



GO THEREFORE AND MAKE
DISCIPLES...

INSTALLATION
REVEREND STEPHEN S. LINCK

OFFICIANT- REV. ERIC JOHNSON
PRESIDENT SOUTHERN DISTRICT LCMS

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MISSISSIPPI
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About the Front Symbol

The symbol on the front of the worship folder depicts several features of the Office of Holy Ministry and, in some instances, of the individual Christian life.

Beginning with the upper left-hand corner and continuing clockwise, we first find an inclined ewer (pitcher) pouring water into a bowl. The ewer and bowl are two vessels which may be used during the rite of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Next we find a shepherd's staff. For the shepherd, the staff functions to guide and protect sheep. A pastor (one of several titles given a minister; "pastor" in Latin, meaning "shepherd") may serve as a spiritual shepherd in that, by instructing his people in the Word of God, he, in effect, guides his hearers to God's forgiveness, and protects their salvation. The stole is draped over the staff. The stole is a visible reminder of the yoke which Christ has placed on all His people; namely, the way Christ is marked by sorrow, suffering, discipline, and sacrifice. The cup (chalice) is the next symbol. The chalice is a vessel used during the Sacrament of Holy Communion. By extending the meaning, as St. Paul did, the chalice also represents the whole, universal catholic church in that all the people of God participate in the body and blood of Christ. Therefore, the ministry, while it is a distinct privilege of any congregation, remains an office of the church catholic. The lantern is at the bottom of the symbol. In a Christian context, light steeps with meaning. Here, fire symbolizes sacrificial love. Oil burning in a lamp is a symbol of sacrificial love, both of Christ and of His disciples. Finally is found an open book with an alpha superscription. Alpha is the first letter and Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. In the Apocalypse of St. John, alpha-omega metaphorically refers to Jesus Christ. The alpha-omega has many meanings; here it communicates the axiom Jesus Christ "opens" the Sacred Scriptures; He gives it meaning and force.

Rite of Installation

P: In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Beloved in the Lord, through the Church's usual order, the **Reverend Stephen S. Linck** has been called by the Lord of the Church to be **Pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Gulfport, Mississippi.**

Salutation and Collect:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray:

O almighty God, by Your Son, our Savior, You have always given to Your Church on earth faithful shepherds to guide and feed your flock. Therefore we pray, make all pastors diligent to preach Your holy Word and to administer Your means of grace, and grant Your people wisdom to follow in the way that leads to life eternal; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (589)

C: Amen.

Sit

P: Hear what Holy Scripture says concerning the institution of the Office of the Holy Ministry.

The Institution of the Office of the Holy Ministry

Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be to you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you retain the sins of any, they are retained." John 20:21-23 NKJV alt.

The Responsibilities of the Office of the Holy Ministry

P: Hear what the Holy Scripture says concerning the responsibilities of the Office of the Holy Ministry. Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord

you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." John 21:15-17

[Jesus] said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." Luke 24:46-47 alt.

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1-5

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable,

hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:1-7

The Strength and Promise in the Office of the Holy Ministry

P: Hear what Holy Scripture says concerning the strength and promise God gives to those in the Office of the Holy Ministry.

[Jesus said:] "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:13-16

"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but

the one whom the Lord commends. 2 Corinthians 10:17-18

Continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:14-17 NKJV

The presiding minister addresses the pastor-elect:

P: Dear brother in Christ, the Lord grant that you receive and keep these words in your heart so that you may be strengthened and encouraged in your labors.

God gathers His Church by and around His Holy Gospel and thereby also grants it growth and increase according to His good pleasure. That this may be done, He has established the Office of the Holy Ministry into which you have been called by the Church and have been ordained and consecrated by prayer and the laying on of hands. It is fitting that you should again acknowledge the responsibilities of this holy office into which you are to serve as **Pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Gulfport, Mississippi** .

In the presence of this congregation and before our Lord God to whom you must give an account now and at the Last Day, I now ask you:

Do you acknowledge that the Lord has called you through His Church into the ministry of Word and Sacrament?

SL: I do

P: Do you believe and confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

SL: Yes, I believe and confess the canonical Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

P: Do you believe and confess the three Ecumenical Creeds, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and do you reject all the errors which they condemn?

SL: Yes, I believe and confess the three Ecumenical Creeds because they are in accord with the Word of God. I also reject all the errors they condemn.

P: Do you confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession to be a true exposition of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? And do you confess that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on

the Authority and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord as these are contained in the Book of Concord – are also in agreement with this one scriptural faith?

SL: Yes, I make these Confessions my own because they are in accord with the Word of God.

P: Do you promise that you will perform the duties of your office in accordance with these Confessions and that all your preaching and teaching and your administration of the Sacraments will be in conformity with Holy Scripture and with these Confessions?

SL: Yes, I promise, with the help of God.

P: Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the chief articles of Christian doctrine, will you forgive the sins of those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you? Will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying? Will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry centered in the Gospel? Will you admonish and encourage the people to a lively confidence in Christ and in holy living?

SL: Yes, I will, with the help of God.

P: Finally, will you honor and adorn the Office of the Holy Ministry with a holy life? Will you be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture and the Confessions? And will you be constant in prayer for those under your pastoral care?

SL: I will, the Lord helping me through the power and grace of His Holy Spirit.

INSTALLATION of the PASTOR of a CONGREGATION

P: Beloved in the Lord, Holy Scripture says, "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." Hebrews 13:17 NIV

P: You have heard the solemn promise of him called to be your pastor. Will you receive him, show him that love, honor, and obedience in the Lord that you owe to the shepherd and teacher placed over you by your Lord Jesus Christ, and will you support him by your gifts and pray for him always that in his labors he may retain a cheerful spirit and that his ministry among you may be abundantly blessed? If so, then answer: We will, with the help of God.

C: We will, with the help of God.

P: Will you honor and uphold your pastor as he serves Christ in all his God-pleasing responsibilities? Will you aid him as he cares for his family? Will you be diligent to "put the best construction on everything," recognizing that "love covers a multitude of sins"? If so, then answer: We will, with the help of God.

C: We will, with the help of God.

P: The almighty and most merciful God strengthen and assist you always

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The presiding minister asks the pastor-elect:

P: Are you ready and willing to assume this public trust and responsibility?

SL: I am.

P: **Reverend Stephen S. Linck**, I install you as **Pastor of St Matthew Lutheran Church**, in the name of the Father of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. *Hebrews 13:20-21*

C: Amen

Stand

P: Let us pray.
Merciful God and Father, You have graciously promised that, through the preaching of the crucified Christ, those who believe in Him will be saved. By Your Holy Spirit grant grace to **Stephen**, whom You have given to be a pastor of this congregation. Grant him

readiness and steadfastness in this ministry, patience, understanding, and great zeal. Support and strengthen him in Your service that by Your Word Your Church may be built and increased: through Your Son, our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, our Lord (590)

C: Amen

Blessing

P: Go, therefore, and be a shepherd of the Good Shepherd's flock. Preach the Word of God; administer the holy Sacraments; offer prayer for all the faithful; instruct, watch over and guide the flock among which the Holy Spirit has placed you. Do it not for earthly gain but with great joy, for you have been called not to lordship but to serve His flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of Glory that will never fade away.

The almighty and most merciful God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C: Amen.

The service continues with the PRAYER OF THE CHURCH, led by the newly installed.

Stephen S. Linck was born in Chicago, Illinois, on September 12, 1953, the son of A. Stephen and Beatrice Linck. He has two sisters, Susan, and his twin Michelle. Steve grew up in the Chicago suburb of Clarendon Hills and, upon graduating from Hinsdale South High School, enlisted in the United States Navy at age 17. He served as a Hospital Corpsman at the Naval Hospital in Orlando, Florida, and with the Fleet Marine Force, MAG-26, in New River, North Carolina. During his active-duty service in Orlando, Steve met and married Mary Lou Ivo on August 18, 1974. Following his military service, he returned to Florida and earned an A.A. degree from Seminole Community College in 1977, followed by a B.A. in Business Administration from the University of Central Florida, Orlando, in 1979. For the next six years, Steve worked in retail marketing, primarily as a computer center manager for Radio Shack. In August of 1984, Steve and his family left Oviedo, Florida, with two toddler children, Nicholas and Timothy, and one on the way. Their daughter Elizabeth was born shortly after they arrived in Indiana, where Steve entered Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. During seminary, he served as a student chaplain in Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Luke's Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne, along with several other jobs. He completed his vicarage at Trinity Lutheran in Reese, Michigan, while also serving as a chaplain at Lutheran Hospital in Saginaw. During this time, the family welcomed another son, Christopher, who became sainted at just eight weeks of age. In November of 1988, Steve returned with his family to Fort Wayne to complete his seminary studies. He earned his Master of Divinity degree on May 19, 1989, accepted a Call to serve Trinity Lutheran, Riesel, Texas, and was ordained on June 26, 1989. During his

ministry in Riesel, their fifth child, Benjamin, was born. Pastor Linck also served for several years as a Nursing Home Chaplain with Central Texas Senior Ministries. He and Mary Lou became licensed foster parents and later adopted their youngest, Marissa, #6. Deeply committed to community service, Pastor Linck volunteered as a fireman, Cub Scout and Boy Scout leader, and President of the Central Texas Foster Parent Association. The Riesel community credits him with starting a Meals on Wheels program and opening the area's only accredited day care facility. In May of 1997, Pastor Linck accepted a Call to St. Paul Lutheran, Groves, Texas. At St. Paul, Pastor Linck served a much larger congregation, and family responsibilities took more of his time. Still, he actively supported community baseball teams, dance teams, high school sports—especially basketball—and the industrial arts program. He also organized youth mission trips to destinations such as Alamo, Texas, to build a food bank; Oaks, Oklahoma, to serve Native Americans; and Woodville, Texas, to rehabilitate a church building. In the spring of 2003, he accepted a Call to Grace Lutheran, Pensacola, Florida. In Pensacola, Pastor Linck continued his passion for youth mission trips, leading groups to places as far as Zeballos, Vancouver, British Columbia, and as close as Thomasville, Alabama. A major challenge came in September 2004, when Hurricane Ivan destroyed most of Grace's church building. Pastor Linck led services in the parking lot that very next Sunday, then arranged to borrow worship space from a nearby Episcopal congregation for the following 18 months. Under his leadership, and with director Amy Onkka, even the preschool never missed a day, moving classes into Sunday School rooms at the borrowed site. Grace also became a hub

for youth mission groups nationwide, who came to help rebuild the community. In 2008, during the financial market collapse, Grace Lutheran undertook a \$2.5 million building project, doubling its facilities and replacing its pine-straw parking lot with paved parking. When the project manager stepped down, Pastor Linck assumed responsibility, gaining experience that prepared him for his next role with the Southern District Church Extension Fund (CEF). In November 2010, he was asked to serve as interim director of the CEF while continuing as Senior Pastor at Grace. For about two years, he managed both roles before transitioning fully to the Southern District CEF in 2013. Since then, he has faithfully served in the “ministry of money,” using his construction and business skills to support congregations and individuals throughout the district. After being widowed for seven years, Pastor Linck married Shelta Richardson on June 11, 2022. Their friendship, which began through shared ministry work, grew into a life together, united in faith and service. Shelta has three daughters of her own: Elizabeth, Ashley, and Kaitlyn. Shelta brings her own gifts in education, leadership, and consulting, and together they look forward to serving God’s people with a shared heart for ministry. Together they have 17 grandchildren. On September 30, 2025, Pastor Linck accepted the Call to St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, Gulfport, Mississippi. He and Shelta now make their home in Waveland, Mississippi, where they enjoy living near the water. They hope to use their home as a place of hospitality and ministry, welcoming members of the congregation for youth gatherings, small groups, and fellowship.

