth clearly your background (family, ministry, theology) and your reasons for desiring to enter the ministerium of the LCMS by colloquy (1500 to 2000 words). Please type below.

IX – THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS

Please write two essays of approximately 1500–1800 words each.

Essay #1: From each chief part of Luther’s Small Catechism, select two to four phrases from Luther’s explanations that you find theologically significant and explain the reasons for your selections. Please type your response below.

Essay #2: Prepare an essay in which you integrate what you believe regarding creation, redemption and sanctification, together with the key theological topics that relate to each. Please type your response below.

X – APPLICANT’S PLACEMENT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE

Will placement be sought in the district of the sponsoring district president? **(to be answered by applicant)**

Yes: No:

I understand that in the process of reviewing my application, the district and the LCMS will receive from other individuals and organizations information and materials relating to my personal, academic and background experience. I agree that all such information and materials shall be retained solely by the district or the Synod as the property of the district or the Synod and that in no event must such information or materials be revealed to me. In consideration of the district and the Synod accepting and proceeding with my application, I agree that I have no right to such materials or information and I waive any right which I may now or later have to be informed of the contents of such materials whether or not I am admitted to the ministry or the colloquy program.

Date

Signature of Applicant

XI – DISTRICT PRESIDENT’S PLACEMENT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE

Does the district president wish to have the applicant placed in his district? **(to be answered by the district president)**

Yes: No:

Date

Signature of District President

XII – CHECKLIST FOR GENERAL PASTOR APPLICANTS

The applicant shall forward the completed application to the district office. Please be sure it includes all of the following items:

- a. ____ Completed and signed AAIM authorization form, which is obtained from the district office, including any payment required. (The district may prefer the applicant accomplish this step prior to the submission of the application packet.)
- b. ____ Completed and signed copy of the Supplemental Information Form, which is obtained from the district office. (The district may prefer the applicant accomplish this step prior to the submission of the application packet.)
- c. ____ A completed copy of the Application for Admission to the Pastoral Colloquy Program. Make sure all sections are completed. **No handwritten copies will be accepted.**
- d. ____ If the applicant is married, his wife *must* complete and sign her portion of the form. (See Section VII.)
- e. ____ Autobiographical statement as explained in Section VIII of the application.
- f. ____ Theological Essay #1. (See Section IX of the application.)
- g. ____ Theological Essay #2. (See Section IX of the application.)
- h. ____ At least three written testimonial letters from references who have known and observed the applicant for at least the past two years, as to his Christian character and life, personality, abilities in ministry, etc. **The reference letters should be sent directly to the district office (not to the applicant).**
 - i. ____ Category 1 Applicants (applicant is **actively serving** in pastoral ministry): One of these testimonial letters must come from the applicant's current ecclesiastical supervisor. The testimonial shall assess the applicant's current pastoral service, together with a declaration of the applicant's standing in the church body.⁶

⁶ If the applicant has a very good reason, he may request an exception to this requirement and provide the committee a testimonial letter from an alternate reference. This alternate must hold/have held membership and a supervisory position in the applicant's church body and be able to attest to the same criteria. Both the request for exception by the applicant, including his substantive rationale, and the letter from the alternate reference must be included in the application packet.

- ii. ____ Category 2 Applicants (**if** the applicant has **previously served** as a pastor): One of these testimonial letters must come from the applicant's former ecclesiastical supervisor at the time he left his previous church. The testimonial shall assess the applicant's past pastoral service, and provide a declaration of the applicant's standing in the church body at the time of his departure.⁶
- iii. ____ **All** Category 2 Applicants: One of the testimonial letters must come from the applicant's current LCMS pastor.
- i. ____ Official transcripts from all colleges and seminaries the applicant has attended. **The transcripts should be sent directly to the district office (not to the applicant).**
- j. ____ Sign the form. Be sure to indicate whether or not you (the applicant) wish to be placed in the sponsoring district.
- k. ____ Send all the required elements of the application package to the sponsoring district office who will then add their elements and forward the completed application package to the OFVP.