

Interim Ministry Resources

Chapter 18 Transitions

Transitions (2)

Part 4 Call Process

Contents

Page	Topic
1	
2	Introduction
2	Theological Background
3	Model Constitution Congregation 2016
6	Stages of the Interim Period
7	Call Process in the ELCA
7	A Blessed Journey: A Congregation's Search for a New Pastor
8	Role of the Synod Staff in the Call Process
8	Call Process—Step by Step
9	_____ 's Interim Journey
10	The Call Process
15	Help in Appointing or Selecting a Call Committee
16	Frequently Asked Questions
16	Selection of a Call Committee
17	Installation of the Call Committee
18	Call Committee Covenant
19	Suggested Prayers
20	Words of Encouragement
20	Thought for the Day
21	Bible Study
22	Call Committee Devotions
24	Why Can't We Call Our Interim Pastor?
24	Calling a Seminary Graduate
25	Calling an Associate/Assistant to Senior Pastor
26	Two Most Common Mistakes
26	Moving from Reflection to Engagement
29	Four Words to Guide Your Work
30	Background Screening Recommendations
31	The Call Process – Congregation Council Responsibilities
31	The Call Process – Call Committee Responsibilities
32	Outline for a First Interview
33	Preparing for a Candidate
34	Multiple Pastor Situations
36	Candidate Nomination Form
36	Sample Letter of Invitation for Personal Interview
36	Call Committee Report of Interview
37	Sample Letter Following Candidate Interview—Decline
37	Sample Letter Following Candidate Interview—Recommend to Council
37	Sample Letter Calling the Special Meeting of the Congregation
38	Sample Congregational Meeting Agenda for the Calling of a Pastor
39	Report of the Special Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor
39	Sample Letter Following a Successful Vote of the Congregation

Part 5 Incoming Pastor

41	Introduction
41	A New Call and a New Day
41	Transition into a New Call
42	Guidelines for the Installation of a New Pastor or Other Rostered Leader
43	Making the Installation a Community Celebration
43	Sample Installation Invitation to Clergy and Congregations
43	Beginning Strong—Things to Do
44	Words of Encouragement
44	Suggested Prayers
45	Implementation with Next Pastor
45	Starting Your New Ministry Together
47	Mutual Ministry Committee
49	New Pastors Called

Part 4 Call Process

**Calling a pastor is discerning the will of God – candidate, synod staff, congregation.
When these three agree, we are bold to state we have discerned who God is calling.**

Introduction

When a pastor retires or accepts a new call, the congregation has the opportunity to reflect – on the pastor's leadership, on who they are, on how they are living in our Lord's grace and love, and how they are sharing that grace and love in their community and in God's world. In the care of the Holy Spirit, we can trust that this process can bring encouragement, spiritual growth, thanks and joy. These resources are intended to be a practical guide to congregations through the whole call process, but it assumes that this process is a deeply spiritual journey for a congregation. The congregation is not "hiring" a new leader; you are "calling" a new pastor. So, you need to be about the work of prayer, Bible study, devotions, and careful reflection on what God needs you to do for the sake of the world. Staying spiritually centered will allow the leadership of the congregation, in concert with the interim pastor, to reduce anxiety, to guide the congregation through change and possible grief, to accurately assess the congregation's strength and growth areas, to discover a new or renewed vision for mission and ministry, and, eventually, to call a new pastor. Pastors are called to lead the congregation in Word and Sacrament ministry, but the better you understand the character of your congregation and the mission that God has in mind for you, the better you will be able to communicate that character and mission with potential candidates. The ultimate goal is to discover who God is calling to be your next pastor, but the process can and should be a time of spiritual reflection and reawakening.

Theological Background

At the heart of our Lutheran theology is something Martin Luther termed "the priesthood of all believers." In our baptism, God has called us all to be part of the body of Christ. Luther reminded us of the Latin origin of the word "vocation"—*vocare*—which means "to call." All of us take up our vocations—our callings—as God's people. We are all ministers in whatever daily activity is ours. Within this priesthood of all believers there exists the ordained office of ministry, the "office of Word and Sacrament" (see Augsburg Confession below). On the basis of our Lutheran theology, a pastor is called, not hired, to serve a congregation. The call process is not the same as the hiring process in other parts of society. Any process that seems to focus on "head hunting," resume shuffling, or high anxiety interviews is missing the point in the calling of a pastor. A call is one element in the church's seeking and following God's movement into the future.

The call process is not a pageant, in which contestants present themselves to their best advantage so they will be the winners. The Lutheran call process is unique because it is an effort to discern what God wants for the local congregation and for the whole church in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed, and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

In order for a call to be issued, there must be first a congregational vote for the candidate. Second the president and secretary of the congregation, representing the congregation's decision, must sign the letter of call. And finally, the bishop, representing the whole church, must sign the letter of call.

What the Augsburg Confession Says

The Lutheran Church looks to the documents called "The Lutheran Confessions" for its understanding of scripture, the faith and the church. Chief among these documents is the Augsburg Confession, adopted by the reformers in the city of Augsburg (Germany) in 1530. These short, concise statements help us understand the nature of the office of ministry in the Lutheran Church:

We cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions. We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us.

Article IV, The Augsburg Confession

To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and sacraments. Through these he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel."

Article V, Augsburg Confession

Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call." All Christians are called to the ministry of serving God and neighbor, but for the sake of good order in the church certain Christians are specially called to the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament."

Article XIV, Augsburg Confession

Call to Ministry

It is through the church that God calls some Christians to ordained ministry. Once that call is discerned, the candidate normally devotes years to study, training, and preparation under the guidance of the whole church through the Bishop and the Candidacy Committee. In a similar way, it is through the church that God calls ordained ministers to a specific pastorate. Not only does the local congregation participate in the call process, but so does the whole church through the office of the bishop. Just as the whole church took an active role in the call to ordination, so now the whole church takes an active role in the call to a specific ministry.

This is shown by the fact that once a person is approved for ordination, the candidate must receive and accept a call to a specific ministry in order to be ordained. Ordination may occur in a local congregation, but it is always an ordination by the whole church as shown in the presence of the bishop at the ordination service.

Congregation and Call

The local congregation is fully the church, but the local congregation is not all the church there is. The local congregation calls a person to be its pastor, but the whole church has a stake in who is called and how the call process is handled. The Call Committee, the Congregation Council and, eventually, the entire congregation participate fully in the process. And so does the bishop, who represents both the interest and the commitment of the whole church in seeing that the pastor called is suited to ministry under the call that is extended.

The bishop's office has a deep concern for the well-being of the congregation's life and ministry. The bishop and synod staff also have a deep concern for the person and gifts of the prospective pastor. In the call process, the Bishop and staff, the congregation, and the prospective pastor work together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring about a new partnership that is faithful to the Gospel, empowers the local congregation in its ministry, and strengthens the whole church as people of God.

Call Process Manual - Saint Paul Area Synod

CHAPTER 1: The Spiritual Work

The Biblical/Theological Grounding for the call process

http://www.spas-elca.org/sites/default/files/files/Call%20Process%20Manual_August%202012.pdf Page 2

[Images for Call Process Manual - Saint Paul Area Synod CHAPTER 1: The Spiritual Work](#)

[DOC]Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository

Chapter 9.

ROSTERED MINISTER

- *C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.02. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- *C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
 - a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
 - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline; and
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin of the ELCA.
- *C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.05. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:
 - a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the

bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

***C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.

***C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:

- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
- b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
- c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

***C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.

- *C9.21.** Authority to call a minister of Word and Service shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.
- *C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
 - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
 - d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
 - e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
 - f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
 - g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
 - h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
 - i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.
- *C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be

undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.26.** The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another field of labor, or
- b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.

***C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.

***C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

<https://www.elca.org/constitution> [2019 Model Constitution for Congregations](#)

<https://download.elca.org> › [ELCA Resource Repository](#) › [Model Constitution](#)

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

Stages of the Interim Period

The congregation will pass through several stages during its interim period. Congregations that use these stages as intentional times of renewal and re-creation will be more prepared to greet their future confidently. The stages of the interim period are:

1. **TERMINATION** At some point, every pastorate comes to an end. Terminations can be happy or sad, loving or angry, long expected or sudden. There are two sides to every termination, that of the pastor and that of the congregation. Farewells must be expressed, and the clergy exits.
2. **DIRECTION FINDING** There is some confusion on the part of the congregation as to what will happen when the pastor leaves – what to do and how to do it, who's in charge, where to find help, etc. What needs to be done until another resident pastor is on the scene? It is important for the congregation to work with the synod staff to find out the answers to these questions.
3. **SELF STUDY** This is the work of the congregation in assessing who and what it is and what it needs to be in the future.
4. **SEARCH** This refers to all the activities that lead to developing a list of potential candidates, one of whom is to be selected to become the pastor. This stage involves getting the congregation's picture of itself (The Ministry Site Profile) and the pastor's picture of himself or herself into direct conversation. Finally, it comes down to face-to-face interaction – interviews.
5. **NEGOTIATION** The negotiations have to do with the specifications of the work, living arrangements, and compensation for the new pastor and family, as well as the relationship between the pastor and the congregation. (In reality much of this is done simultaneously with the decision.)
6. **DECISION** The formal decisions involve a vote by the Call Committee, a second vote for recommendation by the Congregational Council, a formal decision by the congregation, and the assent of the Bishop. On the other side is a fairly personal decision by the pastor and his or her family.
7. **INSTALLATION** Installation refers to all the activities concerned with getting the pastor on the scene and publicly acknowledged as the new pastor of the congregation. This is an event having to do with a congregation's entry into a new phase of its life and ministry.
8. **START UP** The patterns that get established in the first twelve to eighteen months are likely to rule the pastor and congregation for as long as the pastor and that congregation are related. After this process of congregational self-discovery and self-renewal, the congregation seeks a pastor whose skills will assist the congregation with its self-defined ministry/mission.

It's at this point in the interim process that we move to the second arena of development: clergy transition.

"... sometimes called 'clergy development' – is the set of knowledge, skills and processes by which some major assets of the churches, its trained and ordained professional leaders, are matched with positions that most fully challenge their abilities and gifts and most benefit the life of the church." Loren B. Mead: *Ibid*, p. 10. In this phase of interim ministry, the congregation, whose identity, ministry, and mission have been clarified, seeks a pastoral candidate. The congregation identifies gifts, skills, and abilities needed in pastoral leadership to work within the congregation's re-developed understanding of its own vocation. Congregational vision and goals determine the pastoral skills needed. For this reason, clergy transition is the last piece of the puzzle to be fitted. Again, parish development provides the context for clergy transition – it is connected and correlated to the point that is basically the result of the work

done in the Decision and Negotiation Stages and the development task of Commitment to new Directions in Ministry. Intentional Interim Ministers can help with these transitions. Intentional Interim Ministers have had additional training and can offer special skills to assist congregations in the “in between times.” While providing Word and Sacrament ministry and a full range of pastoral care, the intentional Interim pastor is well suited to lead the congregation through the process that builds the bridge between the “what was” and the “what will be” of the congregation’s life.

[\[PDF\] Interim Ministry Handbook - Amazon Web Services](#)

<http://worshiptimesmedia.s3.amazonaws.com/gulcoast/files/2013/01/InterimMinistryHandbook.pdf> Page 2

[Images for Interim Ministry Handbook - Stages of the Interim Period](#)

Call Process in the ELCA

The ELCA Call Process is a prayerful way in which the ELCA 65 synods engage their congregations, church-related organizations and rostered leaders — ordained ministers, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, deaconesses and candidates for each of these rosters — in a time of thoughtful assessment and spiritual discernment. Every synod is responsible for the management of the call process within their respective territory.

The Mobility Database System is a web-based system that unites all forms used in the ELCA Call Process (the Rostered Leader Profile, the Ministry Site Profile, Bishop’s Recommendation Form, Seven Reflections, Twelve Reflections, Reference Recommendation) into a churchwide database. Once in the database, information can be compiled to form a summary or “snapshot” of ministry opportunities for rostered leaders, as well as their profiles. This system offers a quick and effective way to share information and improve our common work in the ELCA Call Process.

Note: To ensure successful submission of your forms, it is highly recommended that you use a Windows PC to save or submit your information electronically. The Mac version of Filler has limited support for electronic submission, encryption, and Remote signing. Please download and use the PC version of Filler if you intend to work with forms that involve these types of operations.

Contact: Marcia Johnson Office of the Presiding Bishop Toll Free: 1-800-638-3522 Ext. 2890

Mailing address

Call Process - Office of the Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

8765 West Higgins Road.

Chicago, Illinois 60631-4195

[Call Process - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

<http://www.elca.org/call-process>

[Images for Call Process - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

A Blessed Journey: A Congregation’s Search for a New Pastor

1. Celebrate: Share time with the departing pastor, (spouse and family) until they move on in their life’s journey.
2. Interim Pastor assigned: The synod office provides the congregation with an interim pastor. This pastor will respect and blend into our existing culture and ministry, while facilitating the transition to an installed pastor. The interim pastor will begin meeting with the departing pastor and the staff.
3. Ministry Site Profile is developed: A Transition Team, including one member of the Congregation Council, is selected. The team works with the synod staff to complete a Ministry Site Profile of the congregation. The profile highlights who we have been, who we are, and who we want to be. This step in the process is accomplished by conducting numerous interviews with congregation members and existing groups.
4. Ministry Site Profile is reviewed: The profile is brought to the Congregation Council and then to an open Special Meeting of the congregation for review/revision to ensure it accurately reflects the congregation’s mission, character and values so that it will elicit appropriate pastoral candidates when posted to the churchwide website.
5. Ministry Site Profile is added to the synod website: Through the churchwide website, the Ministry Site Profile can be accessed by interested candidates, who have also completed a Rostered Leader Profile.
6. A Call Committee is formed according to the congregation constitution

[\[DOC\]Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository](#)

C13.05. When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a **Call Committee** of six voting members shall be elected by [this congregation] [the Congregation Council]. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called rostered minister.

<https://www.elca.org/constitution> [2019 Model Constitution for Congregations](#)

<https://download.elca.org> › [ELCA Resource Repository](#) › [Model Constitution](#)

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

The Call Committee will eventually interview candidates for the position of installed pastor. The committee will develop interviewing skills and will conduct mock interviews with area pastors to hone these skills prior to interviewing actual pastoral candidates.

7. The synod staff selects appropriate pastoral candidates based on the extent to which their Rostered Leader Profiles match the congregation’s Ministry Site Profile. Bishop’s recommendations are also considered at this point, as are any names brought forward by congregation members.
8. The Call Committee presents the selected candidate to the Congregation Council for approval. This name is then presented to the congregation for at a meeting legally called for that purpose.

9. The pastoral candidate makes a decision: The candidate has three weeks to discern whether that pastor is called by God to the congregation.
10. Installation of new pastor: The congregation and new pastor celebrate the beginning of their new journey together at the installation service. Synod staff will officiate at that service.

[View the current news and events. - Immanuel Lutheran Church](#)

http://www.immanuelec.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/march_image.pdf

[Images for immanuel lutheran church eau claire A Blessed Journey: A Congregation's Search for a New Pastor](#)

Role of the Synod Staff in the Call Process

- A synod staff conducts an exit interview with the departing pastor. That can also be done by phone to save a drive.
 - A synod staff meets with the Congregation Council prior to the current pastor's retirement/taking a new call. This is mainly to help cope with their anxiety, and let them know we are going to journey through this together. A synod staff also talks about doing the work of ending strong/well with the departing pastor.
 - A synod staff meets with a Congregation Council for a concurrence interview with the bishop's proposed interim pastor.
 - A synod staff meets with the Congregation Council to orientate them to the entire call process. Sometimes this is done on a Sunday so a synod staff can also do an adult forum, or a temple talk in the congregation so the whole congregation understands what they will be going through. One size does not fit all, if it ever did, so this needs to be tailored to the congregation and its unique context.
 - A synod staff meets with the Transition Task Force (TTF) to orientate them to their work in the call process.
- When the TTF completes the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), a synod staff holds an open meeting where the entire congregation is welcome to attend to review the MSP.
- A synod staff meets with the Call Committee to orientate them to the critical role they play in the calling of a new pastor.
 - A synod staff installs the newly called pastor.
 - Occasionally a synod staff adds this final meeting – with the Call Committee. It is for the purpose of them giving feedback about how the process went.
 - On average, a synod staff meets face to face with congregations seven times. In some cases, a synod staff meets several times with a Call Committee if the process is taking longer than expected.
 - A synod staff often meets face to face with the interim pastor at least once, sometimes more, while the interim pastor is serving a particular congregation in transition. This is helpful in assessing how things are going and how the synod staff is being perceived.
 - A synod staff can be in almost weekly contact with congregations and/or their interim pastor as they go through the process. This is usually by e-mail, so synod staff has a record of what has been said and done.

Assistant to the Bishop Greg Kaufman- Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Call Process—Step by Step

- The interim pastor settles into the life of the congregation.
- The Congregation Council selects the process complete the Ministry Site Profile.
- The interim pastor coordinates the work on the completion of the Ministry Site Profile.
- The Congregation Council prepares the compensation package range.
- The congregation or the Congregation Council selects the Call Committee according to the constitution.
- The Congregation Council, Ministry Site Profile team, Call Committee and other interested members meet with a synod staff to review the Ministry Site Profile, and consider clarification and refinements to the document.
- A synod staff stays to meet with the Call Committee for their orientation to preparing for and carrying out interviews.
- The Congregation Council or the congregation at a special meeting votes to approve the Ministry Site Profile.
- The Call Committee sends names of any candidates suggested by the congregation to synod staff.
- Synod staff prayerfully discerns the needs of the congregation and the gifts potential candidates, sending a packet of 1 to 5 candidates to the Call Committee.
- The Call Committee interviews all the potential candidates.
- If the Call Committee discerns that God is calling a particular candidate, the Call Committee notifies synod staff and recommends the candidate to the council. At this point the circle of confidentiality grows to include the council.
- If none of the candidates are a good match, the Call Committee notifies synod staff, and a new slate is gathered.
- The Call Committee communicates their decisions to the candidates in a timely manner.
- The Congregation Council receives the Call Committee's recommendation and contacts the candidate to negotiate the compensation package
- If there is agreement on the terms of the letter of call, the Congregation Council notifies the synod staff and calls a special meeting of the congregation.
- The Call Committee works with the candidate to provide a biography and other information for the congregation.
- The congregation votes by written ballot to call the candidate; the measure must pass by at least a 2/3 majority vote.
- The congregation president and secretary sign the Letter of Call and the definition of compensation worksheet and mail them to the synod office as soon as possible to be typed and signed by the bishop.
- The congregation president notifies the candidate of the voting results.
- The candidate has three weeks to respond to the letter of call once the candidate has it in hand.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Call Process—Step by Step](#)

Page 50

's Interim Journey

TRANSITION TASK FORCE

Pray throughout the process.

Research basic facts about our congregation—**who are we?**
Ministry Site Profile sections 1-4.

Explore the context in which we live—**what is our wider community like?**
Ministry Site Profile section 5, first three boxes.

Inventory 4 Ps in our congregation: programs, plans, passions, and partnerships—**a deeper look at who are we?**

Assess our congregation's personality—**who are we?**
Ministry Site Profile section 6.

Claim our unique call and identity as part of the body of Christ in purpose, giftedness, and mission—**who are we?**
Ministry Site Profile sections 7-8.

Identify others who can witness to our identity—**who are we?**
Ministry Site Profile, section 9.

Discern the leader we need for the mission God has given us—**what experience and gifts does our next leader need?**
Ministry Site Profile sections 10-12.

Covenant with our next leader our top mission priorities and how we will help achieve those goals.
Ministry Site Profile section 13.

Provide a salary and benefit package that is fair and just for pastor and congregation.
Ministry Site Profile section 14-17.

Supplement this work with the Ministry Site Profile commentary on page 13 and the optional Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context.

Polish the profile to be an accurate reflection of our congregation and a great first impression for potential candidates.

Review the Ministry Site Profile with our synod staff contact and make any appropriate final changes to our document. the profile to be an accurate reflection of our congregation and a great first impression for potential candidates.

Approve our Ministry Site Profile by either Council or Congregational action, record the minutes, and archive a copy.

Continue to work on any other transition issues that need to be addressed.

CALL COMMITTEE

Pray throughout the process.

Learn about the role and responsibilities of the Call Committee at the orientation with synod staff.

Study our Mission Site Profile and anticipate being asked about specific parts by candidates who interview with us.

Plan how we will interview candidates and develop the set of questions we feel will best help us discern a good match between who we are and the leaders we will interview.

Ask members of our congregation to suggest pastors whom they feel would be good candidates and pass on those names to our synod staff contact.

Receive a packet of Rostered Leader Profiles from our synod staff person to review and interview.

Select a candidate and recommend them to our Congregation Council who then negotiates the final Letter of Call including specific mission goals and salary.

Vote at a special congregational meeting to call the pastor.

Wait. The pastor has up to three weeks to discern whether they are called by God to our congregation.

Celebrate with our new pastor at the service of installation.



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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NEXT STEPS



Phase III – The Call Process

- The Call Committee is established according to the congregation's constitution.
- A synod staff person meets with the Call Committee.
- The Call Committee develops the completed Ministry Site Profile and compiles the data collected from the Transition Team, then sends it to the Synod Office.
- The Synod Office enters into a time of prayer and discernment to identify potential candidates to offer the Call Committee for interviews.
- The Call Committee receives the names of candidates. The Call Committee selects and interviews candidates – remaining in contact with the Synod Office – and ultimately recommends a candidate to the Council.
- After the compensation package is negotiated with the recommended candidate and the council votes on a compensation package (requiring a simple majority for approval). They recommend the candidate to the congregation and set a congregational meeting date. The compensation package is sent to the Synod Office for review.
- The congregation votes on whether to extend a call to the pastor (requiring a two-thirds majority).
- The paperwork is returned to the synod office. This includes an Official Letter of Call, the official tally of vote results, and the Definition of Compensation.
- The bishop reviews the paperwork and signs the letter of call.
- The candidate receives the call and, if he or she accepts, notifies the congregation and the Synod Office of their desired start date.
- The new pastor is installed by a synod staff person at an agreed-upon time.

Page 9

Congregational Council Checklist

- _ Accept pastor's letter of resignation and notify the congregation in writing
- _ Schedule a farewell event for the pastor
- _ Congregational Council and pastor fulfill all obligations
- _ Council facilitates an internal review of Parochial Records
- _ Certification of financial records and obligations between pastor and congregation
- _ Clarify new relationship with departing pastor, complete Letter of Agreement, notify congregation
- _ Meet with the Synod Office to talk about transition
- _ Synod Office will recommend an interim pastor for concurrence
- _ Agree on recommended interim pastor and compensation package
- _ Welcome interim pastor
- _ Select a Transition Team
- _ Support the work of the Transition Team during the self-study process
- _ Elect/Appoint Call Committee
- _ Install Call Committee
- _ Receive name of primary candidate from Call Committee
- _ Council President/Treasurer and candidate discuss and agree on compensation package
- _ Set date for congregational vote with at least two weeks' written notice to members
- _ Synod Office mails official call documents to Council President
- _ Immediately contact candidate with results of the congregational vote
- _ Mail signed call papers to the Synod Office
- _ Receive acceptance/rejection of call from candidate (up to 21 days)
- _ Upon acceptance of a call, contact Synod Office to set up a date/time for installation

Page 10

1: Time of Intentional Prayer and Discernment

During the entire transition time, the Synod Office holds the congregation and its leadership in prayer. Because transitions are such critical opportunities healthy and vital growth, everyone needs to be open to where the Holy Spirit might be leading the community of faith. As soon as a transition is identified, prayer and discernment begin around possible future leadership. Page 20

2: Establishing a Call Committee

- A. Purpose of a Call Committee The purpose of the call committee is to identify the candidate who is best suited to lead the congregation into God's future. The call committee builds on the work of the Transition Team. The work of the committee must be done prayerfully, and the people on the committee must be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The call committee is not looking for the "best and brightest" candidate; rather, they are looking for the "right" candidate for this particular congregation.
- B. Make-up of the Call Committee The council should begin by reviewing the congregation's constitution to determine the structure and make-up of the call committee and the process by which its members will be selected. Sometimes, members of a call committee come with a predetermined mindset about the next pastor. It is important for the committee as a whole to understand that each individual has his or her own bias, and to challenge each member to see beyond his or her own wants toward the greater good. Encourage people to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit moving within the call committee for the sake of the congregation's mission and vision. The number of people on the committee can vary, but 6 to 8 people is generally a good size, depending on the size of the congregation. In an addition, it is recommended that an alternate be appointed that will attend all meetings. The committee should reflect the diversity of the congregation. Pay attention to age, gender, length of time

as a member, levels of involvement, and attendance at worship. The number of council members on the committee should be limited to 1 or 2 persons; ideally one of these people should have served on the transition team. If not indicated by the constitution, the committee selects its own chairperson. The Congregational Council should share the name of the committee chair and its members with the representative of the Synod Office (see Call Committee Member Form, (Appendix 10).

- C. Contact the Synod Office Once your call committee is selected, contact the synod office to arrange orientation of the call committee with a staff person.
- D. Announcement of Call Committee Members The names of the call committee members should be made public via your newsletter and bulletin. It is also appropriate to post pictures of the committee with the contact information in visible locations, and to request prayers and support for the call committee.
- E. Installation of Call Committee The work of the call committee is critical to the health and future well-being of the congregation. Installing the members to the call committee in a worship service and publicly blessing their work is encouraged. Ask the congregation to pray for the people who will serve in this ministry (see Installation of Call Committee, Appendix 11).
- F. Expenses of the Call Committee Authorized expenses of the call committee should be paid for by the congregation. These may include: • Opportunities for community building • Administrative costs • Hospitality during the interviewing of candidates • Travel expenses as needed
- G. Getting Started with the Call Committee One of the benefits and responsibilities of the committee is to build relationships with each other. Take time to learn what gifts and skills each member brings to the work of calling a pastor. Because of the cross-section of people on the committee, it is likely that each will learn something about the other and his or her ministry. If the transition team has provided a report to the call committee, it is imperative that the call committee digest and take seriously the recommendations and observations of the transition team.
- H. Meetings Frequency of meeting depends on how the committee plans to complete the Ministry Site Profile and the variables of the process. Meeting once every two weeks is a good baseline to consider, though some committees meet every week. Set an appropriate time frame to prevent frustration and unnecessary delays. Each meeting should begin with devotions and prayer (see some options for these under Prayers and Devotions for Call Committee, Appendix 12). Devotions should be intentional, not rushed. Inviting God into the conversation and opening one's ears to hear God's invitation are vital components to this process.

Page 22

3: Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

When considering the calling of a new pastor, the congregation should know its challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry so that the gifts of the pastor meet the needs of the congregation. The work of the transition team during the interim time is critical to this process (cf. Phase II, Part 3). The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) provides the opportunity for the call committee to articulate an accurate picture of the congregation. It is important that the profile be a thorough and honest reflection of the community, the congregation, and the congregation's mission.

The transition team will have completed Sections I and II of the MSP (which can be accessed online at www.elca.org/call). The call committee will complete Sections III, IV and V. Gathering information to include in the MSP must be the work of the whole congregation, but the call committee is advised to choose one person to input data into the document to maintain consistency of voice. Be sure to refer to the email and password information used by the transition team to complete Sections I and II of the MSP (see page 25). As the call committee completes this document, it is important for committee members to be in consultation with the transition team, congregation council, strategic planning team, and/or other lay leaders. Be sure to save your work frequently! It is recommended that the person who completes this document use the "Save As" button on the last page of the document to keep a remote copy on his or her personal computer for updating as needed.

After all sections are complete, the MSP should be reviewed by the congregation to make certain there is agreement on the congregation's mission and the gifts needed in a new rostered leader. This review will be led by a synod staff person. The congregation secretary should download and print a final copy of the profile for congregational record-keeping. Once the MSP is officially submitted electronically, the ELCA Churchwide Office will inform the synodical Synod Office that the MSP is ready to be shared with potential candidates to interview.

After you have submitted the MSP document, be sure you have downloaded the Reference Recommendation form. You must click "Access your Account" to download your Reference Recommendations. If at any time you have questions or problems with the MSP document, please contact the Synod Office and ask for the Office Administrator.

Page 23

4: Overview of the Interview Process

A. Basic Process Outline

All candidates being invited into the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin will be vetted and cleared by the Synod Bishop, including any name raised from within the congregation from personal contacts. Once the Ministry Site Profile has been officially submitted, the Synod Office will find the best candidates available for your congregation. Below is an outline of appropriate protocol to follow once these names have been officially offered to the call committee:

1. The chairperson will call each candidate within a week of receiving the names to let them know that their Rostered Leader Profile has been received and whether or not they will have an initial interview with the committee. This call is the first step in getting to know the candidate. (Sample Interview Questions: Appendix 13)
2. An initial interview (usually by Skype) with each candidate is completed. This initial interview usually lasts a half-hour or more. Whatever method (Skype, Face-to-Face) is chosen for the initial interview all candidate interviews should be done in the same manner.

3. After the initial interview, the committee should release any candidate who does not seem like an appropriate fit for the congregation. The chairperson notifies each candidate of the decision.
 4. If the committee releases all initial candidates and would like to consider more candidates, additional names will be provided dependent upon availability.
 5. The committee can invite any appropriate candidate(s) for an additional Skype interview or a face-to-face meeting to engage in further conversation and discernment. Some ideas for this time together might include: • Tour of the broader community • Sharing a meal • Tour of ministry site • Speaking with a realtor about potential housing opportunities
 6. The committee is strongly encouraged to run a background check on the finalist candidate(s). The ELCA Churchwide Office recommends Oxford Document Management Company, Inc. (www.oxforddoc.com, info@oxforddoc.com, 800- 801-9114). You may also check with your current insurance provider for completing the background check.
- See Section 5 for more detail about each step in this process.

B. Confidentiality

For the integrity of the process and out of respect for the candidate, it is critical that everyone involved must agree to maintain and respect confidentiality during the interview process. Prematurely divulging information about the consideration of a candidate may jeopardize the ministry of a pastor or sow division within a congregation. Conversations during the call process should remain confidential to the official meetings of the call committee. Committee meetings (and interviews) are not open to those who are not on the call committee.

C. Communication by the Call Committee to the Congregation

Names of candidates must remain confidential, but the call committee should otherwise regularly communicate to the congregation in general terms about its progress in the call process. The congregation should be made aware of the committee's hard work, and the committee should likewise ask for the prayers of the entire congregation during the call process.

D. Preparing to Interview Candidates

Before the interviewing begins, the call committee needs to meet, perhaps several times, to study carefully the oral and written information about each potential candidate given by the Synod Office. The call committee is encouraged to review its commitment to trust each other, share openly and maintain confidentiality at this time. Whenever the call committee chooses to no longer consider a candidate, all materials related to that candidate should be destroyed.

Information packets should be prepared and sent to each candidate prior to his or her interview. Suggested items to include in the packet are: a recent annual report, worship bulletins, newsletters, a listing of staff, a list of congregation council members and call committee members, a picture of the call committee, and the congregation's constitution and mission statement. If you have a local Chamber of Commerce, you may ask it to provide an introductory packet of information about the community to include in this mailing. Written communication verifying the agenda and length of the interviewing process should be sent prior to the meeting. If the candidate has a spouse, the call committee needs to be clear about whether the spouse is invited to accompany the pastor to visit the congregation and community. It is generally highly recommended that the spouse be invited to come along. However, the spouse should not participate in the interview. Because the decision to accept a call impacts the entire family, it is important that the spouse be able to see the church and parsonage (if there is one) and have a chance to ask any questions s/he might have. The advance communication should contain travel instructions to reach the interview site and indicate the commitment of the congregation to provide reimbursement for all expenses. If a spouse is invited to accompany the candidate, the committee should cover all expenses for the spouse. A prompt reimbursement of the candidate for expenses incurred should follow the interview.

Hearing Candidates Preach

If desired, representatives from the call committee may travel to a candidate's current congregation to hear him or her preach. Please ensure that this visit is kept confidential so that people in the pastor's congregation do not recognize you as a call committee! If such a visit is not possible, the call committee may ask for audio and/or video recordings of the pastor's preaching. Page 25

5: The Interview Process

A. Initial Phone/Skype Interview

The initial phone or Skype interview is a brief opportunity for candidates and committee members to get to know one another. The committee should pick 4 to 5 questions to ask each candidate. Remember, consistency in questions between multiple candidates will be helpful. The main goal of this conversation is to make introductions and get a general feeling for each candidate. The interview should occur with equipment that allows all members of the call committee to be visible and to interact with the candidate. Examples of questions for this initial interview include:

- Tell us about yourself and your life of faith.
- Why are you a pastor?
- Tell us about what gives you life in parish ministry.
- What excites you about our congregation?
- What would you like to know about us?

Try to come up with questions which will help you determine which candidates you want to invite for face-to-face interviews and which you want to release. It is good to invite as many strong, viable candidates as you can for a face-to-face interview, although cost may prohibit the committee from inviting more than one or two.

B. Preparing for the Face-to-Face Interview

The Ministry Site Profile, together with the other items you have previously mailed to the candidate, will give the candidate an initial impression of the congregation. When the plan is to interview more than one candidate, an attempt is made to conduct each interview in the same setting and manner. For example, if the call committee meets with one candidate in a restaurant, the same pattern should be followed with any subsequent candidates. The call committee should be consistent in having the same person lead the interview each time and plan for committee members to ask the same basic questions of each candidate. The interview questions, along with a Bible passage for the candidate to lead a study on, shall be sent to the candidate no later than 10 days prior to the interview. This will

ensure that all the bases are covered in each instance once the interview process begins. The leadership needs which have been identified on the Ministry Site Profile should be used to form an outline for the interview. The committee will create approximately eight to ten detailed questions based on this outline. The committee should also be flexible and understand that a give-and-take conversation will not necessarily allow you to ask the questions in predictable order. (See Appendix 13 for sample questions for an interview.)Page26

C. Preparing for the In-Person Visit

1. Set up dates and times for interviews, tours, and other activities.
2. All members of the call committee must be present at the interviews.
3. Arrange for travel, lodging (hotel/motel), and meals.
4. If the candidate is flying, provide a car so s/he can look around on their own.
5. Determine which call committee members will initially meet and welcome the candidate.
6. Show the candidate (and his/her spouse, if applicable) around the area and provide periods of unstructured time for them to decompress away from the call committee.
7. Provide and accompany the candidate to meals.
8. Escort the candidate to the interview with the call committee.
9. Ensure that many different call committee members have a chance to interact informally with the candidate. For example, the person who provides transportation should be different from the people with which the candidate shares meals.

D. Conducting the Formal Interview

The call committee should designate one member to host the candidate at the interview site. If the member is not accompanying the candidate to the interview, be certain that he or she is on hand well before the candidate's anticipated arrival at the interview location. The committee member chosen to direct the interview should outline the anticipated interview procedure for the candidate and indicate the time allotted for the interview. The candidate should be briefed on the "question and answer" format and alerted that he or she will have a chance to ask questions of the call committee. The lead interviewer is responsible for keeping the interview within the time allotted. Have all members of the call committee briefly introduce themselves to the candidate again, identifying his or her vocation and role played in the congregation. It may be helpful to have the candidate begin the interview with a brief devotional or Bible study and prayer, but if you choose to do this, be sure they are aware of this long before they arrive! Before the committee begins asking the interview questions, it is appropriate for the committee chairperson to ask the candidate to briefly tell the committee something about herself or himself (this should take no more than five to seven minutes). After this, the formal questioning may begin. Questions may be assigned to various members of the call committee, assuring that all members are actively participating. Don't hesitate to ask follow-up or clarifying questions if an answer is unclear to all members. Remember, the interview is intended to be a dialogue, not an inquisition! Just as the committee members are discerning the candidate's viability for the congregation, so is the candidate discerning whether the congregation is a good fit. One committee member may be designated to take notes on the candidate's responses during the interview for later review by the committee. Note-taking should be done as unobtrusively as possible and the lead interviewer should alert the candidate beforehand that notes will be taken. Some committees might consider recording the interview, but recording should only take place with the candidate's consent and with the assurance of strict confidentiality. Avoid asking questions which can be answered with a simple yes or no. For example, the questioner should not ask, "Do you think you are effective in your ministry to youth?" The candidate will almost surely answer, "Yes." Ask instead, "Tell us about your approach to ministry with youth," or "Give us some examples of how you have worked effectively with youth in your present or former parish." (Refer again to sample interview questions, Appendix 13.) In concluding the interview, the candidate may be invited to answer any questions not asked or make any other comments. The candidate should be thanked for coming and encouraged to be in phone contact with a designated member of the call committee if any additional questions arise. The call committee should indicate the approximate time table involved in the completion of the congregation's call process. If possible, at the conclusion of the interview, the committee should reimburse the candidate for any expenses incurred, such as travel costs, overnight accommodations, and meals. If the reimbursement cannot occur at the time of the interview, it should be completed within the following week and an appropriate explanation given to the candidate.

In concluding the interview, the candidate may be invited to answer any questions not asked or make any other comments. The candidate should be thanked for coming and encouraged to be in phone contact with a designated member of the call committee if any additional questions arise. The call committee should indicate the approximate time table involved in the completion of the congregation's call process. If possible, at the conclusion of the interview, the committee should reimburse the candidate for any expenses incurred, such as travel costs, overnight accommodations, and meals. If the reimbursement cannot occur at the time of the interview, it should be completed within the following week and an appropriate explanation given to the candidate.

E. After the Interview

Immediately following the interview or as soon as possible after the interview, the call committee will reconvene to share initial impressions. It is important that these shared impressions are recorded for later reference. As the committee engages in the process of selecting one candidate to recommend to the congregation, it will be important to do several things: • Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. • Review and clarify earlier understandings of what it means for the committee to reach a consensus. • Allow ample time for each committee member to speak and be heard. • Come to a decision that takes into account the five top leadership needs of the congregation. • Choose the most suitable candidate, not necessarily the one you think is most likely to accept the call. • While listening to your own heart and impressions, go beyond asking "Which candidate do I favor?" Instead, ask "Which pastor can best serve our congregation?"

Page 28

6: Following Up with Candidates

A. Follow Up

The call committee should send a letter or note of appreciation to each candidate for his or her willingness to be interviewed. This letter may encourage the candidate to address any additional questions or concerns to the call committee. Any expense reimbursement not

made at the time of the interview should be made now. Again, a promise of keeping the candidate current regarding the call process is essential. It is crucial that the call committee immediately notify the candidate when s/he is no longer being considered. The decision should also be submitted to the contact person from the Synod Office who is assisting you with the call process. Upon releasing candidates from further consideration – whether after an initial phone or a face-to-face interview – it is helpful for the candidate to hear the reasons why you do not think she or he would be a good match for your congregation at this time. This information is helpful to both the call committee and the candidate because it fosters clarity in the selection process and gives the candidate an opportunity for growth. The synod office should also be informed as to why the candidate was released. (See sample Release of Candidate letter in Documents, 1 and 2.)

B. Communication

Courtesy and professionalism are essential during this process. The call committee will communicate openly and honestly with the candidate and will continually inform the candidate about the status of their process. The call committee is also asked to stay in regular contact with the Synod Office.

C. Finalizing a Candidate Recommendation

Discussion with the selected candidate should be continued to its conclusion, which might result in one of two possibilities: 1. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person is not the one the Holy Spirit is leading the congregation to call, the chair of the call committee should inform the candidate and the Office of Bishop. At this point, the Office of Bishop will provide names of additional candidates to the call committee as they become available. 2. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person is the one whom the Holy Spirit is leading the congregation to call, the call committee should make a formal recommendation to the congregation council.

D. Making a Recommendation to the Congregation

As the Holy Spirit has guided the call committee to a candidate, the decision to recommend this pastor to the congregation is typically reached by common consent. If through prayer and consideration, the Holy Spirit has led the call committee to a unanimous decision on a candidate, this is certainly a time for celebration. Unanimous consent is definitely the best option. Page 29
The call committee should have considerable conversation before moving forward with a less than unanimous candidate. The call committee should be able to articulate why it is moving forward with the recommending the candidate without unanimous consent.

7: The Vote of the Congregation on the Candidate

A. Preliminary Compensation Discussions When the call committee has identified their primary candidate, the committee chair should contact the president of the congregation council and executive committee to have preliminary discussions about the compensation package. It is prudent to check with the candidate prior to his or her name being brought forth to council to ensure that the committee understands the candidate's compensation requirements and that they are in alignment with realistic compensation recommendations. The council president and/or the call committee chair should have that discussion with the candidate.

B. Special Congregation Council Meeting The council president calls a special meeting of the council to hear the recommendation of the call committee. The committee chair presents the name of the pastor. The council must maintain absolute confidentiality. The following actions must be taken at this special congregation council meeting:

1. Special meeting of the congregation

The council will establish a date, time, and place for the special meeting of the congregation to vote on the call of the pastor. Proper arrangements will be made to notify the congregation of this meeting according to the congregation's constitution. Included in this notice will be the name and brief resume of the pastor and the compensation package. (Sample Document 3)

2. Notification to the Synod Bishop

When the congregation council receives the name of the candidate from the call committee it will notify the Synod Office. The synod office will supply the necessary documents in the call packet sent to the president of the congregation. The president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and sending it to the Synod Office for the Bishop's signature. Page 30

8: The Vote of the Congregation on the Candidate

A. Special Congregational Meeting

1. Quorum required

The person presiding at the meeting will determine that a quorum is present according to the congregation's constitution and bylaws. (See Sample Document 4)

2. Vote to call the pastor

Call committee will present information about the pastor, why they were led to recommend this candidate to the congregation, and the strengths and gifts that the candidate offers to the ministry of the congregation. Only the one name can be voted on at this meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot. No absentee or proxy votes shall be accepted. The vote to elect is a least 2/3 affirmative vote of those present, as stated in the model constitution for congregations C9.01.

B. If the Call Is Approved by the Congregation

After the call has been approved, a personal contact by the president of the congregation will be immediately made with the pastor being called. The following procedure is used to send the official ELCA Letter of Call.

The president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and sending it to the Synod Office for the Bishop's signature. The pastor will send a letter of acceptance or decline of the call to both the congregation and the Bishop's office. The pastor will accept or decline the call within twenty-one (21) days.

C. If the Pastor Accepts the Call

The newly-called pastor, along with the congregational council, will set the date when ministry will begin in the new parish. The president of the congregation council will consult with the newly-called pastor to determine when the acceptance may be publicly announced. Arrangements for moving will be made between the pastor and the officers of the calling congregation. The calling

congregation is responsible for moving expenses. In some circumstances, the pastor and the congregation may negotiate other arrangements.

D. If the Call Is Not Approved by the Congregation

In the event that the call is not approved, the secretary of the congregation council will draft a letter to the candidate to report officially the results of the congregational meeting and to conclude the call process. Personal contact by the president of the council with the pastor will be made before the letter is sent. The Synod Office will also be immediately notified.

E. The Call Is Declined by the Pastor

In the event that the pastor does not accept the call, the process will begin again with more names being offered to the call committee. Refer back to the flow chart on pages 6 & 7. Page 31

9: Special Situations

1. First Call Candidates and Ordination

In the case where this is the candidate's first call, he or she must be ordained before being installed as the pastor. The ordination may take place at the candidate's home congregation or another congregation before being installed. They may choose to be ordained at their first call congregation. If this is the case, the officers of the congregation should contact the Synod Office to prepare for a combined ordination and installation service.

2. Multiple-Congregation Parish

One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

3. Associate/Assistant Pastors

When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor will be specified in documents that accompany the call. These documents must be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the congregation council, and the Synod Office.

4. Term Calls

A congregation may call a pastor for a specific term of years. A term call may transition into a settled call upon completion of the initial term

5. Part-time Ministries/Share-time Ministries

Part-time ministries are normally defined as a minimum of 20 hours of work each week to qualify as a call. Share-time ministries are normally defined as a minimum of 20 hours of work each week to qualify as a call. Please refer to the compensation guidelines and Roster Manual for more details. All arrangement for part-time calls or share-time ministries should be discussed with the Synod Office beforehand and details need to be in writing.

10: Installation of the new Pastor

The start of this new joint ministry between the pastor and the congregation is marked by the ritual of installing the pastor. The date is set in partnership with the pastor, the congregation, and the Synod Office. We encourage the date and time should be set so that neighboring faith communities can celebrate with the congregation. Either the Bishop or a representative from the Synod Office will preside at this service. The Rite of Installation of the Pastor will be sent to you.

During the First Year

The Synod Office strongly recommends the first year of ministry be supported by an intentional program of relationship-building and leadership development. We recommend Healthy Start (www.healthystartup.org). The Synod Office can offer more details about the benefits of this. Page 32

The Call Process for Second Pastors and Deacons

Congregation councils and call committees are encouraged to follow the same process as previously listed for rostered ministers when calling a second pastor or deacon. All steps may not be required and should be adapted to the local situation (e.g. a person already employed by the congregation as a lay staff person and who becomes rostered). Assistance is available from the Synod Office to help determine the appropriate process to follow in calling a deacon. Page 33

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for The Call Process - Congregations in Transition Moving into the Future - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#) Pages 9-10, 20-33

Help in Appointing or Selecting a Call Committee

- First refer to your congregation's constitution. The bylaws may prescribe a process for assembling your Call Committee.
- If your constitution's by-laws do not mandate a process you should proceed in the fashion most likely to find broad acceptance in your congregation.
- One method is to allow congregation members to nominate themselves or others and then hold an election.
- Another method some congregations use is to have the Congregation Council seek nominees from the variety of groups in the congregation and then have the nominees (as a group) confirmed by congregational vote.
- Some congregations have their Congregation Council appoint the Call Committee. While this may seem like the simplest method, though it is open to criticism as "too controlled".
- Whatever the method, operate openly, communicate, encourage questions, and resist the temptation to "stack the deck" in favor of one interest group over all others.

- A special note on the working rules of your Call Committee: No matter how solid your congregation, a call process is likely to provoke big questions and fears. The best favor your Call Committee can do for itself is to set its working rules in place before it begins making decisions.

[Call Manual - Southwestern Washington Synod](#)

<http://www.lutheranssw.org/wp-content/uploads/CALL-MANUAL2.pdf>

Page 7

[Images for Call Manual - Southwestern Washington Synod Help in Appointing or Selecting a Call Committee](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Congregation Council do and when?

- Plans farewell for installed pastor.
- Meets with synod staff for call process orientation and interim pastor concurrence.
- Develops a communication strategy.
- Maintains community with the synod staff.
- Selects the group responsible for the development of the Ministry Site Profile.
- Develops the salary range for the next pastor.
- Sets the open meeting for reviewing the Ministry Site Profile with the synod staff.
- Selects a Call Committee according to the constitution.
- Receives and votes on the Call Committee recommendation.
- Works with synod staff to prepare the salary package.
- Sets the date for congregation meeting to extend a call.
- Plans farewell for interim pastor.
- Plans welcome for new installed pastor.
- Introduces pastor to the Mutual Ministry Committee.
- Coordinates with synod staff and pastor for installation.

How does the congregation participate in the process?

- Participates in the farewell for installed pastor.
- Learns about the call process from the Congregation Council.
- Participates as invited in the Ministry Site Profile.
- Participates in the review of the Ministry Site Profile.
- Votes on the recommended candidate for installed pastor.
- Participates in the farewell for interim pastor.
- Welcomes the new installed pastor.

When can we form the Call Committee?

- After a month or two, the Congregation Council appoints the Ministry Site Profile team, which may or may not be the same as the Call Committee.
- When the Ministry Site Profile is complete, the Congregation Council selects the Call Committee, which may or may not be the same as the Ministry Site Profile team, although at least one or two people on both teams is helpful.

Why is a Ministry Site Profile so important?

- The Ministry Site Profile is an opportunity to directly assess the strengths and growth areas of the congregation.
- It is how you introduce your congregation to potential candidates before they interview.
- It may reveal aspects of ministry that have been neglected or help you to see how you are making a difference in God's world – or both!

What does the synod staff do?

- A synod staff is assigned to each congregation who orients the Congregation Council to the call process and introduces a potential interim pastor.
- The synod staff works with the interim pastor and the Congregation Council throughout the process as needed.
- When the Ministry Site Profile is complete, the synod staff meets with the Ministry Site Profile Team, the Call Committee, the Congregation Council, and other interested members.
- Shares names of candidates for the position of installed pastor.
- Is available to the Congregation Council to answer salary package questions.
- Synod staff installs the new pastor.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

Page 6

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Selection of a Call Committee

Call Committee Formed

The Congregation Council sought to appoint:

People who are regular worshippers.

People who are healthy in body, mind and spirit and not experiencing major life transitions.

People whose support and care of the congregation and its ministries and mission is clearly evident and are in full support of the ELCA, its doctrines and social statements. For more information on this, visit elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues.aspx.

People who are able to adjust personal calendars in order to attend all meetings (often twice a month and several evenings within a two-week period when interviews are taking place).

<http://www.trinity-ec.org/call.phtml>

[Images for Call Committee Formed Trinity Lutheran Church Eau Claire, WI](#)

SELECTION OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

Selection of the Call Committee should be regarded as a crucial first step in the Call Process. Here are some suggestions. Call Committee members should be...

1. Persons of stature, who enjoy the trust and respect of the whole membership of the congregation.
2. Able to think and decide with the good of the whole congregation in mind rather than their own personal desires or wants.
3. About six in number and appointed by the Congregation Council (some congregation constitutions specify that they be elected by the congregation - refer to your congregational constitution).
4. Able to meet regularly and often.
5. As diverse in age, gender, ethnicity, and interests as the congregation is at-large.
6. A group that "looks like the congregation in miniature."
7. A group that does not include employed staff, past pastors, or their spouses.
8. Persons who do not have personal grievances, agendas, or power issues within the congregation.
9. People who begin, end, and act in faith.

If the Call Committee is selected by the Congregation Council...

1. You may wish to solicit "suggestions" from the congregation in order to have everyone's ideas. Do this in a way that makes it clear that you are inviting suggestions and not staging an election.
2. You do not want to ask for volunteers.
3. You want to bring the ideas together and put together a Call Committee that truly has balance and meets the description above.
4. After the persons accept your appointment, announce their names, demonstrate pride and confidence in them, pray and support them.
5. Use the Installation Service as a way of gathering the whole congregation around them and their work.

The Rev. Michael Robinson - Southwestern Texas Synod, ELCA

<http://images.acswebnetworks.com/1/498/CallProcessSelectionRiteInstallationCallCommittee.pdf>

[Images for SELECTION OF THE CONGREGATION CALL COMMITTEE](#)

Installation of the Call Committee

[The installation takes place at the point in the service where the creed is said. The president of the congregation invites the Call Committee members forward.]

The following persons, having been appointed by the Congregation Council to serve on the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church, are asked to come forward as their names are read: _____.

In Holy Baptism, our Lord Jesus Christ liberated you from sin and death and made you members of the church. Through Word and Sacrament, you have been nurtured in faith. I ask you, together with all who are here gathered, to confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we are baptized.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; on the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

St. Paul writes: "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives to everyone ability for particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person, for the good of all." (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

You have been appointed to a position of trust in this congregation. It will be your duty, in consultation with the synod office, to seek out an appropriate candidate for the position of pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

You must be faithful in your efforts...always respecting the concerns of the congregation while, at the same time, maintaining the integrity of the process. Above all else, you must be diligent in prayer so that God's will is done and it is God who is glorified by your efforts.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you: Are you ready to accept and faithfully carry out the duties of this appointment?

Yes, with the help of God.

People of God, I ask you: Will you support these members of the Call Committee? Will you remember them in your prayers and respect their responsibilities and honor their efforts?

Yes, with the help of God.

I now declare you installed as the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church. God bless you with his Holy Spirit, that you may prove faithful servants of Christ. Amen.

Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod

Call Process: Documents for Download
Rite for Installation of the Call Committee

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

[Images for Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod Installation of the Call Committee](#)

See also

The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com

Installation of Call Committee: Appendix 11

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for Call Process - Installation of Call Committee](#)

Page 54

Call Committee Covenant

Pray for guidance of the Holy Spirit

- Trust and believe that God will provide a pastor for our church.
- Lay aside personal agendas and biases.
- Pray for the long-term mission of the whole congregation.
- Pray for the candidate(s) you will interview and for the present staff.

Pledge to attend all interviews

- Prepare well for the interviews: pray, establish questions, do a practice interview.
- Become very familiar with our Ministry Site Profile; the candidates will know it well.
- If you or the congregation surface candidate names, pass on those names to the synod staff.
- Interview all the candidates whose names are provided to you; the number will vary depending upon availability of candidates who match your mission needs.
- Interview in person, not on the telephone (Long distance may require an initial interview by Skype.).
- You may arrange to have candidates provide a tape or video.
- Welcome and show hospitality to candidates; give a tour; eat a meal together.
- Invite spouses to sit in on interview if they wish (but they should not be asked questions).
- Determine how you will evaluate candidates; reflect and debrief immediately after interviews.
- Interview all candidates within 10–14 days.
- Ask questions that get to the heart of mission and ministry.

Practice confidentiality

- Respect the confidentiality of all candidates.
- The circle of confidentiality grows to include the Congregation Council when you recommend a candidate.
- Those candidates not selected must forever remain in confidence.

Communicate

- Explain to the congregation frequently what is happening in writing and orally.
- After receiving the names of candidates, schedule interviews and arrange for lodging and meals, mail a packet to each that contains the Ministry Site Profile, supplemental material from the church and information about the surrounding community.
- After interviews, thank candidates, report your decision as soon as possible, and arrange for reimbursement of travel, lodging, or meal expenses.
- Stay in contact with candidates after interviews.
- Inform candidates in writing of your decision to recommend for call or release from consideration immediately after decision is made.

Bring a united decision to the congregation

- Come to a consensus on one candidate.
 - Be positive and unified in public support of the chosen candidate.
 - Remember there are no perfect pastors or perfect congregations.
 - Bring recommendation to the Congregation Council to approve salary and benefits.
 - Bring complete information about the candidate, salary and benefits to the congregational meeting for the vote (⅔ majority required).
- It is a privilege, a joy, and a responsibility to be on a Call Committee. Plan to work hard and you will meet some fine candidates. Pray that God will provide a pastor who will faithfully and effectively lead and serve your congregation.

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[Images for Call Process - Call Committee Covenant](#)

Page 52

Suggested Prayers

Enlightenment of the Holy Spirit

God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant us, we pray, to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, reveal; that which is wanting in us, fill up; that which we know, confirm; and keep us blameless in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Commitment

Into your hands, Almighty God, we place ourselves: our minds to know you, our hearts to love you, our wills to serve you, for we are yours. Into your hands, incarnate Savior, we place ourselves: receive us and draw us after you, that we may follow your steps; abide in us and enliven us by the power of your indwelling. Into your hands, O hovering Spirit, we place ourselves: take us and fashion us after your image; let your comfort strengthen, your grace renew, and your fire cleanse us, soul and body, in life and in death, in this world of shadows and in your changeless world of light eternal, now and forever. Amen.

Those seeking deeper knowledge of God

Gracious and holy God, give us diligence to seek you, wisdom to perceive you, and patience to wait for you. Grant us, O God, a mind to meditate on you; eyes to behold you; ears to listen for your word; a heart to love you; and a life to proclaim you; through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Church unity

Most high and holy God, pour out upon us your one and unifying Spirit, and awaken in every confession of the whole church a holy hunger and thirst for unity in you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

During the interim time

Loving God, be with us and guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us O Lord to be about the work of your kingdom even as the search for a new pastor continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the work of the call committee

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts: Look on your Church with grace and guide the minds of those who shall choose a pastor for this congregation, that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, page 46)

For new ventures

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, page 153; *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, page 304)

During interviews

God, keep us mindful of your presence among us as we seek to discern your will for us. We pray that you will help us see beyond our own needs to the needs of your whole church. We pray that you will open our eyes to new possibilities, and opportunities of being your people. Guide us and lead us O Lord. Amen.

At Meetings

Life giving God, create among us a desire to do your will. Open our hearts to your Word. Lead us as we seek to lead. Guide us as we seek to guide. God, we desire a new pastor to be among us to lead us and walk with us. Direct us as we wait. Bless all who serve in the congregation, especially those who have the responsibility to lead us in the call process. Bless us Lord Jesus. Amen.

For the Call Process

Lord, send your Holy Spirit to congregations and pastors who are in the call process. Guide them through the call process so that your Word may be proclaimed, people may grow in discipleship, and a pastor and parish who will challenge each other to grow in ministry will find each other. Amen.

Come Holy Spirit and inspire parishes so that they will not look for pastors who will let them remain unchallenged, but will have the courage to call a pastor who will lead them to greater discipleship, growing faithfulness, and more intentional witness to the grace and glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus, bring comfort and peace to congregations and pastors who feel that they are too long in the call process. Give them the faith to trust that you will provide them with the right pastor with whom they can grow in their faith and witness. Grant pastors clear insight into where you want them to serve and be served. Amen.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

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[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Suggested Prayers](#)

Page 25

See also

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com](#)

Prayers and devotions for the Call Committee

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[Images for The Call Process - Prayers and devotions for the Call Committee](#)

Page 55

Words of Encouragement

The interim period is an opportunity for the congregation to do a serious self-assessment so that you may discover what mission God has in mind for your congregation and which pastor God will provide for your next leader.

Pray

Continue to pray. Look for ways to join your interim pastor in maintaining or deepening a posture of prayer as a congregation.

Be Patient

Many will want to rush the process. Allow it to unfold. Remember that you have a pastor who is serving you in the regular tasks of pastoral ministry as well as the unique tasks of interim ministry.

Be Aware of Anxiety

Maintain and improve communication within your congregation and remain committed to the work of the interim period. Through these months strive to "stay the course," especially when some try to short-circuit the process. That is a natural response to anxiety but one that does not bear good fruit. Work with your interim pastor and your synod staff in the most difficult times. And when in doubt refer back to the word of encouragement to pray.

Keep in Regular Contact with Your Synod Staff

Your synod staff is here to assist you. If you have any questions along the way, be sure to contact the appropriate synod staff by phone, mail, or email.

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http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

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[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Words of Encouragement](#)

Page 29

Thought for the Day

Salvation Is for All

But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:8-15)

Paul writes to the Romans about the dynamics of faith. Faith comes by hearing! Hearing comes by Christians speaking words of truth and faith!

Who are the ones sent to speak? Only pastors?

Pastors are called to public ministry and leadership. How does that affect their speaking words of truth and faith so that others may hear and believe?

Unity in the Body of Christ

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Where does the pastor fit in with the whole ministry of all the people of God? How does that happen? What kind of pastor would fit this way in your congregation? How much responsibility for the ministry in the parish do the lay people take?

Qualifications of Bishops

The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way— for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be 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 and the snare of the devil.

(1 Timothy 3:1-7)

How do these personal characteristics of a pastor in the first century apply to pastors today? What other characteristics would you add if you were calling a pastor to your parish?

A Good Minister of Jesus Christ

If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. These are the things you must insist on and teach. Let no one despise your youth but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:6-16)

Paul writes to encourage Timothy about his public ministry and leadership. What are some of the key joys and responsibilities of a pastor?

A congregation in the call process is called to focus on its ministries and the pastoral leadership it needs for those ministries to survive. What are your key ministries? How would you set your priorities among your ministries? How would a pastor encourage and enable those ministries?

Thank your pastor for her/his part in making your congregation's ministries thrive.

Paul's Charge to Timothy

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

(2 Timothy 4:1-5)

Does this apply only to a pastor or does this describe everyone in the parish? Would a pastor be excited to serve a parish that acted this way? Would a parish be excited to receive a pastor who had these priorities?

Resources provided by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

See also

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com](#)

Suggested Biblical texts: Appendix 12

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for Call Process - Suggested Biblical texts](#)

Page 56

Bible Study

LEADER: Open with Prayer:

(Suggestion: Almighty God, we look to your Word for guidance and hope. Open our hearts and our minds that we may hear your word for us. Guide us through your Word to hear the good news for our lives together through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.)

A. One person reads the lesson: • In silence write one word or phrase from the lesson that seems significant: • Each person shares the word or phrase without additional comment.

B. A second person reads the lesson: • In silence reflect on what this passage is saying to you. • Each person may share her/his reflection without additional comment.

C. A third person reads the lesson:

• Each person reflects in one sentence or less what this passage is saying to the Congregation at this time while you are in the Call Process.

• If time allows, a 10-20 minute open discussion may be included at this time.

Closing Prayer:

LEADER: Lord God, we are your servants in need of your love. The leader then offers a prayer for the person on her/his right. That person prays for the person on her/his right, continuing around the room until each person has been included.

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

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[Images for Call Process - Bible Study](#)

Page 57

Call Committee Devotions

[These devotions were written by the Rev. Ronald Olson, Director of Admissions at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. They are shared here for Call Committees to use as they meet in preparation, interview and discernment.]

A suggested order for use:

1. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 1
Use this devotion when synod staff meets with the Call Committee to review the Ministry Site Profile.
2. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 2
Use this devotion when the Call Committee meets to develop their interview questions.
3. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Congregation and Community Needs
Use this devotion when the Call Committee receives the Rostered Leader Profile packet.
4. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Ministry Gifts
Use this devotion when the Call Committee has completed interviews.
5. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider the Changing Context/New Opportunities and Challenges
Use this devotion when the Call Committee is preparing to introduce the candidate to the congregation.

The calling of a pastor is a prayerful discernment process. Enter deeply into prayer as you do your best to discover the will of God.

I. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 1

Writing to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul encouraged believers there to consider their own call. As we begin our work as a Call Committee, we may consider the call we all have from God by exploring a few of the following scriptures:

Acts 2:39, Ephesians 4:4–6, Colossians 3:15, 1 Timothy 6:12, 1 Peter 3:9 and 1 John 3:1

What a calling—to hope, peace, eternal life! In these verses, all of us are called children of God.

Clearly, this is on account of God's power and wisdom, not our own.

This powerful call is the one that comes to all believers through God's Word in Holy Baptism. That is why Martin Luther was bold to insist that "the ministry of the Word belongs to all." And again, "There is no other Word of God than that which is given all Christians to proclaim" (from Luther's *Concerning the Ministry*, 1523). Just as all Christians share the promise, so too do we share the task of proclamation. Most of us take up the task in the ministry of daily life. Others we ask to do so publicly for the community, so faith can be created and sustained in us. So, we see that in the economy of God's grace the ministry of those called and ordained follows from the call which has come to all who believe.

How do we sense God's call most clearly? In which aspect of life do we find God's Word (the promise, the hope, the peace) being "proclaimed" in the strongest way? The Bible even speaks of us as "holy partners in a heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1). What do you think that might mean for daily living?

Gracious calling God, call on us with your grace again and again. Renew us daily in the peace, hope, and eternal life we have been promised and which we have been called to proclaim. As we work to call a pastor to our congregation may we count on the prayers of all members of this community of faith to uphold us, just as we trust your spirit to guide us. We remember God, you are the One who called us first. Amen.

II. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 2

God's gracious giving extends to the church too. God has not been content to let the church fend for itself since Pentecost. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit still enlivens the community of faith. As Bishop, April Ulring Larson has said, "What God is interested in is empowering the body of Christ." God has raised up leaders, gifted ministers and pastors for the church in all times and places. When the church has prayed, "Save and defend your whole Church, purchased with the precious blood of Christ. Give it pastors and ministers filled with your Spirit, and strengthen it through the Word and the holy sacraments," God has answered.

Listen to this wonderful scripture: 2 Peter 1:3–11. Would any of us, either as individual believers or as members together of a congregation, have any reason to question the truth of those verses? In fact, how have the promises offered there been answered and proved true in your experiences of the life of faith? In the life of our congregation?

We overhear the prayer that scripture offers up for us in Ephesians 3:14–21. The One who has called us is also at work in us doing far more than we can ask or imagine. That's an amazing thought!

As we join in singing or saying ELW 858 (LBW 543), *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*, focus on verse two and ask, What does that verse mean, promise, and say to us about God's watch over us? Can we claim this hymn's great promise even in calling a new pastor? Luther's Small Catechism offers his explanation of the third and fourth petitions of the Lord's Prayer saying: "God's will is done when he strengthens our faith and keeps us firm in his Word as long as we live." And, "Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, and orderly community, good government, favorable weather, peace and health, a good name, and true friends and neighbors."

We daily trust God's good gifts for our faith and life. Such confidence also belongs to the faith and life of the whole church.

Gracious giving God, give us your help again, just as you have always done. Remind us of your care. Let there be gratitude in our congregation, for all that is needful has been sent and ordained for us already. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation may we be strengthened for this task with the thought that your providing reaches to every need of your church. This Call Committee and community of believers are your church too. Amen.

III. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Congregation and Community Needs

The Apostle Paul provides a wonderful snapshot of life in Christian community in his first letter to the Thessalonian church: I Thessalonians 5:12–24.

This letter of Paul, one of the earliest Christian writings, already shows Paul's love of lists. Here he checks off some of the characteristics of faithful community life:

- respect for those who labor among us
- peace among ourselves
- help for the weak
- patience with all
- always seeking to do good to one another and to all
- prayer without ceasing
- no quenching of the Spirit
- holding fast to what is good

That is a lot to be and do in the freedom of the gospel. That is a tall order for a mission congregation. Could this be the first Ministry Site Profile? Our congregation today is also the location of worship, care and mission—and full of needs in order to give ourselves faithfully to this gospel work. Let's name some of these community needs.

Is calling a new pastor more a matter of finding someone to meeting those needs (do all those things), or of calling one to lead for congregation to do what needs to be done? Are we, as members of our congregation, only objects of ministry, or are we also subjects or agents of ministry?

When we consider congregational "needs," scripture points us right away to the Christian mission that needs doing in God's world and the gospel work in which we share responsibility. Fortunately, in our need, there are leaders to help us. And we are in the process of calling one of them into our midst.

Gracious sanctifying God, thank you for drawing us ever anew into the ministry of the Word. In the community of faith, we are empowered for witness and service even as we are ministered to with forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation, show us our neediness—what we need and what needs doing for our life together in Christ. Amen.

IV. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Ministry Gifts

If the Bible is to be believed, then God has only "gifted" children. We have this declaration from Ephesians 4:7, 11–16. Gifts galore! God has given ministry gifts to the people of God, to the church, for the benefit of all. We know, of course, that we do not all have all the gifts. And, some having just the gifts they have been given are also called into the church's public ministry, into the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Apostle Paul liked the image of the body, one body with many parts all working together (I Corinthians 12:27–30).

We may all sense that we possess certain "gifts for ministry." It is no accident that some members end up teaching Sunday School year after year—we are not all up to that important work. Some are very comfortable in front of others, leading worship, teaching Bible studies and the like—others are not. We may also sense that our whole congregation, the community taken as one, is gifted too, in a special position or especially equipped for a particular ministry or mission.

Think of some of the special gifts our former pastors had. Which ones did they have in common?

What were their unique gifts for ministry, for leadership in the church? What gifts are going to be most important to our congregation in the years ahead?

Most likely, there is no single gift that will identify our new pastor to us. Nor is there only one who possesses the gifts we seek. There are many gifted leaders in the church, thank God. So, the difficulty of the task at hand is not so much that there are no good candidates, or that there is only one pastor who could lead us in mission. Oftentimes, part of the hard work of a Call Committee is leaving room for the Holy Spirit in the discernment of the many gifts in the candidates God may send. Our task is never simply a matter of hiring someone, even the best someone we can find, but of allowing God's Spirit to work in and through us to build up the church in calling a new pastor. And that can happen, indeed, because God is at work with us in all of this.

Gracious gifting God, we are reminded of your gifts in and for all the children of the church. Call on our gifts now, use us in service of your whole church. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation may your Holy Spirit lead us to discern the gifts we seek and see those gifts clearly in the candidates you are sending to us. In our communications, interviews and meetings with them, may we find ourselves once again who we surely are in Christ Jesus, stewards of your many gifts. Amen.

V. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider the Changing Context/New Opportunities and Challenges

Listen to Colossians 3:12–17. We are being changed. That is what the Spirit of Christ is doing with us. There is a marvelous new-life prayer in the Evening Prayer/Vespers of the ELW:

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are not the same congregation we were last year, or ten years ago. Times have changed, things have changed, we have changed since last calling a pastor. What do those changes mean for the calling of a new one? What is different now? How has our community felt the changes? Changing demographics, aging populations, new immigrants, all these factors make for renewal in mission and ministry too, in service and witness for the community of faith. Let's take some time to reflect yet again on these new opportunities and challenges as a committee.

Are we more open as a congregation to see the gifts of a candidate we may not have considered so seriously before? Many congregations have found that to be true, for example, in looking at single candidates, female and older candidates. Pastor Eleanor Hunsberger states the matter boldly, "When God calls you to ministry as a person of color, a person who is physically challenged, a person who is different, who does not fit the Lutheran mold of this is what a pastor looks like, somehow the Holy Spirit removes the barriers and people are able to open up to receive such people." She goes on to say, "We're helping God, we're working with the Holy Spirit in this process."

We refresh ourselves in these words from scripture about our life in the Spirit: Romans 8:26–30. We are so called according to God's purpose. The times may be changing, but we are standing on that solid promise.

Gracious accompanying God, The One in whom we live and move and have our being. Give us a vision of the times of our lives, the new situations in which we live out our faith in Jesus. May we ask anew what it means to be the Church in our time and place, and as we work to call a new pastor to our congregation may we welcome according to your Spirit the one you are sending to us to lead us into the new days ahead. Amen.

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http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 87

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Why Can't We Call Our Interim Pastor?

These are some reasons behind the policy for not considering the interim pastor as a candidate for a regular call in the congregation the interim pastor is serving.

1. During the time of transition, the congregation often is uniquely vulnerable and therefore develops a relationship based on their need and insecurity. While this can be useful in leading a congregation to prepare for the incoming pastor, it could make for a very inappropriately skewed decision for a permanent call.
2. Interim ministry is unique and an interim pastor may often lead in ways that would be acceptable as an interim pastor but would not be acceptable to some in the congregation where the interim pastor remains as the pastor.
3. The congregation itself may pass up better leadership than it is getting, even with a good interim pastor, if it fails to consider pastors who are open to call.
4. An interim pastor will always have a following but also almost always will have those who are not favorably committed to the interim pastor. If the interim pastor was to be called to be the pastor, there would be built in opposition from the very beginning.
5. If the decision is made to consider the interim pastor along with the others being considered and the interim pastor does not get the position, there could be hurt feelings that would jeopardize the remainder of their interim work until the pastor is called.
6. An interim pastor has an advantage over other possible candidates who may be considered for the position because they have more visibility to the congregation. This makes it unfair to others who may be interested in the position but who will not have the same visibility.
7. Other pastors will know of the ministerial ethics involved and will know that those have been broken if an interim pastor is called. The result could be a lack of fellowship and broken relationships with other pastors.
8. A precedent could be set which would result in pastors seeking interim positions with the specific idea in their minds of putting themselves in a better position to be considered and called as the pastor, thus greatly damaging the whole call process.

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Page 53

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Calling a Seminary Graduate

Of course, all pastors are seminary graduates. However, all pastors also need to start somewhere. Often times they are called "first call pastors." There are some unique aspects to interviewing and calling a seminary graduate or first call pastor. Seminary graduates are fully trained and prepared to lead. Even though pastors develop and grow throughout their ministerial career, new pastors mature significantly during their first three years of ministry. Yet, because seminary graduates do not have years of pastoral experience, they are at a disadvantage in an interview process when compared to experienced pastors.

Thus, if your congregation is an appropriate first call ministry site and receive the name of a seminary graduate, that person will be the only name received to interview. The final result of the interview may be "No" but the question is never whether any one pastor is "better" than another. The question is always, "Is this who God has in mind for our congregation?"

Keep in mind that a seminary graduate will not be able to reflect upon years of pastoral experience, but should be able to answer interview questions based upon their involvement in congregational life as a lay person and seminary training that involved clinical settings, contextual education experiences, and the internship year. Some seminary graduates are second or third career persons; if prior experience enhances a person's skills for ministry, such experience may be considered in calculating compensation. According to the salary standards of our synod, experience prior to ordination is calculated at the rate of 1/3 to 1/2 year for each year up to ten years of prior experience (up to 5 years credit).

Seminary graduates are expected to participate in First Call Theological Education during their first three years as a pastor.

Congregations who receive a seminary graduate as their pastor are expected to encourage participation and fully support First Call Theological Education. New pastors connect with other new pastors and are guided by bishops, seminary faculty, experienced pastors, and churchwide staff as they reflect upon and process their developing identity and leadership as a pastor. To fund this expectation, the congregation needs to ensure the full amount of continuing education and official meeting dollars outlined in our synod's salary

standards is provided and that the full two weeks of time for continuing education is granted. Seminary graduates have just completed four years of extensive graduate school, one of which is an internship year, and are eager and ready to serve the church. That enthusiasm will be an asset to the mission of your congregation should you extend a call to a seminary graduate.

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Page 56

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[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Calling a Seminary Graduate](#)

Calling an Associate/Assistant to Senior Pastor

Several years ago, a sister synod tackled the difficult issue of congregations with multiple pastoral staff wanting to call their associate pastor to fill a senior pastor vacancy. These notes are to help other congregations in similar situations to think carefully about this desire.

The bishop's office does not make this decision for any congregation, and these notes are not a judgment of the gifts or leadership of an associate pastor. This reflection grew out of a deep concern for congregations. Nationally, there is a 70% failure rate when an associate pastor moves into the senior pastor's office. In our sister synod, five congregations thought they were the exception to the rule. One pastorate was too recent to evaluate, one was a positive experience for pastor and congregation, and three had a major crisis. In each of these three cases, (1) the senior pastor left under duress (and in two the new associate left as well), (2) there was need for major conflict management by the synod, and (3) each congregation required an extended period of intentional interim ministry. The failure rate for this synod was 75%. Why is there such a high failure rate? Generally, there are five issues: personalization, unspoken assumptions, unexpected change, desire to avoid risk, and sin.

Personalization

"We have this person whom we love. The pastor buried our loved ones, has been at bedsides, said something that gave me new insight, baptized or married a loved one, and so on." Everybody wants to have a pastor they like and many have experienced pastors they have not liked. So, when you have a good one why not keep that one? The problem is these memories may overshadow any questions regarding the pastor's gifts and abilities for the unique position of the senior pastor. The congregation is responding to someone they like or even love and are not responding directly to a vision for the future needs and mission of the congregation. Choosing a pastor for personal reasons hinders a serious look at the ministry needs of the congregation in an open and dispassionate way.

Unspoken Assumptions

The pastor may think, "They know me. They know what they are getting. I must be what they want and need." Wrong.

1. They know the pastor as an associate not a senior pastor and these are very different roles. A senior pastor can be described as a leader, a buck-stopper, a caretaker of the focus of the congregation's spiritual vision, and an administrator of staff.
2. It is not unusual for the congregation to like the associate because the senior, as part of their call, has made decisions they do not like, thus making the associate seem like a more reasonable pastor.
3. The associate who becomes senior pastor is the same person but in a different role. Established patterns for relating to this pastor will have to change with the change in roles. This can be confusing for both the pastor and the congregation. The congregation may say, "We know this pastor." This is, in most cases, not true. It is more likely the congregation is familiar with the team. They know the pastor functioned alongside another pastor and it might be quite different alongside a different pastor when he/she has primary oversight responsibility. When assumptions are not met, there is usually reaction, usually disappointment and anger.

Change is Not Expected but Will Occur

For the congregation, change comes as a surprise. The congregation expects continuity. This is often true personally as well. Such a simple thing as the pastor relating to different people in the congregation (for instance, the finance committee instead of the youth group). For the pastor, change also comes as a surprise, being suddenly thrust into unfamiliar territory in a familiar place and often left unguarded when challenged. The pastor suddenly has different expectations, relationships with people, and responsibilities. Part of that is letting go of what was central in that person's ministry as pastor before. Changing relationships in the same place is one of the most difficult things to do.

Desire to Avoid Risk

For the pastor this might be, "I know this place-I don't want to move" or "I can handle it" without doing an honest assessment, and so a manipulation of the call process ensues. For the congregation, this might involve them not having to relate to someone new, but at a 70% failure rate, calling your associate pastor is far more risky than the normal call process.

Sin

The pastor may succumb to pride in striving for the senior pastor position. The congregation may be seeking to avoid the hard work of calling someone new. This may be expressed in various ways that reveal our sinful weaknesses:

1. The congregation knew the pastor wasn't ready, but they liked the pastor and thought the pastor could grow.
2. The congregation wanted a pastor right away and didn't want to go through the hassle of the call process.
3. The bishop said, "No" but "Who is he to tell us?"
4. The congregation knew the associate was weaker than the former senior and that was what they wanted so they could control the pastor, etc.

It is hard not to think of yourself as the exception to the rule, and any given congregation could be. God bless you if you are, but the odds are not in favor of success. The greatest risk is to your associate pastor—his/her career is at stake. The risk to the congregation is possible division and difficulty. The risk to the synod is a congregation in distress and a crisis to mediate. The risk to the

mission of the Church is that you will be so caught up in interpersonal division that your congregation will not be what it should be to your community. Again, it is not a decision for the bishop to make, but it is the synod's responsibility to share with you the dangers.

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[Images for Call Process - Calling an Associate/Assistant to Senior Pastor](#)

Page 57

Two Most Common Mistakes

First Most Common Mistake – Beginning a Pastoral Search without Knowing What You're Looking For

It may seem odd, but many congregations immediately begin a search for a new pastor by interviewing pastoral candidates, without any real idea of what they are looking for.

The reason for this approach is emotional, which is why it is misguided. The loss of a pastor leaves members feeling that "something is missing." What is missing is – obviously – a pastor, so the emotional response is to begin immediately to look for pastoral candidates to fill the missing gap. Very little attention is paid to the grief process that may be still affecting members, to the needs of the congregation, or to what God might have in mind for the congregation.

Preferred Process

The preferred approach is to conduct a pastoral search by taking steps in a logical order:

- A. Come to terms with who you are as a congregation, without the previous pastor;
- B. Determine a Vision for the future – What is God calling you to be or do?
- C. Decide on the pastoral characteristics that are needed to accomplish that vision.
- D. Then, enter the call process to interview suitable candidates.

Second Most Common Mistake – Reacting to the Previous Pastor

Research indicates that a second major mistake is to be overly influenced by reactions to the previous pastor. Some congregations go looking for a new pastor who is "just like the previous one." Other congregations may go looking for a new pastor who is "exactly the opposite of the previous one." Neither approach is a good idea.

[\[PDF\] Pastoral Leadership Transition Process-A Guide for Lay Leaders /Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](#)

Two Most Common Mistakes

Page 16

<http://ministrylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pastoral-Transition-A-Guide-for-Lay-Leaders-Edition-3.2-7-7-2013.pdf>

[Images for Pastoral Leadership Transition Process - Two Most Common Mistakes](#)

Moving from Reflection to Engagement

When the Ministry Site Profile is nearly complete it is time to prepare for the next steps. First, connect with your synod staff contact to arrange a meeting, and, second, prepare to adopt the Ministry Site Profile. There will be two major goals for the meeting with a synod staff. The first is to review the Ministry Site Profile and the second is to train the Call Committee for their important work. At the very least, the Ministry Site Profile team and the Call Committee (sometimes these are the same group) should be present. It would be very appropriate to invite the Congregation Council to attend. You may also wish to invite any other interested members. The more people who see the document and have a stake in making it better, the better it will be.

In preparation for this meeting, your synod staff contact will read your profile with three lenses:

1. We get out our blue editor's pen. We are not proficient at proofing, but if we find stray typos or grammatical errors we'll point them out.
2. We strive to be sure that you are clearly communicating what is important to you. If we are unsure of what you mean, potential candidates may have the same questions. If something is phrased strangely we'll try to draw out what you mean. If we are aware of an important issue that doesn't seem to be adequately addressed, we'll point that out.
3. We imagine reading the Ministry Site Profile as a potential candidate. What are the things that are appealing? What areas pose potential red flags?

These last two lenses are very subjective, but our goal is a clear, forthright, compelling profile that communicates your identity and mission clearly. Any suggestions we make are purely that: suggestions. The team that worked on the draft Ministry Site Profile should consider how to address these comments and when a final draft is ready they should notify the Congregation Council and ask for adoption of the Ministry Site Profile. The Congregation Council may choose to adopt the Ministry Site Profile by Congregation Council action or at a specially called meeting of the congregation. If it is by Congregation Council action only, be sure that all Congregation Council members have read the document and participated in the formation of the salary package, enter the Ministry Site Profile into the minutes of a Congregation Council meeting, and share it widely within the congregation. If it is to be adopted at a specially called Congregation Meeting, the Congregation Council should do all of the above work in addition to calling the meeting. The advantage of this way is that there is a better chance of widespread ownership of the vision and mission expressed in the Ministry Site Profile. When it is adopted submit the final draft to the Ministry Site Profile database.

Beginning the Work of the Call Committee

If the Call Committee is the group that prepared the Ministry Site Profile, their work will continue but take new shape. This is an important turn in the interim period when all the reflection of the past few months is used to prepare for and interview potential candidates. It is the responsibility of synod staff to identify those potential candidates for congregations. It is not the responsibility or the desire of the bishop to assign rostered leaders to congregations. There will be occasions in the midst of our clergy shortage when there will be very few or even only one candidate to interview. In spite of this, think of synod staff as "pastor yentas." We look for good potential matches; it is the Call Committee that determines whether any given candidate is the one that God has in mind for your congregation.

Once the congregation has submitted their Ministry Site Profile, synod staff use it to identify potential candidates. Candidates for call come from three sources:

1. The Rostered Leader Profiles of candidates who are interested in serving in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin.

2. Self-referrals by pastors or other rostered leaders to the synod office.
3. Requests from the congregation through the Call Committee.

The process for requesting a candidate is this:

- Any member of the congregation can submit a name for consideration to the Call Committee.
- Potential candidates should not be directly contacted unless synod staff has vetted the names.
- The Call Committee may or may not forward individual names to their synod office.

This is a matter for the committee to decide. Either way, let the person who recommended the candidate know what your decision is.

- If the Call Committee would like to recommend one or more candidates, use the Candidate Recommendation Form found in the resource section of this chapter. Synod staff will follow every lead given to us.

Some rostered leaders will not be available for interview. Most decline because they do not feel called to move. Some have not served in their current ministry context for a sufficient period of time. Some are restricted by their spouse's work or their life circumstances. Some do not have leadership gifts which match well the missional needs of the congregation. Requests for candidates who seem to be "in the ballpark" of your Ministry Site Profile and are open to call will be forwarded to the Call Committee.

Preparing for the Interview

Advanced Preparation for the Call Committee

- Using your Ministry Site Profile and the list of potential interview questions, determine which questions you will ask the candidates.
- Decide who will ask each question.
- Ask your interim minister or a neighboring pastor to do a mock interview with you.
- Refine your questions and process with the feedback you receive from the interim pastor.

Expectations

- Arrange interview(s) directly with candidates. Try to do all interviews within a period of 10–14 days.
- Set up interviews as early as possible because candidates may be interviewing in other congregations.
- Reimburse all candidates for travel, meals, and lodging costs incurred while traveling to or returning from interviews; this is the congregation's responsibility.
- Inform candidates in writing the decision to recommend for call or release from consideration.

Suggested Format for an Extended Interview

- Afternoon: Greet the candidate (and family) with a member of the Call Committee. Tour the community. Keep in mind these potential stops: schools, medical facilities, recreational areas, shopping centers and other services, job possibilities for spouse, and other considerations.
- Evening: Gather for a fellowship dinner with the candidate (and family) and all members of the Call Committee. After dinner, the Call Committee and candidate meet together for the interview. It is appropriate to invite the spouse to all or part of the interview. Make arrangements for children during the interview.
- Night: Provide lodging in a motel or with members of the Call Committee.
- Morning: Gather for breakfast with the candidate (and family) and the Call Committee. Ask questions that arose after the evening interview. Plan other outings or touring as necessary. Discuss how the process will continue to unfold. Bid the candidate farewell.

Potential Interview Questions

This list of possible questions is not comprehensive but suggestive for the Call Committee. On the other hand, some questions may seem repetitive. Choose what seems best and add others to get at issues you feel important.

Life and Faith

- Briefly, tell us your life story.
- Describe your faith journey and your sense of call to be a pastor.
- Describe your theology. How will it apply to our congregation?
- What personal traits and gifts do you have that make it possible for you to be effective as a pastor?

The Image of Ordained Ministry

- Describe your style of ministry.
- What are the primary responsibilities of the pastor?
- What is the role of the laity in the life of the congregation?
- What is the purpose of a congregation? of the wider church?
- Describe the areas of pastoral ministry you enjoy the most. The least.
- What areas of involvement in your last/current parish give you personal satisfaction?

The Place of Worship in the Church

- What is the place of worship in private life, family life, and the corporate life of the congregation?
- What is the chief function of the pastor in worship? of the laity?
- Describe your practices in leading and shaping liturgy.
- Do you have a preference for worship style?
- Walk through the process of sermon creation from initial preparation through presentation.
- What have been your practices for preparing for Baptism and First Communion?
- How do you receive feedback and constructive evaluation?

The Place of Pastoral Responsibilities

- Tell us about your philosophy and style of pastoral visitation and counseling. Describe your practice.
- How much of the responsibility for visitation should be shared with trained groups of laity? How would you conduct such training?
- What areas of pastoral care are the sole responsibility of the pastor?

Discipleship

- What type of plan do you envision for training children, youth, and adults for discipleship?
- What is your evangelism strategy?

- How should we care for inactive members?
- How can congregations effectively assimilate new members into the life of the congregation?
- What strategies do you have for engaging youth and young adults in the life of the congregation?
- What is your understanding of stewardship?
- What is the pastor's role in lifting up stewardship in the congregation?
- How do you talk about money and mission plans (budgets)?
- How do you model good stewardship in all its aspects?

Christian Education

- How do you view Christian education and its role in the life of the congregation?
- How would you encourage our congregation to enter into adult Christian education?
- What is your attitude toward training, assisting, and supervising the teaching staff of the church?
- Are there qualifications necessary for teaching?
- How do you recruit teachers?

Leadership and Management

- What role do you see yourself fulfilling in relating to committees?
- How do you encourage goal setting by committees?
- What are your administrative strengths? growth areas?
- What kind of accountability structures are most helpful for improving ministry and mission?
- Would you be willing to meet periodically with a Mutual Ministry (Staff Support) Committee?
- How do you determine what you will pursue for continuing education?
- What is it about our congregation that interests and challenges you?

Community and Social Action

- In what ways do you participate in the community?
- How do you view the pastor speaking on social issues?
- What is the place of the pastor in social action?

The Church at Large

- In what ways do you participate in the synod?
- What is your commitment level to the general mission support to the ELCA and other agencies of the church?
- What are your views on ecumenical involvement locally? globally?

Personal Life and the Pastor's Family

- How is your spiritual life nurtured?
- What spiritual disciplines do you practice?
- Tell us about your devotional life.
- How do you care for yourself physically, emotionally, and socially?
- What are your views on involvement of your family in the congregation? in the community? in employment?
- Tell us about your priorities regarding family and personal friends?
- What are your specific hobbies and special interests?
- What books have you read recently that have made an impression on you?

Practical Arrangements

- (Introduce your salary range and benefits proposal.) Do you feel it will meet your needs?
- Are our expectations for living arrangements (parsonage or housing allowance) satisfactory?

Questions That May Be Asked of You as a Committee

- What is the focus of your congregation? Describe your mission.
- What is the role of staff and what is the role of the laity in your congregation?
- How many people are involved in leadership roles? How are lay people involved in worship?
- In your opinion, how are decisions made in your congregation?
- What long and short-term goals has the congregation adopted?
- When was the last time an in-depth self-study was conducted?
- What is the congregation's commitment to the support of and partnership with the synod and the wider church?
- How does the congregation respond to change and how are changes made?
- What part should family members of staff play in the congregation?
- What would you display on a highway billboard regarding your congregation?
- Why did the previous pastor leave?
- Are there skeletons in the closet that I should know about in considering the call here?

The Interim—Things to Do

Congregation Council

- Pray for a fruitful interim period, patience through the call process, and openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit as you discern who God has in mind for you.
- Keep in regular communication with synod staff.
- Keep in mind that the interim ministry is a specialized ministry of the church and that the interim pastor is not available for call. This may feel like a blessing because the interim pastor is doing uncomfortable but necessary work or it may feel like a burden because it is going so well.
- Remember the appropriate role of former pastors in the parish. The interim period may be a challenge on this topic because healthy boundaries will be tested by some.

- After the interim pastor has settled into the congregation (one to two months), appoint a transition team or the Call Committee to begin the work of self-study and compiling the information necessary to complete the Ministry Site Profile.
- While the Ministry Site Profile is being developed, the Congregation Council utilizes the synod's salary standards to formulate a salary range for the position.
- Create a savings plan to cover the cost of moving a new pastor.
- Participate in the Ministry Site Profile review with synod staff.
- Receive the name of the candidate which the Call Committee has discerned is the one whom God is calling to the congregation; negotiate the salary and the special areas of emphasis to be addressed in the coming year with the candidate.
- If the negotiations are successful, schedule a special meeting of the congregation to vote on the candidate.
- If the vote is successful, the President and Secretary sign the Letter of Call and forward the appropriate documents to the synod office.

Congregation

- Pray for a fruitful interim period, patience through the call process, and openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit.
- Participate in the self-study as the transition team or Call Committee requests.
- Participate in the Ministry Site Profile review with synod staff.
- At the request of the Call Committee, submit to them names of potential candidates.
- Attend the special congregational meeting to vote on the recommended candidate.

Interim Pastor

- Pray always.
- Lead the congregation through the interim transition dynamics.
- Communicate with synod staff, especially submitting the regular reports.
- Regularly remind the congregation that interims are not available for the regular call.
- Refrain from influencing the interview process.
- Participate in interim ministry gatherings.

Transition Team or Call Committee

- Pray for wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit through your work.
- Work closely with the interim pastor on the interim tasks, especially as they relate to the developing the Ministry Site Profile.
- Seek to engage a wide cross section of the congregation and community for the purpose of creating an accurate picture of the congregation.
- Inform the congregation president and your synod staff contact when the Ministry Site Profile is complete for review.
- Participate in the Ministry Site Profile review meeting with synod staff, the Call Committee, the Congregation Council and other interested members.

Call Committee

- Pray for wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit through your work.
- Participate in the Ministry Site Profile review meeting with synod staff, the transition team, the Congregation Council and other interested members.
- Participate in the Call Committee orientation with synod staff.
- Commit to the Call Committee Covenant.
- Utilize the spiritual resources provided in this document to help you to remember that you are not hiring an employee, but calling a pastor.
- When in doubt call, your synod staff contact person.
- Recommend a candidate to the Congregation Council.
- Explain to the congregation why you sense that this is the one that God has in mind for you at the congregational meeting to vote on the candidate.

Meetings

- The synod staff contact person meets with the transition team, Call Committee, Congregation Council, and other interested members to review the Ministry Site Profile and offer suggestions for improving the document.
- At the same meeting the Call Committee stays longer to receive their orientation to preparing for interviewing potential candidates.
- Congregation Council meeting or congregational meeting to adopt the Ministry Site Profile.
- Congregational meeting to vote on the recommended candidate.

Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 65

Call Process Booklet - Yumpu

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Moving from Reflection to Engagement](#)

Four Words to Guide Your Work

Confidentiality

Rostered Leader Profiles are for Call Committee only. Do not share them with your Congregation Council or anyone else. The continued healthy ministry of the pastor in their current call depends upon this. You may make copies of this profile for each of the members of your committee.

Hospitality

At every step, be welcoming to the candidate. Call them in the next day or two to let them know that you have received their Rostered Leader Profile and that you will be organizing interviews in the near future. When they arrive, think about all that things you would like to have done for you. You know how to do this; enjoy doing this well.

Communication

Keep the candidate and the congregation informed about how the process is moving along. You do not need to share details; just let them know that things are progressing.

Discernment

The call process is about discerning the will of God. Pray, pray, pray. Enter into thoughtful conversation among your Call Committee. Use your Ministry Site Profile to evaluate the candidate's gifts compared to your congregation's needs. Pray some more. And don't forget that your synod staff is available. Feel free to contact your synod staff at the synod office, telephone, or by email. You remain in the prayers of your synod staff through this important time.

Resource provided by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Background Screening Recommendations

"Investigations of a person's past as well as an assessment of his or her suitability and potential fitness for public church leadership are tasks of the ELCA Candidacy Committees. Background checks are a component of this process, as the church does everything possible to screen out people who might use their position as a pastor or lay rostered leader in damaging or illegal ways."¹

This piece from the ELCA Candidacy Manual states clearly the need for background screening in order to protect Christ's church. This is not only applicable to candidates preparing for leadership, but for present rostered leaders as well. The Upstate New York Synod recommends that a congregation in a call process run a background screening for a candidate before issuing a call. Candidates should be aware that this is part of our standard call process. Call Committees are given the responsibility to check personal references. The Congregation's Council is responsible for background screening candidates recommended to them by the call committee. Criminal Records and Motor Vehicle screening should be done through a reputable agency. There are many possible components to a background screening. The Upstate New York Synod recommends the following:

National Criminal Records Check

County Criminal Records Check (for all counties where the individual has resided.)

Motor Vehicle Report

In order for this to happen in a timely manner, The Congregation Council will need to:

1. Select a screening company
2. Set up an account with them.
3. Determine what kinds of checks they wish to have completed
4. Who will actually receive the report.

Once the account is set up, the agencies will set up an on-line form which the candidate completes to start the screening process. The charges for all this and the detail of the work vary from company to company. The ELCA has set up for discounted rates with two companies:

1. Oxford Document Management Company – Go to www.oxforddoc.com
You will see a box called "New Client Registration". Click on it and the screens will walk you through setting up and account. This agency is the one we are currently using for Candidacy. They have a long history in working with various denominations for screening. If you have any questions their telephone number is 1-800-801-9114.
2. Choice Point's VolunteerSelect Plus Program – Go to: www.volunteersselectplus.com
Click on the "Sign Up Now" button in menu box. Complete the application and make sure to include the correct promotional code that waives set up fee and applies 15% discount. This promotional code is ELCA2. You will receive confirmation and account number and password in 1-3 business days. Then you can start processing reports. This agency is an established company that is particularly good for lay volunteers.

Other companies that have been explored by pastors in the synod are:

Groups Volunteer Central - \$99/Year for membership - \$17.00/per Screening includes - US criminal checks, Sexual Offender Data Base, DMV Screening is performed through Kroll Background America. Go to www.churchvolunteercentral.com to begin the process.

Note: This does not include county criminal history.

[background screening recommendations - Upstate New York State](#)

<http://www.upstatenysynod.org/phocadownload/backgroundscreeningrecommendations.pdf>

[Images for background screening recommendations - Upstate New York State Synod of the ELCA](#)

Resources

[Background checks - Synod Resource Center](#)

http://synodresourcecenter.org/admin/personnel/background_checks/

[Images for Background checks - Synod Resource Center](#)

[Legal - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Legal>

[Images for Legal - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

The Call Process – Congregation Council Responsibilities

Selecting the Call Committee

Typically, the Call Committee is appointed by the Congregation Council. The Call Committee is usually comprised of five to seven members that reflect the demographic makeup of the congregation. Not more than one member of the Call Committee should be a member of the Congregation Council (not the president). Be sure to check the constitution and bylaws of the congregation for any local variations.

The Call Committee should represent a cross-section of the congregation and reflect the present demographics of the community served by the congregation. It is suggested that at least one member of the Call Committee should be a person who has joined the congregation in the past four years. Ideally, there should be one teenage member on the Call Committee. Before selecting the Call Committee members, the Congregation Council should develop and publish the agreed Criteria for Call Committee Selection. Each Call Committee member should meet all the criteria.

Suggested criteria

1. Recognized as someone who lives the godly life revealed in Jesus Christ.
2. Committed to the mission of Christ as evidenced by regular worship and involvement in the ministries of the congregation and/or the larger church.
3. Participated fully in Phase Two of Intentional Transition Ministry and is committed to the direction set forth in Phase Two. This will ensure congruence with the information in the Ministry Site Profile during the call process and after the next pastor is called.
4. Demonstrated ability to work as part of a committee or team.
5. Can maintain complete confidentiality – sharing the names or data about candidates with anyone, even family members, can seriously compromise the entire process.
6. Able to make a sound judgment.
7. Has not been the source of conflict.
8. Can commit a significant amount of time and talent to the call process. It is recommended that members of the Call Committee temporarily relinquish their commitments to other ministries during the period when they are serving on the Call Committee.

Don't ask for volunteers. The Congregation Council will prayerfully appoint members to the Call Committee based on these criteria. The Call Committee must include individuals who are open to considering each candidate on his or her own merit and who will honor the expectations of the Synod and the law by avoiding any discrimination on the basis of race, age, gender, marital status, or family profile. The Call Committee should never receive direction from the Congregation Council in a manner that would encourage prejudice for or against any category of persons. If there is any question about this, clarification should be requested from a representative of the Synod.

The Call Committee shall only consider names which have been officially provided by the office of the bishop. Recommendations of possible candidates should be directed to the assistant to the bishop for evaluation as to suitability and availability. No locally recommended person should be approached unless nominated by the office of the bishop. The interim pastor is never a candidate for call as pastor.

The names of the Call Committee members should be shared with the congregation. A Rite of Installation should be used, and the Call Committee should regularly be included in the prayers of the congregation. The Call Committee will report periodically to the Congregation Council and the congregation on their activity and progress without disclosure of any names or information about candidates under consideration.

[PDF] [Pastoral Leadership Transition Process-A Guide for Lay Leaders /Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](http://ministrylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pastoral-Transition-A-Guide-for-Lay-Leaders-Edition-3.2-7-7-2013.pdf)
The Call Process – Congregation Council Responsibilities Page 41
<http://ministrylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pastoral-Transition-A-Guide-for-Lay-Leaders-Edition-3.2-7-7-2013.pdf>
[Images for The Call Process – Congregation Council Responsibilities Selecting the Call Committee](#)

The Call Process – Call Committee Responsibilities

Before Interviewing

Get to really know each other; take time to share background, faith journey, church expectations, and dreams for the congregation.

Select a leader – a person good at leading a process where consensus will be important for a mixture of diverse points of view.

Agree on principles that will guide your work: openness, confidentiality, listening, commitment to the task, lack of prejudice, and support of team decisions.

CRITICAL: Meet with the Congregation Council or Executive Committee to receive direction on mission priorities and complete understanding of the job description and the range decided for the total compensation package. These are the bases for selecting the candidate.

Agree on the process you will use, how to reach decisions, how to conduct the interviews, role of the alternate members.

Schedule and invite candidates for interview. Schedule them in close succession to keep the process flowing.

It can be helpful to send an additional packet of information to each candidate:

- Picture and brief background information of each member of Call Committee;
- Pictorial directory (if available);
- Recent annual report;
- Several recent bulletins and newsletters;
- Community information: local newspaper, information on cultural and recreational opportunities; things to see and do in the region.

Prepare interview questions

- It is critical that the same questions be asked of each candidate.

- Every aspect of the congregation's mission priorities and key aspects of the candidate's life, personal devotion, family priorities, time management, etc., should be covered by questions.
- Write open-ended questions for each area, ones that require the candidate to think then respond with what is important to the candidate. Focus on the past experiences of the candidate as opposed to what might happen in the future.
- The questioner should be prepared with a follow-up question, searching for examples of specific results delivered, not merely glowing words and ideas.
- Each question and follow-up should be assigned to a specific person, someone with an interest or background in the area.
- Questions should be reviewed with the synod staff or interim pastor, asking for suggestions or assistance. If possible, schedule a practice interview.

Practice Hospitality

Remember, you are representing your congregation's future. You are evaluating the candidate, but the candidate is also evaluating you.

Interviewing

First Interview: The Call Committee shall provide all candidates with an opportunity to meet for an interview. It is important to understand that the candidates and the Call Committee are interviewing each other. Upon completion of the first round of interviews, the Call Committee may release any candidate it has determined is not a suitable match or it may retain all candidates until the completion of a ministry site visit and/or a second interview. Candidates may withdraw from the call process at any time.

After an interview has been scheduled, the Call Committee Chairperson sends a letter confirming the details. The congregation is responsible for reimbursing the candidate for any travel costs.

Sample letter

Dear Pastor _____,

I am writing to confirm our telephone agreement concerning your meeting with our Call Committee at _____ Lutheran Church. We will be meeting at the church at time on date. We expect that our conversation will last about two hours. If you have trouble finding us, the best phone number to reach us at is _____. [If the Candidate is located at a distance include confirmation of travel arrangements and lodging if necessary.]

I have enclosed a brief biography of each Call Committee member as well as newsletters, bulletins, an annual report, and other materials for your review. At your earliest convenience, please send us similar sample materials from your experience so we will be better prepared for the interview. If you need additional information from me, please feel free to call me at _____.

At the interview, we will be seeking dates from you to attend a service of worship at which you are the principle leader and preacher. We pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in our process together.

Yours in Christ,

Call Committee Chair

Outline for a First Interview

The following is an outline for a first interview, which should also include a tour of the church facilities.

Open the session with a prayer led by a member of the Call Committee.

Set the tone at the beginning of the interview, conveying enthusiasm about the congregation and possibilities of the candidate, and establishing a two-way dialogue.

Designate one person to take careful notes on the answers to each question. Everyone should take notes, however, to help in later discussions.

Every person should introduce himself/herself, identifying length of membership and areas of service and leadership.

Listen carefully to the candidate's answers to each question and when necessary ask a follow up question to get more specific information (e.g., examples of results).

Be sure to allow ample time for the candidate to ask questions. Allow different people to respond so that one person is not doing all the talking.

Close with prayer, possibly asking the candidate to lead it.

After the candidate leaves, the Call Committee should meet immediately (or very soon thereafter) to reach a consensus about the candidate. It is important to have this session and agree in writing on strengths, weaknesses, and fit, prior to interviewing another candidate.

Possible questions to help the Committee evaluate the climate of the candidate visit and responses to the questions asked:

- Does the candidate understand the mission of the church and our congregation's mission priorities?
- Does the candidate have a record of results that would be positive indicators for our mission priorities?
- Does the candidate have leadership skills to equip us to accomplish our mission?
- What are the candidate's weaknesses?

Ministry Site Visits

The purpose of the Ministry Site Visit is to provide the Call Committee with an opportunity to observe a candidate presiding at worship and to hear his/her preaching during Sunday worship. The ministry site is sometimes the congregation being served by the candidate.

Ministry Site Visits should occur with the knowledge of the candidate after the initial interview.

Under some circumstances a neutral ministry site may be necessary. Typically, this involves situations in which traveling to the location of the candidate's ministry site is both time and cost prohibitive for the Call Committee. There may be other situations which require the use of a neutral site. The Office of the Bishop is responsible for arranging the neutral site.

1. Call Committees should be discreet when visiting a ministry site. For instance, the Call Committee should not visit as a group. Dividing the Call Committee into groups of two is recommended along with worshipping at different services or on different Sundays.
2. Only members of the Call Committee participate in the ministry site visit. The Congregation Council does not visit ministry sites without the permission of the Office of Bishop and the candidate.

Second Interview

If necessary, the Call Committee decides which candidate(s) should be offered a second interview and which should be released. Upon completing this round of interviews, the Call Committee must decide to recommend one candidate to the Congregation Council or to release all candidates and request another group of candidates.

As soon as the decision has been made, the Call Committee chair sends a letter to any candidate no longer under consideration for a call.

Sample letter

Dear Pastor _____,

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to consider a call to our congregation and have been most grateful for the opportunity to meet and worship with you.

We enjoyed learning of your approach to the pastoral ministry and especially appreciate your strengths [provide one or two specific examples, such as "as a preacher and in creating imaginative programming for youths and young adults"].

However, after prayerful consideration, it is the opinion of our committee that at this time your strengths and skills do not meet the needs of our congregation.

[You should mention a specific area of concern, such as "We feel we need to call a pastor who has stronger interest in handling administrative details." or "Given our financial status, we do not feel we can meet the needs you've expressed for yourself and your family." It is probably better to be candid and specific but use care for the sensitivities of the candidate.]

Please accept our sincere thanks for your time and interest and our regret for any disappointment our decision may cause you. We will continue to keep your candidacy in strict confidence. We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide you in your ministry and in our search.

Yours in Christ,

Call Committee Chair

Cc: Synod Office

[\[PDF\] Pastoral Leadership Transition Process-A Guide for Lay Leaders /Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](#)

The Call Process – Call Committee Responsibilities

Page 45

<http://ministrylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pastoral-Transition-A-Guide-for-Lay-Leaders-Edition-3.2-7-7-2013.pdf>

[Images for Pastoral Leadership Transition Process-A Guide for Lay Leaders /Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](#)

[The Call Process – Call Committee Responsibilities](#)

Preparing for a Candidate

When preparing to meet, interview or share information with a pastoral candidate, you may wish to consider the following:

1. Include an enthusiastic cover letter to accompany the packet of materials that you prepare.
2. Provide several editions of the community's newspaper (or its web address), which will help interpret the life of the community where the pastor and family will live and serve. Additionally, employment ads for spousal consideration might give an idea of employment potential. Include the real estate section also (if no parsonage is provided). In general, offer to assist the candidate in locating the information that would be most helpful to them.
3. Provide a few examples of worship bulletins, copies of recent newsletters and the congregation's most recent annual report to give the candidate a feel for the congregation's current ministry.
4. A photo/video walk-through of your church building/parsonage (if applicable).
5. The site for the interview should provide a comfortable setting which helps to put participants at ease. Have a glass of water and a box of tissues available for the candidate.
6. Accommodations for the pastor's stay need not be luxurious, but certainly should speak of the care one would provide for an honored guest. Be sure arrangements for the billing of the room/meals have been made before the candidate's arrival. Occasionally parishioners are willing to open their homes to pastoral candidates.
7. Although we don't want to discourage hospitality, it is important that candidates have a place where they can have some "down time" during their visit, this can sometimes be difficult in the home of a parishioner, so use discretion.
8. During the interview prepare questions other than the "standard" questions that reflect that you have read and "digested" the candidate's mobility papers. Example: If you desire a candidate who will have strengths for youth ministry, you may wish to ask them to describe their ministry to youth, particular programs, emphasis, experiences, other.
9. Ensure that reimbursement for expenses is made promptly.
10. If the candidate's spouse accompanies the pastor but is not involved in the actual interview, there should be some consideration for them that could be made while the interview is underway.

11. A well-thought through tour of the community and surrounding area – especially those points of interest that will illustrate the quality of life available in this location.
12. Especially in a smaller community, an introduction of two or three community leaders, such as a neighboring pastor, school principal, hospital administrator, etc.
13. Invite the Conference Dean to meet briefly with the pastoral candidate – provide them an opportunity to speak briefly and confidentially.
14. Are there staff members, significant leaders from the congregation with whom it would be helpful for the candidate to meet? This would be done at the time of meeting with the Congregation Council.

Preparing for a Candidate - Upstate New York Synod

<http://www.upstatenysynod.org/phocadownload/preparing-for-a-candidate.pdf>

[Images for Preparing for a Candidate - Upstate New York Synod of the ELCA](#)

Multiple Pastor Situations

The call process takes on a different dimension when there is a pastoral staff of more than one pastor. When one pastor resigns a call the other pastor's relationship and responsibilities in the congregation may change dramatically. While most material in this manual will not specifically change when a new senior pastor or associate pastor is being called, there are a few dimensions of this process that should be highlighted.

There are always exceptions, but generally in a staff situation it is best for an associate or co-pastor to begin to seek another call when the Senior Pastor leaves. This is not always possible. It is also important to note that it is rarely advisable for an associate pastor to seek the senior position.

When an associate pastor is being called

- The senior pastor may, with the support of the Congregation Council or Call Committee, screen potential candidates before a Call Committee interview is initiated.
- A senior pastor does not necessarily serve on the Call Committee, but in either case there must be a plan for the senior's input on potential associates.
- A determination should be made regarding two stipulations recommended for inclusion in the Letter of Call to an associate pastor. (See Chapter 9)
- Call to an associate pastor: It has been the practice of the synod to recommend that two stipulations be included in calls issued for associate pastor positions. They are:
 - a. *"In the event of a vacancy in the position of senior pastor, the pastor here called shall under no circumstances be considered for the position of senior pastor."*
Rationale: There is inevitably some sentiment by those closest to the associate pastor to "elevate" that pastor to the senior pastor position. Just as inevitably, there is sentiment among other members for seeking a new senior pastor. The experience of the church over the years is that there is a high frequency of failed or unsatisfying ministries when such a call is issued. Experience has taught the wisdom of having all parties agree at the outset that such a move is not a possibility; and
 - b. *"This call terminates six months after the arrival of a new senior pastor."*
Rationale: This condition is preferable to the previously used "co-terminus" language, which implies the associate leaves simultaneously with the senior pastor. This recommended language allows for pastoral continuity during the interim/transition period; it gives the associate pastor time to consider the changing nature of the ministry; it leaves open the possibility that a new senior pastor and congregational leadership may wish to continue the associate pastor's ministry. If the latter comes to be the case, the congregation is free to issue a new call to the associate pastor at that time.

When an associate pastor is under consideration for call as senior pastor

- As was stated above, "it is rarely advisable for an associate pastor to seek the senior position." This counsel arises out of the accumulated experience of the church that such pastorates are often less than satisfying.
The reasons vary, of course. A few: (a) It is difficult to enter a new chapter of ministry with shared expectations: often the congregations make such a move for the purpose of continuity, while the pastor is imagining how he/she can make things different when she/he takes the lead. (b) Being well-known, there is likely to be varying opinions over the advisability of "promoting" the associate instead of searching widely for the best fit, resulting in a divided house at the outset. (c) Statistically, the length of stay is significantly shorter than for senior pastors coming in new.
Nevertheless, congregations and pastors continue to express interest in exploring this possibility, which can in some cases turn out very well.
- The overarching concern in this scenario is this: do not shortchange the call process! This means:
 - Attend to the work of saying farewell to the outgoing pastor.
 - Do a thorough job of mission exploration – analysis of congregation and community, seeking clarity over the Ministry Site Profile for the next 5-10 years you believe God is calling you to, and what skills and abilities you will need in a new lead pastor to move into that mission.
 - When you reach that point, then face the question of considering the associate pastor for the call to senior pastor. If the decision is to proceed into such consideration, be aware of several factors/steps:
 - Determine whether you will (a) consider the associate pastor alone and make a decision to call or not call before moving to others, or (b) consider the associate pastor along with several other candidates.
 - Each option has a downside: considering only the associate invites concern from the congregation that no one else was even talked to; considering the associate along with others may result in other potentially strong candidates choosing not to go through the process alongside an incumbent.

Make the interview experience itself as thorough as you would with any other candidates. Don't make any assumptions because of familiarity. Do the same preparation of interview questions, the full interview based on experience and Ministry Site Profile, the same evaluation of interview by the committee afterward.

- If the decision is made to recommend the associate pastor for call as senior pastor, it is strongly advised that there be nearly unanimous support from both the Call Committee and Congregation Council. Lacking this invites disaster. Similarly, it is recommended that the congregational call vote be over 90%. A well-known pastor who has over 10% of the congregation voting against him/her would be foolish to accept a call to a divided church.

When a senior pastor is being called

- The Congregation Council will have an initial meeting with the associate(s) and determine the participation level of the associate in the Call Process and review the pastoral status of the assistant/associate. The Congregation Council shall note:
What, if any, limitations of call are placed on the associate in regard to a senior pastor leaving? (May not be called as a senior, co-terminus provision, call terminates six months after the senior departs, etc.)
What are this pastor's intentions? (The associate may not know, or have a clear idea, and may not be able to share much. But the issue should at least be opened. Confidentiality at this point is essential.)
- If an associate or assistant pastor intends to stay under call to the congregation, or is at least open to that possibility, he/she: will need to be kept informed regarding the call process;
may be asked to advise in the development of Ministry Site Profile (see chapter 5);
may be asked to be a part of some of the call activities;
should not be in on the structured interviews or decision process.
- All candidates should be provided an opportunity in their interview/visitation time to have a private conversation with all program staff including the associate(s).
- After a name is selected by the Call Committee, and before a congregation votes, it is recommended that a day be arranged for a meeting between the candidate and the rest of the staff. This day may be led by a facilitator from outside the congregation.
- While the vote for senior pastor will take place after the staff meeting, it may be the recommendation of the facilitator, synod staff, and/or the senior pastor candidate that the associate should begin to seek another call.

When a co-pastor is being called

In the case of a clergy couple, several considerations:

- A separate call is issued to each, even if one position is being shared.
- Structure the interview so that the Call Committee has some time with each pastor individually, and some time with them together. Ask the same question of each person - don't make assumptions about similarities! Ask about strengths and weaknesses of each, complimentary, etc.
- Note in the Compensation Guidelines the information on benefits

In the case of a co-pastor being called to join an incumbent co-pastor.

- The same advice given above for the calling of a senior pastor applies here as well. Especially important are the conversations between the incumbent and the candidate(s), and the outside facilitator described above.

When a co-pastor is being called as senior pastor

Some congregations have called their pastors to serve as co-pastors. When one of the co-pastors leaves the congregation, the following process may be used to consider the remaining pastor as senior/lead pastor:

1. The Congregation Council (or Ministry Site Profile task force) study and review the vision and mission of the congregation, including a thorough job of the mission exploration—analysis of congregation and community, seeking clarity over the mission that God is calling the congregation to for the next 5-10 years.
2. Make a list of skills and abilities needed in pastoral leadership to move into that mission.
3. Determine whether the council will recommend continuing the co-pastor arrangement or move toward lead/senior pastor and associate roles.
4. Review the job description, ministry skills, and leadership qualities of the remaining co-pastor in light of the congregation's mission and determine if the congregation's needs are a good match to the pastor's ministry skills and abilities.
5. The council would then vote to bring a recommendation for action to the congregation regarding one or more of the following:
 - a. Continue the co-pastor arrangement, reaffirm the remaining pastor as one of the co-pastors, and open the call process for a new co-pastor, or
 - b. Change the pastor model to lead/senior pastor with associate(s),
 - c. Consider calling the remaining co-pastor as lead/senior
 - d. If the decision is made to issue a new call to the co-pastor as lead/senior pastor, then a call process for associate pastor(s) begins.

Call Process Manual - Saint Paul Area Synod

http://www.spas-elca.org/sites/default/files/files/Call%20Process%20Manual_August%202012.pdf Page 28

[Images for Call Process Manual - Saint Paul Area Synod - Multiple Pastor Situations](#)

Candidate Nomination Form

The task of calling a pastor belongs to the congregation. The pastoral call is God’s activity, but God works through the congregation, committees, pastors, and synod staff to call pastors to serve the church.

As members of the Call Committee, we want to invite all members to participate to some degree in the process of calling our next pastor. If, as you visit other congregations or talk with your friends and relatives, you become aware of a pastor whom you think may fit the ministry of our congregation let us know by completing the brief form below. Please do NOT make contact with or inquiries to potential candidates. This nomination may be shared with synod staff. Thank you for participating in this important task.

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Present position of proposed candidate

In what ways might this pastor fit the ministry of our congregation?

Other comments

(Submitted by)

(Phone number)

(Date)

Sample Letter of Invitation for Personal Interview

Following Initial Contact

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Dear Rev. _____,

This is a follow up to our phone conversation on _____.

We wish to invite you to meet personally with the members of our Call Committee in order for us to become better acquainted and to discuss in greater depth the current leadership needs of this congregation. In preparation for our time together, an exchange of information would be helpful. Enclosed for your review is _____. We would like to ask you to share with us at your earliest convenience the following _____. (Sermon tape/video, references, etc.)

We would like to arrange a time when this visit would be convenient for you. Once we have arrived at a suitable time, we will arrange accommodations for you (and your spouse) while you are here.

Please plan to spend (indicate the length of time) with us so that we might more fully explore our mutual vision for ministry.

Expenses which you incur, including your transportation, will be reimbursed by the congregation.

Please retain and submit expense receipts. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. If you have special needs, please make them known and we will try to accommodate them. I can be reached by phone at _____ or by email at _____.

I wish God’s richest blessings on your continued ministry.

Sincerely,

Call Committee Chair

Cc: Synod Office

Call Committee Report of Interview

Your response to this questionnaire will be most helpful to us, particularly as we share experiences and suggestions with other Call Committees and with pastors seeking call.

Pastor Interviewed _____

Date of Interview _____

Your Congregation _____

City _____

1. Have you reimbursed the candidate for travel, food, and housing expenses?

2. List some of the positive qualities you discovered in this person:

3. What significant weaknesses did you become aware of?

4. Was your experience of this person in the interview similar to what you expected from the mobility papers? If no, what differences did you note?

5. Do this person's gifts and ministry strengths match the needs and priorities identified on your congregation's Ministry Site Profile? ____ Yes ____ No (Please comment briefly on your answer.)

6. Suggestions and/or comments for the synod office:

Please send this report to the office of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin or give it directly to your synod staff.

Sample Letter Following Candidate Interview—Decline

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Dear Rev. _____,

Thank you for interviewing with the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church as we seek a new pastor. We hope that our time together was as enriching and insightful for you as it was for us.

While we will not be recommending your name to our church leadership and congregation for call, we want to thank you for your conversation, thoughtful consideration, and openness to the call process.

We trust that God will guide and direct you as you discern what God has in store for you next. May God bless the ministry that you carry out in the name of Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Call Committee Chair

Phone number(s)

Cc: Synod Office

Sample Letter Following Candidate Interview—Recommend to Council

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Dear Rev. _____,

Thank you for interviewing with the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church as we seek a new pastor. We hope that our time together was as enriching and insightful for you as it was for us.

We are delighted to inform you that the Call Committee, with your permission, will be recommending your name to our Congregation Council for call. Following the successful resolution of salary package and ministry goals, the Congregation Council will set a meeting for the congregation to vote to extend you a Letter of Call to be our pastor.

This is an exciting time for the people of _____ Lutheran Church! Please know that you are in our prayers during this time of discernment, and we trust that we are in your prayers as well. If you have any questions or concerns about your recommendation to the congregation or about the process that will unfold, please do not hesitate to call.

May God guide and direct us in the days to come.

Yours in Christ,

Call Committee Chair

Phone number(s)

Cc: Synod Office

Sample Letter Calling the Special Meeting of the Congregation

(Date)

Dear Members of _____ Lutheran Church,

The Congregation Council of _____ Lutheran Church has called a special meeting of the congregation for ____ day, _____, 201_, at _____, to be held in the sanctuary of the church.

The sole item on the agenda for the special meeting of the congregation is to act upon a recommendation from the Congregation Council to extend a letter of call to Pastor _____ to be the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

In addition to the enclosed biographical information for Pastor _____, the Call Committee will share about their work as a committee and provide further material about the recommended pastor. The Letter of Call and compensation details will be shared at the congregational meeting.

Hold our congregation in prayer, so that what we discern in selecting a pastor might be guided by the Holy Spirit. Pray, too, for Pastor _____ as he/she discerns whether or not God is calling him/her to lead us.

Yours in Christ,

President of the Congregation
Encl: Biographical Information
Cc: Synod Office

Sample Congregational Meeting Agenda for the Calling of a Pastor

[The following is an agenda draft for a special meeting of the congregation for the purpose of voting to extend a letter of call to a recommended pastoral candidate. The lines in bold are the agenda headings. The text suggests wording for the congregational president. Revise as needed.]

Have the following arranged prior to the meeting:

- Someone who will lead an opening prayer
- A prepared Call Committee chair who will share information about the recommended candidate
- Someone who will read the Letter of Call and compensation information
- Ballots for distribution
- Ushers who are prepared to hand out and retrieve ballots at the appropriate times
- A small group entrusted with counting the written ballots

Call the Meeting to Order

This duly called special meeting of _____ Lutheran Church shall come to order.

Declaration of a Quorum

According to our constitution and bylaws, ____ active members of _____ Lutheran Church constitute a quorum for a meeting of the congregation. Let the minutes reflect that a quorum is present.

Opening Prayer

I call upon _____ to lead us in an opening prayer.

Stated Purpose of the Special Meeting of the Congregation

The purpose of this specially called congregational meeting is to act upon a recommendation from the Congregation Council to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be our pastor.

This is the sole item on the agenda for this meeting.

At this time, I call upon _____, chair of the Call Committee, to provide information about Pastor _____.

Report of the Call Committee

The Call Committee chair provides a brief overview of the work of the committee, shares biographical and ministry history information, and enthusiastically expresses support for the recommended pastoral candidate. Sometimes the pastoral candidate provides a video greeting that can be shared with the membership at this time.

The Letter of Call and recommended compensation are read aloud by either the Call Committee chair or another designated person from the Call Committee or Congregation Council.

Recommendation of the Congregation Council

Because the Congregation Council recommends that Pastor _____ be extended a Letter of Call to become our pastor, the recommendation comes as the motion on the floor for action.

Is there a second to the motion to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to become the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church?

The motion is seconded. Is there any discussion for or against the motion?

Vote on the Recommended Pastoral Candidate

We are now ready to vote upon the motion to extend Pastor _____ a letter of call. Our governing documents direct that the vote be by written ballot and that a two-thirds majority vote is required in the affirmative for the motion to pass. I ask that the ushers pass out the ballots at this time.

A reminder that only those who are active members of the congregation are to receive ballots.

Please do not cast your vote until instructed to do so.

When I instruct you to cast your vote, know that you may vote in one of three ways: "Yes," if you are in favor of the motion; "No," if you are against the motion; and "Abstain," if you wish to abstain from this vote.

Check to ensure every active voting member of the congregation has a ballot.

Seeing that everyone entitled to vote has a ballot, you may now mark your ballot "Yes," "No," or "Abstain." The motion again is to extend a Letter of call to Pastor _____ to be pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

After you have voted, fold your ballot in half and hold on to it until I ask you to turn it in. Please vote and hold on to your ballot.

Ask if anyone needs more time to vote. When all have voted say the following.

Voting is now closed. Please pass your ballot to the center aisle for the ushers to retrieve.

Hymn Sing

Because it will take a while to count the votes, perhaps a hymn sing can help pass the time.

Remember, the meeting is still "in order."

The vote on the motion to extend Report of the Vote to Extend a Letter of Call
a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be the pastor of

_____ Lutheran Church is as follows:

A total of _____ votes were cast.

_____ voted "Yes"

_____ voted "No"

_____ voted to "Abstain"

_____ % of the votes cast are in favor of the motion, thus, the two-thirds requirement for passage has been met. The motion carries.

OR

_____ % of the votes cast are in favor of the motion, thus, the two-thirds requirement for passage has not been met. The motion fails.

Immediately following adjournment of this meeting, I will be phoning Pastor _____ to let him/her know the results of our action.

Then, the secretary and I sign the letter of call and compensation and attest to the vote of this congregational meeting. This material will be in tomorrow's mail to the bishop, who will ensure that everything is in order, sign the letter of call, and forward it to Pastor

_____. Once Pastor _____ has the Letter of Call in hand, he/she has three weeks to respond.

Thank you

This is an opportunity to thank the Transition Team who assembled the Ministry Site Profile, the Call Committee for their interview and discernment work, the Congregation Council who made the recommendation to the congregation, and all who held the church, leaders, and candidates in prayer. It is appropriate to name all individuals involved and encourage a round of applause for their diligent work on behalf of the congregation.

Adjournment

Given that we have completed the purpose for which this special meeting was called, we are now adjourned.

Closing Prayer

Let us stand and together pray the Lord's Prayer.

Congregation President

- Immediately phone the pastoral candidate and report the results of the vote.
- Sign the Letter of Call and compensation sheet—please follow the instructions exactly.
- Place the call material in tomorrow's mail to the bishop at the synod office.

Report of the Special Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor

Congregation(s)

Location of congregation(s)

Date of Call Meeting

Chair

Secretary

Number of voting members in attendance

Name of pastor under consideration

Title (e.g. Pastor, Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor, other)

Total votes cast

Number of "Yes" votes cast

Percentage of "Yes" votes (66.7% needed to call)

Number of "No" votes cast

Percentage of "No" votes

Number of "Abstaining" votes cast

Percentage of "Abstaining" votes

Sample Letter Following a Successful Vote of the Congregation

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Dear _____,

I wish to confirm, following our telephone conversation of (indicate when), that the members of the congregation, at a specially called congregational meeting on (indicate date), have voted to extend to you a letter of call to become pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

The Letter of Call, along with the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor" has been mailed to our Bishop's office for signature. Once you have received these documents you have thirty days to consider your decision. When you respond, please send a copy of your response letter to our synod office. We will pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit through your deliberation and place our hope in God's hands that you will be led to consider a favorable response to our invitation to become our pastor.

We await your answer with excitement and enthusiasm at the prospects of engaging with you as our spiritual leader in service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the ministry of _____ Lutheran Church.

Sincerely yours,

Congregation Council President

Phone number(s)

Cc: Synod Office

[PDF] [Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 93

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Special Congregation Meeting](#)

See also

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](#)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

Page 61

Part 5 Incoming Pastor

Introduction

The Lord said to Ananias, “Go, for Saul is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So, Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. (Acts 9.15–19)

A New Call and a New Day

The mission and ministry of a congregation never stop, but we do recognize that a pastor has a unique role of spiritual leadership within congregations. It is significant in the life of the church when a new call is extended and a new day of making Christ known in your community begins. Throughout the interim period, your congregation is asked to be intentional about each step moving forward. This is not a hiring process or a head-hunting venture. It is a call process in which the Call Committee, Congregation Council and congregation discern the will of God. So, as you begin a new pastorate, it is important to take time to begin strong. This will mean saying goodbye to your interim pastor, laying the groundwork for your new pastor to move in, celebrating the installation, making sure that your new leader will be well supported in their work, and engaging in the mission, which you identified in the interim, with your new pastor.

Beginning Strong—Step by Step

- The Congregation Council notifies the congregation and synod staff of the candidate’s decision.
- The Congregation Council arranges the starting date, installation date (coordinate with synod staff), and moving arrangements with the candidate.
- The Congregation Council appropriately celebrates the work of the interim pastor.
- The Congregation Council and the Call Committee address the details necessary to welcome new pastor.

Transition into a New Call

This can be an exciting time of thanksgiving for both a congregation and their pastor-elect. At the same time, it can be a difficult time for the pastor being called and his/her family. The congregations of this Synod have been encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of its new pastor who is leaving one ministry and moving to a new ministry that may be very different. At the same time, a pastor who accepts a call must be sensitive to the congregation he or she is entering, and also to the congregation he or she is leaving. Each congregation is experiencing a transition, which includes both joy and grief. There are six basic areas for consideration when a pastor has accepted a call. They are listed here, not necessarily in the order of their importance, but in the general order in which they occur.

A. STARTING TIME

The time frame from acceptance of call to arrival may vary and should be agreed upon by both the pastor and congregation. The chair of the Congregation Council should consult with the newly called pastor to determine when the acceptance can be announced publicly. The acceptance of the call, the date it can be made public, and the starting date should be conveyed promptly to the bishop’s office.

B. THE TRANSITION

During this new ministry transition it is important for a congregation and its new pastor to share their expectations openly and negotiate priorities. A transition team can be very helpful during this time. It may be appropriate for the Congregation Council to ask the call committee to serve in this capacity, at least for six months, since they are often the ones who know the new pastor the best. In the course of selection, they have already enjoyed a frank and open relationship, and have begun to develop a sense of mutual ministry. If some members of the call committee feel they cannot serve, they could be replaced as needed. A transition team can meet regularly with the pastor and other staff persons to discuss mutual concerns. Together they can seek to develop and strengthen their ministry. Some beginning activities in which the transition team might be involved include the initial move and settling in of the new pastor and his/her family. Arrangements for moving are made between the council and the new pastor. (Note: The congregation is responsible for all moving expenses.)

C. MUTUAL MINISTRY

At the conclusion of the transitional period, a mutual ministry committee should be appointed in accordance with the congregation’s constitution. Most constitutions suggest a six-member committee, three of whom are appointed by the pastor, and three of whom are appointed by the lay president of the congregation.

D. THE INSTALLATION

A date and time for the installation is established among the new pastor, the congregation and the dean of the conference, in consultation with the bishop. The bishop normally presides until the peace and then the newly installed pastor presides; the conference dean normally presides over portions of the liturgy of installation of the newly called pastor and the reception of his/her family as members of the congregation. (The reception of the family may occur at another time if agreed upon by the pastor and his/her family.) The new pastor and members of the congregation arrange the service utilizing the resources available in the *Occasional Services* book. A Eucharist is desired. The new pastor may choose to invite another pastor to preach or the bishop will preach. Conference clergy and the members of the local ministerium should be invited to attend and vest. The color appropriate for the installation is the color of the day. The service of installation is held as soon as possible after the new pastor’s arrival. The installation is normally scheduled for a Sunday afternoon or evening which enables the bishop, conference dean, area rostered persons, and others in the community to attend. The pastor, in consultation with the Congregation Council, may want to designate an installation offering for a special cause. It is good to include a social event at the time of installation.

E. CARING FOR THE NEW PASTOR

Caring for caregivers is a ministry that congregations can provide for their pastors. The transition team should keep the council and congregation aware of the need for adequate time for the pastor's spiritual, physical and emotional self-care. The needs of the pastor's family should be considered during the transition. The transition team should ensure that their new pastor has time for personal study, study in the company of others, participation in programs of continuing education and extended study. The congregation is expected to provide the new pastor the assistance, understanding, and financial resources needed for such study. Continuing education is an important time of renewal and learning for a pastor. Recent seminary graduates are expected to be involved in First Call Theological Education.

F. MINISTRY EVALUATION

Evaluation is a normal process and is often scheduled for six months after the installation and annually thereafter. The leadership for this procedure may lie with the transition team, mutual ministry committee (staff support committee), or a committee established for this purpose. Such a process provides a way to periodically review how the ministry of the pastor and congregation meets shared expectations. Conflicts are reduced, and effective ministry is enhanced when mutual expectations are clearly discussed. A list of resources for mutual ministry committees and a sample six-month ministry review are available.

G. PASTOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS/HER FORMER CONGREGATION

A pastor's leaving can be a very emotional time. Once the pastoral relationship with the congregation has ended by resignation or retirement, the former pastor should not return to do official pastoral acts such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc. The former pastor may return after a period of time at the newly called pastor's invitation to preach for an anniversary or other special occasion. A pastor should never maintain friendships with members of a former congregation in ways that might undermine the developing relationship between the new pastor and congregation. A former pastor should remove him/herself as completely as possible from the life and ministry of his/her former congregation.

[Transition into a New Call | Upper Susquehanna Synod](http://www.uss-elca.org/for-rostered-leaders/resources/transition-into-a-new-call)

<http://www.uss-elca.org/for-rostered-leaders/resources/transition-into-a-new-call>

[Images for Transition into a New Call | Upper Susquehanna Synod](#)

Guidelines for the Installation of a New Pastor or Other Rostered Leader

The installation of a new pastor or other rostered lay leader is a time of great celebration for a congregation. Installations are performed on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by the authorization of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin.

Please call the synod office as soon as possible to discuss the date and time for the service of installation. It is important to plan well for this important event.

These are guidelines for the service of installation.

- When the letter of call has been accepted, schedule the installation service with the synod office in coordination with your new leader.
- A special worship service at a time other than Sunday morning should be considered so that other clergy and congregations may attend. (See the next section.)
- The service follows the order for Holy Communion, with the order for installation from the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly*, page 224. Please print this service order in your worship bulletin as an insert.
- Normally, the colors and lessons of the day will be followed.
- The pastor and congregation pick the hymns for the service.
- In the event of a call to a "solo" or "senior" position, the synod staff typically preaches and presides from the beginning of the service through the installation rite. Following the installation rite, the newly installed pastor presides through the rest of the service. At the beginning of the service, the congregational president welcomes and introduces the synod staff member, and gives other announcements related to the day. Please have typed prayers (including local prayer concerns) ready for the bishop or synod staff to incorporate into the rite for installation.
- In the event of a call to an associate position, the senior pastor welcomes and introduces the synod staff person at the beginning of the service and gives other announcements related to the day, presides through the second lesson, after which the bishop or synod staff preaches and presides through the installation rite. At this point the newly installed pastor presides through the rest of the service. The senior pastor leads the prayers during the installation rite.
- If the installation is held during a regularly scheduled Sunday service:
 - The installation service will be done at each congregation when the parish has several congregations yoked together;
 - The installation will be done at each worship service when a congregation has several services.
- The lectionary texts for the day are assumed to be the texts used in the worship. If different texts are chosen, please advise the synod office.
- For the installation rite, three congregation members may be asked to take part and read the words prescribed for the font, pulpit, and altar. These could be members of the Call Committee, officers of the congregation, or members representing the diversity of the congregation. It is a thoughtful gesture, but not required, to involve members of the Call Committee as service participants.
- Because the worship service may last longer than usual, in the interests of time please consider:
 - including only the required rubrics in the worship service, and skipping some of the optional "may" rubrics;
 - singing fewer verses of a hymn;
 - scheduling special music during the offering or distribution of the elements, rather than at a time in the service when nothing else is happening;
- A special offering is given at all installations in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and is designated for the Fund for Leaders. Special arrangements should be made to announce this in advance and to receive the offering at the service of installation. If the installation is held on Sunday morning, this designated offering is in addition to the regular offering of the congregation.
- The synod staff normally distributes bread and blesses children during communion.
- At the beginning of the service, the pastor being installed is seated in a pew with any family members.

- Let the synod staff know what the schedule for the day is. If there is a fellowship meal and their presence is desired let the synod staff know as soon as possible.

Your synod staff looks forward to being a part of this ministry milestone in the life of the congregation.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 110

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Guidelines for the Installation of a New Pastor or Other Rostered Leader](#)

Making the Installation a Community Celebration

The apostle Paul reminds us that none of us lives to ourselves (Romans 14:7) and that through baptism every Christian is made part of the whole body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). God's people are not islands unto themselves, but partners and co-workers—with each other, with neighboring congregations, with the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with all other Christian denominations in our nation and across the globe!

An important part of that partnership is the collegial support given by pastors to each other. This strengthens pastors in their own personal faith and develops networks among pastors that enhance their ministries as well. A pastor is called both to your congregation and to the whole church.

To foster this kind of collegial support consider holding the installation service for your new pastor at a time when pastors of neighboring congregations can be present as well. By doing so, your new pastor will begin to develop supportive relationships with many future colleagues at the very beginning of a new ministry. Your pastor will benefit, and so ultimately will you. To do this, you might consider planning the installation service at a time other than Sunday morning, when most pastors are occupied at their own congregations.

At such an installation service, neighboring clergy of all denominations are customarily extended a personal invitation by the congregation to vest and join in the procession at the beginning of the service. (It is helpful to indicate this in your invitation, as well as noting the liturgical color of the day. Feel free to request an RSVP to aid you in your planning.) For many people, this procession is a highlight of the whole service, a colorful beginning to a festive celebration and a visible reminder of our unity in Christ.

You may also wish to invite the lay leaders and members of neighboring congregations to attend. To aid you with the invitations, a sample invitation is included in the resource section of this chapter and address labels for ELCA pastors in your conference are available from the synod office.

If you are not able to schedule the installation service at a time when pastors and members of other congregations can be present, you may wish to consider these alternatives:

- Request neighboring pastors to include your congregation and new pastor in their congregational prayers that morning.
- Invite neighboring pastors to attend a meal if one is held after the Sunday morning installation service.
- Host a meal for neighboring pastors at another time during the installation weekend.

A Sample Guest List

- ELCA pastors in your conference, both active and retired
- Ecumenical pastors in your community and neighboring communities
- Lay leaders and members of neighboring congregations

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 112

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Making the Installation a Community Celebration](#)

Sample Installation Invitation to Clergy and Congregations

You are invited to the installation of the Rev. _____ as Pastor/Senior Pastor/Associate Pastor/Chaplain of _____ (congregation or ministry)

at _____ (time) on _____ (day and date).

A reception (or meal) will follow the service.

Clergy are invited to vest and process.

The liturgical color of the day is blue/white/green/purple/red.

Please RSVP

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 121

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Sample Installation Invitation to Clergy and Congregations](#)

Beginning Strong—Things to Do

Congregation Council

- Pray for a joyful transition and a fruitful future.
- Plan an appropriate farewell for the interim minister.
- Join the interim minister in reflecting on the interim experience.

- Plan an installation celebration.
- Welcome the new rostered leader.
- Commit to helping your new leader hit the ground running.

Congregation

- Pray for a joyful transition and a fruitful future.
- Participate in the installation service.
- Support your new leader.

Interim Pastor

- Pray for the people you have served and the new pastor and say goodbye well.

Call Committee

- Pray for your new pastor.
- Support your new pastor—you were the first to see God's hand at work bringing this person into your congregation.
- Help your new pastor to understand the culture of your congregation and community.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 114

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Beginning Strong—Things to Do](#)

Words of Encouragement

The beginning of a pastorate is an exciting time in the life of the church. Take great joy as you engage the world in mission with your new pastor and with what you have learned about yourself as a congregation through the interim period.

Pray

Keep up this spiritual discipline. Continue to look for ways to maintain or deepen the prayer life of your congregation.

Know Joy

God indeed wants the best for all of creation. As you get to know your new pastor, celebrate with Joy the work that you do together for the sake of mission in God's world.

Remain Partners in Ministry with the Synod

Contact with synod staff is fairly intense through the call process. Maintain and foster the growth of a healthy relationship with the wider church. We are better and stronger together than we are apart.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 115

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Words of Encouragement](#)

Suggested Prayers

The church

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace.

Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Spread of the gospel

By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly proclaim this good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.

Pastors and bishops

Ever-living God, strengthen and sustain pastors and bishops [especially Elizabeth and Richard], that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your people. Grant that together they may follow in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Seminaries

We give you thanks, O God, for all of life and for our common calling as your servants, for the work of your church and for the ministries of word, sacrament, and service. We give you thanks for women and men whom you call to be leaders in your church and for teachers who form them for service. Through the witness and mission of our seminaries may the church join courageously in your work of compassion, mercy, justice, and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

General thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we humbly thank you for your goodness to us and to all that you have made. We praise you for your creation, for keeping us and all things in your care, and for all the blessings of life. Above all we bless you for your immeasurable

love in redeeming the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies that with thankful hearts we praise you, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving ourselves to your service and by living in your gifts of holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all worship and praise, now and forever. Amen.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 117

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Suggested Prayers](#)

Implementation with Next Pastor

1. Welcome Next Pastor

There are a number of tasks to address, particularly if the new pastor is moving from a distance. The Call Committee can be helpful to the pastor (and family) as they acclimate to the community. Upon arrival, the pastor should receive items needed to cover the pastoral ministry of the congregation (such as keys, directories, computer access, etc.). It is important to share information regarding upcoming pastoral ministry commitments such as weddings and baptisms. While a formal installation service will be held in the future, a litany of welcome can be used on the first Sunday.

MORE: • Litanies for Pastoral Transitions

2. Arrange and Plan for Installation Service

The newly called pastor contacts the Office of the Bishop to schedule a Service of Installation with the Bishop or an Assistant to the Bishop. A packet of materials is available to plan this service.

MORE: • Installation Service Guidelines

3. Sharing the Work and Vision of the Transition Process with the Next Pastor

Over the first three months, as the pastor is getting to know the congregation members, it is important for the pastor to be introduced to the work the congregation did throughout the transition period. The congregational leadership (or Transition Team) should schedule a series of meetings with the pastor to review the materials developed and the process experienced in Phase Two. The completed Congregational Leadership Evaluations should be discussed. The pastor is encouraged to schedule a meeting with the former interim pastor.

4. Role of Former Interim Pastor

The former Intentional Interim Pastor can be a valuable resource to the new pastor and congregation due to his/her specific knowledge and experience of the vision developed. It is, however, essential that the former Interim Pastor maintain healthy boundaries – not serving in a pastoral role, but as a consultant only at the invitation of the new pastor.

MORE: • Importance of Healthy Boundaries

5. Develop Plan for Continued Implementation of Vision

After a 3 to 5 month entry period, the pastor and congregational leadership are encouraged to review where things are in relationship to the vision the congregation has articulated. What is going well? Where do energies need to be focused? What has changed? Where are there shortfalls? Using these conversations, the pastor and lay leadership can develop a specific, intentional plan to move forward with implementing the vision of the congregation.

6. Constant Transition

While we refer to the transition process ending, congregations are always in transition – reviewing and discerning. Throughout the synod and beyond there are resources for congregations as they continue to envision the future toward which God is calling them.

[\[PDF\] Pastoral Leadership Transition Process-A Guide for Lay Leaders /Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](#)

Implementation with Next Pastor

Page 10

<http://ministrylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pastoral-Transition-A-Guide-for-Lay-Leaders-Edition-3.2-7-7-2013.pdf>

[Images for Pastoral Leadership Transition Process-A Guide for Lay Leaders /Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](#)

[Implementation with Next Pastor](#)

Starting Your New Ministry Together

So, now you have a new pastor. It's time to take a deep breath and appreciate the hard work of the transition team, the call committee, the prayer team, the interim pastor, and the whole congregation which has grown in new ways. And then take another deep breath and face the future as you begin to live into the future to which God has called you.

One of the first things the pastor will want to do is to get to know all of you. Some pastors make it a point to visit all the shut-ins immediately. Others try to make appointments in the first couple of months to meet all members of the congregation. You can help the pastor by having a list of names and addresses or use a member information form and make a note of persons who are shut-ins. If you have Stephen Minister or regular visitation teams, you will want to involve them in the scheduling and sharing of this visitation ministry. The pastor will probably also want to have a Mutual Ministry Committee who can be the eyes and ears in places he/she can't be. A Mutual Ministry Committee provides feedback and can be a sounding board for the pastor as he/she acclimates to the new culture of the congregation.

The pastor will also want to meet with the various leadership groups in the congregation to hear your vision and mission as you have defined it for your particular committee/group/team. You will also want to listen carefully to the new pastor's vision for this congregation because your call to him/her was to lead you in new directions.

The installation of your new pastor will occur soon after the pastor is called. It is not necessary that it be the first Sunday that he/she is there, but it could be. Planning for the service will involve conversation between the worship planning team, synod office, and pastor.

The first months of the new relationship between the pastor and congregation is sometimes called the “honeymoon.” Both are trying to please and impress the other and both are trying to learn more about how the other functions. What everyone learns during this period is that adjustments must be made on both sides of the equation. You find the pastor is not the perfect answer to all your problems and the pastor finds that he/she was not called to the perfect congregation. It’s not that either misrepresented themselves, but both are in a process of discovery and self-discovery. Demanding that the other conform now to meet previous expectations will make working together an arduous process. Enjoying and appreciating the discovery and self-discovery will make the next years in ministry together much healthier and easier.

Continue to put your best foot forward. Continue to care for the pastor and pay special attention to the needs of his/her family who may not have been as excited to make this move as the pastor was.

Always listen for where God is leading you next and let the Holy Spirit guide you.

Blessings on your new journey together!

[congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod](#)

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf> VI-2

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod - Starting Your New Ministry Together](#)

Resources

[Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions by Roy M. Oswald \(Author\), James Heath \(Author\), Ann Heath \(Author\) - Alban - Building Up Congregations](#)

Beginning Ministry Together is about the transition period between the announcement that one pastor is leaving and the time when another pastor is well settled. The message brought by Roy Oswald and colleagues Jim and Ann Heath is that this is not an impossible time to be survived only with a lot of expert help. Rather, even though the task is complex, committed congregational leaders can handle it—with the help of people who have been on this journey before. Oswald describes how clergy and congregations can better end and begin pastorates. He shows them how to say good-bye and discern their needs for the future—how to use the open space between pastorates for evaluation and preparation for a new day.

<http://www.amazon.com/Beginning-Ministry-Together-Handbook-Transitions/dp/1566992850>

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781566992855/Beginning-Ministry-Together-The-Alban-Handbook-for-Clergy-Transitions>

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/beginning-ministry-together-roy-m-oswald/1007606251>

<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=1566994748>

<http://www.lifeandleadership.com/book-summaries/oswald-beginning-ministry-together.html>

<https://www.amazon.com/Roy-M.-Oswald/e/B001K8KQ1O>

[Images for Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions by Roy M. Oswald \(Author\), James Heath \(Author\), Ann Heath \(Author\) - Alban - Building Up Congregations](#)

Clergy Life Coaching

As a pastor or ministry leader, you walk alongside others, helping them grow in their faith, meet God in their circumstances, seek a faith that is real. Who is walking with you?

Imagine a time set apart to focus on you and your God-given goals.

Clergy Life Coaching is a dynamic partnership that helps you discern God’s will, discover possibilities, sharpen your focus, overcome obstacles, make confident decisions and reach your goals.

Coaching empowers you to discover and live the life you were called to live.

Sometimes you just can’t see the forest for the trees! You are so wrapped up in everyday life that indeed life just passes you by! Coaching enables you to see different alternatives and to take a step back and actually examine your life and all of its component parts.

Clergy Life Coaching is all about helping people get from where they are in their life to where they want to be. If everyone is being honest with themselves, we could all do with improving an area or two of our lives. Everyone knows what to do in life to become more successful, but they don’t do what they know.

As your coach, I can help you order your life around the things you value most and help you more fully experience the “abundant life” God calls you to. A few months of coaching can powerfully change the way you live the rest of your life!

<http://clergylifecoaching.com/>

[Images for Clergy Life Coaching](#)

The Process - Healthy Start for Congregations

Within the first two to four weeks of a new pastorate there is a facilitated one-day retreat with pastor and lay leaders. Usually it is helpful to have the full governing board present, as well as some representatives from the search committee. Often a Saturday is a good day for the retreat. We encourage meeting off-site, even if the retreat location is the parish hall of a neighboring church.

During this retreat, the pastor and lay leaders:

Build and develop a spiritual partnership. All too often this partnership is only about church “business”, not about the faith relationships that are so important in a church setting.

Get better acquainted. It’s easy to settle for only “who are you and what do you do.” This part of the retreat encourages everyone to know one another much more deeply.

Clarify explicit and implicit mutual expectations. Usually there are written expectations that have been produced by lay leaders for the pastor. Sometimes there are also written expectations for the lay leaders themselves. Then there are even more powerful unwritten expectations of both pastor and lay leaders. A large amount of time is spent in the retreat to identify both

levels of expectations. Even if they aren't totally accurate at the beginning, everyone is literally "on the same page" and will modify these expectations at quarterly check-ins.

Set initial goals for the first year. Whether goals are already in place or not, time is spent to clarify the goals for pastor and lay leaders. We encourage adopting modest goals that can be achieved instead of perfect goals that gather dust. Once again, these goals will probably be modified at the quarterly check-ins.

Establish four quarterly check-in dates for monitoring these expectations and goals, and for making the necessary "course corrections." These check-ins can be held on a Sunday afternoon, on a Saturday, or even on a weeknight beginning with supper.

Plan for communication with a denominational representative. The best way to do this is to invite the representative to attend one of the check-ins.

At the end of the first year, plans are made to continue the routine of mutual check-ins, with or without the assistance of a Healthy Start facilitator. Hopefully a culture of mutual dialog about expectations and goals has been developed during the first year and will last for the duration of the pastorate.

Congregations with multiple staff teams engage in a parallel process for the staff team itself. Usually a longer initial retreat produces the best results.

<http://healthystartup.org/process.html>

[Images for Process - Healthy Start for Congregations](#)

Mutual Ministry Committee

[DOC] [Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository](#)

C13.04. *Mutual Ministry Committee(s)* (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president [vice president] and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

<https://www.elca.org/constitution> [2019 Model Constitution for Congregations](#)

<https://download.elca.org> > [ELCA Resource Repository](#) > [Model Constitution](#)

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

[Images for Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository C13.04. Mutual Ministry Committee](#)

If you've never had a Mutual Ministry Committee for your pastor before, now is the time to consider how you might establish one. It may be that three or four members of the Call Committee would be willing to serve in this capacity for the first three to six months of the pastor's tenure. During that time, the pastor will want to be involved in electing the members of this team.

Simply appointing a committee however, does not translate into mutual ministry or pastoral support. The committee's primary task will be to affirm and strengthen the care of the pastor with regard to continuing education, vacation, and family needs. And it will also include honest feedback and discussion with the pastor of issues within the congregation. This committee does this by careful listening and clarifying expectations; sharing and communicating; reviewing and reflections, praying and caring.

The Mutual Ministry Team or Staff Support Team members will be diverse, but they will have these things in common: commitment to keeping confidences, sensitivity to the feelings of others, understanding the Lutheran expression of the Christian faith, the vision of the church and the congregation, and the ability to think clearly and speak candidly.

It should be noted that Mutual Ministry Committees do not take the place of annual evaluations. This is a good time to plan for annual evaluations, not just of pastor and staff, but of the ministry of the congregation, as well. Remember evaluations are not the same as a "report card." Evaluations are ways to improve our ministry together so that we may fulfill God's future for us as the body of Christ. This new beginning is also a good time to look at your congregation's personnel policies and update them in light of recent recommendations for background checks, maternity/paternity leave, etc. Be sure the personnel policy includes your intentions with regard to annual salary reviews and cost of living increases.

The ELCA has resources that are available to help you in this next step of your journey. One resource that will help in pastor-member relationships is *Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work*. The relationship between pastor and people undergirds every aspect of the life and ministry of your congregation. In this book, eight writers offer insights on aspects of this relationship between pastor and people, such as pastors, councils, and committees focused on mutual ministry, parish relations, personnel issues, and finances. The reproducible tools included in the book can be downloaded at www.augsburgfortress.org/CLS.

[congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod](#)

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf> VI-4

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod - Mutual Ministry Committee](#)

Resources

[PDF] [CONGREGATIONAL MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE](#)

1. PURPOSE—Why have another committee?
2. FUNCTION—What would a Mutual Ministry Committee do?
3. MEMBERSHIP—Who would be on the committee?
4. ACCOUNTABILITY—To whom and for what would they report?
5. TIMING—When is it best to begin such a committee?
6. MULTIPLE PARISHES—What about multiple church parishes?
7. MULTIPLE STAFF—What about multiple staff congregations?
8. GETTING STARTED
9. RESOURCES

http://nepasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/mutual_ministry_handbook.pdf

[PDF] Mutual Ministry Committee

Mutual ministry doesn't just happen. Simply appointing a committee won't help much. Committees are made up of people - earthen vessels - who themselves need to be filled for their work. The concept of a Mutual Ministry Committee may be a totally new idea for some people in your congregation. Some members may lack clarity regarding the task of such a committee. Some may see the task of such a committee as merely "hand holding." At times, committees can easily forget to whom it is that they are accountable. It is necessary, therefore, to start by clarifying the purpose of a Mutual Ministry Committee and identifying some of the organizational details which are important. Page 6

http://images.acswebnetworks.com/1/498/mutualministry_elca_2002.pdf

[PDF] Mutual Ministry Committee Guidelines - Northern Illinois Synod

The Mutual Ministry Committee is an important congregational leadership activity that affirms and strengthens the mission of the congregation and the ministry of the various rostered leaders (Pastor, Diaconal Ministers and Associates in Ministry) in the ELCA congregations by:

- Listening and clarifying
- Sharing and communicating
- Reviewing and reflecting

<http://nisynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/mutualministrycommitteeguidelines.pdf>

[PDF] Mutual Ministry Handbook - SD Synod

The model constitution for congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urges the establishment of a Mutual Ministry Committee (Model Constitution, Chapter 13) that is appointed jointly by the pastor and congregational lay president. No specific definition of mutual ministry is given, however, nor is a job description provided for those who might serve on such a committee. This handbook provides suggestions about how a mutual ministry committee might function in a congregation. It is offered as a model that may be adjusted to meet the specific needs of particular congregations. In no way is it intended to be proscriptive. Assistance and/or training for mutual ministry committees is available through the synod office. Page 3

<http://www.sdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Mutual-Ministry-Handbook.pdf>

Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work | Augsburg Fortress

The relationship between the pastor and the people is integral to a congregation's life and ministry. This timely resource offers key insights on tending to various aspects of this relationship, including reflections on the ministry of clergy and laity, the role of a pastor, ministry review, performance evaluation, and much more. Suitable for pastors, congregational leaders and councils, call committees, and anyone involved in church ministry.

This leadership development book contains reproducible tools for use with your council, committees, planning teams, other leadership groups, and the congregation as a whole. These tools are available as a file that can be downloaded and customized. The tools for download are listed below (0806646519sample.rtf can be customized in word processing software). Who might find it helpful?

- Pastors and those serving the pastoral role
- Council presidents and members
- Call committees
- Congregational committees such as mutual ministry, pastor/parish relations, personnel, and human resources
- Synod staff members and others who consult with congregations

What the book is about

Pastor and People is a guidebook of practical information on the relationship between ELCA pastors and congregations. Each chapter explores a different aspect of this relationship.

- The relationship between pastor and people: A clergy perspective
- The relationship between pastor and people: A lay perspective
- The roles of a pastor and expectations of a congregation
- Mutual ministry
- Pastoral ministry support
- Ministry review and performance evaluation
- Personnel issues

This book has been developed in cooperation with the ELCA Division for Ministry and the Division for Congregational Ministries.

Questions & Answers

Is mutual ministry now done by four different committees?

There are mutual ministry, evaluation, support, and personnel functions that need to be carried out in each congregation. A mutual ministry committee has often taken on all four of these functions, but it is a very difficult combination to look at the ministry of both pastor and people, review the pastor's performance, provide the pastor with appropriate support, and set salaries, benefits, and personnel policies.

The book *Pastor and People* encourages you to first think about which groups in the congregation are already handling mutual ministry, evaluation, support, and personnel issues. If any of these areas are being overlooked, there is more than one way to

address this. Some congregations will have a separate committee for each function. Others will combine two or more functions into one committee. The important thing is to make sure the work of mutual ministry, evaluation, support, and personnel is all handled. If one group is responsible for more than one of these areas, the issues should be dealt with separately.

We have been able to bring complaints about the pastor to our mutual ministry committee. What happens now if we have complaints?

In the course of scanning the congregation and community, a mutual ministry committee may discover an area of concern about the pastor or the congregation. The mutual ministry process in *Pastor and People* can build an atmosphere of honesty and trust where concerns can be discussed within the group openly and directly.

A mutual ministry committee, however, is not a place to bring anonymous complaints. If at all possible, discuss a concern about a pastor directly with that person. When it is necessary to involve other people in the conversation, in most congregations that should be the church council.

Is a mutual ministry committee responsible for the same things as a long-range planning committee?

The primary function of mutual ministry is to scan the congregation and community in order to make the ministry of both pastor and people more effective. This doesn't replace a long-range planning committee, which would look at the congregation and community more broadly in terms of future needs such as staffing, finances, and facilities.

The definitions of a mutual ministry committee in *Pastor and People* and *Our Staff* don't seem to be the same. Why is that?

The book *Our Staff*, released in 2002, focuses on lay staff members. The description of mutual ministry committees on pages 56-57 fits with the way these committees have often functioned.

The book *Pastor and People*, released in 2003, focuses not only on mutual ministry committees, but on what needs to be done for an effective relationship between pastors and congregations. It gives congregations the freedom to consider mutual ministry, evaluation, support, and personnel as separate issues that may be carried out by more than one committee.

<http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/6811/Pastor-and-People-Making-Mutual-Ministry-Work>

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/784052.Pastor_and_People

<https://www.selectlearning.org/store/all/making-mutual-ministry-work>

[Images for Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work | Augsburg Fortress](#)

New Pastors Called

Good news! Pastors Sarah and Brahm Semmler Smith have officially signed the Letters of Call to serve as Associate Pastors of Trinity! They were called by the congregation on April 3 after being interviewed and recommended by the Call Committee in May. The Semmler Smiths plan to move to Eau Claire next month and will be installed as pastors of Trinity on Sunday, June 9.



Pastor Sarah's Letter of Acceptance

April 18, 2013

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

With a sense of excitement towards what lies ahead, and gratitude for what has been, I accept the call to serve as associate pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church. I look forward to ministering among you in Christ's name, towards our shared purpose of proclaiming God's grace in word and deed. Please hold us in prayer, as we hold you in ours during this time of transition. We look forward to being with you soon.

Blessed be the journey.

In Christ,

Rev. Sarah Semmler Smith

Pastor Brahm's Letter of Acceptance

April 17, 2013

To the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church,

It is with much joy and anticipation that I send my official letter of acceptance for the position of associate pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church. I look forward to our partnership in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, living in God's grace together, and our work in the mission and ministry of the congregation and the greater Church. Please keep us in your prayers, as you are in ours, as we prepare for this transition. May the God of grace and peace be with you!

In Christ,

Pastor Abraham (Brahm) Semmler Smith

The Call Committee is honored to introduce Pastors Sarah and Brahm Semmler Smith, who have been called to join the pastoral team of Trinity Lutheran Church. The action of the congregation on Wednesday, April 3 gave approval to this recommendation and we anticipate these pastors will accept and join our ministry by the beginning of summer. Pastor Sarah is being called to a full-time position with particular responsibilities in Outreach/Evangelism and Children's Ministries. Pastor Brahm is being called to a half-time position with particular responsibilities with the Youth Leadership Ministry team.

Pastors Sarah and Brahm Semmler Smith received Masters of Divinity degrees from the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago in 2009. They both received Bachelors of Arts in 2004 from St. Olaf College (ELCA), Northfield MN. Sarah's majors were Religion and Religious Studies; Brahm's major was Psychology. She attended New London-Spicer High School in Minnesota, and he attended high school in Whitewater, WI. They were ordained March 13, 2010. Sarah has served Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Stanley, WI, and Brahm has served Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Cornell, WI.

Sarah and Brahm are parents to Meta, 10 months with Anke, the German Shepherd, rounding out their family.

Both Sarah and Brahm have served a year as full-time missionaries with ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission in Thailand. They've worked at ELCA Bible camps (Sarah: Green Lake, Brahm: Lutherdale and together at Rainbow Trail in Colorado). Sarah enjoys cooking, yoga, basketball, volleyball, cross-country skiing and reading. Brahm enjoys basketball, cross-country skiing, Frisbee, movies, and walks with Anke. His favorite music is U2, Sufjan Stevens, Coldplay, Guster, The Beatles, and jazz. Her favorite music is Nora Jones and Broadway show tunes.

Sarah's formative Bible verse is "...For in God we live and move and have our being..." Acts 17:28, and one of Brahm's is "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'" John 20:24-29

Please include in your prayers the Semmler Smith family as they follow God's hand leading them in this important decision.

New Pastors Called - Trinity Lutheran Church

<http://www.trinity-ec.org/call.phtml>