

The Called Life – Ministry on Purpose for the Common Good

Theological Pillars



The call of God is *particular* for each congregation.

God has uniquely knit your congregation together as a particular expression of the Body of Christ in your particular community. God calls your congregation to both embody and live out your congregation's unique collection of **gifts** and **passions**. God calls your congregation in and through your congregation's **experiences**, both joyful and sorrowful, extraordinary and mundane. God calls your congregation in the particular **context** that you find yourself and through the particular **relationships** that compromise your congregation's life and ministry. Through Holy Baptism, God claims and names each person who is a part of your congregation, God gifts each member of the Body of Christ with the Holy Spirit, and God collectively **calls your congregation** for a ministry of purpose for the common good. This is **vocation**.

What are the gifts, passions, ministry experiences, contextual realities, and relationships that uniquely mark your congregation's life and make God's call **particular** to your congregation? Write them around the figure below.

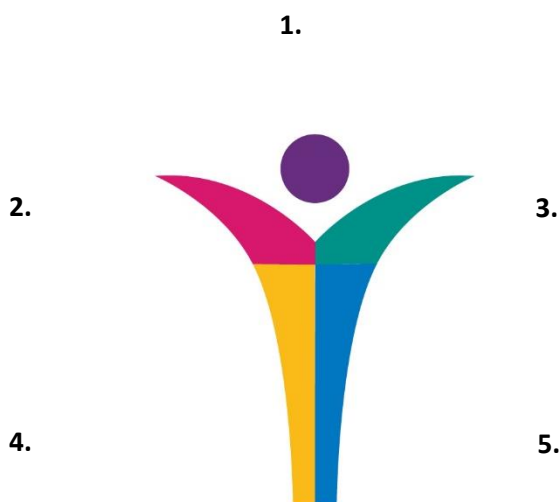


The call of God is discerned and lived *within community*.

No congregation discerns or lives out its vocations in solitude or isolation. We need others to accompany us on the journey, to test our own ideas and thoughts, and to help us understand things from a variety of perspectives. It is within the company of others that we both wrestle with and lean into our various vocations.

In the living out of this called life, there are a host of voices that literally, metaphorically, and ideologically speak to your congregation, influence your discerning, and inform your shared ministry. Who are the individual people or communities that speak to your congregation? What voices – literal or metaphorical – surround your congregation? Which voices are most critical to your congregation? What constitutes your congregation’s community of discernment and ministry?

In the space below, make a comprehensive list of the people, communities, ideas, and voices that influence your congregation’s discerning and ministry at this present time. By the numbers around the figure, write the five most important or influential people, communities, ideas, or voices that accompany you. These five may be positive, negative, or neutral. They may be literal or metaphorical.



This resource was created by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox and Rev. Peter Schattauer and is provided by the Nourishing Vocation Project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College.

The call of God – our congregational vocations – are interwoven with and lived out through **all relationships, experiences, and dimensions** of human life.

Vocation is not singular: each congregation has many and varied vocations, and it is through these varied vocations that we live out our call to ministry. Sometimes our various vocations support and encourage one another. At other times, our vocations are in conflict with one another, and at still other times, our various vocations can co-exist without a lot of intersection or interaction.

Think of your congregation's various vocations. Write one vocation by each of the raindrops below. Reflect upon how your congregation's various vocations relate to and impact one another. Put a star by your congregation's five most significant vocations.

Examples of congregational vocations: worship, music, pastoral care, food distribution, education, advocacy, fellowship, service, etc.



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The particular call of God for congregations, is discerned and lived within community and interwoven through all relationships, experiences and dimensions of human life so that we might **engage in ministry on purpose for the common good – present tense.**

We are called *so that* we can be persons of good in the world – today. We are claimed and named in Holy Baptism *so that* we can let our lights shine – today. We are knit together to Be the Body *so that* we might bear God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world – today.

Engaging together in ministry on purpose for the common good pays attention to, leans into, responds, and confronts critical concerns that contradict, challenge, disrupt, or impede the common good – today.

Think about the **critical concerns** that significantly impact **your congregation’s call** to engage in ministry on purpose for the common good in this unique time, in this present-tense moment. Write one by each of the hands below. The critical concerns impacting your congregation’s ministry may be matters of global concern (i.e. climate change), local concern (i.e. diversifying neighborhood), or personal concern (i.e. the health and well-being of members of the congregation or immediate community). Once you have completed your graphic below, write one additional critical concern on the bottom of the page to which you believe your congregation is called to pay attention, but is not actively doing so in the present.



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Look again at each of the components of this exercise.



What gifts, passions, life experiences, places, and relationships did you note that uniquely mark your life and make God's call **particular to your congregation**?



What did you identify as the people, communities, ideas, and voices that influence your congregation's discerning and ministry at this present time?



What did you list as your congregation's five most significant vocations?



What are the critical concerns that impact your congregation's call to engage in ministry on purpose for the common good today?

Note places of harmony in the above.

Note places of tension in the above.

Spend some time wondering about how the places of harmony and tension present fruitful opportunities for missional/vocational growth *today*.

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Living into the called life – today, is invitation to daily deepen our understanding of God’s call upon our life and work so that each congregation might **more intentionally engage in ministry on purpose on purpose for the common good in the present tense**.

In the space around the image below, write your **hopes for your congregation** *intentionally living into the called life – today*. How do you hope your congregation will be impacted, grow, or change?



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Notes