

Callings in the Church

This chapter provides information about calling and releasing members to serve in the Church. The Chart of Callings, 19.7, lists selected callings and specifies who recommends a person, who approves the recommendation, who sustains the person, and who calls and sets apart the person. Callings on the chart are filled according to need and as members are available.

19.1

Determining Whom to Call

19.1.1

General Guidelines

A person must be called of God to serve in the Church (see Articles of Faith 1:5). Leaders seek the guidance of the Spirit in determining whom to call. They consider the worthiness that may be required for the calling. They also consider the member's personal or family circumstances. Each calling should benefit the people who are served, the member, and the member's family.

Although service in Church callings requires sacrifice, it should not compromise a member's ability to fulfill family and employment responsibilities (see 17.2.1). Before calling a married person to an assignment that requires a significant time commitment, Church leaders consider the effect of the calling on the marriage and family.

If possible, a member is called to serve in only one calling, in addition to serving as a ministering brother or sister.

Leaders keep information about proposed callings and releases confidential. Only those who need to know, such as an auxiliary president who oversees the person, are informed before the person is

presented for a sustaining vote. A person who is being considered for a calling is not notified until the calling is issued.

When a calling will be extended by or under the direction of the stake president, the bishop should be consulted to determine the member's worthiness and the family, employment, and Church service circumstances. The stake presidency then asks the high council to sustain the decision to call the person, if necessary according to the Chart of Callings.

When a young man or young woman will be called to a Church position, a member of the bishopric obtains approval from the parents or guardians before issuing the calling.

Leaders may extend a Church calling only after (1) a person's membership record is on file in the ward and has been carefully reviewed by the bishop or (2) the bishop has contacted the member's previous bishop to determine that the member is worthy for the calling and to verify that his or her membership record does not include an annotation or a comment about unresolved Church discipline.

New converts should be given an appropriate calling or another responsibility to serve as soon as possible. Some new members may be ready for callings as soon as they are baptized and confirmed. Others may need to receive simple assignments that would help them prepare to receive callings. A member of the bishopric interviews new converts before calling them to teach children or youth.

People who are not members of the Church may be called to some positions, such as organist, music director, and assistant Scout leader. However, they should not be called to teaching or administrative positions or as Primary music leaders. The allowance to call nonmembers to some positions does not

apply to excommunicated members, who may not have any callings.

19.1.2

Recommendations and Approvals for Callings

The Chart of Callings indicates who may make recommendations for each calling and who gives approval. In some cases, priesthood and auxiliary leaders are asked to make recommendations to their stake presidency or bishopric. They should approach this responsibility prayerfully, knowing that they can receive guidance from the Lord about whom to recommend. However, they should remember that final responsibility to receive inspiration on whom to call rests with the stake presidency or the bishopric.

Stake presidents and bishops should carefully evaluate each recommendation, recognizing that it has been prayerfully considered. As needed, they may request another recommendation.

Brethren who are actively serving as sealers in a temple have been called to that responsibility under the direction of the President of the Church. For this reason, active sealers should not be called to serve in any of the following callings: Area Seventy; stake, mission, district, or branch president or bishop; or as a counselor to any of these.

19.1.3

Stake Callings

The stake president oversees the calling of members who serve in most stake positions, as shown in the Chart of Callings.

19.1.4

Ward Callings

The stake presidency recommends brethren to be called or released as bishops (see 19.6). The stake

president also oversees the calling of counselors in the bishopric, ward clerks, assistant ward clerks, and ward executive secretaries. The bishop oversees other callings in the ward, as shown in the Chart of Callings.

19.1.5

Elders Quorum Callings

The stake president oversees the calling of elders quorum presidents and their counselors, as shown in the Chart of Callings.

The elders quorum president oversees the calling of quorum secretaries and those who serve in other elders quorum callings. The bishop's approval is required before brethren may be called to these positions.

19.2

Extending a Calling

The Chart of Callings outlines who may extend each calling. After receiving the necessary approvals, an authorized leader conducts a personal interview to determine the member's faithfulness and willingness to serve. If the member is willing, the leader extends the calling. The leader may invite the spouse of a married person to be present and give support when the calling is extended.

A leader who extends a Church calling explains its purpose, importance, and responsibilities. He encourages the member to seek the Spirit of the Lord in fulfilling the calling. He tells the member the name of the person to whom he or she is directly accountable and emphasizes the need to support leaders. As needed, he outlines the meetings the person should attend and describes any resource materials that are available. He may identify special concerns or challenges of the calling and invite the member to ask questions about it.

Leaders ensure that the manner in which they extend a calling is consistent with its sacred nature. Callings should be extended in a dignified, formal manner, not in a casual setting or manner.

19.3

Sustaining Members in Church Callings

Members who are called to most Church positions should receive a sustaining vote before they begin serving. The Chart of Callings indicates whether a sustaining vote is needed and what congregation should give it. The leader who oversaw the calling, or a priesthood officer he authorizes, presents a person to the congregation for a sustaining vote.

The person who conducts the sustaining first announces who was released from the position and asks members to give an expression of thanks for the person's service (see 19.5 for suggested language).

When presenting a person for a sustaining vote, an authorized priesthood officer asks him or her to stand. The officer may say:

“[Name] has been called as [position], and we propose that he [or she] be sustained. Those in favor may manifest it by the uplifted hand. [Pause briefly for the sustaining vote.] Those opposed, if any, may manifest it. [Pause briefly to allow for a dissenting vote, if any.]”

The person who is being presented should participate in the sustaining vote. If more than one person is being presented, they may usually be sustained as a group.

If a member in good standing gives a dissenting vote when someone is presented to be sustained, the presiding officer or another assigned priesthood officer confers with the dissenting member in private after the meeting. The officer determines whether the dissenting vote was based on knowledge that the

person who was presented is guilty of conduct that should disqualify him or her from serving in the position. Dissenting votes from nonmembers need not be considered.

When, as an exception, new stake officers need to begin their service before the next stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting in which they would normally be sustained, they should be sustained in the sacrament meetings of the wards and branches of the stake. These sustainings should be kept to a minimum. Members of the stake presidency or high council present the sustainings.

19.4

Setting Apart Officers and Teachers

Members who are called to most Church positions should be set apart before they begin serving. The Chart of Callings indicates who is authorized to perform a setting apart. Presidents are set apart before their counselors.

Under the direction of the presiding authority, one or more Melchizedek Priesthood holders may participate in a setting apart, including a worthy father or husband (see 20.1.2). These brethren place their hands lightly on the person's head. Then the priesthood holder who acts as voice:

1. Calls the person by his or her full name.
2. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Sets the person apart to the appropriate office in the stake, ward, quorum, or class.
4. Confers keys if the person is entitled to receive them. (In stakes and wards, only stake presidents, bishops, and quorum presidents receive keys of presidency when they are set apart. The word *keys* should not be used when setting apart counselors, high councilors,

presidents of auxiliary organizations, the bishop's priests quorum assistants, or teachers in an organization.)

5. Gives words of blessing as the Spirit directs.
6. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

A setting apart is an opportunity to give a blessing. Detailed counsel and instruction are normally provided when a person is taught his or her duties rather than during the setting apart.

A setting apart should not be expanded into a formal meeting. It is not necessary to have prayers, testimonies, or instruction when someone is set apart.

19.5

Releasing Members from Church Callings

Releases from Church callings should come by inspiration, except when a person's change of residence necessitates a release or when a calling is for a specific time period, such as full-time missionary service.

Releases from Church callings are made by the same level of authority that extended the callings. To issue a release, an authorized leader meets with the member personally, informs him or her of the release, and expresses appreciation for the service. The leader also asks the person to return any current, usable materials so they can be given to the successor. Only those who need to know are informed of a release before it is announced publicly.

The same congregation that sustained a person gives a vote of thanks when the person is released. An authorized priesthood officer may say:

"[Name] has been released as [position], and we propose that he [or she] be given a vote of thanks for his [or her] service. Those who wish to express their

appreciation may manifest it by the uplifted hand." No dissenting vote is called for.

When a president or bishop is released, the counselors are released automatically. Others who hold positions in the organization, such as clerks, secretaries, and teachers, are not released automatically.

19.6

Calling, Ordaining, and Setting Apart Bishops

The stake presidency recommends brethren to be called or released as bishops. Instructions are on the Recommendation for New Bishop form. This form is available electronically in units that use Church record-keeping software. In other units it is available from the assigned administrative office.

When recommending a person to serve as bishop, the stake presidency carefully observes the principles set forth in 1 Timothy 3:2–7. It is not appropriate to solicit recommendations or to conduct surveys among ward members with respect to who might be considered for a call to serve as bishop.

Before a new bishop may be interviewed, called, ordained, or set apart, his recommendation must be approved by the First Presidency. The stake president may extend the calling after he receives written approval from the First Presidency. With this approval, the stake president may also ordain and set apart a bishop after ward members have given a sustaining vote. The approval of the First Presidency is also required before a stake president may release a bishop. The stake president may not assign these responsibilities to a counselor.

If a man who is called as bishop is not a high priest, the stake president ensures that he is ordained a high priest before ordaining him a bishop. If the man was ordained a bishop previously, he needs only to be set apart as bishop of the ward.

After the First Presidency has approved the recommendation of a man to serve as bishop, they authorize a stake president, Area Seventy, or General Authority to ordain him and set him apart. The authorized priesthood officer:

1. Calls the man by his full name.
2. States that he is acting by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.
3. Ordains the man a bishop (unless he was previously ordained).
4. Sets him apart to preside over the ward and to be the president of the Aaronic Priesthood and the priests quorum, emphasizing his responsibilities for the Aaronic Priesthood and for young women in the ward.
5. Confers on him all the keys, rights, powers, and authority of the office of bishop, referring specifically to the bishop's duties as a common judge in Israel and as the presiding high priest in the ward.
6. Gives words of blessing as the Spirit directs.
7. Closes in the name of Jesus Christ.

19.7

Chart of Callings

19.7.1

Stake Callings

The following chart includes a list of selected stake callings. For other callings and service opportunities, see individual chapters in this handbook. Callings are filled according to need and as members are available.

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By ¹	Called and Set Apart By
Stake president	An assigned General Authority or Area Seventy	An assigned General Authority or Area Seventy	Members in stake conference	An assigned General Authority or Area Seventy
Counselors in the stake presidency	Stake president	An assigned General Authority or Area Seventy, or written notification from the First Presidency	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	An assigned General Authority or Area Seventy, or the stake president with written approval from the First Presidency
Stake clerk	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	Stake president
Assistant stake clerks	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	Stake president or an assigned counselor

Stake Callings (continued)

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By¹	Called and Set Apart By
Stake executive secretary	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	Stake president or an assigned counselor
High councilors	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	Stake president or an assigned counselor
Stake patriarch	Stake presidency	Quorum of the Twelve	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	A member of the First Presidency or Twelve, or the stake president with approval from the Quorum of the Twelve
Stake patriarch who is already ordained but has moved to another stake	Presidency of the stake into which he has moved	Quorum of the Twelve	Members in stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting	Not ordained but set apart to begin service in a new stake
Stake auxiliary presidents (Young Men, Relief Society, Young Women, Primary, and Sunday School)	Stake presidency (in consultation with the assigned high councilor)	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference	Stake president or an assigned counselor
Counselors in stake auxiliary presidencies, secretaries, and other auxiliary leaders	President of the stake auxiliary (in consultation with the assigned high councilor)	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor
Stake physical facilities representative (high councilor)	Assigned by the stake presidency; not called, sustained, or set apart.			
Stake activities committee chairman (high councilor)	Assigned by the stake presidency; not called, sustained, or set apart.			
Temple and family history consultant(s)	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor
Stake music chairman	Stake music adviser (high councilor)	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor

Stake Callings (continued)

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By¹	Called and Set Apart By
Stake auditors	Chairman of the stake audit committee (counselor in the stake presidency)	Stake presidency and high council	Not sustained	Stake president or an assigned counselor ²
Stake welfare specialists (including stake employment specialist)	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Not sustained	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor ²
Stake seminary and institute teachers and supervisors	Bishop (may consult with seminary and institute personnel)	Stake presidency and high council	Members in stake conference	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor

¹ When, as an exception, new stake officers need to begin their service before the next stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting in which they would normally be sustained, they should be sustained in the sacrament meetings of the wards and branches of the stake (see 19.3).

² The stake president determines whether members who are called to serve in these positions should be set apart.

19.7.2**Melchizedek Priesthood Callings**

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Presidency of the stake high priests quorum (stake presidency)	See "Stake Callings," 19.7.1.			
Elders quorum president	Stake presidency (in consultation with the bishop)	Stake presidency and high council	Ward members	Stake president
Counselors in the elders quorum presidency	Quorum president (in consultation with the bishop)	Stake presidency and high council	Ward members	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor
Elders quorum secretaries, teachers, and other callings	Quorum president (in consultation with the bishop and the counselors to the elders quorum president)	Bishop	Quorum members	Quorum president or an assigned counselor
Ministering brothers	Serving as a ministering brother is a priesthood responsibility of high priests and elders. Accordingly, these brethren are <i>assigned</i> as ministering brothers by the elders quorum presidency, under the direction of the bishop. They are not called, sustained, or set apart.			

19.7.3

Aaronic Priesthood Callings in Wards

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Priests quorum president (bishop)	See "Ward Callings," 19.7.5.			
Assistants to the priests quorum president	Bishop (priests quorum president)	Bishopric	Quorum members	Bishop
Teachers and deacons quorum presidents	Bishopric	Bishopric	Quorum members	Called by the bishop or an assigned counselor; set apart by the bishop
Counselors in the teachers and deacons quorum presidencies and quorum secretaries	Quorum presidents	Bishopric	Quorum members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Priests quorum adviser (ward Young Men president)	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop
Teachers and deacons quorum advisers (counselors in the ward Young Men presidency), assistant advisers, and ward Young Men secretary	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ministering brothers	Serving as a ministering brother is a priesthood responsibility of teachers and priests. Accordingly, these brethren are <i>assigned</i> as ministering brothers by the elders quorum presidency, under the direction of the bishopric. They are not called, sustained, or set apart.			

19.7.4

Aaronic Priesthood Callings in Branches in Stakes

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Priests quorum president (branch president, who acts as the priests quorum president)	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Branch members	Stake president
Other Aaronic Priesthood callings	See "Aaronic Priesthood Callings in Wards," 19.7.3, substituting <i>branch president</i> for <i>bishop</i> and <i>branch</i> for <i>ward</i> .			

19.7.5

Ward Callings

The following chart includes a list of selected ward callings. For other callings and service opportunities, see individual chapters in this handbook. Callings are filled according to need and as members are available.

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Bishop	Stake presidency	First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve	Ward members	A General Authority or Area Seventy, or the stake president with written approval from the First Presidency
Counselors in the bishopric	Bishop	Stake presidency and high council	Ward members	Stake president or an assigned counselor
Ward clerk	Bishopric	Stake presidency and high council	Ward members	Stake president or an assigned counselor
Assistant ward clerks	Bishopric	Stake presidency and high council	Ward members	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor
Ward executive secretary	Bishopric	Stake presidency and high council	Ward members	Stake president or an assigned counselor or high councilor
Ward mission leader (a member of the elders quorum presidency may fill this role)	Bishopric (in consultation with the elders quorum president)	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop
Ward missionaries	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ward temple and family history leader (a member of the elders quorum presidency may fill this role)	Bishopric (in consultation with the elders quorum president)	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ward auxiliary presidents (Young Men, Relief Society, Young Women, Primary, and Sunday School)	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop

Ward Callings (continued)

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Counselors in the ward Young Men presidency (teachers and deacons quorum advisers), assistant advisers, and ward Young Men secretary	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Counselors in ward auxiliaries (except Young Men)	Auxiliary president	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Secretaries in ward auxiliaries (except Relief Society and Young Men)	Auxiliary president	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Advisers, teachers, music directors, and other callings in ward auxiliaries (except Relief Society and Young Men)	Auxiliary presidency	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Secretaries in the ward Relief Society presidency; teachers and other callings in the ward Relief Society	Auxiliary presidency	Bishopric	Relief Society members (presented in a Relief Society meeting by the bishop or an assigned counselor)	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ministering sisters	Relief Society sisters are <i>assigned</i> as ministering sisters by the Relief Society presidency, under the direction of the bishop. After consulting with parents and leaders, the Relief Society presidency may assign Mia Maids and Laurels as companions to adult sisters. Ministering sisters are not called, sustained, or set apart.			
Temple preparation seminar teacher(s)	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Young Women class presidents	Bishopric (in consultation with the Young Women presidency)	Bishopric	Class members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Counselors in Young Women class presidencies and class secretaries	Class president	Bishopric	Class members	Bishop or an assigned counselor

Ward Callings (continued)

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Ward music chairman	Ward music adviser (member of the bishopric)	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ward music director, ward organist or pianist, ward choir director and accompanist, and ward choir president	Ward music chairman	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ward librarian	Sunday School president	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Assistant ward librarians	Sunday School president	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ward temple and family history consultant(s)	Bishopric (in consultation with the elders quorum president)	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ward young single adult leader(s)	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor
Ward magazine representative	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor ¹
Ward welfare specialists (including ward employment specialist)	Bishopric	Bishopric	Ward members	Bishop or an assigned counselor ¹

¹ The bishop determines whether members who are called to serve in these positions should be set apart.

19.7.6**Branch Callings in Stakes**

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Branch president	Stake presidency	Stake presidency and high council	Branch members	Stake president
Other branch callings	See "Ward Callings," 19.7.5, substituting <i>branch president</i> for <i>bishop</i> and <i>branch</i> for <i>ward</i> .			

19.7.7

Mission Callings

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Mission president	General Authority or Area Seventy	First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve	Not sustained	Member of the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve
Counselors in the mission presidency	Mission president	Area Presidency	Ratified in district conference in all districts	Member of the Area Presidency, or the mission president under their direction
Mission clerk and mission executive secretary	Mission president	Mission presidency	Ratified in district conference in all districts	Mission president

Mission auxiliary presidencies are not recommended. If the mission president feels that branch auxiliary leaders need training from more experienced auxiliary leaders, he may assign individuals to provide it.

19.7.8

District Callings

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
District president	Mission president	Area Presidency	Members in district conference	Mission president
Counselors in the district presidency	District president	Mission presidency	Members in district conference or district general priesthood meeting	Mission president or an assigned counselor
District councilors and district clerk, assistant clerks, executive secretary, and auxiliary leaders	See "Stake Callings," 19.7.1, substituting <i>district president</i> for <i>stake president</i> and <i>district</i> for <i>stake</i> .			

19.7.9

Elders Quorum Callings in Branches in Missions

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Elders quorum president	Mission presidency or district presidency	Mission presidency or, when authorized by the mission president, the district presidency	Branch members	Mission president or, if assigned, the district president
Counselors in the elders quorum presidency	Quorum president (in consultation with the branch president)	Mission presidency or, when authorized by the mission president, the district presidency	Branch members	Mission president or, if assigned, the district president or another priesthood officer
Elders quorum secretary, teacher(s), and other callings	Quorum president (in consultation with the branch president and counselors to the quorum president)	Branch president and quorum presidency	Quorum members	Quorum president or an assigned counselor
Ministering brothers	Serving as a ministering brother is a priesthood responsibility of Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Accordingly, these brethren are <i>assigned</i> as ministering brothers by the elders quorum presidency, under the direction of the branch president. They are not called, sustained, or set apart.			

19.7.10

Aaronic Priesthood Callings in Branches in Missions

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Priests quorum president (branch president, who acts as the priests quorum president)	Mission presidency or district presidency	Mission presidency	Branch members	Mission president or, if assigned, the district president
Other Aaronic Priesthood callings	See "Aaronic Priesthood Callings in Wards," 19.7.3, substituting <i>branch president</i> for <i>bishop</i> and <i>branch</i> for <i>ward</i> .			

19.7.11

Branch Callings in Missions

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Branch president	Mission presidency or district presidency	Mission presidency	Branch members	Mission president or, if assigned, the district president
Counselors in the branch presidency	Branch president	Mission presidency or, when authorized by the mission president, the district presidency	Branch members	Mission president or, if assigned, one of his counselors, the district president, or one of the district president's counselors
Branch clerk, assistant clerk, and executive secretary	Branch presidency	Mission presidency or, when authorized by the mission president, the district presidency	Branch members	District president or a priesthood officer he assigns
Branch auxiliary leaders and other callings	See "Ward Callings," 19.7.5, substituting <i>branch president</i> for <i>bishop</i> and <i>branch</i> for <i>ward</i> .			

19.7.12

Military Service Member Group Callings

Office	Recommended By	Approved By	Sustained By	Called and Set Apart By
Service member group leader	Stake presidency or mission president	Stake presidency and high council or mission presidency	Group members	Stake president or mission president, where possible ¹
Assistants to the service member group leader	Group leader	Stake presidency and high council or mission presidency	Group members	Stake president or mission president or a priesthood leader either of them assigns ¹

¹ In a war zone or remotely isolated area, it may not be possible for a stake president or mission president to call and set apart service member group leaders and assistants. Instructions that apply in these circumstances are provided in *Handbook 1*, 10.5.