

	Zion Lutheran Church Recruitment SOP Internal SOP	SOP # 2	
		Revision #	
		Implementation Date	6/13/2026
Page # 1	1 of 18	Last Reviewed/Update Date	//
SOP Owner	Pastors	Approval	6/13/2026

1. Purpose

This SOP is intended to give explicit instruction for the recruitment and hiring of staff members.

2. Scope

This SOP is relevant to the activities of the Pastor(s), Treasurer and members of the Personnel Committee. The usual period of advertising for regular, full-time, part-time and temporary positions is four (4) to six (6) weeks (Recruitment of rostered staff is conducted by a Call Committee and does not follow the procedures described in this document). Internal recruitment positions are usually advertised for two (2) weeks. The time required to complete the recruitment process is affected by a number of variables such as the initial time required to obtain approval to fill the position, the time needed to review the position description; convene a committee; review applications; identify finalists; interview; make a selection and offer the position.

3. Responsibilities

- a. Pastor(s) responsible for - and directly involved in - the recruitment process. He or she may delegate to the Personnel Committee the responsibility of conducting the recruitment.
- b. Personnel Committee: The Personnel Committee has the responsibility for filling vacant staff positions and updating Job descriptions from time to time, as

needed. These actions will be coordinated in conjunction with the appropriate supervisor(s) and committee(s) having oversight responsibility for the duties and responsibilities included in the job description.

- c. The Office Business Manager/Treasurer . The major duties of the Treasurer are to handle the financial and legal obligations as identified in Section 5 below.
- d. Supervisors: Assist the Personnel Committee in updating the job descriptions by identifying specific duties and responsibilities for the position.

4. General Information

Recruitment and hiring begins with an accurate job description that identifies what is expected of a new employee and for which the employee will be held accountable. The job description summarizes the employees' duties and responsibilities and gives them important information about their job.

5. Procedures

The steps for creating clear, meaningful job descriptions include:

- a. Accurate descriptions of the employees' responsibilities and requirements. The Standard Format for Job Descriptions is found in Appendix A.
- b. Looking at similar job descriptions and scanning resumes of qualified candidates to understand what skills and experience are required for similar roles.
- c. Monitoring job trends in the area to identify the most popular job titles and keywords job candidates are searching for, and
- d. Comparing salaries to determine the right compensation level for the position.

The steps for recruiting full and part-time (non-rostered) employees are listed below.

- a. Pick a standard job title that job seekers are searching for or use the current title if the current job description is not changed.
- b. When several applicants have been identified, start narrowing down the candidate pool based on their resumes. Filter out applicants who don't match the key job requirements by sending them a rejection email.
- c. To determine which resumes should be added to the "yes" or "maybe" piles, look for the following clues that tell a story about the candidate's motivations, experience and work style:
 - 1. Quantitative evidence of a candidate's past achievements
 - 2. Longevity in past roles
 - 3. Clear career progression

4. Attention to detail (is the resume riddled with grammar and spelling mistakes?)
 5. Skills and experience that are tailored to the job description
- d. After reviewing resumes, communicate with the top candidates to learn more about their qualifications.
 1. Create a short list of the best candidates and decide who should move forward in the hiring process.
 2. Send emails to learn more about the candidate's experience or start scheduling phone screens and interviews.
- e. When interviewing candidates, start with a quick 15 to 30-minute phone screen to find out if they meet the basic job description and to determine if there is a mutual fit.
- f. Invite at least three of the most promising candidates to an in-person interview. Ask strategic questions that reveal their skills and qualifications, important personality traits and level of enthusiasm for the job. Avoid certain topics, like age, race, marital status, etc. Here are some general questions that are appropriate to ask for any position:
 1. Tell me about yourself.
 2. Why are you interested in this position/organization?
 3. What are your strengths/weaknesses?
 4. What professional achievement are you most proud of?
 5. Describe your ideal work environment.
- g. Check references: Request at least three references from the top candidates and give them a quick call. Consider asking the candidate's references three to five of the following questions:
 1. Can you confirm the candidate's job title, responsibilities, start and end dates, etc.?
 2. How long have you known/worked with the candidate?
 3. Tell me about what it's like to work with the candidate.
 4. Why did they leave the position?
 5. What are their biggest strengths and weaknesses?
- h. Keep track of interesting candidates as they move through your hiring process by using candidate statuses (New, Reviewed, Phone Screened, Rejected, etc.) and maintaining accurate, detailed notes of each of your candidate's strengths and weaknesses.

- i. To make a decision,
 1. Reflect on what was learned about the candidates' skills, personality and experience from their resumes, interviews and references.
 2. Consider how the candidates will add to the staff church culture.

The **Pastor(s)/Personnel Committee** will:

- a. Ensure that the basis of employee selection for hiring, promotion, transfer, training, job assignment, hours of work, rate of pay, and working conditions is according to ability, not age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, disability, or any other factors not considered pertinent to performance;
- b. Ensure that the hours of employment and working conditions for employees less than 18 years of age strictly follow the regulations set forth by federal and state laws;
- c. Ensure that relatives of individuals on staff are normally not offered employment with us unless an exception is made by the Church Council who may approve the hiring;
- d. Steps to take before hiring a new employee:
 - Have a job application completed.
 - Ask for references.
 - Ask for previous employment references.
 - Make sure you call the references and make written notes of the calls for your files.
 - See job application sample.
- e. extend a job offer once the **supervisor** selects a candidate. Before sending the official offer letter, email the candidate to set up a time to talk over the phone. During the call, present the terms of the offer, including salary, benefits, start date, etc. If the candidate accepts the verbal offer, send an official written letter. The offer letter should cover everything you talked about during the phone call.

Resources for writing an engaging, informative job offer letter:

1. [Job Offer Letter Format With Template](#)
2. [How to Write the Perfect Job Offer Letter Email](#)
3. [Job Offer Letter Samples](#)

- f. Prepare Contract. See Appendix B.

- g. To avoid burning bridges, notify your rejected candidates as soon as you know they aren't the right fit. For candidates that have reached this far in the process, deliver a prompt, personalized rejection over the phone. Be honest but supportive by giving constructive feedback to help them understand why they were rejected and wishing them luck with their job search.

The Office Business Manager/Treasurer will: Handle your legal obligations: When hiring an employee, there are a variety of legal requirements must be met to comply with federal and state labor laws.

- a. Get an Employer Identification Number (EIN) by applying on the IRS website.
- b. Register with the state's labor department.
- c. Fill out paperwork to withhold federal taxes from the employee's wages.
- d. Set up workers' compensation insurance if required by the state.
- e. For every hire you make and every volunteer who will be driving a vehicle transporting passengers or working with Youth for church purpose:
 - 1. Background checks will be part of the hiring and volunteer management processes. They should be conducted prior to any job offer or volunteer service agreement for positions involving children, the elderly, vulnerable populations, money or transportation. Employee and volunteer data will be re-examined on an annual basis to verify employment or volunteer participation eligibility.
 - 2. Have the new employee fill out Form I-9 to verify their eligibility to work in the United States.

Form I-9's: Under federal law, all employers—including congregations—must have a form on file that verifies the employment eligibility and identity of each employee.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act requires all U.S. employers to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification form (Form I-9) (Employment Eligibility Verification | USCIS) for all employees, including U.S. citizens. There are no exceptions! There are many documents that have been approved to establish employment eligibility. Be careful to note which documents are needed alone and which ones are needed in

combination.

- U.S. passport
- driver's license
- social security card
- certified copy of birth certificate
- permanent resident card

The Bureau of U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has primary responsibility for enforcing these laws. You will find the I-9 forms, in English and Spanish, and other useful information on their Web site.

3. Have them sign Form W-4 to withhold the right amount of income tax from their paycheck.
4. Report the new hire to the state's reporting agency within 20 days.

The **Personnel Committee** will:

- a. Select a standard job title or use the current title if the current job description is not changed.
- b. Narrow down the candidate and send rejection emails.
- c. Determine which resumes should be added to the "yes" or "maybe" piles.
- d. Create a short list of the best candidates and decide who should move forward in the hiring process.
- e. Send emails to learn more about the candidates' experience or start scheduling phone screens and interviews.
- f. Conduct phone screens.
- g. Schedule and invite promising candidates to an in-person interview.
- h. Check references
- i. Keep track of interesting candidates as they move through the hiring process.
- j. Send a recommendation to the Pastor(s).

6. References

1. Personnel Manual: The Evangelical Lutheran Church Zion of Middletown, Maryland dated 4/16/23
2. How to Write Effective Job Titles and Descriptions (best practices)
3. Resources for writing an engaging, informative job offer letter:
 - a. Job Offer Letter Format With Template
 - b. How to Write the Perfect Job Offer Letter Email
 - c. Job Offer Letter Samples

7. Definitions

1. SOP: Standing Operating Procedure

8. Appendix

- A. Standard format for Job Description
- B. Maryland Employment Contract Agreement
- C. Job Application

Appendix A: Standard format for Job descriptions

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH ZION

JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION:

POSITION SUMMARY:

SUPERVISION:

WORK SCHEDULE:

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Consent to Criminal Background Search: Because of the position of involves interaction with all types of members of the church, young and old, the church requires all prospective employees to voluntarily submit to a criminal background check through the State Attorney General's Office. By signing this agreement, the employee specifically consents to said background check and waives any claim against the church for performing said background check.

Change of Duties: It is specifically understood by the employee that from time to time, the specific duties of the may change and this agreement shall be modified accordingly.

Acknowledgement: By signing this agreement, the employee states that he has read the document in its entirety, that he understands each and every provision contained herein, and that he consents to be bound by its contents and give the church permission to perform the Criminal Background Check as set forth above.

Supervisor

Date

Reviewer

Date

Appendix B:

Maryland Employment Contract Agreement

Free At-Will Employment Contract Template - PDF | Word – eForms

AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

This employment agreement (“Agreement”) is made and effective as of _____, 20__ by and between a(n) ☐ Individual ☐ Business Entity known as _____ having its principal place of business at _____, City of _____, State of _____ (“Employer”) and _____ with a mailing address of _____, City of _____, State of _____ (“Employee”).

WHEREAS the Employer intends to hire the Employee for the position of _____ and the Employee desires to provide their services on the conditions set forth.

IN CONSIDERATION of promises and other good and valuable consideration the parties agree to the following:

I. Employee Duties. The Employee agrees that they will act in accordance with this Agreement and with the best interests of the Employer in mind, which may or may not require them to present the best of their skills, experience, and talents, to perform all the duties required of the position. In carrying out the duties and responsibilities of their position, the Employee agrees to adhere to any and all policies, procedures, rules, regulations, as administered by the Employer. In addition, the Employee agrees to abide by all local, county, State, and Federal laws while employed by the Employer.

II. Responsibilities. The Employee shall be given the job title of _____ (“Position”) which shall involve: _____.

The Employer may also assign duties to the Employee from time to time by the Employer. The Employee shall be expected to work ☐ full-time ☐ part-time.

III. At-Will. The Employer agrees to hire the Employee “At-Will” which means this Agreement is able to be terminated at any time by either the Employee or Employer. After termination by any of the Parties, neither will have any obligation other than the non-disclosure of the Employer’s proprietary information as outlined in Section XII and any non-compete listed in Section XIII.

a.) Employee’s Termination. The Employee shall have the right to terminate this Agreement by providing at least ____ days’ notice. If the Employee should terminate this Agreement, he or she shall be entitled to severance, equal to their pay at the time of termination, for a period of _____.

b.) Employer’s Termination. The Employer shall have the right to terminate this Agreement by providing at least ____ days’ notice. If the Employer should terminate this Agreement, the Employee shall be entitled to severance, equal to their pay at the time of termination, for a period of _____.

IV. Pay. As compensation for the services provided, the Employee shall be paid _____ dollars (\$_____) ☐ per hour ☐ salary on an annual basis (“Compensation”). The Compensation is a gross amount that is subject to all local, State, Federal, and any other taxes and deductions as prescribed by law. Payment shall be distributed to the Employee on a ☐ weekly ☐ bi-weekly ☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ annual basis.

a.) Commissions. In addition to the aforementioned Pay, the Employee shall be entitled to commissions that are to be paid every _____ and shall be calculated as follows: _____

b.) Bonus. The Employee shall be entitled to Bonuses on a _____ basis which is to be calculated as follows: _____

V. Employee Benefits. During the period of employment, the Employee shall be eligible to participate in benefits established by the Employer. These include

The aforementioned benefits may change at any time by the Employer.

VI. Out-of-Pocket Expenses. The Employer agrees to reimburse the Employee for any expenses that are incurred including: (check all that apply)

☐ - Travel

☐ - Food

☐ - Lodging

☐ - Other:

VII. Ownership Interest. This Agreement shall ☐ not include ☐ *include partial ownership in the business operations of the Employer.

*If such ownership is offered, the details shall be stated in an attached Exhibit.

VIII. Trial Period. Other than certain benefits prescribed by law, the Employee will not be eligible for Benefits, Vacation Time, or Personal Leave until after the first ____ days of employment (“Trial Period”). In addition, the Employee will not be eligible for vacation time, sick leave, or any time off that would be paid or unpaid.

IX. Vacation Time. After the Trial Period is completed, the Employee is entitled to ____ days off per year of which is required to be mutually benefiting of the Employer and the Employee. It is required for the Employee to give notice before scheduling their vacation in accordance with Company policy.

X. Personal Leave. After the Trial (probationary) Period, the Employee shall be eligible for ____ days of ☐ paid ☐ unpaid time off per year for personal and/or medical issues.

If for any reason the Employee depletes their number of days of personal leave in a given year, he or she ☐ may ☐ may not be able to use any remaining vacation time.

XI. Federal Holidays. The Employee shall be entitled to federal holidays as determined in SOP #3 Personnel Manual.

XII. Confidentiality. The Employee understands and agrees to keep any and all information confidential regarding the business plans, inventions, designs, products, services, processes, trade secrets, copyrights, trademarks, customer information, customer lists, prices, analytics data, costs, affairs, and any other information that could be considered proprietary to the Employer (“Confidential Information”). The Employee understands that disclosure of any such Confidential Information, either directly or indirectly, shall result in litigation with the Employer eligible for equitable relief to the furthest extent of the law, including but not limited to, filing claims for losses and/or damages. In addition, if it is found that the Employee divulged Confidential Information to a third (3rd) party with the Employer shall be entitled to any and all reimbursement for their legal and attorney’s fees.

a.) Post Termination. After the Employee has terminated their employment with the Employer, the Employee shall be bound to Section XII of this Agreement for a period of ____ ☐ Months ☐ Years (“Confidentiality Term”). If the Confidentiality Term is beyond any limit set by local, State, or Federal laws, then the Confidentiality Term shall be the maximum allowed legal timeframe.

XIII. Deleted

XIV. Deleted

XV. Appearance. The Employee must appear at the Employer’s desired workplace at the time scheduled. If the Employee does not appear, for any reason, on more than ____ separate occasions in a 12-month calendar period the Employer has the right to terminate this Agreement immediately. In such event, the Employee would not be granted severance as stated in Section III.

XVI. Disability. If for any reason the Employee cannot perform their duties, by physical or mental disability, the Employer may terminate this Agreement by giving the Employee ____ days’ written notice.

XVII. Compliance. The Employee agrees to adhere to all sections of this Agreement in addition to any rules, regulations, or conduct standards of the Employer including obeying all local and federal laws. If the Employee does not adhere to this Agreement, company policies, including any task or obligation that is related to the

responsibilities of their position, the Employer may terminate this Agreement without severance as stated in Section III.

XVIII. Return of Property. The Employee agrees to return any and all property of the Employer upon the termination of employment. This includes, but is not limited to, equipment, electronics, records, access, notes, data, tests, vehicles, reports, models, or any property that is requested by the Employer.

XIX. Deleted

XX. Amendments. This Agreement may be modified or amended under the condition that any such amendment is attached and authorized by all parties.

XXI. Severability. This Agreement shall remain in effect in the event a section or provision is unenforceable or invalid. All remaining sections and provisions shall be deemed legally binding unless a court rules that any such provision or section is invalid or unenforceable, thus limiting the effect of another provision or section. In such cases, the affected provision or section shall be enforced as so limited.

XXII. Waiver of Contractual Right. If the Employer or Employee fails to enforce a provision or section of this Agreement, it shall not be determined as a waiver or limitation. Either party shall remain the right to enforce and compel the compliance of this Agreement to its fullest extent.

XXIII. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed under the laws in the State of _____.

XIV. Entire Agreement. This Agreement, along with any attachments or addendums, represents the entire agreement between the parties. Therefore, this Agreement supersedes any prior agreements, promises, conditions, or understandings between the Employer and Employee.

Employer's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Title (if any) _____

Employee's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Title (if any) _____

Appendix C: Job Application

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

(This type of application should be completed by all who seek any position that will involve the supervision and/or custody of children or youth. You should tailor the application to the specific circumstances in your congregation. However, the employment application should include sections for personal identification, job qualifications, experience and background for the past 5-10 years, references, a criminal history, and a waiver/consent to periodic criminal records check or fingerprinting.)

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name (Last)	(First)	(Middle)	Date
Address	City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone	Alternate Telephone	Best Contact Time	E-Mail Address
Social Security Number	Driver's License No./Issuing State	Date of Birth	
Position Apply For	Type of Work Desired ☐ Full-Time ☐ Part-Time ☐ Temporary/Contract		
When Are You Available to Begin Work?		Will You Work Overtime? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
If hired, can you provide evidence that you are authorized and of legal age to work in the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No			
In Case of Emergency Notify	Telephone	Name of Nearest Relative	Telephone

EDUCATION

<i>TYPE</i>	<i>SCHOOL NAME/LOCATION</i>	<i>COURSE OF STUDY</i>	<i>NO. YEARS ATTENDED</i>	<i>DEGREE/DIPLOMA</i>
HIGH SCHOOL				
BUSINESS/TECHNICAL				
COLLEGE				
GRADUATE				
OTHER				

Professional Organizations:	
First-Aid Training? ☐ Yes ☐ No	Date Completed
CPR Training? ☐ Yes ☐ No	Date Completed

EMPLOYERS

(List all jobs and contracts held by you during the past five continuous years)

CURRENT EMPLOYER

Company Name			Telephone
Address	City	State	ZIP Code
Position Held	From	To	Starting/Ending Salary
Reason for Leaving Supervisor			

PREVIOUS EMPLOYER

Company Name			Telephone
Address	City	State	ZIP Code
Position Held	From	To	Starting/Ending Salary
Reason for Leaving Supervisor			

PREVIOUS EMPLOYER

Company Name			Telephone
Address	City	State	ZIP Code
Position Held	From	To	Starting/Ending Salary
Reason for Leaving Supervisor			

PREVIOUS EMPLOYER

Company Name			Telephone
Address	City	State	ZIP Code
Position Held	From	To	Starting/Ending Salary
Reason for Leaving Supervisor			

PREVIOUS EMPLOYER

Company Name			Telephone
Address	City	State	ZIP Code
Position Held	From	To	Starting/Ending Salary
Reason for Leaving Supervisor			

MILITARY STATUS

Have You Served in the U.S. Armed Services? ___ Yes ___ No	Branch	Start Date	End Date
Rank/Rate at Discharge	Type of Service	Type of Discharge	
Special Training/Experience Received in the U.S. Armed Services	Draft Status	Reserve Status	

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Have you ever been <i>convicted</i> of a criminal offense? Check One: ___ Yes ___ No
Do you currently have any criminal actions pending in which you are the Defendant? (Not Applicable to California Applicants) Check One: ___ Yes ___ No
Are you currently on probation or parole? Check One: ___ Yes ___ No
If you answered "Yes" to any of the above questions, please explain the nature of the offense and provide the date of the offense and the county and state in which it occurred.

PERSONAL REFERENCES:

Name	Address	Phone	Occupation	Relationship
Name	Address	Phone	Occupation	Relationship
Name	Address	Phone	Occupation	Relationship

APPLICANT STATEMENT

(Read and Sign Below)

I certify that this employment application was completed by me and that all of the information on this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any falsification, misrepresentation, or omission of facts called for herein will result in my disqualification from further consideration or dismissal from employment if I am hired.

Print Name
Signature Date

CHURCH MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY AND HERMES SARGENT BATES WISH TO POINT OUT THAT NO WARRANTY ATTACHES TO THESE DOCUMENTS, AND IN FACT, THESE DOCUMENTS MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF A PARTICULAR ENTITY. THESE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD PRACTICE, PROPER SUPERVISION, AND DILIGENT OVERSIGHT AND CONTROL. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THESE DOCUMENTS WILL PROTECT ANY FACILITY THAT CHOOSES TO USE THEM. BEFORE USING THESE DOCUMENTS OR ANY SIMILAR DOCUMENTS, YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH YOUR OWN ATTORNEY TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE DOCUMENT YOU EVENTUALLY USE IS CORRECT AND CURRENT UNDER THE LAW OF YOUR PARTICULAR JURISDICTION AND THAT THE DOCUMENT MEETS YOUR NEEDS FOR YOUR PARTICULAR SITUATION.