



Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Where do pastors come from?

It was an innocent question, asked of me several years ago by a 6 year old in the congregation wherein I was serving. When I told her that pastors were just ordinary people who felt called by God and the church, and who took special training to become a pastor, her eyes lit up. "Do you mean that I could become a pastor some day?" she asked. "I think you would be a very good pastor," I responded. Who knows... she just might.

I suspect that all of us who are pastors made that decision, at least in part, because we were identified and encouraged by others. Someone saw something in us that, perhaps, we did not even see in ourselves at the time. Or alternatively, we saw something in a beloved pastor, chaplain, youth leader, teacher, or camp counselor which prompted us to consider pastoral or diaconal ministry as our vocation.

No matter how it happened, we were persuaded to pursue the road to a ministerial or diaconal vocation because Christ's call was translated into tangible form as others identified and encouraged us.

In January of 2009 our church will be holding another *It's Your Call* emphasis. *It's Your Call* is a recruitment programme aimed at encouraging members of our church to consider a vocation as an ordained or diaconal minister. In the process, *It's Your Call* also encourages us all to consider or reconsider our vocations as we live out our baptismal call to ministry. For this emphasis to continue to bear fruit we need your help. *It's Your Call* is designed as a congregational program, and we are encouraging all congregations of the church to designate Sunday January 25, 2009 as *It's Your Call* Sunday. You will find with this letter materials that will help you carry out an *It's Your Call* Sunday emphasis.

Here is a **step by step outline** for conducting an *It's Your Call* emphasis.

- Step One: Publicize *It's Your Call* Sunday in advance. Use the **Sample Bulletin Announcements and Newsletter Articles**.
- Step Two: On January 11th (the Baptism of Our Lord) and January 18th (Epiphany 2) **use the bulletin inserts #1 and #2 included in this resource packet**.
- Step Three: Prepare for *It's Your Call* Sunday using the **Worship and Sermon Suggestions** in your service preparations for January 25th.
- Step Four: On Sunday January 25, 2009, join other congregations across the church in celebrating *It's Your Call* Sunday. Read the **letter from the Synod Bishops** to the congregation and lift up the call to ministry in hymn and prayer and sermon.



Distribute **bulletin insert # 3** as well as the **Candidate's Profile** and **Nomination Form**. Collect the completed nomination forms in the offering.

- Step Five: Pastor should interview nominees and complete the **Interview Form**. If candidates from other congregations have been nominated, send their nomination form to their home pastor.
- Step Six: With permission of those nominated, send completed **Interview Forms** to your synod office. Individuals who are nominated will be contacted and followed up. If nominees aren't sure about the difference between ordained and diaconal ministry, refer to the enclosed document **What is a Call to Ministry?**
- Step Seven: Support and encourage candidates for ministry within your congregation. Refer to the brochure **Tips for the Growth and Nurture of Candidates for Ministry** for ideas on how to do this.

Thank you in advance for participating in this very important emphasis. Let us continue to pray and work together to identify, recruit and nurture candidates for ordained and lay diaconal ministry.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Bob Binhammer – member of the *It's Your Call* Steering Committee