



God has given us new
birth into a *Living Hope*.
- 1 Peter 1:3

July 25, 2030

Pastor John Bugenhagen
20 Church Square
Wittenberg, California 12108

Dear Pastor Bugenhagen,

On July 25, 2030, the voters of Living Hope Lutheran Church by unanimous vote extended a divine call to you to serve as our pastor. We are confident that you can hear the Lord's voice in this call and that he has given you the spirit and abilities to fulfill it. We are eager to have a full-time shepherd.

Living Hope was founded in 1989. Since then we have been served by Pastors John Smith (1989-1998), John Rolfe (1998-2018), and Wilhem Walther (2019-2029). Pastor Walther accepted a call to another congregation in the spring of 2029.

Our first place of worship was a local elementary school. We dedicated our current facility in 1996. We're thankful for a prominent location on a busy road. A floor plan is included in this call packet. We refinanced our mortgage in 2020 when we experienced some financial difficulties. The current balance is \$125,000. The monthly payment is \$4,000. We are on track to pay it off in 2035. We have no other debt.

In 2008 we reached an average Sunday attendance of 120 worshipers. Participation has declined slightly since then. Last year average Sunday attendance was 98. Our Sunday education program is strong, with about two-thirds of worshipers participating in Sunday School and Bible Class. In 2015 we started a small-group ministry. Participation in small groups has waned during the vacancy. We hope to revitalize the program and perhaps retool it under the leadership of our new pastor.

Even though about half of our members live more than thirty minutes from church, we are a close-knit congregation. We don't always agree on everything, but we love one another and enjoy spending time with each other. It's not unusual for people to continue visiting more than an hour after Sunday activities have wrapped up. Visitors often comment positively about our friendliness. Even so, we observe that there is room for improvement in engaging and following up with visitors.

We started using the new hymnal in 2023. Our worship tends to follow the hymnal's orders of service, with some variation from time to time. We sing a mix of traditional and new hymns. God has blessed us with some excellent singers—and some non-excellent ones. Typically accompaniment is done with our piano and organ. Guitar and brass instruments adorn our worship on occasion. We have an active choir of about ten people. We print the service in bulletins except for the hymns, for which we use pew hymnals. We currently have one organist/pianist who plays about half the time. MIDI serves us well on other Sundays.

We host community events about once per quarter, including Christmas for Kids, an Easter Egg Hunt, VBS, and our Fall Festival. Only a few families have started attending worship or classes directly through these efforts. We feel, however, that they help us to maintain a community presence.

We planned our small-group ministry to serve as a meaningful point of regular contact with people who do not yet know Jesus. We encourage our members to invite their friends, relatives, and neighbors. This has given us many opportunities to share the gospel with people. Several families have joined our congregation

through contacts established through this ministry. As mentioned above, we need some pastoral encouragement and guidance in revitalizing it.

Our Sunday education program consists of an adult Bible study and three Sunday School classrooms: PreK-1, grades 2-4, and grades 5-8. With such wide-ranging ages in these classrooms, we have struggled to keep everyone engaged. We have gifted teachers who are faithful to their calling. It has also been a struggle for us to maintain a youth group and an effective youth group education program. Currently our high school students join the adults in Sunday Bible class. We want to work on improving our ministry to this critical age group. It has been difficult for us to maintain connections to our high school and college students.

We don't have a long-range plan. We would like to develop one and to hold ourselves accountable to its execution. We have decided that it would be best to wait for our next pastor to arrive so that he can play an integral role in its development. We want you to lead us in making a plan that we can carry out together!

Living Hope has a traditional leadership structure. A copy of our constitution and bylaws is included in this call packet. We have not always been able to fill every church council position. This has led us to wonder whether a leaner structure might serve us better. We have not yet considered anything specific.

There is a small pastor's office at the church. We have an older computer. If you accept the call, we will purchase a new computer of your choice up to \$1,500. We have a volunteer church secretary who helps with basic tasks for ten hours each week. She typically works from home but is willing to do on-site work as necessary.

Our financial health is moderate. Our general operating budget this year is \$180,000. Our offerings are on track to total about \$170,000. Since our expenses have been lower during the vacancy, we expect an operating fund surplus of about \$8,000 this year. We have \$60,000 in cash and cash equivalents. We have enclosed the current budget, the latest financial report, and the last two annual reports to provide more details.

Somewhere, Massachusetts is an established suburb north of Springfield. Even so, residential and commercial development continues. Somewhere's population is growing. There is an even mix of white- and blue-collar workers. Life is fast-paced. People in New England tend to have a tough exterior compared to many other areas of the country. It can take time and effort to become part of a friend group. However, once you're in a group of friends, there is a high level of trust and openness. We consider these personal relationships to be prime opportunities to witness to the gospel. We intend to afford you time to make inroads into our community. We will encourage you to spend time away from your desk to develop relationships.

Living Hope does not have a parsonage. If you accept this call, you will need to find a place to purchase or rent. We can point you to some Realtors if you wish. We encourage you to find a place close to the church where you can strike deep roots. We are eager to spread the gospel in our local community.

We promise to honor and support you and your family as you devote yourself to the ministry of the Word and sacraments. We will compensate you according to column G of the WELS salary matrix, together with Massachusetts COLA of 20.6%, housing for a three-bedroom home in Springfield according to the HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation System, SECA contribution at 7.65% of COLA-adjusted salary and housing. We will also give you WELS VEBA Plan 1 and contribute to the WELS Retirement Program. In accordance with synod code, you will receive three weeks of vacation annually. One week of vacation may be carried over from one calendar year to the next. We have used the online WELS Called Worker Compensation Calculator to calculate your compensation. The worksheet is enclosed. Please let us know if you have any questions about our method or the calculations.

We will reimburse you at \$0.60/mile for ministry mileage in your personal vehicle. We will give you a cell phone allowance of \$70/month and a continuing education allowance of \$100/month. Since your continuing education expenses may fluctuate from year to year, we will put your education allowance into a sinking fund. Any unused allowance will roll over into the next year.

We will pay for moving expenses for up to 12,000 pounds, plus one vehicle at \$0.20/mile and lodging and meals along the way. Because moving reimbursement is now considered taxable income, we will give you a one-time payment of 27.3% of total moving costs to subsidize your additional tax liability. If it is possible for you to reduce costs by avoiding a full-service moving company, we would appreciate it greatly and help to whatever extent we are able.

We hope that you will take the opportunity to talk to a variety of people here while you deliberate this divine call. Contact information for several people is below. Please reach out to me if you desire contact information for anyone else.

John Doe, President
johndoe@aol.com
555-555-5555

Jim Doe, Treasurer
jimdoe@aol.com
555-555-5555

Hans Doe, Head elder
hansdoe@aol.com
555-555-5555

Jane Doe, Sunday School Teacher
janedoe@aol.com
555-555-5555

Joyce Doe, Small Group Coord.
joycedoe@aol.com
555-555-5555

Janice Doe, Secretary
janicedoe@aol.com
555-555-5555

Michael Seifert, District President
nadp@wels.net
555-555-5555

Heath Llewellyn, Circuit Pastor
[hleu@aol.com](mailto:hlew@aol.com)
555-555-5555

Justus Jonas, Vacancy Pastor
justus@aol.com
555-555-5555

Our district president has asked us to provide “Courtesies to Follow When Receiving a Divine Call.” It provides helpful information about steps you should take when you receive, deliberate, and make a decision about a divine call. The document is enclosed.

We extend this divine call to you with the confidence that the Lord will keep his promise to answer the prayers of his people and send out workers into his harvest field. We pray that you will be the next pastor he sends us. Of course, we assume that you already find great joy where you are presently serving, that you love God’s people there and that they love you. God has placed two good options before you. We will pray that he fill you with sanctified wisdom and selfless love as you consider where you might serve best at this time. We will also do whatever else we can to assist in your deliberations. God bless you, Pastor!

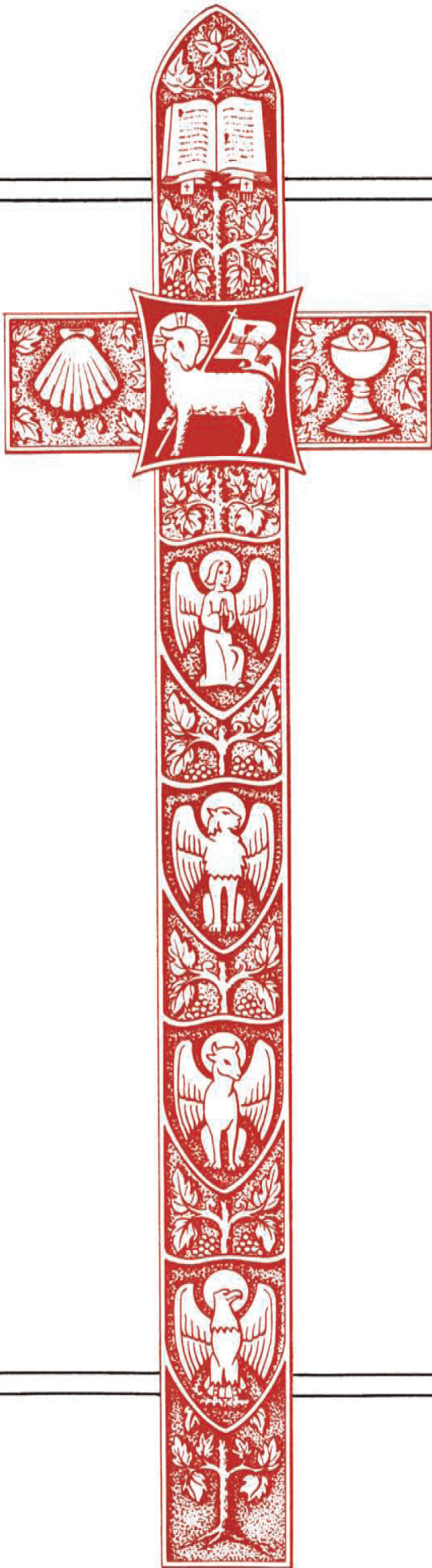
In Jesus Christ our Savior,



President John Doe
Living Hope Lutheran Church

Enclosures:

- Call form (hardcopy mailed)
- Compensation worksheet
- Pictorial directory
- Constitution and bylaws
- Facility floor plan
- Budget
- Latest financial report
- Last two annual reports
- Recent service folders
- Courtesies to Follow When Receiving a Divine Call



In Nomine Jesu

Reposing full confidence in your faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ and in your desire to feed his sheep and lambs

Living Hope

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

of Somewhere, Massachusetts

herewith, in the name of the Triune God, calls you,

John Bugenhagen

to be our pastor.

We trust that you will recognize in this CALL the voice of your Lord Jesus Christ, and we pray that he, the Head of the church, may give you willingness and strength joyfully to follow it, and faithfully to labor among us, to the glory of his most holy name and the salvation of immortal souls.

In extending this call to you we solemnly charge you

To preach the gospel of our Lord among us in its truth and purity, to administer the sacraments in accordance with the inspired Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as incorporated in the Book of Concord of 1580, and to establish and maintain sound Lutheran practice at all times;

To discharge toward all the members of our congregation the functions of a pastor, that is, to watch over their souls in an evangelical manner (Acts 20:28); in particular to visit the sick and the dying, to admonish indifferent and erring members (2 Timothy 4:2) and to be ever zealous for the winning of souls for Christ's kingdom;

To be faithful in the spiritual care of the young, in particular to instruct our catechumens in the word of God, as it is taught in the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther, and in general to be diligent in fostering and furthering the educational agencies of our congregation;

To walk and conduct yourself at all times as it becomes a minister of Christ (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:7-9), so that by your Christian life you may be an example to all men (Matthew 5:16); and

To devote your time, strength and ability to the general advancement of the kingdom of Christ and to the gathering in of his harvest.

Should the Lord in his grace and mercy bring you to us

We will receive, honor and love you as our pastor.

We will support your work among us with our prayers and personal assistance.

We will provide your proper maintenance according to our ability, being mindful of our Lord's injunction that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:10; Galatians 6:6), and will for the present pay you promptly and regularly a salary of

\$ 78,568 per annum

WELS VERA Plan I

Participation in WELS Retirement Program

Signed in behalf and by authority of

Living Hope Ev. Lutheran Church of Somewhere, Mt

T ~ D ~, Chairman

H ~ D ~, Secretary

Given and signed this 25th day of July, AD. 2030

Called Worker Compensation Worksheet

Total Compensation Calculation for: **John Bugenhagen**

Position	Years of Service	Fiscal Year	Available Columns
Pastor	10	2024-25	E - H
Additional Responsibilities (\$0)		Additional Education (\$0)	
WELS Retirement Program (2024)	Long Term Disability	Accidental D & D	
\$4,528			
COLA Index	Housing	Health Insurance	Sec 105 Empl Contrib
20.60% (Boston MA)	\$20,028	\$26,748	
Total Compensation without Benefits		Total Compensation with Benefits	
\$78,568		\$109,844	

CALCULATIONS

Components	Addition	Total
Base Salary	\$43,911	\$43,911
COLA	\$9,046	\$52,957
Housing	\$20,028	\$72,985
SECA Contribution	\$5,583	\$78,568
Benefits		
Retirement Program	\$4,528	\$83,096
Health Insurance Premium	\$26,748	\$109,844

COMMENTS

Ministry mileage at \$0.60/mile

Cell phone allowance of \$70/month

Continuing education allowance of \$100/month, placed into sinking fund

Date Printed: 2024-4-24



Courtesies to Follow When Receiving a Divine Call

(included in Divine Call Packet)

Upon receipt of the divine call

1. Immediately notify the president of the congregation or institution you are serving
2. Promptly send a letter via email to acknowledge receipt of the divine call to the calling body in care of its president. CC the following:
 - President of the district in which you hold membership
 - President of the district in which the calling body is located
 - Circuit pastors of each circuit or the school visitor for your school
 - Pastor or vacancy pastor serving the calling congregation
 - Chairman of your district mission board, if you serve a mission congregation
 - Chairman of the calling district mission board, if the calling congregation is a mission congregation

While deliberating the divine call

1. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in prayer
2. Seek the counsel of your spouse, neighboring pastors, circuit pastor, teachers, district president or others as the circumstances warrant
3. Discuss the call with your current congregation and seek their counsel
4. As you converse with representatives of the calling body, remember that it has been our practice as a synod not to physically visit a site before making a decision. This can help avoid even a hint of improper motives once a decision is reached
5. You may at times include your spouse in discussions with representatives of the calling body. Be careful not to include your spouse in items which are confidential in nature
6. If possible, determine and announce the projected date for reaching a decision

After reaching a decision

1. Notify the president of the calling body of your decision
2. Announce your decision to your present congregation or institution
3. Send a letter via email formally announcing your decision to the same parties you addressed when acknowledging the call
4. If you accept the new divine call, then request, in writing, a peaceful release from your present call

If you decline the call

As soon as possible, return the call form and all other materials that you received from the calling body. Alternatively, with the consent of the calling body you may shred them.

If you accept the call

1. Make arrangements for moving, planned day of arrival and date for installation with the president, pastor and/or vacancy pastor of the calling body. It is good practice not to linger any longer than absolutely necessary
2. Inform me of the date and time of your installation and the name of the installing pastor as soon as they are determined
3. Remember that if the Lord leads you someplace else, that's your new home. As you settle into your new home, allow your memory of your previous place of service to fade while God's people there learn to know and love their new servant in Christ

God bless your deliberations! Please contact me if I may be of assistance.

Pastor Michael Seifert

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Seifert". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

North Atlantic District President (WELS)

PastorSeifert@LivingHopeWELS.com

cell: 804-239-5206

Revised: 4/24/24