

SELECTING A PASTOR

Booklet 2 in the Call Process

(Call Committee and Call Process Coordinator
with appropriate communication with council & congregation)

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

I. MINISTRY SITE PROFILE (MSP)*

A. THE MINISTRY SITE PROFILE (MSP) IS AN ESSENTIAL DOCUMENT IN THE CALL PROCESS

The **Ministry Site Profile** (MSP) is the ELCA document in which congregations describe their ministry and their search for a rostered leader. Congregations must fill out the entire MSP. The call committee can not be trained without this completed document. The Congregation Council will need to appoint persons to assist in the completion of the profile and schedule a special data gathering meeting to provide information not readily available from other sources. The entire MSP is shared with all candidates the call committee considers and with those candidates who express interest in the congregation by contacting the synod office directly. The summary paragraph in the MSP will be made available on the ELCA Web site for anyone interested. (*Tips on Completing the MSP*)

B. APPOINTING A COORDINATOR/TASK FORCE CHAIR AND TASK FORCE

The Congregation Council shall appoint a council person to coordinate the completion of a draft of the MSP. The task force may include the coordinator with one or two additional council members, two members of the call committee and additional congregational members, as needed.

C. THE COORDINATOR/CHAIRPERSON ARRANGES FOR RESOURCES FOR TASK FORCE

The coordinator arranges for the gathering of readily available resources that can be used by the task force. The task force may identify other resources as they meet.

Congregations often use:

- Congregation study
- Demographics and congregational statistics from ELCA
- Annual parochial report your congregation completes for synod each year
- Congregation treasurer
- Annual reports of congregation
- Focus groups within congregation
- Interviews with committees and/or individuals
- Conversations with other local pastors/congregations
- Newsletters, bulletins and congregation brochures
- Exit interview from previous pastor
- Conversation with interim pastor
- Local resources: Chamber of commerce, library, AAA, business associations

E. THE TASK FORCE COMPLETES A WRITTEN DRAFT OF THE MSP

This draft is shared with council for approval. Once the council approves the draft the task force's task is complete.

F. CONGREGATION COUNCIL SHARES DRAFT MSP WITH CALL COMMITTEE

The council approved draft is given to the call committee with the council understanding that the call committee has final responsibility for submission and wording of the MSP. The call committee uses the draft in their training. After the call committee completes training they may need to revise some wording to thoroughly reflect the competencies and characteristics of the pastor they will be seeking. The call committee makes appropriate changes/additions and develops a final version. The call committee should share with the council the final document before submitting.

G. FINALIZED MSP IS SUBMITTED ON LINE

The call committee submits the final version on the ELCA Web site.(See below) All candidates the call committee interviews will have access to MSP.

The **Ministry Site Profile** form is available at www.elca.org/Call-Process The form is completed and submitted electronically. A blank sample form can be printed for use prior to submitting.

II. CALL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING

A. CALL COMMITTEE TRAINING

The call committee or Congregation Council establishes a contact person who works with the appointed bishop's staff person to arrange for call committee training. The committee works with a trainer to arrange approximately 9-12 hours of preparation for its work together. Topics include tools for evaluating candidates, review of the congregation's characteristics and needs, development of interviewing skills, team building, practice at seeking God's will together, and call committee organization. A mock interview and a review of the interview are part of the training. This training normally takes place over a Friday evening/Saturday. Trainers are as flexible as possible about scheduling and location. The trainer donates his/her time and the congregation is responsible for the trainer's travel expense (mileage, meals, and lodging – if needed) and the expenses of the mock interview (\$50 honorarium plus mileage). The trainer arranges the mock interview.

B. ORGANIZATION

A part of the call committee training includes the committee's choosing of:

1. CHAIR OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

The communication among the candidate, call committee, and bishop's office is the responsibility of the chair of the call committee. The chair is responsible for leading meetings and also ensures that the candidate(s) and committee members are appropriately reimbursed for expenses. All call committee expenses and expenses of the candidates interviewed are paid by the congregation. When the committee is ready to make a recommendation, the chair communicates this news to the Congregation Council and the bishop's office.

2. SECRETARY OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

The secretary is to record the actions of the committee and, if the committee chooses to make this one way to communicate with the bishop's staff person, forward committee minutes to that person. The secretary also writes letters of thanks and communicates promptly with candidates following interviews. (**Sample letters**) The secretary asks the questions: Is there anything we need to report to council or congregation as the result of this meeting? Is there anything we need to communicate to the bishop's office or any of our candidates?

3. CHAPLAIN OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

One member of the committee has primary responsibility for seeing that the work of the committee is carried out in a prayerful manner through arranging for meetings to be opened and closed with prayer and/or devotional time, and by calling attention to the working of the Spirit in the call process.

C. INSTALLATION OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

This is an opportunity for prayerful commitment of the call committee members to their task, to ask God's blessings, to invite the prayers of the congregation throughout the process and to introduce the call committee to the congregation. "**Installation of Call Committee,**" on the synod Web site, provides a sample rite. Two or three members of this committee may be invited to serve on a transition/mutual ministry committee for the pastor's early ministry.

III. THE WORK OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

A. COMMITTEE DETERMINES VOTE NEEDED TO MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

The committee determines how a decision will be made, and does so before interviewing any candidates. Normally this decision is by consensus.

B. THE CALL COMMITTEE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGREGATION COUNCIL determines appropriate kinds and frequency of communication the call committee should regularly have with the Congregation Council and the congregation. The method and types of communications may also be agreed upon. This communication often takes many of these forms:

1. Monthly report to Congregation Council by a member of the call committee
2. Written monthly newsletter update
3. Bulletin announcements
4. Brief verbal reports to the congregation at meeting or prior to worship.

In all communication the call committee tries to be as transparent as possible about the process, while honoring the confidentiality of candidates by not sharing names, places or personal information about candidates until a primary candidate is named.

C. THE CALL COMMITTEE IN CONSULTATION WITH CONGREGATION COUNCIL completes the “*Ministry Site Profile*” and the “*Congregation/Community Packet*”

D. THE CALL COMMITTEE SUBMITS ALL APPROPRIATE FORMS, NOTIFIES SYNOD OFFICE, AND PREPARES FOR THE FIRST INTERVIEW (*Preparing for the First Interview, Working With Rostered Leader Profile*)

E. BISHOP AND STAFF SELECT NAMES

On Wednesday mornings the bishop and members of the bishop’s staff meet together to pray for congregations and pastors in the call process and to make recommendations to call committees needing names. Congregational study materials including the MSP are shared with bishop’s staff members and needs of the congregation are discussed before names are selected. The call committee is normally given three candidates initially. Candidates recommended to the congregation may come from across the ELCA and may be:

1. Pastors who submit rostered leader profiles and express a willingness to be available for call.
2. Pastors recommended by members of the congregation.
3. Pastors who ask to have their names submitted to a particular congregation.
4. Pastors who are asked to complete rostered leader profiles and have conversation with a congregation because the study seems to indicate they would be an appropriate fit for ministry in a particular place.
5. Seminarians assigned to our synod. Assignments are made in spring and fall.

All candidates must work through their bishops in order to be considered for call. The call committee’s receipt of rostered leader profile signed by the bishop and sent from the NC bishop’s office is assurance that this has taken place.

F. THE COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS CANDIDATES

The expectation is that call committees make contact with each candidate for whom forms are received. When ministry leader profiles are submitted to the call committee, the bishop's office notifies the candidate that he or she is in consideration. The candidate will expect to hear from the committee in a timely fashion. Initial interviews should be planned for the convenience of the candidate and the committee, and arranged by the committee chair. Normally a candidate is invited to the congregation or community for a first interview. Face to face interviews always provide the best experience for a call committee to assess the candidate. For candidates at a great distance (over a 5 hour drive) the first conversation may be by telephone conference call or video conferencing using a webcam and applications such as Skype. Candidates should be provided with forms to submit travel expenses or video conferencing expenses for reimbursement. Attention to hospitality is important. Candidates should be offered good directions, meals while in the community, and reservations and costs of a hotel or motel room if the interview involves traveling a significant distance. Normally prior to the first interview the candidate is provided with a "congregation and community packet" to help them better understand the congregation and community. (See "[**Congregation/Community packet samples**](#)") At this interview the candidate is forming an initial impression of the congregation and the community in the same way that the committee is forming an initial impression of the candidate. (***Sample Interview Questions, Preparing for the First Interview***)

G. THE COMMITTEE REPORTS THE INTERVIEW OUTCOME TO THE CANDIDATE

The committee may choose to continue with a candidate or to remove a candidate from consideration. Either way, the candidate should be contacted. Sample letters are provided. A telephone call would also be appropriate. The committee chair should be in touch with a candidate at least once a month while he/she is being considered, or when any decisions are made. All subsequent interviews should be face to face. A phone call to ask for clarification in an area from a previous interview would be acceptable.

THE COMMITTEE MAY DECIDE:

- 1. TO CONTINUE WITH CANDIDATE.** The committee may decide to continue with a candidate, in which case the committee will want to experience the candidate's preaching and worship leadership. A trip to the congregation the candidate is currently serving is ideal. If that is not possible because of distance, or because the candidate is not serving in a congregation, the bishop's office will arrange for the candidate to preach in a congregation near enough for the call committee to visit. It is not recommended that the candidate be invited to the call committee's congregation to preach. The conversation with the candidate may continue until the call committee determines that this is not the person to be called, and returns the name to the bishop's office, or until the committee is ready to name the candidate as primary candidate.
- 2. TO RETURN CANDIDATE'S NAME.** When the committee has determined that a candidate is not to be called to the congregation, the candidate is thanked by letter and/or a personal call, reimbursement for expenses is provided, and an evaluation of the interview (***Candidate Evaluation Form***) is completed and sent to the bishop's staff person with whom the congregation/call committee is working. Rostered minister profiles should be destroyed. Confidentiality is critical.

H. THE COMMITTEE REPORTS THE INTERVIEW OUTCOME TO THE ASSIGNED BISHOP'S STAFF PERSON, AND REQUESTS AN ADDITIONAL NAME IF NECESSARY

A written evaluation of the candidate (*Candidate Evaluation Form*) is mailed, or e-mailed, to the bishop's staff person, along with anything learned in the interview that might help to further identify candidates who would be appropriate matches. Be sure to indicate on the evaluation form if the committee requests another candidate. The committee can normally be provided with another candidate after the next weekly staff meeting following the receipt of the form requesting a new name. The call committee will interact with 2, or at the most 3, candidates at one time. Continuing with one candidate means the committee gets additional candidates one at a time as they return the previous one.

IV. SELECTING A PRIMARY CANDIDATE

When the call committee is ready to name a primary candidate, the chair of the call committee contacts the pastor and invites him/her to be the primary candidate. If the pastor agrees to be primary candidate, the chair of the call committee informs the bishop's office that such an invitation has been extended.

A. CLARIFICATION WITH PASTOR ABOUT BEING PRIMARY CANDIDATE

IF THE PASTOR AGREES to be the primary candidate, that pastor is not to be in conversation with any other call committee until this possibility is resolved. Also, the call committee considers no other pastor until this pastor's call is either extended or fails to come before the Congregation Council or the congregation for a vote.

B. CARRY DISCUSSION WITH THE PRIMARY CANDIDATE TO ITS CONCLUSION

The following topics need to be discussed at this point if they have not been discussed in prior conversations with the pastor: compensation package, vacation/continuing education, job description, and timeline for how the process will continue to unfold. The congregation is encouraged at this point to do a background check on the candidate. You may wish to check with your insurance carrier as to the type of background check they recommend. **"Background Checks"** provides additional information. Discussion with the primary candidate continues to its conclusion, which might result in one of two possibilities:

1. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person IS NOT the one the Spirit is leading to be called by this congregation, the chair of the call committee communicates with the pastor and contacts the bishop's staff person working with the congregation to best decide how to proceed.
2. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person IS the one whom the Spirit is leading to be called by this congregation, the call committee makes a formal recommendation to the Congregation Council (taking into account the pre-determined procedure which was established during call committee training). At this time a proposed compensation package is presented to the Congregation Council as well.

NOMINATIONS FORM TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS

Nominations for Pastoral Candidates

The call committee welcomes your suggestion of possible candidates for our next pastor. Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be nominated. All ELCA pastors, with the exception of your interim pastor, are eligible. The call committee will take all nominations seriously and share appropriate names with the office of the bishop. If a nominee is from a synod other than NC our bishop will obtain clearance from the nominee's synod.

Candidate Name _____

Current Congregation/Ministry _____ City _____ State _____

Synod (if known) _____

How did you hear about this person?

Do you personally know this individual? _____ Yes _____ No

Please summarize why you feel this individual would be a strong candidate for our congregation: _____

NOTE: Once your referral is made, please support the confidentiality and integrity of the call process by allowing the call committee and Synod to have exclusive contact with the candidate for any matters related to our congregational call.

Your name _____ Phone _____

E-mail: _____ Cell Phone _____

Congregation: _____ Location: _____

*Please give this completed form to the chair of your call committee.
Appropriate names will be forwarded to the bishop's office for consideration.*

TIPS ON COMPLETING THE MINISTRY SITE PROFILE (MSP)

- *Write the MSP carefully*
All the information that will appear within your listing on "Ministry Opportunities" is drawn from your entries on the MSP. Write the MSP carefully, as if the whole world will read it.
- *Complete the entire MSP*
Congregations are expected to fill out the entire MSP.
- *Involve others*
Involve as many people as possible at your ministry site in thinking and writing about the questions of Identity/Purpose, Gifts/Resources, and Context/Needs. Begin every conversation with Bible study and prayer.
- *Give thought to the narrative questions*
The most important questions are the narrative questions. Give them a lot of thought; especially **question 8** which will be publicized within "Ministry Opportunities."
- *Be clear and specific*
Use the multiple choice options and narrative sections to focus the description of your site rather than to speak broadly or generally.
- *Contact information*
Be certain to learn from your synod staff the name and contact information that you should use to answer **question 20**.
- *For multiple-point parishes*
If you are a part of a multiple-point parish, the MSP can be used to describe individual congregations within the parish (choose "congregation" on p.1 of the MSP) or used to describe the entire parish (choose "multiple point parish" on p. 1). In either case be sure to clarify your cooperative arrangement on p. 13.

Two supporting forms

1. *Seven Reflections*

You may choose to enhance your MSP by providing additional information on the *Seven Reflections* form. The form can be downloaded at "Access Account" on the web site after the MSP has been submitted. The form is optional.

2. *Reference Recommendation*

Each ministry site is required to provide an outside reference who will complete a recommendation form. The form contains within it the "Ministry Site Characteristics" survey just as the MSP also contains, creating an opportunity for the rostered leader to pursue some comparison and conversation. You can download the form by going to "Access Account" after the MSP has been submitted. The form is then emailed to the reference as an attachment. The *Reference Recommendation* form is a PDF form, requiring the use of Adobe Acrobat. The reference submits the form by clicking the "Submit" button at the end of the form. Use "Access Account" to monitor the arrival of this reference form.

a. Selecting a Reference – As you consider who you might ask to be a reference you might consider people in the following categories: A physical neighbor to your congregation, a local pastor, a community leader familiar with your ministry, someone from an agency you serve or partner with, someone from a community group that uses your facility, someone from a congregation who partners with you in some ministry

TIPS ON COMPLETING THE MINISTRY SITE PROFILE (MSP)

The chart below indicates what parts of the study process might help in completing specific portions of the MSP.

MSP ITEM	CONGREGATIONAL STUDY	
COUNCIL INPUT SESSION		
Programs, p. 4	Most important current ministries	
Goals, p. 4	In the next few years, I hope...	
Energy, p. 4	Most important current ministries	
Ministry site char., p 5		
ministry site characteristics		
Purpose, p. 6		
congregation's purpose		
Giftedness/obstacles, p 6	What might get in the way...?	congregation's assets
Mission priorities, p. 7	Most important current ministries	
	In the next few years, I hope...	
Top ministry tasks, p. 9		
ranking ministry tasks		
Gifts for ministry, p. 10	Our next pastor is someone who...	
Mutual expectations, p. 11	In the next few years, I hope...	
	Our next pastor is someone who...	

POSSIBLE INPUT GATHERING INSTRUMENT FOR MSP

WHO ARE WE THIS SUNDAY?

Please answer the following questions and return your form as directed. It will take a minute or two. Please help children with their forms or fill out the forms on their behalf. The purpose of this form is to give your leaders and potential candidates a snapshot of the people present in church today.

1. Mark *one* box to indicate your gender and age group.

	Male	Female
4 years or younger		
5 to 9 years		
10 to 14 years		
15 to 19 years		
20 to 24 years		
25 to 34 years		
35 to 44 years		
45 to 54 years		
55 to 64 years		
65 to 74 years		
75 to 84 years		
85 years or older		

2. Are you... Caucasian African American Asian American Indian Hispanic
 Another race: which? _____

3. What language do you usually speak at home? English Spanish
 Another language: which? _____

4. How long does it usually take you to get from your home to the church? _____ minutes
 Driving Walking Other: _____

5. How long have you been a member of this congregation?
 Less than 1 year 1- 3 years 4-10 years More than 10 years Not a member

6. On the average, how often are you at the church building other than for weekend worship?
 Once a week or more 2 or 3 times a month About once a month Less than monthly

7. Of the people (including children) here today, how many are related to you (by marriage or blood)? How many people, not including relatives, would you consider close friends?
 (Please enter "0" if none.)

_____ people here today are related to me
 _____ people here today are close friends of mine

Thank you for providing this information about yourself. You are invited to share your concerns and ideas with your call committee, or with your congregational council.

WORKING WITH ROSTERED LEADER PROFILES

THE ROSTERED MINISTER PROFILE (RMP):

The RMP is a document that is common across the ELCA. The RMP is completed by the candidate and provides a candidate's assessment of him/herself.

SCREENING AND PROCESSING OF RMP'S AT THE SYNODICAL LEVEL:

Prior to providing the names of candidates and a copy of their RMP to a call committee the following steps are taken at the synodical level of the call process:

1. Candidates' RMP's come from a variety of sources:
 - a. Candidates from other synods interested in moving to NC. These RMP's have been cleared by the bishop of their synod.
 - b. Candidates from NC Synod who have indicated a willingness to be open to a new call.
 - c. Potential candidates recommended by congregational members. The call committee chair shares names with the synod and they are cleared through bishop's office of their synod. Those cleared are contacted to determine willingness to consider a call at this time.
 - d. Candidates who request to have their RMP considered by a particular congregation.
 - e. Seminarians assigned to NC Synod.
 - f. Bishop's staff sometimes asks a particular pastor to consider submitting a RMP because they feel that pastor has gifts that match a particular congregation.
2. RMP's are screened through a detailed review and interview process. Candidates are interviewed by a bishop's staff person to get a better understanding of the candidate's strengths, the preferred size and setting of a congregation and to determine other key factors that will help match them to particular congregations. Only those candidates who have the appropriate skills, experience and desirable qualities are placed in a pool of available candidates.
3. Wednesday mornings the bishop's staff, through prayer and conversation, makes decisions to assist congregations and candidates in the call process. It is in this process that candidates' names are paired with congregations. The names are shared with the call committee chair person and an RMP for the individual is sent to the call committee. The candidate is informed that his/her name has been shared with the specific congregation and a copy of the Ministry Site Profile is sent to him/her. Receiving an RMP from synod is a guarantee that the candidate has come through proper channels and has been screened through the above process.

HOW CALL COMMITTEES ARE ASKED TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS

1. Because candidates and RMP's have been pre-screened and prayerfully matched with congregations through the above process it is anticipated that call committees will make personal contact with each candidate. Therefore the function of the RMP the committee receives is not pre-screening. The RMP is sent to help the call committee develop conversation and appropriate questions for a personal contact and interview(s) with the candidate. Use the RMP as a springboard for conversation. You should not dismiss a candidate on the basis of the RMP alone. Always feel free to contact the bishop's staff person with questions and/or concerns prior to contacting a candidate. He/she will gladly share reasons why the name was thought to be a match for the congregation.
2. Remember the RMP is completed by the candidate. The "essay" answers give you a great wealth of information on leadership style, worship preferences, theological stances, and ministry priorities. Pay attention to these to help design questions and conversation. The prioritization sections are somewhat helpful but are no reason to eliminate a candidate without having conversation. Feel free to ask why or why not an item was ranked as a priority.
3. Normally the call committee chair or another committee member assigned has initial conversation with the candidate and sets up a time for an interview. Face to face interviews are by far the best. If a candidate has to travel a long distance (over a 5 hour drive) an initial phone interview or SKYPE/video conferencing might be held. The candidate is aware you have the RMP, so having copies of the RMP present at the interview is perfectly acceptable.
4. You are reminded that this is not a secretive process but it is a confidential one. Therefore be sure that RMP is kept only in the hands and eyes of the call committee. If you duplicate the RMP for the committee, make sure the duplication process is done by a committee member.
5. The RMP contains references. Check references usually after a first interview if you think the conversation will go further. Background checks are encouraged and may be required by your insurance carrier. The synod does not do background checks. We have checked for any known problems with appropriate synod offices for out of NC people.

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST INTERVIEW WITH A CANDIDATE

Call committee training helps the committee develop the skills for planning and conducting interviews

IDENTIFYING COMPETENCIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

As the call committee reflects on the needs of the congregation, it should develop a list of competencies and characteristics it would like in the next pastor. “Competencies” are the skills, talents, and accumulated experience that the candidate brings to the position. “Characteristics” are aspects of the candidate’s personality, outlook on life, and relational style. In preparing for the interview, committees should develop a list of around six competencies and six characteristics to look for in a candidate.

BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING

Call committees should resist the temptation to ask only questions that require the opinion or beliefs of the candidate. The discernment process will benefit by developing “behavior-based” questions to help committee members understand the candidate’s competencies related to the needs of the congregation. Such questions will encourage the candidate to share “real world” experiences and reflect on the learning from those experiences. Questions focus on competencies while characteristics are typically *observed*. It is important that call committee members discuss their observations of a candidate’s characteristics after the interview. The assumption, in this kind of interview, is that past behavior of candidates is the best indicator of future behavior. The responses of candidates should be consistent with information received from references.

EXAMPLES

If the desired competency is “manages conflict,” the committee might say to a candidate, “Tell us in detail about a time when conflict arose, and describe your role in that conflict. Be specific about the circumstances, your response, and what you learned.”

If the desired competency is “clearly articulates Christian faith,” the committee might say, “Give us a specific example of a time when someone came to you with a crisis of faith. Tell us your response and why you responded in the way you did. What was the outcome of your involvement in this person’s crisis of faith?” This competency can also be discerned by listening to a sermon, in person (typically after the first interview) and/or by video or audio tape.

If the desired characteristic is “good relational gifts” that characteristic should be observed during the interview through the candidate’s eye contact, body language, facial expression, attitude, conversational style, etc.

SHARING CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPETENCIES

Once the list of competencies and characteristics is developed enter them in the appropriate spots in the MSP. If there are some key characteristics that are not reflected in the MSP please e-mail the list of those characteristics to the bishop’s staff person you are working with.

CONGREGATION AND COMMUNITY PACKET

It is very helpful for Congregation Councils and/or call committees to assemble a packet of information to send to a candidate whose “Rostered Minister Profile” has been made available to you.

The purpose of the packet is to provide helpful information about your congregation and community beyond the information they will learn from your MSP.

Helpful items to include in the packet are

- Bulletins from the last month
- Last three Newsletters
- Annual Report
- Budget
- History summary or Anniversary Booklet outlining congregational history
- Picture directory
- Other items containing photos of congregational activities
- Web site information
- Community Welcome Packet from your Chamber of Commerce
- Visitors guide to your community
- Map of the community and directions to the church building

It is helpful to send the person this packet prior to their first interview.

RESOURCES FOR CALL COMMITTEE CHAPLAIN

Devotion Ideas for call committees

A call to God's work in your setting will look different from a call to another ministry in the synod.

Ask devotional questions:

- Where is spiritual renewal taking place in your ministry/congregation?
- How are you raising up leaders for the church?
- What differences exist in your community? How are you addressing or embracing the differences?
- How do you help people to see and talk about God in their daily lives?
- As you prepare to call a new spiritual leader for your ministry, how do your answers to some of these questions apply to the priorities you have for your leader?
- Which comments reflect most closely fit what the congregation is currently doing? Which comments most closely fit your hopes for the future?
- What gifts do you need in your next leader to help you work toward those directions?
- What are we hearing from our biblical story that can inform the work we are currently about?
- What key question(s) is God asking us today?
- What issue(s) does God want us to talk about today?
- What challenge(s) does God call us to tackle today?

Read Romans 12:1-8.

Give thanks to God for the variety of gifts placed in your congregation, and pray for wisdom to put those gifts to use in God's mission beyond the congregation. Pray for those you will meet in the call process, that they will see the ways they can help you live out your calling to ignite spiritual renewal, raise up leaders, build bridges, and equip others to see what God is doing in their daily lives.

Consider the great call stories in scripture.

Have each committee member choose a favorite Bible story of God calling someone to ministry: Moses, Abraham, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Mary, Paul, Peter, Andrew, Lydia, etc. Each meeting, have a different member takes a turn telling why they chose that story, and how the story informs their own life. Look for the surprises in those call stories as God did amazing works through ordinary people.

Print out the text or provide Bibles so that everyone has a copy of the gospel for the coming Sunday. After reading through it, allow 5 minutes of silence while individuals silently consider the questions, "What is God doing in this text?" and "What is God saying to me in this text?" Spend 15 minutes sharing reflections. Close in prayer for each other, for God's work among you, and for the candidates who will be considering a call to ministry with you.

Other texts to read and let feed you in the same manner include Ephesians 4:1-13, Luke 10:1-12, Philippians 4:4-9, I Corinthians 12:14-27

RESOURCES FOR CALL COMMITTEE CHAPLAIN

Prayer of faithfulness

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

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

As you have raised up faithful servants of your holy word to tend your flock in each time and place, open our hearts to consider new possibilities for ministry in this community of faith.

May we be open to your grace.

Inspire us to be a people of insight, recognizing our own unique gifts and talents, yet seeking a leader who will compliment who we already are with a vision of what we are to become.

May we be open to your wisdom.

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

Lead us and guide us, gracious God.

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

Lead us and guide us, gracious God.

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

Lead us and guide us, gracious God.

Bless the work and ministry of this call committee. Give us the gifts we need to seek and find the leader of your own nurturing, the faithful leader of your own choosing, that we might grow in faith and love and ministry.

Lead us and guide us, gracious God.

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

Amen

*adapted from prayers
by The Rev. Thomas L. Weitzel
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

RESOURCES FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING

Video conferencing can be a great way to save cost and time on initial interviews with Pastoral candidates.

Video conferencing is accomplished with a video camera (webcam) and an online application such as Skype, TokBox or Windows Live. These are internet applications that can be easily set up. Registration and login are required. There is no cost to use the online application, as long as both ends use the same application. Instructions for Skype and TokBox are provided below.

It is a good idea to set up a test of the webcam session well ahead of time. Set up the computer and webcam in the location where you plan to do the interview. Think about:

- Seating and lighting arrangement to allow the candidate to see all of the call committee members within the camera viewing window. You may need to adjust the height of the camera / distance between the camera and subjects.
- Sound output – some laptops may not have adequate sound projection for a large room; external speakers (like those used with desktop computers) can be added to the laptop if needed.
- Sound input – make sure that the candidate can hear the person speaking from each of the chairs where call committee members are seated.
- Ensure that the internet connection is adequate, and that you are familiar with how to set up the video conferencing session.
- Maximize the viewing window so that the largest possible image of the candidate is displayed for the call committee.
- When setting up the meeting, remember time zones.



Instructions (How to place a call to multiple sites)

1) Setting up an account

- Go to www.tokbox.com
- Home page shows the sign up box on the right-hand side of the screen.
- Fill in the required name, email address, etc.
- When completed, click **Sign Up Now**.
- A new screen provides options to find friends who have IM (Instant Messaging) accounts. If not needed, click **Skip** at the bottom of the screen.
- You now have an account!

2) Inviting people to Conference

- Click **Conference**, which is the green box on the left side of the screen.
- A new, smaller window should pop up on the main page. This is your conferencing screen.
- Once you see the window, click **Invite Friends** located on the right-hand side of the conferencing screen.
- If the person is not currently online or does not have an account, then click on the **Share URL** tab at the top of the screen. Click the **Copy** button and then click **Close**.
- Go to your email account and paste the link into an email or multiple e-mail addresses. Now all you have to do is send the email to whomever you want to conference with. They will open the e-mail and connect to your call on-line. (Voice only, if they do not have a camera)

3) Checking your camera and/or microphone settings

- If your computer does not have a built in camera, then just using a microphone is fine.
- To check camera and/or voice settings, click on **Cam and Mic Settings** on the left side of the main page.
- The first screen shown checks your camera setting. If you are able to see yourself, click **Next**.
- The next option will allow you to check microphone levels. You can do so by choosing **Adjust Volume**.
- If you see microphone levels "shifting or wiggling" on the screen, your computer is picking up your voice.
- If you wish to test the sound, click the **Test Sound** button and then click **Next**.
- Now you may close the window, and you are ready to conference!

RESOURCES FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING



Free Video Call with skype

1. If you do not have a laptop with a built in camera or need to use NC Synod camera:
 - Load Logitech Quick Cam software following instruction booklet
 - Allow 30 minutes to install & test.
2. If a headset is included with your camera, plug in external headset (pink jack) to your computer outlet marked with microphone diagram
3. Set up account with www.skype.com. Test a call.
4. Place a test call
 - Open Programs and select Skype
 - Add Contact – person you would like to call
 - Make sure the person you are calling has added your new contact info in their contact list.
 - A green check by their name on your contact list indicates they are available for a call.
 - Click the big green button to dial.

SAMPLE LETTERS FROM A CALL COMMITTEE

Dear _____,

On behalf of the call committee, I want to thank you (and spouse's name) for visiting with us as a beginning step toward consideration of a call to _____ Church. We were pleased with the openness and depth of our conversation.

If it is agreeable with you, we would like to leave your name on our call list with the understanding that we are still in the process of deciding on a primary candidate. We will continue to keep you informed of our progress.

Please feel free to call me any time if you have questions or concerns. If you return the enclosed form to me I will see that you are reimbursed for your expenses. Again, thank you for spending time with us.

Sincerely,

Call Committee Chair

cc: Bishop's staff person
Enc. Reimbursement form

Dear _____,

On behalf of the call committee, I want to thank you (and spouse's name) for visiting with us as a first step toward consideration of a call to _____ Church. We appreciate your responses to our questions and were glad that you shared your concerns with us.

After considering the challenges and needs of _____ congregation in light of your strengths and interests, we feel that it would be best to continue our search for a pastor in other directions.

Again, we thank you for your time and interest. If you return the enclosed form to me I will see that you are reimbursed for your expenses. Please feel free to call me if you have questions or concerns. Our prayers are with you in your ministry.

Sincerely,

Call Committee Chair

cc: Bishop's staff person
Enc. Reimbursement form

REIMBURSEMENT FORM FOR EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE CALL PROCESS

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Description of Expenses:

Travel:
Auto: _____ miles @ _____ (current IRS Standard) \$ _____
Air Fare: \$ _____
Auto Rental: \$ _____
Meals: \$ _____
Lodging: \$ _____
Telephone, Postage, Fax: \$ _____
Other Expenses (please list): \$ _____

TOTAL EXPENSES TO BE REIMBURSED \$ _____

*Please forward this statement to the chair of the call committee.
Bills, receipts, or itemized statements should be attached, if available.*

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Asking for a background check when someone becomes the primary candidate will generally allow the committee to receive and review the results prior to the congregation council's recommendation.

All seminarians have a background check at entrance into the four year seminary/candidacy process. Congregations are responsible for doing background checks at the time of a call. Even a first call pastor has had about 5 years since his/her previous background check. The practice of conducting effective church and ministry background checks for prospective pastors and employees has exploded in the workforce over the last 15 years. The need to call the most qualified candidates, and the inherent risk in calling inappropriate candidates, has never been greater. The costs of not performing a proper background check for pastors and church staff can be costly for churches. The Church Mutual Web site below can give more details.

Your congregation's insurance company is likely the best place to begin. Your insurance company may require a particular type of screening. It is best to follow their guidelines. They should be able to suggest the appropriate screening for a pastoral candidate. If that is not helpful, the insurance company endorsed by the ELCA – Church Mutual - has many resources and suggestions on their Web site:

http://www.churchmutual.com/index.php/choice/risk/page/RM_SN_04/id/39 This link puts you directly to their screening page – but also look at the safety resources available in the left had margins. If you are a church mutual customer discounted rates are available.

Be sure to ask for and check personal references. Some are on the RMP – but if you want additional feel free to ask.

SAMPLE LETTER OF CALL AND DEFINITION OF COMPENSATION

Originals will be sent to you at the time a call is to be issued.

See next THREE pages consisting of:

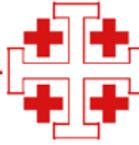
1. LETTER OF CALL
2. DEFINITION OF COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR (2 sides)

Additional important resources:

Board of Pensions web site: www.elcabop.org (Calculators available at the site for congregations)

Compensation guidelines: www.nclutheran.org/congregations_forms.asp (Under finance)

The NC Synod has approved (1988) a Resolution for Self Care for Rostered Persons. A copy of that is included in this booklet.



LETTER OF CALL

TO AN ORDAINED MINISTER OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

*In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

With prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to do God's will,

a congregation of the

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
meeting on

extends to you this call to serve as

We call you to exercise among us the ministry of Word and Sacrament which God has established and which the Holy Spirit empowers: To preach and teach the Word of God in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; to administer Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead us in worship; to proclaim the forgiveness of sins; to provide pastoral care; to speak for justice in behalf of the poor and oppressed; to encourage persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel; to impart knowledge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its wider ministry; to endeavor to increase support given by our congregation to the work of our whole church; to equip us for witness and service; and guide us in proclaiming God's love through word and deed.

In accepting this call, you hereby promise to fulfill this pastoral ministry in accord with the standards and policies for ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Therefore, be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture, in use of the means of grace, in prayer, in faithful service, and in holy living.

With this call, we pledge our prayers, love, esteem, and personal support for the sake of the ministry entrusted to you by God and for our ministry together in Christ's name. Specific responsibilities, compensation, benefits, and conditions of this call are contained in a document related to this call.

In testimony of this call, we have subscribed our names on behalf of the congregation on this day of _____, A.D. _____.

President

Secretary

Attested by _____

Bishop of the _____

Date of synodical bishop's signing _____

DEFINITION OF COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR

Prepared by _____

for the Reverend _____

for the period: _____ to _____

A. COMPENSATION

The congregation will provide the following annual compensation:

1. Base Cash Salary \$ _____
2. Housing Allowance (if provided) \$ _____
3. Self-employed Social Security payment allowance (if provided) \$ _____
4. If a parsonage or other housing is provided:
 - a. Utilities allowance \$ _____
 - b. Furnishings allowance \$ _____
 - c. Housing equity allowance \$ _____

B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS

The congregation will sponsor the pastor in the Pension and Other Benefits Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which provides retirement, disability, survivor, and medical-dental coverage. (Sponsorship will include medical-dental coverage for the pastor's spouse and children unless they have other employer-provided group medical insurance coverage and the pastor consents to waiving medical-dental coverage for them under the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program.)

1. ELCA Pension at _____ % of defined compensation
2. ELCA Medical-and-Dental Insurance (check one below):

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Member only	<input type="checkbox"/> c. Member and children	<input type="checkbox"/> e. Coverage waived
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Member and spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> d. Member, spouse, and children	
3. Other insurance or benefits: _____ \$ _____
 _____ \$ _____

C. EXPENSES

The congregation will provide for the following expenses related to this pastor's ministry.

1. Automobile and travel allowance \$ _____
2. Other professional expenses \$ _____
3. Expenses for official meetings of the synod, as reimbursed _____
4. Continuing education (\$1,000 recommended; minimum \$700 from calling source) \$ _____
5. Other (_____) \$ _____
6. Pay the moving expenses to this field of service as follows: _____

D. AGREEMENT

1. Vacation time of _____ days per year, including _____ Sundays;
2. Continuing education time of _____ weeks per year (recommended minimum of two weeks per year that may be accumulated up to three years, as reflected in a continuing-education agreement developed by the pastor and congregation council);
3. Participation in a First-Call Theological Education Program, where applicable;
4. Ongoing care through a Mutual Ministry Committee;
5. Up to two months of continued salary, housing, and contributions to the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program in a 12-month period in the event that the pastor is physically or mentally disabled; and
6. Where applicable, parental leave up to six weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits.

* Provision may be made for further unpaid time for disability recovery as agreed by the congregation, but with the stipulation that unused accumulated sick leave will not be compensated at the end of this call.

A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities."

< OR THE FOLLOWING MAY BE COMPLETED >

E. OTHER PROVISIONS

Special emphases of the pastor and special encouragement by the congregation:

1. During this time period, the pastor will give special attention in ministry to the following:

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____

2. The congregation will encourage this pastor's ministry in the following ways:

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____

F. OTHER MATTERS

(Such as accountabilities, service on synodical or churchwide boards and committees, work in church-camp programs, or other such details) _____

We, the undersigned, certify that the necessary approvals of the congregation and congregational council have been granted for the provisions set forth above.

Congregation President

Council Secretary

Date: _____

I certify that I accept the above statement:

The Reverend _____ Date of signature: _____

NOTE: Retain original in records of the congregation. Make a copy for the pastor. As a matter of information, send a copy to the synodical office. A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities."
(Revised January 6, 2006)