

Listen! God Is Calling Congregational Manual

APPENDIX

Materials in the appendix section are available:

- On the appeal website, **sdsynodlisten.org**
- Request the materials via e-mail by e-mail (coordinator@sdsynodlisten.org) to
- By calling the campaign office at (605.274.5033) to request the materials on CD

August 2015

APPENDIX A

First Congregational Letter

Dear Member of _____ Lutheran Church,

We are privileged to participate in some of the finest ministries and most important Christ centered outreach among our congregations here in South Dakota. We have also, more than any other Synod in recent years, consistently provided many seminary students and candidates for rostered leadership in the Church.

We, as Lutherans across the South Dakota Synod are now embarking on a most challenging and important effort to greatly expand this impact both in South Dakota and across the world. The plan includes supporting ministries that touch the lives of new populations, new or renewing congregations, pastors who labor under significant education debt and encouragement to those who have been touched by God's call into ordained ministry.

This effort will also provide support the ELCA Church-wide campaign, "Always Being Made New" and Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

During the next five weeks, you will learn more about this important effort, called **Listen! God is Calling**. Our commitment Sunday will be (date). Gifts and pledges will be received beginning at this time.

We pray that your commitment to this ministry will encourage you to become involved.

Yours in Christ,

(Signed by Congregation Leader
and/or Pastor and/or Council Chair)

APPENDIX B
Second Congregational Letter
(See Appendix C for Phonathon letter)

Dear Fellow Members,

We, as Lutherans, are in the process of learning more about the vital ministry that we share and can be sure will continue here in South Dakota. The **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal, which is now underway, seeks to raise at least \$2.5 million in gifts across the state. The successful completion of the appeal will greatly expand our ability to ensure continued strong and capable rostered leadership for our South Dakota congregations and will also strengthen our ministries with new populations and neighborhoods. Specifically . . .

1. Equipping laymen and laywomen for leadership.
2. Helping mission congregations that are starting, to eventually thrive and grow and become self-sufficient and start and support new congregations and ministries that will need our continuing support.
3. Encourage, nurture and provide financial assistance to South Dakotas who are responding to God's call into ministry.
4. Relieving current and future generations of rostered leaders of the financial burden of education debt.
5. Supporting Luther Seminary in St. Paul and the ELCA "Always Being Made New" appeal.

On (date), we will join Lutherans from across South Dakota in supporting the **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal. The congregation council has set a goal of \$(___), and we firmly believe we can reach or even exceed that goal. Pledges can be made over a three-year period of time.

We will receive commitments from the members of our congregation beginning on (date). (**explain the method and timing of your response plan**).

We look forward to your joining us in supporting **Listen! God Is Calling**. Whatever you can give will be appreciated.

In Christ,

Pastor/Campaign Leader

APPENDIX C

Second Congregational Letter (Only if you are conducting a phonathon)

Dear Fellow Members,

We, as Lutherans, are in the process of learning more about the vital ministry that we share and can be sure will continue here in South Dakota. The **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal, which is now underway, seeks to raise at least \$2.5 million in gifts across the state. The successful completion of the appeal will greatly expand our ability to ensure continued strong and capable rostered leadership for our South Dakota congregations and will also strengthen our ministries with new populations and neighborhoods. Specifically . . .

1. Equipping laymen and laywomen for leadership.
2. Helping mission congregations that are starting, to eventually thrive and grow and become self-sufficient and start and support new congregations and ministries that will need our continuing support.
3. Encourage, nurture and provide financial assistance to South Dakotas who are responding to God's call into ministry.
4. Relieving current and future generations of rostered leaders of the financial burden of education debt.
5. Supporting Luther Seminary in St. Paul and the ELCA "Always Being Made New" appeal..

On (date), we will join Lutherans from South Dakota in supporting the **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal. The congregation council has set a goal of \$(___), and we firmly believe we can reach or even exceed that goal. Pledges can be made over a three-year period of time.

Beginning **(day/date)**, members of our congregation will be phoning other members of the congregation to receive commitments to **Listen! God Is Calling**. Please be ready to make your response when you receive their phone call so that we can complete the campaign effort quickly and successfully!

We will ask you to consider a gift of **(\$am't.)** or **(in the range of \$)** to be given over a three-year pledge period. Please know that whatever you can give will be appreciated.

We look forward to your joining us in supporting the **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal. Any gift you can give will be appreciated.

In Christ,

Pastor/Campaign Leader

Appendix D
Letter to those who don't return a pledge card on Commitment Sunday

(Date)

Dear Fellow Member of (church),

On Sunday, **(Date)**, **(number)** families participated in the **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal raising over **(\$XXX)** to help expand and energize ministry across South Dakota. Gifts ranged from **\$xx to \$xx** and averaged **\$(xxx)** per family! I am grateful for all who have already participated.

When we approved participating in this campaign, we hoped that all families at **(church)** would hear the story of **Listen! God is Calling** and make a commitment in some way.

We have certainly heard the vision and know that it is a meaningful ministry that will touch thousands of lives each year.

I hope you will join me in making a commitment to this endeavor.

Please join all the families in this congregation who made commitments so that our response to the **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal will reflect giving by the entire congregation. Together, we can make a significant difference for older adults across the state.

Please fill out the enclosed statement of intent form and place it in the offering plate on Sunday or return it during the week to the church office. Gifts need to be in by (date), or we will need to follow up with you by phone to learn of your intentions.

Sincerely,

(Name), Campaign Chair/Pastor

Appendix E Temple Talk I

To the Temple Talk Presenter

Thank you for presenting this brief talk on behalf of “Listen! God is Calling” an appeal for Leadership and Mission. Please try to limit your speech to three minutes. It is important that you “speak from the heart” and do not read the words printed here. These are just suggestions to help you bring out the important points. Bulletin Insert #1 should be distributed prior to your talk.

- Over the next three weeks, you will hear about a journey our congregation is on along with the other 211 congregations in the South Dakota Synod. Through the efforts of the “**Listen! God is Calling**” appeal, the Synod hopes to raise \$2.5 million to strengthen the ministry of our synod. Our congregation’s goal is _____ over the next three years.
- The campaign has three goals, and over the next few weeks we will learn more about each. Today I want to talk about Goal 1: Providing and Preparing Future Leaders.
- Choose several facts from the Prospectus related to Goal 1 (pages 3 & 4) focusing in on leadership. The **Listen! God is Calling** appeal will provide seminary scholarships and seminary debt reduction to provide for future pastoral leadership in the synod.
- Seminary tuition and fees has continued to increase and more of the cost of seminary education has been shifted to the seminary students.
- The seminary debt for first call pastors can reach 6 figures and makes it difficult for them to serve smaller congregations.
- South Dakota leads the way in providing seminary scholarships and debt reduction but the needs exceed what we are currently able to do.
- During the next few weeks, you will learn more about this important effort for Leadership and Mission.
- Thank you for your support of the mission and ministry of our congregation and the South Dakota Synod

APPENDIX F Temple Talk II

To the Temple Talk Presenter

*Thank you for presenting this brief talk on behalf of “**Listen! God is Calling**” an **appeal for Leadership and Mission**. Please try to limit your speech to three minutes. It is important that you “speak from the heart” and do not read the words printed here. These are just suggestions to help you bring out the important points. Bulletin Insert #2 should be distributed prior to your talk.*

- Last week we were told that our congregation along with the other 211 congregations in the South Dakota Synod, will be on a journey together. Through the efforts of the “**Listen! God is Calling**” appeal, the Synod hopes to raise \$2.5 million to strengthen the ministry of our synod. Our congregation’s goal is _____ over the next three years.
- Last week we heard that our church needs pastors and how important seminary scholarships and debt reduction is to provide pastors for our congregations.
- We also need to recruit and shepherd candidates for pastoral ministry. The appeal will provide the resources to have a synod staff person recruit new candidates for pastoral ministry.
- Evangelical outreach is our call from our Lord Jesus to go and “baptize all nations”. The appeal will help provide support for the synod’s ethnic specific ministries such as Pueblo de Dios, Woyatan and the African ministry in Sioux Falls.
- The only capital expense in the appeal is for an urban retreat program at Woyatan in Rapid City that can enhance our ministry with and among South Dakota’s most economically disadvantaged people.
- The appeal will also provide resources for new congregations and renewal of existing congregations.
- Thank you for your support of the mission and ministry of our congregation and the South Dakota Synod

APPENDIX G
Temple Talk III

To the Temple Talk Presenter

*Thank you for presenting this brief talk on behalf of “**Listen! God is Calling**” an **appeal for Leadership and Mission**. Please try to limit your speech to three minutes. It is important that you “speak from the heart” and do not read the words printed here. These are just suggestions to help you bring out the important points. Bulletin Insert #3 should be distributed prior to your talk.*

- Our congregation along with the other 211 congregations in the South Dakota Synod, are on a journey together. Through the efforts of the “**Listen! God is Calling**” appeal, the Synod hopes to raise \$2.5 million to strengthen the ministry of our synod. Our congregation’s goal is _____ over the next three years.
- The campaign has three goals, and today I want to review those three goals outlined in the bulletin insert.
- Goal I - Providing Leadership:
 - Our church needs pastors – seminary scholarships and debt reduction
 - Our church needs well-equipped lay leaders
- Goal II – Enabling Mission:
 - Support for ethnic specific ministries
 - Urban retreat program at Woyatan
 - New congregations and congregational renewal
- Goal III – Ministry Partner Support:
 - 10% Tithe after expenses
 - 2/3 to the ELCA appeal “Always Being Made New”
 - 1/3 to Luther Seminary
- Next week all members of our congregation will be invited to participate in the appeal to reach our congregational goal of \$_____. Spend time in prayer and reflection this week as you let the Holy Spirit guide you in making your commitment to the appeal.
- Thank you for your support of the mission and ministry of our congregation and the South Dakota Synod.

Appendix H Temple Talk IV

(Talk prior to intent forms being filled out)

- We have heard, for the past few weeks, the vision for **Listen! God Is Calling** across South Dakota.
- The **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal will fund this effort and will provide make the following possible:
 1. Encourage, nurture and provide financial assistance to South Dakotas who are responding to God's call into ministry.
 2. Relieving current and future generations of rostered leaders of the financial burden of education debt.
 3. Equipping laymen and laywomen for leadership.
 4. Helping mission congregations that are starting, to eventually thrive and grow and become self-sufficient and start and support new congregations and ministries that will need our continuing support.
 5. Supporting Luther Seminary in St. Paul and the ELCA "Always Being Made New" appeal.
- Now, it is our turn. Our congregation has set a goal of (\$xxx).
- The appeal has already received \$XXX in gifts and pledges from other congregations and donors from across South Dakota.
- My Wife/husband and/or I - am supporting this effort because . . .
(presenter's testimonial)
- Please complete your intent form now during the next few minutes. Take a few minutes to consider carefully your response and then use the form to record your commitment. Be sure to include all address information.
- And, even if you are unable to give at this time, put your name on the card and write "no gift at this time" so that we do not follow up with you any further.
- In just a few minutes we will pass the offering plates to collect intent cards from everyone (or, you will come forward in a processional with your intent). Please join me now in supporting **Listen! God Is Calling**.

***NOTE:**

Please call the appeal office prior to Commitment Sunday and get an updated total of what has been pledged to the campaign. (605.274.5033)

Appendix I Fillers for Bulletins and Monthly Newsletters

- Did you know that our congregation along with the other 212 congregations in the South Dakota Synod, are on a journey together. Through the efforts of the “***Listen! God is Calling***” appeal, the Synod hopes to raise \$2.5 million to strengthen the ministry of our synod. Our congregation’s part is _____ over the next three years.
- The “Listen God is Calling” appeal has three goals:
 - Goal I - Providing Leadership:
 - Goal II – Enabling Mission:
 - Goal III – Ministry Partner Support:
- Did you know that The South Dakota Synod leads the way in providing seminary scholarships and debt reduction for future pastors but the needs exceed what we are currently able to provide.
- Did you know that to enable our congregations to have pastoral leadership in the future, we will need to recruit new candidates for pastoral ministry. The appeal will provide resources for a synod staff person to recruit new ministry candidates.
- Did you know that the only capital expense in the appeal is for an urban retreat program at Woyatan in Rapid City that can enhance our ministry with and among South Dakota’s most economically disadvantaged people.
- The “Listen! God is Calling” appeal will help provide support for the synod’s ethnic specific ministries such as Pueblo de Dios, Woyatan and the African ministry.
- Well equipped lay leaders are essential for a vibrant healthy church. The “Listen! God is Calling” appeal will provide education to equip lay leaders to be grounded in scripture and Lutheran theology with specific training for evangelism and outreach.
- Two ministry partners will be supported by a tithe of the appeal after expenses. Two-thirds will go to the ELCA Church-wide campaign “Always Being Made New” which also seeks to develop new leaders. One-third will go to Luther Seminary to help educate future pastoral leaders.

APPENDIX J
Suggested Commissioning Service

Ask the **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal workers to come to the front.

Beloved in the Lord:

You have been chosen for the very important responsibility of to help expand the ministry of congregations and members through **Listen! God Is Calling**. By your presence, you are signifying your acceptance of this responsibility before God.

May God bless this vision and your efforts. May God grant you courage to bring to each member and to this entire congregation the challenge of this responsibility so that God's mission may be carried out to a fuller measure. May God prosper you that your mission shall meet with a full measure of success to the honor and glory of God.

Let us hear the Word of God concerning the stewardship of means:

"Honor the Lord with your substance, with the first fruits of all your produce." Prov. 3:9

"The point is this: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." II Cor. 9:6-7

I ask you now, will you accept this task to which you have been called and carry out this mission to the glory of God and to the full extent of your ability, until all the members of this congregation have been given the opportunity to share in this work?

If so, answer YES.

Will the congregation please stand:

I ask you also, on whose behalf these fellow members shall contact you in the interest of the many who can be reached with Christ's love, will you receive them as messengers doing God's will; and will you accept the challenge God has given to this congregation, giving of your substance as God has prospered you and as the Word of God sets forth?

If so, answer YES.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we pray that you will make us worthy members of your church, who by both word and deed glorify Your Name. We pray you to bless these, your servants who today go out to ask for gifts that shall enable us better to serve Your people. Touch the hearts of those they shall visit, that their mission may be lightened and made joyous.

Grant every member of this congregation a vision of the importance of the work in which we are engaged and help us all that we may share to the full extent of our abilities. Prosper us in every good work. "And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us." In the Name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. AMEN.

APPENDIX K
Sample Thank You Letter

Dear member of _____ Church,

Thank you so much for your contribution to the **Listen! God Is Calling** appeal.

Your gift is an investment in this mission and the ministry that it will provide for years to come.

To date, our congregation has generated \$ _____ in gifts and commitments to the **Listen! God Is Calling** effort. We hope that more members may respond in the next few weeks.

You will be receiving an acknowledgement of your gift from the **Listen! God Is Calling** office in the near future. You will also receive periodic updates on the campaign progress and the ministry made possible through your generosity.

Thank you again for your partnership in this effort.

Sincerely,

(Congregation leader/Committee members/Pastor, etc.)

(Reminder: If the donor has not received or kept a copy of their intent form, be sure to enclose it with this letter.)