



# **CALL PROCESS MANUAL**

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

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- 1C. A Sample Timeline for the Call Process**
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## 1A. HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

There is a lot of material in this manual, and it may seem a little overwhelming at first! Start by familiarizing yourself with the Table of Contents and then review the Overview of the Call Process (*Section 1b*) and the Sample Timeline for the Call Process. (*Section 1c*)

Members of the Congregational Council should receive copies of the Table of Contents and Sections 1-6, but they do not need copies of all the material in the appendix.

Members of the Call Committee should receive copies of the Table of Contents and Sections 1, 3 and 4.

The chairperson of Council and the chairperson of the Call Committee should receive copies of the entire manual.

Remember, if you have any questions about the manual or about the process, please contact your staff advisor at the synod office.

## 1B. AN OVERVIEW OF THE CALL PROCESS

- (a) When the pastor submits a letter of resignation, the chairperson of the congregation contacts the Bishop by phone, letter, or e-mail to initiate the call process.
- (b) The Assistant to the Bishop, responsible for call processes, contacts the Dean of the Ministry Area, in which that congregation is located, instructing him/her to meet with the Congregational Council to initiate the call process. Letters are sent to the Council President and Pastor, informing them that the Ministry Area Dean will initiate this contact.
- (c) The Dean of the Ministry Area schedules a meeting with the Council to oversee an exit interview between the pastor and Church Council (*Section 2c*), facilitate a transitional document review with the pastor and Church Council (*Section 2e*), and review the Eastern Synod call process.
- (d) The congregation prepares to say goodbye to their pastor. (*Section 2*)
- (e) The Bishop, in consultation with the Council, appoints an interim pastor.
- (f) The Congregational Council prepares the Congregational Mission Profile and appoints a Call Committee. (*Sections 3b and 3c*)
- (g) The Bishop, or his/her representative, meets with the Church Council and Call Committee to review the Congregational Mission Profile and develop a list of no more than six names for consideration for call. The Bishop's Assistant will solicit Availability for Call forms from those on the list and forward them to the Call Committee. (*Section 3d*)
- (h) The Call Committee reviews the Availability for Call forms that are submitted and creates a short list of no more than three names for interviewing. The Bishop's Assistant is informed of those who are being short-listed.
- (i) The Call Committee contacts the individuals on the interview list by letter, inviting them for an interview and attaching a copy of the Congregational Mission Profile and the most recent Annual Report of the congregation. The letter will also request, where applicable, a copy of the most recent Annual Report of the congregation where the pastor is presently serving. (*Section 4b*)
- (j) The letters are followed up by phone calls and interviews are arranged. (*Section 4b*)
- (k) Interviews take place. (*Section 4c*)

- (l) Once a decision has been made on whom the committee wishes to recommend for call, the Call Committee informs synod office of their decision.
- (m) The Call Committee formally presents its recommendation to the Congregational Council. The Council votes on the recommendation. If the vote is positive, Council prepares the compensation package with assistance from synod office. A call meeting date is set. (*Sections 4d and 5a*)
- (n) The Call Committee contacts all other candidates, in writing, to inform them a recommendation has been made and to thank them for participating in the search process. (*Section 4e*)
- (o) In preparation for the call meeting, the Council Chair/President will inform the Bishop's Assistant of the particulars of the call. The Bishop's Assistant will see to the preparation of the call documents and forward them in time for the call meeting.
- (p) The call meeting takes place. (*Section 5b and 5c*) If the vote is positive, a call is extended. Members of Church Council sign the Letter of Call and the Employment Agreement which are then returned to the Bishop's office. If the vote is defeated, the Council returns to step *g*.
- (q) The Letter of Call and the Employment Agreement are issued to the new pastor, who has 30 days to respond.
- (r) If the pastor accepts the call, a start-date and moving details are negotiated with the Council. (*Section 6*) An installation date is negotiated between the Pastor, the Dean of the Ministry Area, and the Council.
- (s) The new pastor attends the next Eastern Synod Transitions Workshop. This is at the expense of the calling congregation. If the new pastor is newly ordained they are required to attend the First Call Program for the first three years. This is at the expense of the calling congregation.

## 1C. A SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR THE CALL PROCESS

<i>TIME</i>	<i>TASK</i>
<i>0</i>	The pastor submits a letter of resignation.
<i>Week 1</i>	The chairperson of the congregation contacts the Bishop to initiate the call process. The Bishop requests the Ministry Area Dean to meet with the Congregational Council.
<i>Week 2-3</i>	The Ministry Area Dean meets with the Council to review the call process and deliver a copy of the Eastern Synod Call Process Manual.
<i>Week 4-6</i>	Council prepares the Congregational Mission Profile and appoints a Call Committee. An Interim pastor is appointed.
<i>Week 8</i>	The Bishop's Assistant meets with the Council and Call Committee to review the Congregational Mission Profile and develop a list of names for consideration for call.  The Bishop solicits Availability for Call forms from those on the list for forwarding to the Call Committee chairperson.
<i>Week 11</i>	The Call Committee reviews the Availability for Call forms and creates a short list of persons who will be invited for an interview.  The Call Committee contacts the individuals on the interview list by letter.
<i>Week 11</i>	The letters are followed up by phone calls and interviews are arranged.
<i>Week 14</i>	Interviews take place.
<i>Week 15</i>	The Call Committee contacts Synod Office with a recommendation they are prepared to make to Council.
<i>Week 16</i>	The Council votes on the recommendation and prepares the compensation package and the Employment Agreement with assistance from synod office.  A call meeting date is set.
<i>Week 17</i>	The Call Committee informs other candidates that a recommendation has been made and thanking them for participating in the process.
<i>Week 20</i>	The call meeting takes place. If the vote is positive, a call is extended.
<i>Week 24</i>	When a call is extended, the pastor has 30 days to respond to the call.
<i>Weeks 32-36</i>	Once a call is accepted, the new pastor takes residence, usually within 60 days.  The new pastor is installed.

## 1D. CHECKLIST FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

### Starting the Call Process

- Contact the Bishop by phone or letter to initiate the call process.
- Schedule a meeting with the Ministry Area Dean to begin the call process.
- Meet with the Ministry Area Dean, at which time he/she will oversee an exit interview between the pastor and Church Council (*Section 2c*), facilitate a transitional document review (*Section 2e*), and provide an overview of the Eastern Synod call process.
- Complete the Congregational Mission Profile and send it to the synod office.
- Appoint a Call Committee.
- Authorize funds for the work of the Call Committee, such as travel and interview expenses.
- Arranging a meeting with the Bishop's Assistant and the Council / Call Committee to review the Mission Profile.

### Saying Farewell and Interim Ministry

- Consult with the Bishop for the appointment of an interim pastor.
- Arrange a farewell for the pastor who is leaving.
- Hold an exit interview with the pastor who is leaving.
- Disband the current mutual ministry committee and thank them for their work.

### Completing the Call Process

- Meet with the Call Committee to hear their recommendation for call.
- Vote on the recommendation.
- Inform Synod Office of your decision.
- Prepare the compensation package and the Employment Agreement with assistance from Synod Office.
- Set a call meeting date in consultation with Synod Office.
- Announce the call meeting date to the congregation.
- Hold the call meeting. (See *Appendix 13*)
- Arrange for the installation of the new pastor in consultation with the pastor and Ministry Area Dean. Inform synod office.
- Work with the pastor to appoint a new mutual ministry committee.
- Support and encourage the pastor to attend the Eastern Synod Transitions or First Call Workshop.

## **1E. CHECKLIST FOR THE CALL COMMITTEE**

### **Starting the Process**

- Appoint a chairperson and secretary.
- Review the completed Congregational Mission Profile.
- Meet with the Bishop's Assistant to develop a list of no more than six names for consideration for call.

### **Selecting and Interviewing Candidates**

- Review the Availability for Call forms that are submitted.
- Create a short list of no more than three names for interviewing.
- Write letters to candidates you are not interviewing.
- Contact the individuals on the interview list by letter, inviting them for an interview.
- Follow up letters with phone calls and arrange interviews.
- Prepare for interviews.
- Conduct interviews.
- Reimburse candidates for expenses.

### **Making a Recommendation and Wrap-up**

- Decide on a candidate to recommend to Congregational Council.
- Inform Synod Office of your decision.
- Collect and destroy the Availability for Call documents of all individuals who participated in the call process. Also, if any audio or video tapes of candidates have been employed, these also should be collected and destroyed.
- Meet with Congregational Council to make your recommendation.
- Write to candidates who were interviewed but who are not being considered for call.
- Attend the congregational meeting prepared to answer questions about the candidate.

## 1F. CHECKLIST FOR THE MINISTRY AREA DEAN

### Starting the Process

- Once informed, by the Bishop's office, of an impending vacancy, contact the Council president/chairperson to schedule a meeting with the Church Council.
- You will receive a copy of the Eastern Synod Call Manual from synod office.
- At the meeting with the Council, oversee an exit interview between the pastor and Church Council (*Section 2c*), facilitate a document review with the pastor and Church Council (*Section 2e / Appendix 14-B*), and review the Eastern Synod call process. A sample agenda for this meeting is included in *Appendix 14-A*.

Further questions, which you cannot answer or which the Council or Call Committee may have at any time, should be directed to the Assistant to the Bishop who is responsible for call processes.

- Complete the Transitional Document Review (*Appendix 14-B*), and a Record of Expenses. Submit these to the Bishop's Assistant.

### Completing the Call Process

- Once a Pastor has accepted a Call, work with the Pastor and Church Council to schedule an appropriate installation date.
- Preside at the installation of the new Pastor.
- Submit final expense report.\*



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## **SECTION 2: SAYING GOODBYE**

- 2A. Introduction**
- 2B. How Will You Bid Your Pastor Farewell?**
- 2C. The Exit Interview**
- 2D. Dotting the I's and Crossing the T's**
- 2E. Transitional Document Review**



## **2A. INTRODUCTION**

**W**hen a pastor announces her/his resignation it usually comes as a surprise. Often it is an unwanted surprise, particularly when the pastor is well-liked and has performed an effective ministry.

In this situation there is often a period of time when the experience of loss finds expression in various ways among members of the congregation. The congregation's response may follow the pattern described below although the stages may or may not follow the order in which they appear.

These are some of the typical emotional responses members may have when a pastor resigns. They should be dealt with intentionally and with compassion during the transitional period in order to bring about final resolution and closure as the congregation prepares to engage in a search for its new pastor.

### **STAGE ONE – *SHOCK AND DENIAL***

Members of a congregation may meet the resignation of their pastor with surprise and disbelief. "I can't believe he/she is leaving. There must be some mistake." Shock and disbelief is usually a temporary state and will likely be followed by one or more of the following stages.

### **STAGE TWO – *ABANDONMENT/PANIC***

Feelings of being abandoned may set off a temporary state of disorganization with fear and panic about the future life of the congregation. There may be a fear of the loss of the congregation's mission and plans for the future. "He/she can't possibly leave us. There's too much at stake right now." Feelings of betrayal may be expressed.

### **STAGE THREE – *ANGER AND RESENTMENT***

Anger and tears may accompany feelings of unfairness and regret. Anger may become displaced on church leaders, Church Council members, other staff members or it may be directed at the departing pastor. Anger may precipitate members transferring their membership to other congregations, withholding funds or staying away from worship.

### **STAGE FOUR – *GUILT/BARGAINING***

As the reality of the pastor's departure settles in, anger and regret may become displaced on self or others in the congregation, taking the form of guilt which might be accompanied by pleading, frantic prayerfulness, and bargaining with the pastor, Church Council or Bishop. "Is there something we've done to make you decide to leave? Is there anything we can do to persuade you to stay?"

### **STAGE FIVE – *ACCEPTANCE/RESOLUTION***

Through mutual support, members can be helped to accept the loss, make peace with their pain and bring about a sense of reconciliation without revisiting earlier stages. They can begin to talk about their sense of loss without tears or resentment and to articulate a sense of appreciation and even celebration of the life they and the pastor have shared together.

## **STAGE SIX – CLOSURE**

Closure has occurred when members and the departing pastor have reconciled any differences which may have occurred, have released one another from previous commitments and can bid one another farewell and Godspeed.

When the relationship between pastor and congregation has not been positive, notice of a pastor's resignation can come as a welcome announcement. You may even find that there is a mix in the congregation, where some people are sorry to see the pastor go and others are relieved.

No matter what the relationship has been between the pastor and the congregation, it is important to take the time to plan for a good ending to your shared ministry. A good ending with this pastor will help you be ready for a good beginning with a new pastor.

In this section you will find some suggestions that will help you in saying goodbye.

### **2B. HOW WILL YOU BID YOUR PASTOR FAREWELL?**

**I**t is often difficult to say goodbye to a person with whom one has been intimately associated. As already mentioned, feelings of bereavement, sorrow, loneliness, relief, guilt, and confusion can be present.

It is wise to establish a “new” relationship with the departing pastor. This begins with announcing the resignation, but it goes far beyond that. Council should work with the pastor on the best use of the remaining time. What will be the significant events that lead up to the actual departure? What individuals and groups does that pastor want or need to say goodbye to? What events will be planned to honour and thank the departing pastor, and where applicable, the pastor's family?

*Here is a list of suggestions of ways to honour your pastor:*

- Hold a congregational dinner or potluck, or plan for a special reception after a worship service.
- Use a slide show, skits, or speeches to highlight special memories.
- Collect written testimonials from members and put them in a book to present to the pastor.
- Present a gift.
- Plan for a special closing worship service. Use the “Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation. (**Appendix 1a**)

Good-byes are not easy and some people want to just “ride off into the sunset”. At the same time, by planning opportunities for people to say goodbye, everyone will be helped to move through their feelings of grief.

## 2C. THE EXIT INTERVIEW

**P**rior to the Pastor's departure, and as an intentional step in the call process, the Ministry Area Dean will oversee an "exit interview", preferably in a relaxed setting, between the pastor, Church Council, and others whom the pastor may wish to participate. The exit interview is intended to be a dialogue between the departing pastor and members of the congregation focused around issues of their ministry together during the pastor's tenure. It is one of the steps designed to help bring closure to the pastor's ministry.

This is time for debriefing, for learning any details that may have been unknown, for hearing the pastor's hopes for the congregation, and for clarifying the relationship the pastor will have with the congregation after departure. It is an opportunity for looking back and reflecting on the life and ministry to which each has contributed, celebrating the successes, lamenting the failures, and bringing closure to things unresolved.

Both the pastor and participants should be clear as to the distinctly positive nature of the exit interview. The pastor should be given the choice as to whether he/she wants members, in addition to the Church Council, to participate in this conversation. Such additional participants might include the Call Committee, the mutual ministry committee, and/or selected church leaders.

The event should be given structure, but not to the extent that free and open dialogue is inhibited. Two cautions: this is not a setting to try to reverse the resignation decision; neither is this a setting to get drawn into debates, arguments, or the rehashing of past history. This is a time to listen carefully and to honour the contributions of each participant.

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

### *To the pastor:*

- "What were your hopes and dreams for the congregation when you began your ministry here"?
- "What were some of the surprises you encountered in your first months among us"?
- "What have been some of your joys and sorrows during your ministry here"?
- "What were some of the high points of your ministry here"?
- "In what ways are we different now from when you came?"
- "What are some of your present concerns for the congregation as you bring your ministry to a close"?
- "How can we help you in your transition?"
- "What can we do to support our new pastor?"

### *To members present:*

- "What gifts has Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ given to this congregation during his/her ministry among you"?
- "Are there events or memories which had special meaning that anyone would like to share"?
- "Are there humorous events which would not prove to be too embarrassing that anyone would like to share"?

- “How will Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ be remembered by the members of \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran church”?

***To pastor and members present:***

It is also important to clarify the relationship the pastor will have with the congregation after her/his departure. The synod constitution defines the relationship in this way:

*No ordained minister shall preach or perform any ministerial act within the parish of another pastor except at the latter’s request or consent, or visit or perform ministerial acts in a time of a pastoral vacancy except by invitation of its congregational Council. (Article VII, Section 8)*

Discuss together what this means. Consider different scenarios such as possible requests for funerals, weddings, and baptisms. Discuss putting the following announcement in the bulletin and newsletter after the pastor leaves:

*While Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ is still a pastor, he/she is no longer your pastor. We love and cherish the friendship we have had, but we should not ask for further pastoral services such as counseling, baptisms, weddings, and funerals.*

**No Exit Interview?**

In the event that circumstances do not allow time for an Exit Interview, or in the case where a pastor declines the opportunity, it is advisable for Council to consider holding such a meeting without the pastor. In the event there may have been unresolved conflict associated with the departure of the pastor it is important that an opportunity be made available to reconcile those feelings prior to the arrival of the new pastor. The structure of this session should be open and positive, avoiding any sense of “bashing” the departing pastor. The focus should be on finding resolution, self-examination, learning from mistakes, and preparing for the leadership of a new pastor.

**2D. DOTTING THE I’S AND CROSSING THE T’S**

**B**efore the pastor leaves, all important parish papers and records must be located and inventoried. The Transitional Document Review( *Section 2e*) is meant to assure that the pastor has brought all records up-to-date for which he/she is responsible.

It is also important that any outstanding financial obligations between the congregation and pastor be resolved before the pastor leaves. Such obligations may include:

- (a) salary;
- (b) housing allowance;
- (c) car allowance;
- (d) pension and benefits;
- (e) book allowance;
- (f) continuing education fund; and
- (g) settling of any loans (eg. a mortgage loan) which the congregation may have made to the pastor.

This is also the time to disband the existing mutual ministry committee and thank them for their work. Make sure that the committee members know that you have appreciated their work, but that it is important for the new pastor to have input into the make-up of the committee. If you do not have a mutual ministry committee, this may be the time to consider having one. Resources are available from the synod office.

## 2E. TRANSITIONAL DOCUMENT REVIEW

Experience has taught us that there are a number of important documents which are often either overlooked or, in some cases, even lost in the course of a pastoral transition. The loss of these documents or the failure to have them up-to-date may not only make the beginning of a new pastor's ministry more challenging, but may even compromise the assets of the congregation. That is why an intentional part of the call process will now include a transitional document review.

Overseen by the Ministry Area Dean, this review will allow both the pastor, Church Council, and Synod Office to rest assured that the congregation is administratively healthy and up-to-date as it enters the transitional period. A copy of the report which comes out of this review will also be filed at synod office, in the event that it needs to be accessed for future reference. (see *Appendix 14*)

The important parish papers and records that must be located, inventoried, and brought up-to-date are of two types: *pastoral records* and *financial records*.

*Please note: It is not the responsibility of the Ministry Area Dean to verify the accuracy of these records, but to confirm that he/she has lead the pastor and Council through an inventory to assure that these records, documents, and procedures are current.*

### **Pastoral Records: Are the following up-to-date?**

1. Records of membership, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, births, funerals, transfers, and communions;
2. Annual congregational report forms (parochial reports) and recent congregational meeting reports and Council minutes;
3. Perspective members list;
4. Sick and shut-in's list, and other pastoral situations needing special attention; and
5. Congregational mailing/address list.

### **Financial Records:**

1. Where is the title for the church property?
2. Are the records of the church treasurer and the financial secretary up-to-date?
3. Has the church filed its yearly report with Revenue Canada? Who is responsible to look after this each year?
4. Does the church have RSP's or other investments? Where are they located? Who has responsibility for oversight of them?
5. Where is the church insurance policy? Who sees that it is current?
6. Who has keys to the church?
7. Is there a safe? Who has the combination?



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### **SECTION 3: STARTING THE PROCESS – COUNCIL’S ROLE**

- 3A. Introduction**
- 3B. The Congregational Mission Profile**
- 3C. Appointing the Call Committee**
- 3D. Meeting with the Bishop**
- 3E. Appointing the Interim Pastor**

### 3A. INTRODUCTION

Following the resignation of a pastor, there is an immediate need for an ordered process to keep a sense of stability in the congregation's life and to help people stay focused on the mission they share as God's people in this place. The responsibility for this leadership lies with the Congregational Council.

The transition period will bring extra responsibilities for Council to oversee. These may include:

- oversee and guide the ministry of the congregation during the time between pastoral leadership;
- provide reassurance to the congregation that pastoral ministry tasks will be fulfilled;
- assist the congregation in processing their feelings related to the departure of their pastor;
- provide leadership to assure the continuation of services of worship and to assist those who will lead worship (supply pastors, interim pastor(s), assisting ministers, musicians, and others);
- give support and guidance to those staff persons (office personnel, music personnel, custodial personnel, etc.) who normally function under pastoral oversight (continuation of staff meetings or conversations which help clarify needs, directions and expectations);
- assure continuation of pastoral ministries (hospital visits, other visitations, emergency pastoral response, funerals, weddings, confirmation, baptisms);
- assure confidentiality in regards to sensitive issues which arise during the period of transition;
- be a resource to the next called pastor and assist her/him in the continuation of immediate and special pastoral ministry needs.

### 3B. THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION PROFILE

The development of the Congregational Mission Profile (**Appendix 2**) prior to the calling of a new pastor or an associate in ministry is helpful in at least three ways. First, it provides the Call Committee with basic information and a description of leadership needs which will guide their work. Second, the profile will assist the Bishop in recommending candidate(s) to be considered by the Call Committee. Third, it provides a picture of the congregation for the candidates as they consider serving the congregation. Therefore, allow adequate time to thoroughly complete the Congregational Mission Profile.

The purpose of the Congregational Mission Profile is to enable the elected lay leadership of the congregation to:

- review the congregation's life and mission;
- evaluate the congregation's present strengths;
- identify specific areas where the congregation needs to strengthen its ministry;
- specify resources necessary to fulfill the mission of the congregation, including especially mission tasks in the parish community;
- arrive at a current understanding of the mission of the congregation;
- identify the gifts that are most important for the next pastor to possess.

**The Congregational Mission Profile has five parts: Part I – Congregation Information, Part II – Ministry Practices and Structure, Part III – Mission in the Community, Part IV – Where is God Leading Us? and Part V – The Leader We Seek.**

Responsibility for completion of the Congregational Mission Profile belongs with the Congregational Council. The Congregational Council may, at its discretion, assign a special committee to complete this task.

It is recommended that as many people as possible participate in answering Part V – The Leader We Seek. Fuller participation can be achieved by mailing the survey to congregation members, or by having members fill them out before or after worship services. While the time for a comprehensive survey of the membership may lengthen the call process, the benefit of including and listening to many voices from the congregation will bear much good fruit and be well worth the time spent. In the end, however, it is the responsibility of the Council to make a final decision on the six leadership priorities for the congregation.

As you prepare the Congregational Mission Profile, take care to avoid the following two sand traps!

1. Do not attempt to make the congregation or parish sound better than it is by downplaying financial, property or spiritual problems. Tell it as it is. You may scare off some clergy, but that is better than having a deeply unhappy and disappointed new pastor who feels he/she was sold a bill of goods!
2. Do not make claims you have not fully thought through for example “we want more young people and new members.” To bring new members and young people into the church usually requires a lot of change and planning on the part of the congregation or parish. One of the biggest areas of discontent for clergy arises from unrealistic expectations with little support.

**NOTE:** If your pastor will be serving in a multiple staff situation, please refer to **Appendix 3, Guidelines for Congregations Considering Calling an Additional Pastor**, for more information.

When these two profiles are completed, copies are mailed to the Synod Office so the Bishop or Bishop’s Representative will have time to study them prior to meeting with Council and, where appropriate, the Call Committee.

A Synod staff person can help you if you need other assistance in completing the profile. In some instances Synod office may be able to match you up with a neighbouring parish who has recently completed the call process in order that they can share their newly acquired expertise!

### **3C. APPOINTING THE CALL COMMITTEE**

**I**t is the responsibility of the Congregational Council to appoint the Call Committee. In a parish arrangement, the responsibility lies with the Parish Council. In some situations the Council may choose to serve as the Call Committee.

When appointing the Call Committee consider the makeup of the congregation, assuring that a diversity of gender, age, and ethnic/racial identity is represented, as well as representation from various segments of the ministry of the congregation, such as Worship, Youth, ELW, Education, Evangelism, etc. It is recommended that the committee be comprised of 6-8 persons including at least 2 members of Council.

It is essential that Call Committee members are respected members of the congregation, are familiar with the issues faced by the congregation and/or parish, and are spiritually mature. It is also vital that the Call Committee members are able to work as a team. This requires ability and commitment to: listen effectively and respectfully; communicate effectively; maintain confidentiality; think reflectively and analytically; prepare for and participate in the work of the committee regularly and frequently through all parts of the process.



It is important that the Congregational Council not select those who simply volunteer to sit on the Call Committee as well-meaning as they might be. Having the right gifts, as described in the above paragraph, is essential. With that in mind, one Congregational Council asked congregational members to apply for membership on the Call Committee. This proved helpful. Members were asked to state why they would like to be on the Call Committee and what strengths or skills do they bring that would be beneficial to the committee and its work.

**Because of additional demands on the chair of the Congregational Council during a pastoral transition, it is recommended that the chair of the Congregational Council not be the chair of the Call Committee.**

The Congregational Council needs to give the Call Committee the appropriate parts of this call process manual as well as copies of the completed Congregational Mission Profile, including the Leadership Needs. The Congregational Council also needs to give the committee information concerning the salary and benefit range that the congregation can consider. Salary and benefit considerations are not matters which are to be negotiated between the candidate and Call Committee. The Call Committee, for example, does not have the authority to commit the congregation to a dollar figure or an extra week of vacation or additional educational leave. The Congregational Council also needs to authorize funding to the Call Committee for its use in carrying out its responsibilities, such as cost of travel, meals and hotel expense for candidates invited to come to interview, or for travel by the committee to hear a candidate preach at some other location.

Prayer is an important activity for both the Call Committee and the entire congregation throughout this process. Call Committee members are encouraged to commit themselves to pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation. Special prayer at worship and during other meetings of the congregation is encouraged. When the Call Committee is selected, the names of the members are made public, with request that special prayers be made on their behalf.

### **3D. MEETING WITH THE BISHOP**

Once the completed Congregational Mission Profile is received by the Synod Office, a meeting is held with the Bishop or Bishop's Representative, the Congregational Council and the Call Committee.

The agenda of the meeting shall include the following:

1. Appointment of an interim pastor;
2. Review of the Congregational Mission Profile;
3. Review of the Call Process and the roles of Council and the Call Committee;
4. Develop a list of names for consideration for call.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERIM PASTOR**

This is fully discussed in the next section of this manual (3e). It is important to note that although the Call Committee may be present at this meeting, the appointment of an interim pastor is solely a Council responsibility.

#### **REVIEW OF THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION PROFILE**

The Bishop or Bishop's Representative will lead a review of the Congregational Mission Profile, reviewing the leadership needs and pointing out any areas that may need clarification.

## **REVIEW OF THE CALL PROCESS AND THE ROLES OF COUNCIL AND THE CALL COMMITTEE**

The Bishop or Bishop's Representative will then review the call process. The role of the Council and the role of the Call Committee will be highlighted. The importance of balancing the need for confidentiality and the need for open communication between the Call Committee and Council as well as with the whole congregation will be discussed. It is especially important, in this first meeting, to set aside enough time to raise crucial questions and concerns.

The Bishop or Bishop's Representative will outline how the Synod can be helpful to the congregation in the call process. An attempt will be made to clarify any expectations that the Synod might have of the congregation and what expectations the congregation might have of the Synod.

## **DEVELOP A LIST OF NAMES FOR CONSIDERATION FOR CALL**

Names of potential candidates for call will come from two sources: names provided by members of the Council or the Call Committee, and names provided by Bishop or Bishop's Representative. Let's look at how names can be generated from both of these sources.

### ***(a) Names Provided by the Council or Call Committee***

Members of Council and of the Call Committee are invited to submit names for consideration. There are many ways that names can come to the attention of the Council and Call Committee. Individuals may suggest:

- The pastor of a previous congregation where they have been a member.
- A pastor they have met at a church convention.
- A pastor of a congregation where they have worshipped on vacation.
- A previous intern or student from your congregation.
- A pastor recommended to you by a member of the congregation.

Please note that these pastors may be unaware that their names are being suggested and may not be open to call at this time.

### ***(b) Additional Names Suggested by the Bishop or Bishop's Representative***

The Bishop or Bishop's Representative will also suggest names at this time. These names will include any pastors who have asked to have their names provided for consideration in this call process. Pastors from outside the synod may have their names suggested upon submission of a completed "Personnel Information for Synod Bishops" through their synod office. The Bishop or Bishop's Representative may also suggest the names of pastors who have the specific leadership needs identified by the Congregational Mission Profile. In this last instance, these pastors may be unaware that their names are being suggested and may not be open to call at this time.

### ***(c) Important Considerations***

All of the names suggested will be discussed. Some names may be removed from the list at this time. A list of no more than six names will be agreed upon. After the meeting the Bishop will solicit Availability For Call forms from those who have been identified for further consideration.

It is likely that some of the candidates you are considering at this point will not choose to participate in your call process. There are many reasons for individuals to make such a choice including:

- The Pastor has been in his/her present call a fairly short time.
- Family considerations can play a significant role for some pastors and their availability for call. The age and schooling of children, the spouse's occupation, or care for parents or other family members are all examples.

- Some pastors do not feel comfortable serving in certain settings. A person raised in a rural area may not be a good leader in a city setting, or vice versa, for example. This may also be an issue for other family members.
- The congregation where the pastor presently serves may be in the midst of a major project such as a building program.

The pastor is under no obligation to share reasons with you when they decline to participate. It is important not to take these declinations as rejections!

**NOTE:** Following this meeting, continuing dialogue with the Bishop's Office is encouraged and expected. Ongoing contact usually will take place in person or by telephone, ordinarily between the staff advisor appointed by the bishop and the chair of the Call Committee.

### **3E. APPOINTING THE INTERIM PASTOR**

**S**ynods provide for the care of congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy through the appointment of an ordained minister to provide pastoral care on an interim basis. An interim pastor is appointed by the Synod Bishop in consultation with the Congregational Council. Pastoral care is then provided on a contract basis, either through appointment or a term Letter of Call.

Whether your congregation can best be served by an appointed interim pastor or by a called interim pastor will depend in part on the "climate" within your congregation.

A congregation facing the normal range of congregational concerns related to a pastoral transition may be served by an interim pastor without formal training for interim ministry. The Synodical Bishop arranges for the congregation to receive Word and Sacrament leadership during the period prior to the regular calling of a pastor through the appointment of an interim pastor. Usually this is done by a neighbouring pastor on a very part-time basis.

Some congregations will benefit from the leadership of an experienced and trained interim pastor. Situations in which this is particularly appropriate include the transition following a long pastorate, a congregation facing new mission opportunities and/or a changed context for ministry, a transition following the resignation of a pastor related to disciplinary action by the Synod, or a transition marked by distress, discord or upheaval within a congregation. In such situations an interim pastor serves at the very minimum on a half-time basis.

The Bishop or Bishop's Representative will help you decide what kind of interim ministry is right for you. Sometimes the geographic location of a congregation may limit the choices available for interim ministry.

Part-time Interim Ministry is compensated in accordance with the current compensation schedule. It is expected that the church council and the interim pastor will negotiate the expected duties and the anticipated number of hours. Duties will include attendance at church council meetings and crisis response. They may also include hospital and or shut-in visitation, confirmation instruction, office hours and so on. Pulpit supply is to be compensated separately, according to the most current Synod Compensation Schedule. In situations where the interim pastor lives a long way away from the congregation, compensation for driving time will be negotiated separately. A monthly log of hours worked is to be submitted for reimbursement.

### **Some facts about interim pastors:**

- (a) An interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor as stated in the Model Constitution for Congregations.
- (b) The interim pastor normally serves the congregation by covenanted agreement.
- (c) Ordinarily, interim pastors cannot be considered for call. An interim pastor may only be considered for call after consultation with the bishop's office and may not be considered for call at the same time as other candidates. Interim pastors shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor as stated in the Model Constitution for Congregations.
- (d) All interim ministry relationships with an individual congregation, whether by appointment or call, can be terminated on 30 days notice by the interim pastor, the Synod Bishop or the Congregational Council.

For more information see the document "**Interim Ministry Guidelines**". (**Appendix 4**)

You may wish to use the service "**Recognition of an Interim Pastor**" (**Appendix 1b**) as a means of beginning your interim pastor's ministry. This might take place within the Sunday service or at a Council meeting.



# **CALL PROCESS MANUAL**

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## **SECTION 4: THE CALL COMMITTEE**

- 4A. Getting Organized**
- 4B. Reviewing Availability For Call Forms**
- 4C. The Interview Process**
- 4D. Making a Decision**
- 4E. Following Up**

## 4A. GETTING ORGANIZED

The Call Committee is a special (ad hoc) committee whose sole purpose is to recommend a pastoral candidate to the congregation. Time needs to be taken for members of the Call Committee to become comfortable with one another and to cement a solid working partnership. Hours spent in healthy dialogue within the Call Committee will contribute to developing this relationship.

Prayer is an important activity for the Call Committee and for the entire congregation throughout this process. Call Committee members are encouraged to commit themselves to pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation. In the Appendix you will find "**Five Brief Devotions for Call Committees (and others)**" to help you in your prayers. (**Appendix 5**)

After some preliminary getting acquainted, the committee selects a Chair and a Secretary.

The Chair convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, is the contact person with the Bishop's Office and may be the primary contact with candidates.

The Secretary keeps the minutes of Call Committee meetings. The Secretary is responsible for written communication between candidates and the committee (letters informing candidates of committee's time line and the interview process to be used, confirming invitations, travel arrangements, thank you notes, and letters informing candidates of decisions reached), sends copies of correspondence to the Synod Office, and may write the newsletter articles, notes for Sunday bulletins, etc. which keep the congregation informed of the committee's progress. Some of these duties may be delegated to other members of the committee.

The Call Committee, at its initial meeting, makes other decisions necessary for good order and clear communication, such as the frequency and duration of meetings, rules of order for transacting business, issues of confidentiality, and adoption of either a majority vote or consensus model for decision making. Committee members should also review the document "**Some Theological Considerations**". (**Appendix 6**)

### COMMUNICATION

The Call Committee reports regularly to the Congregational Council. The Call Committee will need to determine, with the Congregational Council, the means, frequency and nature of communication with the congregation. The Call Committee may decide to communicate through a variety of means including:

- **Newsletter articles** explaining the Call Process to the congregation can be helpful; with follow-up articles each time another stage in the process is reached.
- Notes in the **Sunday bulletin** announcing that the Call Committee is meeting, keeps the congregation informed of progress.
- **Verbal reports** by a member of the Call Committee to update the congregation on a regular basis might also be welcomed. (Even if the report is "nothing has changed since last time" - it is very helpful to let people know what is happening in the Call Process. Also, from one time to the next, you will not necessarily be reporting to exactly the same audience.)
- **Sunday / Weekday Adult Class** - use for re-emphasizing the process, "Where we are," etc. This format invites interaction and feedback
- **Bulletin board postings**
- **Informal conversation** with Call Committee members who have announced their availability at the coffee hour.

***Some points to include in your communication are:***

- (a) Description of process
- (b) Summary of specific presentations, i.e. the Bishop's visit
- (c) Outline of progress - this would include past, present and future
- (d) List of actions taken
- (e) The preferred process for communicating with the members of the Call Committee

***Some things you want to accomplish through your communication are:***

- (a) That the congregation will clearly understand the process, including the roles of the Bishop's Office, Council, Call Committee and Congregation
- (b) Clear identification of the members of the Call Committee
- (c) Members will have a clear understanding of the proper process for communicating with the members of the Call Committee.

With the exception of confidential materials, there is no such thing as too much information!

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality in the Call Committee discussions should be clearly agreed upon at the first meeting. Conversations about candidates need to be open and forth-right within the committee. These discussions should, however, be kept in confidence between the Call Committee members.

The importance of confidentiality cannot be overemphasized in the task of calling a pastor. It is inappropriate to mention specific candidates outside the Call Committee, including the names of those on the call list, until the committee is ready to share its recommendation with the Congregational Council. It is important to keep all names, as well as any verbal or written information about prospective candidates, within the confines of the committee. This means committee members will need to establish ground rules and boundaries, not only with the congregation at large, but also with those in their household or place of work.

One of the things to consider as you think about confidentiality is the difference between openness and holding confidence. Openness means that the Call Committee needs to report regularly to Council and the congregation in order to help everyone understand the process.

Holding confidence means that the Call Committee needs to keep all of the verbal and written information about the individual candidates to themselves.

At the end of the call process, all materials related to candidates not being called shall be destroyed.

**SATISFACTION**

Many people report that serving on a Call Committee turned out to be one of the most important things they ever did as members of the Church. It allowed them to experience firsthand how the Holy Spirit works through committed Christians to help the Church be faithful to its calling. It gave them an opportunity to see how the local Church is vitally connected to the whole Church and to participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their congregation.

We hope and pray that this will be the case for you!

## HELP ALONG THE WAY

Sometimes the call process can be confusing! The staff advisor appointed by the Bishop is there to help you. Please do not hesitate to call for assistance. In some instances Synod Office may be able to match you up with a neighbouring parish who has recently completed the call process in order that they can share their newly acquired expertise!

## 4B. REVIEWING AVAILABILITY FOR CALL FORMS

**A**fter meeting with the Congregational Council, the Bishop or the Bishop's representative will write to the potential candidates requesting Availability For Call forms. **(You will find a sample Availability For Call form in Appendix 7.)** The candidates will be asked to send their Availability For Call forms to the synod office for certification and subsequent submission to the Call Committee by a specified date.

Once all Availability For Call forms have been received, and hopefully within thirty days of your initial meeting with the Bishop or Bishop's Representative, the Call Committee needs to meet and review the forms and come up with an interview list of not more than three names.

Every member of the committee should have ample opportunity to read through each candidate's Availability For Call form, making notes of their comments or questions. Hopefully this can be accomplished before the Call Committee meets as a whole.

The committee as a whole should review the Availability For Call forms one at a time, allowing lots of time for discussion and the sharing of individual comments and questions. Keep in mind that just because people say that they have attended a course or say they are interested in a particular aspect of ministry does not guarantee that they are good at it!

### SELECTING AN INTERVIEW LIST

After you have reviewed the Availability For Call forms, you need to identify a list of candidates that you want to interview. There should be no more than three names on this list. You may feel comfortable with only selecting one or two names.

**NOTE:** Once the interview list has been determined it is important that you immediately inform any candidates that will no longer be considered. Use the sample letter identified as **Appendix 8a**.

### FOLLOW-UP

Once your interview list is complete, you need to contact the candidates on the list by letter, **(using the form letter you find identified as Appendix 8b)**, inviting them for an interview, and requesting, where applicable, a copy of their most recent annual report. In the letter you will promise to follow up with a telephone call. With the letter you will send a copy of the Congregational Mission Profile and your most recent annual report. Please send copies of all letters to the Bishop or the Bishop's representative.

The chair of the Call Committee will then follow up the letters by telephone to arrange interviews. There is a possibility that some of the candidates might decline to be interviewed. Do not be discouraged by this, but continue on with the rest of your list. If at all possible, arrange for interviews to take place as soon as possible, hopefully within a month of identifying the interview list.

Follow up your telephone conversation with a letter which reviews the place, time and expected length of the interview. If there is a spouse, the Call Committee needs to clarify whether the spouse is invited to accompany the pastor to the interview. The letter also contains travel instructions to reach the place of an interview, and indicates the commitment of the congregation to provide reimbursement for all expenses. A prompt reimbursement of expenses incurred by the candidate should follow the interview.



## **TO VISIT OR NOT TO VISIT?**

In order to get more information about the candidates, you may choose to arrange to visit the congregations where the candidates are currently serving. Sometimes it is not possible to arrange such visits due to distance and costs involved.

Before you decide to make visits there are some ideas you need to think through.

- What is the purpose of the visit? What are you looking for?
- Who is going to do the visiting? Will everyone go or just a few? How will you share the information you gather?
- What if you can't visit all of the candidates? Do you go ahead with some visits? Do you ask the candidates you can't visit to submit a video or audio tape of a service?
- How will you conduct yourselves during the visit so as not to needlessly upset the congregation. Remember, your candidate is still someone else's pastor!!
- If you do decide to visit, remember that the traditions and customs you observe may reveal more about the pastor's ability to adapt to that congregation than it does about his/her personal preferences. Watch for the pastor's ability to give leadership in spiritual matters, revealed in her/his love for the people and the general feel of the service.

## **4C. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

**A** good interview begins with good planning. How will you meet and greet the candidate? Where will you hold the interview? Who will ask questions? What will you ask? Answering these questions will allow you to make the best use of the interview time as well as putting you and your congregation in the best possible light.

An attempt should be made to conduct each interview in the same setting and manner. The Call Committee should be consistent in having the same person lead the interview each time and plan for committee members to ask the same basic questions of each candidate. This will assure that all the bases are covered in each instance once the interview process begins. If the Call Committee eats in a restaurant with one candidate, the same pattern should be followed with any subsequent candidates.

It is extremely important, in fairness to all candidates and for effective functioning of the committee, that all Call Committee members commit themselves to being present for all interviews.

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

- The person being interviewed has invested time and effort to be with you. Therefore, he/she is worthy of the committee's respect, interest, and undivided attention.
- The committee gives the person time to formulate thoughtful answers.
- Building on what the person has said, the interviewer asks questions that pick up on information already shared in the interview. This indicates that you are listening.
- The committee listens for key words and phrases, making certain that they are understood by all.
- The interviewers listen for main ideas, not just facts and figures. They should ask themselves, "What is this person telling us?"
- Interviewers ask clarifying questions to make certain they are really understanding what the person is saying. If a response is not clear, the committee should ask for it to be clarified. Doing so does not reflect ignorance but demonstrates that the committee is truly interested and trying to understand what the person is attempting to communicate.

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

As the Call Committee prepares its questions, it recalls the top six leadership needs identified in the Congregational Mission Profile. These leadership needs are used to form an outline for the upcoming interview with the candidate. The committee selects eight to ten questions that will shape the primary part of the interview. The committee is flexible in realizing that a give-and-take conversation will not necessarily allow you to ask the questions in predictable order.

*Here is a list of sample questions for you to consider.*

- (a) What events led you to prepare for ordained ministry?
- (b) Briefly state your personal faith.
- (c) How do you describe yourself theologically?
- (d) How do you nurture yourself spiritually?
- (e) How do you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially?
- (f) What personal traits and gifts do you have that make it possible for you to be effective as a pastor?
- (g) What books have you read recently that have made an impression on you?
- (h) How do you prepare a sermon? What do you try to achieve in your preaching?
- (i) Describe the areas of pastoral ministry you enjoy the most.
- (j) Describe the areas of pastoral ministry you enjoy the least.
- (k) What role do you see yourself fulfilling in relating to committees?
- (l) Tell us about your philosophy and style of pastoral visitation.
- (m) Discuss your expectations concerning catechetical instruction.
- (n) Share your thoughts regarding the worship life of a congregation.
- (o) In what ways do you participate in the community? In the synod?
- (p) What areas of involvement in your last/current parish gave you personal satisfaction?
- (q) What is it about our congregation that interests and challenges you?
- (r) How do you determine what priorities to put on the tasks you must do?
- (s) Can you tell us about a time when you had to deal with a difficult parishioner regarding a complaint?  
How did you handle the situation?
- (t) Tell us about a time which was very stressful. How did you cope?
- (u) Give us an example of how you motivate and enable your parishioners to be effective in ministry.
- (v) Do you consider yourself to be flexible? Can you give an example?
- (w) Can you give examples of how you addressed conflict in your previous calls?
- (x) What is the essence of the Gospel message that our church should be communicating to the community at large?
- (y) What kind of social outreach/mission activities have you been involved with in the past?

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

***Here are some questions that may be asked of you as a committee.***

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

**CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW**

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

Following brief, informal introductions, a member of the Call Committee may conduct an opening devotional.

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

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

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

The formal questioning now begins, remembering that it is very important that the same questions are asked of each candidate for later comparison. Questions may be assigned to various members of the Call Committee, thereby assuring that all present actively participate.

If the response received from the candidate seems incomplete or unclear, the person asking the question may pose a follow-up question, asking for elaboration, clarification, or examples. The committee should not expect finely polished, textbook accurate answers to spur-of-the-moment questions. If committee members are not satisfied with the answer, clarification can be requested before the next question is asked. Remember to give time for the candidate to answer the questions adequately. You may get a period of silence after a difficult question. Resist the temptation to jump in or answer for the candidate.

There are some other interview pitfalls you will want to avoid:

1. Don't rate a candidate on the basis of physical and personal characteristics unrelated to their qualifications. Be able to substantiate interview impressions with objective behaviours and comments.
2. Resist the tendency to rate the candidate as good or bad on the basis of one trait or comment. Remember that people are complicated, never wholly good or bad.
3. You may experience awkwardness at the beginning of your interview process. That is just the reality of learning how to work together as a group. Try not to project that awkwardness on to the candidate.
4. Make every effort to treat each interview independently. Resist making comparisons between candidates before all of the interviewing is completed. Judge each candidate on her/his own merit.
5. Resist being swayed by first impressions. Try to base your opinion of a candidate on the whole interview, not just on the first few minutes.

A committee member may be designated to record candidate responses during the interview, for further scrutiny by the committee. Note taking should be done as unobtrusively as possible, and if it is to occur, the Committee Chair should explain the purpose of the note taking to the candidate. Some committees might consider recording the interview. Recording should only take place with the consent of the candidate, and with assurances of confidentiality.

In formulating questions, carefully avoid those which can be answered with a response of "yes" or "no." For example, the questioner should not ask, "Do you think you are effective in your ministry to youth?" The candidate will almost surely answer, "yes." Rather, ask, "Describe how you minister to youth. Give us some examples of how you have worked effectively with youth in your present or former parish."

When the committee has completed its list of pre-selected questions, the Committee Chair may invite additional questions. Though the Call Committee is "in charge" of the interview, it is helpful to remember that the interview is intended to be a dialogue and not an inquisition! This is intended to be a "mutual" interview. Invite the candidate to ask questions and provide additional comments during the interview.

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

In concluding the interview, the candidate may be invited to "answer questions not asked" or make any other comment he or she would like to make. The candidate should be thanked for coming and encouraged to be in phone contact with a designated member of the Call Committee should there be additional questions which occur to the candidate in the days following the interview. The Call Committee should indicate the approximate time table involved in the completion of the congregation's call procedures. If possible, at the conclusion of the interview, the committee should reimburse the candidate for any expenses incurred, such as travel costs, overnight accommodations, and meals. If the reimbursement cannot occur at the time of the interview, it should be completed within the following week and an appropriate explanation given to the candidate. There is a sample expense form in the appendix. **(Appendix 8c)**

While the interview is still fresh in the minds of committee members, it might be useful to reconvene the Call Committee, upon the candidate's departure, for sharing initial impressions. It is important that these shared impressions are recorded for later reference.

The Call Committee should send a letter of appreciation to each candidate for his/her willingness to be interviewed. This letter may encourage the candidate to address any additional questions or concerns to the Call Committee. Any expense reimbursement not made at the time of the interview should be made now. Again, a promise of keeping the candidate informed regarding the call process is essential. There is a sample letter for this purpose in the appendix. (**Appendix 8d**)

#### **4D. MAKING A DECISION**

**A**s your committee engages in the process of selecting one candidate, whose name will be recommended to the Congregational Council, it will be important to do several things.

1. Ask again for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
2. Review and clarify earlier understandings of what it means for the committee to reach an agreement.
3. Allow ample time for each Call Committee member to speak and be heard.
4. Come to a decision measured against the six top leadership needs of the congregation.
5. Choose the most suitable candidate, not necessarily the one you think is most likely to accept the call.
6. While listening to your own heart and impressions, go beyond asking “Which candidate do I favour?” to ask “Which pastor can best serve our congregation?”

Once the Call Committee has decided upon a candidate to recommend, the Bishop’s representative is informed and a meeting of the Congregational Council is called. The entire Call Committee or only the Chair of the Committee may be present at this meeting. At this meeting, the Call Committee presents its recommendation to the Congregational Council. Careful preparation by the Call Committee member who is chosen to present the candidate is important. Providing thorough information about the candidate, with ample opportunity for dialogue between the Call Committee and the Council, will enable the Congregational Council to come to a decision regarding the Call Committee’s recommendation.

If you are unable to make a decision or feel that you can not recommend any of the candidates you interviewed, you will need to inform Council and your staff advisor. The process will begin again by establishing a new list of candidates.

#### **4E. FOLLOWING UP**

**O**nce Council has made a decision to recommend a candidate for call, the staff advisor should be informed. The candidate will be contacted by the staff advisor and will need to withdraw from any other call processes they may be involved in.

There is a possibility that the candidate may choose to withdraw from your call process at this time.

It is also important to let any other candidates know that you are no longer considering them. You will find a sample letter for this purpose in the appendix. (**Appendix 8e**)

You should also inform the Bishop’s representative when you are no longer considering candidates.

If Council votes to accept your recommendation, and the congregation subsequently votes to extend a call, your work as a committee is done! Please have each committee member fill out the “**Call Process Evaluation Form for Call Committees**” (**Appendix 9**) and return them to the Synod Office. You may wish to have a final meeting as a committee to discuss your responses and debrief your call process.



## **CALL PROCESS MANUAL**

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### **SECTION 5: PREPARING FOR THE CALL MEETING**

**5A. Putting Together the Employment Agreement**

**5B. The Call Meeting**

## 5A. PUTTING TOGETHER THE COMPENSATION PACKAGE

Once Congregational Council has accepted a recommendation from the Call Committee regarding a candidate for Call, the next step is to put together the compensation package. This is the responsibility of Council and will make up part of the recommendation that will go to the congregational meeting for a vote.

You will find a copy of the current “**Compensation Schedule for Pastors, Diaconal Ministers & Pastoral Supply**” in the appendix of this manual. (**Appendix 10**) You will also find a copy of **The Employment Agreement** which you can copy and use as a worksheet. (**Appendix 11**) You will note that the Synod guidelines outline expectations for salary, housing, professional expenses, and benefits. You may also want to consider what level of remuneration the candidate is currently receiving. You should also review the sample **Letter of Call** that you will find in the Appendix of this manual. (**Appendix 12**) If you have any questions as you go through this process, please do not hesitate to contact synod office or the Bishop’s representative.

Once completed, the compensation worksheet needs to be sent to Synod Office to become part of the call documents.

You should note that in July 2002 the Eastern Synod Convention passed a motion “that a synod sponsored **Transitions Workshop** be provided annually for all persons receiving a new Letter of Call; the costs to be covered by the calling congregations or employing agencies.” We know that participation in this event will help your pastor and you in the new beginnings of your relationship.

In the case of calls for new graduates, the synod convention in June of 2004 approved the creation of a **First Call** program of mandatory continuing education. This means an addition two years of extra continuing education following the **Transitions Workshop**; the costs to be covered by the calling congregations. We know that this program will help new pastors become successful in their call to ordained ministry.

One of the requirements of the call is to cover the cost of all moving expenses for your new pastor.

## 5B. THE CALL MEETING

The Congregational Council will set a date for a special Congregational Call Meeting in consultation with the Bishop's Office. Once the date has been set, Council should follow the congregation's constitution in notifying all eligible voting members of the special meeting.

The Bishop shall appoint someone to chair the meeting. Ordinarily the Bishop will appoint the Chairperson of the Congregation to serve in this capacity. On occasion the meeting may be chaired by another pastor or an Assistant to the Bishop.

In preparation for the Congregational Call Meeting, the Council should review portions of the congregation constitution relative to the calling of a pastor, including the number of voters required for a quorum and the definition of a voting member.

Unless it is conducted immediately following worship, the special meeting of the congregation to consider the calling of a pastor should begin with a devotional time. The Chair should then establish that a quorum of members is present and ask that this number be recorded in the minutes. The motion to call a pastor, including the compensation package is presented to the congregation. It may be helpful to hand out copies of the compensation package to the congregation. Information concerning the proposed candidate should then be presented to the congregation. The congregation should then be invited to address questions about the proposed candidate or the compensation package to representatives of the Congregational Council and Call Committee.

The vote to call a pastor will be by secret ballot. Proxy or absentee ballots are not permitted. **A two-thirds majority of votes cast is necessary for election.** In the case of a call to a parish, **a two-thirds majority of the total number of ballots cast within the parish, as well as a simple majority of the ballots cast in each individual congregation, is required for election.**

Tellers should be appointed by Council to distribute, collect and count the ballots. The vote is recorded on the form "**Official Congregational Call Meeting**", a copy of which you will find in the appendix to this manual. (*Appendix 13*) The tellers should then report the vote outcome to the Chair of the meeting who announces the results to the congregation. Careful minutes must be taken.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Congregational Council Chair should express gratitude to the Call Committee for its work and assistance in the call process. If an approval to call takes place, the congregation should be informed that the candidate has 30 days to consider the call and will normally notify the congregation of his/her decision within that time.

At the end of the meeting, members of the Congregational Council and members of the Call Committee are asked to sign the call documents. These are then returned to Synod Office, signed by the Bishop, and forwarded to the candidate.

If the required two-thirds majority vote to call is not met, the Chair of the meeting declares that the candidate has not been called. When possible, the Congregational Council Chair and Chair of the Call Committee are advised to meet with the Bishop or Bishop's Representative to discuss the failure to elect and to initiate a renewal of the call process. Other Congregational Council members and Call Committee members may be included in this meeting, if desired.

A step-by-step agenda of the Call Meeting, including the details mentioned in this section, will be found in *Appendix 13* of this manual.





## **CALL PROCESS MANUAL**

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### **SECTION 6: NEW BEGINNINGS**

- 6A. New Beginnings**
- 6B. Another Ending**
- 6C. Press Release**
- 6D. Invite the Community and the Wider Church**
- 6E. Helping Your Pastor with the Transition**

## 6A. NEW BEGINNINGS

The candidate's decision to accept or decline the call will be sent to the congregation via the Congregational Council chair. In accepting, the pastor will be asked to indicate the starting date, usually within one or two months. Any variance will need to be approved by the calling congregation. Acceptance of The Call is conveyed promptly to the Bishop. With acceptance, the work of the Call Committee is finished.

The pastor-elect and the officers of the Congregational Council will agree on arrangements for moving. The congregation is responsible for moving expenses.

The Congregational Council chair and the pastor-elect will consult with the Ministry Area Dean to decide upon a date for installation. The Ministry Area Dean conducts the installation. The Dean may or may not preach.

The Service of Installation is printed in the *Occasional Services for the Assembly Book* (printed by Augsburg-Fortress). Pastors have personal copies for their use.

The Congregational Council arranges for welcoming the arriving pastor. You may wish to appoint a welcoming committee. Such a group may assist the pastor with relocation needs and possibly plan a celebration and welcoming event. All efforts to greet, welcome and assist the pastor in the start of a new ministry will be appreciated by the new pastor and will help to assure the healthy beginning of a strong, mutual ministry of pastor and people.

## 6B. ANOTHER ENDING

The arrival of your new pastor will bring to a close the ministry of your interim pastor. Council should consider ways of thanking your interim pastor for their ministry among you. The kind of thank you will need to reflect the length and amount of service provided, but might include a farewell service, a gift, a letter from Council, a special coffee time at a Council meeting. You may wish to use the service "**Rite of Farewell and Godspeed for an Interim Pastor and His/Her Family**" which you will find in the Appendix. (Appendix 1c)

## 6C. PRESS RELEASE

A press release about the arrival of your new pastor is an opportunity for outreach. Make sure to include relevant information about your new pastor: educational background, congregations served, major accomplishments, and sometimes information about the family. But also describe your congregation. The press release is an outreach tool that helps to create a congregational image in the community as well.

## 6D. INVITE THE COMMUNITY AND THE WIDER CHURCH

**W**hen you and your new pastor plan the installation service, consider inviting the community, especially representatives from local churches, and the wider church, especially representatives from your conference.

Remember that the time you choose to hold your installation service will make a big difference in who will be able to attend. Sunday morning services usually bring the largest attendance from the congregation, but do not allow individuals from other churches to take part.

*Here is a sample you may find helpful as you design the invitations. Designated areas will require information specific to your plans.*

*We request your prayers and presence with us  
at a service of Holy Communion  
and the Rite of Installation*

*The Reverend Jane W. Doe  
will be installed to the  
office of Pastor*

*The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
September 13, 1998  
at three o'clock in the afternoon  
First Lutheran Church, ELCIC  
12345 Name Street  
City, Province*

*Reception immediately following*

*RSVP by \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone number) \_\_\_\_\_*

*Clergy are invited to vest.*

*The colour of the day is \_\_\_\_\_*

## **6E. HELPING YOUR PASTOR WITH THE TRANSITION**

**L**et's face it. There are a lot of adjustments in any move. And the move to a new call brings with it a lot of transitions. Recognizing the need for pastors to have help in making good transitions, the Eastern Synod Council passed a motion in April of 2002 "that a synod sponsored Transitions Workshop be provided annually for all persons receiving a new Letter of Call; the cost to be covered by the calling congregation." Your support and encouragement for your pastor to attend the Transitions Workshop is one way that you can help your pastor adjust to the transitions involved in coming to your congregation(s). It will provide her/him with an opportunity to reflect on initial experiences of this new call, talk with others facing the same transitions, as well as providing time to relate to the bishop and the rest of the synod staff.