

EXTENDING THE CALL

Booklet 3 in the Call Process

(Congregation Council, Call Committee and Synod)

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**Not printed in booklet – only available through Web link.



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

I. THE PRIMARY CANDIDATE IS RECOMMENDED TO CONGREGATION COUNCIL

When the call committee recommends the primary candidate to the Congregation Council, the bishop's staff person is informed and the following occurs:

A. CONGREGATION COUNCIL AND CALL COMMITTEE MEET WITH PRIMARY CANDIDATE

The agenda for this time period should include the following:

1. **COUNCIL DISCERNS CALL.** The council, in conversation with candidate and call committee, determines/affirms that the person will serve well in the congregation and has been led by the Holy Spirit to serve in this place. Council is reminded that the candidate's name is still confidential until the candidate is recommended to the congregation.
2. **THE PASTOR, CALL COMMITTEE, AND COUNCIL DETERMINE THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPENSATION PACKAGE.** At this time, the "Letter of Call" and the accompanying "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" are discussed in detail. Usually this discussion includes the call committee chair or representative, treasurer and council chair. In cases where there is a first call candidate, plans for "First Call Theological Education" are written into the plan. See bullet below. Plans for the development of an annual opportunity for visioning and evaluation may be discussed. Moving details may also be discussed. (*Note: The congregation is responsible for all moving expenses.*)
 - **FIRST CALL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:** The ELCA has adopted a special continuing education process to help recent seminary graduates and the congregations they serve during the first three years of service under call. Participation in First Call Theological Education should be included on the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" attached to the "Letter of Call"

B. CONGREGATION COUNCIL ACTS ON RECOMMENDATION

1. **IF THE COUNCIL VOTES NOT TO RECOMMEND THE PRIMARY CANDIDATE TO THE CONGREGATION, THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL** immediately notifies the pastor and contacts the bishop's staff person with this information. The bishop's staff person then contacts the call committee and/or the Congregation Council to see how to best proceed.
2. **IF THE COUNCIL VOTES TO RECOMMEND THE PRIMARY CANDIDATE TO THE CONGREGATION, THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL** contacts the pastor and the bishop's office with this information. (*Note: A 2/3 majority vote of the Congregation Council is appropriate to recommend a candidate to the congregation.*)
 - The call committee and council determine the best ways to share information about the candidate with the congregation. Samples of some ways are provided.
 - An opportunity is generally provided for the candidate and his/her family to meet the congregation's members prior to the congregational meeting. This often is done with a dessert meeting with devotions led by the candidate and some formal question/answer time followed by opportunity for informal conversation with individuals.
 - The congregational meeting is set following the congregation's constitutional requirements to bring the matter before the congregation. The bishop is notified of the meeting date and the name of the person who will preside (*often this person will be the chair of the Congregation Council*).

The bishop's office then authorizes the meeting and the chairperson. At this time, the bishop's office mails: 1) a letter empowering the person conducting the congregational meeting; 2) the "Letter of Call" and 3) "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" forms to be completed by the council chair

C. THE CONGREGATION CONSIDERS THE CALL

At the congregational meeting called to recommend the pastor: 1) A written ballot giving an approval by a 2/3 majority of the votes cast will be required to issue a call. 2) A second vote, requiring a simple majority, shall determine the compensation package of the newly called pastor. This second vote may or may not be a written ballot. "**Sample resolutions**"

1. **IF THE CONGREGATION DOES NOT ISSUE THE CALL**, the decision is communicated to the bishop's office and pastor by the chair of the Congregation Council. The bishop's staff contacts the chair of the call committee to see how best to proceed.
2. **IF THE CONGREGATION ISSUES THE CALL**, the "**Letter of Call**" and "**Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor**" forms are completed in their entirety, signed by the congregation president and secretary, and mailed immediately to the bishop's office for the bishop's signature. The chair of the Congregation Council telephones the pastor to inform him/her of the congregation's decision and sends photocopies of the "**Letter of Call**" and "**Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor**" to the pastor. The bishop signs the "**Letter of Call**" and sends it to the pastor. The pastor has up to 30 days to respond.
3. **IF THE CONGREGATION ISSUES THE CALL AND THE PASTOR DECLINES THE CALL**, the chair of the Congregation Council communicates this information to the congregation and the bishop's office immediately. The bishop's staff person then contacts the call committee and/or the Congregation Council to see how best to proceed.

D. THE CALL IS ACCEPTED by the candidate and a start date is determined. The time frame from acceptance of call to arrival may vary and should be agreed upon by both the pastor and congregation. The chair of the Congregation Council should consult with the newly called pastor to determine when the acceptance can be announced publicly. The acceptance of the call, the date it can be made public, and the starting date should be conveyed promptly to the bishop's office. Once the starting time is set, the congregation can make plans to say farewell to the interim pastor.

- **WHEN THE CANDIDATE IS A SEMINARIAN** a service of ordination is planned by the candidate and congregation in consultation with the bishop of North Carolina Synod. The service may occur at the annual synod assembly, in the congregation that has extended the call, or in the candidate's home congregation. Ordinations normally take place in the synod to which the ordinand is called.

COUNCIL MEETS PRIMARY CANDIDATE

The call committee meets with the Congregation Council to present the primary candidate's name and information.

The task of the call committee is to present in the most helpful ways the details of the primary candidate:

- why the committee has decided on this candidate
- how this candidate meets the defined competencies and characteristics
- call committee members can share short summaries of what was important and outstanding for them about this candidate
- in general the ways and places the committee interacted with the candidate
- the council is reminded that the name and location of this candidate is still strictly confidential at this point in time. It should not be shared until the council votes to present that person to the congregation as primary candidate. Only members of the call committee and council should know the identity of the candidate. (not spouses, friends, co-workers or possibly staff)

The call committee may prepare a summary sheet about the candidate, share quotes, committee member comments and how the candidate matches the top competencies and characteristics identified.

“Samples of ways to share information” are shared on the Web site as examples.

Conversation about the candidate occurs between the council and the call committee members.

The candidate is then invited to meet with the council. If the candidate is not at a great distance this is usually a stand alone visit, often with a spouse (if applicable) accompanying the candidate. The purpose of this visit is not to duplicate the interview(s) of the call committee, but rather for the council to observe, meet and get to know the candidate and look for those key items the call committee shared with the council when the presented the name.

**SAMPLE LETTER FROM BISHOP AUTHORIZING PERSON
TO LEAD CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE

To Conduct a Congregational Meeting for the Calling of a:
Pastor, Diaconal Minister or Associate in Ministry

_____ is hereby
(Name of Council Chair or other Congregation Council appointee)

appointed to represent the bishop of the North Carolina Synod at a meeting of the members of

(Name and location of congregation)

to be held _____
(Date and time)

The congregational meeting to recommend the candidate should be called according to the congregation's constitution. A written ballot giving approval by 2/3 majority of the votes cast will be required to issue a call. A second vote, requiring a simple majority, shall determine the compensation package of the newly-called rostered leader.

You will see that the meeting is conducted in accordance with the policy of the church and that a report of the meeting is made to the Bishop of Synod.

Bishop, North Carolina Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

SAMPLE MOTIONS TO EXTEND THE CALL

MOTION TO EXTEND THE CALL

- This motion requires a 2/3 vote for approval.
- The ballot must be a written ballot.

That _____ (*name*) be called to serve as pastor (or associate in ministry)(or diaconal minister) (or deaconess) of _____ (*name*) Lutheran Church.

YES NO

Additional copies of information material provided to the congregation about the candidate should be available for those who may need them.

MOTION TO APPROVE COMPENSATION PACKAGE

- This motion requires a simple majority for approval.
- The ballot may be made by a voice vote or by written ballot.

That the initial compensation for the leader (*or pastor, etc.*) be:
(an itemized list of compensation is provided)
An example might be:

Salary: _____
 Housing: _____
 Pension: _____
 Health Ins. _____
 Social Security Allowance _____

ADDITIONAL MINIMUM SUPPORT:
 Cont. Ed. _____
 Auto allowance _____
 Professional expenses _____
 Sabbatical coverage _____

TOTAL COMPENSATION _____

TOTAL ADDITIONAL _____

YES NO

This is really a vote to amend the budget to reflect the actual figures agreed upon. Therefore presenting it in the same manner as it would appear in the budget is often helpful.

INSTALLATION OF THE PASTOR

(A downloadable copy of the installation service is on the synod Web site.)

Installation Planning Notes

Installations should normally be arranged with the dean of the conference. An installation should take place as soon as is reasonably possible after the arrival of a pastor and after all records from the previous congregation are certified – preferably within the first six weeks. An afternoon installation allows for attendance by other congregations in the conference and in the community. The date and time of the installation should be shared with the bishop's office.

The installation service should be planned with the dean, whose name and contact information can be found on the synod Web site – www.nclutheran.org. Normally the dean will preach, though occasionally the pastor to be installed may want to invite someone to preach. Lessons may be the lessons for the day, or, for an afternoon service, different lessons may be chosen. Suggestions for lessons are in the Occasional Services Book. Generally an installation service includes communion.

It is appropriate for the new pastor to robe and to be seated near the front with family at the beginning of the service. The installation itself usually follows the sermon, or the hymn following the sermon. It is permissible to leave out the creed. The dean presides through the installation, and then the newly installed pastor presides for the rest of the service, including communion. The prayers are at the end of the installation service, and it is appropriate for the dean or a member of the congregation to serve as assisting minister for the prayers so that prayers can be offered for the new pastor and for the congregation.

The service of installation is found in the Occasional Services Book. It can be copied “as is” for the bulletin if that is the most convenient way to print it. A “bulletin ready” version can also be downloaded from the synod's Web site. The service requires four participants from the congregation. One should be the council or call committee chair who should be prepared with a sentence or two saying that the new pastor was properly called. The others will stand at the altar, pulpit, and font and deliver the one-line charges from the installation service.

Following the installation, it is good to provide a meal or refreshments that allow those attending to greet the new pastor and to visit with one another.

