
*South Carolina Synod – ELCA
Congregational Transition Packet
Resources*

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South Carolina Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

The transition process of calling a new Pastor or Deacon for your congregation can be both exciting and challenging at the same time. In Martin Luther's Small Catechism, he reminds us that the Holy Spirit "calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church..." This same Spirit will be present to guide all of us as we move through this time of transition. Keep in mind that the Holy Spirit doesn't generally work according to our timetables and discernment takes some time. It is important that the whole congregation join in prayer, and continue in worship and fellowship confident in the presence of the Holy Spirit who is with us in our discernment together.

To assist you in this transition my office has prepared this Transition Ministry Packet of resources to use in completing and celebrating the ministry of your current pastor, preparing to welcome the Interim Pastor and moving with your Interim Pastor through the transition process. The Synod Staff and I are always here and willing to assist you with any questions you may have. Feel free to contact our Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership, Pastor Rick Carter or me at any time.

One of the first things our office staff will work to do is to secure supply pastors to be with you for worship on Sundays over the first several weeks after your current pastor leaves office. Then we will walk with you through the appointment of your Interim Pastor and the whole transition including the call process. It will help you a great deal to become familiar with the resources that are included in this packet and intended to guide us all. You will find a few forms that need to be completed. After you have reviewed the Packet feel free to call us with any questions you may have.

I am holding you close in prayer that God will give you all that you need including the blessing of the Holy Spirit as you and your congregation move through transition.

Together in Christ,

The Rev. Virginia S. Aebischer, Bishop, South Carolina Synod – ELCA

Section 1
Current Pastor Resigns or Retires

Resource A
The Dynamics of Transition

By the Rev. R. Richard Armstrong, LMFT, and the Rev. Thomas L. Weitzel

What to Expect for Your Ministry

Your pastor has resigned or retired. Suddenly it is a new day. It may have come unexpectedly. Or it may have been announced many months ago so that the congregation could prepare. In either case, the day that your pastor leaves, it is a new and changed situation. The transition has begun. Being in Transition means:

- An *Ending* has taken place.
- There is a *Time in Between*
- A *New Beginning* has not yet occurred.

Transitions are about the Time in Between. How do we experience these times?

Just as congregations are made up of a variety of people, so it is that people may experience the transition in a variety of ways. Transitions can be a time of joyful anticipation and planning for the new ministry to come (like Advent, like pregnancy). For others, it can be a period of anxiety and confusion because of the transitory nature of the period. Yet others will be working their way through the typical stages of grief over the loss of their pastor: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance.

In all cases, the time in between is a *changing situation*. The comfort and contentment of normal routine left with the last called pastor (= the *Ending*). Everything is in a state of *Becoming* prior to the *New Beginning*.

The Old Testament gives us a helpful example of transition in scripture in the story of the Exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to go to the Promised Land of Canaan. The Exodus was the *Ending*. The Wilderness Experience as the Transition, the *Time in Between*. And the Promised Land was the *New Beginning*. From these stories we learn that the promised new beginning is always filled with hope that aids transitions for the people of God.

We also learn from the Wilderness story that in God's hands, transitions can be *Transformational*. The Wilderness experience was a time of *re-forming* as a people of God (Ex. 6:7). It was a time for faith renewal and learning to trust God (Num. 14:20f). It was also a time of testing of that faith (Ex. 20:20). The Israelites came out of that wilderness strengthened as God's people.

It wasn't always easy however. The experience of the Wilderness for some included: frustration and dissatisfaction (Ex. 15:24), complaining (Ex. 17:3), uncertainty about the future (Num. 14:1-4), disillusionment with leaders (Ex. 16:2), even desires to "go back" (Num. 14:4). That can occur for God's people in transition even today.

But this was also true: At every turn in the Wilderness, God addressed the needs of his people (Ex. 15:25, 16:5, 17:6). Following and trusting God got them through the uncertainty of the Wilderness to the Promised Land (the *New Beginning*).

So it is that “during the transition period, a congregation can reflect, renew, grow and learn about itself. Rather than simply a time to put everything on hold, or maintain the ‘status quo’, the transition time is an opportunity for the congregation and interim pastor to do many things in preparation for the start of a new pastor’s ministry” (Section 2, Page 2).

That last phrase is key to understanding the focus for the interim period: doing “many things in preparation for the start of a new pastor’s ministry.” Like Advent, preparing for Christmas. Like pregnancy, preparing for that new and life-changing blessed event that is about to happen. The focus, including any changes that may occur, is preparation for the *New Beginning*.

For leaders of congregations, it is helpful in transitions to do these things: Stay focused on your vision. State and publish expectations for the transition time. Communicate widely. Call informal congregational meetings to discuss progress as needed. Expect to be challenged, but understand it for what it is: a changing situation in the state of becoming. Stay on course.

Always remember: No matter what happens, everyone will be OK! We are safe in our relationship with God through faith in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:37-39). The God who led the Israelites through the Wilderness to the Promised Land will also lead our congregation to the *New Beginning* of God’s own making.

Resource B

The Ethics of Pastoral Transition

Congregations and pastors need to understand the professional ethics of ministry relating to former pastors, interim pastors, current pastors and retired pastors. A pastor who resigns or retires from a congregational ministry setting no longer serves as pastor to members of this congregation. Former pastors should not agree to pastoral responsibilities that rightfully belong to the current pastor of the congregation.

The PURPOSE of this paper is to clearly state the proper boundaries for former pastors, interim pastors, retired pastors, current pastors, and members of congregations relative to on-going pastoral responsibilities and duties. Please sign this resource and send a copy to the Office of the Bishop for file.

Former Pastors

If a former pastor is asked to officiate at a special service by members, he/she should respond immediately by saying: “Thank you very much for asking me, but it is simply NOT appropriate for me to do that since I am no longer your pastor.” The former pastor then encourages them to call their present pastor.

It is very natural that members turn again to a former pastor who perhaps baptized their other children, or performed other weddings and funerals for family members while serving as the family’s pastor. Again, with great sensitivity and love, the former pastor should graciously decline and direct the family to their current pastor. As with other family friends, the former pastor might attend the service as a guest.

Former pastors should avoid the comment to members, “You’ll need to speak first to your present pastor about me doing this.” Such a comment places the current pastor in the very awkward situation of having to relinquish the pastoral role to the former pastor, or saying no to the members’ request and thus appearing insensitive, uncaring or insecure.

Former pastors who retire need to transfer their membership to another Lutheran congregation where they can become involved as a retired pastor. This is also a great gift to the congregation formerly served.

In this age of extensive social networking on-line in its many forms, former pastors need to be aware and sensitive about their on-line communications. Continuing to “copy” members of their former congregation in emails or Facebook interactions is a form of continuing pastoral interactions/relationships, and it is not helpful.

Interim Pastors

The interim pastor is the current pastor of the congregation until that time comes when the new pastor assumes the role of pastor and shepherd of the congregation. Whether part time or full time, the interim pastor should be contacted for all pastoral acts during the transition time. The former pastor should not be contacted by members to return to perform a pastoral responsibility during the transition.

Current Pastors

Current pastors should speak as positively as possible of the ministry of former pastors even though their style and vision might be very different. The current pastor should never feel pressured to relinquish his/her pastoral role to a former pastor. When a current pastor feels it is appropriate and healthy to invite a former pastor to return to participate in a special occasion, worship or activity, he/she can certainly extend such an invitation.

Retired Pastors Who Join a Congregation

Retired pastors who join congregations can be a blessing to the congregation. Retired pastors need to remember that they come with experience and gifts for ministry and may be asked to share such gifts at the invitation of the current pastor. Retired pastors need to be supportive of the current pastor. Should retired pastors have concerns about the current pastor, or feel they are unable to be supportive of the current pastor, they are to call the bishop rather than to share their unsupportive viewpoints with the leadership or congregation. It is strongly suggested that retired pastors and their spouses do not serve on council.

Members & Friends of the Congregation

Members should avoid placing both the current and former pastors in awkward positions by seeking the pastoral services of a former pastor. Members should simply not ask for such favors from former pastors. By showing high regard to the current pastor, members affirm the significance of the pastoral office which was once held by the former pastor.

If the congregation, council or current pastor experience difficulties with proper boundaries being maintained, the bishop should be contacted. Feel free to copy this paper and distribute as needed.

Pastoral Ethics Covenant

Having completed my tenure as Pastor /Deacon of _____ Lutheran Church,

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

As Council President, I, _____ agree to these pastoral ethics and will do my best to support the Pastor or Deacon in upholding these expectations.

Signature _____ Date _____

Resource C

Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call

This order is appropriately set within the service of Holy Communion on the final Sunday of a minister's service under call in a congregation. The order follows the prayer after communion. This order may be led by a pastor of the congregation (unless the pastor's call is the one concluding), another rostered leader, a representative of the congregation, or a representative of the synod.

ADDRESS

The person whose call is concluding and representative/s of the congregation come before the assembly.

For a pastor

A representative of the congregation addresses the pastor whose call is concluding with these or similar words.

Name, on date of call, we of name of congregation called you to be pastor in this place: to proclaim God's word, to baptize and teach, to announce God's forgiveness, and to preside at the Lord's table. 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, in our service to this community, and in God's mission to the whole world. [As you leave this community of faith, we say farewell, and we pray for God's blessing.]

For a deacon

A representative of the congregation addresses the person whose call is concluding with these or similar words.

Name, on date of call, we of name of congregation called you to serve among us as a deacon. Here a description of the particular ministry may be included. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you [and your family] have been important to our life together in the church of Jesus Christ, in our service to this community, and in God's mission to the whole world. [As you leave this community of faith, we say farewell, and we pray for God's blessing.]

The leader addresses the assembly with these or similar words.

People of God, members of *name of congregation*,
do you release *name* from service
as your *pastor / deacon*?

We do, and we give thanks to God for our ministry together.

The leader addresses the person whose call is concluding.
Name, do you recognize and accept
the completion of your ministry with *name of congregation*?
Response:
I do, and I give thanks to God for our ministry together.

THANKSGIVING AND SENDING

The presiding minister leads the assembly in prayer.
Let us pray.
Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ
you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock.
You equip your people with abilities that differ according to the grace given to them,
and you call them to various avenues of service.
We give you thanks for the ministry of *name* among the people of God in this place.

You watch over our going out and our coming in:
bless this time of ending and beginning.
You surround your people in every time and place:
keep us close in your love.
You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial:
prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together;
heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us.
Help *name* [and *her/his* family] and all of us
to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us.

As *they* have been a blessing to us,
so now send *them/us* forth to be a blessing to others;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

BLESSING

The presiding minister, or the pastor whose call has concluded, proclaims God's blessing in these or similar words.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.
Amen.

A sending song may be sung.

DISMISSAL

The assisting minister may send the assembly into mission.
Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

This order may be adapted for use in settings other than ministry in a congregation.

At the conclusion of a call to a minister of Word and Service, Farewell and Godspeed may be used instead of this order. Farewell and Godspeed may also be used at the conclusion of a lay professional worker's time of service.

The address may be adapted as appropriate when this order is used on the occasion of the retirement of a rostered minister.

When a representative of the synod leads this order, the representative may address the person whose call is concluding and the assembly with these or similar words. This address may precede the blessing.

Your sisters and brothers in the *name of synod*
and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared.
We promise you our continued support and prayer.
Rejoicing in the blessings of God in this congregation
and in the ministry of *name*,
with hope in God's abundant grace in years to come,
I announce that *name's* service as *position* in this congregation
is now concluded.

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Resource D

Starter Questions for an Informal Closure Conversation

This conversation is to celebrate and reflect upon the partnership and mutual ministry that the pastor and congregation have shared. Someone other than the pastor should lead the conversation monitoring the agreed upon time for this sharing. This conversation may take place with the council. If desired, a representative of the Office of the Bishop could be present and may facilitate the conversation.

The designated leader might also provide an opening devotion and closing prayer. The questions below are designed to help focus the conversation.

Some possible starter questions that might be asked of the members present:

- Which of Pastor's gifts are you personally most thankful for?
- Would you share a personal or special memory or event involving the pastor that has special meaning to you?
- Is there a humorous event or recollection, not too embarrassing, that you might share?
- How will the Pastor be remembered by you?
- What lasting treasure has the Pastor given to this congregation?
- What were some of your hopes & dreams for this congregation when you began your ministry among us?
- What was your greatest joy during your ministry here?
- Would you share your greatest sorrow or disappointment in your ministry?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of relating to your ministry here?
- What do you see as this congregation's greatest strengths?
- Any concerns or parting words of wisdom that you'd like to share with us?

Resource E

The Exit Interview

The Exit Interview is designed to assist the Office of the Bishop in gathering valuable information from the pastor that could be helpful to the bishop and the congregation for the transition time. The Council President will initiate the interview with the pastor. The Council President or Pastor may invite a member of the Bishop's Staff to participate in this Interview. Information that is gathered that is not confidential will be shared with the council and with the Bishop.

Name of Pastor: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Congregation: _____

City: _____

Those participating in the Exit Interview: _____

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW

1. What do you regard as the most important accomplishments during your time as pastor of this congregation?

2. What has been your biggest challenges or disappointments?

3. What do you see as this congregation's greatest strengths?

4. What do you see as this congregation's greatest growth areas or weaknesses?

5. Where do you see this congregation's mission and ministry heading in the future?

6. Do you have any concerns about the congregation's current staffing situation?

7. Are there issues that you feel this congregation needs to address before calling a new pastor?

8. Are there any other issues that you feel the Office of the Bishop needs to know?

9. Have the following items been tended to:

- Listing of those who are sick or hospitalized? Who has this information?
- Are there marriages or baptisms scheduled? Who has this information?
- Other continuing care issues? Who has this information?
- Who will handle classes you have been teaching (catechism, Bible, etc.)?
- Have you reviewed the congregational records, including the parochial records, with the secretary of the congregation and has the secretary signed the certification of this?
- Please arrange to leave any passwords and keys with the Council President
- Are there any outstanding reimbursements due the pastor or due the congregation?
- Is it clear whether computers, cell phones, or other devices belong to the departing pastor or to the congregation?
- When is compensation to end? And what will be the amount of that final paycheck?
- When will health insurance coverage end?

Resource F
***Certification of Congregational Records
at the time of Pastoral Transition***

In accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the South Carolina Synod which states:

“The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed or members excluded from membership” (S14.03.a), and further, “The parochial records of each congregation shall be kept in a separate book that 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 before: a. installation in another field of labor; or b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.” (S14.15.)*

This certification testifies to the fact that the departing pastor has kept accurate parochial records, and that such records have been reviewed and found in good order by the secretary of the congregation.

Name of Congregation: _____

Address of Congregation: _____

City: _____

Departing Pastor Signature

Secretary of the Congregation Council

Date: _____

This certification should be mailed before the last Sunday worship that the pastor leads to the bishop of the South Carolina Synod at 1003 Richland Street, Columbia, SC 29201. The departing pastor and the secretary of the congregation should retain copies of this certification.

*Or electronic file.

Resource G

Guidelines for Retired Ordained Ministers

Ordained ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ordained ministers of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, or upon disability, and continue to be listed on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of a Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster . . . (bylaw 7.41.17. in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

Persons who have served within the ordained ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and who have determined that they will enter retirement are not only to be honored for their past service but are seen as important resources for ministry within the life of this church. To enter this new phase of one's life is always a significant milestone. It is a transition into another important stage of life for every retired person. It is true also for the retired pastor (and spouse/partner if the pastor is so blessed). The following statement is a guideline for retired pastors, the congregations they served, and synodical bishops in understanding the new status of a retired pastor. It is intended to affirm the past ministry of retired pastors, to give directions which seek to avoid some pitfalls that can present themselves to the retired pastor, and to point to new arenas of service and support.

I. ROSTER OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

A retired pastor is on the roster of the synod in which last under call or in which the pastor resides. The retired pastor remains accountable to the synodical bishop where rostered. A retired pastor must be a member of an ELCA congregation in order to remain on the roster of ordained ministers and remains subject to the standards for ordained ministers of this church.

II. CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

A retired pastor should not remain a member of the congregation served at the time of retirement. Transferring one's membership to another congregation allows the successor pastor to assume pastoral leadership more readily. It also provides an opportunity for the retired pastor to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about the pastor's retired role.

III. PASTORAL SERVICE

At the time of retirement, a pastor is no longer pastor of a congregation and therefore must discontinue the functions of the pastoral office in the congregation unless specifically authorized to do so. The service of retired pastors is governed by the *Constitution for Synods* [†S14.14.], which describes the role of ordained ministers in congregations in which they do not serve: "Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the congregation Council" (†S14.14. in the *Constitution for Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*).

IV. INTERIM MINISTRY

One area of potential service for the retired pastor is interim ministry. Many retired pastors provide valuable and needed ministry to congregations in time of transition following the resignation of a pastor. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America invites retired pastors to consider this important arena of ministry. A retired pastor may serve as an interim pastor during a time of pastoral vacancy only by the authorization of the synodical bishop. Retired pastors who wish to serve under call in an interim ministry must return to the active roster of ordained ministers.

V. COMPENSATION

Retirement benefits provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the Portico (formerly Board of Pensions), combined with Social Security benefits, are intended to provide adequate compensation to pastors in retirement. Therefore, there shall be no financial commitment by a congregation or agency to retired pastors or their spouses/partners.

- A. A retired pastor who is authorized to serve (not under call) in a congregation for a stated period of time and for pastoral services may be compensated according to compensation practices within the synod.
- B. The title of Pastor Emeritus has no official standing and carries with it no compensation or authorization for service or for other responsibilities.

VI. CONSULTATION WITH SYNODICAL BISHOP

As part of the bishop's pastoral care of retired pastors, a synodical bishop or a member of the bishop's staff is encouraged to meet with a pastor at the time of retirement to discuss these guidelines, the pastor's new retired status, and its implications.

*Adopted by the Church Council as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, November 1998
[CC98.11.45*

Section 2

*The Interim Pastor Arrives:
Discernment and Assessment Begin*

Resource H
South Carolina – ELCA
Covenant for Interim
Ministry

Council President or another member of Council should complete and return this Covenant to the Bishop before the start of the Interim Pastor’s ministry.

Congregation _____

Address _____

and the South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America covenant with

Pastor _____

To serve as Interim Pastor (Start Date) _____

This service of ministry leadership will be [] full time., or
[] part time. If Part time, Please indicate the percentage or hours per week _____

This Covenant will be reviewed every six months by the Congregational Council and Interim Pastor.

This covenant will be terminated when a new pastor has accepted the call to be pastor of this congregation. The specific date will be negotiated by the council president and the interim pastor. This covenant may also be terminated by the interim pastor or the congregational council in consultation with the Office of the Bishop, or by the synod bishop with a thirty-day written notice and forfeiture of any payment beyond that period.

The mutual agreements of this covenant are set as follows:

The Congregation and Interim Pastor together will:

- A. Examine the history and traditions of the congregation.
- B. Work through the emotions of transition that usually follow the departure of a pastor.
- C. Explore the congregation’s connections with Conference, Synod and ELCA and consider resources which strengthen these connections.
- D. Subscribe to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to the constitution and bylaws of this congregation.
- E. Collaborate on the Interim Ministry Tasks and complete the items on the Administrative Benchmark Checklist. (Both included in the SC Synod Transition Packet)
- F. Develop a vision for this time of interim and prepare for the future of the congregation.
- G. Seek to confirm and identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.

The Congregation will:

- A. Commit to faithful participation in worship, learning and fellowship activities.
- B. Look to the Interim pastor to preside at baptisms, marriages, funerals and the celebration of Holy Communion.
- C. Uphold and support the ministry of the Interim Pastor with prayer, respect and good will.
- D. Provide appropriate compensation.
 - a. Compensation is based on the experience level of the interim pastor.
 - b. Use the Synod Compensation Guidelines and your previous pastor's compensation as your starting place for calculating compensation.
<https://scsynod.com/wpcontent/uploads/documents/compensation/scsynod-compensation-guidelines.pdf> Appendix A will help you find the base salary and defined compensation numbers for years of experience.
 - c. Part time service is prorated by percentage of time agreed upon. ½ time is considered 50% and averages 20 hours per week. Use the percentage to prorate the base salary amount from the compensation guidelines. The formulas in the excel worksheet will then assist you in prorating the remainder of the compensation numbers.
 - d. Use the Synod Excel Worksheet to help you with these calculations. A copy of the final excel worksheet form that is agreed upon by the council and Interim Pastor should be sent to the Office of the Bishop with this signed agreement.
<https://scsynod.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/compensation/2021-minister-of-word-and-sacrament-compensation-worksheet-housing-allowance.xls>
 - e. Travel expenses, Official Meetings such as Synod Assembly and Convocation should also be included.
 - f. Continuing education should be included at a rate of one day per month and a financial allowance of up to \$1000 per year.
 - g. Vacation days are calculated at one week for every 13 weeks of service, and includes Sundays.

The Interim Pastor will:

- A. Lead Worship, Preach and Teach the Word of God on Sundays and special days of the Church year.
- B. Administer the Sacraments
- C. Provide for special services (such as marriages and funerals)
- D. Provide Pastoral Care to members of the parish according to their needs. Visit the ill and homebound that may be in the hospital, nursing homes or at home.
- E. Pray for all disciples that are part of this congregation.
- F. Serves as a resource and provides pastoral leadership to the council, committees and ministries of this congregation.
- G. Assure that accurate parish records are kept during this time of interim ministry.
- H. Lead the Council and Congregation through the Interim Ministry Tasks and Administrative Benchmark Checklist (Included in the Transition Packet)
- I. Limit involvement in the Call Process to clarifying messages and instructions from the Bishop's Office for the council and helping Council find the resources for information needed.
- J. Participate regularly in the SC Synod Interim Ministers Gatherings and communicate regularly with the Bishop's Office the updates on this interim process.
- K. Respect the boundaries set forth for any departing pastor.

The following two questions should be completed within the first 3 months of the interim, and may be revisited and updated.

During interim, the congregation and the Interim Pastor will address the following concerns:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other areas which need special attention during this interim include:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. **Feel free to add others as needed on a separate page.**
5. _____

+ + +

Council President _____ Date _____

Council Secretary _____ Date _____

Interim Pastor _____ Date _____

This original completed Covenant for Interim Ministry should be sent to:

**South Carolina Synod, ELCA
1003 Richland Street
Columbia, SC 29201**

It is recommended that all parts of the Transition Packet are reviewed carefully. At the beginning of the Interim the following items from Section 2 are very important, and attention to them should be given by the Council and the Interim Pastor:

1. **An Overview of Interim Ministry Tasks**
2. **Interim Ministry Benchmark Checklist**
3. **Compensation – it is more than “What will I get paid”**
4. **Order for Welcome for the Interim Pastor**
5. **Early Assessment of Interim Ministry**
6. **Congregational Sustainability Assessment**
7. **Christian Education Network - ELCA Safety Template for Churches**
8. **Interim Pastor Report Form**

And from Section 1, please give special attention to:

9. **Ethics of Pastoral Transition**
10. **Certificate of Congregational Records Form**

The Bishop will review and sign this Covenant. The Synod office will distribute completed, signed copies to the Interim Pastor, the Council President and the Synod files.

SC Synod Bishop _____ Date: _____

Resource I

An Overview of Interim Ministry Tasks

(NOTE: The SC Synod Interim Ministry Task Force is working in conjunction with the Bishop on a “Handbook” for interim ministry. That handbook will be a compilation of pieces which are being built individually, though with a consistent core set of principles. These core principles are built around the conviction that the service of an Interim Pastor is both a pastoral ministry to the members of the congregation and attention to the structural matters pertaining to the organization.)

1. Bishop appoints an Interim Pastor after consultation with congregational council
 - a. The Council meets with the appointed Interim to discuss duties and expectations, to review the Synodical Benchmarks for Interim Pastors, and to establish a Contract.
 - b. The Covenant must be signed by Congregational Representative, the Interim Pastor, and the Bishop of the SC Synod.
2. The congregation designs opportunities to welcome the Interim Pastor, and plans a service of installation.
3. The Interim Pastor is the congregation’s pastor, with all the rights and roles specified in the congregation’s constitution.
4. Interim pastor’s initial weeks of work are to include leading the council/congregation in a discussion of specific issues that need to be addressed during Interim. These might include: personnel need, leadership issues, stewardship, Faith formation needs, unresolved conflict, changing community dynamics, etc.
5. The interim pastor’s role involves assisting the council/congregation in resolving issues identified in #4
6. The interim pastor’s role should also include leading the congregation in a time of reflection on its history
7. The interim pastor serves as a resource as the congregation clarifies God’s call and its mission
8. The Interim Pastor’s involvement in the Call Process is limited to clarifying messages and instructions from the Office of Bishop (see slides and power point about call process)
9. A monthly/quarterly report is to be prepared by the Interim Pastor, signed by the Council Chair sent to Office of Bishop
10. The Interim Pastor’s role ends upon the installation of the pastor
11. An Interim Pastor is to respect the boundaries set forth for any departing pastor.

Resource J

Interim Ministry Benchmark Checklist

Interim Ministry Benchmark Checklist (IMBC)

*This list is a draft, a starting place. Some items would need to be completed before a call committee begins its work; others may be completed as the search process has started. **It is helpful if you put a date next to each item when it is completed.***

Administrative

1. Review SC Synod *Interim Ministry Handbook* (which is a work in process).
2. Review congregation council orientation materials. (Goal to be completed.)
3. Review the Congregational Constitution. Determine if amendments are needed
 - a. Ensure Congregational Constitution is up to date with the **2019** ELCA Model Constitution.
 - b. Verify submission to the Secretary of the Synod for review and approval by the Synod Council.
4. Complete and discuss with the Congregation Council the *Congregational Sustainability Assessment*
5. Review Parish Register (electronic or book)
 - a. Up to date
 - b. Regular back-up plan in place and implemented for electronic register
 - c. Fireproof on-site storage for book register
6. Email databases for members and visitors are current
7. Review SC Synod policy on sexual misconduct in the parish.
8. Review congregation's policies on sexual misconduct and child protection
 - a. Update as needed.
 - b. Resource: Christian Education Network of ELCA Generic Safety Template for Churches.
9. Schedule training for all who work with children and you
10. Annual congregational/parochial report filed with ELCA
 - a. In addition to the pastor, who is responsible for submission?
11. Ensure website, Facebook, Twitter, and all other social media accounts are regularly updated and maintained.
 - a. Review and/or create policy for administrating all social media.
 - b. Minors and social media
12. Review all insurance policies (may be helpful to do this with insurance agent)
 - a. Keep copies of ALL policies, even those that are no longer in effect
 - b. Determine if coverage is sufficient for liability, risk management, fire, safety, repairs, etc.
 - c. Review and/or complete fire safety checklist annually
13. Make sure years inspection of fire protection equipment is scheduled.
 - a. Determine if any additional insurance is necessary to cover contents not covered by a standard policy – such as banners and other artwork, etc.
 - b. Review and implement expectations for congregations regarding Covid-19
14. Review and complete ELCA Legal Checklist for Congregations (see ELCA website)
15. Create and/or review Active Shooter Plan for the Congregation
 - a. Practice implementing the plan.
 - b. Resource: local sheriff's office.

16. Review ELCA and Synod websites for congregational resources
17. Disaster response plan for property and congregation membership (See ELCA website resources.
18. Download and discuss congregation demographic information from ELCA Research and Evaluation webpage.
19. Archives
 - a. Review/discuss archiving possibility with Crumley Region 9 Archives
 - b. Review ELCA Records Retention Resource
 - c. Ensure important documents and objects (charter, council minutes, old parish registers, descriptions and purposes of investment funds, photographs, other historic documents are kept in fireproof safe).
20. Review and update policies and fee schedules
 - a. Weddings, funerals, baptisms
 - b. Cemetery
 - c. Building use – kitchen, parlors, etc.
 - d. Personnel (must be kept under lock and key)
 - e. Borrowing property
 - f. Donation policy

Financial

1. Review Synod mission support
 - a. Percentage of budget: _____
 - b. Contribution schedule: _____ (monthly, quarterly...)
2. Verify Mission Support Covenant submitted to Synod office by _____ .
 - a. Who is responsible for submitting this form?
3. Review Synod Compensation Guidelines
 - a. Download a copy of guidelines
 - b. Watch instructional videos about filling out Excel worksheet.
4. Verify annual audit is completed or scheduled
 - a. Audit report is made to the Council and available for the congregation.
5. Annual budget review.
6. Complete and send to Synod congregational financial reports for review to determine the congregation's ability to fund a pastoral compensation
7. Review/create sabbatical policy
8. Endowment fund plan renewed or explored
9. Mission Investment Fund investments reviewed or explored Church credit card
 - a. Who may use?
 - b. Credit limit?

Key Ministry Priorities

1. Review and/or update mission statement
2. Read/discuss *Called Forward Together in Christ: ELCA Future Directions*
3. Review/introduce ELCA Social Statements, Messages, Social Policy Resolutions
4. Review Christian formation curriculum used, children through adults

Resource K

“Compensation – It is more than what I will get ‘paid’”

These notes have been prepared by the SC Synod Task Force on Interim Ministry. While they lack the status of “Policy”, they have been reviewed and approved by Synod Staff. Approval of the Synod Council is forthcoming. Updated June 30, 2020

A few opening thoughts:

- Those who serve congregations during a period of pastoral vacancy serve a vital role in the life of the Church and our Synod.
- The pastors willing to serve congregations during periods of transition have a servant’s heart and a generous spirit.
- Those traits, as admirable as they may be, can work to the detriment of the mission of the Church and its professional leaders.
- Church leaders too often shy away from honest conversations about compensation.
- The process of negotiating your compensation is your first opportunity to assist the congregation. Yours is the opportunity to help the congregational leaders learn to speak openly and honestly about financial matters.

Another disclaimer/distinction - It is impossible to find the exact terms or titles of those who serve congregations between their last pastor and their next pastor. However, for the sake of this document we are making a distinction between two types of service and servants: Stated Supply Pastors and Interim Pastors.

Stated Supply Pastors

The stated supply is an ordained pastor appointed by the bishop who provides part-time worship leadership and pastoral support to a congregation for a long term. The agreed upon responsibilities are clearly defined in a contract signed by the congregational representative and the pastor and filed with the Office of the Bishop. Compensation usually is based on an agreed upon hourly rate.

Worship duties may include Sunday worship services, additional worship services such as weddings, funerals and baptisms and seasonal worship services. Pastoral care may include hospital visits and home communion and other home visits as contracted.

The agreed upon responsibilities are clearly defined in a contract signed by the Congregational representative and the pastor and filed with the Office of the Bishop.

Interim Pastors

The interim pastor is an ordained pastor appointed by the bishop. The interim pastor is the current pastor of the congregation until that time comes when the newly called pastor assumes the role of pastor and shepherd of the congregation. The interim pastor serves as an extension of the office of bishop. An interim pastor will work with the congregation on: 1) Helping the congregation come to terms with its history; 2) Enabling leadership changes; 3) Helping develop a vision for the future; 4) Renewing synodical linkages; and 5) Helping commit to new directions of ministry. In addition will provide worship leadership and pastoral care, and any ministry leadership that you would normally expect from a pastor. The interim pastor and generational

council together will determine readiness to start the call process. The agreed upon responsibilities are clearly defined in a contract signed by the Congregational representative and the pastor and filed with the Office of the Bishop.

Stated Supply Pastors are more likely to establish a contract in which compensation is established as an hourly rate. Stated Supply Pastors typically articulate the hours they are available and days/times when they would not be available.

In that Interim Pastors function as the “Pastor” of the congregation, they may contract for a percentage of a typical Pastor’s work week. For both Interims and pastors under call, it is important to establish boundaries and expectations which ensure service to the congregation while preserving opportunities for sabbath and time away.

Here is suggested procedure in working out a compensation contract for Interim Pastors:

1. Totally unrelated to the congregation - make sure YOU know what you are willing to do and/or interested in doing. Evaluate the advantages of an Interim appointment over the responsibilities. Is there an amount you need to receive in compensation in order to be willing to do the work? How many hours a week would you like to work? These calculations are totally personal and extremely important. You should have these numbers in mind before you express a willingness to serve as an Interim Pastor and before you start conversation with a congregation.
2. First - familiarize yourself with the Call Process. The work of this Task Force for Interim Ministry is part of a larger effort to update these procedures. The documents posted at the SC Synod’s website: <https://scsynod.com/call-process/>, are themselves undergoing revision. But you should be familiar with the information.
3. Give particular attention to the videos regarding compensation. There is a Part One and a Part Two. These are under the heading - “Compensation Resources”.
4. The second of these videos will guide the viewer through a process of calculating the Synod’s recommendations for compensation. Complete the spreadsheet for yourself. Keep in mind that a pastor accepting a call will need all of these expenses to be considered. You may not be in need of an allowance for housing. Maybe your health insurance is covered by a spouse’s employer. These can be subtracted later, but for the sake of that pastor who will come when you leave, share the full spreadsheet with the congregational leaders.
5. With these calculations, you are prepared to discuss your compensation. If you are being invited to serve half-time, your compensation would be half of the guidelines. If you are working three-quarter time, three-quarter of the guidelines.
6. Do not fail to discuss other matters. These ought to include but are not limited to:
 - a. Vacation time - both days off and Sundays off
 - b. Continuing Education - time off, and allowance for costs
Expectations (yours and those of the congregation) for participation in Synod Assembly, Professional Leaders’ Convocation, and Conference Event
 - c. Travel allowance

Stated Supply Pastors are encouraged to complete these same steps. This might allow the one being asked to serve to arrive at an appropriate rate for compensation. Perhaps knowing the bottom number on the spreadsheet would allow you to divide that amount by the number of hours a pastor would work under a full time call.

This process (and data) will be very helpful to the congregation as they contemplate and prepare for extending a call to their next pastor. Keep in mind that you are not merely negotiating a contract. You are assisting the congregation in a very essential step in preparing to extend a call to a pastor. Regardless

of the compensation you finally settle upon, this process makes sure the congregation knows how to complete the forms when their Call Committee is interviewing candidates and putting together call documents.

Questions? Feel free to contact one of The Interim Task Force Team Leaders:

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Resource L

Order of Welcome for the Interim Pastor

At the first service in which an Interim Pastor leads worship, the following may be used after the prelude and prior to the beginning of worship.

President of the Congregation Council:

People of God, the Rev. _____ has been appointed by the Office of the Bishop of the South Carolina Synod to serve _____ Lutheran Church as our Interim Pastor. (A description of duties and days may be inserted here.) We welcome him/her into our midst as a shepherd and guide for our ministry and thank him/her for his/her willingness to be with us during our time of transition. Let us together ask God's blessing's on Pastor _____ and upon the work that we will do together in Christ's name.

The President or an Assisting Minister may offer the following prayer:

A: Loving God, we thank you for sending this faithful pastor to be among us during this special time in the life of our church. And we ask that you would empower him/her with your Holy Spirit that his/her preaching and teaching may show forth your living presence, that his/her counsel might be blessed with wisdom and insight, and that all our work together may witness to the love of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

C: **Amen**

A: Pastor _____,

C: **We welcome you into our family, and pray God's blessing be upon you.**

The Interim Pastor may wish to respond with

a few informal remarks. The service begins

as is customary.

Resource M
Early Assessment of Interim Ministry

The interim pastor is asked to use the following form to assist in evaluating a new interim assignment in the first six weeks, and then submit it to the Office of the Bishop. Use this form to help identify areas to address during the interim.

Church Name _____

City _____

Interim Pastor _____

Date _____

Attendance Trends

What is the average worship attendance in the current year?

What was last year's worship attendance reported to the ELCA?

Has there been a change in worship attendance during the past two years?

YES [] NO []

If so, to what do people attribute this?

Financial / Stewardship Trends

Is the financial situation stable or unstable?

Stable Unstable

Has there been a marked change in the financial situation?

Yes No

If so, to what do people attribute this change?

Does the situation indicate readiness to support a called pastor?

Yes No

When was the last audit by the Audit Committee?

Are audits conducted annually?

Is there a planned annual Stewardship Response?

If so, when was it last reviewed or revised?

Is there a long-range strategic plan?

What percentage of the congregation makes contributions annually?

_____ %

Congregational Participation Trends

What are people saying about volunteer participation?

High Med Low

What are people saying about event participation?

High Med Low

Do people feel connected to ministries of the congregation?

Yes No

Has there been a recent change in volunteer & event participation?

Yes No

If so, to what do people attribute this change?

Leadership Trends

What's the congregation's trust level in their elected leadership?

High Med Low

Do leaders feel adequate to their task?

Yes No

Are there any signs of burnout?

Yes No

Does the congregation have a history of leader/participant burnout?

Yes No

How is communication between leadership and the congregation?

Is the leadership using their constitution as a guide for their leadership?

Yes No

Organization for Ministry

Is there a clear internal structure to the organization for ministry?

Yes No

Is the structure working to effectively deliver ministry?

Yes No

If not, to what do people attribute this?

Is there appropriate accountability/communication between leadership & ministries?

Yes No

Are all ministry teams/committees functioning?

Yes No

Are new people welcomed into existing structures of leadership?

Yes No

Is there a clear mission/vision statement?

Yes No

Yes

Attitude Trends

What are people saying about attitudes in the congregation?

Has there been a shift in attitudes in the last two years?

Yes No

Is there conflict present in the congregation?

Yes No

If so, to what do people attribute this?

Is the congregation welcoming of visitors?

Yes No

Is there a system of visitor follow up?

Yes No

Is the congregation hopeful and positive?

Yes No

Is the congregation focused inward or outward?

Inward Outward

What's the congregation's current anxiety/fear level?

High Med Low

Spiritual Trends

Does prayer permeate the entire organization?

Yes No

Is there an active prayer group/chain?

Yes No

Are people eager to grow spiritually?

Yes No

Is there ongoing Christian Education of youth?

Yes No

Is there ongoing Bible Study for adults?

Yes No

Conclusions

What appears to be the primary gift of this congregation?

What stands out as troublesome/challenging for this congregation?

List any other areas that need addressing that are not mentioned above.

Resource N

Congregational Sustainability Assessment

The following form should be filled out by the elected congregational leadership and the results discussed by the congregational council when completed. A copy sent to the Bishop for file.

SUSTAINABILITY: FACILITIES

I. BUILDING AGE & MAINTENANCE

1. In what year(s) were your parish buildings constructed?

Sanctuary _____ Parish Hall _____

Other buildings & dates: _____

2. HVAC & other major systems are new or have been replaced within the last 10 yrs. Y N

3. If our sanctuary A/C (or other major system) failed next week, we would have the funds on hand to replace it? Y N

4. Such an expense would pose a financial crisis for our congregation. Y N

5. Think back to the last major maintenance need (new roof, new windows, new a/c etc.):

a. What was the repair needed? _____

b. How were the needed funds secured? _____

c. How did the congregation respond? _____

- d. Is it realistic to expect the same response/resolution when the next major maintenance need arises? Y N

6. Based on our answers above, do we see our Building Age & Maintenance as a strength or a weakness for our sustainability as a congregation? **Strength** **Weakness**

15. We have a congregational/ endowment/memorial fund. Y N
- a. If yes, we have withdrawn \$_____ from it to pay regular ministry expenses within the past 12 months.

16. We receive financial gifts by: *(check all that apply)*
- Through passing around offering plates/baskets in worship
 - Providing and promoting online giving, giving at kiosks, etc.
 - Providing and promoting gifts through estate planning, trusts, stock gifts, etc.

17. How much mission support do we provide to/through our Synod and the ELCA for new ministries and churches and pastoral training?
- We don't provide any mission support to the Synod or ELCA
 - Less than 5% of our annual budget
 - 5-10% of our budget
 - More than 10% of our budget

18. Based on our answers above, do we see our Financial Stewardship as an Opportunity or a Threat for our sustainability as a congregation?
- Opportunity** *(we have the capacity to increase our giving)*
 - Threat** *(we are maxed out on our giving capacity and could be in jeopardy)*

IV. PASTORAL COMPENSATION

19. We are able to provide a full-time "Defined Compensation" *(does not include medical or pension)* to our pastor that is equal to or greater than synod guidelines *(See "Compensation Guidelines Worksheet" at www.SCSynod.com)*? Y N

- a. If not, what is the level of "Defined Compensation" we are able to provide our pastor based on our recent actual giving numbers? \$_____

20. We are currently able to provide full benefits coverage *(full family health, disability, retiree support)*, and at least 10% pension to our pastor based on the "Defined Compensation" *(see the Portico Benefits Calculator tool at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Resources/Calculators/BenefitsCostCalculator>)*? Y N

- a. If not, what level of benefit coverage are we able to provide our pastor? \$_____

21. We are able to provide continuing education, professional expenses and mileage reimbursement to our pastor. Y N

22. Based on our answers above, do we see our ability to support Pastoral Compensation as a strength or a weakness for our sustainability as a congregation? **Strength** **Weakness**

SUSTAINABILITY: PEOPLE

V. LEADERSHIP

23. We regularly have enough people to serve on Council. Y N
24. We regularly have enough people to serve on committees. Y N
25. We regularly have enough people to lead the most important ministries we do. Y N
26. Based on our answers above, do we see our Leadership as a strength or a weakness for our sustainability as a congregation? **Strength** **Weakness**

VI. WORSHIP

27. We have enough people to help with weekly worship preparations and assistance. Y N
28. What has our average worship attendance been for the last 5 years? *(See your Annual Reports or the "Full Trend Report" for your congregation at <http://www.elca.org/tools/findacongregation>)*
29. Based on these numbers, our congregation is Growing Holding Steady Declining
30. Based on our answers above, do we see our Worship as a strength or a weakness for our sustainability as a congregation? **Strength** **Weakness**

Resource O

Congregational Safety Information

Christian Education Network of the ELCA Generic Safety Template for Churches
2018

Forward

The purpose of this generic template is to provide general safety information to churches. The content is based on research into best safety practices as discovered by the Christian Education Network of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.) It is our hope that everyone who uses this generic template will customize it to fit their specific church environment. In the changing world in which we live, recommended safety practices must be reviewed regularly.

Each church setting is unique. In addition to *church policies and procedures*, congregations are subject to specific *laws* governing the local community. A congregation may also be subject to specific *regulations* as detailed in the church insurance policy. Specific information, regarding laws and regulations, is ***not*** included in the original template.

The Christian Education Network of the ELCA assumes no liability for any incident that may occur, and everyone uses this template at their own risk.

Introduction: Purpose Statement

The purpose of this manual is to provide everyone at (insert church name here) a single resource for basic safety information. Safety considerations should be included in the design of all worship, learning, and serving experiences so participants of all ages thrive.

In the event of an emergency, leaders have seconds to respond. It is important to have trained leaders and an informed congregation who together have practiced drills before an emergency occurs. Leaders may also need to comply with additional laws and regulations, depending on the activity, and it is the leader's responsibility to discover and communicate any additional safety procedures. This is especially important when partnering with outside organizations.

The following list include items that should be checked and possibly updated by Council Leaders.

Insurance liability & community laws

- A.** Insurance requirements
- B.** Public assembly

Building safety

- A.** Floorplans-includes exits, hiding places, posted signs

- B.** Natural risks-includes tornado, fire, flood, toxic fumes, earthquake
- C.** Bomb threats-identify exits and gathering place
- D.** Active threat/ Shooter-includes lock down procedure, outside threat, inside threat
- E.** Church equipment and technology
- F.** Security Systems-includes door policy
- G.** Technology-includes computers; audio systems; music systems; phone & intercom systems

First aid supplies & equipment

- A.** Location of supplies & equipment
- B.** Defibrillator (AED) -includes maintenance, use, & training
- C.** Wheelchairs & walkers

General policies for employees and volunteers

- A.** Overview of screening, background and reference checks
- B.** Supervision of ministry programs-includes adult to child ratios
- C.** Discipline
- D.** Injuries or illness
- E.** Reporting injury, abuse, or molestation
- F.** Internal Investigations
- G.** Dealing with law enforcement and the media
- H.** Annual employee/volunteer worker review

Chapter 5: Additional middle and high school policies

- A.** Overview
- B.** Behavioral guidelines
- C.** Event policies
- D.** Adult chaperone/mentor/volunteer policies

Chapter 6: Transportation Policies

- A.** General transportation information
- B.** Driver qualifications
- C.** Passenger policies

Chapter 7: Partnering with other organizations

- A.** Inside the church
- B.** Outside the church

Chapter 8: Protecting data and security systems

- A.** Electronic data-includes data storage, email & text
- B.** Printed information
- C.** Photos & videos
- D.** Access to building and security information
- E.** Social media, electronic, and phone communication

Chapter 9: Training & drills

- A.** New leader/member orientation
- B.** Church community drills-includes everyone
- C.** Annual safety manual review

Chapter 10: Forms and Floorplan

- A.** Permission slips
- B.** Photo release
- C.** Incident reports
- D.** Floorplan

Resource P
*Congregational Vitality Survey
Information*

Description of CVS

Vital congregations may be large or small. They may be growing, shrinking or holding steady. The key to their vitality is that they experience God's active presence in everyday life and live as disciples of Christ. This way of describing vitality points to the relationships between the congregation's members and God, each other, and the world. These relationships are at the heart of what it means to be church and are summed up by Jesus in scripture through the Great Commandment "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40) and the Great Commission when 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 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).

The congregational vitality survey helps congregations to write their narrative in regard to their relationships with God, each other and the world.

How to Request CVS

Information Needed

- Name of congregation and city
- Congregational ID
- Congregation contact person and email address
- Number of surveys needed (average attendance plus 10%). NOTE: All ages are included and if you have guests that day, you should invite them to take the survey as well.

Cost to Congregation

NUMBER OF SURVEYS	PRICE
25 or Fewer	\$100
26-50	\$150
51-75	\$200

76-125	\$250
126-175	\$300
176-225	\$350
226-275	\$400
276-325	\$450
326+	Ask for a quote

NOTE: Once the number of surveys needed has been determined, the congregation contact person will share this information with the SC Synod staff person. The surveys will be ordered, and the contact person will receive an invoice within 5 business days. The invoice must be paid in order to receive the survey link. The contact person must download and print the surveys. It is also helpful to have pencils on hand for the congregation to complete the survey.

What to Do When I Receive Survey Link

1. Determine a Sunday to administer the survey. We recommend giving a two-week notice to the congregation. Set an end date for the surveys to be collected. NOTE: All surveys to be included in the evaluation must be mailed in one packet.
2. You may want to mail out copies of the survey if attendance that Sunday is not representative of the congregation. NOTE: If mailing out surveys, the end date for collection of the completed surveys must allow time for the surveys to be received by members and returned to the church.
3. Contact person collects all of the surveys. When surveys are completed, please place ALL surveys, in a flat envelope and mail to the Center for Community Research & Development at Baylor University Center for Community Research & Development, One Bear Place #97131, Waco, TX 76798

What Happens Once We Submit Surveys?

1. Congregational surveys will be processed and results available online from the SC Synod office, usually within 6 weeks.
2. Contact person must schedule an appointment with SC Synod staff person approximately 6 weeks out from when you mailed in the surveys to review the results and receive training on how to present the results to your congregation. NOTE: This meeting includes the contact person, the council and call committee (if applicable).
3. Schedule meeting with congregation to review the results. We recommend giving a two-week notice to the congregation.

Resource Q
Interim Pastor Report Form

Report for Month(s): _____, 20__ Date of Report: _____

Interim Pastor: _____

Email address: _____

Interim Pastor's Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Congregation: _____

City: _____

Cong Email address: _____

Church Phone: _____

Progress Report on the Five Primary Areas of Focus for the Interim Time:

1. Putting the congregation's history into perspective.

2. Claiming a clear identity in God's call and mission.

3. Supporting congregational leadership shifts and changes

4. Strengthening inter-relationship with the synod and ELCA

5. Deepening commitments to new pastoral leadership and the future

Additional concerns or updates for the Office of the Bishop:

Signed: _____

Please provide copies of this confidential report to the bishop. Retain a copy for your files. Attach copy of council minutes if helpful. This report is not copied to council.

Resource R

Developing the Ministry Site Profile

The significant task of leading the congregation in developing the Congregational Ministry Site Profile is entrusted to the call committee.

The Congregational Ministry Site Profile provides an important document for those involved in the call process:

- The congregation is given the opportunity to carefully study its history and direction and to articulate more clearly its mission and ministry priorities.
- The call committee and the Office of the Bishop receive valuable and necessary information for their important work of identifying leadership priorities and needs, and matching this information with the gifts and skills of potential pastoral candidates.
- The potential pastoral candidates with a comprehensive picture of the congregation and its mission and plans as these candidates consider being open to a Call to this congregation.

Therefore, it is most important that the council and call committee assure that appropriate time to thoughtfully and carefully produce an excellent Congregational Ministry Site Profile is encouraged. The completed mission profile should be neat and attractive, possibly including the use of pictures and attachments.

Some Valuable Benefits of Completing the Ministry Site Profile & Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context

There are some very important benefits of engaging the congregation in this self-study:

- The life and mission of the congregation is reviewed and celebrated;
 - The congregation's sense of identity and call from God are renewed;
 - The members evaluate together congregational strengths and growth areas;
 - The congregation more clearly articulates its mission both within the church and in the community/world;
 - The congregation's relationship with the greater church is celebrated;
- AND, the members of the congregation identify gifts and skills that they feel are most important for their next pastor to possess!

A step in calling a rostered leader is completing a Ministry Site Profile, a document that describes your congregation's context and setting, vision for mission and leadership needs. The form is more explicitly focused on mission. The intent is to help a congregation to call the leader that can best serve the congregation as it lives out the Good News of God in its community. Hence, a Ministry Site Profile is essential because of the role it plays in expressing who your congregation is now and what your ministry will look like in the future.

While the call committee is charged with the overall responsibility for the development of the Ministry Site Profile, the committee needs to be in consultation with the council, other congregational leaders and staff, and the members of the congregation to more fully and accurately complete each part of the profile. (See "Role of the Call Committee," par. 2, Section 3, Page 1.) The Ministry Site Profile is divided into five parts with each part addressing different aspects or areas of the congregation's life and leadership needs.

The call committee will need to review the entire document before attempting to answer questions in any part of the profile. As the committee reads through the profile, it will be helpful to begin identifying persons outside of the committee whose input would be helpful to answer a particular question or section. One particular piece of the mission profile, Part III – Leadership Needs, will involve the whole congregation.

Also helpful is to do the research by locating, for example, your congregation's annual reports. The Congregational Ministry Site Profile will ask you to summarize information on your congregation and community. This information, found in your congregation's current Congregational Trend Report and Demographic Data for Your Zip Code Report, is immediately available through the Department for Research and Evaluation. (You may also get the demographic data that your congregational council downloaded from MissionInsite prior to the formation of the call committee. Section 2, "Claiming a clear identity...", Page 6.) It is really helpful to complete the Congregational Vitality Survey first and use what you learn from that to assist you in completing this MSP.

The ELCA website provides an introduction to the call process with helpful downloadable documents on the MSP and video tutorials at <https://www.elca.org/call>. This is also the portal for the online Ministry Site Profile (choose "Ministry Site"). The optional form "Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context" can also be reviewed at Resource C at the end of this section.

Surveying the Congregation

For the completion of Part III: Leadership Needs, Number 11, Top Five Ministry Tasks, and Number 12, Gifts for Ministry, it is particularly important that the call committee invite the greatest participation by members.

Numbers 11 and 12 may be sent to all members through a congregational mailing requesting that it be returned by a certain date to the church office; or the sections may be distributed at worship services for several consecutive Sundays; or time might be set aside at the end of worship services on a particular Sunday announced in advance when members would be

invited to complete the sections and return them before leaving. Regardless of the means by which the sections are completed, the objective is to get responses from the greatest number of persons possible. It may be that some would complete the sections at the church, while others would prefer to take them home for additional time to reflect. Both ways are quite acceptable.

These sections are among the most valuable sections in the Congregational Ministry Site Profile in order to identify and seek these gifts in a rostered leader's ministry.

Putting Together the Survey

The call committee will need to copy Numbers 11 & 12 of the Congregational Ministry Site Profile. These pages could be copied front to back to save paper.

It is helpful if a Cover Letter for the Survey created by the council or by the call committee is written to help explain to the members of the congregation the procedure for completing the survey. The committee will want to be sure to include a deadline date for returning the forms and the collection point for the completed surveys.

After the results of the survey have been tabulated, the call committee may wish to share a summary of the results with the whole congregation prior to the completion of the whole Congregational Ministry Site Profile. Congregational feedback could be invited.

Tabulation of the Survey Results for Numbers 11 & 12

In Section 11, the top five ministry tasks that are checked most often by the congregation are then identified as the "top five ministry tasks" by the members of the congregation. Follow the same tabulation process for Section 12 to identify the 5 Top Priorities and 5 Very Helpful Gifts. The call committee may not agree with the consensus of the membership, but it is best to reflect the desires and perceptions of the whole congregation. If the committee wishes to communicate additional information about the survey results, further explanation, input or clarification can be added in Part IV: Commentary.

Draft Profile

The completed Congregational Ministry Site Profile should be shared with the council for approval, and with the Office of the Bishop for review and possible editing suggestions.

A representative of the Office of the Bishop will then schedule a meeting with the call committee. The shared objective is to produce the most representative and accurate Congregational Ministry Site Profile for the congregation.

The Final Version of the Congregational Ministry Site Profile

The final Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is electronically submitted to the ELCA database. The call committee is encouraged to make additional copies available to members of the congregation by posting it or having it available at a table after worship for several weeks.

The Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context provides additional information about your congregation's mission and vision for the candidates. The form is listed as optional on the ELCA website, but can be very helpful. Please complete these seven questions (online and through your congregation's Congregational Ministry Site Profile account) once you have completed the entire Congregational Ministry Site Profile.

Section 3
Preparation for selecting a
Call Committee

Resource S

The Importance of Communication

Communication is always important to keep members of a congregation informed and together in mission and ministry. However, it becomes even more important during times of transition so that a consistent and accurate message is shared within the congregation and with potential candidates for the pastoral vacancy.

Who has the responsibility for communication in a congregation? Virtually everyone who has a role within the church to keep the ministry functioning. Primary responsibility for communication is held by elected church leaders, the congregation president in particular, as well as the call committee chairperson. The Interim Pastor may also help a great deal with the various avenues of communication. However, the Interim Pastor may be limited by whatever time arrangement is contracted with the church.

Why is communication important? The transition time is a special time of reflection, evaluation and assessment within the life of a congregation. It is a time to take stock of where the church's ministry has been and where God seems to be leading that ministry in the coming years. The Congregational Ministry Site Profile will help in focusing this work. But it should be understood from the outset that the ministry of the church is of the whole people of God who are called and gathered in this place, and therefore as many voices need to be heard within that process of reflection, evaluation and assessment as possible. This necessitates good communication for this process to be complete.

At the same time, the result of this process will be shared by the call committee with potential candidates for the pastoral vacancy, and every effort must be put forth to insure that what is communicated by the call committee, and successively by the congregation council, faithfully reflects everything that the ministry of the congregation is and hopes to be. Failure in communication at this stage can effect the whole call process and the future ministry of the congregation.

It is also the case that call processes take time and require patience. Regular and effective communication during that process between congregation leaders and the congregation will again help to keep people together and increase trust in the process and in the Holy Spirit's guidance during that process.

Levels of communication in a congregation are always in direct proportion to levels of trust between leadership and members. High levels of communication will always assist in bringing about high levels of trust.

Some suggestions for good communication during the Transition Process:

1. Make use of the church newsletter or e-news on a frequent basis to report what is happening in the Transition Process at every stage.
2. Schedule regular Temple Talks at worship services by the congregation president as well as by the call committee chairperson to keep members informed.
3. Make use of regularly scheduled adult forums, committee and organization meetings to gather information for the Congregational Ministry Site Profile to increase participation in the life and mission and direction of the ministry.
4. Publish the results of the Congregation Ministry Site Profile in some form for purposes of accountability, increased ownership, and good communication.
5. Be sensitive to the need for confidentiality within the process of interviewing of candidates and reporting to the congregation. Take time to share with the congregation the reasons for maintaining confidentiality in the early stages of the interview process. However, do not confuse confidentiality with no communication. Reporting on the process and the stages of that process is important for the congregation's sense of well-being during the transition. Find effective ways of doing this without breaking the boundaries of confidentiality.

Resource T

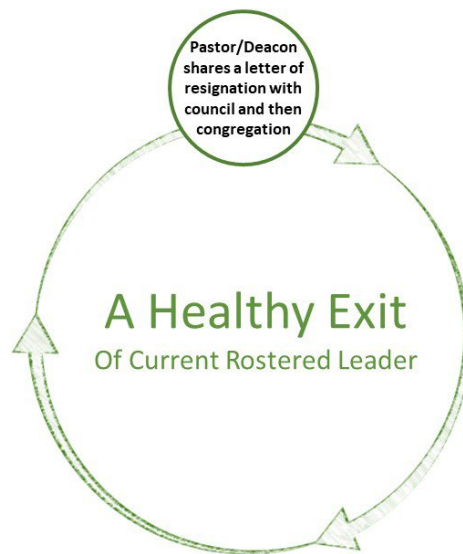
South Carolina Synod – ELCA Call Process

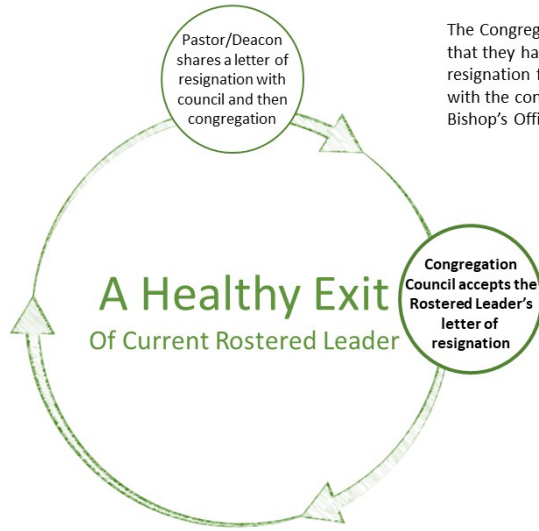
Please review the SC Synod – ELCA Power Point Presentation on Call Process. This helpful tool will be well worth your time and can be reviewed as often as needed.

Power Point Link: <https://scsynod.com/call-process>

Information from the Power Point is included in written form below, but we strongly encourage you to watch the presentation which has narration.





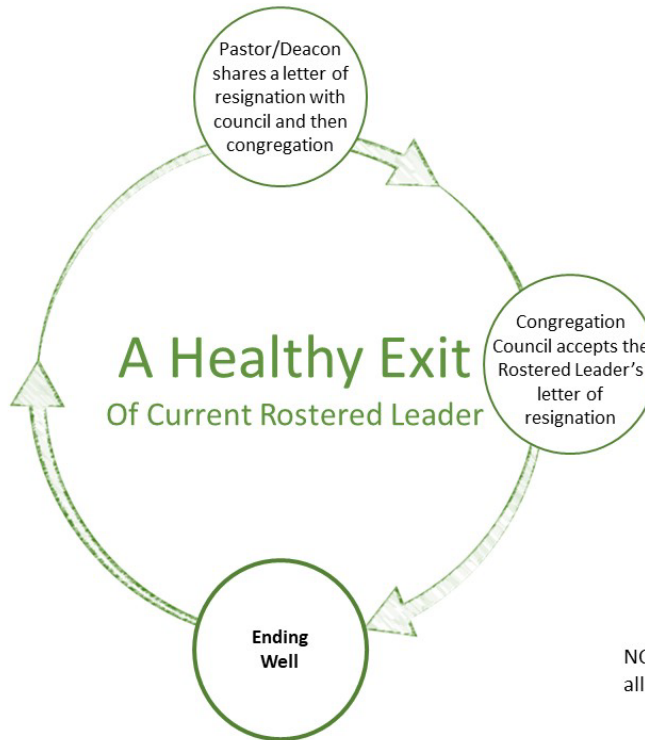


The Congregation Council will share that they have received a letter of resignation from the Pastor/Deacon with the congregation and with the Bishop's Office of the SC Synod.

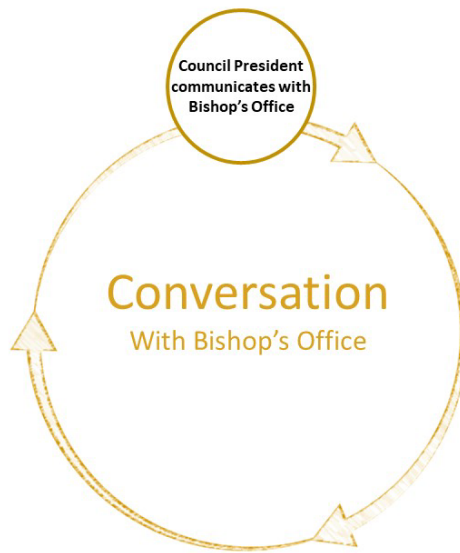
The council letter should include:

- acceptance of the letter of resignation;
- expressions of gratitude for the rostered leader and family;
- the last date the rostered leader will serve the congregation;
- a copy of the letter of resignation;
- and any plans for a farewell event if known.

- Determine last Sunday and last workday.
- Plan celebration.
- Certify parish records.
- Review compensation and finalize any financial commitments. (e.g., vacation)
- Complete excel spreadsheet found [HERE](#) on current compensation and submit to Bishop's Office.
- Contact Portico with end date.
- Set up exit interview.
- Receive keys and passwords.
- Celebrate partnership.



NOTE: This process applies to all Pastors and Deacons



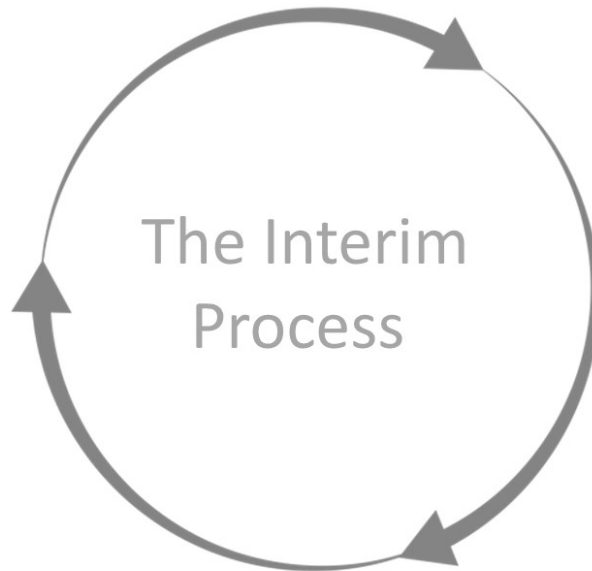
Early steps in the process:

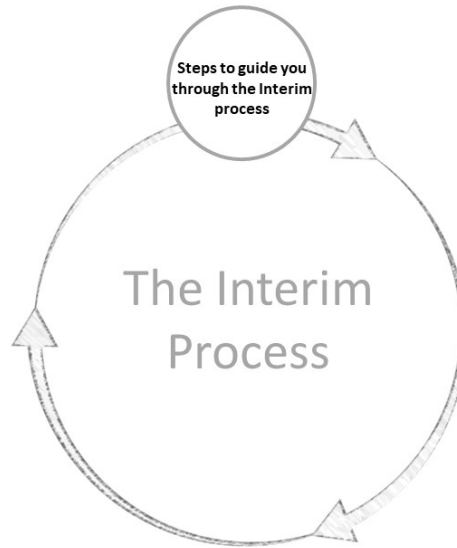
- Bishop's Office provides Transition packet.
- Bishop's Office works with you to schedule Supply Pastors for 2-6 weeks after Pastor's last Sunday.
- Council President completes and returns Transition packet.
- Bishop's Office reviews Transition packet.



- Bishop's Office appoints Interim.
- Council President meets with Interim to review benchmarks, additional ministries to be accomplished and finalize contract.
- Interim is introduced to Council.
- Council and Interim sign contract and submit to Bishop's Office before Interim begins.

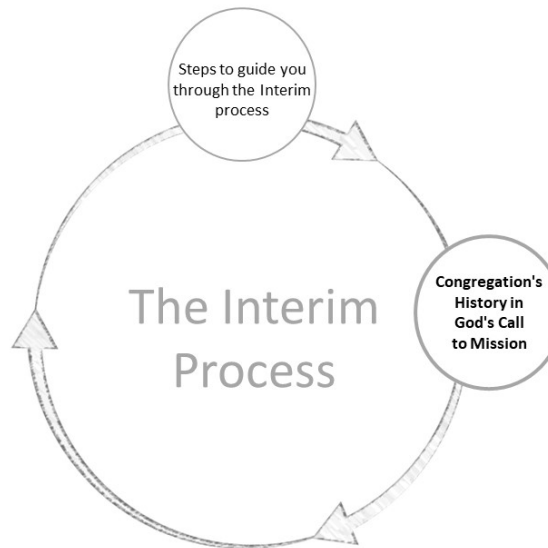
NOTE: It is important that the contract be signed by Council, Interim and Bishop's Office before Interim begins.





The Interim process lasts until you have called your next Pastor/Deacon.

- Congregation welcomes Interim.
- Council, Interim and Bishop's Office coordinates date for installation.
- The Interim Pastor, through Word and Sacrament, teaching and pastoral visitation, tends to the spiritual needs of the congregation.
- The Interim Pastor also works with the Council to lead the Congregation in discussions of any specific issues which need to be addressed during this interim time (e.g., leadership, stewardship, faith formation, unresolved conflicts, changing community dynamics, etc.).
- This will be ongoing work during the entire interim process.

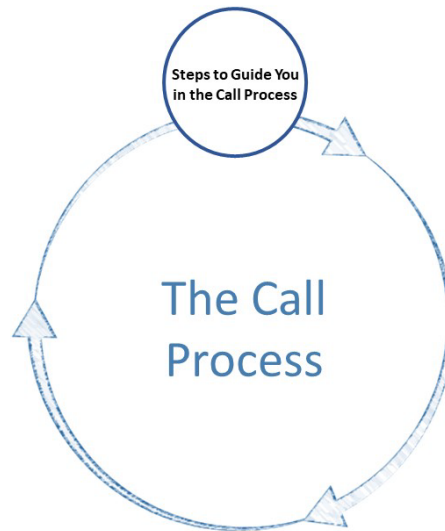
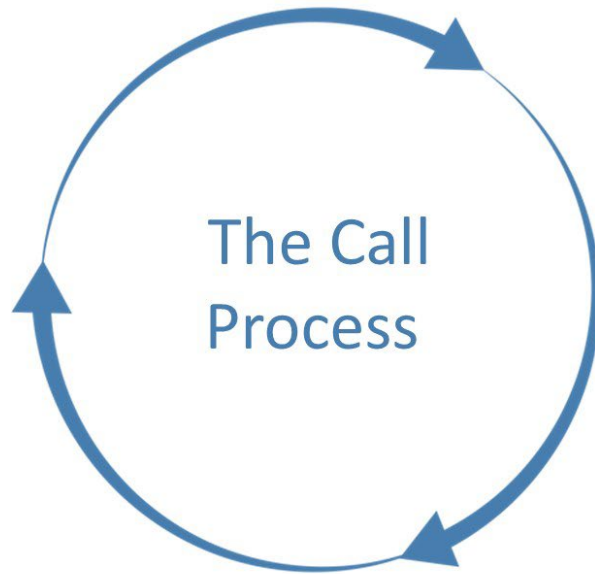


After the Interim Pastor and Congregation have had some significant time to get acquainted and begin ministry together, they will reach out to the Bishop's Office to schedule an appointment with Council to discuss next steps in the call process.

This period of significant time varies in length and includes the Interim Pastor leading the Congregation in the reflection of their history, clarifying God's call and mission for the congregation, and continued work in resolving any issues and working on administrative benchmarks.

The Interim Pastor serves as a resource to the congregation as they clarify God's call and their mission.

NOTE: The Interim Pastor's involvement in the call process itself is limited to clarifying messages and instructions from the Bishop's Office.



Bishop's Office meets with Church Council.

- Meeting date is set.
- Next steps of the call process are reviewed. This would include how to conduct the Congregational Vitality Survey (CVS) and how to complete a Ministry Site Profile (MSP).

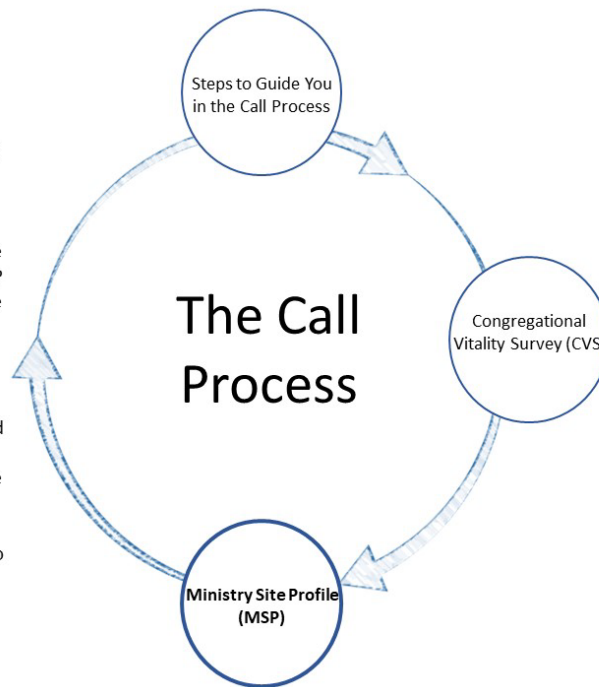


- The Council follows written instructions and conducts CVS with congregation.
- After the Bishop's Office receives the results of the CVS, a Zoom appointment will be scheduled with the Council to review the results. (Receiving results can take up to 6 weeks.)
- The Council, in coordination with the Bishop's Office, schedules a Congregational Event to share the results and answer any questions. The Bishop's Office will lead this event.

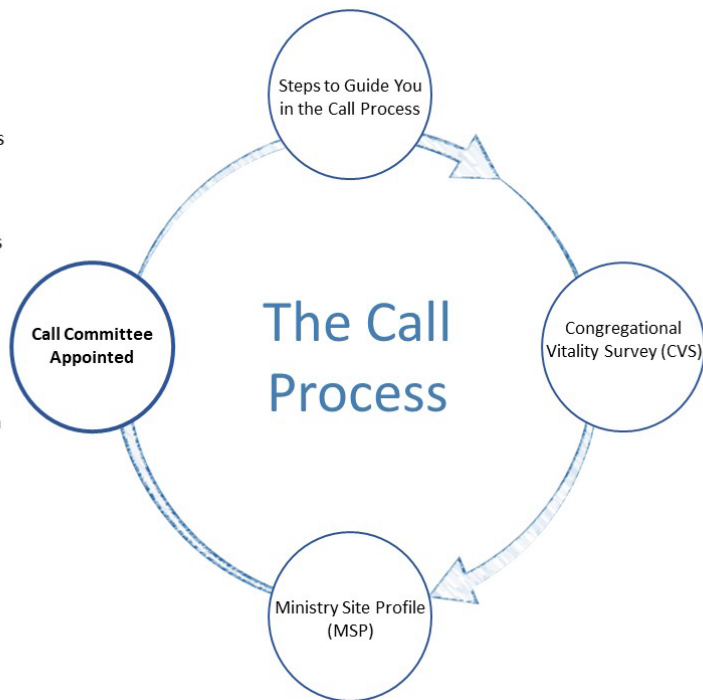
NOTE: The Interim Pastor's involvement is to be present and supportive, and as follow up, help the Council process the information and focus with the congregation on growth areas.

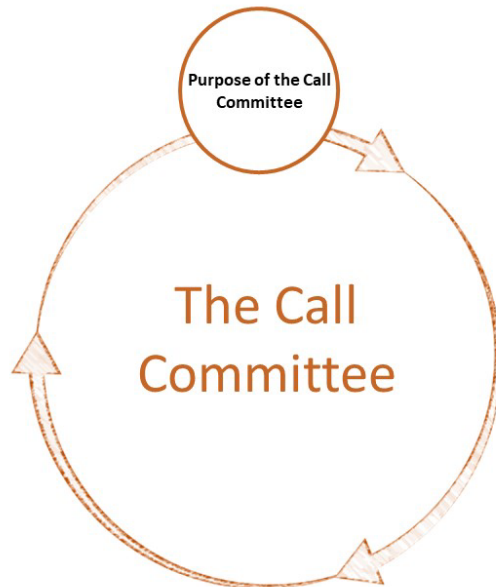
The Church Council completes the Ministry Site Profile. (Council has the option to appoint a task force to work on the MSP on their behalf. At least one council person should be included.)

- Click [HERE](#) to use this link to guide you through completing your MSP
- You will create your own passcode for your congregation. Please keep this on file in the church office for future reference.
- The task force will want to take some questions from the MSP and share them with small groups within the congregation to get the fullest answers possible.
- The information that you have gathered through the CVS will also contribute to the completion of your MSP.



- The Council appoints Call Committee following the congregation's constitution.
- The Council President sends a copy of the MSP to the Bishop's Office and to the Call Committee.
- The Call Committee reviews the MSP together.
- The research process belongs to the Bishop's Office and includes ongoing prayer, reviewing rostered minister profiles, conversations with other Bishops (for those outside of the synod), conversations with pastors about their interest and availability, and reviewing compensation needs.
- The Bishop's Office will set a meeting with the Call Committee once the research is complete.





The call process is a deeply spiritual process.

The Call Committee's goal is to work together to bring a recommendation for pastoral leadership to the Church Council.

The Call Committee will use prayer, interviews, visits and deep listening to serve on behalf of the congregation in discerning the best recommendation possible for a partnership between this congregation and the next Pastor.

The Call Committee will work with the Bishop's Office who recommends Pastors (Deacons) for the interviews for this call.



The Church Council appoints or elects the Call Committee based on the congregation's constitution. The committee should be a cross section of active members of the congregation.

The Congregation Council will report the Call Committee's contact information to the Bishop's Office.

The entire Call Committee will need to be present at all meetings (barring any last minute emergencies), and able to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality, discernment and maturity.

The Council names a Chair of the Call Committee to lead the meetings and communicate with the Bishop's Office.

A Secretary can be designated by the Council to record the actions of the committee.

The Council informs the congregation who is serving on the committee. The Interim Pastor installs the Call Committee and prays for their work throughout the process.





- Introductions are made with Bishop's Office.
- Following research a meeting is set with the Call Committee to share information about available candidates.
- It is the goal of the Bishop's Office to give the Call Committee profiles of the top three matches for this call.

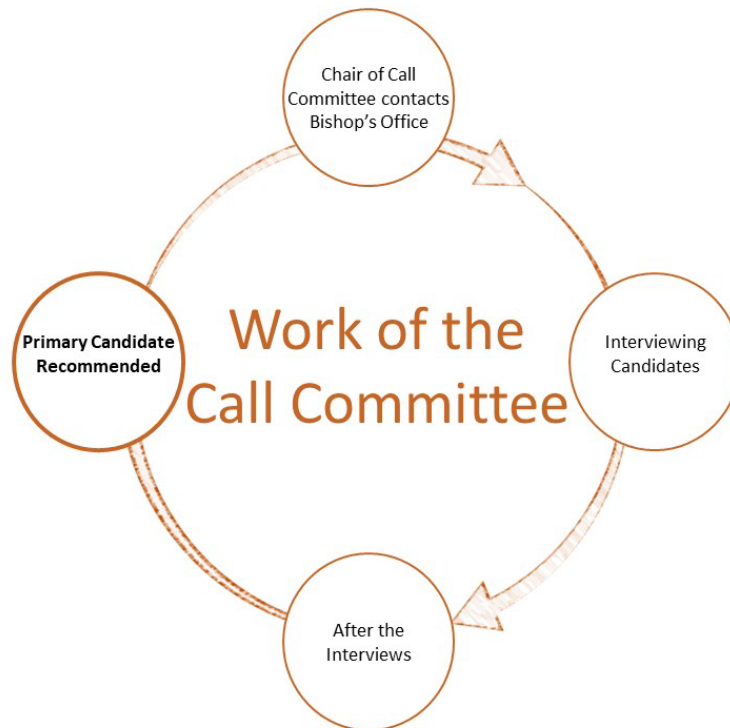


- The Call Committee Chair contacts the candidates within 48 hours of meeting with Bishop's Office to make an introduction.
- The Call Committee will coordinate available meeting dates on their calendars for interviews with the candidates.
- A first interview with each candidate should be scheduled within 2 weeks. This can be done by Zoom or in person.
- Feedback on this interview should be given to each candidate by the Chair of the Call Committee within 2 weeks of the interview.
- This feedback needs to be shared with the Bishop's Office.

- The Call Committee schedules a time to visit each of the candidates within their worship setting. This can be done in person or using video/streaming technology.
- Call Committee gives feedback to candidates within 1 week of visiting worship.
- The Call Committee determines which candidates they want to interview for a second time.
- The Call Committee communicates with any of the candidates whose names they are returning. This communication is by phone and in writing, copied to the Bishop's Office.
- The Call Committee shreds any paperwork they have on those candidates.
- Occasionally even a third interview is helpful.
- Timeliness of communication is essential.



- Call Committee determines who they would like to be their Primary Candidate.
- Call Committee Chair asks Pastor (Deacon) to be Primary Candidate.
- Once all parties agree to Primary Candidate status, it is understood that neither the candidate or the Call Committee are interviewing others.
- Primary Candidate status must be reported to the Bishop's Office.

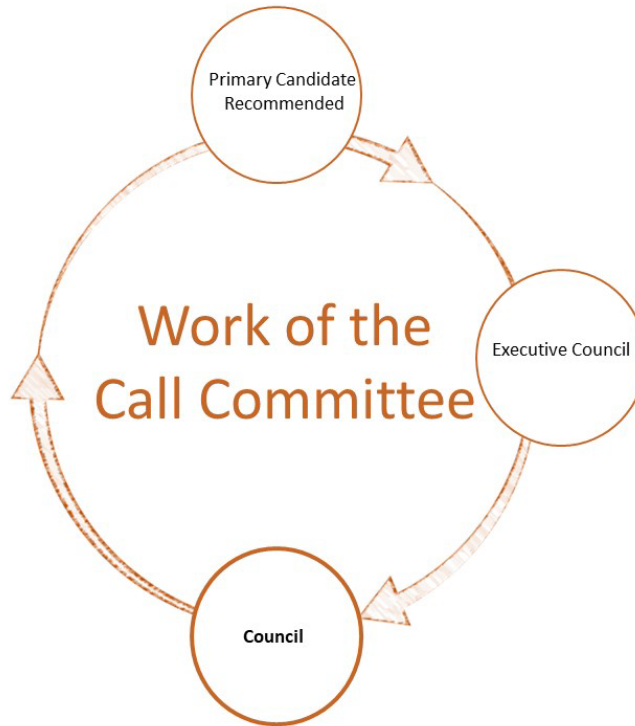


NOTE: If a primary candidate is not selected from the 3 candidates given, the Call Committee may request additional candidates from the Bishop's Office

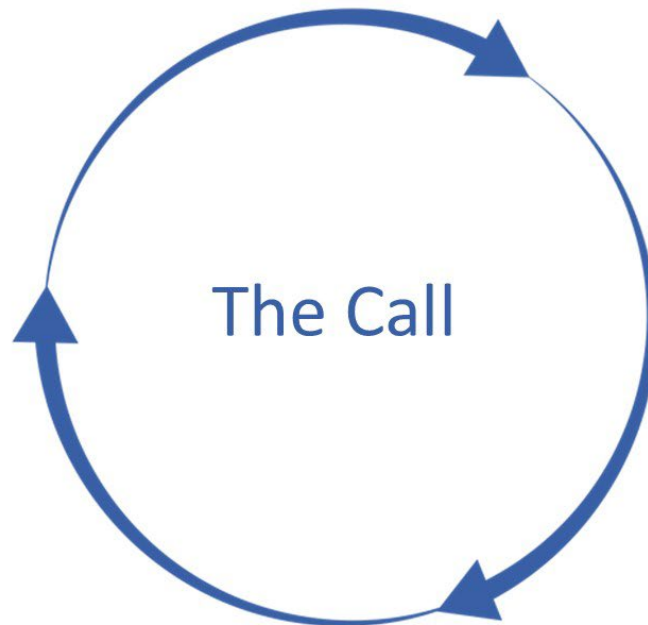


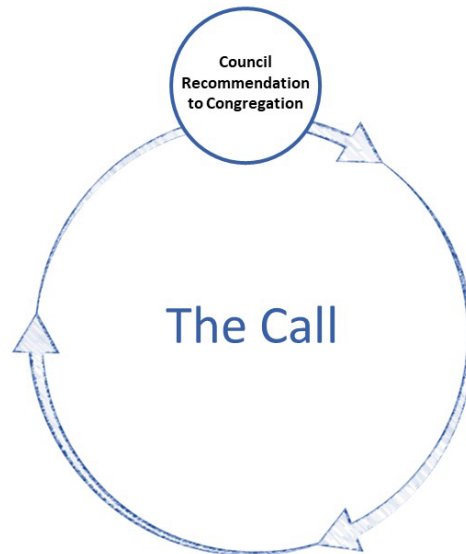
- Call Committee Chair sets up a meeting with the Primary Candidate and Executive Council to discuss compensation.
- Council President or Treasurer complete synod excel spreadsheet found [HERE](#) based on Primary Candidate's years of experience.
- Primary Candidate also completes this excel spreadsheet.
- This will be the starting place for Executive Council and Primary Candidate to finalize the compensation package.
- [HERE](#) is the link to our synod compensation guidelines.

- Following Executive Council meeting, the Primary Candidate is introduced to the entire Council.
- Call Committee sits in on this meeting where Council interviews the Primary Candidate and Primary Candidate interviews Council.
- Primary Candidate and Call Committee are excused while the Council discerns and votes.
- Congregation Council calls congregational meeting to vote on candidate per their constitution.
- Council is in communication with the Bishop's Office about the date of the meeting.

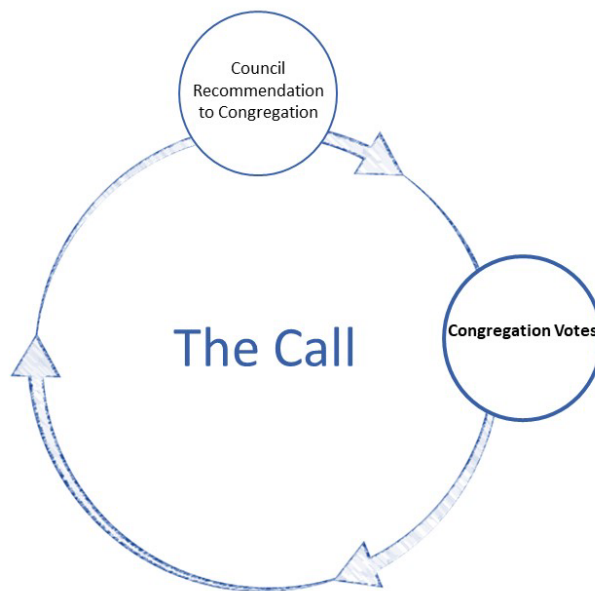


Council may wish to arrange for a Meet and Greet fellowship drop in.



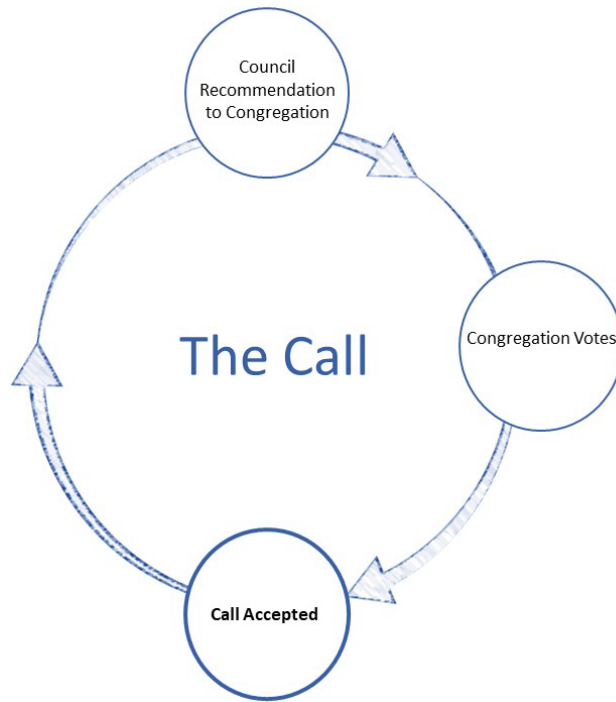


Written notification of congregational meeting to Congregation and Bishop's Office, following the guidance of your constitution.



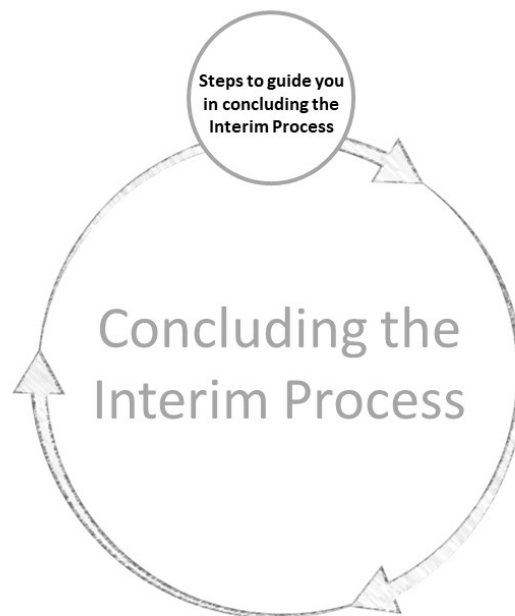
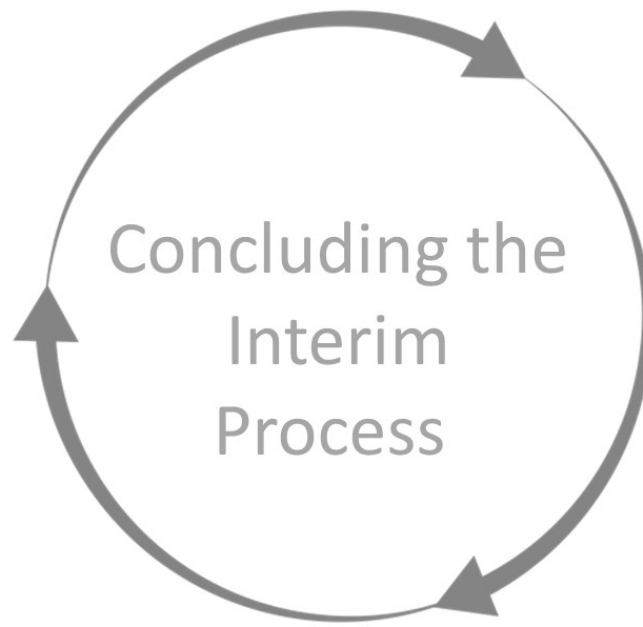
- Two written votes are taken:
 - Vote to Call
 - Vote on Compensation
- The total number of eligible voters is recorded.
- Record vote to call: total yes, total no (two-thirds vote required to extend call).
- Record vote on compensation: total yes, total no (simple majority vote required to pass).

- Report all numbers to Primary Candidate and to the Bishop's Office.
- Primary Candidate has 30 days to accept or decline the call.



Pastoral Candidate determines and reports start date to the Council and the Bishop's Office. (The Pastor/Deacon will need to give a 4-6 week notice to their current congregation.)





The Interim process lasts until you have called your next Pastor/Deacon.

Now that you have extended a call to your new Pastor/Deacon, it is time to conclude the Interim process.

- Determine last Sunday and last workday.
- Plan celebration.
- Certify parish records.
- Review compensation and finalize any financial commitments. (e.g., vacation)
- Contact Portico with end date.
- Set up exit interview.
- Receive keys and passwords.
- Celebrate partnership.

Resource U

Guidelines for selecting the Call Committee

Those responsible for selecting persons as nominees for the call committee have a very important task and should prayerfully approach their work seeking God's guidance. The constitution should be reviewed to determine any restrictions relating to the number of persons to serve on the committee, the method of election or appointment, whether alternates will be selected, and the nominating process that may be required. It is never wise to simply solicit volunteers for a call committee. Rather, a careful and thoughtful discernment process should be followed to ensure that the best possible candidates are considered and selected to serve.

General characteristics and expectations of ALL persons who serve on the call committee include the following:

- **Strong evidence of faith** -Faithful worship participation should be a prerequisite for any person chosen to serve on the call committee. These people should be persons of prayer who will faithfully and carefully seek to discern God's will for this congregation.
- **Active in the life of the congregation** - call committee members should be involved the life and ministry of the congregation beyond worship, and familiar with its programs and activities. They will represent the importance of these ministries to potential pastors.
- **Positive and enthusiastic spirit** -The call committee will represent the congregation to the pastoral candidates during the interview process. They should have a deep sense of the vision and mission of the congregation. This is not a place for chronic complainers.
- **Faithful stewards** -Those who serve on the call committee should recognize that all that they have and are belongs to God. As good stewards, they are persons who share their gifts of time, talent and treasures in the ministry of God's Kingdom.
- **Commitment and follow-through** -The call committee is charged with a significant responsibility on behalf of the whole congregation. Meetings may be frequent and a willingness to share and participate faithfully in the work of the committee is critical.

Further, the call committee should be as representative of the whole congregation as is possible. Special consideration should be given to including:

Newer members and longer term members; Older and younger members, perhaps including a youth; Ethnic and cultural diversity; Balance of female and male members; Representation of various ministries and programs of the congregation.

Special notes:

1. Congregation members who are also employees or staff members of this congregation should not serve on the call committee because of potential conflict of interest.
2. Rostered persons, active or retired, or their spouse/partner should not serve on a call committee. There are other ways for these folks to share their input. An exception is that the senior pastor serves on the call committee to call an additional rostered leader.
3. It is not necessary for council members to serve on the call committee, and if desired, the maximum should be one; the council president should not serve on the call committee.

Resource V

Installation of the Call Committee

P= Presiding Minister A= Assisting Minister R= Call Committee C= Congregation

The order follows the Creed and replaces the Prayer of the Church. The congregation may be seated.

- P. Sisters and brothers in Christ, God has called us to a new time in our life as _____ Church. It is a time for reflection and prayer, a time for self-examination and seeking, a time for expectation and hope. We need a shepherd to lead our flock, and God has promised that he will provide a shepherd for us.
- A. The following persons have been appointed/elected to serve as the call committee of our church.

As the names are read, those persons present come forward to the chancel.

- P. Dear friends, you have been duly *appointed/elected* to serve as the call committee for this congregation in order to seek a pastor to shepherd and lead us. Sacred scripture guides us in our task, to seek a pastor who strives for righteousness and godliness, faith and love, endurance and gentleness -
-a pastor who is a servant as Christ himself was a servant--a pastor who is not domineering or quarrelsome, but who leads with care and concern for God's flock--a pastor who is filled with the Holy Spirit and a trustworthy steward of the mysteries of God. Yours is a spiritual endeavor on behalf of this congregation. Are you willing therefore to be open to the Spirit's leading, and, by prayer and holy conversation, to undertake this calling to seek a shepherd for us?

R. Yes, by the help of God.

- P. Will you be diligent in your seeking, careful in your listening, purposeful in your questioning, and respectful in all that you do?

R. Yes, by the help of God.

- P. Will you seek the Lord's guidance through Holy Scripture and prayer and in your deliberations with your fellow committee members until you are brought to one mind and one will in Christ and have discerned God's shepherd for us?

R. Yes, by the help of God.

All stand.

- A. Let us pray for those who are being installed today and for our church as we seek the Lord's guidance during this special time.

Almighty God, you alone are the great Shepherd of the sheep, and we turn to you to lead and guide us in all things. Our trust and our hope is in you.

C. You are the way, the truth, and the life.

A. As you have raised up faithful servants of your holy word to tend your flock in each time and place, send us now, we pray, a faithful shepherd to lead our flock.

C. Send us a shepherd, O Lord.

A. Send us a shepherd of goodness and grace, of strength and faith, of righteousness in your sight.

C. Send us a shepherd, O Lord.

A. Send us a shepherd to comfort and care for us, to preach your word, to teach our children, to baptize and commune, to marry and counsel, to visit the sick and lay to rest, to guide us and pray for us.

C. Send us a shepherd, O Lord.

A. Give us a holy patience in this time of our seeking, a patience that trusts in you for our present care, knowing that you will bring our good work to fulfillment in your time.

C. O Lord, hear our prayer.

A. Keep us faithful in mission, regular in worship, responsible in stewardship, mindful of the needy, and diligent in prayer.

C. O Lord, hear our prayer.

A. Fill us all with your Holy Spirit and magnify our gifts of discernment, that we might follow your will and leading into a future yet unknown.

C. O Lord, hear our prayer.

A. Bless those who are especially called to serve on the call committee. Give them the gifts they need to seek and find the pastor of your own nurturing, the shepherd of your own choosing, that we might be fed by your holy word and sacraments and grow in faith and love and ministry.

C. O Lord, hear our prayer.

P. All these things we ask, O God, with whatever else we need, in the name of him who is the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. **Amen**

The minister addresses the call committee.

P. I now declare that you have been installed as the call committee of _____ Church.
May God bring your good work to fulfillment and grace in Christ's name.

C. **Amen**

P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C. *And also with you.*

*All share the peace of the Lord.
The liturgy continues as is customary after the peace.*

Resource W

The work of the Call Committee

The Experience of Serving on a Call Committee

It is often reported that the experience of serving on a call committee is one of the most important and rewarding things that members of a congregation can do. They experience firsthand the working of God's Spirit through the whole process of discerning God's will for the congregation and the calling of its new pastor. It gives them an opportunity to see how the local congregation is vitally a part of the synod and the whole church.

In a very special way, members of a call committee participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of a congregation. As a first step in the work of the call committee, the members of the committee will want to review the entirety of this manual and the various resources provided.

Two resources are included in this Section to assist call committees in their work. The first, ***The Call to Ministry***, will assist members of the committee to understand the very nature of God's calling to all people within the Church. The second resource is a short article on ***Discerning God's Will***, which presents basics in the process of discernment. Finally, a set of ***Five Devotions on Discernment from the Book of Acts*** for the call committee (useful elsewhere too) will assist the committee to incorporate these ideas into their work and spiritual lives.

The Importance of Communication

Communicating regularly to the council and the congregation regarding the work and progress of the call committee helps keep everyone aware of how the process is moving along, and helps avoid the perception that things are being done in secret. Creative and frequent communication is a wonderful way to include everyone in the excitement of calling a new pastor!

The call committee should review the resource, Importance of Communication, located in the resources following the Introduction of this manual, for more information about communications. Some ideas include:

- Sharing a description and outline of the process;
- Posting summaries or copies of resources
- Prayer petitions for the various stages of the call process to be used in worship;
- Temple Talks by various members of the call committee to share updates;
- Bulletin board displays showing the Time-Line Poster and providing information about the present work of the committee;
- Newsletter and bulletin articles; e-news updates;
- Visits to adult and youth Sunday School classes for conversation and sharing of news.

Confidentiality

While open and regular communication is a high priority, there are some parts of the call committee's responsibilities that are highly confidential in nature. During the interview stage of the call process, the call committee must keep all verbal and written information about each pastoral candidate strictly confidential. This means that committee members will need to establish ground rules and boundaries with their spouse/partner, family, the council, and the congregation at large.

Pastor-candidates place a great deal of trust in the ability of members of the call committee to keep confidences so as not to hinder their present ministries if they were not to receive a new call. It is inappropriate for call committee members to mention any information about candidates outside of the committee.

When a primary candidate has been identified by the call committee, only that candidate's name and information is to be shared with the council. It then becomes the council's role to decide whether to recommend the candidate to the congregation and to determine the process for introducing the candidate to the whole congregation.

The confidential information and the Rostered Minister Profile of the candidates who are not recommended to the council should be collected by the call committee chairperson and properly destroyed/shredded, or returned to a representative of the Office of the Bishop.

The call committee chair and recorder and the congregation council president and secretary are particularly cautioned about keeping information confidential in all forms of communication within their groups. Candidate names and locations should be guarded very carefully in these communications.

Call Committee Expenses

The congregation bears the responsibility for paying any expenses incurred by the call committee, including the costs involved in the travel, lodging and meals for pastoral candidates being interviewed by the call committee. The chairperson of the call committee works closely with the Treasurer of the congregation to assure that matters of confidentiality are maintained. Any travel and related expenses of call committee members incurred while doing the work of the Call Committee are to be reimbursed by the congregation.

It is the responsibility of the congregation council to authorize and provide in advance a budget line for call committee expenses. It should be understood that these expenses could well include the airline flights of pastoral candidates from various places in the United States and will include lodging expenses and meals. It is best to provide motel lodging for all candidates so that they may have their privacy, and confidentiality is maintained. It is inappropriate to place candidates in the homes of single persons. Confidentiality is broken when candidates are placed in homes that include family members who are not on the call committee.

The chairperson of the call committee should meet with the council to be certain that a budget line has been approved and that it is adequate for the call committee to do its work. Projections can be difficult because of uncertainty about where the pastor-candidates might live, but a reasonable figure can usually be determined in advance.

Resource X

The Call to Ministry

The Call of All Christians

I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in my Lord Jesus Christ or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has CALLED me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith just as he CALLS, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth.

(Small Catechism, 3rd Article, Apostles' Creed)

In our Baptism, the Holy Spirit enters our lives to fill us with God's Spirit and to give us the faith through which we receive God's free gifts of forgiveness and new life. In Baptism, we are called into a relationship with God and to a life of service to all the people God has made.

All those who are baptized are called to proclaim the Gospel and to follow Christ's example of humble service and love for others. There is no higher calling.

For the sake of good order in the church, some Christians are called to ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament.

A Call to the Public Ministry of Word and Sacrament

In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and the sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the Gospel.

(Augsburg Confession, Article V)

In the course of daily living, God provides many settings in which the people of God are to live out their vocation or calling: marriage and parenthood, civil service, occupations, the ordained ministry, to name a few. The Office of Pastor was given to the church as a way to see that the means of grace, the Word and sacraments, were made available to the people in a regular and orderly fashion. Lutherans believe and teach that God established the Office of Pastor and authorized its perpetuation by the church.

The Spirit is at work calling some people to serve as pastors. Lutherans believe there are two parts of the Spirit's call. There is both an internal and external dimension of the call. The *internal call* is the nudging by the Holy Spirit that an individual experiences that prompts one to ministry. The *external call* is the call of the church. In it, the church discerns and publicly

recognizes a person's internal call and confirms it with a call to specific ministry. Both dimensions of the call are necessary for a person to have a valid call to the ordained ministry. A person's call to the Office of Pastor and his/her ability to perform the required tasks are developed and certified by the church through seminary training and ordination.

It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call. (Augsburg Confession, Article XIV)

The Lutheran reformers saw the necessity of good order and recognized ordination as the church's means to assure it. Ordination belongs to the church. It is the task and privilege of the church to determine the standards for ordination and to oversee the continuing fitness of its pastors for ministry.

Therefore, individuals who are ordained and rostered place themselves under the life-long authority of the church.

A Call to a Particular Context for Ministry

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I, send me!" (Isaiah 6:8-9a)

All calls originate with God, but the church issues calls to specific ministry. Ordinarily, this is through a congregation. If a pastor is being called to specialized ministry in the world, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council may issue a special call. The process of calling a pastor is very different than hiring an employee and should not be confused with secular hiring practices.

Lutherans firmly believe that the Holy Spirit plays the major role in the decision about who is the most appropriate person to provide pastoral ministry in any particular place. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Office of the Bishop, the Call Committee and pastoral candidates seek to discern God's will for the mission and ministry of a particular congregation.

Martin Luther's Advice to Those Seeking a Pastor

Act in this way: first beseech God with prayers, both individual and in common. For this is a great undertaking, and the magnitude of it, rather than its novelty, impresses me. When you have so prayed, have no doubt that God to whom you have prayed is faithful and will give what you ask, opening to the one who knocks and granting to the one who seeks (Matt. 7:8).

Thus you may be assured that you are not pushing this matter, but being pushed in it. Then call and come together freely. Then let those who are leaders among you lay hands upon them, and certify and commend them to the people and the church or community. In this way let them become your bishops, ministers, or pastors. Amen. (Concerning the Ministry, Luther's Works, 40:40)

Resource Y
Discerning God's Will: The Basics of Discernment
By the Rev. Thomas L. Weitzel

The Call Process: Discerning God's Will

The process of seeking and calling a pastor to serve a congregation is one of discernment. For Christians, the goal of all discernment is seeking the will of God in each situation. The call process therefore seeks to know God's will for the future mission and ministry of a congregation and who God chooses as pastor and shepherd for that ministry. It is God who chooses. It is the work of the Call Committee, the Congregation Council, the congregation, the pastors interviewed and the Office of the Bishop to discern God's choice and the Spirit's leading.

When a congregation enters into the call process, they enter into a process of discernment that has its roots in the New Testament community described in the book of Acts. In Acts 1, when it was time to fill the vacancy left by Judas among the Twelve Apostles, the disciples all prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry..." (Acts 1.25-26). It was a prayer of discernment.

In Acts 6, when it was time to expand the ministry of the local church in Jerusalem, the leaders called the membership together and asked them to nominate seven men "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" for this new task of ministry. And when the seven were chosen, the Apostles then prayed and laid hands upon them. The seeking of candidates "full of the Spirit" was a seeking of the Spirit's leading and calling, and seeking of God's will. It was a process of discernment. (Acts 6.1-6).

Throughout Acts, at every point of development of the new Christian Church, the Spirit was there doing the leading with the church members seeking the leading and following the Spirit's bidding. The Spirit led Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch to interpret God's word and baptize him (Acts 8.29). The Spirit led Paul and his companions to each and every city of his missionary journeys, even forbidding entry to some (Acts 19.21; 16.6-7).

Even at a crucial point in the development of the Church, when the earliest leaders and members had thought that God had only given salvation to the children of Israel, it was the Spirit who made it known to them through a careful process of examination of evidence and conversations and deliberations and reports that "God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11.1-18). This led to further discoveries of God's will for the Gentiles that did not require their observance of Jewish laws regarding food and circumcision (Acts 15). A decision by church leaders was made about this and a report of that decision sent to Gentile Christians in Antioch that stated very clearly how that decision was reached: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials..." (Acts 15.28).

The Church lived its life as a life of discernment. And as a result, “Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the church increased in numbers” (Acts 9.31).

How did the Spirit lead? How was God’s will known? From Acts we see the Spirit coming to both individuals (11.12) and groups (2.1-4; 21.4). In Acts, the Spirit comes during worship and fasting (13.2), during prayer (10.9-16), in answered prayer (10.31), during the preaching of God’s word (10.44), at baptism (19.1-6), in the laying of hands (8.14-17), in visions (9.10-12; 10.3-6), as a voice heard (8.29; 10.19), as an insight (11.28), as a matter of reading the signs and interpreting events (11.1-18; 16.6-7; 20.22-23), and as reported above, within group processes of deliberation and conversation (Acts 11 and 15).

As it was for these first Christians, so it is for those in the Church today, whether seeking God’s vision and will for ministry or seeking a pastor for that ministry. And just as God came to a variety of members in a variety of ways, so also the Spirit will continue to come to those who believe and trust in God and listen for God’s voice.

Some Basics about Discernment

Through Holy Scripture and faith experience, all Christians have come to realize that knowing and doing God’s will is the best possible thing that can happen to them. And so Christians pray to God frequently, even daily, “Your kingdom come, your will be done,” as Jesus taught in the Lord’s Prayer.

While realizing that the Spirit will come and lead as the Spirit chooses, Christians over the centuries have come to know that there are some basics that can help in the discernment process:

1. Knowing our identity and calling will provide a foundation for being open to the Spirit’s leading. We are Christians, called into relationship with God and fellow believers and living in the unity of Spirit by the grace of Jesus Christ. Our identity and name not only says who we are, but whose we are as well. We are Christ’s, and therefore children of God.
2. Knowing our mission and purpose will also provide grounding and focus for the task of calling a pastor. The preparing of the *Congregational Ministry Site Profile* will help to detail both this congregation’s identity and purpose.
3. Shedding is a most important step for the success of discernment. The goal of discernment is to seek God’s will, not the will of any one person or group. Therefore, shedding occurs in faith and trust and asks each participant to lay aside those things that would hinder the following of the Spirit’s leading. Shedding does not mean leaving behind one’s gifts, but rather allowing those gifts to be used by the Spirit. Shedding leaves behind personal gain or agenda for the sake of God’s will and the common good.
4. Rooting is important to discernment as it connects everyone with the word and activity of God. Rooting asks, “How does the Bible inform us regarding our mission and ministry and the calling of a pastor and shepherd? How does our tradition and history also inform us?” Rooting connects us with God and God’s work among us at the beginning of our task.
5. Listening is a premium in discerning God’s will. Listening hears the prompting of the Spirit,

as well as the voices of all in the discerning community. Listening hears those who might be affected by decisions made. God will speak through these voices. But in order to hear them, one's own voice may need to be silent more than heard. Listening is not confined simply to call-related meetings and conversations. As was witnessed above in the book of Acts, the Spirit came at many times and in many ways and to many people, even at unexpected times. Therefore, a whole posture of listening becomes important during the discernment and call process – in worship, in prayer, in conversation, in deliberation, in private devotions, in group Bible study, in preaching and teaching. Listening is a premium in discerning the leading of the Spirit.

6. Exploring is what will occur within the call process itself, especially at the time of the interviews by the Call Committee, the council and eventually the congregation. Exploring is how Christians come to know God's leading and includes sorting through options. As exemplified in Acts 6, exploring goes beyond skills and gifts to seek the spiritual. During an interview, exploring will ask, "Is the Spirit clearly evident in this candidate? Is this pastor's inner call and personal faith evident as well? Is the hand of God evident in the life and past ministry of this candidate? Is the Spirit leading this candidate to minister in this congregation and setting?"
7. Weighing is what comes after the interviews. In addition to the normal positives and negatives, pros and cons, that are identified, the Call Committee, the council and congregation seeks foremost to know what comes from God. What here leads toward God and not away from God? What is filled with human novelty or invention? Does the Spirit seem to rest on a particular individual or path? Weighing is not about democratic practice. Weighing is the spiritual process of identifying the Spirit's leading.
8. Deciding moves the process to the final test: is this choice the choice of God? Ignatius of Loyola, who founded the monastic order of the Society of Jesus in the 16th century and wrote a great deal about discernment, suggested that a decision based upon discernment will be filled with one of two things. Either it will be filled with *consolation* and movement toward God, assisting in loving God more. Or it will be filled with *desolation* and movement away from God, pulling people toward things that are other than godly.

In the end, the goal of discernment and the goal of the Call Process will be much as it was for those first Christians in the book of Acts. A Call Committee, council and congregation will want to be able to say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..."

Resources persons are available through the Office of the Bishop to assist congregations, Call Committees and congregation councils to learn more about discernment in scripture and in Christian practice.

Leaders of the congregation might ask the interim pastor to lead a study of the book of Acts during the early part of the interim period.

Resource Z
Five Devotions on Discernment from the Book of Acts
by the Rev. Thomas L. Weitzel

1. And the Lot Fell on Matthias

Read Acts 1:12-26.

This story follows the Ascension of Jesus into heaven and shows the process by which a new person was chosen to replace Judas the Betrayer for the ministry of the Twelve Apostles.

The story makes clear that there were more who believed in Jesus than just the Apostles. How many did they number? (1:15)

Peter takes the lead in the account and suggests a discernment process to follow.

What was the criteria for the candidate to be considered? 1:21-22

If Jesus' ministry from his baptism to his ascension was about three years long, then what are the implications of the criteria suggested by Peter?

How many candidates were settled upon that fulfilled the criteria? 1:23

Could there have been more? What do you think led them to put forward only two?

What was the next step in the process? 1:24

What specifically did the prayer ask for? 1:24c

The last step in the process was casting lots (1:26). Proverbs 16:33 says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is the Lord's alone." Although this method of determining God's will was an old and venerable one, appearing 20 times in both Old and New Testaments, this was the last recorded use of casting lots in the Bible.

How do you see casting lots differing from taking a vote as we do today?

All human methods of determining or discerning God's will can be corrupted by the human element. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of casting lots for determining God's will? What might be the advantages and disadvantages of voting?

In the end, "the lot fell on Matthias, and he was added to the eleven apostles" (1:26).

Does this last verse indicate faith in the process and general agreement among all the believers that God's will had indeed been done?

In Acts 5:38-39, a Pharisee named Gamaliel makes a helpful statement about discernment, saying, "if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them--in that case you may even be found fighting against God!"

That suggests that there are signs that can be read during and after a process is complete that would indicate whether God's will has been done. What might be some of those signs that Matthias truly was God's choice? What might be signs that Matthias was not God's choice?

What do we learn from this passage about God's leading in our ministry?

Close this devotion with a prayer asking God to teach us how to listen with ears attuned to the

Spirit and eyes open to the signs of God's leading.

2. Full of Wisdom & the Spirit

Read Acts 6:1-8.

This story details some of the "growing pains" in the new ministry of the fledgling Christian community in Jerusalem as both numbers and ministry needs increased.

What is the "complaint" or conflict that had developed in the community? 6:1

In dividing out ministries, what ministry took priority for the Apostles themselves to do? 6:2 and 4?

Are there implications in these verses with regard to pastoral involvement in church administration? What might these be?

Bible interpreters have often identified this story as detailing the development of lay ministries within the church. The Apostles suggested specific criteria for fulfilling lay ministry in the church. What were these? 6:3

How do these criteria match our own understanding of lay ministry within our church? When Church Council or committee positions become vacant, how important are these kind of biblical criteria for choosing replacements?

What would be the outward signs that a person is "full of faith and the Holy Spirit" today? 6:5

Who actually chose the seven candidates for ministry of "daily distribution of food" -- the Apostles alone or the whole community? 6:5

What would be the importance of having the whole community involved in the choosing?

Notice that the complaint in 6:1 came from the Hellenists (Greeks) against the Hebrews, then notice that the names of the candidates put forth in 6:5 includes both Greeks and Hebrews. How would the good of the whole community be served by this?

Something of an installation service occurs in 6:6, presumably at worship. What are the individual elements of this rite of installation?

In the Bible, laying hands was a sign of several things: it was a setting apart of a person for service (Num. 8:10), a giving of authority (Num. 27:18-23), a sign of blessing (Mk. 10:14-16), a mode for healing (Mk. 5:23, Acts 28:8), and especially a conveyance of the Holy Spirit (Deut. 34:9, Acts 8:17), particularly related to Baptism (Acts 19:5-6). Which of these uses is being employed in this passage (6:6)?

Although this passage is a simple narrative of a problem and the resolution of that problem through a particular process, how might it be described as a discernment process? Where is the evidence of God's leading in the process?

As mentioned in the last lesson, signs of God's leading within a particular process become evident as time goes on. What are the signs that God blessed the process of the choosing of the seven? 6:7-8

What do we learn from this passage about God's leading in our ministry?

Close this devotion with a prayer asking God to teach us to look for signs of the Spirit and of wisdom and faith in those we encounter within the church.

3. Guided by the Spirit

Read Acts 8:26-40.

In this passage, we see Philip being led in his ministry after being commissioned in Acts 6. Philip hears an "angel of the Lord" (8:26) and then "the Spirit" (8:29) speak to him in very specific ways with very specific directions. Can we take this "hearing" literally? In what ways do people "hear" the Spirit's leading? How do we know that it is the Spirit speaking? Jesus says in John 7:17, "Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God."

What did Philip discover on that "road from Jerusalem to Gaza" that made him realize that it truly had been the Spirit directing him there? 8:27-28

What is the result of this Spirit-led encounter with the eunuch? 8:38

8:39-40 says that "the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away" and he next found himself 15-20 miles away in Azotus. Is this a miraculous moving of Philip from one place to another? How similar is it to say, "The next thing I knew, I was in Albuquerque"? Is the emphasis in this passage on the manner of Philip's movement or on the author of that movement, the Spirit?

When we are following the Spirit's leading, are we fully conscious of it? What tells us if we are?

Read Acts 16:6-15.

This account details part of one of the missionary journeys of Paul. Paul had been called on the road to Damascus for this ministry (Acts 9) and set apart with prayer and laying of hands by the church at Antioch at the bidding of the Spirit (13:2-3).

What's striking in Acts 16:6-7 is the negative advice of the Spirit: forbidding preaching in Asia and not allowing Paul to enter Bithynia. While we normally think of how God positively leads us, this passage indicates that God lets us know what not to do as well.

How might God communicate that something is not the direction that we should take? What signs might be available to us of this? In 16:9, Paul has a vision "during the night." Are dreams and visions the same thing? How might they differ?

How does a person know if a vision or a dream is from God? Note in 16:10 that it was not simply Paul who was convinced of God's call in the vision; rather it says "we" were "convinced." This presumes that after Paul had the vision, he discussed it with his traveling companions to confirm his own feelings about it. In 1 Cor. 14:26-33, Paul is very specific in saying that "revelations" and "speaking in tongues" should always be "interpreted" and "weighed" by others for the purpose of "building up" the church. 1 John 4:1 similarly says "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God." Discerning God's will is a collaborative process in the church of the New Testament.

How might we go about testing visions and revelations and insights today? What did Paul and his party find when they went to Macedonia that served as confirmation of God's leading? 16:13-15

What do we learn from these passages about God's leading in our ministry?

Close this devotion with a prayer asking God to teach us how to read both negative and positive signs of the Spirit's leading.

4. Reading Multiple Signs

Read Acts 11:1-18.

The entrance of the Gentiles (non-Jewish people) into the Christian Church was the first major test of God's leading encountered in the fledgling church and is described in detail in Acts 11 and Acts 15. The first Christians had been Jews ("circumcised believers"), just as Jesus had been.

What is the posture of these circumcised believers in Judean church? 11:2-3

How might such behavior lead to conflict in a congregation?

Peter's response is to describe his own discernment process "step by step" as it included multiple signs indicating the welcome of the Gentiles. What is the first sign that Peter describes? 11:5-9 What was Peter's sense of the origin of this sign? 11:9 How many times did this sign occur? 11:10 What was the second sign that Peter encountered? 11:11-12a Peter was told of a third sign that someone else saw. What was that sign? 11:13-14 What was the fourth sign that Peter witnessed? 11:15

The fifth sign came in the form of a memory of Jesus' words, 11:16. In John 14:26, Jesus had promised the disciples that "the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you."

Did Peter witness and read these signs alone? No, 11:12b. Note, as discovered in the last devotion, discernment is a collaborative process.

What was Peter's conclusion from all these signs? 11:17 Did the assembled church in Jerusalem agree with Peter's conclusion about the signs? 11:18

Could they have continued to criticize and oppose Peter? Remember Gamaliel's advice in Acts 5:38-39, "if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them--in that case you may even be found fighting against God!"

Drawing conclusions from this passage, if God is calling the church to a new ministry or path: How many signs are likely to point to it? How many people are likely to see it? What will be the place of scripture in relation to the signs? cf. 11:16 How important is interpretation in reading signs and drawing conclusions for direction? Can interpretation be wrong? What would assure that interpretation is not wrong?

In this story, the "circumcised believers," who would have been the majority in the Christian church of that day, were not happy in 11:2 about the influx of the uncircumcised Gentiles. In 11:18, their criticisms were "silenced." What does this say about personal agendas, fears, prejudices when it comes to discernment?

Will a discernment process always "silence" or "convince" (16:10) everyone? In Acts 15:1, some from the Judean church tried to convince the Gentiles that they had to observe Jewish tradition in order to "be saved." Another meeting of the church was necessary (15:6-28) to finalize the matter.

What do we learn from these passages about God's leading in our ministry?

Close this devotion with a prayer asking God to assist us in using scripture to interpret signs of the Spirit's leading.

5. How the Spirit Comes to Us

In previous devotions, we have seen signs of the Spirit's leading in many and various ways. Assign each of the passages below to a different member of your group. Then have each member share with others how the passage describes the Spirit's leading in that particular situation:

Acts 4:8-10 - The Spirit comes to individuals

Acts 2:1-4 - The Spirit comes to groups

Acts 13:2-3 - The Spirit comes during worship and fasting

Acts 22:17-18 - The Spirit comes during prayer

Acts 10:30-32 - The Spirit comes in answered prayer

Acts 10:44-48 - The Spirit comes during the preaching of God's word

Acts 11:16 - The Spirit comes in recalling Jesus' words (= scripture)

Acts 19:1-6 - The Spirit comes at baptism

Acts 8:14-17 - The Spirit comes in the laying of hands

Acts 9:10-12 - The Spirit comes in visions

Acts 10:19-20 - The Spirit comes as a voice heard

Acts 11:27-28 - The Spirit comes as an insight

Acts 20:22-23 - The Spirit comes as a matter of reading the signs and interpreting events

Acts 15:6-28 - The Spirit comes within group processes of deliberation and conversation

Can our own egos and desires speak louder than the Spirit? Consider Jonah 1:1-3

Will signs and visions always be from God? No. Acts 19:13-16

What is the place of scripture in helping to interpret such signs? Acts 11:15-17

Multiple signs pointing to the same thing and collaborative process will also help to test signs.

What do we learn from these passages about God's leading in our ministry?

Close this devotion with a prayer thanking God giving us insight into discernment and the leading of the Spirit.

Section 4
The Interview Process

Resource AA

The Interview Process

Receiving the Call List

A representative of the Office of the Bishop will normally email the call list of candidate names and their Rostered Minister Profile (RMP) to the chair of the call committee, although on occasion the names might be delivered personally. After the list is transmitted, the bishop's representative will review the interview process as well as the interview covenant with the call committee chair. The call committee will want to carefully read the information received about the potential candidates. Each candidate should be treated equally and fairly regardless of first impressions received from printed materials. The face-to-face interview can impact the committee's perception of a candidate.

Upon receiving the call list, the call committee members should reaffirm their commitment to confidentiality. The names and information about the candidates are NOT to be shared with spouse/partner, family, council members, or anyone else outside of the call committee. All committee members, particularly the chair and recorder, will be guarded in all their communications within the committee regarding candidate names, locations and other information about them. The committee also determines what might be included in the interview process beyond the personal interview itself. *This might include visits by a team from the call committee to the present churches of candidates to hear them preach. (Arrangements can be made through the Office of the Bishop to hear a candidate preach who is not presently serving in a congregation.)*

Setting Up the Interview Dates and Process

Within two days of receiving the call list, the call committee makes a telephone call to each candidate to invite the candidate for the interview. The date, place, and anticipated length of the interview are worked out with each candidate. It should be noted that telephone interviews are **discouraged** since that is a most difficult means of developing a relationship and fully learning about another person. However, we have discovered that Zoom meetings where everyone can see one another can serve effectively as a first interview.

It is helpful to remember that the pastoral candidates are also in a discernment process and during the interview experience, they are carefully listening to the members of the call committee to learn more about the congregation and its mission.

When agreement to interview has been received from the candidate(s), the contact person for the call committee should indicate that a

letter with details will follow and ask each candidate for his/her preferred mailing address and/or email contact information.

Confirming the Interview and Arrangements

A letter, or email, which promptly follows the phone conversation inviting a candidate to interview, confirms the place, time and expected length of the interview.

It is recommended that the first interview be with the pastor candidate only. If the pastor desires to bring along his/her spouse/partner, the congregation is not under obligation to pay for their travel expenses, but may offer to do so if finances will permit. The Congregation is expected to pay all expenses for the Pastor or Deacon being interviewed including mileage expenses or other travel fees, hotel lodging and meals.

[NOTE: After a candidate is identified as the Primary Candidate, it is encouraged that the spouse/partner accompany the candidate for the interview with the congregation council. During that visit, there is usually opportunity to meet many other members of the congregation.]

The confirmation letter should contain information about who will meet the pastor at the airport, if the pastor is flying, or travel directions to the place of lodging. If the candidate is being asked to lead a devotional at the start of the interview, the letter should indicate this with clarity about expectations regarding length and format.

The letter should also affirm the congregation's commitment to provide reimbursement for all expenses related to the pastor's coming for the interview. Prompt reimbursement should be made to the candidate following the interview.

Interview packets may be prepared and sent to each candidate prior to the interview. The packet could include items not included in the Ministry Site Profile such as a listing of the names of all the call committee members, a recent annual report, a congregational directory, worship bulletins, newsletters, a listing of staff and congregation council members, and the congregation's constitution and bylaws. The Chamber of Commerce may have a welcome packet with community information that might be shared as well.

Hosting the Candidates

One or two members of the call committee should be designated to serve as host(s) for the candidates. This often is the chair of the call committee and one additional person. The hosts will meet and welcome each of the candidates to town and share the general itinerary of their time together.

If overnight accommodations are needed for any of the candidates,

arrangements at a motel should be made by the call committee with the room charge pre-paid by the congregation. Because of boundary and privacy concerns, pastor candidates should NOT be invited to stay in the homes of call committee members. The hosts will assist each candidate with check-in and clarify pick-up times. The candidate is escorted to the place of the dinner, the site of the interview, and then back to the place of lodging.

The hosts may also arrange for each candidate to have opportunity to tour the church facilities at times when it would be unlikely that staff or other congregational members would be present. Pastoral candidates are very interested in seeing the worship space, offices and facilities.

It is helpful for the committee to arrange for a tour of the greater community pointing out schools and places of interest. If the candidate(s) does not drive a personal car to the interview, it is a wonderful gesture to provide the candidates with the use of a car for personal touring of the area as time is available.

An informal dinner for the candidate and members of the committee prior to the interview serves the good purpose of helping to establish relationship.

The same hosts or perhaps two others from the call committee may be designated to meet the candidates the following morning for breakfast and transportation to the airport, or to provide a closure to the interview if the candidate is driving his or her own car.

[A Practice Interview](#)

The call committee may wish to do a “practice interview” using the interim pastor, a representative of the Office of the Bishop, or a neighboring pastor as the person being interviewed. A practice interview helps the committee to review its plan, sharpen the questions the committee desires to ask, and receive feedback about the experience from the one being interviewed in the practice interview.

The practice interview should be conducted as if it were a real interview with preparation done in advance. Plan ahead who will ask which question and what materials the committee will use to evaluate and assess the candidates. It is helpful to loan the pastor assisting in this practice interview a copy of the Congregational Ministry Site Profile in advance of the interview so he/she can also ask some fitting questions of the call committee. It is appropriate that an honorarium be given to the pastor equal to the amount paid to a supply pastor on a Sunday morning (the council should be able to provide information on this amount).

[The Interview Site](#)

Since it is desirable to interview each candidate in a similar fashion, it is recommended that all the interviews be held at the same location. A comfortable and informal atmosphere is preferred. The home of one of the call committee's members may be able to accommodate the candidate and all the members of the call committee for the interviews. If a home is not available, then consider a comfortable room at a nearby facility or the church. Refreshments should be served.

For each of the interviews, arrangements should be made with the candidate for transportation from the place of lodging to the place of interview. If the interview must be conducted at the church because of space, the call committee needs to assure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained. During the interview stage, it is not appropriate to introduce the candidates to other members of the church or to staff persons.

(NOTE: When a primary candidate has been recommended to the council, the council will introduce that candidate to congregational members and to the church staff if the council has voted to recommend the candidate to the congregation.)

Planning the Interview

The call committee will want to keep in mind its critical task of discerning God's will for the congregation and its pastoral leadership. The committee should consider important questions that they desire to ask each candidate, keeping in mind the leadership priorities and needs identified in the mission profile. Determine in advance who will ask which questions.

This helps to provide consistency and clear opportunities for comparisons of responses by the candidates. Sample questions are provided in a resource entitled Questions a Call Committee May Ask found at the end of this section. Consider some questions that will give insight into the candidate's faith and sense of calling.

Good questions will solicit valuable information about a candidate's past experiences, behaviors and ministry endeavors that might suggest what the candidate is likely to do again.

Questions that require only yes or no answers should be avoided. Asking follow up questions will help a candidate clarify answers. This also demonstrates that the committee is truly interested and seeking to understand what the candidate is saying.

When planning the interview, the committee should allow adequate time for the pastoral candidate to ask his/her own questions about the ministry of the church. This is a mutual interview process.

It is extremely important for the effective functioning of the call committee and in fairness to each candidate that all call committee members

be present at each interview. For the interviews, members of the call committee should wear clothing similar to what is worn at Sunday morning worship. It is recommended that call committee members also wear name tags to assist the candidates. The length of time to be given to the whole interview should be determined in advance, announced at the start of the interview, and monitored by the chair.

Conducting the Interview

After gathering with refreshments and making informal introductions, the chair or the one designated to lead the interviews gathers the call committee and candidate together in a circle of chairs. If the candidate has been asked to lead devotions, the chair invites the candidate to do so. Otherwise, a member of the committee leads an opening devotional.

Each member of the call committee may share briefly some personal information about family, career and involvement within the congregation. The chair may ask the candidate to share “something about yourself” to provide opportunity for personal introduction.

The chair then reviews the plan for the interview including the general time parameters and shares with the candidate that his/her questions will also be welcomed throughout the interview. It is a courtesy to indicate to the candidate that members of the committee may be taking notes to assist with recalling comments after the interview.

The committee now asks the questions prepared in advance of the interview and listens carefully to the responses, asking for clarifications as needed. The chair helps to move the group along in a timely fashion. When the formal questions are completed, the chair invites the candidate to ask any questions that might be helpful to the candidate. A listing of questions, ***Questions Candidates May Ask***, is included in the resources at the end of this section.

In concluding the interview, the chair may invite any additional questions or comments that anyone might like to share. The candidate is thanked for coming and participating in the interview. The chair indicates that the candidate may contact the chair should any additional questions or concerns arise in the days following the interview. The time together is closed with prayer. The hosts escort the candidate back to the place of lodging.

Reflections on the Interview

It is often desirable to schedule brief meetings of the call committee following each interview, especially if there is extended time between interviews. Members of the call committee can share their impressions and responses to the interview while the candidate’s responses are still fresh in the minds of the members. Behavioral observations, highlights and concerns

are also shared and recorded for later reference following the completion of all interviews. Further discussion and decisions about seeing the candidates lead worship and preach may be beneficial at this point.

Selecting the Primary Candidate

The call committee has the holy responsibility and privilege of representing the congregation in discerning which candidate may lead the congregation in its mission and ministry.

Promptly following the conclusion of the interviews, the committee gathers to determine whether they are led by God's Spirit to present one of the candidates to the council for further interview and possible recommendation to the congregation for Call. The committee prays together asking for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Complete agreement and consensus on one particular candidate may not be possible by the call committee. However, each member's thoughts, reflections and impressions should be respectfully received. It is particularly important to listen carefully to any on the committee who may be disagreeing with the majority. Remember that God speaks to us through our common voices and is present "where two or three are gathered in my name" (Matthew 20.18).

A suggested way to proceed is to review the top leadership needs of the congregation and reflect upon each candidate in relationship to each leadership need. Review responses to the questions that were asked by the committee during the interviews and those asked by the candidates. Consider perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Test the thinking of the call committee by sharing around the circle each member's perception of each candidate answering the question "What is the Spirit telling you about this candidate?" Share concerns as well as positives. Members may then be invited to share the candidate that is their preference. If there is not full consensus, invite further conversation.

Asking for the Spirit's guidance, the call committee should determine if there is enough consensus on one candidate to present that candidate to the council as the primary candidate for consideration as the next pastor of the congregation.

If a candidate receives majority support in a call committee vote, then you may ask him or her if he/she is willing to become the "Primary Candidate," and, if they agree, the name of that candidate, along with the materials related to that candidate, are presented to the council. At the time the chair presents the name to the council, other members of the call committee may also be present to answer questions about the candidate selected and reasons for the selection. See notes in Primary Candidate section following this part of the Transition Packet for more information about the Primary Candidate phase.

The identities and mobility papers of the other candidates remain confidential and are not shared with the council but returned to the Office of the Bishop or collected and destroyed by the call committee chair.

No Candidate Selected

If the call committee declines to forward one of the candidates to the council, then a decision is reached to release all candidates under consideration and to request a new call list from the Office of the Bishop. This decision and the reasons for the decision are shared with the council and the Office of the Bishop. The committee chair is charged with the responsibility of contacting the Office of the Bishop to request a review followed by a new call list.

A representative of the Office of the Bishop will usually meet with the call committee and a representative of the council to review expectations and determine what additional traits or qualities the committee may be seeking in the candidates for the next call list.

Follow-up Contact with Each Candidate Released

The call committee should send a letter of appreciation to all candidates thanking them for their willingness to be interviewed. It is helpful to share with the candidates specific reasons why the candidate was not identified as the Primary Candidate.

It is crucial that the call committee immediately notify candidates who are no longer under consideration for the position of pastor of this congregation. The release of candidates should also be communicated to the representative of the Office of the Bishop assisting the committee in this process. This prompt response not only informs the candidate but also makes it possible for that candidate to be considered in a different call situation.

Any expense reimbursement not made at the time of the interview should be included with this letter. Mobility papers for the other candidates are either returned to the dean or are to be shredded locally by the call committee chair.

A Pastor Withdraws from the Process

Sometimes a pastoral candidate will decide to withdraw his/her name from further consideration in a congregation following the interview with the call committee, or even further along in the call process. The candidate's reasons may be for personal or professional and are most often shared with the call committee.

On occasion, a candidate will withdraw from the process because of troubling insights or concerns regarding the congregation's health, vision or ministry. Normally a representative of the Office of the Bishop will meet with

the call committee and a representative of the council to discuss the concerns raised and to determine any needed direction. The concerns may need to be addressed before proceeding further into the call process.

Upon learning of the withdrawal of the candidate, the Office of the Bishop will work with the congregation to resume the call process as soon as feasible and possible.

The Primary Candidate

The chair of the call committee will want to immediately notify the pastoral candidate who has been selected as the Primary Candidate in order to congratulate him/her on behalf of the committee. The chair informs the Primary Candidate of plans to present the candidate's name to the congregation council and indicates that the council president or a representative of the council will be contacting the candidate soon to set dates to interview with the council. This notification should be by phone and could be followed by a letter of appreciation. Any expense reimbursement not made at the time of the interview should be included with this letter.

After presenting the name of the Primary Candidate to the council, the call committee entrusts the call process to the members of the council. The call committee remains available for assistance and for resumption of duties should the Primary Candidate not be approved by the council or if the candidate withdraws from the process.

Resource BB

Questions a Call Committee may ask & Questions Candidates may ask

As the call committee decides on questions to ask each pastoral candidate, the committee should be mindful of the leadership needs identified in the Congregational Ministry Site Profile and the time restrictions of the interview. From the long list of possible questions, the committee needs to identify or create 8 to 10 questions that will shape the primary part of the interview and determine who on the committee will ask each question. The following question examples are related to each leadership skill and ministry area; some may be combined into one question. The committee will note that some questions are actually invitations to make comments: The committee must be selective.

Worship / Preaching

1. Share some thoughts about the worship life of a congregation and your leadership of worship.
2. Describe how you prepare for sermons and your style of preaching.

Evangelism / Witness

1. Describe a recent example where you encountered an unchurched person in your community and shared your faith with that person.
2. What kind of guidance and training do you provide members of your congregation for reaching unchurched persons in the community?

Stewardship

1. Describe the development of your personal sense of Christian stewardship.
2. How have you helped members in your congregation grow in their personal stewardship?

Teaching the Faith / Interpreter of Theology

1. Share how you have helped adults evaluate their faith development and grow in their faith.
2. Give examples of how you have shared your understanding of the Bible and Lutheran theology with adults who lack background in the Lutheran faith.

Administrator / Leader

1. How do you empower others in ministry? Describe steps you normally take to recruit, train and encourage lay persons for leadership roles within the church and community.
2. How would you describe your style of leadership as it relates to the work of the congregation?
3. Tell about a period in your ministry when you had to manage multiple demands upon your time and work and how you determined priorities and maintained balance in your life.

Social Ministry / Outreach

1. Share an example of how you have helped persons within a congregation to become aware of community needs and participate in action and advocacy to meet those needs.
2. Describe how you have encouraged and led your congregation in getting to know and become involved within the community.

Interpersonal Climate

1. Give examples of how you help others to feel secure, trusted and open with you.
2. When pressure mounts and conflict arises, describe how you react and deal with those who may have strong feelings different than your own. Provide an example from your ministry.

Ministry in Crisis / Counseling

1. How have you established and used boundaries to strengthen your ministry to persons in crisis or in need of counseling?
2. Describe your special gifts and limitations in the area of ministering to persons in crisis.

Innovator

1. Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
2. Think back to a situation in your ministry that was stagnate or failing, and describe how you were able to work with others to revitalize it.

Denominational Leadership

1. Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding and appreciation of their relationship to the synod and churchwide expression of the church.
2. What have been your favorite and most meaningful involvements in the work of the church beyond the local congregation?

Children and Youth Ministry

1. What is your approach to teaching children and young people about the Christian faith and involving them in the life of the church?
2. Share an event or experience you had of a ministry connection with youth.

Your Call to Ministry

1. Briefly describe the events which led you to prepare for the ministry.
2. In what ways has your call to ministry changed over the years? What words would you use to describe your ministry and why?

Personal Growth

1. Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.
2. How do you work at making yourself more effective in your ministry?

Family and Recreation

1. Tell us something about your family and how you assure balance between your call to ministry and your personal life.

2. Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

Other Questions

Consider carefully other questions that might be most helpful to the call committee in determining which candidate would make the best pastor for the congregation.

An effective interview works two ways, with the candidate also bringing questions and concerns to the call committee about the congregation, its mission and vision. The candidate may also have questions related to the Congregational Ministry Site Profile. The following questions are some examples that could be asked of the call committee by a perspective pastoral candidate.

1. What is the mission of your congregation and how are you personally involved in that mission? Does the congregation have a Mission Statement? What is it? What does it mean to you?
2. Describe the worship and music practices of the congregation including the frequency and methods of celebrating holy communion. What are the congregation's expectations for worship? What is the openness to creativity?
3. What is the role of staff and what is the role of the laity in your congregation?
4. How many people are involved in leadership roles? How are lay people involved in worship?
5. In your opinion, how are decisions made in your congregation?
6. What long and short term goals has the congregation adopted? What are the most important goals for the congregation in the next three years?
7. Describe the sense of partnership and involvement of the congregation with the conference, the synod and the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
8. Does the congregation normally have members attend the Synod Assembly and conference meetings?
9. What is the congregation's commitment to ELCA Mission Support/benevolence?
10. What is the congregation's attitude toward the pastor's participation in community affairs and in the life and ministry of the whole Church?
11. In what ecumenical and inter-church activities has the congregation been engaged?
12. Do members visit the sick and assist with the pastoral care of members and friends?
13. What do you see as the possibility of growth for this congregation and why?
14. Describe the congregation's education and faith development programs.
15. Describe the sense of unity within the congregation.
16. How does the congregation respond to change and how are changes made?
17. Describe the ministries and programs of the congregation.
18. When was the congregation's constitution last updated?
19. How would you describe the congregation's financial situation? Does income meet expenses? What shape does the stewardship program take?

20. Describe the congregation's evangelism program and its outreach and invitation to the unchurched.
21. Describe the youth ministry program and how are the youth involved in the congregation?
22. What part do family members of a pastor have in the congregation?
23. Are there any unresolved conflicts that I should know about in considering a call to this congregation?
24. How does this congregation and leadership address conflict?
24. Why did the previous pastor leave?
25. What is the salary and compensation package that I might expect at this congregation?

Section 5
Primary Candidate & The Call

Resource CC

Steps in recommending a Primary Candidate to Council

When the Call Committee has come to the decision that they have a Candidate for their call that they would like to recommend to Council the proceed in the following manner:

1. Contact the Pastor or Deacon and ask if they are willing to be your Primary Candidate.
 - a. If they say yes, that means both they and your call committee stop interviewing others and focus on this relationship moving forward.
 - b. Call the Council President and let the President know that you have a primary Candidate recommendation to make.
2. Set up a time for the Pastoral Candidate to meet with the Council President and Executive committee, or those who are responsible for working on finalization of the compensation package. Be sure that the chair and possibly other members of the Call Committee are present at that meeting to help with introductions and to support the pastoral candidate.
 - a. This meeting is to finalize the compensation package should this call move forward. Going into the meeting with the council the Pastor or Deacon as well as the Council members and the Call Committee would know the agreed upon Compensation package.
 - b. Use the SC Synod Compensation Guidelines <https://scsynod.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/compensation/scsynod-compensation-guidelines.pdf> as your starting place, and the SC Synod Excel spreadsheet <https://scsynod.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/compensation/2021-minister-of-word-and-sacrament-compensation-worksheet-housing-allowance.xls> to calculate all compensation.
 - c. If you are working on a Part Time Call PLEASE discuss the way to calculate compensation with the Office of the Bishop before finalizing a compensation package. You may speak with the Bishop's office for full time calculations as well, but they are a little easier to figure out.
3. The Council interviews the Pastor or Deacon with the Call Committee (or members of the Call Committee present).
4. The Council may ask the Pastor/Deacon and the Call Committee to step out as they finalize their deliberations. Those folks may wait together in a room down the hall, or may go home and have the Council President call later to discuss the Councils decision.

Resource DD

Congregational Vote to Call

If the Council votes to take this Pastor or Deacon's name forward to the Congregation for vote to call:

1. They will let the Pastor or Deacon and the Call Committee know of their decision.
2. The Council will follow the constitution for in communicating with the Congregation that there will be a called meeting for the purpose of voting on a Call. The Council will share some basic information about the Pastor or Deacon with the Congregation and will share the Compensation Package.
3. The Council Chair will also inform the Office of the Bishop at the same time. The Office of the Bishop will send Council President the paperwork for conducting this meeting and this Call.
4. At the Congregational meeting two votes are taken on paper separately.
 - a. The first vote is whether to call this pastor Yes or No.
 - b. The second vote is on the compensation package Yes or No.
 - c. You need 2/3s vote to call the pastor and simple majority on compensation.
 - d. The Council President will need to report the results to the Pastor and to the Bishop, including: total number of people who voted, and the number of yes and no votes on each part.

The Pastor or Deacon has time to accept or decline this call, and that should be done in a letter which is copied to the Office of the Bishop. The letter of acceptance would include the starting date. The Pastor or Deacon and the Council President should stay in communication with the Bishop throughout the process.

After a new leader has time to get settled and acquainted in a new call, she or he will contact their Conference Dean to schedule a date for Installation. Installations are held in the afternoon as a separate service to make it possible for colleagues in the Conference to participate.