

All About Circuit Convocations And How CLCC Can Help You



A circuit convocation, which is a one-day gathering for all the congregations of a circuit, can strengthen the circuit by providing an opportunity for the members of the congregations get to know each other and the pastors of the other congregations.

The CLCC provides complimentary material for a circuit's convocation, or the circuit's pastors may develop their own material. When the topic of the convocation is drawn from the confessions, congregants learn about the confessions in a manner that individual congregations may not be able to provide. And the congregations that have already been studying the confessions are given the chance to demonstrate to congregations that haven't why it is good that every Lutheran should be familiar with them.

While the program will vary with the topic to be presented, a general outline could be

- 1) A 45–60 minute plenary session introducing the topic and creating the setting for the breakout sessions. The CLCC has several presentations that could be adapted for this session.
- 2) Multiple breakout sessions. While the CLCC can provide this material, pastors are trained to do presentations like these and may want to develop their own. Suggestions for breakout sessions are available from the CLCC. Consider having the participants register for these beforehand. Offering more presentations than a participant is able to attend gives a wider choice.
- 3) A closing plenary session which reviews the material just covered and presents multiple resources for further study.

One of the strongest features of a CLCC convocation is the circuit team with lay representatives from each congregation. Thus each congregation has a voice in what is presented at the convocation and an incentive to encourage its members to attend the convocation.

CLCC's goal in providing an outline and materials for a circuit convocation is that attendees will come away with:

- A better understanding and appreciation for our Lutheran heritage.
- More confidence in passing on the faith to the next generation.
- Greater comfort in responding to non-Lutherans about our beliefs.

Circuit Team

The Circuit Team consists of the Circuit Coordinator, Circuit Visitor, and Congregational Representatives. The Circuit Coordinator and Congregational Representatives do the bulk of the work. Their duties are outlined in sections on the next page.

The Circuit Visitor

- Announces plans to hold a circuit convocation and seek the support of the other circuit pastors.
- Requests help from the circuit pastors in identifying lay people to serve on the Circuit Convocation Team.
- Assures the pastors that hosting a convocation doesn't mean they will have extra work, unless the team asks them to develop a presentation.
- Contacts the circuit coordinator of his selection and provide CLCC with his contact information.

Participating circuit pastors assist by

- Identifying and recruiting a lay person within his congregation to coordinate the promotion of the seminar and provide the circuit coordinator his contact information.
- Supporting the hosting of a circuit convocation and permit promotional messages as deemed appropriate.
- If asked, being a presenter at the convocation.

Circuit Coordinator

The Circuit Coordinator is the point of contact with the CLCC and coordinates the work of the congregational representatives and other volunteers. This role is ideally filled by a layman who recognizes the unique opportunity this event provides. It requires the ability to organize and motivate other volunteers.

The Circuit Coordinator

- Locates representatives from each congregation in the circuit. (See *Tips for Locating Congregational Representatives* on page 4 and the representative's duties in the next section.)
- Chairs meetings with the congregational representatives to determine
 - Date and location of convocation (See Facilities and Equipment on page 3)
 - Topics to be covered
 - Format of event
 - How the presenters will be chosen
 - Estimates for the costs and the ways to fund event
 - What additional resources may be desired
- Serves as the on-going communication focal point for the circuit seminar, staying in touch with the CLCC and using their resources as the team wishes.
- Oversees distribution of promotional material. A Circuit Promotion Coordinator may be chosen to prepare and distribute promotional materials. (See Promotion on page 3)
- Applies for grants.
- Determines responsibility among the congregational representatives for the following: (See also Host Congregation Coordinator on page 3.)
 - Equipment for the presentation (laptop, projector, screen).
 - Registration desk and at least one volunteer to man it.
 - Refreshments and food before and during the convocation.
 - Volunteers to serve the refreshments and lunch.
 - Volunteers to set up and clean up.
 - Documentation of the event (photographs, video and audio files) to be shared among team members and with the CLCC
- With permission of presenters, submits presentations to the CLCC for use in other circuits.
- Provides feedback after the seminar, including the list of attendees and photographic documentation of the event.

Congregational Representative

The Congregation Representatives, selected from each congregation within the circuit

- Provide input to the circuit team for the development of the convocation.
- Coordinate with the congregation's pastor the announcement and promotion of the seminar.
- Elicit support through the congregation's officers, Board of Elders, and Board of Education.
- Serve as advocates for the convocation stressing the opportunity to:
 - Develop a common language and identity so outsiders can recognize us as a faith community.
 - Get to know members of other congregations and see their congregation is a part of a bigger reality.
 - Understand better what their congregation has formally stated is their guideline for doctrine and practice.

- Become familiar with the comfort and confidence available from our Lutheran confessions.
- Learn better how to pass on the faith to the next generation.
- Develop an appreciation for our Lutheran heritage and its relevance in today's world.
- Include a description of the convocation in the congregational newsletter. (CLCC can provide suggested wording.)
- Include a bulletin insert for the two weeks prior to the convocation (CLCC can provide a sample) and create an advanced registration.

Host Congregation Coordinator

The Host Congregation Coordinator is responsible for preparing the site and related functions such as lunch and registration. It is envisioned that this coordinator would recruit individuals to chair the refreshment and lunch functions, the set-up and clean-up activities, the audio-visual equipment needs, and the registration table. The coordinator will

- Solicit registration estimates from the congregation coordinators to determine space and food requirements.
- Provide an estimate the costs of food and packets to the circuit convocation team as requested.
- Recruit volunteers to provide refreshments and lunch.
- Ensure that all food and supplies are available.
- Recruit volunteers to man the registration table.
- Ensure room, lunch and registration set ups are in place and that needed equipment (computer with PowerPoint, projector, screen, extension cords, power strip, microphone, etc.) is in place. (See Facilities and Equipment on page 3)
- Ensure that information for the registration packets is printed, assembled, and available at the registration table.
- Ensure that facility is opened and ready for traffic at least one hour before the start of the convocation.

Promotion

The strongest form of promotion will be the enthusiasm displayed by those hosting the seminar. CLCC will provide a suggested timeline of promotional releases as well as sample flyers that you can customize and give to your circuit congregations for their newsletter and bulletins. The circuit team will coordinate the promotional activities among the participating congregations and determine where common resources can be used. You may choose to run ads in various media.

Facilities and Equipment

The first step in site selection is to estimate the anticipated attendance. Both the convenience of the location and the amenities of the facility are important.

It is best to have a place other than the nave of the church to meet. We have found that having tables as well as chairs is more productive than chairs alone. Where space is available, a U-shaped arrangement usually works best, with a table near the front for the projector and a lectern to the side for the presenter. We have also found that, unless the group is small, ceiling height is important and rooms with ceilings less than 10 ft. should be avoided. Determine how many breakout sessions will be held and what furniture will be needed.

You will need to have a computer with PowerPoint software and a means to project the slides (a projector connected to the computer and a screen or a TV monitor connected to the computer). Depending on the size of the group, you may need a microphone.

In addition to setting up for the presentation and breakout sessions, you should plan to have a manned registration table. The registration table can serve to:

- Welcome attendees.
- Log their names and contact information.
- Collect any registration fee. (Whether or not to charge a fee to cover your costs is up to the circuit team. There is no financial obligation to CLCC.)
- Provide attendees a packet that can be as simple as a one-page agenda or one that includes paper for notes or an outline of the slides.
- If the team so chooses, make available copies of the CLCC book that is most appropriate for the presentation or other resources, such as the Book of Concord. These books can either be included as part of the registration packet or sold separately. CLCC books were written especially for laymen; you will find these to be both informative and enjoyable to read. The seminar price for a set of ten is \$150 which includes shipping.

Finally, you will want to have a room for breaks and lunch. While this does not need to be a separate room, it is definitely preferable if space permits. Separate rooms permit everyone to enjoy a change in scenery and allow those helping with lunch not to feel intrusive when setting and clearing the tables.

With respect to funding, see if someone will form a Thrivent Action Team to help with the costs.

Tips for Locating Congregational Representatives

Here are some tips to help you find congregational representatives in your circuit. Keep in mind that the representatives from the congregations don't need to be well versed in the Lutheran confessions. You simply want leaders.

1. Find the e-mail addresses of the circuit pastors.

Generally, a circuit has about 8-12 congregations. There are a number of ways you can get the pastors' addresses. The easiest would be to ask a pastor who would be likely to help you get this project organized. This is most likely your own.

If you prefer to find the pastors yourself, you may be able to get the list from your district's website. You should be able to find the name of your circuit visitor and a list of the churches in your circuit.

Once you know the names of the pastors or churches you can get their email addresses at lcms.org using *Locators* at the top right corner. A church's page has a link to its pastor's information.

2. Write to each circuit pastor. Introduce yourself and explain that you would like to see a convocation in your circuit and ask for his help. Explain that he may be asked to lead a presentation, but for now you would simply like his help in finding a representative from his congregation who could help you. Explain in the letter that if he's not able to help you, and it's a large church with secretarial staff, you would like his permission to contact his office secretary to get these names. Don't expect responses from all of the pastors. You may not get any. The purpose of this letter is obviously to get the pastors' help, but the other purpose is to make it clear you are not going behind the pastors' backs. You want their support. Be very tactful and respectful in your request. This could be a form letter, see the sample on the next page.
3. Ask for help from the CLCC.

Hopefully you will get a positive response. Lack of a response does not mean, however, they won't cooperate for the actual seminar. It is not likely to be too difficult to find pastors to lead the presentations, especially when material is available for them. They would simply need to personalize it. It's at this first step, when they are not sure what this is about, that you may not get a response. If you don't get a positive response, please contact CLCC for additional helps.

Sample Letter to Circuit Pastors

You might customize this letter to fit your circuit.

Dear Pastors of LCMS MN S District – Circuit 13,

I would like to interest you and your congregations in an opportunity to participate in a well-structured seminar developed by [Confessional Lutherans for Christ's Commission](#) (CLCC) to observe and celebrate the Reformation and Lutheran Confessions.

Who am I to ask this of you? My name is _____. I have been an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Rochester for the last 23 years. While attending a recent Continuing Education Class on the book of Job, I was approached by Rev. Rob Jarvis, a the executive director of the CLCC. He asked if I would be the 13th Circuit's Coordinator for this seminar.

As Pastors of your respective congregations you have undoubtedly offered or plan to offer your own instruction concerning the Reformation and Confessions – just as the Pastors of Trinity have done. The main difference in this convocation would be the opportunity for interested LCMS laypersons from the 9 circuit #13 congregations to gather together in a single place (yet to be determined) and to learn and share their faith and understanding of what it means to be a Christian Lutheran with each other.

This event cannot take place without a coordinated effort on our parts as laid out on the CLCC web page <https://www.theclcc.org/organizing-a-circuit-convocation/>. This page goes into greater detail about organizing a convocation and has links to presentation materials. While the materials for presentation are available through the CLCC, volunteers would be needed to host, publicize, and present the seminar – hopefully sometime in October.

I believe this seminar would be a great opportunity for the laity of our congregations to work together and learn. And if there is any interest from local congregations outside this circuit, and they do not have their own circuit coordinator, then let them join in!

Please let me know if you have any interest in this seminar and who I might contact in your congregation for any further coordination efforts. I look forward to hearing from you.

VDMA,
(name)