

DEVELOPING YOUR MINISTRY SITE PROFILE

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 7 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 "coterminus" 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:

Bishop Joy Mortenson-Wiebe

joymw@scsw-elca.org

Marie Leafblad

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If you have access or technology questions about completing the MSP you can call Robyn Zimmerman, Synod Executive Assistant at robynz@scsw-elca.org or (608) 270-0201

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.