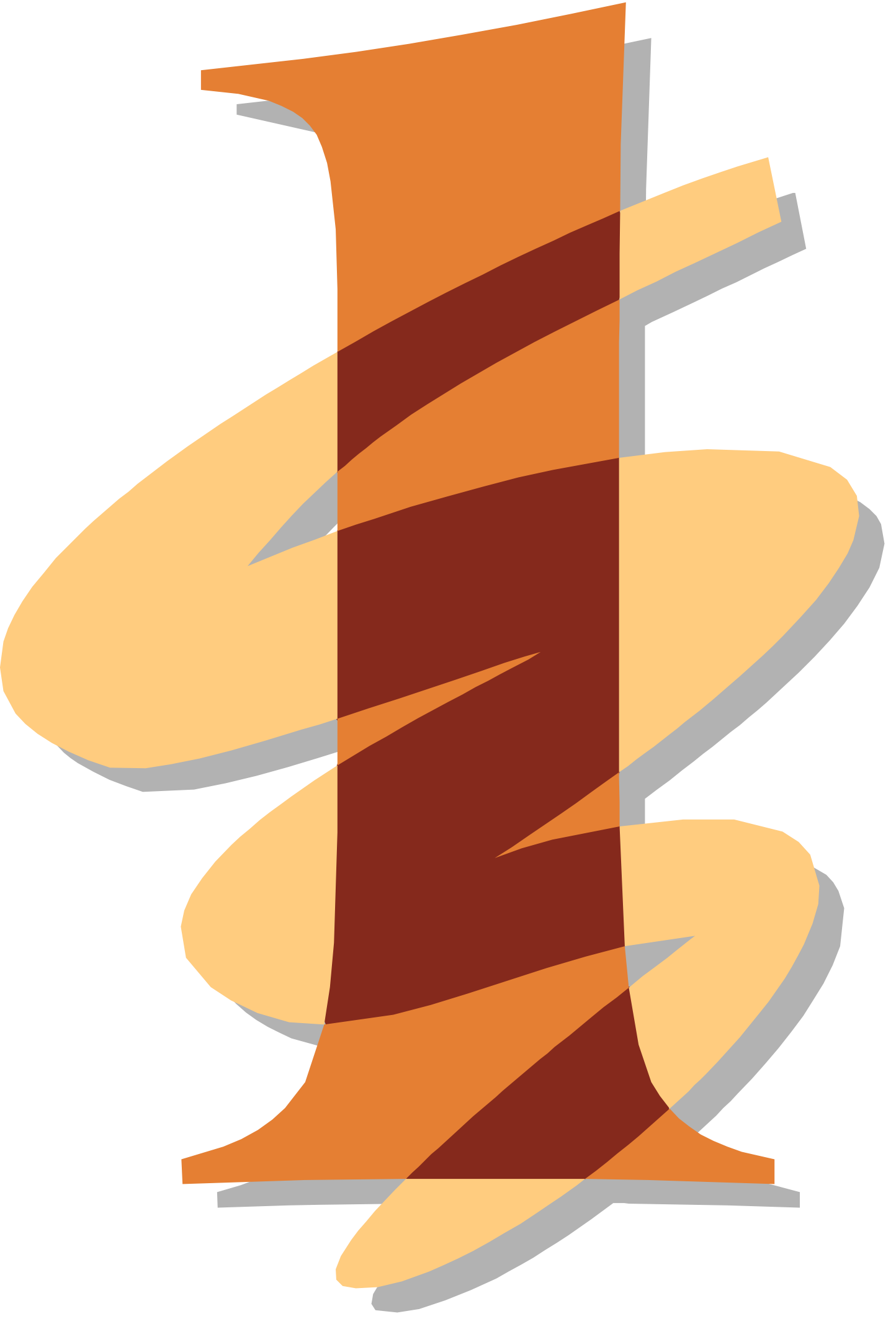
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THE CALL PROCESS  
A GUIDE FOR CALLING A PASTOR/DEACON  
(FOUR BOOKLETS)



Booklet 2  
SELECTING A PASTOR or DEACON



Booklet 2:  
TRANSITION/ CLOSURE



Booklet 3:  
EXTENDING  
THE CALL



Booklet 4:  
WELCOMING & SUPPORTING  
THE CALL

**TRANSITION/CLOSURE**

**Booklet 1 in the Call Process  
*(Congregation Council & Resigning/Retiring Pastor)***

* **Pastor notifies bishop of intent to resign or retire and sends copy of resignation letter to bishop (2)**
* **Congregation Council receives resignation—notifies congregation and contacts synod office (2)**
* **Synod provides Pastoral Transition/Closure booklet to council chair and pastor including “Pastoral Ethics for Resigning/Retiring Pastor” and assigns a bishop staff person (2)**
* **Meeting of Congregation Council with bishop’s staff person (3-5)**
* **Council oversees selecting/appointing and installing a call committee (6)**
* **Council sets date for congregational study and date for meeting to gather data for Ministry Site Profile. (7-9)**
* **Congregational study is conducted in congregational event by bishop’s staff person (8)**
* **Council works with call committee on Ministry Site Profile in council input session (8-9)**
* **Call committee is trained by synod trainer**

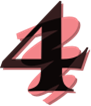
******SELECTING A PASTOR/DEACON**

**Booklet 2 in the Call Process  
*(Call committee & call chair with communication to council & congregation)***

* **Call committee finalizes competencies/ characteristics**
* **Ministry Site Profile completed in cooperation with council (2)**
* **Candidate nomination forms made available and received from congregation members (4)**
* **Call committee begins to receive candidates (may meet with bishop’s staff; receive first forms) (4-5)**
* **Call committee selects primary candidate (6)**
* **Background checks are performed, and compensation and benefits finalized (6)**
* **Call committee determines best way to present information about candidate to Congregation Council (6)**
* **Call committee recommends primary candidate to Congregation Council (6)EXTENDING THE CALL**

**Booklet 3 in the Call Process  
*(Congregation Council, Call Committee & Synod)***

* **Council and call committee plan meeting with primary candidate (2)**
* **Council meets & recommends extending a call (2)**
* **Representatives from council/call committee discuss with candidate and agree upon compensation/benefits (2)**
* **Council and call committee determine best ways to share information about the candidate with congregation (2)**
* **Council and call committee plan opportunity for congregation to meet informally with candidate (2)**
* **Congregational meeting is set to vote on candidate and compensation/benefits package and synod contacted (2-3)**
* **Congregation votes on call and terms of call**
* **Letter of Call /Compensation/Benefits form completed, signed by council chair and sent to bishop’s office (3)**
* **Council plans to say farewell to interim pastor and welcome new pastor (Last booklet)**
* **Evaluation of Call Process sent to synod (3)**

**WELCOMING & SUPPORTING YOUR NEW PASTOR/DEACON  
Booklet 4 in the Call Process  
*(Congregation Council & Ministry Support [Mutual Ministry] Team)***

* **Installation service is planned by council, new pastor and conference dean. Once date/time of service is set it is shared with synod office (2)**
* **Council appoints a Ministry Support (Mutual Ministry) Team to work with new pastor. (2-3)**

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**SELECTING A PASTOR/DEACON**

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 cannot be trained without this completed document. The Congregation Council will need to appoint persons to assist in the completion of the profile. 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 task force to coordinate the completion of a draft of the MSP. The task force may include the coordinator with one or two additional council members, a member of the call committee and additional congregational members, as needed. Three to four members is probably sufficient.

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
* Conversations with other local pastors/congregations
* Newsletters, bulletins, and congregation brochures
* Exit interview from previous pastor
* Conversation with interim pastor

D. **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.

E. **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 the 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.

F. **FINALIZED MSP IS SUBMITTED ONLINE** 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[ELCA Call Process](http://www.elca.org/call-process?_ga=1.106407110.434834849.1485446792)**.**

The form is completed and submitted electronically.

II. CALL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING

**A. CALL COMMITTEE TRAINING** The call committee chair will work with the synod’s call process coordinator 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 their 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 and the call process coordinator arrange the mock interview. The mock interview will normally be conducted via Zoom.

**B. ORGANIZATION**

**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 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. (See 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 by 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,” in Call Process Booklet #1, 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. Weekly 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 MSP

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

**E. BISHOP AND STAFF SELECT NAMES** On Wednesdays, the bishop and members of the bishop’s staff meet together to pray for congregations and pastors/deacons 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 at least three candidates initially. Candidates recommended come from across the ELCA and may be:

1. Pastors who submit rostered minister profiles (RMP) and express a willingness to be available for call.

2. Pastors recommended by members of the congregation using the Nomination Form.

3. Pastors who ask to have their names submitted to a particular congregation.

4. Pastors who are asked to complete rostered minister profiles (RMP) 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 RMP signed by the bishop and sent from the NC Synod 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. Each candidate has received from the synod office a copy of the congregation’s MSP and agreed for their name to go forward. 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 a Zoom call for the first interview. Candidates should be provided with forms to submit travel expenses or video conferencing expenses for reimbursement. After the first set of interviews with all candidates, the call committee will decide which candidates they would like to move forward with to a second interview. The second interview should be on site if at all possible. Attention to hospitality is important. Candidates should be offered good directions, meals while in the community, and reservations and costs of a hotel room if the interview involves traveling a significant distance. At all interviews the candidate is forming an impression of the congregation and the community in the same way that the committee is forming an 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. A telephone call is the most appropriate; sample letters are also provided. The committee chair should be in touch with a candidate at least once a month while they are 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 a second interview should be scheduled. This should be an in-person interview. If that is not possible because of distance, a second Zoom interview is acceptable. It is

perfectly acceptable during this time to do electronic/social media perusal of the candidate. Most candidates will also have recorded videos/audios of their worship/preaching styles. If a call committee would like to see the candidate preach in person, the synod office will attempt to coordinate a neutral site for preaching. 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, re-imbursement for expenses is provided, and an evaluation of the interview (Candidate Evaluation Form) is completed and sent to the synod’s call process coordinator. Rostered minister profiles should be destroyed. Confidentiality is critical.

**H. THE COMMITTEE REPORTS THE INTERVIEW OUTCOME TO THE SYNOD’S CALL PROCESS COORDINATOR, 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.

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/DEACON 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: 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. (See Background Checks.) 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 call committee chair 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). The church council executive committee/finance committee will start/continue negotiating the compensation package. If requested, the synod office can offer suggestions and guidance.

TIPS ON COMPLETING THE MINISTRY SITE PROFILE

* ***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.
3. *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.

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…

**WHO ARE WE THIS SUNDAY?**

POSSIBLE INPUT GATHERING INSTRUMENT FOR MSP

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  Native American  Latinx

Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

**3. What language do you usually speak at home?**  English  Spanish Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

**4. How long does it usually take you to get from your home to the church?** Click or tap here to enter text. Minutes  Driving  Walking Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

**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.)

Click or tap here to enter text.people here today are related to me

Click or tap here to enter text.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.**

**THE ROSTERED MINISTER PROFILE (RMP)**

WORKING WITH ROSTERED MINISTER PROFILES

The RMP is a document that is common across the ELCA. The RMP is completed by the candidate and provides a candidate’s personal assessment.

**SCREENING AND PROCESSING OF RMPs 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’ RMPs come from a variety of sources:
  2. Candidates from other synods interested in moving to NC. These RMPs have been cleared by the bishop of their synod.
  3. Candidates from NC Synod who have indicated a willingness to be open to a new call.
  4. 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.
  5. Candidates who request to have their RMP considered by a particular congregation.
  6. Seminarians assigned to the NC Synod.
  7. 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.
  8. RMPs 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.
  9. 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. Candidates are contacted and the congregation’s MSP is shared with them. They must agree to have their name presented to the call committee. The names are shared with the call committee chairperson and an RMP for the individual is sent to the call committee. The candidate is informed that their name has been shared with the specific congregation. 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 RMPs have been pre-screened and prayerfully matched with congregations through the above process it is expected that call committees will make personal contact with each candidate and set up an initial interview. 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.
  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. The first interview should be via video conferencing. The year 2020 made this a normal occurrence.
  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 background check is only needed for the primary candidate. The synod does not do background checks. We have checked for any known problems with appropriate synod offices for people coming from outside of North Carolina.

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST CANDIDATE INTERVIEW

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

**IDENTIFING 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 by video or audio recording.
* 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.

CONGREGATION & COMMUNITY INFORMATION

It is very helpful for congregation councils and/or call committees to make sure that all electronic information is up to date. One of the first things candidates will do is investigate your website/social media.

Candidates will want to learn as much as possible about your congregation. Therefore, you will want to make sure that these items are up to date on your website.

* Bulletins
* Newsletters
* Annual Report
* Budget
* History summary or Anniversary Booklet outlining congregational history
* Picture directory
* Other items containing photos of congregational activities
* A link to the local Chamber of Commerce
* Visitor’s guide to your community
* Directions to the church building

RESOURCES FOR CALL COMMITTEE CHAPLAIN

Devotional ideas for call committees.

A call to God’s work in your setting will look different from calls to another ministry sites 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 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. At each meeting, have a different member take 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.

**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 dili-gent 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 Shep-herd, 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 should be the first contact the committee has with a candidate. In the year 2020, video conferencing became a way of life during pandemic times. Zoom has become the platform of choice.

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENTS TO CONGREGATION ABOUT PROCESS

The Call Committee has now completed its required training. The committee spent 10 hours over this past weekend in training for its work in calling our next pastor for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are excited to continue this work! As part of this training, we reviewed the Ministry Site Profile that was prepared and approved by Council. No changes were made to this document which goes out to prospective candidates as part of the call process. We are pleased to share this document with the congregation. Please click on this link to review this profile of our congregation. (insert link here!)

We are scheduled to meet in the coming weeks with the synod staff to receive our first round of names for our consideration. We ask for continued prayers from the congregation as we move forward in this process. We also continue to invite members of the congregation to submit names that you would like to be considered. Please use the form provided by the synod to make such nominations. (insert link here!)

As announced on Sunday, the Call Committee has completed its formal training and is busy refining its interview process. The committee will meet with representatives from the Synod office in the coming weeks to receive the first set of names for its consideration. We invite the congregation to submit the name of any rostered ELCA pastor that you would like to have considered in the process. Please click on the following link \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (please insert the link to the nomination form here) to complete a nomination form. Please forward the nomination form to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, chair of the Call Committee. The committee also requests that the congregation continue to hold us and this process in your prayers.

The Call Committee has met with the synod staff and has received a list of prospective candidates for us to consider. These names came from the synod staff as well as from members of the congregation. The committee has scheduled initial interviews with all of these candidates over the next few weeks. We ask for your continued support and prayers during this time of discernment.

The Call Committee is in the midst of initial interviews with the candidates that were submitted to us by the Synod staff. We are excited to learn the ministry stories of these very qualified and competent pastors. This interview process will continue over the coming weeks. We ask for your continued prayers as we discern whom God is calling to be our next senior pastor.

The Call Committee has concluded its interviews with the initial group of candidates that were provided by the NC Synod staff. We will process those interviews and be in a time of discernment before proceeding with the next steps in the interview process. The quality of pastors that we have had the pleasure and privilege of interviewing is both encouraging and exciting for us as we move through this process in discerning whom God is preparing as our next pastor. We ask for your continued prayers.

As previously reported, the Call Committee has completed interviews with all of the candidates who were submitted to us by the bishop and synod staff. After processing all of these interviews and spending some time to reflect upon all the gifts that each candidate could bring to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the committee selected three of these candidates to invite for more in-depth conversations. To our delight, all three enthusiastically accepted this invitation! We are excited and energized by the potential that we see in each of these candidates! We will conduct these interviews over the course of the next month. The committee continues to feel God’s presence and guiding hand as we work to discern the person that God is preparing to be our next pastor. We ask for your continued prayers for clarity and guidance.

The Call Committee continues with its face-to-face interviews with prospective candidates for our next Senior Pastor. We are energized and excited by the passion for ministry that these individuals demonstrate. At the conclusion of our interview sessions, the Committee will take some time to process our sessions and reflect on the many gifts that our candidates possess and have to offer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Following this deliberate time of discernment, we will make decisions about our next steps in the process. We ask for your continued prayers for clarity and guidance for the Committee and for our candidates as we move through this process together.

The Call Committee has concluded its face-to-face interviews with our final candidates. After an intentional period of reflection, processing, discernment and prayer, the Committee has been led to one person that we feel is being prepared to be our next senior pastor. We are excited to announce that the Call Committee has named that person as our Primary Candidate and that person has accepted this distinction!

What does being the Primary Candidate mean? Over the coming weeks, the Call Committee will continue its discussions with this pastor and no other candidates. The Candidate will not be in contact with any other churches if that were to arise. The discussions at this point will focus on compensation, benefits, vacation, continuing education, and the timeline for how the process will continue to unfold. We will also be discussing and planning for the transition. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person is the one whom the Holy Spirit is leading to be called by this congregation as its next Senior Pastor, the Call Committee will make a formal recommendation and present the Candidate to the Congregation Council at a special called meeting. A proposed compensation package is also presented to the Council at this time as well. Further details will be shared as the process continues.

We ask for your continued prayers as the committee continues its work. We also ask for prayers for our Primary Candidate as they continue to work through this process. God is truly moving among us at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!

Following additional conversations with our Primary Candidate, the Call Committee is pleased and excited to announce that we will officially present our Primary Candidate to the Congregation Council at a special called meeting on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. At that time, the Call Committee will share all of the supporting information about the Candidate with the Council. We then will formally recommend this person be approved, by the Council, to be presented to the congregation for its consideration as our next Senior Pastor. The Council will then have the opportunity to meet the Candidate and gain an understanding of why the Call Committee feels this person is the right fit for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as our Senior Pastor.

If, following this presentation and deliberation the Council votes to recommend this person, a special meeting of the entire congregation will be scheduled for the purpose of voting to extend a call to this person as our next Senior Pastor. Several “meet and greet” events will be scheduled prior to the congregation meeting to give the congregation the opportunity to meet the Candidate and their family.

Should the Council not approve the Candidate for recommendation to the congregation, the synod office would be notified of this action and we will begin the call process over again.

While we are all excited about what God seems to have in store for us, and we are anxious to share this with everyone, we must be mindful that strict confidentiality is still required throughout this process. This means that we will not be able to share the name of the Candidate, or any specific information about the Candidate, with the congregation until the congregation can be introduced to this person at the “meet and greet” events.

We ask for your prayers as we continue in this exciting process!

GREAT NEWS!! At a special called meeting, held last night, October 1, the Congregation Council voted unanimously to recommend the Primary Candidate, presented by the Call Committee, to the congregation for approval to be called as the next Senior Pastor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! A congregation meeting has been set for Sunday, October 20, at 9:45 a.m. for the congregation to vote on this recommendation and a compensation package. Several “Meet and Greet” events are being planned for the week of October 14 to allow the congregation the opportunity to meet this pastor. More details will be included in this week’s E-news. Save the date: Congregation Meeting: Sunday, October 20, at 9:45 am.

At its meeting on October 1, the Congregation Council unanimously approved the Primary Candidate, presented by the Call Committee, for recommendation to the congregation as its next Senior Pastor. A congregation meeting has been set for Sunday, October 20, at 9:45 am to vote on this recommendation and a compensation package. Both the Council and the Call Committee look forward to presenting the Candidate to the congregation, and for all of our members to share in this exciting step in the life of our congregation! In order for members of the congregation to get to know our prospective pastor and family, we have scheduled three “Meet and Greet” events during the week prior to the congregation meeting. The dates and times are Tuesday, October 15, at 7:00 pm, Wednesday, October 16, at 10:00 am and Wednesday, October 16, at 7:00 pm. These events will be informal and are open to all members and families. We encourage everyone to attend one or more of these events. Desserts will be offered at both of the evening events.

We know that everyone is excited to learn more about our prospective pastor, and we are just as eager to share this information with everyone! However, we must be a little more patient. Out of respect for the current home congregation of our prospective pastor and their relationship with its members, we will continue keeping the name of our prospective pastor confidential until the week of the “Meet and Greet” events. We plan to release detailed information about our prospective pastor on Sunday evening, October 13. We ask for your continued prayers as we continue on the journey that will lead us to our new Senior Pastor.

Come and meet our prospective new pastor! The Congregation Council and the Call Committee enthusiastically invite you to come to any one of the three “meet and greet” events that are planned for next week. This will be a great opportunity for all of our members, young and older, to meet our prospective new pastor and their family and learn more about the person that the Council is recommending to the congregation to be called as our next Senior Pastor. The format will be informal. Desserts will be provided for each of the evening events. The goal is for members of the congregation to experience the same enthusiasm and excitement about the gifts that this pastor could bring to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that the Council and Call Committee have experienced. There will be time for questions and one-on-one conversations.

The schedule is as follows: Tuesday, October 15, at 7:00 pm. Wednesday, October 16, at 10:00 am. Wednesday, October 16, at 7:00 pm. We are specifically inviting all our youth and young youth and their parents to the event on Tuesday, October 15. This will give our prospective pastor a chance to meet our youth and their families as a group. Of course, all events are open to everyone of any age! Please find the one that fits your schedule!

Everyone will receive an email this Sunday evening, October 13, with specific information about our prospective pastor.

SAMPLE LETTERS FROM A CALL COMMITTEE

Dear ,

On behalf of the call committee, I want to thank you for interviewing 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 for interviewing 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 CALL PROCESS EXPENSES

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Address: Click or tap here to enter text.

City/State Click or tap here to enter text. Zip: Click or tap here to enter text.

Description of Expenses:

Travel:

Auto: Click or tap here to enter text. miles @ Click or tap here to enter text. (current IRS Standard) $Click or tap here to enter text.

Air Fare: Click or tap here to enter text. $Click or tap here to enter text.

Auto Rental: $Click or tap here to enter text.

Meals: $Click or tap here to enter text.

Lodging: $Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone, Postage, Fax: $Click or tap here to enter text.

Other Expenses (please list):Click or tap here to enter text. $Click or tap here to enter text.

TOTAL EXPENSES TO BE REIMBURSED $Click or tap here to enter text.

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

CANDIDATE EVALUATION FORM

Name of Candidate: Click or tap here to enter text.

The information provided here will enable the bishop’s office in partnership with you to better understand your needs and the gifts of pastors/deacons in the call process.

1. What kind of contact did you have? Click or tap here to enter text.

2. For which of your competencies and characteristics was this candidate a good match? Click or tap here to enter text.

3. For which of your competencies and characteristics was this candidate not a good match? Click or tap here to enter text.

4. What appear to be the major strengths of the candidate? Click or tap here to enter text.

5. What appear to be the significant weaknesses of the candidate? Click or tap here to enter text.

6. What words would you use to describe this candidate’s ministry style? Click or tap here to enter text.

7. What other factors affected your decision? Click or tap here to enter text.

Please e-mail, mail, or FAX (704-638-0508) to Sandra Cline [scline@nclutheran.org](mailto:scline@nclutheran.org) or the bishop’s staff person working with you.

DO YOU NEED AN ADDITIONAL NAME?  Yes  No

Call Committee Chair Click or tap here to enter text.

Congregation: Click or tap here to enter text.

City / State: Click or tap here to enter text. Zip: Click or tap here to enter text.

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/deacons 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 pastor/deacon candidate. If that is not helpful, the insurance company endorsed by the ELCA—Church Mutual—has many resources and suggestions on their website: [https://www.churchmutual.com/109/Background-Checks-You-Can-Trust](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-hand 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 & 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. & 3. DEFINITION OF COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR

Additional important resources:

* + Portico website: <https://porticobenefits.org/>. (Calculators available at the site for congregations.)
  + Compensation guidelines: <https://www.nclutheran.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-Approved-Compensation-Guidelines.pdf>

