

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CALL PROCESS

### **How long will it take to find a pastor?**

Every Call Process varies in length. It will normally take between 6 months and 1 year, but some last longer. The length of the process depends on the number of candidates interviewed; the time call committee and candidates have available for conversation, and the needs of the congregation for grieving and preparation for the next pastor.

### **What will the congregation do during this time of transition regarding pastoral leadership?**

In a pastoral vacancy, the Office of Bishop, in consultation with the congregation council, will appoint an Interim Pastor who will, at a *minimum*, lead worship/preach (or arrange for this leadership) weekly, meet with the Council each month, and provide emergency pastoral care. The responsibilities of the Interim Pastor will vary and may range from a few hours a week to full-time, depending on the availability of the Interim Pastor and the needs of the Congregation. A letter of agreement is signed between the council and the Pastor that explains exactly what the Interim Pastor will be doing during this time. Sample agreements are available from the Bishop's Office.

### **What are the sources of names provided by the Office of Bishop to the Call Committee?**

The names of the candidates come from a variety of places, including:

- Pastors from South Carolina Synod asking to be available for conversation with Call Committees and having submitted their Rostered Leader Profile.
- Pastors from other synods who have asked that their Rostered Leader Profile be shared with congregations in South Carolina. Please note that Candidates from outside South Carolina must be given clearance by their Synodical Bishop to our bishop before they can be considered for an interview.
- Pastors identified by the Bishop and Bishop's staff as particularly suited for a congregation.
- Recent seminary graduates awaiting their first Call.
- Pastors suggested by members of the Congregation can also be shared with our office to look into as potential candidates.

### **Will there be Pastors willing to talk with our Call Committee?**

The answer is almost always "yes." In highly specialized situations or in part time ministry opportunities there may be fewer candidates to consider; however, in general, the Holy Spirit is able to bring gifts and needs together.

### **Should we follow compensation guidelines?**

Yes. While not every congregation is able to reach or exceed the recommended figures, the guidelines serve as benchmarks to guide congregations and candidates in helpful

conversation regarding what is fair and adequate. Please keep in mind that as of this printing our Minimum Compensation Guidelines are for First Call and do not take into account years of experience which some Pastors bring. If compensation is far below guidelines, fewer candidates may be able to consider the Call to a particular congregation - a part-time Call should be explored.

### **Can we invite the candidates to preach in our congregation on a Sunday morning?**

No, we do not suggest that candidates be invited to preach in a congregation where they are being considered. If a candidate preaches in a congregation, the entire congregation becomes involved in the overall process and members are put in the position of deciding on that person's merit on the basis of worship leadership and one sermon alone, which is only one of many elements of pastoral ministry. The effect is to displace the careful, prayerful discernment of the Call Committee. Call committees should travel to the Pastor's congregation or to a neutral site to hear him or her preach. When a Pastor being considered is not presently serving a site the Synod staff can assist in setting up a supply location for him or her to preach and lead worship where the call committee could go to participate in worship.

### **Should spouses of call committee members travel and visit with the call committee?**

No. It is better for the call committee to travel and interview without spouses since spouses have not been selected to participate in the call process. Committee members need the freedom to interact with complete confidentiality as those chosen to represent the congregation.

### **Should the congregation expect there to be expenses related to the work of the call committee?**

Yes. Mileage reimbursement to committee members AND to any candidates who interview with your committee can be expected. The committee may also have receipts for expenses related to meals or refreshments provided. We recommend that you use the standard IRS mileage rate for reimbursement. Often councils will designate the expenses of the call committee and the process out of any remainder left in your pastoral compensation package.

### **Should there be alternate members of the Call Committee?**

We do not recommend alternate members; however, if alternates are elected or appointed, they should attend all meetings of the call committee and have voice, but should not vote unless a regular member of the committee finds it necessary to relinquish his or her position.

### **What if we have additional questions?**

If at any time during the call process you have questions, concerns, or ideas, please feel free to communicate with the member of the Bishop's Staff that is coordinating the Call Process with your congregation.