

CALL PROCESS HANDBOOK

*A Partnership Between Congregation and Synod Office
during Transition*

A congregational resource offered by the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin to be of support and partnership with congregations during the time of a spiritual leadership change.



**South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

4/12/16

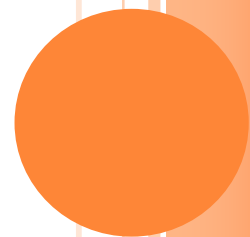


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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

By the grace of God, wisdom, joy and peace to you!

Calling a pastor to your congregation begins by calling the Holy Spirit to inspire, guide, challenge, encourage and even surprise you. We urge you to pray often, fervently and expectantly. And, we promise that the Synod Office will be praying for you.

The pages in this handbook are valuable ones for your Congregation Council and Call Committee to read. Here you will find helpful information to guide you from the time one pastor resigns through the installation of a new pastor.

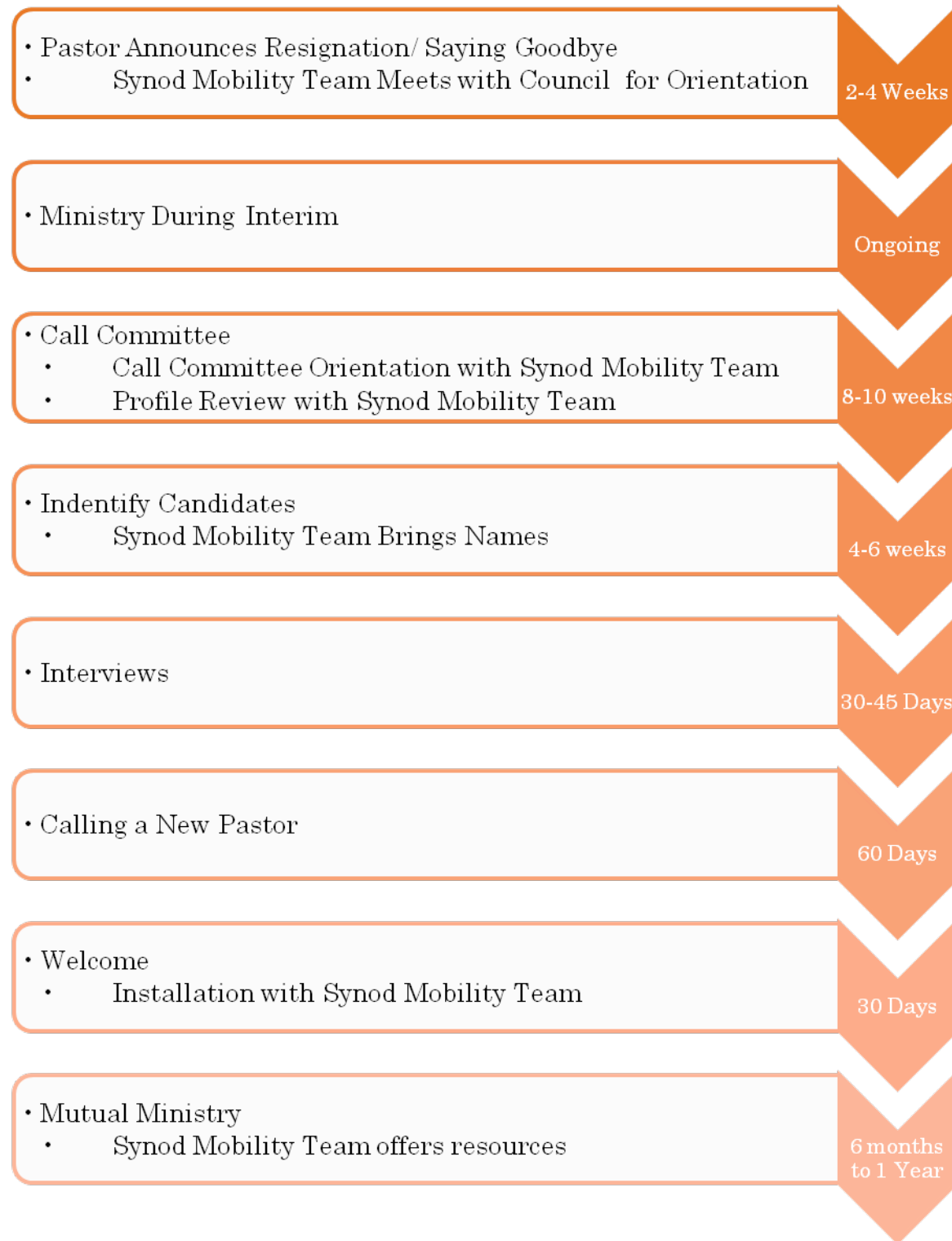
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin is eager for you to experience the call process as a healthy, trusting and faithful partnership between council, call committee, congregation members and synod staff. We will work hard with you and for you in the days ahead. Do not hesitate to ask us for help when you need it. You can merely contact the office at 608-270-0201.

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP

ORIENTATION TO THE CALL PROCESS

AVERAGE CALL PROCESS TIMELINE



DETAILED CHECKLIST

Blue = Congregational Council Responsibilities Orange = Call Committee Responsibilities

- Receive Resignation Letter
- Contact Synod Office
- Congregational Council Orientation with Synod Office
- Exit Interview
- Sign Ethics of Transition and Return Copy to the synod office
- Plan Farewell Celebration
- Contact Portico
- Find Supply Pastor and /or Interim Pastor
- Complete Interim Contract
- Form Call Committee
- Call Committee Orientation with Synod Office
- Create Call Process Budget
- Installation of Call Committee
- Complete Profile and send to Synod Office
 - Council (job description and financial sections)
 - Congregational Surveys
 - Call Committee complete remaining sections
- Synod Office Meets to Review Profile
- Give Suggested Candidate's Names to Synod Office (optional)
- Receive Names from Synod Office
- Contact Candidates
- Prepare Interview Questions
- Mock Interview (optional)
- Do Interviews
- Contact All Candidates with Decisions
- Reimburse for expense vouchers
- Visit Pastor at Current Setting
- Check References
- Do Background Check
- Call Committee Recommendation to Congregational Council
- Congregational Council Votes
- Discuss Financial Package with Candidate
- Congregational Council Calls Congregational Meeting
- Congregational Vote
- Contact Candidate with Results
- Prepare Letter of Call
- Acknowledge Transitional Ministry
- Pay Moving Expenses
- Schedule Installation
- Notify Portico
- Press Release
- Welcome Celebration
- Create Mutual Ministry Structure

UNDERSTANDING CALL

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”

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 offers several opportunities to “look” at a pastoral candidate** in an effort to discern what God wants for the local church and for the whole church in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

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 the sacraments. Through these he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel.

(Article V, The 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, The Augsburg Confession)

THE 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 in 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 church, but it is always an ordination by the whole church as shown in the presence of the Bishop at the ordination service.

THE CHURCH AND CALL

The local church is fully the church, but the local church is not all the church there is. The local church 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. 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 the 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 church in its ministry, and strengthens the whole church as people of God.

SAYING GOODBYE

The timeline on page 6 is simply an estimate for how long the call process may take. Each step is important along the way and congregations are encouraged not to hurry the process of calling a new pastor. When the pastor resigns or retires, the primary concern for many congregations is to find a new pastor quickly. However, the interim period between the leaving of one pastor and the arrival of another can give the congregation necessary and valuable time and space for the grief of saying goodbye to your spiritual leader. It is also a good time for reassessing its mission and possibly reordering its ministry for the future. In some circumstances an intentional long term interim can be a great opportunity for vision and healing. In other circumstances a short interim is appropriate.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A RESIGNATION

When a pastor accepts a new call, the pastor will normally notify the congregational leadership first, then the congregation through a letter to all members. Normally the end date is no less than 15 days and no more than 30 days from the time of announcement, and any accrued vacation is taken at the end of the tenure. It will be important to have this in writing, so there is no confusion during this emotional time of saying goodbye. (For instance, if a pastor announces her leaving in early September and has two weeks of vacation accrued, the pastor may announce "My resignation will be effective October 30, with the last two weeks of October taken as vacation. My last Sunday will be October 16." The congregation pays all salary and benefits through October 30, though all expenses (car allowance, etc.) would end as of October 16. You will want to notify the synod office as soon as this happens so that we can begin to work together on the many steps that will come. An orientation for the Congregational Council and the Synod Office should be scheduled as soon as possible. This transition time before the interim minister can start is usually covered by a supply pastor. The most current supply pastor list is on the synod website at www.scsw-elca.org. This list will also give current mileage reimbursement and worship supply compensation.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

When a pastor discerns it is time for the end of public ministry, the pastor will normally notify the congregation and the bishop. This announcement may happen several months before the actual retirement date. An orientation for the Congregational Council and the Synod Office should be scheduled for close to the time of retirement. This time will allow the congregation and the Synod Office to think intentionally about celebrating the many years of ministry of the pastor and time to think about the next steps in the life of the congregation after the pastor's retirement.

EXIT INTERVIEW

The pastor who is leaving has come to know the congregation from the intimate perspective of the pastoral office. Both the congregation and the synod are well-served by learning what insights the pastor has to share as she or he takes leave. The Exit Interview offers this opportunity. It is also a time for the congregational leadership to become more fully aware of dynamics that might affect the next pastorate, both positively and negatively.

The Exit Interview is an opportunity for looking back and reflecting on the life and ministry to which both pastor and congregation have contributed, celebrating the successes, acknowledging the failures, and bringing closure to things unresolved.

The departing pastor should be invited to participate in an exit interview and the invitation should stress the distinctively positive nature of the interview and its goals. The pastor should be made aware that even though strongly recommended, it is an optional event. He/she should be given the choice of who within the congregation should be included.

The interview should take about an hour. Choose a site that is comfortable and non-threatening, the Congregation Council meeting area for example. Remember this should be a positive experience, both in terms of the reflection that will be undertaken and the insights which will be gained about the future. Someone, perhaps the Council President, should take the role as moderator, to keep the meeting on agenda. Begin with prayer or a devotion. Council members should be ready to comment and participate in the conversation. Be attentive to both the intellectual and emotional content. Honesty and respect should characterize the meeting. This is not a time to “vent”. It is an opportunity to rejoice in the ministry which has been completed and to begin to anticipate the future ministry. After the interview has been completed, the process ends with a closing prayer. Someone should be designated to take careful notes, to be shared with a Call Committee, the Synod Office and perhaps even the pastor(s) being considered for call. If the pastor chooses not to be present, we recommend that the exit evaluation process still be completed without the pastor.

The Exit Interview is an opportunity for looking back and reflecting on the life and ministry to which both pastor and congregation have contributed, celebrating the successes, acknowledging the failures, and bringing closure to things unresolved.

Sample Exit Interview Questions

The following are some “dialogue starter” questions which might be used:

To the Pastor:

- “What were your hopes and dreams for the congregation when you began your ministry here?”
- “What have been some of your joys during your ministry here?”
- “What have been some of your sorrows during your ministry here?”
- “What surprised you about your ministry here?”
- What do you believe to be the strength(s) of our congregation?
- “What are some of your present concerns for the congregation as you bring your ministry to a close?”
- “Are the records of the congregation up to date?” See Exit Checklist.

To the Members:

- “What gifts/strengths has Pastor _____ given to this congregation during his/her ministry among you?”
- In what areas might Pastor _____ need to work and grow for his/her next call?
- “Are there events or memories which had special meaning that anyone would like to share?”
- “Are there humorous events which would not prove to be too embarrassing that anyone would like to share?”
- “How will Pastor _____ be remembered by the members of _____ Lutheran Church?”

ETHICS OF TRANSITION

How the congregation relates to its former pastors is critical for the health of the congregation and the entire Church. As part of the exit interview, both the congregational leadership and the pastor are encouraged to agree to expectations of the transition. Included are statements that should be signed and a copy given to the pastor, a copy kept for the congregation, and a copy sent to the Synod Office. It is also encouraged that the congregation as a whole be educated in the congregational ethics of this transition time.

Congregational Ethics

Members Relating to Former Pastors

We believe that the Holy Spirit is acting when a clergy person is called to the office of pastor. We also believe that the Holy Spirit is acting when it is time for that pastor to accept another call; including the call into retirement. How the congregation responds to previous pastors is critical for the health of the congregation and the entire Church. Unhealthy expectations from a congregation of a previous pastor will negatively impact the congregation's ability to receive the ministry of the pastor(s) that follow.

Congregational members make and maintain loving and caring relationships with their pastors and their family members. Within the realm of friendship it is appropriate to continue such relationships. Hospitality is always proper. It is not appropriate to engage them in discussions or to seek their advice concerning congregational matters or the current pastor.

The title of "Pastor" is appropriate for the person who has been called to your congregation. While that person serves you it is appropriate to address him/her by "Pastor." Once that person ceases to hold the congregational office of pastor, all the responsibilities of that office are removed from him/her and the title of pastor is no longer appropriate to use for that person. Technically, they are still "Reverend" and are still a clergy person, but not your pastor.

The members should not turn to a former pastor at emotional and ceremonial times with expectations that the person will perform any pastoral acts, i.e. weddings, funerals, baptisms, home communions, etc. What is important at these times is that we know God is with us and blesses us. We are baptized children of God. We each have a relationship with God. The challenge is to indeed trust God and God's presence in our lives. These times are special opportunities to allow the called pastor to minister to you and, thereby, build relationship with you.

Whether it is a pastor who has been called by the congregation or an interim under contract, it is the responsibility of each member to love them, forgive them, and to turn to them for pastoral leadership. The concern of not knowing, or being known, by the "new" pastor is each member's responsibility to address.

Pastoral ministry is grounded in the relationship between the people and the pastor. Unfortunately, in our sinfulness, this relationship occasionally ends in discord. It is appropriate for the people through the congregation council to give to the Bishop a reflection of concerns. It is equally important that the congregation be reflective and honest about its part in the brokenness. It is vital that the congregation seek out the proper care and healing to better ensure healthier choices, relationships, and behaviors in the future. Unrealistic and diverse expectations are at the heart of most congregational conflict, if there are difficulties, your synod staff can assist you with appropriate resources.

When the clergy person leaves in the midst of conflict, it is inappropriate to continue to speak negatively about the former pastor and diminish the possibility of that one moving forward in a new ministry relationship. The challenge is found in Luther's word, "but defend him/ (her), speak well of him/ (her), and put the best construction on everything" (The Small Catechism, 8th Commandment).

As representative of _____ Church ,

I _____, Congregation Council President, agree to these congregational ethics and will do my best to lead by example.

I sign this document on _____ date.

Signature _____

As pastor of _____ Church ,

I _____, agree to these congregational ethics and will do my best to support the congregation in these ethics.

I sign this document on _____ date.

Signature _____

Pastoral Ethics

Clergy Relating to Previously Served Parishes

When a member of the clergy accepts a call to a congregation, a sacred covenant is established between that person as pastor and the people of God in that place. In order that the ministry might be strong and effective, it is important for that relationship to be strengthened and nurtured until God calls that pastor to another ministry setting. When a pastor resigns, that call, that covenant, with all its responsibilities, ends.

How do pastors relate appropriately to members of congregations where they previously served? The following expectations are offered with the hope that they will give guidance as clergy set boundaries and make wise choices which will enable the congregation to build a positive relationship with the new pastor.

Clergy and their family members often establish and invest in long lasting relationships with congregational members. As a new call is accepted, these relationships should continue on a personal basis; not on a professional one. Do not think that you must sever loving relationships. Rather, you must be diligent to exercise responsibility in controlling the boundaries of what topics are open for discussion. These relationships should focus on personal and family issues, not congregational.

It is your responsibility as a former pastor to set clear, consistent boundaries. With former parishioners, refrain from using the title of the office, “pastor,” as a self descriptor. Setting a firm boundary, continue to ask, and remind people to call you by your given name.

Declining invitations by former members to conduct pastoral acts even for their “family” events is a matter of sound clergy expectations. Clergy will increase their spiritual and emotional health by maintaining healthy boundaries and clarifying expectations. When an invitation is offered by a former member, it is important that you do not pass the burden of such a decision back to the pastor who currently holds that call. It is vital that you say a decisive “no” rather than giving an answer such as, “I will, if the current pastor says it’s okay.” This sounds innocent, but it is can be self-serving and diminishes the present pastor’s role and ability to build relationships.

It is your responsibility, as a former pastor, to be supportive of your successor, even when that is difficult to do. If it is not possible for you to be supportive of that pastor’s ministry, it is a matter of healthy expectations that you cut off communication with members of that congregation as it relates to the pastor, or any aspect of congregational life. Even being a “good listener” will become a hindrance to the congregation’s ministry. While the success of their new pastor is not your responsibility, proper boundaries will help ensure that any failings in that ministry will not be attributable to your on-going friendship with any of the members.

Pastoral ministry is grounded in the relationship between the pastor and the people. Unfortunately, in our humanness, this relationship occasionally ends in discord. It is appropriate for the pastor to make known any concerns about the congregation to the Executive Committee in an exit interview and to the bishop. It is equally important that the pastor be self reflective of his/her part in the

brokenness. It is vital that the pastor seeks out the proper care to better ensure healthier choices and relationships in the future.

Once the clergy person has left a congregation, it is inappropriate to speak negatively about the congregation and diminish the possibility of them moving forward. The challenge is found in Luther's words, "but defend (them), speak well of (them), and put the best construction on everything." (The Small Catechism, 8th Commandment).

While the above statements are addressed to pastors, spouses of pastors are encouraged to observe the same expectations and respect the recommendations. Spouses also reflect on the pastoral vocation and, as a result, can support, as easily as they can hinder, the future of a congregation.

As pastor of _____ Church ,

I _____, agree to these pastoral ethics and will do my best to lead by example.

I sign this document on _____ date.

Signature _____

As representative of _____ Church ,

I _____, Congregation Council President, agree to these pastoral ethics and will do my best to support the pastor in these ethics.

I sign this document on _____ date.

Signature _____

Pastoral Ethics

Clergy Retiring to a Community Where Having Served as Pastor

By virtue of ordination you received the title of “Reverend.” By virtue of a call you assumed a position of service within the Church; e.g. chaplain, professor, pastor. When a clergy person, serving a congregation, retires, he/she continues to retain the title given at ordination, “Reverend,” but returns responsibility of the office of pastor to the congregation. It is right and fitting to relinquish the descriptive name, “Pastor,” as well. Now is the time for people to know you for the person you are and not merely the role you served. Therefore, the following observations and suggestions are offered as guidance to clergy who are considering retirement. It is desired that sound decisions be made so that behaviors do not negatively impact the ministry of the people of God, nor diminish the memory, respect, and relationship of the people with one they have called “Pastor.” Refrain from using the title of the office as a self descriptor. Setting a firm boundary, continue to ask, and remind, people to call you by your given name.

Often it is important to move away from the community. Plan to move to a place where you desire to be. Whenever possible, choose a community where you have not served. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, join a congregation where you have not served. This will allow you to have respect and acceptance for who you are as a person, not merely for what you did in your past. If you are seriously considering retiring in a community in which you have served because economic, family or other reasons please consult with the bishop before any firm decisions are made.

Since there is no mandatory retirement age for clergy in the ELCA, honor your decision. Discern what it means now that God has called you into retirement. Retirement does not mean being uninvolved; it means to be involved in ministry as one would encourage lay members to be involved, but, admittedly, with proper respect for boundary issues. Belonging to the same congregation that you served as pastor will not allow you to function actively, sharing your many gifts and insights without creating problems for the congregation which has a covenant with its current called pastor. It is important to allow the called pastor both the freedom and the opportunity to develop a trusting, loving relationship with the members of the congregation through performing pastoral acts and responsibilities.

By being in a community where you had served, you may become the focus of difficulty in that setting. Many people do not handle change well. For some, even a new voice leading worship is too much change. As problems arise, people may turn to you to “save the church.” Do not allow yourself to be tempted into participating in this way. In the long term, it will only negatively impact both you and the church.

It is your responsibility as a congregational member to decline invitations to conduct pastoral acts in any former parish. It is vital that you say a decisive “no” rather than giving an answer such as, “I will, if the current pastor says it’s okay.” This sounds innocent, but it can be self-serving and it diminishes that present pastor’s role and ability to build relationships. To say, “I would like to, but the Bishop says I can’t” makes you into a victim. Life choices have consequences. Retirement is a life choice. You are not a victim. Rather, it is suggested that you respond on the order of, “I would be delighted to attend along with your other friends.” If you are planning to attend an event based

on such an invitation, it is professional courtesy to discuss your attendance with the presiding pastor prior to the event.

While the above statements are addressed to pastors, spouses of pastors are encouraged to observe the same expectations. Spouses also reflect the pastoral vocation therefore can be a blessing or become a hindrance as easily as can a member of the clergy.

It is your responsibility as a former pastor to be supportive of your successor, even when that is difficult. The challenge is found in Luther's words, "but defend (them), speak well of (them), and put the best construction on everything." (The Small Catechism, 8th Commandment). If it is not possible for you to continue to be supportive, it is extremely important that you quietly and graciously remove yourself from that congregation.

It is a matter of health to maintain proper boundaries gracefully, rather than needing to depend on the law. Boundary violations, however, have led some Synods to develop strict guidelines such that clergy retiring, but not moving to a new community, must absent themselves from congregational activities and involvement from the time of retirement to a date not less than one year after the installation of the next called pastor.

These ethical guidelines are for the sake of the Church and the mission of Jesus Christ through it. They are intended to enable wisdom to prevail in difficult and emotional circumstances.

As pastor of _____ Church ,

I _____, agree to these pastoral ethics and will do my best to lead by example.

I sign this document on _____ date.

Signature _____

As representative of _____ Church ,

I _____, Congregation Council President, agree to these pastoral ethics and will do my best to support the pastor in these ethics.

I sign this document on _____ date.

Signature _____

EXIT CHECKLIST

This checklist is provided to assist the leaders of the congregation and especially the secretary of the congregation in determining that the congregational records are in good order and that the leaders know the location of various important documents.

Parish Record Book: Are the following records up to date?

Baptisms Deaths Weddings Communion
 Confirmations Transfers In Transfers Out Others:

Records of Membership: Are there lists of:

Members in good standing Members in college
 Inactive members Members in military service
 Is active membership list realistic? When were these last updated?

Parochial Reports

Annual ELCA parochial records are kept where?
 Congregational Annual Reports are kept where?

Church Council Records: List the locations of:

Current year's minutes Past year's minutes
 Committee Reports Parish goals, long-range plans
 Unfinished Council Business

Congregational Records: List the locations of:

Minutes of congregational meetings Church archives
 Volunteer Screenings/Background Checks

Parish Correspondence:

Where is correspondence kept? Any pending matters?

Financial Concerns: Where are the following located?

Financial Records What is the process for paying bills?
 Bank accounts (who manages them?) Deeds
 Endowments Insurance Policies

Pastoral Care and Ministry:

- Is there a potential member/prospect list? Where?
- Any adult baptism or adult instruction potentials?
- Any families needing infant baptism?
- Confirmation Class list. What is the next step for them? Where is the curriculum?
- Any Weddings Scheduled?
- List of persons in need of ministry.
- Particular problems needing attention
- List of shut-ins?
- Any special events?
- Other?

Ethics of Transition:

- Document Read and Signed by Pastor
- Document Read and Signed by Congregation Representative
- Copy sent to Synod Office

From the Constitution of the South-Central Synod

S14.15 The parochial records of each congregation shall be kept in a separate book which shall remain the congregation's property. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his/her hands in good order by a departing pastor...

FAREWELL EVENT

A congregation will want to arrange with the pastor a time to celebrate and give thanks for the years of ministry together. Often this takes place on the final Sunday. The design of the farewell may take many forms (a dinner, a special program, brunch, expanded coffee hour, etc.) Whatever is planned, those plans should include the pastor's family, friends and ministry colleagues.

Worship Liturgies

With so much emotion present in the congregational system surrounding a pastoral transition, rites speak what words cannot fully express. Three rites are included in this handbook: *Rite for the Close of a Ministry*, OR *Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation*, OR *Order for Godspeed and Farewell for a Pastor*. One of these rites or an alternative ritual may be used that an individual congregation creates. Included on the following pages are rites written for the context of worship, and are offered as a guide. You may also consider looking at resources that are provided in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services books.

With so much emotion present in the congregation system surrounding a leadership transition, rituals speak what words cannot fully express.

Rite for the Close of a Ministry

Congregational Representative: PASTOR'S NAME, on DATE, we called you to be our pastor: to proclaim God's Word, to baptize new members into the Church of Jesus Christ, to announce God's forgiveness to us, and to preside at our celebrations of the Lord's Supper. With the Gospel we have been challenged to live lives of service. With the Gospel you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and our sorrows, you have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community.

Congregation: We release you from NAME OF CHURCH to share God's gifts as an ordained pastor in NAME OF CHURCH AND LOCATION.

Pastor: I give thanks for the life we shared in Christ. I have found our time together rewarding and memories of what we have shared will always remain precious and meaningful. I return to you symbols representing my role and responsibilities as an ordained minister in your midst.

I have baptized people in the name of the Triune God, using water as a symbol of cleansing and rebirth. Here is water which symbolizes God's gift of belonging in Christ (*A vessel of water is given to a lay leader at the font*).

I have tried to proclaim the Word of God faithfully among you. Here is the Bible which expresses this. (*The bible is presented to a lay leader at the pulpit*).

I have celebrated Holy Communion with you. Here is bread and wine, the means by which we are strengthened in our faith and transformed into the Body of Christ. (*Bread and wine are given to a lay leader at the table*).

Here are the keys to my office, the place where I have challenged, counseled, and comforted people. (*The keys are given to a lay leader*).

Congregational Leader: Prayer, both individual and corporate, is the means by which our relationship with God and with one another grows, deepens and strengthens. We will continue to pray for you.

Congregation: Eternal God, we thank you for PASTOR'S NAME and for our life together in this congregation and community. As he/she has been a blessing to us, so now send him/her forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Congregational Leader: We send you forth with a going away blessing.

Congregation: (*Arms raised upward toward pastor to signify the bestowal of a blessing*)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace, now and forever.

Amen.

Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation

The Pastor (P), a Representative of the synod designated by the Bishop (B), and a Representative of the Congregation (R) come forward.

R: Pastor _____, on _____, we called you to be our pastor: to proclaim God's Word, to baptize new members into the Church of Jesus Christ, to announce God's forgiveness to us, and to preside at our celebration of the Lord's Supper. With the gospel you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you (and your family) have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community.

You have served our congregation faithfully _ years. You are now leaving our midst to [become pastor of ____]. As your fellow members of this congregation we wish to honor your ministry among us and bid you farewell and Godspeed in your new endeavor, bringing closure to your ministry at ____.

P: I thank the members of ____ Lutheran Church for the love, the kindness and support shown to me (and my family) during active ministry among you. I ask forgiveness for the ways I have sinned against you. I am grateful for the ways my ministry has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

C: We receive your thankfulness. We offer you our forgiveness and accept that you now leave to resume your ministry [in another congregation]. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask forgiveness for the ways we have sinned against you. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

P: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

B: Do you, members of ____ congregation, release him/her from the duties as pastor?

C: We do, with God's help.

B: Do you offer encouragement for his/her ministry as it unfolds in his/her new [congregation]?

C: We do, with God's help.

B: Do you, Pastor _____, release ____ congregation from turning to you and depending on you?

P: I do, with God's help.

B: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here?

P: I do, with God's help.

B: On behalf of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin I witness to the words spoken here: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. We will hold you in our prayers as you begin your ministry at ____ [or as you retire]. We pledge our support and love to you and wish you God's blessing.

R: Let us pray: God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments. We give you thanks for the countless ways our lives have been woven together in the tapestry of your church. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories, but move us in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

R: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

R: The Lord bless us, defend us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen.

The peace is shared.

Order for Godspeed and Farewell for a Pastor

Congregational Leader: Century after century Christians continue to take certain persons in the communities, set them apart and say, “You are our shepherd. Lead us to Christ likeness.” The community tells the pastor, “We want you to be responsible for saying and acting among us what we believe about God and kingdom and gospel. We need help in keeping our beliefs sharp, accurate and intact. We know there are strong influences that would dilute or destroy our faith. We want you to give us help. Minister with Word and Sacrament through all the stages of our lives, in our work and play, celebrations and sorrows. This is what the church says to individuals it calls its pastors. Today we are not just saying good-bye — this is a time of sending.

On BEGINNING DATE OF CURRENT CALL, Bishop NAME (or Bishop's designee) presided as you were officially installed as Pastor here at CHURCH NAME, (Walk to pulpit)

You were invited into this pulpit. In this spot you have proclaimed the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ hundreds of times throughout these past FILL IN NUMBER of years. This pulpit has not belonged to you; the saving message of Christ is not something one can possess, but only bear witness to. You have been a faithful occupant of this church’s pulpit and messenger of the good news of God’s love in Christ. As you leave this pulpit we thank God for your preaching ministry.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational Leader: (Walk to font) At this font you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Through the cleansing waters of baptism we welcome new members into the family of Christ. The gift of new life in Christ belongs to God. The church is the custodian of this rite of welcome, and you have introduced this congregation to many new brothers and sisters in the faith. You have presided as FILL IN NUMBER of confirmands affirmed their baptismal promises during your years with us. As you leave this font, we thank you for your ministry surrounding baptismal promises.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational Leader: (Walk behind or to the altar) At this altar you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Communion. You have reminded us of the story of Jesus’ beginning of this meal. You have provided instruction to those who would receive it for the first time. The meal is the Lord’s, and this congregation has been provider of this meal to the baptized who seek to be fed with the living presence of Christ. You have presided over this meal so that it could be served in an orderly fashion. As you leave this table, we thank you for presiding at the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational Leader: (Walk to the top chancel step) Standing in front of this congregation you have led services where we thanked God for people who had died. You led us in the midst of grief while we expressed gratitude for God’s gift of life. You proclaimed the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and encouraged the community with the comfort of the gospel. FILL IN NUMBER of services celebrating God’s victory over death took place while you were here. As you leave this sanctuary, we thank you for being with us in our times of loss.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational Leader: (Standing at the top of the chancel steps) It is here that you presided at services where couples were married. You were present to rejoice with those who rejoice. Thank you for sharing those and other great times of joy.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational Leader: (Hold up keys) When you came here in YEAR you received keys to this building. You have had a study here to do your work of reading and preparing, to meet people for small talk and big conversations. You have heard confessions and spoken words of absolution. Your study has been a place of prayer and preparation. As you return your key, we thank you for your prayers, your diligent preparation and your careful listening.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational Leader: It is indeed possible we will see you again, but you will no longer be Pastor of NAME OF CHURCH. We ask you to honor that and help us to honor that boundary. You will continue to be a sister/brother in Christ's family and we will cherish that relationship. Thank you for journeying with us these years.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational Leader: PASTOR'S NAME, you have received a Letter of Call to become Pastor of NAME OF NEW CHURCH in CITY AND STATE and you have said yes to that new calling. WE want to acknowledge that it is not only that church calling you and you saying yes. We are sending you. You have been in our midst for FILL IN NUMBER of years. You have been part of this church family, sharing your gifts for the sake of Christ's mission in our community. We are proud to send you with our blessing.

(to pastor) Please kneel to receive our prayers: Gracious God, you have called us in our baptism to be your servants. You have enabled us to respond to your call as a community of believers. Thank you for the partnership in the gospel we have enjoyed with PASTOR AND FAMILY. Now send them forth to continue their work in another congregation and community. Strengthen them for the mission you have placed before them, and may they go from here knowing our love and our continuing partnership. In Jesus' name, Amen.

(Pastor stands) When we end our worship, you have often said to us, "Go on peace. Serve the Lord." Today we speak it to you.

CONGREGATION: GO IN PEACE. SERVE THE LORD.

PASTOR: Thanks be to God.

PASTOR does the benediction.

PORTICO

As a sponsoring congregation or organization, you will need to notify Portico when a pastor or rostered layperson will no longer serve under call to your church organization. You will need the form named *End of call notification - for pastors or rostered laypersons*. The form can be found at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources.aspx> or by calling Portico at 800.352.2876. You can also use this form to report any post-employment contributions.

The pastor/rostered leader will also have similar paperwork to fill out for a change of call.

MINISTRY DURING THE INTERIM

THE TRANSITION TIME

Although lay and staff leadership can attend to many of the issues presented to a congregation in transition, pastoral presence and support is still needed. The congregation must continue to worship, receive the sacraments and pray together during the transition period. A congregation that relaxes or ignores the worship needs of its members will find it even more difficult to deal with the pastoral vacancy. It is recommended that close contact be maintained with the Synod staff as a source for pastoral support resources.

Intentional Interim Minister

The intentional interim will oversee the maintenance of existing ministries and programs equipping lay leaders for mission and ministry. The Intentional Interim will also support the congregation throughout the transitional time including the grieving process by modeling and teaching effective communication. The Intentional Interim will help the congregation come to terms with its history, discover a new identity, manage leadership shifts, and renew connections with the synod and the ELCA.

Because of the unique nature of Interim Ministry, the Interim Minister is NOT available to be a candidate considered by the Call Committee. Interims are appointed for the specific needs of a congregation during the time of transition and those needs are not necessarily the same as the congregational needs for a permanent/settled pastor. The Interim Minister also has an unfair advantage over the other possible candidates. The other candidates have not had the opportunity to develop relationship as the Interim Minister does, therefore giving the Interim an unfair advantage.

The Interim Minister may relate to the call committee as an outsider perspective or provide help with a mock interview. The Interim Minister does not regularly meet with the Call Committee, nor is s/he a member of the Call Committee. The expectation is that the Interim Minister is not intimately involved with the Call Process. Questions for the Call Process should be directed to the Synod Office.

Supply Pastor

Supply pastors may preside at worship, preach, teach on Sunday morning and/or may provide a minimum of pastoral care for the seriously ill or those in crisis. These pastors work either for specific, one-time duties, or for very limited work defined in a carefully designed contract that outlines the scope of their work and range of authority. Sunday supply and part time pastors may be pastors who are retired, On leave From Call, or lay persons with special training who have been authorized by the Synod to engage in this ministry.

The Congregation Council, in consultation with the Synod Office, identifies persons who could offer transitional ministry. The council will meet with this person (or persons) to determine the purposes, duties, and mutual expectations (including compensation) for this ministry. This is unlike calling a pastor where there is a large pool of candidates. The Synod Office will do their best to match the gifts of the congregations with the transitional ministers available at the time.

In the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Interim Ministers are usually paid what the congregation's previous pastor was receiving for defined compensation. Exceptions are negotiated with consultation of the Synod Office. The interim contract included in this handbook will address some of the other parts of compensation.

The council president, secretary, and pastor(s) sign an Interim Contract and forward a copy to the synod office. This is a contract and not a call and therefore does not need a full congregational vote. A contract is included on the following page.

Sometimes a congregation is in a transitional phase in its life cycle and would benefit from an extended self-study process in order to prepare for a fruitful ministry with its next pastor. There may be issues that need to be resolved or confronted before beginning the call process. There are many synod resources available including the Synod Mediation Team, conflict resolution and strategic planning to name a few. The council and president, in consultation with the synod office, will determine the potential helpfulness of such a study for the congregation in its particular circumstances.

Synod Mediation Team

A group of pastors and lay leaders has been trained to come to congregations in teams to address unresolved issues and or conflict. This resource is available for minimal cost and the full process involves the whole congregation over the course of several months. The end result is the congregation ready to move forward with a new spiritual leader, healthier and more self aware.

Interim Interview Questions

The interim time is a very different time in congregations. Congregations should keep in mind that there are unusual emotional dynamics at work during the interim period. The departure of a pastor creates a difficult situation for almost any congregation. There is a sense of loss that may result in a grief process similar in many respects to what happens to an individual who has suffered a loss. The congregation needs time to adjust to the loss of its pastor and to establish its own identity, separate and apart from the departed pastor. This is part of a process referred to as "Coming to Terms with its History" (Developmental Task #1). The departure of a pastor may result in other staff changes or leadership changes within the Council or Committees. This is normal, although it may seem a bit unsettling (Task #2). Then the congregation must discern the direction in which God is calling it to move. God has a plan for every congregation. The congregation needs to give attention to God's will and develop a Vision for the Future (Task #3). There is an obvious need to work closely with the synod, both in the selection of an interim pastor and in the search for a new pastor (Task #4). And, finally, there is the need to establish a Call Committee and go through the search process (Task #5).

We have been encouraging staff/councils to ask questions appropriate to the interim time and not "general ministry questions" only. Here are a few you might consider based on the Five Developmental Tasks of the Interim Period:

1. How will you help this congregation come to terms with our history?
2. How will you help us think thoughtfully about leadership changes?
3. How will you help us develop a vision for the future?
4. How will you help us connect with the South-Central Synod of WI and the ELCA as a whole?
5. How will you help us commit to new directions in ministry as we look for our next leader?

All general ministry tasks are expected of interims, eg. preaching and worship leadership, visitation, special services, attending meetings, teaching, etc. A few brief questions in these areas may be appropriate to see if this will be a good short term fit for both congregation and rostered leader.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT
For Interim Pastoral Service

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Pastor</i>
<i>Address</i>	<i>Address</i>
We _____ of _____	_____
<i>Name of Congregation</i>	<i>Location</i>

enter into an agreement with the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin to have _____ serve as our Interim Pastor. The Interim Pastor will serve our congregation _____ (hours per week) beginning on _____ (full time is 50 hours per week).

This agreement shall be for six (6) months and thus will terminate on _____.

Requests to extend the agreement are to be made by the president of the congregation to the synod office.

This agreement may be terminated by the Interim Pastor, the congregation or the synod bishop with a two-week notice.

The Interim Pastor will:

- 1) Lead worship and preach
- 2) Administer the Sacraments
- 3) Provide special services (marriages and funerals)
- 4) Teach in the congregation's education program
- 5) Provide pastoral care, especially for sick, homebound, or in crisis
- 6) Be a consultant and resource to church council, committees and programs; call committee
- 7) Be available to serve the whole church through synod or ELCA ministries
- 8) Pray for the congregation and the next spiritual leader.

Note: These responsibilities can be fully assumed only under a full-time ministry.

The church council of the calling congregation may ask the Interim Pastor to give special attention to special areas of need in the congregation's life. Areas of special need and concern are:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

It is the understanding that the Interim Pastor will not be a candidate for Call to the congregation.

The Calling congregation will:

- 1) Uphold and support the ministry of the Interim Pastor with prayer
- 2) Compensate the Interim Pastor as follows:
 - a) Salary _____
 - b) Housing (allowance or parsonage) _____
 - c) Social Security Allowance _____

A+B+C = Total Defined Compensation _____

 - d) Health insurance (as needed by the interim pastor) _____
 - e) Pension _____
 - f) Disability Insurance _____
 - g) Retirement Support _____
 - h) Housing Equity Allowance _____ (if provided in existing compensation package)
 - i) Social Security Allowance _____ (if provided in existing compensation package)
 - j) Compensation for miles driven on behalf of congregation at IRS level or monthly travel allowance.
 - k) One-week paid vacation for every three months of service
 - l) One week of study leave for every six months of service

Notes on compensation:

Compensation should be based on total compensation of the previous pastor, with few exceptions. For example: half-time, twenty-five hours per week, should be compensated at one-half salary and benefits of the previous pastor. The Interim Pastor may request re-allocation of funds by different proportions to the above categories as best meets his or her needs.

The synod will not agree to any compensation package lower than entry level compensation as per synod guidelines.

- 3) Provide an evaluation of the Interim Pastor's service to the synod office. The synod can provide sample formats on which to base this evaluation.

Congregational President

Date

Congregational Secretary

Date

Attested by: Interim Pastor

Date

Accepted by: Bishop
 (Revised 08/14)

Date

DEVELOPING YOUR MINISTRY SITE PROFILE

CALL COMMITTEE

FORMING A CALL COMMITTEE

Calling a pastor to a congregation is an important event. We believe it is our Lord Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who guides the call process. The calling of a pastor represents a valuable partnership between God, the calling congregation and the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. An ideal call process builds on trust, openness, and good communication. When the call process results in a good match between pastor and congregation, the total mission of the church is furthered.

In the call process the Synod Office, 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 church in its ministry, and strengthens the whole church as people of God. The role of the Synod Office is to be in partnership with the congregation and with potential candidates for ministry in your congregation. It is not the intention or purpose of the Synod Office to direct or in any way coerce either party during the call process.

The foremost question for the call committee always is whether this is the person God desires this congregation to have as its pastor. That is why every meeting of the call committee should include prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

Many people report that serving on a call committee turned out to be one of the most meaningful things they ever did as members of the church. It allowed them to experience firsthand how the Holy

Spirit works through committed Christians to help the church be faithful to its calling. It gave them an opportunity to see how the local church is vitally connected to the whole church. And being on the call committee let them participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their church.

The foremost question for the Call Committee always is whether this is the person God desires this congregation to have as its pastor.

The constitution governing your congregation will prescribe appointment or election of a call committee. You may choose, if allowable by the constitution, to ask for nominations from the

congregation. These are just that, nominations, and not guarantees for positions on the call committee.

The composition of the call committee, after prayerful consideration, should intentionally reflect the makeup of the congregation. There should be a diverse representation of gender, age, and ethnic/racial identity on the committee. All segments of the ministry of the congregation should be represented (Worship, Youth, Education, Evangelism, etc.). You will want strong spiritual individuals who are regular worshipers, prayerful, read Scripture regularly for their personal devotion, and those who share of their God given talents and resources. Beyond these considerations, there should also be a balance of long-term and newer members, people from different elements of the congregation, drawing upon a variety of contributing styles and gifts. This is not an appropriate place to invite an inactive member to become more active. This is also not an

appropriate place for the congregation member who has an axe to grind or for a congregation member with an outspoken agenda that may not be in coordination with the mission of the congregation. An effective Call Committee is usually more than five people and fewer than nine.

The call committee may also take a different shape at a congregation with more than one pastor. For this situation, please see the section *Multiple Pastor Situations* on page 41.

It is advisable to have one congregation council member, who is not the president, sit on the Call Committee as a liaison. The council representative should not have a vote on the Call Committee, but this may depend on the constitution of the congregation. The council representative will report back to the Congregation Council on the progress of the Call Committee, but he/she may not violate the confidences of the Call Committee. The council instructs the chairperson of the call committee to contact the Synod Office in order to schedule a call process orientation for the call committee.

Committee Structure

The Call Committee Chairperson can be appointed by the Congregation Council or be elected by the Committee itself. The leaders include a Chair, Recording Secretary, Communicator and Spiritual Guide.

Chair convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, will be the primary contact with candidates, will likely also be the contact person with the Synod Staff, and oversees the Call Process. The Chair is also responsible for written communication between candidates and the committee (letters informing candidates of committee's time line and the interview process to be used, confirming invitations, travel arrangements, thank you notes, and letters informing candidates of decisions reached), sends copies of correspondence to the synod office.

Secretary keeps the minutes of Call Committee meetings. While motions may not necessarily be made, committee assignments need to be recorded for future reference. The Secretary may also be responsible for final preparation of the Ministry Site Profile.

Communicator, helps to build trust with the congregation with regular updates. This may writing the newsletter articles, notes for Sunday bulletins, website updates, bulletin boards, write weekly worship prayers, schedule short announcements from the Call Committee during worship and anything that will keep the congregation informed of committee's progress. The Communicator may also be in charge of posting the job description more broadly than just with the synod (newspapers, professional journals, websites, etc.)

Spiritual Guide helps to coordinate the spiritual life of the call committee. The Call Committee should bathe each meeting with prayer and Bible study. The Spiritual Guide should not always be the doer of these important tasks but an equipper and coordinator.

Please provide the Synod Office with the name, phone, and e-mail contact information for your council president and call committee chair person.

Communication

Communication is very important to the Call Process. While the Call Committee will be well aware of all of the details of the process, the congregation will not. Good communication is the very tool for building trust between the call committee and congregation. Without timely accurate information from the Call Committee, rumors and mistrust can bubble up surprising the Call Committee and compromising their work. Every means ought to be utilized to keep the members of the congregation informed about the Call Committee's work and progress, including but not limited to:

- Newsletter articles explaining the Call Process to the congregation, with follow up articles each time another stage in the process is reached.
- Notes in the Sunday morning bulletins.
- Website updates.
- Temple talks by members of the Call Committee to update the congregation.
- Question and answer forums during education hours.
- Photos and/or contact information easily accessible so congregation members can contact the Call Committee with questions and concerns.

With the exception of sharing confidential information, it is hard to imagine a Call Committee communicating too often or sharing too much information with the congregation. Conversely, it is often the case that a Call Committee communicates too infrequently and unclearly.

A general time line and process for the Call Committee's work should be proposed and announced to the congregation. This may be modified as the Call Process unfolds, but any changes should be communicated to the congregation.

Every means ought to be utilized to keep the members of the congregation informed about the Call Committee's work and progress.

Budget

One of the first tasks of the Call Committee, after prayer, is to establish a Call Committee Budget. This needs to be done with the Congregation Council. Some of the items that need to consider in the budget are:

- Office Expenses (i.e., photocopying, data entry, postage, etc.)
- Hospitality/Meal Expenses for Interviews
- Travel Expenses for Candidate(s)
- Travel Expenses for Committee to Visit Candidate(s) at their current setting.
- Background Check Fees for Candidate(s)
- Miscellaneous Expenses

Although some of these expenses are difficult to accurately determine ahead of time (such as travel expenses for the candidate), every effort should be made to set aside the needed finances for the call process.

Installation of Call Committee

It is important that the ministry of those who have been selected to serve on the Call Committee be recognized in some formal way by the congregation. The Committee members will spend many hours in prayer and meetings, expending significant energy over many months during the course of their service. The installation rite below is an example of how a Call Committee might be recognized by a congregation during worship. If appropriate you may also consider using resources in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Service book for elected officers.

An Installation of the Call Committee

P=Interim Pastor C=Congregation CC=Call Committee members

P: Let us pray. Gracious God, in times of change and transition you provide leaders to guide and direct us. Through them, you lead us over the rough places, and comfort us when we are afraid. We pray today that you will send your Spirit to be with these leaders and each one of us during this time of discernment. We ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

P: Do you, the people of ____(*church*)____ promise to hold this Call Committee in prayer?

C: We do.

P: Will you accept their leadership, support them in their work, and encourage them in their deliberation?

C: We will.

P: (*To the Call Committee*) - You have prayerfully been called to serve this congregation in selecting a pastoral candidate. You have been asked to give generously of your time. You have been entrusted with this responsibility on behalf of the whole congregation. Do you accept this responsibility and trust?

C: We do.

P: Will you faithfully participate in the process, support one another in meetings, and call upon the Holy Spirit for guidance and direction in all you do?

C: We will.

P: Let us pray - Lord, Bless this committee, its work and guide its decisions, that through them we might all be strengthened to serve you. Bless each member of the committee, that he or she might have the compassion, wisdom and energy to fulfill this responsibility. Keep us strong in faith and resolute in proclaiming the gospel to all people. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE CALL COMMITTEE

The time of calling a pastor can be a special time for reflection and prayer in the life of a congregation. This time of transition is an opportunity for the Congregation Council to provide encouragement, trust in God, unity and spiritual growth. Prayer, bible study, and regular devotions keep the leadership spiritually centered as it guides the congregation in grieving its loss, assessing the current congregational strengths and weaknesses, creating a vision for mission and ministry, and calling a new pastor.

Prayer

Prayer is an important activity for the Call Committee and the entire congregation throughout the Call Process. Call Committee members are encouraged to commit themselves to daily pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation. Special prayer at worship and during other meetings of the congregation is encouraged. Begin your time in prayer, end in prayer, break in the middle for prayer. The following prayers are provided as examples for Call Committee and Congregational use. Please do not limit yourself to these prayers however.

Call Committee members are encouraged to commit themselves to daily pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation.

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

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.

Bible Study

The following are just a few Bible verses that may be used for devotions or bible study during the call process.

- Matthew 28: 16-20
- The Call of Matthew: Matthew 9:9-13
- Call of the first Disciples: Luke 5: 1-11
- Romans 12: 1-8 (9-21)
- I Corinthians 3:1-9
- Ephesians 6: 10-18
- Philippians 2: 1-11
- I Timothy
 - 2: Instructions concerning Prayer
 - 3: 1-7 Qualifications of Bishops
 - 3: 8-13 Qualifications of Deacons
 - 4: 6-16 a Good Minister of Jesus Christ

Reflections on God's Call:

Call of Young People:

- Samuel : I Samuel 2:1- 3:18
- Mary: Luke 1: 26-38

Call of Elderly

- Elizabeth and Zechariah : Luke 1
- Abraham and Samuel: Genesis 18: 9:15
- Simeon and Anna: Luke 2: 22-38

Call of the Disciples:

- Follow Me: Matthew 4:18-22, Mk:1-16-20; Luke 5: 1-11

Reflections on Being the Church:

- Read The Book of Acts together. Read one chapter a week begin meetings by reflecting on recent readings and the ministry of your congregation.

MINISTRY SITE PROFILE

Completing the Ministry Site Profile is among the most important steps in the Call Process. Do it prayerfully, thoughtfully and honestly! The Call Committee, Congregational Council, and whole congregation have important roles in this process. The development of the Ministry Site Profile prior to the calling of a new pastor or other rostered person is helpful in at least four ways. First, it provides the Call Committee with basic information and a description of leadership strengths and needs which will guide their work. Second, the profile will assist the Synod Office in recommending candidate(s) to be considered by the Call Committee. Third, it provides a picture of the congregation for the candidates as they consider serving the congregation. Fourth, it gives the congregation voice and opportunity to be involved in the call process. Therefore, allow adequate time to thoroughly complete the Ministry Site Profile. You may consider asking the Congregation Council to review the profile before you send it to the Synod Office. The Synod Office will also come and review the Ministry Site Profile with you after it is completed.

To Access the Ministry Site Profile Form go to the ELCA website at: <http://www.elca.org/call-process>.

Select “Getting Started”. Scroll down to “The Ministry Site Profile form (MSP)” and follow the directions for setting up your account. Make sure more than one Call Committee member has the password to access your account. You may wish to print a copy of your congregations “Trend Report” which can be found under resources.

The Ministry Site Profile has five parts:

- Part I – Who We Are
- Part II – Our Vision For Mission
- Part III – Leadership Needs
- Part IV – Commentary
- Part V – Completion of Profile

Gather information that you need for the Ministry Site Profile in several ways from numerous voices (Call Committee, Council, Congregation, Community) to get consistent accurate information. The Synod Office has several resources, books, activities and examples of items that might be useful in filling out the Ministry Site Profile .

Job Description Prepared By Congregation Council

The Congregation Council is responsible for preparing the job description of the pastor. This is usual informed by the ministry site profile, but may also be included separately in the ministry site profile with greater detail. **If you are calling a solo pastor please continue to page 44 to Preparing the Financial Package, otherwise continue reading for pastoral staff job descriptions.**

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's 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.

It has been the practice of the Synod to recommend that two stipulations be included in Calls issued for Associate Pastor position. They are:

- a) "In the event of a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor, the pastor here called shall not 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 "coterminal" 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 Considered 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. 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 mission 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:
 1. The Associate Pastor needs to discern whether they are called to the role and ministry of Senior Pastor. If so, they must complete the Rostered Leaders profile (RLP) as would any other candidate.
 2. 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.
 3. 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 mission 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 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.

If the Associate Pastor is not recommended by the Call Committee, and council, the Associate Pastor is to continue seeking a Senior position and resign within one year. The rationale here is they have discerned a call to a Senior Pastor position and ought not simply slide back into the role of Associate where feelings of resentment toward the new Senior Pastor may well up.

When a Senior Pastor is Being Called

The 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 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, coterminous provision, Call terminates 6 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 Mission Site Profile;
- 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.

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. Feel free to ask the same question of each person - don't make assumptions about similarities! Ask about strengths and weaknesses of each, complementarity, etc. Note in the Compensation Guidelines the information on benefits for clergy couples.

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).

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:

- The Church council (or mission study 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.
- Make a list of skills and abilities needed in pastoral leadership to move into that mission.
- Determine whether the council will recommend continuing the co-pastor arrangement or move toward lead/senior pastor and associate roles.
- Review the job description, ministry skills, and leadership qualities of the remaining co-pastor in light of the congregation's future mission, and determine if the congregation's mission needs are a good match to the pastor's ministry skills and abilities.
- 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 pastoral model to lead/senior pastor with associate(s),
 - c) Consider calling the remaining co-pastor as lead/senior pastor
 - 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.

Preparing Financial Package By Congregation Council

It is the responsibility of the Church Council to prepare the financial package, not the call committee. The call committee will have no authority to negotiate with the candidates about changes in the compensation. Along with the Defined Compensation (base salary, housing and Social Security supplement), a congregation can also plan to have expenses that would be similar to any employee such as health benefits, pension, and continuing education.

More accurate numbers can be budgeted by using the synod guidelines, which can be found on the synod website at http://www.scsw-elca.org/compensation_guidelines.aspx. There are also very helpful calculators on the Portico website to help with these budgeting issues. Go to <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx> and click on calculators to help with this step.

The financial package helps the Synod Office to know about how many years of experience a congregation would be open to or can afford. The Synod Office will use this as a starting place. If there is a candidate with less experience, but seems to be a good fit the candidate's name might be included for you to interview. This might also be the case for a pastor with slightly more experience, and therefore expense that might be a good fit for the Synod Office has prayerfully thought would be a good match.

Congregational Involvement in Profile

As a Call Committee you may consider involving the congregation in the preparation of the Ministry Site Profile. One of the ways to do this is with round table discussions, survey and anything else you can imagine that will help the congregation feel ownership over the process. Included is a possible congregational survey that can be useful in preparing the ministry site profile. These questions or others the call committee creates can be useful during this time.

As the Call Committee completes the Ministry Site Profile a congregational survey can be a way of checking the accuracy of the congregation's self perception and the Call Committee's perception. A particularly useful section to do this would be with Part II, question #6, "Ministry Site Characteristics"

Congregational Input

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are seeking to identify what God is calling us to do and who might be the best pastor in our future. Would you please help in this task? Our call committee will be filling out a "Ministry Site Profile" which will provide prospective pastor candidates with information about us as your congregation. Please help by answering the following questions.

Thank you. Your Council

1. Pastor-candidates like to learn about the history of congregations at which they will be interviewing. List three important events or developments from the history of your congregation. Please indicate dates when possible.

2. Conflict is inevitable in any organization, including the church. Often it can lead to renewed growth and vigor if it is handled well. Please describe the most significant conflict in your congregation in the last 20 years, and what the congregation has learned from that conflict.

3. To help your congregational leaders and your next pastor plan for future outreach, what trends in the community should be addressed by the congregation in the next five years? *(For example: impact of population shifts, domestic violence, day care, youth services or recreation, homelessness, new construction, inflated housing prices, or decline of housing stock.):*

4. Where is God leading your congregation in the future? During the next 1-3 years, what are the top three mission priorities for the congregation which, if accomplished, hold the most promise for the development of your ministry? *(For example: outreach to increase membership; service to community; building program; adding staff or pastors; restructuring of committees or boards; stewardship or evangelism programs.)*

5. Imagine that you are describing your congregation to a visitor, or to your next pastor. Who are you as a congregation? What things are important to you? What are you and the other people in the congregation excited about?

Optional Activities

There are several optional sections to the Ministry Site Profile. These documents begin the courting process for a congregation and spiritual leader. Complete as many sections as you desire to help the spiritual leader get a complete picture of your congregation.

Completion of Profile

Part V, Question 19 of the Ministry Site Profile as for the Call Process Contact Person. The Synod Office member working most directly with you in this process should be the name included here. It will be one of the following names:

Name	Rev. Mary Froiland	Rev. Steve Kottke
Title	Bishop	Assistant to the Bishop
e-mail	maryf@scsw-elca.org	stevek@scsw-elca.org
Office phone	608-270-0201	608-270-0201

If you have access or technology questions about completing the MSP you can call Rhonda Marten at the synod office at 608-270-0201 or send her a message at rhondam@scsw-elca.org.

Reference's Recommendation

Your reference will be asked to fill out a Ministry Site Characteristic questionnaire similar to the one the Call Committee prepares for the Ministry Site Profile and then offer additional reflections. This reference will need to be received by the Synod Office before your MSP can go live onto the ELCA National Database.

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

IDENTIFY CANDIDATES

WAYS OF FINDING CANDIDATES

Many congregations ask where names come from. There are several possible sources and the Synod Office encourages partnership between the synod, the congregation and pastoral inquires.

Synod Office

Most possibilities surface through the ongoing work of the Synod Office. Synod staff spend a great deal of their time in conversations relating to pastoral mobility. There are on-going communications with pastors serving in this Synod, including assessments of a pastor's openness to considering a new call. In addition, pastors from outside the Synod are routinely in contact with other synods where they might be open to serving. The Synod Office regularly interviews these pastors and talks to other synod offices about vacancies and pastoral mobility.

The primary criterion used by both the Synod Office and by the Call Committee in discerning the pastor to be called is the Ministry Site Profile. The Call Committee's focus will be on the question: "Where is God leading us, and who will have the pastoral gifts we need to move that direction?"

Hopefully, the pastor is to be more than a chaplain to a membership list, and more than a caretaker of the status quo. The pastor is to be part of God's movement of your congregation into the future. As the Synod staff considers specific pastoral candidates, the congregation's mission needs are the primary focus, and the main question is always whether the skills and interests of the pastor will match the needs of the congregation. Of course, other considerations also come into play:

As the Synod staff considers specific pastoral candidates, the congregation's mission needs are the primary focus, and the main question is always whether the skills and interests of the pastor will match the needs of the congregation.

Readiness to move. Neither a bishop nor a Call Committee can tell a pastor to move who is still feeling called to the present place of service. Timing is often a major factor.

Family considerations. You want a pastor to value family life, and sometimes those considerations impact a pastor's openness to considering a call.

Financial considerations. Most congregations and most pastors assume that salary will fall generally within Synod guidelines. The Synod staff will not submit a candidate whose salary needs are above the congregation's reach; however, sometimes a question will be raised early on about a congregation's willingness to go higher, or a candidate's willingness to accept less. But financial negotiations should not be the major factor.

Housing. In our Synod, over three-quarters of congregational pastor positions include housing allowance rather than a provided parsonage. Again, the Synod Office will assist in addressing any housing considerations.

Geographic restrictions. Some pastors, for reasons of family or spouse vocation, may be restricted as to where they can serve. This must be weighed as a consideration, but should never be the primary reason for considering a candidate or extending a call.

Pastoral Inquiry

Occasionally a pastor might express interest in a specific vacancy. In such a case, the Synod Office would consider the pastor, with the primary consideration being the suitability of the match of pastoral gifts and congregational needs.

First Call Candidates

Another option for finding candidates is a pastor who is just graduating from seminary. Many First Call candidates come with a variety of life and often other career experiences. First Call Candidates are looking for congregations who will be open to helping the new pastor learn what his or her pastoral identity is. A first call congregation will have to be a strong healthy congregation, free from extreme conflict. Many first call pastors have high energy and enthusiasm fresh out of school and are full of lots of creative ideas. If you are interested in this option please let your Synod Office member know early in the call process. First Call Candidates are interviewed one at a time, and therefore a congregation is not given a “batch” of names. The Synod Office will give more in depth information if this is a desired option for you.

Ecumenical Full Communion Partners

The ELCA is in full communion partnership with several other denominations. This means that your next pastor does not have to be an ELCA pastor but could be another denomination. Full communion is when two churches develop a relationship based on a common confessing of the Christian faith and a mutual recognition of baptism and sharing of the Lord’s Supper. At printing of this handbook, full communion relationships are established with the Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, Reformed Church in America, The Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church and The Moravian Church. For a current list of full communion partners please go to <http://www.elca.org/en/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Full-Communion>

Congregational Referrals

Sometimes candidates surface through members of the congregation. It should be made clear to the congregation that just because a name is suggested, it does not guarantee that the pastor will be interviewed.

If there are congregational referrals, the Call Committee should share those names with the Synod Office. The Synod Office will look seriously into the possibility - checking with that pastor's bishop, determining his/her openness to call, considering the suitability of the match, etc. Regardless of whether the person is recommended by the Synod Office for an interview, a report will always be given to the Call Committee regarding the candidate(s) lifted up by the congregation. A sample Nomination Form is included on [page 54](#) for your reference. A sample letter is also included if the call committee wishes to refer candidate’s to participate.

No matter what method is used to find candidates, of the ones listed above or any other such as websites, advertising in professional journals and other publications the procedure to find candidates is to clear all the candidates through the Synod Office. This is most importantly because of the national ELCA checks and balances that are in place for the safety of congregations.

CALL COMMITTEE REFERRAL OF CANDIDATE FORM

Is there a leader that you think would be a good match for _____ Church? Please include the information below and the call committee will give the name prayerful consideration.

Pastor's Name:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Telephone number (area code/phone number)

Pastor's Current Congregation and address (if known)

1. How do you see this pastor's gifts, leadership skills, and abilities helpful to furthering our congregation's mission and ministry?

2. What is your relationship with this pastor? (How do you happen to know this pastor?)

3. For what reason might this pastor want to consider our congregation for his/her next call?

4. Other comments:

Call Committee Chair Name: _____

Congregation: _____

SAMPLE INVITATION TO INTERVIEW LETTER

To be printed on church letterhead

Rev. (Name)

Congregation

Address

Dear Pastor (Name),

We are writing on behalf of the people of _____ Lutheran Church, an ELCA congregation located in _____, WI. We are currently in search of a pastor to lead us in mission and ministry. _____, WI is located in south-central Wisconsin. We are a well established church having just celebrated our 100th anniversary of ministry in the community. Our average worship attendance is 140 people. Our staff includes a full time secretary, part time custodian, and part time music minister in addition to several volunteers.

We are seeking a Pastor who can lead our congregation into the future. We want to reach out to the Unchurched in our area as well as maintain the high level of worship and ministry that we have learned to appreciate over the years.

If you or someone you know might be interested in this position, please have your bishop send your “Rostered Leader” form to the bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin 2909 Landmark Pl. Ste #202 Madison, WI 53713 with a note indicating your interest in _____ Lutheran Church. To discover more about _____ Lutheran Church, you can also visit our website at www.???.org.

We thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration as _____ Lutheran Church seeks God’s plan for our congregation.

In Christ’s Service,

Call Committee Chair
_____ Lutheran Church

INTERVIEWING

PLANNING

Determine what information you want from the pastoral candidates, and what information you want to send to them. Some things others have found helpful are

From you to the pastor:

- The Ministry Site Profile
- Copies of the congregation's last several annual reports
- Several newsletters, publicity brochures, etc., describing the congregation
- Information about the community - Chamber of Commerce info, etc.
- Topics/questions to be explored in the interview/visit
- Sample bulletins from recent Sunday services
- Anything else, be creative

From the pastor:

- Annual reports from his/her current congregation;
- Any other resume or mobility information not already shared;
- Original material - sermons, class outlines, continuing education projects, etc; and
- A few bulletins from recent Sunday services

As soon as the call committee receives candidates' materials, the chairperson should contact each candidate to let the candidates know:

- that the committee has her or his materials,
- an idea regarding when the candidate can anticipate further contact
- the committee's request for additional material from the candidate,
- the additional materials which he/she can expect from the committee.

The Call Committee should also make plans for the interview process. You may want to think twice before releasing a candidate before an initial interview (either by phone or in person). Some congregation's best candidates were ones that did not look the best on paper! And the reverse is then also true. Some of the best candidates on paper turn out to be a wrong fit when you meet in person. It is important to be open to the candidate's interests as well, but some elements of the visit format might be:

You may want to think twice before releasing a candidate before an initial interview (either by phone or in person). Some congregation's best candidates were ones that did not look the best on paper!

- Time for the candidate to experience the parish community;
- A walking or driving tour;
- A meal in a local place (restaurant, home, church etc) or some other type of hospitality;
- A look at housing, educational facilities, library, and other places that may be of interest as reflected in your reports and/or the Pastor's personal situation.

It is wise to contact candidates every few weeks throughout the process. Otherwise they may conclude that the call committee isn't interested in them and turn to other possibilities.

When the plan is to interview more than one candidate, an attempt should be made to conduct each interview in the same setting and manner. This helps the Call Committee fairly compare multiple 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. This will assure that all the bases are covered in each instance once the interview process begins. If the Call Committee eats in a restaurant with one candidate, the same pattern should be followed with any subsequent candidates. If you sit in the brown chair to the right of the candidate for one interview you should sit in the brown chair to the right of the candidate for each subsequent interview. The length of time for the interview should be as similar as possible as well.

If a Call Committee member has a conflict and will be unable to attend an interview, the interview should be rescheduled. It is extremely important, in fairness to all candidates and for the effective functioning of the committee, that all Call Committee members be present.

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING

A crucial aspect of interviewing is the art of listening. To be a good listener, several things are important.

INTEREST: The person being interviewed has invested time and effort to be with you. Therefore, he/she is worthy of the committee's respect, interest, and undivided attention.

PATIENCE: The committee gives the person time to formulate thoughtful answers.

LINKING: Building on what the person has said, the interviewer asks questions that pick up on information already shared in the interview. This indicates that you are listening.

ALERTNESS: The committee listens for key words and phrases, making certain that they are understood by all.

CONCENTRATION: The interviewers listen for main ideas, not just facts and figures. They should ask themselves, "What is this person telling us?"

CLARIFY QUESTIONS: Interviewers ask clarifying questions to make certain they really understand what the person is saying. If a response is not clear, the committee should ask for it to be clarified. Doing so does not reflect ignorance but demonstrates that the committee is truly interested and trying to understand what the person is attempting to communicate.

A crucial aspect of interviewing is the art of listening.

DELIBERATION: Committee members guard against coming to a hasty decision about a candidate. Thorough dialogue with other Call Committee members and listening to all candidates is essential before making a final decision.

BODY LANGUAGE: Committee members can learn to set the candidate at ease by their own relaxed body language, which conveys openness, and a welcoming, non-defensive atmosphere.

OUTLINE OF AN INTERVIEW

The Call Committee should designate a committee member to host the candidate. Be certain that this committee member is on hand well before the candidate's anticipated arrival at the interview location. If the interview is to take place in the church building, and if time permits, the host might consider providing a guided tour of the church facilities before the interview. The Call Committee may also decide to host the candidate at a local restaurant before the interview.

Following brief, informal introductions, a member of the Call Committee may conduct an opening devotional. Or, prior to his/her arrival, some committees invite the candidate to lead devotions or a brief Bible study.

Following the devotional, each member of the Call Committee may again introduce him or herself to the candidate, identifying his or her vocation and role played in the congregation.

The committee member chosen to direct the interview should then outline for the candidate the anticipated procedure for the interview, indicating the time allotted for the interview, the "question and answer" format, and an invitation to the candidate to ask questions of the Call Committee.

Before the committee's pre-selected questions are posed, it is appropriate for the Call Committee chairperson to ask the candidate to tell the committee something about himself or herself. The invitation, "Tell us something about yourself," is purposefully general and open-ended. A time limit of from five to seven minutes is suggested for this opening self-introduction by the candidate.

The formal questioning, with prepared questions, now begins, remembering that it is very important that the same questions are asked of each candidate for later comparison.

Questions may be assigned to various members of the Call Committee, thereby assuring that all present actively participate.

If the response received from the candidate seems incomplete or unclear, the person asking the question may pose a follow-up question, asking for elaboration, clarification, or examples. The committee should not expect finely polished, textbook accurate answers to spur-of-the-moment questions. If committee members are not satisfied with the answer, clarification can be requested before the next question is asked.

A committee member may be designated to record candidate responses during the interview, for further review by the committee. Note taking should be done as unobtrusively as possible, and if note taking is to occur, the committee chair should explain the purpose of the note taking to the candidate. The Call Committee might consider creating interview sheets that will have your questions and room for notes for each candidate for your reference at a later date.

In formulating questions, avoid ones which can be answered with a response of "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." Rather, ask, "Describe how you minister to youth. Give us some examples of how you have worked effectively with youth in your present or former parish."

When a clergy couple is being interviewed, a separate call is issued to each, even if one position is being shared, so structure the interview so that the Call Committee has some time with each pastor individually, and some time with them together. Feel free to ask the same question of each person - don't make assumptions about similarities! You will also need to contact Portico for clergy couple particularities.

When the committee has completed its list of preselected questions, the committee chair may invite additional questions. Though the call committee is “in charge” of the interview, it is helpful to remember that the interview is intended to be a dialogue and not an inquisition! This is intended to be a “mutual” interview. Invite the candidate to ask questions and provide additional comments during the interview.

The committee member leading the interview is responsible for keeping the interview within the anticipated time period previously established. Prolonged interviews are usually counterproductive. If all is not accomplished in the first interview, a second interview can be scheduled.

In concluding the interview, the candidate may be invited to “answer questions not asked” or make any other comment he or she would like to make. The candidate should be thanked for coming and encouraged to be in phone contact with a designated member of the Call Committee, should there be additional questions which occur to the candidate in the days following the interview. The Call Committee should indicate to the candidate the approximate time table involved in the completion of the congregation’s call procedures. 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. The following page includes a sample expense voucher.

Some call committees find it useful to have a mock interview before the candidates come. The interim pastor or another local pastor might be willing to do this. It will give you a chance to try out how the rhythm of the interview will go and practice what each individual’s role will be.

EXPENSE VOUCHER

You will be responsible for reimbursing candidates for their travel expenses. Here is a sample voucher you might use. These expenses should be reimbursed promptly after an interview.

INTERVIEW EXPENSE VOUCHER

For _____ Church

Date _____

Travel by car round trip:

_____ miles @ _____ current IRS mileage rate.....\$ _____
Travel by air\$ _____
Meals.....\$ _____
Lodging.....\$ _____
Miscellaneous.....\$ _____

Total \$ _____

Please attach copies of your receipts to this voucher.

X/ _____

Candidate Address

X/ _____

Call Committee Chairperson

PHONE INTERVIEWING

Some congregations choose to conduct the first interview by telephone or by webcam over the internet using free programs such as Skype. Face-to-face communication is always the best. Much of our communication happens on a nonverbal level, therefore, it is usual best to conduct all interviews in person. Because of certain circumstances (such as extremely high travel expenses, inability of the candidate to travel at a particular time, etc.), a phone or web cam interview is the only possibility. If one candidate is to be initially interviewed in this way, it is recommended that all the candidates be initially interviewed in this way. This places everyone on the same level for the first interview.

If the initial interview is conducted by telephone, it is suggested that it occur over a speaker or conference phone so that several members of the Call Committee can participate in the interview.

If the initial interview is conducted by phone or web cam, it should follow (as much as possible) the same procedure as is outlined in the preceding pages.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It is likely that you will have questions for each candidate at three levels: congregation specific questions, general questions and pastor specific questions.

Congregation Specific Questions

The specific content of the interview should reflect the position that is being filled, in your particular congregation, at this particular time in its history.

General Questions

This list of possible general questions is not comprehensive, but merely suggests issues you might want to raise with the candidate in areas connected with parish life. There are far too many questions here, so be very selective in choosing only a few that will shape the primary part of the interview with each candidate.

Worship/Preaching

- Describe how you go about preparing for the worship service on Sunday morning.
- Think back in your ministry and tell me about the most difficult sermon you ever preached.
- Share some of your thoughts about the worship life of a congregation.

Social Ministry/Outreach

- Tell me how you evaluate community needs and community strengths.
- Describe how you have contributed to the quality of life in your community.
- Describe how you go about motivating members of your congregation to respond to community needs.

Administrator/Leader

- Describe the steps you take normally when working with groups to achieve consensus or cohesiveness.
- How would you describe your style of leadership in overseeing the work of the congregation?
- Tell me about a period in your life when you had to manage multiple demands in your work and how you determined priorities.

Teaching the Faith

- How do you evaluate the faith development of others?
- Describe your approach to helping adults to grow in their faith.
- Describe your approach to teaching children and young people about the Christian faith.

Stewardship

- Describe how you have helped others grow in their personal stewardship.
- In what ways have you helped members understand the management of their money and their responsibilities as Christian stewards?
- Describe the development of your personal sense of Christian stewardship.

Evangelism

- Describe ways in which you typically become acquainted and associate with unchurched people in your community.
- What kind of guidance and training do you provide members of your congregation for reaching unchurched persons in the community?

Interpersonal Climate

- What steps do you take in helping others feel secure, trusted, and open with you?
- When pressure mounts, how do you maintain your cool in ministry?
- Describe an experience where conflict arose between you and another person and how resolution was finally achieved.

Ministry in Crisis/Counseling

- Describe your style of ministry to persons in crisis.
- Describe how you have used the establishment of boundaries to strengthen your ministry.
- How do you assess your own professional limitations when ministering to persons in crisis?

Interpreter of Theology

- Describe ways in which you communicate the faith.
- Describe your skills as teacher and preacher.
- What resources do you use to remain theologically and Biblically fresh and current?

Innovator

- Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
- Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to capture that vision.
- Think back in your ministry and describe a situation that was stagnant or failing and describe how you stepped in to revitalize it.

Denominational Leadership

- Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding their relationship to the greater church.

- Describe your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation, including ecumenical relationships, church agencies, and institutions.
- Describe what your congregation believes to be their role as a congregation of the ELCA.

Personal Growth

- Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.
- How do you work at making yourself more effective in your work?
- Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Your Call to Ministry

- Briefly describe the events which led you to prepare for the ministry.
- Describe the process of deliberation which helps you determine God's call.
- In what ways has your call to ministry changed over the years?

Pastor Specific Questions

By exploring the candidate's Rostered Leader Profile, find questions that help you come to know him/her as a spiritual person and leader. Take time here to clarify questions that may have arisen from reviewing the mobility forms.

Questions You Should NOT Ask

Some of the following questions are not appropriate in an interview setting and might be legally prohibited for an employer to ask.

- How old are you? When are planning to retire?
- Are you married? Or divorced?
- How will your spouse be involved in the church?
- What is your sexual orientation?
- Do you plan to get married?
- Do you have children?
- Do you intend to start a family?

Instead ask "Tell us about yourself and your family." This will get at many of the answers you are looking for above.

Other questions to be careful about:

- Do you belong to any social or political groups?
- Do you suffer from any disabilities or illness?

Instead ask, "Is there anything else about yourself that you think is important for us to know?" Again, you will get answers to these questions if needed. When information is freely offered by a candidate it is then appropriate for conversation.

Questions Candidates May Ask

An effective interview is a two-way street, with the candidate also bringing questions and concerns. Allow time and opportunity for the candidate to ask questions and be prepared to address them.

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 support of and partnership with the synod and the ELCA?
- 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?

SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEWS

You may decide to invite one or more of the candidates back for additional interviews. This can be a time of deeper, more specific questions. Both the Call Committee and candidates will most likely have additional things they would like to talk about further. Might there be key leaders that should be involved in the next interviews? Staff, lay leaders, etc. This might also be a time to invite the candidates' families to experience your community if you have not already done so.

DECISION MAKING

Please bathe each interview with prayer. While the interview is still fresh in the minds of committee members, it might be useful to reconvene the Call Committee, upon the candidate's departure, for sharing initial impressions. It is important that these shared impressions are recorded for later reference. It will also be important to promptly notify each candidate of the next step in the process. It is also wise not to make a final decision immediately after an interview. Give all the Call Committee members time to process what they have heard and schedule a follow-up meeting to make a final decision. This allows time for first impressions, further reflection and prayer.

The next several pages have sample letters for various situations relating to interviews. As you send these correspondences, please include a copy to the Synod Office.

NEED FOR MORE NAMES

After all of your hard work of interviewing, occasionally, there is a need for the Call Committee to receive more names. This might be because none of the candidates were a good fit or the top candidate was in a process at another congregation and has taken another call, or any number of other reasons. If you decide as a Call Committee to ask for more names, please be in touch with your Synod Office member to begin this process.

If this does happen, be in touch with the congregation as well, to let them know you have asked for more names. Continue at every opportunity to build trust with the congregation and let them know what you are doing, as much as confidentiality will allow.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The call committee keeps the names and resumes of all candidates in the strictest confidence throughout the committee's work. The reason for maintaining confidentiality is in respect of the other parties involved in the process: the potential pastor and her/his present congregation. Pastors are often open to considering other calls as a way of discerning God's will for them. However, a congregation which learns that its pastor is open to other possibilities often assumes that the pastor is indeed going to leave. Often pastors make a decision to stay where they are but further ministry is disrupted by a premature disclosure of their involvement in a call process. It is only appropriate for the call committee to reveal the name and resume material of the candidate it recommends to the council. Good candidates have refused further contact with call committees who have not respected their desire for confidentiality.

It is only appropriate for the call committee to reveal the name and resume material of the candidate it recommends to the council.

SAMPLE LETTERS FOR INTERVIEW PROCESS

Next Step with Candidate following the Interview

Date

The Rev. John H. Doe

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Pastor Doe:

On behalf of the Call Committee at _____ Lutheran Church I want to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to visit with you on _____. I thought it was a very helpful and informative interview. It certainly allowed us to gain a clearer perspective regarding your many gifts as a Lutheran pastor and we thank you for that. (make reference to some of those gifts)

After careful and prayerful discernment, we would like to continue conversation with you about being the next pastor of _____ Lutheran Church. Our next step is [explain next step.... Second interview, another visit to congregation, want to experience preaching, etc.]

If you have questions or concerns about previous time together or future opportunities to get to know each other, I would be happy to discuss them with you. You may contact me at _____ .

I wish God's richest blessings on your own discernment.

Sincerely yours,

Your Name

cc: Synod Office
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

SAMPLE LETTERS (CONTINUED)

Release of Candidate After Interview

Date

Minni Ster

123 Any Street

Anytown, Wisconsin 12345

Dear Ms. Ster,

You were one of several ministers for whom it was our privilege to give consideration in our search for a pastor to serve _____ Lutheran Church. Our committee is very appreciative of the opportunity we had to meet and confer with you.

Knowing that you will appreciate some word as to the outcome of our effort, we are reporting that, in the light of the needs of our parish and the qualifications of persons with whom we have made contact, you are no longer being considered to serve _____ Lutheran Church.

Thank you for your courtesy to our committee. We extend to you our best wishes in your ministry.

Sincerely,

Call Committee Chairperson

Cc: Synod Office
South-Central Synod of WI

SAMPLE LETTERS (CONTINUED)

Invitation for Additional Interview Following Phone Interview

Date

The Rev. Jane R. Doe

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Pastor Doe:

On behalf of the Call Committee at _____ Lutheran Church I want to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to visit with you on _____. I thought it was a very helpful and informative interview. It certainly allowed us to gain a clearer perspective regarding your many gifts as a Lutheran pastor and we thank you for that. (make reference to some of those gifts)

After careful and prayerful discernment, it is our wish to invite you to meet personally with (indicate who would be included in that meeting) in order for us to become better acquainted and to discuss in greater depth the current leadership needs of this congregation.

[If married...]

Please consider this invitation to also include your spouse.

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.

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

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

Sincerely yours,

Your Name

cc: Synod Office

South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

VISITING A CANDIDATE IN OWN SETTING

This is a very important step that is about much more than just hearing the pastor preach. With today's technology, it is easy to hear or see through webcast the sermon. However, while you are visiting you will get a chance to see what kind of worship leader the pastor is and experience her/him in person. You will also have to opportunity to observe the pastor interacting with congregation members. Check with the candidate for a range of possible Sundays to visit. You would hate to come when he/she was on vacation or not preaching. But you also want your visit to be a bit of a surprise so you can see an "average" Sunday worship. Please be respectful of the fact that the congregation may not know that their pastor is seeking a new call. Therefore, when greeted by someone sitting next to you, do not acknowledge that you are from a call committee, just simply say that you are a visitor for the day.

CHECKING REFERENCES

Checking references is an important step. It is more than just icing on the cake, as the information gleaned can facilitate additional questions for a second interview. The candidate's bishop is listed as a reference. The synod office receives a confidential bishop's recommendation. If there are issues of misconduct or concern, we would most certainly share those with the call committee. Although one might assume that all reference will be a ringing endorsement, this is not always the case. Some things a call committee might want to ask are:

- When did (name) work for your congregation/organization? Could you confirm starting and ending employment dates?
- Why did (name) leave?
- What was her/his starting and ending salary?
- What was her/his position? Can you describe the job responsibilities?
- Did (name) miss a lot of work? Was s/he frequently late? Were there any issues you are aware of that impacted her/his job performance?
- Did (name) supervise other employees? How effectively? If I spoke to those employees, how do you think they would describe (name's) management style?
- How did (name) handle conflict? How about pressure? Stress?
- Did you evaluate (name's) performance? Can you speak to his/her strong and weak points? What was noted as needing improvement during this performance review?
- What was (name's) biggest accomplishment while working for your congregation/organization?
- Would you call (name) if the opportunity arose again?
- If I describe the position we are hiring for to you, could you describe how good a fit you think (name) would be for the position?
- Can you describe this person's experience working as a member of a team?
- Is there anything I haven't asked that you would like to share with me?

BACKGROUND CHECKS

For your protection and the candidate's, you will also want to do a background check similar to what the congregation should do for all adults who might be working with children and/or vulnerable adults and your church councils (see *Parish Protection Manual for Children and Youth – Congregational Training Manual*). Most church insurance companies have excellent resources. If you currently do not have a system for background checks, the resources identified below may be helpful.

To do this vital step, you will need to have written permission from the candidate. You may also need to have additional information such as driver's license number and/or social security number. The company who will provide the background check will give you standards and/or forms to complete.

The calling congregation is responsible for obtaining background checks. You may, of course, use whatever resources and company that you are currently using to do other background checks in the congregation. If you currently do not have a system for background checks please contact the synod office immediately to begin this process. It is important to background checks for all adults that might be working with children and/or vulnerable adults. It is also important to do background checks for your church council as well. Most church insurance companies have excellent resources, as does your synod office.

Two background check companies, *ChoicePoint*, a LexisNexis company, through VolunteerSelect Plus and *Oxford Document Management Company* (Oxford), are offering ELCA organizations and institutions at competitive fees for their services:

For the most up to date information please go to: www.elca.org/backgroundchecks.

All ELCA organizations may use any provider they choose to obtain background checks.

Oxford

Web site: www.oxforddoc.com

Customer Service and Sales Support: 1-800-801-9114

For the past fifteen years Oxford has worked *exclusively* with religious organizations seeking independent and comprehensive background checks of clergy, prospective clergy, church workers, and volunteers. Many synods of the ELCA already use the unique screening models available through Oxford (see a list of references, and samples of the unique referencing models on Oxford's [Web site](#)).



Oxford differs from the competition in several key areas:

- At Oxford, all public record searches are ordered by an experienced staff person based on information gathered both from the candidate and a social security trace. To rely solely on one or the other will most likely result in overlooking searches in key jurisdictions.
- At Oxford, all public record searches are performed *real-time* and *in-person* by their network of experienced court researchers. With the exception of the supplemental National Background Directory search, Oxford does not rely on potentially outdated or incomplete databases.
- Oxford's fees are as stated, and no additional "access fees" are charged to you.
- Oxford strives for the highest level of personal attention and customer service. Screening is complex, and Oxford's staff is there to guide you through the entire process.
- Oxford's ministry is to serve *your* needs, rather than those of shareholders.

Oxford is a small private company headquartered in Anoka, Minnesota – about 30 minutes north of Minneapolis.

Some Specific Searches Available

Each ELCA entity may very well have unique screening needs based on the risk inherent in the position in question. As such, we encourage you to call Oxford at 1-800-801-9114 to develop a screening program to best suit your unique needs.

For those of you seeking to comply with the new candidacy requirements, the new ELCA Candidacy Manual outlines the basic recommended criteria for background checks. These criteria and Oxford's fee for each (net of the 10% discount) are as follows:

- Social Security Trace — \$7.20
- Criminal History Records check at the County level — \$13.50 per county
- National Background Directory — \$18.00
- Credit Report — \$13.50
- Motor Vehicle Report — \$13.50

For a complete description of these specific searches, and to learn more about Oxford's other unique services capabilities, call them at 1-800-801-9114 or visit their Web site at www.oxforddoc.com/services.html.

ChoicePoint - a LexisNexis company

Web site: www.volunteersselectplus.com

Customer Service and Sales Support: 866-399-6647

Overview

VolunteerSelectSM Plus is an online volunteer and employee screening service, providing a wide variety of background reports to the nonprofit industry. This Web-based service will allow registered 501(c)3 organizations to apply for a new account, order background reports and view the results of those searches within minutes. The VolunteerSelect Plus Web site offers affordable access to criminal records, credit reports, motor vehicle records, identity verifications and other resume credentialing information.



Service Features

- Recommended search packages are available, based on geographic availability
- Legally compliant information is delivered, eliminating the need to worry about the integrity of the results
- Many searches are returned immediately
- Pricing is structured to deliver affordable solutions for your organization
- Access account information 24 hours a day, 7-days a week
- Web site is user friendly

How to Sign Up

All ELCA members should use the promotional code below on the VolunteerSelect Plus sign up form, and they will waive your setup fee — a \$25-\$100 savings.

1. Log onto www.volunteersselectplus.com
2. Click on the “Sign Up Now” button on the left-hand side of the screen
3. Complete the application form and include the ELCA-specific promo code on the form to waive your setup fee.

Promo code = ELUTH (not case-sensitive)

About VolunteerSelect Plus

VolunteerSelect Plus is a service of ChoicePoint, a LexisNexis company. In May of 2002, ChoicePoint developed a background screening service specifically tailored for the nonprofit industry in conjunction with the National Assembly and Boys and Girls Clubs of America. VolunteerSelect Plus is part of ChoicePoint's charitable initiatives and offers subsidized pricing to encourage social service organizations to protect their clients through the adoption of high-quality background screening program.

Today, the VolunteerSelect Plus service works with many of our nation's leading nonprofit youth development and religious organizations. More than 1 million volunteers have been screened through our service, and an estimated 5 million children have benefited from these background checks.

Responsible Use of Information

ChoicePoint is committed to delivering comprehensive volunteer and employee background screening services to nonprofit organizations in order to help protect our nation's vulnerable populations. To learn more about how we continue to protect consumers' personal information, please see their Web site at

www.choicepoint.com/privacyatchoicepoint.

ChoicePoint Cares Program

ChoicePoint, a LexisNexis company, uses the positive power of information to give back to society through our corporate giving programs. Please see their Web site for more information at

www.choicepoint.com/about/cares.html.

Pricing and Product Information

Visit their Web site for detailed product descriptions (visit

www.volunteersselectplus.com/hdocs/product_description.html), or call their sales support line at 866-399-6647, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. EST for more details.

Recommended background search packages are available at www.volunteersselectplus.com/hdocs/packages.html.

Criminal Records

- > National Criminal File Check \$ 5.00
- > County Courthouse Search** \$ 11.20
- > Federal Courthouse Search** \$ 11.20
- > Statewide Criminal Bureau Search* (where available) \$ 11.20

Credential Verification

- > Education Verification \$ 8.40
- > Professional License Verification \$ 11.20

Other Records

- > Motor Vehicle Record* \$ 3.50
- > Sex Offender Registry Search \$ 6.30
- > Social Security Number Search \$ 2.10
- > Credit Report \$ 6.30

Interview Services

- > Employment Verification* \$ 9.10
- > Reference (Developed for Regulated Industries only) \$ 7.70

* **Note:** The above prices do not include additional expenses for reference fees, 900 # charges, court fees, transcript fees, state registry fees, etc. Turn-around time on non-instant reports are processed during regular business days only. Pricing structure is based on searching or verifying information at one source only.

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RECOMMENDING CANDIDATES

CALLING A NEW PASTOR

RECOMMENDATION TO CHURCH COUNCIL

Once the Call Committee has decided upon a candidate to recommend, a meeting of the Congregation Council should be called. The entire Call Committee may be present at this meeting to strengthen the recommendation.

Thorough information about the candidate and the Committee's process of discernment, with ample opportunity for dialogue between the Call Committee and the Council, will empower the Congregation Council to move the Call Committee's recommendation forward and share in the growing enthusiasm. The Council receives this recommendation and sets a time for a special congregational meeting, giving adequate time for notice and preparation.

The Call Committee will want to contact the candidate and give her/him the details of the next steps. The Council President will research and pursue conversation with the candidate concerning an initial compensation proposal.

PREPARING THE LETTER OF CALL

After you contact the synod office with the date of your special congregational meeting, an original *Letter of Call* document will be sent to the Council President with instructions. The Bishop will not sign a *Letter of Call* which does not meet the minimum standards offered in the current year's *Compensation Guidelines of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin*. The particular details should be written using a *Definition of Compensation* form, available from the synod office or on the ELCA website.

MEET AND GREET

A few days before the congregational vote, you may find it helpful to provide an opportunity for the congregation to meet the candidate. This is not a time for formal interviews and questions, nor a time for the whole congregation to hear the pastor preach. Rather it is a time to put a name and a face together as you begin to build a relationship with the pastoral candidate. The Call Committee or Council would commonly host this opportunity. You might design the event like an "open house," briefly convening for a time of public introduction and reflection on scripture.

COMPENSATION PLANNING CONVERSATION

Before the congregational meeting, the congregational president should be in touch with the candidate to have conversation about the compensation package (or delegate someone as appropriate). Since each *Letter of Call* signed by a bishop must be accompanied by an initial *Definition of Compensation*, it is wise to have arrived at a consensus about compensation prior to the special meeting. Sometimes this conversation takes place with a planning meeting of the Council with the candidate. Expenses for this meeting should be reimbursed.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Congregation Council sets a date for a special congregational call meeting according to constitutional provisions and calendar considerations. Communications to notify members may include a brief statement from the Call Committee and information about the recommended candidate's experience and qualifications. While the name and information about your candidate is presumed to be public, please refrain from sharing any details via social media or on the congregation's website unless you have cleared this with your candidate. Generally a leader will not give an actual notice of a pending transition until *after* a vote issuing them a call has taken place and the leader has formally accepted the call.

In preparation for the congregational call meeting, the officers should review the portions of the congregation constitution relative to the calling of a pastor, including the number of voters required for a quorum and the definition of a voting member. (Sections C10.04, *C8.02.c. and C9.04 in the *ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations*.) If the Interim Pastor is available to attend the meeting, they serve as a representative of the synod to advise and consult. The vote to call a pastor should be by written paper ballot (these may be preprinted, or the congregation may be instructed to simply write a "yes" or a "no" on a slip of paper). Per C9.01 a **two-thirds majority of members present and voting is necessary for election.**

Open the special meeting of the congregation with scripture and prayer. Because the vote on the question of "whether to issue a call to _____" needs to provide an official count (to insure the proper percentage), tellers should be appointed. The chair should establish that a quorum of members is present and invite the secretary to record this number in the minutes.

The Call Committee may then present information concerning the proposed candidate to the congregation. The congregation may then be invited to address questions about the proposed candidate to representatives of the Congregation Council and Call Committee. Then the question is placed before the body for a decision. The proposed compensation package may be discussed at this point as well, or it may be taken up as a second motion. It is appropriate to invite the Interim Pastor or Call Committee Chair to lead the congregation in prayer before the ballots are distributed.

Tellers may distribute, collect and count the ballots. After the tellers have left the room to count the ballots, a second motion from the Council may be introduced to address compensation as defined in C9.04. You might use a copy of the *Definition of Compensation* as one way to share this information for consideration, or another suitable form of presentation. The Council may entertain questions about the proposed figures and provisions (which have already been discussed with the candidate for call). Because this is a budget matter, the congregation may also choose to delegate the responsibility for finalizing the compensation package to the Council. A motion to do so must be adopted and noted in the minutes of the meeting.

***C9.01.** *Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose.*

***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.*

The chief teller reports the ballot count to the president who announces the results to the congregation. Minutes of this meeting should note the actual count. The congregation should be instructed that the candidate has 30 days to consider the call after it has been received and will normally notify the congregation of his/her decision within that time.

Before the congregational meeting, the congregational council should be in touch with the candidate to have conversation about the compensation package.

Following the meeting, the Council President or Call Committee Chair should contact the candidate. They will be eager to hear the outcome of your discernment process.

After the congregation has approved the call and compensation at the meeting, the council president and council secretary finalize the *Letter of Call* and the *Definition of Compensation* documents and send them to the synod office for the bishop's review and signature. If a congregation does not endorse the recommendation of the Call Committee and Council through a positive vote, the documents will not be necessary. A phone call to both the disappointed candidate and the synod office is necessary. The Congregation Council President and chair of the Call Committee will want to discuss the failure to elect and to initiate a renewal of the search process.

When the bishop receives a signed *Letter of Call* and the *Definition of Compensation*, these are sent on to the candidate with the bishop's signature. Once received by the candidate, they have up to thirty (30) days to respond in writing to the congregation's call. Often a candidate, who has allowed his/her name to be presented to a congregation, is prepared to accept the call immediately and will give verbal confirmation.

When a candidate accepts a call, she/he communicates acceptance of the call to the congregation in writing (copy to the bishop's office).

Sample Letter Following Successful Vote of the Congregation

Date

The Rev. John H. Doe
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Pastor Doe:

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 delivered to our Bishop’s office for signature. Once you have received these documents we understand, according to the constitution of the ELCA, you have thirty days to consider your decision. We will pray for the guidance of God’s 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 you joining us as our spiritual leader in service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the ministry of _____ Lutheran Church.

Sincerely yours,

Name

Cc: The Synod Office
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

ACKNOWLEDGE TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

It is recommended that the council lead the congregation in planning a closure service and other appropriate acknowledgement and thank you to those who have offered ministry support during the pastoral transition. Such acknowledgement should be complete before the new pastor arrives to begin ministry.

SAMPLE SERVICE

Liturgy for Departure of an Interim Pastor from a Congregation

The Pastor (P), a Representative of the synod designated by the Bishop (B), and a Representative of the Congregation (R) come forward.

R: Pastor _____, on _____, you were appointed as our Interim Pastor: to prepare us for our next called pastor, to proclaim God's Word, to baptize new members into the Church of Jesus Christ, to announce God's forgiveness to us, and to preside at our celebration of the Lord's Supper. With the gospel you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you [and your family] have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community.

You have served our congregation faithfully these ____months/years. You are now leaving our midst. As members of this congregation we wish to honor your ministry among us and bid you farewell and Godspeed in your next endeavor, bringing closure to your ministry at _____.

P: I thank the members of _____ Lutheran Church for the love, the kindness and support shown to me [and my family] during interim ministry among you. I ask forgiveness for the ways I have sinned against you. I am grateful for the ways my ministry has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

C: **We receive your thankfulness. We offer you our forgiveness and accept that you now must us. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask forgiveness for the ways we have sinned against you. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.**

P: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

B: Do you, members of ____ Lutheran Church, release him/her from the duties of Interim pastor?

C: **We do, with God's help.**

B: Do you offer encouragement for his/her ministry as it unfolds in his/her future?

C: **We do, with God's help.**

B: Do you, Pastor ____, release this congregation from turning to you and depending on you?

P: I do, with God's help.

B: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here?

P: I do, with God's help.

B: On behalf of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin I witness to the words spoken here: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. We will hold you in our prayers as you begin what God has next for you. We pledge our support and love to you and wish you God's blessing.

R: Let us pray: God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments. We give you thanks for the countless ways our lives have been woven together in the tapestry of your church. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories, but move us in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

R: We send you forth with a going away blessing.

(Congregation lift arms raised upward toward Interim Pastor to signify the bestowal of a blessing)

The Lord bless you and keep you

The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Song

NEXT STEPS ONCE CALL ACCEPTED

WELCOME

MOVING

Moving expenses are the obligation of the calling congregation. There should be clear understanding of arrangements and reimbursements. It is common to ask the pastor to submit estimates of moving expenses (provided by a mover) to the congregation for approval prior to the move.

An editorial observation for any congregational members who may want to choose a pastor on basis of proximity: When you consider that you will be investing many hundreds of thousands of dollars in this pastor over the full length of ministry, not to mention the health of the congregation depending on the best possible selection, the difference in moving costs between someone nearby and someone far away is insignificant!

SCHEDULE THE INSTALLATION

The Congregation President and the newly called pastor need to confer to decide upon a date for installation, in consultation with the Synod Office. The Presiding Minister for the Rite of Installation is usually the bishop or Synod staff person. It is a fitting symbol, especially if the installation happens shortly after arrival, for the bishop or staff to preach and preside over the service up until the point of installation, which happens after the hymn of the day. This represents the pastoral care of the whole church over the congregation. Then, upon the completion of the Rite of Installation, the newly-installed pastor becomes the presiding minister for the remainder of the service.

In most cases the installation takes place during worship on Sunday morning, facilitating the best possible participation of the congregational members. If there are multiple services, the Rite of Installation can be done at a special combined worship service, at only one service and acknowledged at the other services or conducted at each service.

It is encouraged that invitations to the Service of Installation be extended to neighboring ministers and congregations. In areas where these relationships are already significant, the Service of Installation is sometimes held at a time other than Sunday morning, allowing for greater participation by ministry partners from outside the congregation.

PORTICO

The newly elected pastor and congregation will need to fill out several forms with Portico. It is right and fair that as a congregation you begin paying for pension and benefits based on the start date of ministry together. Portico will calculate this for health benefits but may not be as attentive to pension benefits. Please be an advocate for your new leader and complete the *Change in Salary* form promptly. The pastor will also need to fill out the *Change of Call* report. The form can be found at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources.aspx> or by calling Portico at 800.352.2876.

PRESS RELEASE

The press release about the arrival of your new pastor is an opportunity for outreach. Consider what usually appears in the religion section of the newspaper: a pastor's educational background, congregations served, major accomplishments, and sometimes information about the family. Look at it from the perspective of church members.

Think about those who are inactive. Are there unchurched people waiting for a congregation to show interest in them, rather than just itself? These folks are asking themselves, "What difference does the new pastor make to me?" "How might I benefit?" "Why should I care?"

People look for congregations offering a clear Biblical message, an interest in their needs, and a place that makes them feel wanted. Using the press release for outreach means that the image of the pastor and congregation portrayed in print must be what people experience in the church. Think of it as truth in advertising.

How does the congregation benefit from this approach? First, it's free. Second, as a public article, it shows that the newspaper sees the event as genuinely newsworthy.

The press release as an outreach tool helps to create a congregational image in the community as well. A well-planned public relations effort not only makes outreach more effective, it also serves to keep a congregation's mission focused and relevant.

WELCOME CELEBRATION

It generally falls naturally to the leadership of the Call Committee and/or Congregation Council to stay in close contact with the newly-arrived pastor in the first weeks. Close communication for both professional and personal matters is appreciated by the pastor and family, and establishes a good posture of mutual support. Some kind of welcoming event helps celebrate the new beginnings; often the day of Installation involves a special reception or luncheon to which congregation and neighbors are invited.

RITE OF INSTALLATION OF A PASTOR

P=Pastor doing installation

R=Representative of the congregation

I=Pastor being installed

C=Congregation

Installation is appropriately set within the service of Holy Communion, following the sermon and hymn of the day. If used, the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed may precede the installation rite.

This order is appropriate for installing a pastor who has been previously ordained. The bishop, or an ordained minister designated by the bishop, presides at the installation of a pastor.

Presentation

The assembly stands. The pastor to be installed and a representative of the calling body come before the presiding minister and the assembly.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

P: Having been authorized by the church to install full name, our co-worker in the gospel, as position, I now ask for certification of this call.

A representative of the calling body addresses the presiding minister.

R: After prayerful deliberation, we, of name of calling/employing body, have called full name as position. I present *her/him* and this letter certifying the call.

The presenter gives the presiding minister the letter certifying that the call has been received and accepted.

The presenter moves aside, and the assembly is seated.

Address and Questions

The presiding minister addresses the pastor being installed.

P: *A reading from John:* Jesus said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:21-23)

P: *A reading from Matthew:* Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

P: *A reading from First Timothy:* Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Attend 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 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 4:12-16)

The presiding minister questions the pastor being installed.

P: Name, in the presence of this assembly
will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility,
in the confidence that it comes from God through the call of the church?

I: I will, and I ask God to help me.

P: Will you preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures
and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church?
Will you carry out this ministry in harmony with the constitutions
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in *America*?

I: I will, and I ask God to help me.

P: Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures
and in your use of the means of grace?
Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people,
nourish them with the word and sacraments,
and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

I: I will, and I ask God to help me.

P: Will you give faithful witness in the world,
that God's love may be known in all that you do?

I: I will, and I ask God to help me.

P: Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things,
graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

C: Amen.

The assembly stands.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

P: People of God,
will you receive name as a messenger of Jesus Christ
sent to serve all people with the gospel of hope and salvation?
Will you regard her/him as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God?

C: We will, and we ask God to help us.

P: Will you pray for her/him,
help and honor her/him for her/his work's sake,
and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

C: We will, and we ask God to help us.

The presiding minister addresses the pastor being installed.

P: Name, the office of position is now committed to you
in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Blessing

The newly installed pastor may kneel as the presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.

P: The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working in you that which is pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

C: Amen.

The pastor stands. The following procession to the places of the word and sacraments may be used.

The presiding minister escorts the pastor to the place of baptism. A representative of the congregation says:

R: You have been called to be among us to baptize, to teach, and to forgive sins.

They proceed to the place of the word. A representative of the congregation says:

R: You have been called to be among us to proclaim the good news.

They proceed to the place of the meal. A representative of the congregation says:

R: You have been called to be among us to preside at the Lord's supper.

The presiding minister and a representative of the congregation/institution/agency welcome the pastor.

The assembly may offer acclamation with applause.

The service continues with the prayers of intercession. Prayers are included for the newly installed pastor, all ministries in the church, and all Christians in their vocations.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

When scheduling an installation service, the rhythms and emphases of the church year should be taken into account. For example, because of their solemn character, the days from the Sunday of the Passion through Easter Day are best avoided as days for such a service.

A congregation that has more than one primary weekly service may consider combining its services for the installation. Otherwise, installation may take place at only one of the services, and an appropriate announcement may be made at the other services.

Neighboring congregations and ministers may be invited to participate in the service.

The pastor to be installed is appropriately vested in alb and stole. If she/he will preside at the meal of holy communion, a chasuble may also be worn. Until presented, she/he may be seated with the assembly.

The complete name of the pastor is used at the presentation. At other places in the service, the first or given name/s (without surname/s) is appropriate.

If the pastor-elect had resigned or had been removed from the clergy roster and is now being reinstated, the installation order is modified as follows.

Following the hymn of the day and prior to the presentation, the presiding minister says:
Name, having been ordained a pastor in the church of Jesus Christ by *church body*, has been examined and approved by *church body* to resume the ministry of word and sacrament.

Following the address and prior to the first question, the presiding minister questions the one being installed.

Before almighty God and in the presence of this congregation, I ask you: Will you affirm that God has called you to the ministry of word and sacrament, and will you resume the duties of this office?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Where this church body recognizes the ordination by another denomination of a pastor-elect who is beginning ministry in the Lutheran Church, the first Lutheran installation may include announcement of her/his examination and certification, and her/his allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions. The installation order is modified as follows.

Following the hymn of the day and prior to the presentation, the presiding minister says:
Name, having been ordained a pastor in the church of Jesus Christ, has been examined and approved by *name of synod* for service in the ministry of word and sacrament in *church body*.

Following the address and prior to the first question, the presiding minister questions the one being installed.

The church in which you are to minister confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God and are the norm of its faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures. Is this your confession?

Response: Yes.

Presentation

A description of "position" may include not only title, but also the name of the congregation, institution, or agency to which the person has been called.

The letter which the representative presents is not the letter of call. It is certification of the pastor's acceptance of the call that has been received.

Blessing

The presiding minister may lay one hand on the head of the pastor while saying the blessing. The procession to the places of baptism, the word, and the meal is appropriate only where the ministry is directly one of word and sacrament. When using this form, a hymn may be sung during the procession. At the place of baptism, the presiding minister may present the newly installed pastor with the baptismal shell. If a baptismal shell is not used in the congregation, it is sufficient to pause at the place while the accompanying words are said. At the place of the word, the presiding minister may present the Bible or lectionary book used in worship to the newly installed pastor. It is then returned to its place. At the place of the meal, the chalice and the paten may be brought for presentation to the newly installed pastor. They are then placed on the table/altar.

As an option to the form of the presentation in the rite, the following may take place. The symbols of word and sacrament ministry may be handed to the pastor by the presiding minister or by representatives of the congregation, held briefly, and handed back to be returned to their places or placed on the table/altar. The presiding minister may say these or similar words:

Receive these signs of your calling to serve God and the people of God in the ministry of word and sacrament.

Beginning at the peace, the newly installed pastor may assume the role of presiding minister. The installing minister may serve as a communion minister. Or, the installing minister may preside for the entire service.

PROPER

When installation is set within the primary service of the congregation on a Sunday or festival, the propers for that Sunday or festival are normally used. The prayer of the day for installation may be said following the prayer of the day appointed for the Sunday or festival.

When installation is scheduled as a part of a special service, apart from the primary service of the congregation, propers may be selected from those listed below.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock. Inspire all pastors to proclaim your word diligently and your people to receive it willingly, that finally we may receive the crown of eternal glory; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Readings and Psalms

Exodus 3:1-12

Numbers 6:22-27

Isaiah 40:1-11

Isaiah 42:5-9

Isaiah 52:7-10

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Jeremiah 23:23-29

Acts 20:28-35

Romans 10:13-17

Romans 12:4-8

2 Corinthians 4:1-7 [8-12]

1 Timothy 4:14-16

2 Timothy 4:1-5

1 Peter 5:1-4

Psalms 16

Psalms 84

Psalms 91

Psalms 95

Psalms 96

Psalms 99

Psalms 103

Psalms 113

Psalms 121

Psalms 122

Psalms 133

Matthew 9:1-8

Mark 4:1-9

Mark 10:42-45

Luke 10:1-12, 16-20

John 10:7-18

John 13:[3-11] 12-17, 20

John 21:15-17

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, * who brings good news, who announces salvation. *Alleluia.* (Isa. 52:7)

Or, during Lent:

May I never boast of | anything *
except the cross of our Lord | Jesus Christ. (Gal. 6:14)

Other gospel acclamation texts that may be used:

John, Apostle and Evangelist; Conversion of Paul; Holy Cross Day; Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist; Reformation Day; Lent 3, year B; Lent 5, year C.

Hymn of the Day

395 Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord
401 Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading
579 Lord, You Give the Great Commission
743 Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray
878 Soli Deo Gloria

Preface: Apostles

Color: of the season or of the day

MUTUAL MINISTRY

The Synod Office would be happy, if invited, to come back approximately six months after the beginning of the new ministry for conversation with the pastor and the congregational leadership. Make an appointment to do this now, as it is often forgotten after the excitement of ministry begins. The purpose is to provide opportunity to use this early stage to compare expectations with actual happenings. The Ministry Site Profile can be reviewed, and questions posed to each:

- What were you expecting as you entered into this Call?
- How has reality compared?
- What are the pleasant surprises?
- What may some unexpected findings be?
- What has been the focus of the first 6 months?
- Would it be good to think about some early course corrections?

Some questions that evaluate the impact of this entire calling process might be:

- Does the decision to call this pastor still “feel right?” Explain.
- What have you learned about your pastor that is consistent with the image you had of him/her during the Call Process?
- What have you learned about your pastor that varies from the image you had of him/her during the Call Process?
- Based upon what you now know, how could the Call Process have been better designed?
- What impact has the pastor made since he/she has started?
- What progress has the congregation made toward fulfilling its missional objectives?
- What have you learned about being on a Call Committee that you feel may benefit others who will serve in the future?

Generally these conversations are very affirming. The review provides a non-threatening, supportive setting for raising any concerns or issues from either perspective. It is helpful for the pastor to know what to expect in regards to the evaluation process. If none exists this is a good time to create it as it is helpful, before patterns are too ingrained, to review the unfolding ministry.

The relationship between the pastor and the people is integral to a congregation's life and ministry.

RESOURCES

There are also many resources that can be used to do continued mutual ministry together. One is called *Pastor and People*, published by 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, support in ministry, visioning and dreaming, ministry review, performance evaluation, and much more. There is also an accompanying DVD for this resource. Both resources are available through Augsburg Fortress at www.augsburgfortress.org.

If you would like more assistance with mutual ministry, please feel free to contact the synod office.

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