



Printing instructions:

This manual is formatted to be printed like a book, on both sides of each paper and flipped on the long edge.

# **CALLING A PASTOR A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY FOR A CONGREGATION**

## **Congregations Served by Multiple Pastors**

**This manual speaks most directly to situations where a congregation is calling a solo pastor. The call process takes on a different dimension when there is a pastoral staff of more than one pastor. Please refer to Appendix Z (page 79) for additional guidelines and instructions for multiple pastor situations.**



**Material prepared by:  
Grand Canyon Synod  
1819 East Morten Ave., #100A  
Phoenix, AZ 85020  
602.957.3223  
gcsynod.org**

This manual can be accessed on the Grand Canyon Synod website ( [www.gcsynod.org](http://www.gcsynod.org) ).  
Click on "Congregations/Rostered Leaders" to access the drop down menu for Call Process forms and information.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."  
Jeremiah 29:11

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The words of the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah remind us that ultimately the Lord is in charge of leading, providing, and equipping God's people for the future ahead. You are preparing to call a new leader into your midst in light of a need to replace a leader who God has called elsewhere or to add to an expanding ministry team. As you venture into this journey of discernment, I hope that you will take seriously the wisdom that is contained in this manual. This is a guide created from the insights of synod staff, call committee members, candidates and me. I am indebted to the many who have worked to shape this document so it is "user-friendly" and can be a real asset to laying the foundation for a successful and faithful call process. As you read through the pages may the verse from Jeremiah assure you of the plans the Lord has in store for your congregation.

In Christ's Service,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stephen D. Palmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephen" being more prominent than the last name "Palmer".

Bishop  
Grand Canyon Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# putting the pieces together





# contents

## introduction: understanding call 1

For ALL: Foundational material to understand and implement a call process.

- 0.1 a spiritual journey for a congregation 1
- 0.2 what is a “call”? 2
- 0.3 the call and the whole church 3

## step one: the pastor resigns 4

For ALL: Closing out the former pastor’s ministry.

- 1.1 the exit evaluation and interview 4
  - the exit interview process* 5
- 1.2 the termination date 5
- 1.3 the farewell celebration 6
- 1.4 how does the former pastor relate to the congregation? 6

Resignation  
BASICS  
page 4

## step two: time for transition 7

For COUNCIL: Necessary leadership concepts following a resignation.

- 2.1 focused leadership by lay leaders and staff 7
- 2.2 respond to the emotional dynamics 8
  - accept the reality of the loss* 8
  - experience your pain* 8
  - adjust to the new environment* 9
  - emotionally relocate the departing pastor* 9
- 2.3 when called clergy continue on staff 9

Interim Ministry  
BASICS  
page 7

## step three: developing a plan for mission and ministry 10

For ALL: The how and why of the *Mission and Ministry Task Force*.

- 3.1 mission and ministry task force charge 10
- 3.2 the congregation debriefing meeting 11
- 3.3 evaluation 11

Mission and  
Ministry Task  
Force BASICS  
page 10



# contents

## step four: the call committee 12

For COUNCIL AND CALL COMMITTEE: How and when to form the *Call Committee* and basic guidelines for *Call Committee* organization and operations.

- 4.1 the significance of service on a call committee 12
- 4.2 when should the call committee be formed? 12
- 4.3 how is the call committee selected? 13
- 4.4 who should be on the call committee? 13
- 4.5 recognition of the ministry of the call committee 15
- 4.6 call committee authority 15
  - synod support* 16
- 4.7 how is the call committee organized? 16
  - call committee charge and tasks* 17
  - communication* 18
- 4.8 call committee fundamentals 19
  - the right question* 19
  - prayer* 19
  - servanthood* 20
  - confidentiality* 20

Call Committee  
BASICS  
page 12

Suggestions for  
Effective Call  
Committee  
Meetings  
page 17

## step five: candidates and interviews 21

For CALL COMMITTEE: Receiving candidates' names through interviews.

- 5.1 who provides the names of the candidates? 21
- 5.2 how are the candidates selected? 22
- 5.3 all candidates receive an initial interview 23
- 5.4 rostered leader profiles (aka mobility forms) 23
- 5.5 making contact with candidates 24
- 5.6 what questions underlie the interview and evaluation process? 25
- 5.7 preparation for initial interviews and evaluations 25
  - plan for evaluation after initial interviews* 27
  - practice the interview* 27
  - scheduling interviews* 28

Candidate  
BASICS  
page 21

Key Questions  
page 25



# contents

## step 6: making decisions 29

For CALL COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL: Moving from interviews to finalizing the call.

- 6.1 narrowing the candidate pool 29
- 6.2 due diligence 30
  - sermons* 31
  - course outlines/materials* 31
  - internet searches* 31
  - checking references* 31
  - background checks* 32
  - concluding thoughts* 32
  - what if we can't narrow the candidate list?* 33
- 6.3 scheduling site visits 33
- 6.4 face-to-face interview planning 34
  - developing questions for the second interview* 34
  - process planning for face-to-face interviews* 35
  - process planning for traveling* 36
  - interview process evaluation* 37
  - the interview* 37
- 6.5 evaluating the candidates 38
  - evaluation guidelines* 38
- 6.6 call committee recommends a candidate to council 39
- 6.7 council procedure to recommend candidate 40
  - introducing the candidates* 42
  - the congregation meeting step by step* 42
- 6.8 after the call is issued 42

Call Committee Recommendation BASICS page 39
Finalizing the Call BASICS page 41

## step 7: arrival, installation, and follow-up 44

For COUNCIL AND CALL COMMITTEE: Reception, installation, and evaluation.

- 7.1 need for continued vigilance by council and call committee 44
- 7.2 installation 45
- 7.3 formulate a press release 46
- 7.4 periodic review and evaluation 46
- 7.5 mutual ministry team 47
- 7.6 evaluation of the call process 48



## appendixes

<b>A</b>	<b>A Model for a Community Bible Study</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Text Suggestions for a Community Bible Study</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Exit Interview Forms</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation (and prayer)</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Model One: Mission and Ministry Planning</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Model Two: A Strategic Planning Process</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>How to Complete the <i>Ministry Site Profile</i></b>	<b>60</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Evaluating the MMTF Process</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>An Affirmation of a Call Committee</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Sample Call Committee Agenda</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>Sample of a Proposed Call Timeline</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Sample of a Visual Timeline used on the Web</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Sample Initial Interview Script</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Sample Interview Questions <u>for</u> Candidates</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Sample Interview Questions <u>by</u> Candidates</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Sample Interview Evaluation</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>Sample Letter to Candidates Not Recommended for Call</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Sample Questions for Checking References</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Sample Agendas for Face-to-Face Interviews</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Sample Outline of Candidate Recommendation to Council</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Six-Nine Month Review: Option 1</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Six-Nine Month Review: Option 2</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Prayers for Use Throughout Call Process</b>	<b>80</b>
	<b>(Transition, Work of Call Committee, Pastoral Interviews, Meetings)</b>	
<b>Z</b>	<b>Multiple Pastor Situations</b>	<b>81</b>

Please note that Appendixes A - W are available on the synod website as downloadable Word forms for ease in usage. Click on “Congregations/Rostered Leaders” to access the drop down menu for Call Process information and forms.





# introduction: understanding call

CALLING a pastor offers a remarkable opportunity for reflection and prayer in the life of a congregation. This time of transition is an opportunity for congregational leadership to place trust in God, to model unity, and to provide encouragement and opportunities for spiritual growth. Prayer, Bible study, regular devotions, and theological reflection will keep leadership spiritually centered as it guides the congregation in grieving its loss, assessing the current congregational strengths and weaknesses, creating a vision for mission and ministry, and calling a new pastor.

**“Calling a pastor offers a remarkable opportunity for reflection and prayer in the life of a congregation.”**

## 0.1 a spiritual journey for a congregation

### **pray**

BEGIN with prayer every time members of the congregation gather. The whole community needs to be in prayer. The prayer should be focused on the call process as well as other community concerns. Every group and committee should be furnished with information about the call process and asked to share in this spiritual work. There should be invitations to pray during worship and meetings, as part of announcements, in bulletins and newsletters, and on the church website.

### **study and reflect**

THE leadership should begin its meetings with Bible study, devotions, and time for reflection and prayer before beginning its various tasks. The leadership should provide suggested prayers, Biblical resources, and other devotional materials to assist groups in the congregation to deepen their reflection and promote understanding of the spiritual nature of the call process. Sample materials are included in this manual. (See *A Model for a Community Bible Study*, [Appendix A, page 50](#), and *Text Suggestions for a Community Bible Study*, [Appendix B, page 51](#).)

### **communicate**

THERE should be regular, ongoing communication about the transition and call process to invite congregants into a deeper understanding of the call. All of the places that communicate the work of the church (announcements, bulletins, newsletters, e-mail, web site) are opportunities for sharing the call process and inviting people into a process of spiritual growth. ►

## 0.2 what is a “call”?

AT THE heart of our Lutheran theology is something Martin Luther termed “the priesthood of all believers.” In our baptism, God has called us all to be part of the body of Christ. Luther reminded us of the Latin origin of the word “vocation” – *vocare*, which means “to call.” All of us take up our vocations – our callings – as God’s people. We are all ministers in whatever daily activities we take up. And, within this priesthood of all believers there exists the office of ordained ministry — the “office of Word and Sacrament.”

THE Lutheran church looks to the documents called *The Lutheran Confessions* for its understanding of scripture, the faith, and the church. Chief among these documents is the *Augsburg Confession*, written by Martin Luther and other reformers in the city of Augsburg (Germany) in 1530. These short, concise statements help us understand the nature of the office of ministry in the Lutheran Church:

“We cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works or satisfactions. We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for His sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us.”

(Article IV, The Augsburg Confession)

“To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these He gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where He pleases, in those who hear the Gospel.”

(Article V, The Augsburg Confession)

“Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call.”

(Article XIV, The Augsburg Confession)

ON the basis of our Lutheran theology, all Christians are called to the ministry of serving God and neighbor, but for the sake of good order in the church, certain Christians are specially called to the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament.

**“A pastor is called — *not hired* — to serve a congregation.”**

THE call process is not the same as the hiring process in other parts of society. A pastor is called — not hired — to ►

serve a congregation. Any process that seems to focus on headhunting, resume shuffling, or high anxiety interviews is missing the point in the calling of a pastor. The call process is not a pageant, in which contestants present themselves to their best advantage so they will be the winners. A call is one element in the church's seeking and following God's movement into the future. A call is about discerning the leading of the Holy Spirit in the work of ministry.

THE Lutheran call process is unique because it is an effort to discern what God wants for the local church and for the whole church, in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

## **0.3**      **the call and the whole church**

THE local congregation is fully the church, but the local church is not all the church. The local church calls a person to be its pastor, but the whole church has a stake in who is called and how the call process is handled.

THE Call Committee, the Congregation Council and the entire congregation participate fully in the call process. The Bishop also participates, representing the interest and commitment of the whole church.

THE Bishop has a deep concern for the well-being of the congregation's life and ministry. The Bishop also has a deep concern for the person and gifts of the prospective pastor. In the call process, the Bishop and staff, the congregation, and the prospective pastor work together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring about a new partnership that is faithful to the Gospel, empowers the local church in its ministry, and strengthens the whole church as people of God. ■

**“A call is about discerning  
the leading of the Holy  
Spirit in the work  
of ministry.”**

**“The Lutheran call process  
is unique because it is an  
effort to discern what God  
wants for the local church  
and for the whole church, in  
order that the Gospel may  
be proclaimed and the  
sacraments administered  
in accordance with  
the Gospel.”**

## STEP

# 1

## the pastor resigns

WHEN the pastor resigns or retires, the primary concern for many congregations is to find a new pastor quickly. But, it is important to note that no one can guarantee how long the call process will take. Most congregations greatly underestimate the time needed for completion of the call process.

CONGREGATIONS are encouraged not to hurry the process of calling a new pastor. There is work to be done to lay a sound foundation for the next stage in the congregation's life. The next chapter (*Step Two: Time for Transition*) will explore more fully the dynamics present for an effective period of transitional ministry. In this chapter we give attention to the leave-taking of the pastor whose ministry is ending.

### 1.1 the exit evaluation and interview

NO ONE is in a position to know the congregation from the intimate perspective of the pastoral office as does the pastor who is leaving. Both the congregation and the synod are well served to explore the insights that pastor has to share as she or he takes leave. It is also a time for the congregational leadership to become more fully aware of dynamics that might affect the next pastor, both positively and negatively. It is a conversation to be held in gratitude, honesty, and charity.

BOTH the pastor and the Congregation Council leadership should take the time to look back and reflect on the church's ministry. The *Exit Interview Forms* ([Appendix C, page 52](#)) can be used for this process. The exit interview is generally conducted with the outgoing pastor by the Executive ►

### Resignation BASICS

1. When the pastor resigns or retires, the pastor notifies the Bishop of her or his intent.
2. The pastor then notifies the congregation and sends a copy of the resignation/retirement paperwork to the Bishop.
3. The Bishop meets with the Congregation Council to discuss interim ministry during the pastoral vacancy and explains the call procedure.
4. The Congregation Council or Mutual Ministry Committee conducts an exit interview with the pastor.
5. The congregation holds a farewell celebration.
6. The synod assists the Congregation Council with pulpit supply for the two to four- week period until an interim pastor begins.

Committee, the Personnel Committee, or a team of 3-4 individuals appointed by the Congregation Council. The exit interview results will then be shared with the entire Congregation Council, the incoming interim pastor, and the Bishop. If the terms at the end of a call necessitate, the Bishop or the Bishop's representative will conduct the exit interview with the outgoing pastor.

---

### **the exit interview process**

- Expect to meet at least one hour.
- Choose a site that is comfortable and nonthreatening. Adopt the attitude that this should be a positive experience, both in terms of the reflection that will be undertaken and the insights that will be gained about the future.
- Honesty, candor and respect should characterize the meeting. This is not a time to 'vent'. It is an opportunity to rejoice in the ministry that has been completed and to begin to anticipate the future ministry.
- If a facilitator outside of the team is needed to conduct the interview, the synod office can be a resource to provide such a facilitator.
- Careful notes should be taken so that they can be shared with the Call Committee and the synod staff.
- Begin with prayer and/or devotions.
- The event should be given structure, but not to the extent that free and open dialogue is inhibited. The process may vary from the structure to allow for spontaneous discussion relevant to each interview's specific context.
- Council members should be ready to comment, follow-up on comments, reinforce, clarify, etc, saying, in effect, "Here is something I can add..."
- Be attentive to both the intellectual and emotional content of the responses.
- After the interview has been completed, the process ends with a closing prayer.

---

## **1.2 the termination date**

congregation is informed through mail, e-mail, or other modes of communication utilized by the congregation. Normally the termination date is 30 days from the time of announcement, although exceptions may be negotiated. Any accrued vacation is taken at the end of the tenure. For example, if a pastor announces her or his leaving in early September and has two weeks vacation accrued, the pastor may announce, "My resignation will be effective October 30, with the last two weeks of October taken as vacation. My last Sunday will be October 16." The congregation pays all salary and benefits through October 30, though all expenses (car allowance, etc.) would end as of October 16. The synod office can provide end of service information as it pertains to "On-Leave-From-Call" status and the ELCA's Portico Benefit Services. ►

WHEN a pastor accepts a new call, the pastor will normally consult with the Bishop to determine a termination date. The congregational leadership is notified first and then the whole



## 1.3 the farewell celebration

WHEN there is mutual agreement with the departing pastor, a congregation will want to arrange a time with the pastor to celebrate and give thanks for the years of ministry together. Often this takes place on the final Sunday. (See *Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation*, [Appendix D, page 54](#).) It is an appropriate opportunity for the congregation to celebrate. Invitations should also be extended to the pastor's family and colleagues in neighboring ELCA congregations.

**“The privilege of relating to you as pastor ends when the pastor retires or accepts another call. It is not appropriate to ask your former pastor to return to perform pastoral acts . . . ”**

## 1.4 how does the former pastor relate to the congregation?

THE relationship of a pastor with members of a congregation is privileged. Your pastor shares moments of incredible joy with you as well as your deepest times of sorrow. You hear God speak to you through your pastor each week in worship. Your pastor is your spiritual leader, counselor, companion, and fellow disciple. However, the privilege of relating to you as a pastor ends when the pastor retires or accepts another call.

IT IS not appropriate to ask your former pastor to return to perform pastoral acts such as a wedding, funeral, baptism, confirmation, or renewal of marriage vows. If asked, the former pastor should reply, “I am not your pastor any longer and it is not appropriate for me to do what you ask. If I am available, I will be present as a friend, but not to function in the capacity of pastor.”

THE synod constitution puts it this way:

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. **S.14.14**

A RETIRED pastor is typically not allowed to continue as a member of a congregation in which she or he formerly served as pastor. Part of planning for retirement is finding a new spiritual home. The retiring pastor is encouraged to consult with the synod Bishop if there are any questions or concerns regarding a new spiritual home. ■

## STEP

# 2

## time for transition

FOLLOWING the resignation or loss of a pastor, the congregation will be required to move through a successful transition from the former pastor to a new pastor. The pastoral vacancy occurs with little advance notice, sometimes catching the congregation off guard. Emotions and anxieties may quickly surface that will need prompt attention. The uncertainties, emotions, and questions about the future of the congregation may present significant challenges to the congregation, yet the transition period can be an opportunity for the congregation to reaffirm its ministry and to grow in spite of the challenges created by the pastoral vacancy. The transition period can be a time of revitalization for the congregation. (See [Appendix W, page 80](#), for prayer that could be used during transition.)

### 2.1 focused leadership by lay leaders and staff

THE announcement of a pastoral vacancy will trigger the need for focused leadership by lay members of the congregation as well as remaining staff members. There will be an immediate need for an ordered process to keep a sense of stability in the congregation's life and to help people stay on mission as they share as God's people. The congregation will look to its church Council members, other pastor(s), and remaining staff members for this leadership. This leadership team has the task of overseeing and guiding the ministry of the congregation during this time. At the outset, the leadership team may simply attempt to maintain the status quo, which may be no small task given the challenges presented by the pastoral vacancy. The leadership team should communicate closely with the synod staff for assistance during this period. ►

### Interim Ministry BASICS

1. The Bishop appoints an interim pastor.
2. The Council meets with the appointed interim and gives its endorsement. A *Letter of Agreement* is signed and the *Compensation* form is completed. Both are forwarded to the Bishop. Interims normally receive the compensation package of the previous pastor.
3. The interim pastor will NOT be available for call by the congregation.
4. The interim pastor cares for the congregation and leads it in a review of past and current states while anticipating the future. The congregation is led through five developmental tasks: reconnecting to its history; developing a clear identify in line with current circumstances; adjusting to leadership shifts; reestablishing relationship with the synod; and, visioning a future.

THE following leadership tasks need to be assigned and individuals authorized to handle them together with the Bishop and/or synod staff representatives:

- Assure the continuation of worship services and assist those who lead worship (supply pastors, transitional pastor(s), assisting ministers, musicians, and others).
- Assure continuation of pastoral ministries (hospital visits, other visitations, emergency pastoral response, funerals, weddings, confirmation, and baptisms).
- Give support and guidance to staff persons (office personnel, music personnel, custodial personnel, etc.) who normally function under pastoral oversight. Continue staff meetings or conferences which help clarify needs, directions and expectations.
- Support congregational leaders (Council members, financial people, etc.) in the service of their various responsibilities.
- Assist the membership of the congregation in the processing of their feelings related to the departure of the pastor. (See Section 2.2, below, *Respond to the Emotional Dynamics*.)

The leadership tools for addressing these needs may include newsletter or bulletin articles, small group discussions, a review of current policies, and other congregational resources.

ONE last caution, highly sensitive issues will arise during the period of transition. Leadership needs to discuss confidentiality and agree on boundaries and guidelines. Remaining staff needs to a part of those discussions so that the congregation can be assured that confidentiality will be maintained.

## 2.2 respond to the emotional dynamics

FOLLOWING the resignation or loss of a pastor, there is often a period of time when the experience of loss finds expression in various ways among members of the congregation. These

responses are normal, as in any experience of grief from loss. Often there appears to be a pattern, depending on the circumstances and the strength of the members' relationship with the pastor. The congregation's response may take the form of the pattern described below, even though the stages may or may not follow in the same order. These emotions, which will vary widely, should be dealt with intentionally and with compassion during the transition period in order to bring about final resolution and closure to the ministry of the separating pastor.

### accept the reality of the loss

**Shock and Denial.** Members of a congregation might respond to the resignation of their pastor with surprise and disbelief: "I can't believe she or he is leaving. There must be some mistake." Shock and disbelief are usually temporary states and will likely be followed by one or more of the following emotions.

### experience your pain

**Abandonment – Panic.** Feelings of being abandoned may set off a temporary state of disorganization with fear and panic about the future of the congregation. There may be a fear of ►

the loss of the congregation's future story — its mission and its plans for future programming: "She or he can't possibly leave us. There is too much at stake right now." Feelings of betrayal may be expressed.

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

**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 that might be accompanied by pleading, frantic prayerfulness, and bargaining with the pastor, church Council, or the synod office: "Is there something we have done to make you decide to leave? Is there anything we can do to persuade you to stay?"

### **adjust to the new environment**

**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 finally talk about their sense of loss without tears or resentment and begin to approach a sense of appreciation and even celebration of the life they and the pastor shared together.

### **emotionally relocate the departing pastor**

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

## **2.3 when called clergy continue on staff**

Unless stated in a *Letter of Call*, co-pastors, associate pastors, or assistant pastors will continue to remain under call and on the staff of the congregation. In consultation with

the Bishop, such clergy may provide initial pastoral support until an interim pastor has been appointed. In most cases, clergy under call to the current congregation will not serve as the interim pastor.

A pastor remaining on staff will not be a candidate for the vacated pastoral position in most cases. If the pastor is to be considered, there must be a recommendation made to the Bishop by the Congregation Council and that pastor will need to be the first candidate interviewed by the Call Committee. If this staff member is not recommended for the vacated position by the Call Committee, then she or he will need to submit a resignation from call upon the calling of a new pastor. ■

## developing a plan for mission and ministry

IT IS important to develop a plan for mission and ministry prior to the calling of a new pastor because it provides analysis that will be useful during the call process. It provides the opportunity to review and assess the mission and ministry of the congregation. It provides the Call Committee with basic information and a description of leadership needs that will guide their work. The profile assists the Bishop in recommending candidates to be considered by the Call Committee. Last, the plan provides a picture of the congregation for the candidates as they consider serving the congregation.

### 3.1 mission and ministry task force charge

IT IS recommended that the Congregation Council, in consultation with the Bishop, appoint a Mission and Ministry Task Force (MMTF) that will be responsible for developing the plan and completing the *Ministry Site Profile* (MSP). You may consider representation from a neighboring ELCA congregation, partner congregations, the community, the conference dean, or persons from programs housed in your church building. The synod staff can help identify potential members.

THE purpose of the MMTF is to create a roadmap for the congregation, Call Committee, Bishop, and pastoral candidates. It portrays where the congregation's mission and ministry have been and identifies the direction the congregation hopes to pursue in the future. It enables the congregation to:

- Claim ownership of the mission of the congregation and the call process.
- Review the congregation's life and mission as the Church, the Body of Christ.
- Arrive at a current understanding of the mission of the congregation.
- Evaluate the congregation's present strengths.
- Identify specific areas where the congregation needs to strengthen or change its ministry.
- Discuss the congregation's challenges/opportunities in the next 5 years.
- Specify resources necessary to fulfill the mission of the congregation, especially mission tasks in the parish community.
- Identify the gifts that are most important for the next pastor to possess in order to fulfill the mission and ministry plan. ►

### Mission and Ministry Task Force BASICS

- **The Congregation Council, in consultation with the Bishop, appoints a task force that is responsible for completing the *Ministry Site Profile*.**



TWO models are available for formulating the plan for the congregation's mission and ministry: *Mission and Ministry Planning* ([Appendix E, page 56](#)) or *A Strategic Planning Process* ([Appendix F, page 59](#)). In reviewing the models, some may think it is a lot of unnecessary work and will want to proceed to “just filling out the forms.” It is true that the planning process is hard work, but it is also true that congregations who take time to do the work invariably describe it as among the most useful elements of the entire call process. It is well worth the effort. (See *How to Complete the Ministry Site Profile*, [Appendix G, page 60](#).)

AS the MMTF completes its work, a report is prepared that should contain a summary of the material collected and what discoveries were made that led to the details in the *Ministry Site Profile*, a copy of the *Ministry Site Profile*, and copies of any other documents or materials that will be illustrative of the conclusions. The MMTF will present its findings to the Council, the congregation, and the Call Committee. For the congregational meeting, It is very helpful if materials are made available prior to the meeting.

### 3.2 the congregation debriefing meeting

and approve the document at this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to gain clear congregational buy-in and insure a good common ground of understanding between the congregation, synod, and Call Committee. The meeting ends with congregational affirmation of the MMTF report and the *Ministry Site Profile*. (See [Appendix W, page 80](#), for meeting prayer.)

### 3.3 evaluation

THROUGHOUT the call process, periodic evaluation is helpful to assess if things are working well so far. After the *Ministry Site Profile* has been created, it's a good time to ask some questions to review the MMTF process. (See *Evaluating the MMTF Process*, [Appendix H, page 62](#).) ■

**“It is true that the planning process is hard work, but it is also true that congregations who take time to do the work invariably describe it as among the most useful elements of the entire call process.”**

A DEBRIEFING with the congregation should be scheduled by the Council President. The Chair of the MMTF should facilitate the meeting and review the process and results. The congregation is expected to discuss

**“Throughout the call process, periodic evaluation is helpful to assess if things are working well . . .”**

## STEP

# 4

## the call committee

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

### 4.1 the significance of service on a call committee

MANY people report that serving on a Call Committee turned out to be one of the most important experiences they ever had as members of the church. It allowed them to witness 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, it let them participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their congregation as part of the history-long, worldwide church of Jesus Christ.

### 4.2 when should the call committee be formed?

THE Call Committee may be formed prior to the completion of the work of *Mission and Ministry Task Force* (MMTF), but the launch of the Call Committee's formal work is not started until the bulk of work of the MMTF is completed. It is not recommended that the Call Committee take the place of the MMTF and work solo in defining the congregation's ministry, mission, and staffing needs. Those tasks are best done by larger leadership groups. ►

### Call Committee BASICS

1. **The Congregation Council reviews the constitutional requirements for the selection of a Call Committee and recommends names for congregational approval. A congregational vote ratifies that recommendation and Call Committee members are seated.**
2. **The Bishop meets with the Call Committee to provide information on the call process.**

## 4.3 how is the call committee selected?

THE Congregation Council should review the constitutional requirements for the selection of the Call Committee. Some constitutions require the Call Committee to be elected by the congregation. In this

case, the Council recommends members for congregational approval and a congregational vote ratifies the recommendation. Other constitutions authorize the Council to appoint the Call Committee.

IF THE Call Committee is selected by the Congregation Council, the Council may wish to solicit suggestions from the congregation in order to consider everyone's ideas. Do this in a way that makes it clear you are inviting suggestions and not staging an election. Avoid asking for volunteers; the committee members need to be representative of the recommendations provided in *"Who Should be on the Call Committee?"* (see Section 4.4 below).

## 4.4 who should be on the call committee?

AFTER the Call Committee has been selected, the Council President or Chair of the Call Committee should contact the synod office to schedule an orientation session for the committee with the Bishop or synod representative.

- Call Committee members must be people of prayer. The call process is Spirit-led and members are expected to be in prayer daily throughout the entire process.
- The Call Committee should be comprised of people who understand the Lutheran doctrine of call. This is not a job search and a pastor is not "hired."
- The call process takes four to twelve months of committed work. Committee members must be willing to commit to the process and be willing to coordinate work and personal calendars. This requirement directly correlates to the length of the call process.
- The work of a Call Committee is time consuming. Committee members may need to give up some other ministries in order to fulfill this vital role.
- The Call Committee should have a balance of men and women who — on the one hand — reflect the makeup of the congregation, but who — on the

**"Call Committee members must be people of prayer."**

other hand — are not present to represent segments of the congregation. Everyone on the Call Committee has to have a grasp of God's mission throughout the whole congregation.

- Call Committee members should be trusted and respected members of the congregation who are faithful in worship, service, and financial support.
- Call Committee members need to be people who are spiritually discerning, good listeners, and willing to trust a process. Call Committees rush at their own peril.
- Call Committee members must be people who are able to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- The Call Committee will function by consensus. It is important for Call Committee members to be open, communicative, and relational.
- No ordained ministers (active or retired) may serve on the committee.
- No staff members or family members of staff members may serve on the Call Committee.
- It is recommended that the Call Committee not include members of the Congregation Council. The Council will have plenty of work to do in the time of transition. In addition, the gifts of a Council member are not necessarily the same gifts needed on a Call Committee. If there is a member of the Council on the Call Committee, that person should not be the chair of the Call Committee.
- Family members of Congregation Council members should not serve on the Call Committee.
- It is not appropriate for a husband and wife team to serve on the Call Committee.
- It is best if the committee is comprised of five to seven members.
- Two alternates should also be selected who are willing to attend all meetings in the event that they may have to replace a voting call committee member. Each committee can decide how they want to handle participation from alternates. Some committees may choose to have alternates fully participate in all but voting. Other committees may choose to have input and participation only from voting members.
- It may be helpful to have a representative from the MMTF serve on the Call Committee or at least provide consultation as the committee reviews the *Ministry Site Profile*. ►

**“Call Committee members must be people who are able to maintain appropriate confidentiality.”**

## 4.5 recognition of the ministry of the call committee

IT IS important that the congregation recognize the ministry of those who have been selected to serve on the Call Committee in some formal way. The committee members will spend many hours in meetings, expending significant energy over many months during the course of their service. It is a ministry requiring dedication and commitment by persons who will provide leadership to the Call process. To affirm this ministry, an installation service is recommended as a way of gathering the whole congregation around the committee and its work (see *An Affirmation of a Call Committee*, [Appendix I, page 63](#)).

**“An installation service is recommended as a way of gathering the whole congregation around the [Call ] Committee and its work.”**

## 4.6 call committee authority

THE *Ministry Site Profile* provides the Call Committee with information concerning salary and benefit possibilities that the congregation can offer. Salary and benefit considerations are not matters that are to be negotiated between the candidates and the 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 educational leave.

THE congregation or Congregation Council needs to authorize funding to the Call Committee for carrying out its responsibilities. The budget should cover interview costs, visits to the candidates' home sites by call committee members, and visits by candidates and their spouse or family members. These costs include travel, meals, and hotel expense. A figure of \$10,000.00 is a reasonable estimate.

THE Call Committee must be given the authority to develop a process that will allow it to meet with and interview candidates for the pastoral vacancy. At some point the Call Committee will select a candidate to recommend for call to the Congregation Council or the congregation, depending on the constitution. Thereafter, in conjunction with the Call Committee, the Congregation Council (or congregation) will consider the candidate. In the end, the congregation is the body that votes to issue a call to a candidate. ►

**“Salary and benefit considerations are not matters that are to be negotiated between the candidates and the Call Committee.”**



---

### **synod support**

THE synod will serve as a valuable partner and resource during all phases of the call process. The Bishop or a synod staff person will be assigned to work with the Call Committee.

- If a synod representative is assigned, she or he will serve as a liaison between the synod and Bishop and the Call Committee and congregation.
- An orientation session will be conducted by the Bishop or synod representative soon after the Call Committee has been formed. The meeting will interpret the call process to the Call Committee and clarify the steps and goals.
- The orientation will also assist the Call Committee in finding their own calling to lead and guide the process as a part of their spiritual journey within their congregation.
- After the orientation session with the Call Committee, it is likely that the synod staff's involvement will lessen as the call process moves forward. However, the synod representative is available to guide, coach, and assist at the request of the Call Committee throughout the entire process.
- The Bishop or synod representative will help clarify issues when there are questions, times of confusion, or issues that are difficult and potentially derailing or conflicting.
- As needed, the synod representative will remind the committee about its goals and tasks and the process most helpful in fulfilling them.
- As needed, the synod representative will help coach the committee as required to assist the committee in fulfilling its calling (e.g., interviews, presenting a candidate to the congregation, the congregational meeting, etc.).

---

## **4.7 how is the call committee organized?**

AFTER the Call Committee is selected, one of the members must be designated as the chairperson. The Call Committee chairperson can be appointed by the Congregation Council

or can be selected by the committee itself. The chairperson convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, and may be the primary contact with pastoral candidates. She or he should also be the primary contact person with the synod. The chairperson oversees the call process. To that end, the Chairperson of the Call Committee should have the following skills:

1. Organizational skills to guide the committee and keep it focused.
2. Communication skills — both written and verbal — to effectively and clearly communicate with committee members, candidates, the congregation, and the Bishop and/or synod representative.
3. Leadership skills to nurture the committee and help them through periods of uncertainty and disagreement. ►

THE chairperson speaks for the group to the congregation and Congregation Council. Because much of the work done by Call Committee is confidential, there is a need for one consistent voice outside the group. Thus, when other committee members are asked questions about the Call Committee's work, their answer always must be: "The chairperson speaks for the Call Committee. Could you please address that question to (chairperson)?"

SOME call committees choose to designate co-chairs who share leadership tasks. One person may excel in setting agendas and leading meetings while another may excel in communication tasks. The division of duties is best decided by the co-chairs themselves. Co-chairs work best when their skill sets match their areas of responsibility, when they respect each other's differences, and when they are able to openly communicate.

THE committee may select a secretary to keep the minutes of Call Committee meetings. While motions may not be made, committee plans and assignments need to be recorded for future reference. The committee may select a member to handle congregational communication for the group including bulletins, newsletters, and articles for the church web site. The secretary or another designated person may also be responsible for written communications between candidates and the committee. The secretary or another designated person may confirm travel arrangements, write thank you notes, and compose necessary letters. These tasks can be divided in ways that work best for each committee and its members. When the Call Committee concludes its work, all confidential material should be destroyed.

#### **call committee charge and tasks**

THE Call Committee's primary charge is to recommend one candidate to the Congregation Council. To do that, the Call Committee needs to understand fully the needs and desires of the congregation so that the call process progresses in a manner consistent with those needs and desires. The *Ministry Site Profile* is meant to guide the Call Committee. Thus, Call Committee members are ►

## **Suggestions for Effective Call Committee Meetings**

- 1. The chairperson prepares and distributes an agenda several days before each meeting.**  
(See [Appendix J, page 64.](#))
- 2. Start and end on time. Agree at the first meeting what time frame works best for members. Work is demanding and weekly meetings of 90 minutes are suggested.**
- 3. Begin with devotions and prayer.**
- 4. Be realistic about what can be accomplished each week.**
- 5. Listen to all members and appreciate the opportunity to consider dissenting views. They may open up new directions or, through consideration, clarify and affirm the majority view.**
- 6. Set ground rules for what consensus will mean to your group.**
- 7. At closing, review what has been decided, review responsibilities and tasks for the next meeting, and pray.**

responsible for familiarizing themselves with the *Ministry Site Profile*, determining the interview process, receiving candidates' names, conducting interviews, evaluating candidates, checking references, scheduling site visits, and fulfilling its charge by recommending one candidate to the Congregation Council.

IT IS vital that the committee develop a timeline to use as a guide as it proceeds through its tasks (see *Sample of a Proposed Call Timeline*, [Appendix K, page 65](#)). Each call is unique and the timing can seem paradoxical. The process should never be rushed; the process should move forward as quickly as possible. Reconciling the friction in these two contradictory ideas is the challenge for each Call Committee and is best done by developing a timeline, but the committee must be willing to make necessary adjustments as the process unfolds. The Bishop or synod representative will be an important asset in laying out the various tasks and how to accomplish them.

THE timeline should be announced to the congregation. The timeline helps the congregation set reasonable expectations for the process. This timeline may be modified as the call process unfolds, but any changes should be communicated to the congregation. One Call Committee turned the timeline into a model showing the stages in the call process. Stages that had been completed turned green, while those remaining to be done were red (see *Sample of a Visual Timeline Used on the Web*, [Appendix L, page 66](#)). The visual representation was on the church's home page, providing easy access for members to follow the committee's progress.

### **communication**

IT IS important to note the significance of communication by the Call Committee. For the congregation to embrace the process and remain vigilant in prayer, they must be kept informed. A basic tenet in communication studies is that everything we do communicates. The import of this is that if we "fail" to communicate, we still have communicated "something." That "something" may be interpreted to be that the Call Committee is not making progress, that the Call Committee is not working very hard, that the congregation is not worthy of hearing what is happening. None of that would be true, of course, but it reinforces the notion that the committee must actively communicate using all avenues possible:

- Monthly newsletter articles explaining the call process to the congregation.
- Weekly notes in Sunday morning bulletins.
- Articles written for the church's web site.
- Temple talks by the chairperson(s) of the Call Committee to update the congregation.
- Question and answer forums during education hours. Members of the congregation can be invited to meet with the Call Committee chairperson(s) to ask questions and learn about the progress of the Call Committee's work.
- With the exception of confidential information, there is no such thing as sharing too much information with the congregation. ►

**“For the  
congregation to  
embrace the  
process and  
remain vigilant in  
prayer, they must  
be kept informed.”**

IT IS also important to note that communication by the Call Committee sets expectations about what to expect in this call process. Many members of the congregation will have experienced calls that were done differently — where the congregation re-interviewed candidates, where multiple candidates were brought in to preach, or where candidates were vetted. If communication is consistent and open with the congregation, they are more likely to know and trust the process. The spiritual nature of the call and the comprehensive process that the Call Committee has followed must be communicated.

**“. . . communication by the  
Call Committee sets  
expectations about what to  
expect in this call process.”**

## **4.8 call committee fundamentals**

### **the right question**

IT IS not appropriate for a Call Committee to be guided chiefly by such questions as these: Will the congregation like this pastor? Will it approve of the Call Committee's choice of candidates? Will people feel good having this pastor around on Sunday morning? Will this person do until a better pastor comes along?

THE foremost question for the Call Committee always must be: Is this the person God is calling to this congregation to serve as its pastor? Human preferences and personalities never come before the mission to which God calls His church. That is why every meeting of the Call Committee should include prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

**The Right Question  
“The foremost question for  
the Call Committee always  
must be: Is this the person  
God is calling to this  
congregation to serve as its  
pastor?”**

### **prayer**

PRAYER is an important activity for the Call Committee and the entire congregation throughout the call process. Call Committee members are encouraged to commit themselves to 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 and the names of the members are made public, a request should be made that special prayers be offered on their behalf. It is also recommended that Call Committee meetings open with prayer and devotions and close with prayer. Pray and then pray some more. ►

### **servanthood**

SERVANTHOOD on behalf of the congregation is the fundamental stance of the Call Committee. The work of the committee always is to be about discerning the leading of the Spirit to seek pastoral leadership to best lead and serve in this congregation.

### **confidentiality**

CONFIDENTIALITY cannot be overemphasized in the task of calling a pastor. Confidentiality boundaries for the Call Committee's work should be clearly agreed upon at the first meeting. Issues that are discussed about candidates need to be open and forthright among the members of the committee; however, these discussions should be kept in confidence among the Call Committee members. Verbal and written information about prospective candidates must be kept within the confines of the committee. Committee members will need to establish ground rules and boundaries, not only with the congregation at large, but also with those in their households or places of work. Since e-mail is likely to be used as a source of committee communication, attention must also be given to securing individual e-mail accounts (not using accounts with multiple users).

THE names of candidates must be kept confidential. Mention of specific candidates outside the Call Committee is inappropriate until the committee is ready with its recommendation to the Congregation Council. Confidentiality is different than secrecy. The congregation and Congregation Council should be kept abreast of the status of the Call Committee's progress, but no names or other identifying information about candidates can be shared until a candidate is selected and ready for recommendation to the Congregation Council.

IT IS also vital that committee decisions be owned by the entire committee. In whatever manner the committee has chosen to define consensus and in whatever manner voting or decision making has occurred, the breakdown of votes must be kept in confidence. No members will discuss her or his vote or position about a candidate outside the committee either during the process or after. The committee collectively owns decisions that are made. ■

**“Confidentiality is different than secrecy. The congregation and Congregation Council should be kept abreast of the status of the Call Committee's progress, but no names or other identifying information about candidates can be shared until a candidate is selected and ready for recommendation to the Congregation Council.”**



WHEN the *Ministry Site Profile* and the Call Committee are in place, the process begins to focus on the identification of the pastor to be called.

## 5.1 who provides the names of the candidates?

THERE are several possible sources for candidates.

- Most possibilities surface through the ongoing work of the synod staff. Synod staff members spend a great deal of their time in conversations relating to pastoral mobility. There is on-going communication with pastors serving in this synod, including assessments of a pastor's openness to considering a new call. In addition, pastors from outside the synod are routinely in contact with other synods in which they might be open to serving.
- The Call Committee solicits recommendations from the congregation. A deadline for submitting names is established. As part of the communication inviting potential candidate's names, the Call Committee informs the congregation of the process:
  1. The potential candidate must first be contacted by the congregational member to verify interest in the position.
  2. If interested, the potential candidate must fill out the *Rostered Leader Profile*, which is often referred to as "mobility papers."

When these two conditions have been met, potential candidates' names are submitted to the Call Committee, which in turn notifies the Bishop.

- Occasionally a pastor might express interest in a specific vacancy. In such a case, the synod staff ►

## Candidate BASICS

1. The Synod Mobility Team evaluates congregational openings and reviews potential candidates.
2. If congregational members identify potential candidates, they contact the candidates. If interested, the candidates complete the *Rostered Leader Profile* and have it forwarded from their synod office to the Grand Canyon Synod office.
3. The Bishop contacts potential candidates and forwards the church's *Ministry Site Profile* for review by the candidates.
4. The Bishop presents names of candidates to the Call Committee.
5. The Call Committee interviews all candidates. Candidates not chosen to proceed in the call process are informed and released from consideration.

would consider the pastor, with the primary consideration being the suitability of the match of pastoral gifts and congregational needs.

- In most cases, a pastor remaining on staff will not be a candidate for the vacated pastoral position. If the pastor is to be considered, there must be a recommendation made to the Bishop by the church Council, and that pastor will need to be the first candidate interviewed by the Call Committee. If this pastor is not recommended for the vacated position, then she or he will need to submit a resignation from call upon the calling of a new pastor.

## 5.2 how are the candidates selected?

BOTH the synod staff and the Call Committee turn to criteria in the *Ministry Site Profile* to use in the discernment process. As the synod staff considers specific pastoral candidates, the congregation's mission needs are the primary focus and the main question is always whether the skills and interests of the pastor will match the needs of the congregation. The committee's focus will be on the questions: "Where is God leading us?" and "Who will have the pastoral gifts we need to move in that direction?" The pastor is to be more than a chaplain to a membership list and more than a caretaker of the status quo; the pastor is to be part of God's movement of your congregation into the future.

THERE are other considerations that come into play:

- Readiness to move. Neither a Bishop nor a Call Committee can tell a pastor to move who still feels called to the present place of service. Timing is often a major factor.
- Family considerations. You want a pastor to value family life and sometimes those considerations impact a pastor's openness to call.
- Financial considerations. Most congregations and most pastors assume that salary will fall generally within synod guidelines. The synod staff will not submit a candidate whose salary needs are above the congregation's reach; however, sometimes a question will be raised early on about a congregation's willingness to go higher or a ►

**“The committee's focus will be on the questions: ‘Where is God leading us?’ and ‘Who will have the pastoral gifts we need to move that direction?’ The pastor is to be more than a chaplain to a membership list and more than a caretaker of the status quo; the pastor is to be part of God's movement of your congregation into the future.”**

candidate's willingness to accept less. But, financial negotiations should not be a major factor.

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

## 5.3 all candidates receive an initial interview

IN MOST cases, the synod will make every effort to bring two or more candidates for interview by the Call Committee. The staff will have had conversation with the candidates, giving some description of the congregation and the position, and determining that the pastor is open to considering a call.

THE Call Committee is expected to arrange initial interviews with all candidates. The synod's constitution commits us to fair consideration of pastors regardless of age, race, marital status, gender, or family status. Our experience is that a process that involves an interview for all candidates is an effective tool for ensuring fair consideration. Of course, the decision to call is ultimately the congregation's alone.

**“The Call Committee is expected to arrange initial interviews with all candidates. The synod's constitution commits us to fair consideration of pastors regardless of age, race, marital status, gender, or family status.”**

## 5.4 rostered leader profiles (aka mobility forms)

WHEN candidates' names are provided by the Bishop or synod representative, the committee will be given a *Rostered Leader Profile* (often called a mobility form) filled out by the candidates and signed by their Bishops. A *Rostered Leader Profile* is a good introduction to the candidate, but it is not meant to be an exhaustive resource. The *Rostered Leader Profile* include information about the pastor's education and work experience; a self-description of particular areas of interest and skill; brief responses to questions about ministry calling, convictions, context, accomplishments, denominational relationship, and ►

**“A *Rostered Leader Profile* is a good introduction to the candidate, but it is not meant to be an exhaustive resource.”**

public ministry; as well as a personal ministry statement and candidate commentary.

- Mobility forms and the insights of the synod staff person providing the candidates' names will serve to get you started.
- Mobility forms will also include the names of four or more references. Do not neglect to call them all. Often committees assume the references will simply give positive responses because the pastor, after all, provides them. In practice, references have been found to be candid and forthright, providing valuable information.
- As you review mobility forms, be aware of giving too much weight to the written presentation. You could miss a great pastor who is simply not a good resume writer. Nothing can replace a personal contact.

**“As soon as the committee receives the candidates’ names, it should contact them by phone.”**

## **5.5** making contact with candidates

SINCE the synod staff will have already discussed the congregation's call process with the candidates, they are aware that their names are being recommended. As soon as the committee receives the candidates' names, it should contact them by phone. If the committee is prepared to schedule interviews, it can proceed to that directly. If the committee needs further time for preparations, communicate that to the candidates along with a timeline. They will appreciate knowing that their names have been received and be grateful to have an idea when the next step of the process will unfold.

**“Without regular contact and updates, candidates may become less attuned to the call.”**

CONSISTENT contact and timeline updates throughout the process are important. As Call Committee members experience the process from their intimate vantage point, candidates are also experiencing the process — but from afar. Without regular contact and updates, candidates may become less attuned to the call. ►

## 5.6 what questions underlie the interview and evaluation process?

KEY questions underlie the interview and guide the Call Committee through its preparation and evaluation.

- Does this person have the gifts and skills to be the leader we are seeking?
- If called, does this person have the passion, motivation, perseverance, and time management skills to be effective in this setting?
- How does this person fit into the culture of the community as well as the congregation and its field of mission and ministry?
- And, on a personal note: Can this person be my pastor?

## 5.7 preparation for initial interviews and evaluations

JUST as Call Committee members are evaluating potential pastoral candidates during interviews, potential candidates are also evaluating the calling church via its representatives, the Call Committee, as well as the *Ministry Site Profile* and other documentation provided. Call Committee preparation is key to a successful interview process.

- To ensure that all candidates are treated consistently and to facilitate a well-run interview, the Call Committee will develop a script (see [Appendix M, page 67](#) for script sample). The chairperson will facilitate the interview.
- The initial interviews with candidates will be by telephone or Skype and will last approximately 60 minutes, 45 minutes for the Call Committee to ask questions and 15 minutes for the candidate to ask questions.
- Whichever format is chosen, it must be the same for all candidates, so checking technology ►

### Key Questions

**“Does this person have the gifts and skills to be the leader we are seeking?”**

**“If called, does this person have the passion, motivation, perseverance, and time management skills to be effective in this setting?”**

**“How does this person fit into the culture of the community as well as the congregation and its field of mission and ministry?”**

**“Can this person be my pastor?”**

capabilities of candidates will be necessary. If one candidate does not have the capability to use Skype, then Skype will not be used with any of the candidates.

- Questions should be chosen or developed in advance, keeping in mind the time frame. Other committees have suggested a range of twelve to fourteen questions for the initial interview. Potential questions have been prepared for committees that encompass *Theology, Ministry, Leadership Style, and Pastor as Person* (see [Appendix N, page 69](#)). The Call Committee may also develop questions of its own, but keep in mind that the questions will not be individualized — that each candidate will be asked the same questions during the initial interview.
- 1. One of the most important skills in interviewing is shaping open-ended questions — questions that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no.” Open-ended questions always start with words such as “what”, “how”, “in what ways”, “how would you”, etc.
- 2. Another important skill is developing questions that are focused on the key issues in **Section 5.6**. When developing questions, always ask yourself: “Why am I asking this question?”
- Call Committee members are expected to attend every interview session. If this is not possible, an alternate should replace the standing member.
- For all interviews, provide each committee member a list of interview questions with space to take notes.
- Have copies of the *Ministry Site Profile* on hand for each member. Remain focused on the congregation's priorities for the call.
- Be prepared to engage in dialogue about your ministry. The candidate may refer to the *Ministry Site Profile* in questions asked of you. A list of questions that might be asked of the Call Committee is available (see [Appendix O, page 71](#)). You may want to decide in advance who will take the lead in answering candidates' questions about specific areas of ministry, sections of the *Ministry Site Profile*, and the sample questions.
- At the end of the interview, be prepared to provide a date when the committee will tell candidates if they will continue in the process or be released. ►

**“Call Committee members are expected to attend every interview session. If this is not possible, an alternate should replace the standing member.”**

### **plan for evaluation after initial interviews**

THE Call Committee should evaluate each candidate immediately after the interview, while the interview experiences and impressions are freshly in mind. Devoting another 30 minutes or so to assessing the interview will help clarify issues, answer questions, and address concerns as well as allow committee members to rejoice in responses. Since in most cases there are multiple candidates, evaluation is an important element in helping committee members solidify memory and assist recall as the process continues.

THE Call Committee will need to decide how it will evaluate the candidates. Will there be a global assessment of how well the candidate's talents match the criteria in the *Ministry Site Profile*? Correlating the gifts, skills, and experience of each candidate to the priorities, qualities, and visions identified in the *Ministry Site Profile* is very important. Will there be a question by question discussion by committee members to clarify responses and indicate approval or concern? Other committees have recommended first having each committee member provide a global assessment and then proceeding to a thorough discussion of each individual question and answer. (See more about evaluation in Step 6.5 *evaluating the candidates*, page 38, as well as *Sample Interview Evaluation*, [Appendix P, page 73](#)).

### **practice the interview**

THE committee will choose a trusted pastor with whom to practice the interview. A retired pastor may also be asked to serve in this capacity. The pastor should be rostered with the ELCA and it is best if the pastor is familiar with the calling church and its current situation. The synod staff can help provide names if necessary.

PRIOR to the practice interview, the committee will provide the pastor with the *Ministry Site Profile* and all other documentation that will be provided to actual candidates. Documents may be mailed or e-mailed as attachments, but it is important to verify that candidates receive them in time to review and prepare for the interview. ►

**“ . . . evaluation is an important element in helping committee members solidify memory and assist recall as the process continues.”**

**“The committee will choose a trusted [ELCA] pastor with whom to practice the interview.”**



THE interview should be conducted in the same manner as it will be with the actual candidates so technology can be checked, time requirements verified, questions cut or added as necessary, and all details and kinks can be worked out.

USE the script and the questions that you have developed. At the beginning, set the candidate at ease. Committee members should briefly introduce themselves and share their roles in the congregation. During the last 15 minutes, allow the pastor to ask the committee questions, just like an actual candidate.

AT THE conclusion of the test interview, ask the pastor to give you feedback: How might the committee improve the interview?

AFTER concluding the test interview, proceed through the evaluation just as you will with the actual candidates.

### **scheduling interviews**

THE first step in moving to the actual interview is scheduling interview dates for all candidates.

- Because it is necessary to have all committee members present, calendars will need to be checked for availability and cleared of other commitments as is possible. (If a committee member will be unavailable for any initial interview, the standing member should be replaced by an alternate.)
- Other call committees recommend that a push is made in this stage to schedule and interview all candidates within a two-week period. Because committees will interview all candidates provided by the Bishop, generally there will be several interviews taking place. If these stretch over a significant period of time, committee members may face recall issues and the candidates interviewed toward the end may have an advantage over those interviewed at the beginning.
- See [Appendix W, page 80](#), for prayer that could be used during interviews. ■

**“At the conclusion of the test interview, ask the pastor to give you feedback: How might the committee improve the interview?”**

**“Other call committees recommend that a push is made to schedule and interview all candidates within a two-week period.”**

IN THE midst of planning and paperwork, it is possible to get so caught up in the process that people lose sight of this as God's call. The Holy Spirit is calling the pastor and congregation to be together in mission and ministry. Thus, the basic question is always: "Is the Holy Spirit calling us into partnership with this person?"

## 6.1 narrowing the candidate pool

IT WILL be worth the committee's time to revisit confidentiality at this point. All discussions regarding candidates needs to be open and forthright among the members of the committee; however, these discussions should be kept in confidence by the committee. The same is true of consensus. However consensus has been defined and however voting or decision making has happened, it stays within the committee. Members will not discuss their votes or position about a candidate outside the committee. The committee collectively owns decisions that are made.

AT THE conclusion of the first round of interviews, the committee meets to evaluate all candidates to decide which ones will continue in the process. There is no perfect number of candidates to keep or release. The number will be different in each discernment process. The synod staff is available for consultation during this process, if needed.

- Discern which candidates best match the priorities for congregational mission and ministry.
- If no one seems to be a good match, contact the synod staff for further assistance.
- The committee may realize that earlier interviews were handled differently from later ones. In those cases, a second interview may be advisable.
- Additional information may be gathered by asking the candidate(s) for additional references relative to specific issues, questions, or concerns. Confidentiality and courtesy are important. ►

**"The basic question is always: Is the Holy Spirit calling us into partnership with this person?"**

**"The committee collectively owns decisions that are made."**

IN MOST cases, a committee will enthusiastically support at least one candidate. Occasionally this doesn't happen;. When that is the case, the synod staff will have further conversation with the committee, clarify what is being sought, and move on to other candidates.

A COMMITTEE is sometimes tempted to "hold on to one candidate", release the other(s), and look for more candidates. Experience has shown that a decision should be made before receiving more candidates' names — that "holding on" is unfair to both the candidate and congregation and rarely results in a call. The committee needs to make a decision.

ONCE consensus is reached, all candidates will be promptly informed by telephone. For those being released, a "thank you" letter will be sent to the candidate (see *Sample Letter to Candidates Not Recommended for Call*, [Appendix Q, page 74](#)). It is also helpful to those candidates being released if constructive feedback can be offered so that the candidate may process the information for future calls. The Call Committee chairperson will inform the synod office of the committee's decision.

FOR those candidates continuing in the call process, remind them that the references they provided will now be contacted. This allows the candidates to inform their references that they are continuing in the call process and that phone calls are to be expected.

## 6.2 due diligence

AT THIS point, the Call Committee has concluded the first round of interviews and notified the candidates of its decision. For those candidates remaining in the process, attention becomes more focused. The Call Committee enters a phase that can be thought of as that very familiar term — doing due diligence. The committee wants to be become as well-acquainted with the candidates as possible before face-to-face interviews are scheduled. ►

**“Experience has shown that a decision should be made before receiving more candidates’ names — that ‘holding on’ is unfair to both the candidate and congregation and rarely results in a call.”**

**“The committee wants to be become as well-acquainted with the candidates as possible before face-to-face interviews are scheduled.”**

### **sermons**

ASK candidates for sermons. Decide how many sermons the committee wants to collect. Perhaps the committee will want two sermons: the most recent Sunday (specify a date) and another sermon that the candidate feels best presents her or his preaching abilities. To be fair to the candidates, requests must be identical. This also applies to the medium. If all candidates can provide videotapes of sermons, then get videotapes. If not, see if all candidates can provide audiotapes. If not, the committee can accept written copies of sermons.

### **course outlines/materials**

ASK candidates for course outlines or materials from adult education classes that they have led.

### **internet searches**

CONDUCT internet searches. Let's not kid ourselves, if the Call Committee doesn't find out every detail about a candidate that is in the public domain, someone in the congregation will once the candidate's name is released. The homework assignment for the Call Committee for one week might be to search the internet and see what information is available. Do not allow yourself to be surprised by something that is in public domain. If the current church of the candidate has a website, it may also allow you to get to know your candidate better.

### **checking references**

CHECK references. Check all references. Four are provided in the *Rostered Leader Profile*. Check them all. As previously noted, committees may assume references will simply give positive responses because the pastor provides them. In practice, references have been found to be candid and forthright, providing valuable information.

- Select the questions that will be asked of the references (see *Sample Questions for Checking References*, [Appendix R, page 75](#)). Reference calls should last approximately 15 minutes. Eight to ten questions should suffice. ►

**“Let’s not kid ourselves, if the Call Committee doesn’t find out every detail about a candidate that is in the public domain, someone in the congregation will once the candidate’s name is released.”**

**“Check references. Check all references. Four are provided in the *Rostered Leader Profile*. Check them all.”**

- Choose two to three members who are able (as a group) to conduct interviews with all references and report back to the committee. This provides conformity in interviews and evaluation. One suggestion given by other Call Committees is that those conducting the reference interviews take notes individually and then compare them with each other before typing one summary for the entire committee.
- Develop a script in which the committee callers identify themselves and the role they are playing in the call process. Emphasize the confidential nature of the process to set the reference giver at ease. Using a structured interview and asking the same questions of each reference helps to establish a more systematic procedure for evaluating all candidates and helps to focus on relevant issues.
- Do not cold call anyone not listed as a reference without consultation with the Bishop or synod representative. Equal treatment of candidates is essential.

### **background checks**

BACKGROUND criminal and credit checks are encouraged for the final candidates. Speak to the synod representative to determine procedures, costs, and clarify the best timing for this to occur in your call process.

- Ask permission of the candidate before the search is done.
- Identify who is to get the information and how it will be shared. This is highly confidential material and it is recommended that the chairperson review the information and give a summarized, verbal report to the committee.

One caution, if derogatory information is found about a candidate during reference, internet, or background checks, a phone call should be made to the Bishop or synod representative immediately. The Bishop has recommended these candidates to you and will want to be made aware of surprising information.

### **concluding thoughts**

AS THE committee moves through information gathering and reference checking, it is important for them to continue evaluation. Is the information that they are receiving through other sources consistent with what they heard and experienced in the interview with the candidate? The committee should continue to focus on the gifts and experience of the candidates and how well they correlate to needs and desires identified in the *Ministry Site Profile*. Return to the key questions that underlie the interview and evaluation process:

- Does this person have the gifts and skills to be the leader we are seeking? ►

**“If derogatory information is found about a candidate during reference, internet, or background checks, a phone call should be made to the Bishop or synod representative immediately. The Bishop has recommended these candidates to you and will want to be made aware of surprising information.”**

- If called, does this person have the passion, motivation, perseverance and time management skills to be effective in this setting?
- How does this person fit into the culture of the community and the congregation and its field of mission and ministry?
- And, on a personal note: Can this person be my pastor?

### **what if we can't narrow the candidate list?**

AFTER initial interviews, a Call Committee may struggle to narrow the list of candidates. They may choose to try again after reference checks and still be unable to narrow their pool of candidates. Instead, they may choose to conduct live, face-to-face interviews to assist in taking the next step. When face-to-face interviews involve multiple candidates, the Call Committee will need to determine how best to conduct such visits. It is not encouraged that face-to-face interviews be scheduled so that candidates are on campus at the same time. The Call Committee will need to determine if it is comfortable offering to pay for a spouse or partner to come to this initial face-to-face meeting or will wait until the candidate is closer to being recommended for the call. Whichever choice the Committee makes, the guidance given in preparing for such a visit and providing reimbursement for all travel expenses remains the same. These will be addressed in the next section.

## **6.3 scheduling site visits**

AFTER conducting the initial round of interviews, evaluating candidates, narrowing the candidate pool, checking references for the remaining candidates, and doing due diligence, committee members are anxious to see and experience the candidates face-to-face. But, again, preparation and planning must be completed. The committee may simultaneously begin making plans for site visits and developing second interview questions.

TO HEAR a prospective candidate preach in her or his present ministry setting, the pastor should be contacted beforehand to get a preaching schedule. All or some of the Call Committee members may participate in the visit. For evaluation, it is best (but not always possible) for the same members to hear and report back about candidates. However, costs and personal schedules may dictate how many are able to travel.

THE candidate should be informed about the visit, but discretion should be used during the visit. The team should be anonymous. The pastor's relationship with her or his current congregants is to be valued. ►

**“... discretion should be used during the [site] visits. The team should be anonymous. The pastor's relationship with her or his current congregants is to be valued.”**

IT MAY also be possible to arrange for a candidate to preach in a nearby congregation. If a candidate is “On-Leave-from-Call”, an alternative site will need to be arranged with help from the synod office. The team should be anonymous in these settings, also. The cost for the pastor’s travel will be the responsibility of the interviewing congregation. Should it be agreed that a stipend would be given, that stipend would also be the responsibility of the interviewing congregation. The obvious advantage in having the candidate preach in a neighboring congregation is that all members can observe and participate (should an interview occur at the same time). Traveling costs may also be minimized. However, some may consider it disadvantageous to be unable to see the candidates in their own settings.

## 6.4 face-to-face interview planning

EVERY call is unique, so the second interview may occur at different times in your process depending on the circumstances. It may be that the second interview takes place when a site visit is conducted or when a candidate preaches in a nearby congregation. The synod representative can help provide guidance about how best to accomplish this in your call process.

### developing questions for the second interview

QUESTIONS should be chosen or developed in advance as was done for the initial interviews. There is generally 45 - 60 minutes allowed for questions of the candidates. However, because this interview will be more dynamic than the initial interview, answers take longer and fewer questions may be used. Other committees have suggested 10 questions.

ALTHOUGH some of the questions that are selected may be identical for each candidate, the second interview is the time to ask specific questions about areas of concern or issues needing clarification. The same list of potential questions referenced for the first interview may help guide the committee again (see [Appendix N, page 69](#)). ►

**“Every call is unique, so the second interview may occur at different times in your process depending on the circumstances.”**

**“Although some of the questions that are selected may be identical for each candidate, the second interview is the time to ask specific questions about areas of concern or issues needing clarification.”**



IT IS possible for committees to lose focus at this stage and meander in their questions, asking things out of curiosity or asking questions that are inappropriate (age, race, marital status, gender, or family status). Be introspective about the questions being proposed: Why is this question being asked? If the question doesn't guide the committee in its discernment process, the question will take up valuable time during the interview and take the committee off track.

ANOTHER way of thinking about this is to keep in mind the questions that the committee wants to be able to answer to make decisions. Does this person have the gifts and skills to be the leader we are seeking? If called, does this person have the passion, motivation, perseverance and time management skills to be effective in this setting? How does this person fit into the culture of the community and the congregation and its field of mission and ministry? Can this person be my pastor?

#### **process planning for face-to-face Interviews**

MANY of the suggestions for the first interview apply to the second interview.

- Prepare an agenda, with opportunities for breaks and refreshments as well as dialogue (see *Sample Agendas for Face-to-Face Interview*, [Appendix S, page 76](#)). Ninety minutes is suggested as the limit for the official interview, which includes introductions, committee questions, and candidate questions. Time may be planned before or after the interview for social conversation, but committee members need to be intentional not to turn that time into an unofficial interview to ask questions that were not chosen by the committee.
- Plan or prepare a script for the opening and closing.
- Committee members should be prepared to briefly introduce themselves and share their roles in the congregation. Name tags are recommended to help set the candidate at ease.
- Plan who will ask which questions. Rotating responsibility will help avoid lengthy one-on-one conversations. ►

**“Why is this question being asked? If the question doesn't guide the committee in its discernment process, the question will take up valuable time during the interview and take the committee off track.”**

**“Time may be planned before or after the interview for social conversation, but committee members need to be intentional not to turn that time into an unofficial interview to ask questions that were not chosen by the committee.”**

- For all interviews, provide each committee member a list of interview questions with space to take notes.
- Have copies of the *Ministry Site Profile* on hand for each member. Keep focused on the congregation's priorities for the call.
- Consider other information that may be necessary to answer candidates' questions. The last few annual reports may be desired along with the church history. The situation of your call may require other documents such as the church constitution or other specific reports.
- Be prepared to engage in dialogue about your church's ministry. The candidate will probably refer to the *Ministry Site Profile* in questions asked of you. A list of sample questions that might be asked of the Call Committee by candidates is also available so that the committee can be well-prepared (see [Appendix O, page 71](#)). You may want to decide in advance who will take the lead in answering candidates' questions about specific areas of ministry, sections of the *Ministry Site Profile*, and the sample questions.
- Be prepared to give the candidates a date when the committee will get back with them.

**“Be prepared to give the candidates a date when the committee will get back with them.”**

### **process planning for traveling**

WHETHER candidates travel or Call Committee members travel, there is a great deal of planning that must be done for the visits to proceed smoothly. If candidates travel, a plane ticket, rental car, and hotel accommodations must be provided as well as an allowance for meals. You may want to confer with your church treasurer about the advisability of providing a meal allowance or offering reimbursement for meal costs. Whichever method is chosen, prompt reimbursement for costs is a necessary courtesy.

ALWAYS keeping the candidate's comfort in mind, discussion should occur about whether a welcome committee is desired or whether the candidate prefers to be on her or his own upon arrival. Depending on the time of arrival, candidates may be exhausted or may want to spend some free time looking over the call area on her or his own. Talk to the candidates about what they prefer.

SOME Call Committees have put together welcome baskets and had them placed in the candidate's hotel room. Food items, flowers, maps, restaurant recommendations and/or gift certificates, Chamber of Commerce information, etc., will help welcome and introduce candidates to your area. ►

IF THE committee is traveling to the candidate's current site, the committee will need to determine the best plan for its members. Depending on the distance, plane tickets, rental cars, hotel accommodations, and meals need to be planned in advance. Attention to detail will help things go smoothly and allow attention to be given to the reason for the visit.

### **interview process evaluation**

AFTER the Call Committee has mapped out its interview process, but prior to implementing the process, take time to review and evaluate.

1. Is the call process well designed?
2. Does the content of the process address our defined needs in the *Ministry Site Profile*?
3. Does the process match the capabilities of the Call Committee?
4. What challenges or obstacles remain? How will we overcome them?
5. Are we confident that our process will allow us to discern and recommend the candidate the Lord has led us to select?

### **the interview**

THE Call Committee chair presides over the interview process. It is important to help the candidate feel welcome and relaxed. You want to learn as much as possible about one another during this interview, keeping the focus on mission and ministry. To help you do so the following guidelines are suggested.

- Follow the script and agenda you have prepared.
- Have snacks and drinks within reach.
- Provide the candidate the agenda so she or he knows what to expect and when a break will occur.
- General information regarding compensation may be discussed as a part of the interview. The information is available in the *Ministry Site Profile*, so the basic response should be: "We have established a range based on synod guidelines for the position. Details will be discussed only after we have moved to recommend a candidate to the church Council."

MANY Call Committees schedule interviews over a twenty-four hour period for those coming from a distance. It is recommended that the time together include as many of the following as possible:

- A tour of the campus and neighborhood. Note availability of housing and costs; schools; child care services; public services; etc.
- A meal with the candidate and family, if applicable.
- Time with staff members. Remind them about confidentiality.
- Ask the candidate what would be helpful.

AS SOON as possible after each face-to-face interview, the committee should reconvene to evaluate the candidate. The process that was utilized for the initial interviews may be used — or improved on — for subsequent interviews. ►

## 6.5 evaluating the candidates

AFTER all face-to-face interviews are completed, the committee will meet to discuss all candidates. (Each will have already been discussed individually immediately after her or his interview.) Remember, the Call Committee operates under consensus. The discernment process may lead the committee to be ready to answer the question: “Is the Holy Spirit calling us into partnership with this person?” If so, the committee moves forward to recommend the candidate to the Congregation Council. If not, the pool may again be narrowed and more interviews, visits, and/or references checked. The synod representative can be of assistance.

**“Is the Holy Spirit calling  
us into partnership with  
this person?”**

---

### **evaluation guidelines**

#### **Reminders**

1. Emotions are real, but good decisions deserve the light of rationality as well.
2. Differentiate between personal attractiveness and professional competence.
3. Mission and ministry are key issues. Does the candidate show the ability to do both as well as inspire and encourage?
4. Pay attention to strengths. Weaknesses are present in everyone; if they overwhelm, then pay attention.

#### **Ask Yourself Some Basic Questions**

1. Is this person theologically sound?
2. Does she or he demonstrate maturity of faith and leadership?
3. Does this person demonstrate concern for people? Inspire trust?
4. What strengths are most important for our church?

---

**FINALLY, one candidate will be chosen! Hallelujah!** The Call Committee, through prayerful process and consensus, has been moved to declare: “We have found our pastor. This is the person who God is calling to work with us as a partner in mission and ministry.” Another conversation may be needed at this point to give the candidate and the Call Committee an opportunity to ask follow-up questions and to discuss specific details regarding the call. At this point, the chairperson notifies the Bishop or synod representative of the committee’s decision. All candidates are notified by phone and those who did not receive the recommendation are sent a personal letter from the committee (see [Appendix Q, page 74](#)).

WHEN the recommended candidate receives the notification call from the Call Committee, she or ►

he may ask for time to prayerfully consider the recommendation. Up to this point, the candidate has been prayerfully considering the 'possibility' of a call. It is understandable that the 'reality' of being recommended by the Call Committee may deserve more prayer and consideration. One week is generally enough time for a candidate to make the decision, although in some cases more time may be requested. Once the candidate has accepted the recommendation by the Call Committee, the Council President and the Bishop or synod representative should be notified immediately.

## 6.6

### call committee recommends a candidate to council

THE Call Committee chairperson notifies the Council President that the committee is ready to recommend a candidate and arranges the date and time for the recommendation to the Council. The presentation should include materials that describe the candidate as well as the rationale for choosing the candidate. This should not be taken to mean a comparison of candidates. Other candidates' names and qualifications remain confidential and are not to be discussed outside Call Committee.

IT IS recommended that all Call Committee members be present and participate in the presentation; however, should questions be asked, the chairperson should continue to speak for the committee. The presentation might include:

- A brief resume of the candidate's past ministries and ministry skills, personal and pastoral style, and vision for the church.
- An audio taped message of introduction and greeting from the candidate. If available, a quality-videotaped message could be presented.

THE presentation might also include an analysis of how the pastor's gifts and talents correlate with congregational hopes and needs as stated in the *Ministry Site Profile*:

- How this candidate's pastoral and personal style, vision, and ministry skills will meet the needs of the congregation.
- How the congregation will fulfill the candidate's needs.
- Why the Call Committee believes the Holy Spirit is calling the candidate and congregation to join their ministries.

OTHER Call Committees have introduced the candidate by summarizing how they moved through the call process — how they came to an understanding of call and how they came to know the candidate through the MSP, phone interview, internet searches, sermons and articles, references, live preaching, and second interview (see *Sample Outline of Candidate Recommendation to Council*, ►

### Call Committee Recommendation BASICS

1. **The Call Committee recommends a candidate for Call and notifies the congregation president and the Bishop. The Call Committee presents its formal recommendation to the Congregation Council.**

**Appendix T, page 77).** By taking Council members through a summarized version of the process, Council will also be able to slowly 'meet' and appreciate the qualities and characteristics of the candidate.

IT HAS proven extremely meaningful for Call Committee members to write a brief statement about why they recommend the candidate. Those statements can be compiled and used in the recommendation for Council as well as the congregation. Because the discernment process is such a Spirit-led occurrence, it may be difficult to try to synthesize it into a simple decision-making process that can be categorized, summarized, and fit into a neat box. The testimonials from committee members help showcase the basics of the call process while underscoring the leap-of-faith that comes through prayerful discernment.

**“The testimonials from committee members help showcase the basics of the call process while underscoring the leap-of-faith that comes through prayerful discernment.”**

## **6.7 council procedure to recommend candidate**

APPROVAL of a motion to recommend a candidate to the congregation generally requires a 2/3 majority of the entire Congregation

Council (present or not), unless your constitution specifically dictates otherwise. Once the Council votes to recommend the candidate to the congregation, the Council takes over the next steps in the call process.

A SPECIAL congregational meeting is scheduled and synod staff is notified. Consult your constitution regarding requirements for official notice about the special meeting. Most require two announcements at worship and/or ten days written notice. Sometimes the Congregation Council must vote to call the meeting. Possible settings for the announcement are Sunday worship services, the newsletter if due to be mailed/e-mailed soon, and/or a special letter to each household. Immediate notification of synod staff allows time for the synod office to prepare the *Letter of Call* and send you the *Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor* form for you to complete.

COMPENSATION will be negotiated with the candidate by the Executive or Personnel Committee. It is expected that compensation will be within the range listed in the Ministry Site Profile and that synod guidelines are utilized to provide useful information for this discussion. (Compensation guidelines may be found at <http://www.gcsynod.org/congregations/compensation.php>.) The Council president is urged to discuss details regarding salary, housing, pension, health, and other allowances with the synod staff should any questions develop.

CONGREGATIONS also specify moving expense reimbursement as a part of the compensation package. There should be a clear understanding of arrangements and reimbursements. It is common to ask the pastor to submit an estimate of moving expenses (provided by a mover) to the ►

congregation for approval prior to the move. While it may be tempting to save money by utilizing a “do-it-yourself” approach, that is usually not a productive practice. When the cost of the move is viewed in terms of the years of service that will be spent in mission and ministry with the pastor, it is cost effective for most congregations to authorize the candidate to choose a professional moving company. Special offerings may be received to cover the moving costs if a reserve fund has not been established in prior budgets.

COMPENSATION also includes continuing education. Continuing education is an important time of renewal and learning for a pastor. More and more congregations are encouraged by the mutual benefit of a specified length of time away periodically. The sabbatical is used for renewal through travel, study, or engaging in some new and different activity in addition to normal vacation and continuing education time. The ELCA recommends providing two weeks annually for this purpose. Our synod recommends consideration of a sabbatical after six years of continued service. The Bishop should be consulted in the planning of a sabbatical.

ANNOUNCEMENTS to the congregation about the candidate should include background information and the rationale for choosing the candidate. Call Committee can draw on its presentation to Council to prepare this information. Usually compensation is not shared in advance so that the focus is on ministry rather than finances at this stage.

THE Council has the option of inviting the pastor (and family) to meet the congregation in a social setting sometime prior to the day of the Congregational Meeting. Most congregations want to meet the pastor before they vote. Pastors and their families (if applicable) are often eager to meet the congregation and other staff, if any. However, given distance and time constraints, it may be ►

## Finalizing the Call BASICS

1. **The Council president and Executive Committee finalize the compensation package with the candidate and call for a congregational meeting. It is important to notify the Bishop the date of this meeting to allow time for the *Letter of Call* to be prepared and forwarded to the congregation.**
2. **A congregational meeting is held to approve the calling of the nominated candidate.**
3. **A two-thirds vote is required to call the candidate as pastor.**
4. **A simple majority vote is required to approve the compensation package.**
5. **The candidate is notified of the vote by the president.**
6. **The *Letter of Call* and the compensation form are signed by the president and secretary. Both forms are then sent to the synod office for the Bishop's review and signature.**
7. **The Bishop signs the *Letter of Call* and forwards both documents to the newly called pastor. A copy of the letter and documents mailed to the newly called pastor will be mailed to the congregation.**



that the congregation will not meet the candidate until the weekend they are voting. Communication that has set expectations is the key to this working.

### **introducing the candidates**

THE candidate may be introduced to the congregation during worship services, at an informal potluck, at Sunday School classes or other meetings, or any combination of the above. Care must be taken not to make this a congregational interview. This visit is essentially for getting acquainted.

### **the congregation meeting step by step**

THE Congregation Meeting to call the candidate is the culmination of months of hard work by the Call Committee and patient waiting by the congregation. Because of the significance of this meeting, careful preparation and agenda planning are very important.

1. Take attendance and make sure a quorum is present. (Check your constitution for the quorum required.) Appoint tellers to count votes.
2. Open with devotions, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If the meeting is held immediately after a worship service, a brief scripture reading and prayer are appropriate.
3. The candidate should be described, along with the rationale for the recommendation. Involve as many people in the presentation as possible.
  - Review the *Ministry Site Profile* describing the congregation, its vision, values and priorities, and the resulting qualities sought in a pastor.
  - Provide a concise description of the candidate, along with individual statements of why each Call Committee member believes this pastor to best fit the future needs of the congregation.
  - Explain the process used to arrive at the recommendation.
4. Invite questions from the floor.
5. Be prepared to distribute written ballots and pencils with tellers prepared to collect, count, and report. **A 2/3 majority of the members of the congregation present and voting is required to issue a call** (+S14.11.6). If the President feels there is overwhelming support for the candidate, it may be possible to have the motion affirmed by voice (“yea” or “nay”) or a show of hands. However, if there is any doubt about the division of votes when using one of these methods of affirmation, paper ballots should be distributed.
6. **FIRST MOTION:** Invite a motion from the floor: “Is there a motion to call [\(name\)](#) as [\(lead/associate\)](#) pastor of [\(name of church\)](#)?” By stating the motion, a member in attendance can simply say “So moved” and another can say “Second” to proceed to voting.
7. While the ballots are being counted, the proposed compensation statement will be presented in writing for discussion. Be prepared to answer questions about salary and benefits.
8. The tellers' report will be made by the Council President. If the motion passes, proceed to agenda item #10.
9. If the motion to call the candidate fails, a time of discussion (before adjourning with prayer) is in order. During that time, it would be helpful to hear from the congregation.
  - Why people think the vote failed. ►

- Explanation of the process to be followed. (The Call Committee will meet with the synod representative to discuss the reasons for the vote, potential candidates, including any already interviewed, and the time frame for another congregational vote on a candidate.)
10. **SECOND MOTION:** Invite a motion from the floor: “Is there a motion to approve the compensation package for Pastor [\(name\)](#)?” A motion and second are made recommending the compensation package. After questions and discussion, a voice vote is adequate. **A simple majority is required to pass the motion.**
  11. The meeting is adjourned with prayer.

THE Call Committee chairperson or Council president should notify the candidate with the results immediately following the meeting. If the call is to be extended, the Council President should see that the *Letter of Call* and *Compensation* form are completed, signed, and sent to the Bishop.

ONCE the call is officially extended by a vote of the congregation, the candidate has 30 days to accept or decline the call. In most cases, a candidate responds within a week. Often the candidate has indicated an intent to accept to the Call Committee or Council prior to a congregation's vote.

## 6.8 after the call is issued

**“Arrival times are negotiable, with many factors to be considered.”**

SOMETIMES special considerations make it difficult for a candidate to leave within the normal 30 - 60 days after accepting the call. Arrival times are negotiable, with many factors to be considered. A few weeks one way or the other is not much when you look forward to many years together.

HOPEFULLY, candidates will have had an opportunity to consider available housing. That often happens as part of a visit or during an interview. If not, it is important to assist the candidate (and family). You may be able to indicate where good schools, shopping, and housing values are located.

ASSURE the candidate of adequate time to move and settle in. Effectiveness will be enhanced in the long run, and attitudes will be positive. Usually a full week is necessary to unpack, get utilities hooked up, and find stores, doctors, dentists, hospital, schools, etc. You can help by offering recommendations and addresses. You may also offer to prepare meals, provide child-care, and house the pastor/family until furniture and utilities are in place.

BE SURE the pastor's office has been cleaned and that all signs have been updated with appropriate name changes. Stationery and calling cards can be ordered in advance if discussed with the candidate-elect.

WHILE these transitions are happening, it is important for your new pastor to feel welcomed and wanted. Notes and cards of greeting are appropriate. ■

# 7 arrival, installation, and follow-up

## 7.1 need for continued vigilance by council and call committee

YOUR pastor has arrived and been warmly welcomed by the congregation. There is a temptation to take a breath, relax, and let the pastor settle in, but this is not a time for congregational leaders to disappear. This is a time to be visible as a resource to the pastor and to assist her or him. There will be immediate and special pastoral ministry needs. There will be a learning curve about how this church operates, how things are done, how the computer works, who fixes the things that break, who is involved in which ministries, how to turn off the lights.... There is no end to the list and there is no one to 'train' a lead pastor. Congregational leaders need to be visible and supportive. The Call Committee can also play a role.

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

THE constitution of most congregations suggests the Call Committee term comes to an end when the call process is completed. There is a real opportunity, however, for the Call Committee to contribute to the start-up experience of a new pastor. The Call Committee probably knows the new pastor better than anyone in the congregation and played a significant role in shaping expectations and hopes. We ►

**“Your pastor has arrived and been warmly welcomed by the congregation. There is a temptation to take a breath, relax, and let the pastor settle in, but this is not a time for congregational leaders to disappear.”**

**“We suggest the Call Committee be available for the six-nine month review of the pastor and as a source of feedback and support through the end of the first year.”**

suggest the Call Committee be available for the six-nine month review of the pastor and as a source of feedback and support through the end of the first year.

## 7.2 installation

THE Congregation Council president and the pastor-elect, in consultation with the Bishop or synod representative, need to confer and choose a date for installation. The *Presiding Minister for the Rite of Installation* is usually the Bishop or synod staff person. It is a fitting symbol, especially if the installation happens shortly after arrival, for the Bishop or staff to preside over the service up until the point of installation (including preaching), representing the pastoral care of the whole church over the congregation. Upon completion of the *Rite of Installation*, the newly-installed pastor becomes the presiding minister for the remainder of the service.

THE *Grand Canyon Synod* encourages scheduling installation services on a Sunday afternoon, which facilitates participation by other rostered leaders and congregations. The congregation should extend an invitation to the *Service of Installation* to neighboring rostered leaders and congregations.

DON'T overlook the importance of the *Installation Service* as a time to lift up the life of the whole church. Invite neighboring and partner congregations to be present even if you're holding the installation on Sunday morning. Other congregations may send representatives or greetings. And, think ecumenically — including our sister communities of faith is an important witness to our own people as well as the whole community.

The *Service of Installation* is printed in the *Occasional Services Book*, published by *Augsburg-Fortress*, and is available on the synod web site. ►

**“The Congregation  
Council president and the  
pastor-elect, in  
consultation with the  
Bishop or synod  
representative, need to  
confer and choose a date  
for installation.”**

## 7.3 formulate a press release

A PRESS release about the arrival of your new pastor is an opportunity for outreach. Consider the typical content in the religion section of the newspaper: a pastor's educational background, congregations served, major accomplishments, and sometimes information about the family. Now consider the content from the perspective of church members. Think about those who are inactive. Are there unchurched people waiting for a congregation to show interest in them? What do all these people want to know? Tailor the press release to answer these questions: "What difference does the new pastor make to me?" "How might I benefit?" "Why should I care?"

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

HOW does the congregation benefit from this approach? First, it's free. Second, as a public article it shows that the newspaper sees the event as genuinely newsworthy. The press release as an outreach tool helps create a congregational image in the community as well. It also provides a way to evaluate ministry. Congregations must ask what benefits people might receive by participation in their services, programs, and special events.

A WELL-PLANNED public relations effort not only makes outreach more effective, it also serves to keep a congregation's mission focused and relevant.

**"A well-planned public relations effort not only makes outreach more effective, it also serves to keep a congregation's mission focused and relevant."**

## 7.4 periodic review and evaluation

IT IS helpful for the Bishop or synod staff person to come back six to nine months after the beginning of the new ministry for conversation with the pastor and congregational leadership. Usually this will involve a personal conversation with the pastor and then a conversation with the Congregation Council. The purpose of the conversation is ►

**"It is helpful for the Bishop or synod staff person to come back six to nine months after the beginning of the new ministry for conversation with the pastor and the congregational leadership."**

to compare expectations with actual happenings at an early stage. The focus should be on the ministry of the congregation and pastor. Conflicts are reduced and effective ministry enhanced when mutual expectations are clearly discussed. (See [Appendix U, page 78](#), and [Appendix V, page 79](#), for two possible formats for the review.)

AFTER the initial review, evaluations should be scheduled annually. Periodic review and evaluation of ministry can be life giving. The performance of a called pastor needs to be evaluated in the context of overall mission and ministry goals of the whole church. A staff support or mutual ministry committee is a helpful vehicle for ongoing, supportive review and evaluation.

## 7.5 mutual ministry team

CARING for caregivers is a ministry that congregations can provide for their pastor(s). The ELCA's Churchwide Ministry Team and this synod suggest each congregation have a mutual ministry team through which care and support of their pastors can take place. A resource book, *Pastor & People*, may be ordered from *Augsburg Fortress Publishing Company* or from the synod office.

IN CONSULTATION with the Call Committee chairperson(s) and Council president, the Pastor is expected to form a Mutual Ministry Team within 90 days of the start of the call. This group will be expected to serve one year as the initial Mutual Ministry Team. It is likely that this group will largely, if not completely, be composed of members from the Call Committee, with whom the pastor is most familiar. After one year, it is expected that the pastor will self-select members from the congregation to serve on the team. It is recommended that the team be comprised of three members.

SERVING as a member of a Mutual Ministry Team should be approached prayerfully and lovingly. Conversations should be open and forthright, but confidential. Pastors need caring listeners who will hear their challenges in nonjudgmental manners. Pastors also need members who will speak difficult truths to them with love and concern. ►

**“Serving as a member of a Mutual Ministry Team should be approached prayerfully and lovingly. Conversations should be open and forthright, but confidential. Pastors need caring listeners who will hear their challenges in nonjudgmental manners. Pastors also need members who will speak difficult truths to them with love and concern.”**

## 7.6 evaluation of the call process

IN AN effort to strengthen and improve the call process for other congregations in the future, the Call Committee is asked to engage in a post-call evaluation of the whole process. Upon its completion, this evaluation is to be provided to the Bishop or synod staff member who worked with the congregation. The following are two options to assist in the evaluative process.

### **Option 1**

1. Needs Evaluation: How well did we identify our congregation's needs?
2. Design Evaluation: How well was the call process designed?
3. Impact Evaluation: How did the call process benefit the candidate, Call Committee, and the congregation?
4. Implementation evaluation: How well did the call process work?

### **Option 2**

1. Did the Call Committee find the process that was used helpful? Why or why not?
2. Did the congregation find the process that was used helpful? Why or Why not?
3. What parts of the call process worked well?
4. What parts of the process didn't work as well?
5. Were there unexpected problems? If so, how could they be avoided next time?
6. What parts of the process produced frustration, confusion, mistakes, etc.?
7. What did you find helpful about the role played by synod staff?
8. What didn't you find helpful about the role played by synod staff? ■



## appendixes

**Please note that Appendixes A-W are available on the synod website as downloadable Word forms for ease in usage. Click on “Congregations/Rostered Leaders” to access the drop down menu for Call Process information and forms.**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **A Model for a Community Bible Study**

#### **Leader: Open with Prayer**

(Suggestion: *Almighty God, we look to your Word for guidance and hope. Open our hearts and our minds that we may hear your word for us. Guide us through your word to hear the good news for our lives together through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*)

**A. One person reads the lesson** (See *Text Suggestions for a Community Bible Study*, pg. 51)

- In silence write one word or phrase from the lesson that seems significant.
- Each person shares the word or phrase without additional comment.

**B. A second person reads the lesson.**

- In silence reflect on what this passage is saying to you.
- Each person may share his/her reflection without additional comment.

**C. A third person reads the lesson.**

- Each person reflects using only one sentence or less on what this passage is saying to the congregation at this time, while you are in the call process.

If time allows, a 10-20 minute open discussion may be included at this time.

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Leader: *Lord God, we are your servants in need of your love.*

The leader then offers a prayer for the person on her/his right. That person prays for the person on her/his right, continuing around the room until each person has been included.

**Close with the Lord's Prayer. ■**

## APPENDIX B

### Text Suggestions for a Community Bible Study

The following are a few texts that may be used for devotions or Bible study during the call process. The lessons for each Sunday could also be used for your study.

#### **Suggested Biblical Texts:**

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

#### **Reflections on God's Call:**

Call of Young People	
I Samuel 2:1- 3:18	Samuel
Luke 1:26-38	Mary
Call of Elderly	
Luke 1	Elizabeth and Zechariah
Genesis 18:9-15	Abraham and Samuel
Luke 2:22-38	Simeon and Anna
Call of the Disciples	
Matthew 4:18-22	Follow Me
Mark: 1:16-20	
Luke 5:1-11	

#### **Reflections on being the church:**

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

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Exit Interview Forms**

#### **PASTORAL RESPONSES**

**Pastor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person(s) filling out the form:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was the compelling mission and ministry that attracted you to accept the call to this congregation?
2. How did your expectations of ministry here compare to the realities of your ministry here?
3. What has given you the sense of greatest fulfillment? (What are you satisfied and pleased about?)
4. What has given you the sense of greatest frustration? (What leaves you unsatisfied/ dissatisfied or displeased?)
5. What do you consider the strengths of the congregation?
6. What areas do you believe the congregation needs to strengthen and develop in the coming years?
7. What present areas of mission, ministry, and program do you think should be retained and continued?
8. What new areas of mission, ministry, and program do you think should get emphasis in the future?
9. What do you think this congregation can do to strengthen and support the incoming pastor?
10. What would you like this congregation to do to help you and your family in the transition soon to take place?
11. Are there any critical issues or ongoing concerns that should be addressed in the near future? ►

## CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSES

**Congregation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person(s) filling out the form:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What were the compelling reasons that attracted the congregation to call this pastor to the congregation and its mission and ministry?
2. How did your expectations of the pastor compare to the realities?
3. Regarding this pastoral ministry: What has given you a sense of greatest fulfillment? (Where and how are you satisfied and pleased?)
4. Regarding this pastoral ministry: What has given you the sense of greatest frustration? (In what ways have you been unsatisfied/dissatisfied or displeased?)
5. What do you consider the strengths of the congregation?
6. What areas do you believe the congregation needs to strengthen and develop in the coming years?
7. What present areas of mission, ministry, and program do you think should be retained and continued?
8. What new areas of mission, ministry, and program do you think should get emphasis in the future?
9. What do you think that the congregation can do to strengthen and support the incoming pastor?
10. What would you like the pastor to do to help the congregation in the transition soon to take place?
11. Are there any critical issues or ongoing concerns that should be addressed in the near future? ■

## APPENDIX D

### Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation (and prayer)

***When used as part of the Sunday Service, it may follow the Prayers of the Church. In other service settings, it may precede the Benediction.***

The Pastor (**P**), a Representative of the synod/cluster designated by the Bishop (**B**) \*\*, and a Representative of the Congregation (**R**) come forward. C = Congregation

*\*\*Due to availability, a representative from the synod may not be able to be a part of this service. For a retiring pastor, it is more important to have synod representation. The likelihood of representation is increased if the date is first coordinated with the synod staff person.*

**R:** Pastor (name) on (date), we called you to be our pastor: to proclaim God's Word, to baptize new members into the Church of Jesus Christ, to announce God's forgiveness to us, and to preside at our celebration of the Lord's Supper. With the Gospel, you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you (and your family) have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community. You have served our congregation faithfully for (number) years. You are now leaving our midst to [become pastor of name of church] / [retire]. As members of this congregation we wish to honor your ministry among us and bid you farewell and Godspeed in your new endeavor, bringing closure to your ministry at (name of church).

**P:** I thank you ... the members of (name) Lutheran Church for the love, the kindness, and the support shown to me (and my family) during active ministry among you. I ask forgiveness for the times I have not served well. I am grateful for the ways my ministry has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

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

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

*Omit the following line and congregational response if the pastor is retiring.*

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

**C:** **We do, with God's help. ►**

- B:** Do you, Pastor [\(name\)](#), commend the congregation into the care of another pastor?
- P:** I do, with God's help.
- B:** Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here?
- P:** I do, with God's help.
- B:** On behalf of the Grand Canyon Synod I witness to the words spoken here: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. We will hold you in our prayers as you [\[begin your ministry at name of church\] / \[retire\]](#). We pledge our support and love to you and wish you God's blessing.
- R:** Let us pray: God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help each of us to trust the future that rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments. We give you thanks for the countless ways our lives have been woven together in the tapestry of your church. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories, but move us in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C:** **Amen.**
- R:** Let us bless the Lord.
- C:** **Thanks be to God.**
- R:** The Lord bless us, defend us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life.
- C:** **Amen.**

*The peace is shared.*

### **A Possible Prayer For the Departing Pastor**

Gracious God, you have united us all in one body. We give you thanks for the work of Pastor [\(name\)](#) among us. As [she/he](#) leaves [to a new congregation / to retirement](#) surround [her/him](#) with your Spirit. Give us the courage to release [her or him](#) to a new call and bless our remembering of the work that has been done among us. Guide Pastor [\(name\)](#) and us as we continue to seek to share the Good News of salvation through your son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ■



## **APPENDIX E**

### **MODEL ONE: Mission and Ministry Planning**

Before the Call Committee or MMTF begins the work of filling out the *Ministry Site Profile*, it is helpful to gather a sense of the congregation, its neighborhood, and the community. The following suggestions may serve as guides for your group to plan a time for the congregation members to be involved in the process.

An Interim Pastor generally has the training to guide the whole congregation through this process. Ideally, this process would be conducted over a period of many weeks during the transition process. If the Interim Pastor is unable to facilitate, it is possible that a synod staff member or representative may be able to assist the congregation with parts of this process.

**Session 1**      **Who are we?**  
**What is our history?**  
**What do we say about ourselves?**  
**How do others describe us?**

Idea: Create a wall of history. Cover one wall of the fellowship hall with paper. Create a time line from the beginning of the congregation through today. You may want to leave a portion at the end for dreams for the future. Give everyone a marker and have each person put important events and people on the wall. Information can be about your church or society at large. (Wars, depressions, disasters affect the ministry, too.) Have people gather in small groups and review the wall. Ask: "What do you see? What's missing?" Ask each group to create one or two sentences that describe who you are.

**Session 2**      **Where are we located?**  
**What is the community we serve?**

Idea: Create a community map. Break into small groups with a piece of newsprint. Put in all the details. Put the various maps on the wall. Ask: "What do you see?" Have small groups walk or drive through the community. Each person silently notes the signs of hope and the signs of despair in your community. Have people gather afterwards to share their observations.

Demographic resources are available through the *ELCA Research and Development Department*:  
<http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Research-and-Evaluation>

To access a demographic report, users will need the zip code of interest, region/synod code: 2D, and congregation ID#. This five-digit number can be found in the synod directory at <http://www.gcsynod.org/directories/synod/>. Click on "Synod Directory" under "Conferences and Congregations" and locate your congregation in this document. (Note: users may need to insert a 0 before the congregation ID listed in the directory.) ►

### **Session 3**      **What is Outreach?**

Idea: Arrange for a presentation time to clarify outreach. Look at the difference between what is good for the congregation and what is simply self-serving. Define current outreach efforts and intentions of the congregation. Evaluate the church budget as a way of assessing the commitment to outreach.

The congregation is to assess the mission, energy, and resources that are devoted to sharing the good news of God's love in Jesus outside the walls and doors of the local congregation. It involves doing a community assessment of needs in the surrounding community/neighborhood. Congregations are encouraged to invite a neighboring school principal, the current City Council member for the district in which the congregations resides, the community affairs officer for the police precinct servicing the congregation's neighborhood, and the Captain of the closest fire station. Each can provide current perspectives on needs.

### **Session 4**      **What are the assets and needs of our community?**

**What services are needed?**

**What services are available?**

**Who are the invisible people?** (The poor, lonely, homeless, hungry, angry, etc.)

**What is the relationship of the congregation with the community?**

Idea: Have key leadership and Transition Team members read The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts by Luther K. Snow.

### **Session 5**      **Who are our mission partners?**

**How do we support others?**

**How do others support us?**

Idea: Use the Mission Table resource available at:

<http://gcsynod.org/ministries/documents/MissionMappingforWeb.pdf> to map the various ways in which the congregation is engaged in mission partner relationships.

### **Session 6**      **What is our Mission and our Ministry?**

**How has our mission changed?**

**What do we expect of our pastor in our mission work?**

**What do we expect of ourselves in our mission work?**

Idea: Using the previous session's input, form small groups to reflect on how the mission and ministry has evolved and where it appears the Spirit is leading them. Write a mission statement or review current statement for relevancy. ►

## **Session 7**      **What are our Gifts?**

The purpose of this session is to:

- Introduce giftedness
- Look at gifts of leadership
- Assess gifts needed for mission
- Identify resources in congregation and community
- Identify needs

The last session can be conducted by the Transition Team or an appointed writing team who will now be charged with drafting the *Ministry Site Profile* (MSP) for review by the leadership and the congregation. It is recommended that a deadline be given to the completion of this task and a forum to present the MSP be scheduled, so this does not get lost in the ministry schedule of the congregation.

## **Session 8**      **Writing Task**

At the final meeting the written materials produced should include:

- A mission statement
- A Mission and Ministry strategy for the next 5 years
- A list of mission partnerships both active and potential
- A plan for evaluation and review
- The *Ministry Site Profile* ■

## **APPENDIX F**

### **MODEL TWO: A Strategic Planning Process**

*Process requires a trained facilitator. (If a facilitator is not available within the congregation, contact the synod staff member working with the congregation for possible recommendations.)*

**Step One**      Training session for a small group of leaders.

Meant to equip leaders to facilitate small group sessions doing inquiry and identification of stories, assets, liabilities, wishes, hopes and dreams. The goal is to discover the gifts and strengths of the congregation and use those as a way to move into the future.

**Step Two**      A number of small group gatherings (12-15 persons).

Invite the congregation to sign up to participate in one of the group sessions (each session about two hours). The leaders trained in Session One facilitate the Small Group sessions.

**Step Three**      Compile and record information.

The learning from congregational groups is gathered together by a small group of leaders. All the accumulated information is assembled into one document, which should be several pages.

**Step Four**      Workshop (15-25 persons). Workshop might be done in two segments, starting on a Friday evening and continuing into Saturday.

Major workshop to focus the information gathered in small groups to identify the central themes, the core assets and liabilities, and discover where wishes, hopes and dreams move into potential directions for the congregation. The group spends time imagining the future, stretching “what is” to become “what could be.” At the end of the day the group will have generated four to six strategic directions and a mission or vision statement.

**Additional steps are possible to expand upon the four to six strategic directions. ■**

## **APPENDIX G**

### **How to Complete the Ministry Site Profile**

The *Mission and Ministry Task Force (MMTF)* is charged with completing the *Ministry Site Profile (MSP)*. This is a form used throughout the ELCA and is available on the ELCA website at <http://elca.org/call-process>. Printing a blank copy will be very useful as the committee prepares to complete the form. Follow the instructions below.

One committee member needs to be selected to create an online account and will be responsible for filling in the form with information provided by the MMTF. This should be a person with good computer skills.

1. Once you have accessed the website listed above click on "Getting Started" located at the top left of your screen.
2. Scroll down to the section entitled "The Ministry Site Profile form".
3. Follow the directions in this section to begin the process.
4. Create an account with your e-mail address and choose (and remember) a password.
5. The next screen will ask for information regarding your congregation.
6. Once this section is complete click on the tab labeled "MSP Status" in the middle of the screen.
7. Click on "Create a New MSP" located on the right side of your screen.
8. The MSP is an eleven page document and will require several sessions to complete.
9. Print the blank form for reference by the committee.
10. Other Call Committees recommend that the paragraph-long submissions be typed into a word processing program to take advantage of spell check. The text can then be copied and pasted into the appropriate space on the MSP.
11. Changes can be made to the document until it is submitted. The work in progress can be printed and reviewed at committee meetings.
12. When the document is completed, it is "locked" with the password and submitted. After that, no more changes can be made to the document.
13. The Assistant to the Bishop for Administration, Kim Stevens ([kstevens@gcsynod.org](mailto:kstevens@gcsynod.org)), can be an asset in answering questions about using the program necessary to fill out the form.

Below is a description of the various sections of the MSP.

**Part I                      Who We Are**

Congregational information is recorded and descriptive paragraphs are written about the community as well as the congregation. This information should come out of the work done by the *Mission and Ministry Task Force*. If not, before recording membership or attendance statistics, talk to the people responsible for these numbers. When was the last time the membership rolls were updated? How accurate are your church records? What is the policy for maintaining accurate records? An Interim Pastor can help if work needs to be done in this area.

**Part II                      Our Vision for Mission**

Statements about the church as a community, leadership style, programming, and theological perspectives are presented and an agreement scale is completed. Paragraphs are written to describe the congregation's purpose, giftedness, and mission. References for the church are provided.

**Part III                      Leadership Needs**

Priorities are set for ministry tasks and gifts. Mutual expectations are defined and a Compensation Range and Benefits are indicated. (This information comes from the Congregation Council, Executive Committee, Treasurer, or Finance Committee.)

**Part IV                      Commentary**

The church's vision, opportunities, challenges and nature of the ministry site are presented in a page-long essay. Examples are provided.

**Part V                      Completion of Profile ■**

## **APPENDIX H**

### **Evaluating the MMTF Process**

1. How are we doing in following the recommended process? Did the process we used get the job done? What worked well? Not so well?
2. How are we managing with the financial resources we have allocated for the process? What did it cost to develop and assess the congregation's needs (consider time, money, materials, etc.)?
3. Did the process ensure input from a cross-section of the congregation?
4. How is our work matching our proposed timeline?
5. Do we know how to proceed? What questions do we need answered by the synod staff or others at this point?
6. Were synod staff and materials helpful along the way? Why or why not?
7. Do we know what spiritual gifts and skills we are seeking and are necessary in our new pastor to achieve our plan for mission and ministry? ■



## APPENDIX I

### An Affirmation of a Call Committee

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

CC = Call Committee members

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

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

**C: We do.**

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

**C: We will.**

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

**CC: We do.**

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

**CC: We will.**

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

(Also see [Appendix W, page 80](#), for other prayers affirming the work of the Call Committee.) ■

## **APPENDIX J**

### **Sample Call Committee Agenda**

**Monday, 12/6/20xx**  
**6:30pm – 8:00pm**  
**(room number)**

**Please read:** Ministry Site Profile, Calling a Pastor: Step 5, Step 6  
**Please bring:** Ministry Site Profile, Calling a Pastor

#### **ONGOING ITEMS**

Devotions and Opening Prayer: (Committee Member)

Word on the Street? All (Used to check up with each other on what was being heard/overheard from the congregation.)

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Communication Plan: Review

Ministry Site Profile Review: Complete review

Interview Questions: Fine tune questions chosen last week. Are there other questions that should be considered? Come with interview questions that were selected last week prioritized.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Interview Preparation: If time permits, discuss “Preparing for the Interview” and “Interview Procedures” found in Step 5 under “Preparation for Interview.” Also, review Step 6: Decisions, paying attention to “Evaluation Guidelines”.

Closing Prayer: (Committee member) and Committee



## APPENDIX K











### Sample of a Proposed Call Timeline

DATE	COMMENTS	TASK
<b>Year</b>		
8-Nov	1st meeting	Get to know each other, select officers.
9-Nov	Meet with Bishop	Orientation
15-Nov		Meet with Communication task force members. Set Timeline. Start review of Profile.
22-Nov	Thanksgiving week	Complete MSP review. Solicit congregation for pastoral suggestions in bulletin 11/21, 11/29, 12/6.
29-Nov		Select Interview Questions.
6-Dec		Timeline and Questions complete. Practice interview.
13-Dec		Get candidates' names from Bishop. Distribute candidate info.
20-Dec	Christmas week	Initial discussion of candidates. Contact candidates and request copies of sermons?
27-Dec		Holiday break?
<b>Year</b>		
3-Jan		Schedule initial interviews.
10-Jan		Begin Interviews
17-Jan		Continue interviews?
24-Jan		Evaluate candidates. Background check.
31-Jan		Schedule site visits.
7-Feb		Visits
14-Feb		Visits
21-Feb		Face to Face Interviews.
28-Feb		Evaluation
7-Mar	Ash Wed. is March 9	Evaluation
14-Mar		Final Visit/Introduce to congregation.
21-Mar		Recommend to Council.
28-Mar		Congregational meeting.
4-Apr		Issue call.
11-Apr		
18-Apr		
25-Apr	Easter is April 24	
2-May		Receive new pastor.

## APPENDIX L

### Sample of a Visual Timeline Used on the Web

#### ***Call Process Major Steps and Progress***

-  **Step One:** Time for transition after lead pastor resigns.
-  **Step Two:** Complete rough draft of *Ministry Site Profile* (MSP) document for Call Committee.
-  **Step Three:** Formation of Call Committee and orientation meeting with Bishop.
-  **Step Four:** Finalize MSP. Seek candidate suggestions from congregation.  
[Ministry Site Profile](#) (clickable link)  
[History of Church](#) (clickable link)
-  **Step Five:** Determine interview questions and complete practice interview.
-  **Step Six:** Obtain candidate names from Bishop and schedule interviews.  
(Candidate names obtained month-date-year.)
-  **Step Seven:** Conduct interviews and evaluate candidates.  
(Final phone interview completed month-date-year.)
-  **Step Eight:** Site visit(s), face to face interviews, evaluations.
-  **Step Nine:** Recommend candidate to Congregation Council.
-  **Step Ten:** Congregational meeting.  
(Planned for month-date-year.)

**Questions? Suggestions? Comments?**  
Email Call Committee chairperson(s) [name\(s\)](#)

[Call Committee - Archive of weekly bulletin articles](#)

[Call Committee - Archive of monthly newsletter articles](#)

**Please lift up your prayers for the Call Committee. ■**

(Steps that are complete are noted with a green circle and those that are still in progress are noted with a red circle.)

## APPENDIX M

### Sample Initial Interview Script

Hello Pastor (name),

This is (name), chair of the (church name) Call Committee. I am on speakerphone and want to make sure you can hear me okay. (Wait for response.)

Pastor (name), am I saying your name correctly? I'm wondering, how do you prefer to be addressed?

We would like to tape this interview for internal call committee use only. The tape will not be duplicated or used outside the members of the committee and will be deleted at the end of the call process. May we have your permission to tape? (Wait for response.)

With me are the other members of the committee. We'd like to take a minute to introduce ourselves to you. (Short introductions by members.)

Thank you for agreeing to speak with us tonight. I want to make sure that you've received copies of our Ministry Site Profile, church history, (names of other documents provided to candidate). (Wait for response.)

We have received your Profile and are looking forward to getting to know you better. Our plan is to spend about 45 minutes asking you questions and to reserve about 15 minutes for you to ask us questions. Do you have any questions before we get started? (Wait for response.)

We'd like to open with prayer: *God, keep us mindful of your presence among us as we seek to discern your will for us. We pray that you will help us see beyond our own needs to the needs of your whole church. We pray that you will open our eyes to new possibilities and opportunities of being your people. Guide us and lead us O Lord. Amen.*

I will be asking the questions. We will start with.....

#### **Opening Question**

Something broad to set the candidate at ease.

#### **Theology**

Selected questions.

#### **Ministry**

Selected questions. ►

**Leadership Style**

Selected questions.

**Pastor as Person**

Selected questions.

**FINAL QUESTION**

Selected closing question.

Thank you for your thoughtful responses to our questions. We'd like to give you the chance to ask us questions now.

Thank you, Pastor [\(fill in name\)](#), we want to let you know that we will be completing our interview process and will get back with you by [\(date\)](#).

Would you lead us in a closing prayer?

Thank you, again. Good bye. ■

## **APPENDIX N**

### **Sample Interview Questions for Candidates**

Ask the candidate to briefly tell you about herself or himself. What brought the candidate to this congregation at this point in time?

#### **Theology**

1. Describe your preaching style. What themes do you emphasize in your preaching? What do you see as the purpose of the sermon?
2. How do you go about teaching and interpreting Scripture?
3. What are the ways worship and liturgy generate energy and life for you?
4. How do you view corporate and private worship? What role would you play in setting the style of worship in this congregation? What role would congregational members be asked to carry out?
5. Describe your understanding of the fundamental mission of the Church. What is the role of the pastor and the congregation in relation to that mission?

#### **Ministry**

1. Describe your top three skills in ministry? What aspect of ministry is most satisfying? What aspect is most dissatisfying?
2. How do you deal with conflict?
3. Evangelism is important to us. If you were our pastor, how would you work with us in this community in doing outreach? What are your past experiences and new ideas?
4. How active are you in synod, region and church-wide programs? How do you view ecumenical involvement?
5. Questions about the following areas of ministry are suggested if they have not come up in previous discussion:  

> visitation	> counseling	> stewardship
> financial mgmt.	> social concerns	> youth
> community involvement	> teaching (adults, Sunday School, Confirmation)	

#### **Leadership Style**

1. Describe your leadership styles. *(There are a variety of leadership styles. Different situations call for different styles.)* ►



2. What do you see as the primary role of the Congregation Council? Describe how you work with committees/teams. How do you work with other staff members?
3. Communication is an important part of parish life. What methods of communication work for you?
4. What do you see as the role of lay members in the congregation, specifically in relation to the functions of worship, learning, witness, service, and support?
5. How do you envision congregational planning? How do you go about generating a vision for a congregation?
6. What are your feelings relative to an annual review of the congregation's program, leadership, and staff?
7. What functions are uniquely the pastor's? How will mutual ministry be fostered within the congregation?

#### **Professional and Personal Growth**

1. What kinds of continuing education experiences have you pursued in the last five years? Have you received any special training in educational ministry? How do you approach confirmation ministry? How would you relate to volunteer leaders and teachers?
2. What continuing education opportunities will you seek in the future?
3. Share a recent (or past) experience that challenged your thinking, inspired you, or deepened your understanding of the ministry and/or life? (e.g., a book, lecture, movie, event, program, article, travels, etc.)
4. What are your future plans for continued personal and professional growth?

#### **Pastor as Person**

1. Describe your basic work orientation. Where and when do you work best? How do you determine priorities in tasks you must do?
2. Describe ways you take care of your physical, emotional and spiritual self. How do you spend your free time?
3. How do you value collegiality with neighboring pastors? What kind of relationship do you appreciate among other clergy, Lutheran and non-Lutheran?
4. The *Ministry Site Profile* has provided some information about financial arrangements. You may wish to explore a number of financially related concerns, (i.e. salary, housing, and equity allowance.) ■

## **APPENDIX O**

### **Sample Interview Questions by Candidates**

1. What do you think individuals like about this congregation?
2. What are some of the things you hope this congregation will do in the future that would benefit you and/or others?
3. What are some of the reasons why you are members of this congregation?
4. What kinds of organizations do you have in this congregation?
5. What kinds of activities take place on a weekly/monthly basis?
6. How do you welcome and assimilate new members?
7. What plans has the Council made for doing additional self-study and goal setting?
8. What governing structure does this congregation have? (This information should be in the Ministry Site Profile or other advance material.)
9. What kind of benevolence do you support? How do you see this congregation as part of the ELCA Mission?
10. In what area(s) of social concern has/is the congregation (been) active?
11. How would you prioritize the functions of a pastor, both in terms of importance and number of hours? What gets deferred if time runs out?
12. What view does the congregation have about continuing education? What about time off? Financial support? Will the pastor be encouraged to attend pastors' conferences and Synod Assemblies? Who will pay the expenses?
13. How does the pastor's family receive support? Are there expectations of the pastor's family?
14. Who prepares the Council and congregational meeting agendas? Who chairs meetings?
15. What are the housing opportunities in the neighborhood? What present financial arrangements have been made for the pastor's housing? Has the Council and/or congregation envisioned any future ideas for the pastor's housing (shared equity, mortgage loan from the congregation, etc.)? ►

16. What is the school situation in this area?
17. *(In the case of multiple-staff ministries)* How do you describe the task definitions, lines of authority, conflict management, and reporting methods for the pastoral staff, Council, congregation and committees?
18. What is the community's image of this congregation (if you can tell)?
19. What hardships has the congregation experienced in the past? Have there been any major conflicts?
20. What is the attitude of the congregation toward the church-at-large (synod and ELCA)?
21. What are the possibilities for growth in size and involvement?
22. How many pastors has this parish had in the past twenty years?
23. How is the pastor's leadership accepted by the congregation?
24. What kind of secretarial service will the congregation provide?
25. What do you see as the role of the lay members in fulfilling the purposes of the congregation, specifically in relation to the functions of worship, learning, witness, service, and support?
26. What do you see as the pastor's role in fulfilling the purposes of the congregation in relation to the functions of worship, learning, witness, service, and support?
27. What arrangements do you anticipate for moving the pastor, family, and household goods into this area? ■

## **APPENDIX P**

### **Sample Interview Evaluation**

#### **I. THEOLOGY**

How will this pastor's theology address the spiritual needs of this congregation?

Does she or he understand the mission of the church?

#### **II. MINISTRY**

What specific skills does this pastor have that address the ministries identified in our *Ministry Site Profile*? Look at experience, training, and education in these areas.

Does she or he have a vision and skill for our needs as well as pastoral care?

Does she or he understand the community? Does she or he have the capacity and skills to learn about and relate to the community?

#### **III. LEADERSHIP/PASTORAL STYLE**

Was I comfortable with the candidate?

Will she or he relate to the members of this congregation?

Did this candidate work well with us as a Call Committee?

#### **IV. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

Has the pastor had opportunity for professional growth?

How has it affected her or his understanding of the ministry?

#### **V. PASTOR AS PERSON**

How does the pastor exercise self-control?

Does the pastor's basic work orientation fit the needs and rhythm of our parish life? ■

## APPENDIX Q

### **Sample Letter to Candidates Not Recommended for Call**

Dear Pastor,

On behalf of the Call Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church, I would like to thank you for your willingness to be considered as a candidate for the position of (Senior)/(Associate) Pastor. We were impressed by your fine record and sample sermon.

*(You may wish to go into more detail of strengths and areas of concern.)*

*At this time, we have chosen another candidate to recommend to our congregation.\** The choice was difficult because of the quality of the candidates recommended to us. We wish you blessings upon your continued ministry.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, Chair  
Call Committee

*\*If this letter is sent when narrowing the pool of candidates and not when recommending one candidate, this sentence might read: "At this time, we will not be moving forward in the call process with you." ■*

## **APPENDIX R**

### **Sample Questions for Checking References**

Please remember that it is important to notify the candidates that you will be checking references. When placing calls to references, emphasize the confidential nature of this process. Use a structured interview and ask the same questions of each reference. This helps to establish a more systematic procedure for evaluating all candidates and helps to focus on relevant issues. Equal treatment of candidates is essential.

- A. Identify yourself and the role you are playing in the call process.
- B. Identify and record the name of the individual to whom you are speaking and the working relationship this person has with the candidate.

#### **Sample Questions**

1. What were the candidate's responsibilities in order of importance?
2. How would you rate the candidate's effectiveness in her or his work?
3. How would you rate the candidate's passion and energy?
4. How would you describe the candidate's attitude?
5. How would you describe the candidate's relationship to the Congregation Council?
6. How would you describe the candidate's relationship with staff and volunteer workers?
7. What were the candidate's main strengths, outstanding successes, and significant failures?
8. How did the candidate work with people? Identify reasons for positive or negative working relationships.
9. How do you feel about the candidate's management techniques?
10. How would you describe the candidate's success in training, developing, and motivating persons?
11. What would most people with whom he or she worked say about the candidate?
12. What other information can you share that would help to develop a more complete picture of the candidate?
13. Tell me/us about this person. ■

## APPENDIX S

### Sample Agendas for Face-to-Face Interviews

#### Sample 1

<u>Minutes</u>	<u>Item</u>
5	Opening Prayer/Scripture by committee member
10	Introductions: Committee members identify themselves, areas of work, church activities, etc.
10	Candidate introduction of self and story
60	Questions of the candidate by the committee
5	Stretch break (keep refreshments available to avoid long breaks.)
20	Candidate's response and questions
15	Final questions or comments by the committee or candidate; notification of when the candidate can expect to hear a progress report; closing prayer by the candidate

#### Sample 2

Sunday, (date)

8:45	Service, sermon by Pastor <u>(name)</u> at <u>(church name and address)</u> .
10:45	Brunch at <u>(committee member's)</u> home <u>(Committee member's name)</u> leads prayer before meal
11:45	<b>Session 1: Interview</b> <u>(Committee member's name)</u> will lead opening prayer.
12:30	Break
12:45	<b>Session 2: Interview</b> Minimum of 30 minutes will be reserved for Pastor <u>(name)</u> to ask questions of us
1:30	Leave for campus tour <u>(Names of committee members who will guide tour)</u> ■



## APPENDIX T

### **Sample Outline of Candidate Recommendation to Council**

1. Opening and thank you to council
  - We are here to recommend one candidate
  - Introduction of candidate to council just as we met the candidate
2. Call Committee Basics
  - Understanding Call
  - Call committee process and timeline
  - Importance of prayer
  - Recommend Pastor [\(name\)](#)
3. Introduce Pastor [\(name\)](#)
  - Candidate details (resume/RLP)
  - Match RLP strengths to MSP desires
4. First Interview by phone
  - One *Call Committee* member reads questions and another reads the responses
5. Internet searches
  - Presentation of all internet findings
6. Articles by Pastor [\(name\)](#)
  - Selected excerpts
  - Excerpts from sermon
7. References
  - Review of questions that were asked of references
  - Read summary statements of references' responses
8. Live preaching and second interview
  - Live preaching review
  - Second interview: One Call Committee member reads questions and other members who feel comfortable supply the responses to the questions they asked
9. Criminal, background checks and Summary
  - Summary of criminal and background checks
  - Closing: Each Call Committee member reads the recommendation paragraph that she or he wrote ■

## **APPENDIX U**

### **Six-Nine Month Review: Option 1**

**The Ministry Site Profile can be reviewed, and questions posed to both the pastor and the Council:**

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

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

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

Generally these conversations are very affirming. The review provides a non-threatening, supportive setting for raising any concerns or issues from either perspective. It is helpful, before patterns are too ingrained, to review the unfolding ministry. ■

## **APPENDIX V**

### **Six-Nine Month Review: Option 2**

To be completed by Council and/or Mutual Ministry Committee and Call Committee. A copy may be sent to the Synod Office.

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Reflections on our ministry:**

1. A time of joy was...
2. The most difficult aspect of the start-up has been...
3. A specific instance in which the Council supported the pastor...
4. A time when the Council could have been more supportive of the pastor...
5. A time when the pastor could have provided stronger support for the Council or a committee...

#### **Checking the vital signs:**

1. How are we doing regarding:
  - a) Worship attendance
  - b) Programs
  - c) Care of members
2. How is our stewardship looking?
3. What is the congregational climate?

#### **Looking ahead to next year:**

1. Are there changes or adjustments that need to be made? What are they? By whom?
2. Two specific steps we can take to strengthen our mutual ministry as Pastor and Council... ■

## **APPENDIX W**

### **Prayers for Use Throughout Call Process**

#### **During the Transition Time**

Loving God, be with us and guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us, O Lord, to be about the work of your kingdom even as the search for a new pastor continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **For the Work of the Call Committee**

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts: Look on your Church with grace and guide the minds of those who shall choose a pastor for this congregation, that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, pg. 46)

Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on us! We thank you that throughout the generations you have raised up men and women to serve your church in all times and in all places. As we go about the task of calling a new pastor to serve with us, we pray for a spirit of mutual trust and for the ability to speak fully and listen faithfully to each other. We pray for the spirit of wisdom to be in our midst as we go about the task to which we have been called. We give thanks for all who have served this congregation as servants of your Word, especially do we remember [\*\[at this time, names of former and present pastors, deaconesses, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, and lay leaders in congregations may be spoken by those gathered\]\*](#). Fill us with the love, grace, and confidence that can only come from you, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

#### **During Interviews**

God, keep us mindful of your presence among us as we seek to discern your will for us. We pray that you will help us see beyond our own needs to the needs of your whole church. We pray that you will open our eyes to new possibilities and opportunities of being your people. Guide us and lead us, O Lord. Amen.

#### **At Meetings**

Life giving God, create among us a desire to do your will. Open our hearts to your Word. Lead us as we seek to lead. Guide us as we seek to guide. God, we desire a new pastor to be among us to lead us and walk with us. Direct us as we wait. Bless all who serve in the congregation, especially those who have the responsibility to lead us in the call process. Bless us, Lord Jesus. Amen. ■

## **APPENDIX Z**

### **Multiple Pastor Situations**

THE call process takes on a different dimension when there is a pastoral staff of more than one pastor. When a pastor resigns, the remaining pastor's relationship and responsibilities in the congregation may change. Each multiple staff is different, so it is important to consult with the Bishop and synod staff to determine the best way to proceed.

#### **Role of the Senior Pastor When an Associate Pastor Is Being Called**

WHEN calling an associate pastor or associate in ministry, it is especially important there be mutual understanding of the theological positions, worship preferences, and leadership styles. This is best facilitated by in-person discussions during the interview process.

WHILE Call Committees will want to assess the candidate in terms of character, commitment, and competence, the interactions among staff are also critical elements. They cannot be adequately assessed without significant discussions that include the senior pastor.

THERE are various instruments that can be helpful in the discussion of leadership styles, although no instrument can replace lengthy dialogue.

- The Alban Institute's *A Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Survey* uses case studies of various situations and describes leadership styles as directing, influencing, consulting, or delegating. All have validity, depending on the situation. It is helpful to know both the dominant style of the senior pastor and staff members and their adaptability to various situations. If interested in more information regarding these styles of leadership, please contact the synod staff person working with your committee.
- It is also helpful if the senior pastor and candidates have reviewed Anne Marie Neuchterlein's book, *Improving Your Multiple Staff Ministry*, (esp. Chapter 3). This publication is also available through The Alban Institute, Code #DT15. The Alban Institute's toll-free phone number is 1-800-457-2674. Their address is The Alban Institute, 4125 Nebraska Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20016.

THE senior pastor and Council will want to discuss in advance the task definitions, accountability lines, and whether the style will be hierarchical or collegial. There is frequently a huge gap between professed style and actual style. There is also an even larger gap between what the congregation anticipates from a senior pastor and what they expect from a new assistant or associate. How the senior pastor leads is critical to the success of bringing on a second pastor, especially if the senior pastor has never had an assistant or associate. Serious consideration of the leadership gifts and style of the senior pastor will significantly influence how the new pastor will relate and respond to the senior pastor.

No two situations are alike; however, here are some general guidelines for Call Committee ►

operations:

- The senior pastor may, with the support of the Congregation Council or Call Committee, screen potential candidates before a Call Committee interview is initiated.
- A senior pastor does not serve on the Call Committee, but there must be a plan for the senior pastor's input on potential associates.
- After a Call Committee has selected a candidate, the Call Committee chair will work with the synod staff person to set up a one day meeting with the senior pastor, the candidate, and an outside facilitator.
- The congregation is responsible for any costs associated with this process.
- The vote by the congregation for issuing the call will take place after this session.
- The process is terminated if the pastors recognize that they will be unable or unwilling to work together.
- The facilitator may make recommendations to the pastors or the congregation regarding ongoing work for this pastoral team.

IN CONCLUSION, there needs to be a clear consensus that the new associate pastor is right for God's mission and also right in terms of a working relationship with the senior pastor.

### **Role of the Associate Pastor When a Senior Pastor Is Being Called**

- The call of an associate pastor is fully a call and has its own integrity. It is not co-terminus with the call of the senior pastor, unless so stated in the original call.
- That having been said, it is also true that the call of the associate is to a specific role in the congregation. The associate pastor will not serve as the interim or transition pastor.
- The associate pastor may not be part of the Call Committee.
- Part of preparing a Plan for Mission will be to assess the role of the associate pastor and the entire staff. Sometimes an associate can play an important role in helping provide continuity through transition; in other cases, it becomes clear that God's mission will best be served if the associate seeks another call.
- Part of the discernment process for candidates who are considering a call to serve as senior pastor is the ability to relate to and work with the associate pastor(s) and other staff. A Call Committee can expect questions about the willingness of the congregation to accept changes in staff.
- In some (fairly rare) cases, there is a strong desire to consider the associate pastor for the position of lead/senior pastor. When this is the case, it is vital to work directly with the Bishop.
- The associate pastor needs to discern whether she or he is able to fill the role of senior pastor. The Congregation Council also needs to engage in such discernment.
- If the associate pastor is to be a candidate for the position of lead/senior pastor then she or he will be the only candidate considered initially. If after consideration, the associate pastor is not recommended, it is expected for the sake of a healthy call process the associate pastor will submit a letter of resignation from the call of the congregation effective with the start of the newly called pastor. ►

ALL candidates should be provided an opportunity in their visitation time to have a private conversation with all program staff including the associate(s). After a candidate is selected by the Call Committee, and before a congregation votes, a day should be arranged for a meeting between the candidate and the rest of the staff..

WHILE the vote for senior pastor will take place after the staff meeting, it may be the recommendation of the synod staff and/or the senior pastor candidate that the associate pastor should begin to seek another call.

### **When a Co-Pastor is Being Called**

In the case of a **clergy couple**, several suggestions are offered:

- A separate call is issued to each, even if one position is being shared.
- Structure the interview so that the Call Committee has some time with each pastor individually and some time with them together. Feel free to ask the same questions of each person — don't make assumptions about similarities! Ask about strengths and weaknesses of each, complementarities, etc.
- It is critical that duties, responsibilities, and lines of decision-making be clearly spelled out for the candidates, Council, and congregation. It is also important that congregants understand they are not getting two individuals who will both work full-time for the compensation of one full-time call. Clear boundaries regarding allocated days off are also important to provide adequate staffing for the work to be done as well as adequate time off for rest and renewal.
- Refer to the *Compensation Guidelines* for information on benefits.

### **In the Case of a Co-pastor Being Called to Join an Incumbent Co-pastor**

The same advice given earlier for the calling of a senior pastor applies here as well. Especially important are the conversations between the incumbent and the candidate(s).

Based on recent experience, in the event of a co-pastorate where one of the pastors resigns a call it is recommended that the other pastor's call is co-terminus, so that the congregation has an opportunity to transition into new leadership. If a congregation can no longer support the co-pastor model, it is recommended both pastors resign rather than force the congregation to choose between the two leaders. ■