

FRLC Recovery Meeting Format

I. “Welcome to the regular Thursday noon (or whatever time it is in your time zone) FRLC Recovery meeting. My name is _____ and I’m a _____.

II. Read the following Statement of Purpose:

The Fellowship of Recovering Lutheran Clergy is a network of pastors sharing their experience, strength and hope as we recover from alcoholism and other addictions. Our primary purpose is to stay in recovery and help others find recovery. Membership is open to all Lutheran clergy recovering from alcoholism and other addictions. Our stories are the personal testimonies of clergy who were caught in the hell of alcoholism, other addictions and codependency and found a way out. Not only did we find recovery; we found an amazing way of life that fulfills all the promises of scripture. You can have what we have if you are willing to humble yourself and follow a few simple suggestions.

The diseases of alcoholism, addictions and codependency are cunning, baffling and powerful. They are diseases which convince their victims that they don’t have this problem. Each one of us was in denial and had convinced ourselves we did not have this particular problem—that if we could just get certain matters of our life under control we could manage our lives in a more responsible way. But with all the earnestness at our command, with all the prayer and hope we had in God, we could not manage and our problems only grew worse. What each one of us has in common is that we recognized we were powerless and that we had to have help from someone else. No matter what we tried nothing changed until we said to another human being “I need help.”

What we offer as a fellowship is a supplemental support to clergy who face the unique problem of being clergy in recovery—because it is a profession which does not easily allow for brokenness. We have each struggled with this issue and can offer support and strength. We share experiences and the languages of living in the disease, of recovery, of Lutheranism and of being clergy, and find this fellowship to be the one place we can speak of all these aspects of our lives without having to translate or explain them to others.

Here are the 12 steps as adapted for the FRLC:

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions: alcohol, work, drugs, codependency, sin, etc. and that our lives had become unmanageable.
 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
 7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
 9. Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry it out.
 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who suffer from this disease and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
- III. We practice the principle of anonymity and ask that you respect the anonymity of all of our members. We will maintain the format of a recovery meeting until all have had the opportunity to share, refraining from cross talk. Please allow everyone to speak before speaking a second time. Please refrain from making background noise or mute your phone so all can hear the call. Following the formal part of the meeting there will be opportunity for open conversation for those who care to do so.

- IV. We will now have a moment of silence for those who still suffer... Would someone care to pray the serenity prayer aloud, with the rest of us praying along in silence.
- V. Introduce yourself, and ask participants to do so. In addition to identifying ourselves as alcoholics please identify your location (state or community), type of ministry you are doing and length of sobriety.
- VI. Does anyone have a topic for our meeting today? (if no one does, be prepared with a suggestion).
- VII. After all have shared, ask if anyone has anything else to share in the meeting.
- VIII. Please read our “7th tradition” statement: *“The Fellowship of Recovering Lutheran Clergy (FRLC) is a self-supporting group of Lutheran pastors committed to an ongoing outreach to all clergy who suffer from various forms of addiction that become barriers to serving the people of God. As an organization that functions on freewill gifts, we appreciate the gratitude and generosity of those members and friends who have gained sobriety, offering financial contribution to this ministry and sustain our ongoing work.”* As a non-profit tax exempt organization, your tax-exempt contribution or sustaining gift may be made to the FRLC by mailing a donation to the postal address on our web-site, frlc.org, or directing Thrivent Choice Dollars to the FRLC at thrivent.org. Thank you for your support!
- IX. Close the meeting with one person praying the Lord’s Prayer aloud while others pray along in silence. Then if time remains, invite anyone who wishes to remain to stay on the line for open conversation.