

CALLED TO BE AMONG US

**SO, YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO WORK
TOGETHER TO CALL A NEW PASTOR.**

THAT'S GOOD NEWS!

You are on a journey to select a new pastor, spiritual leader and friend. You have a wonderful opportunity to share in the gifts of God and help guide your congregation in renewing its ministry and mission. You will experience the presence of God and the people of God in new and exciting ways. You will be a partner in glimpsing a new vision of mission in the congregation and community. The prayers of your congregation, neighboring congregations and the Synod staff will carry you. It will be a wondrous experience as you work in the Spirit and find new joy in your ministry together.

Eleanore L. Feucht Sudbrock

INTERVIEWING, SELECTING AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

THE CALL COMMITTEE

- Designing selecting call committee members
- Forming forming a positive working team
- Guiding synod and congregation guidelines and guidance

PROFILE TO PROFILE

- Understanding your congregation, community and mission
- Clarifying hope and expectations of the minister and ministry
- Reviewing information about the candidate for pastor

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

- Concept of behavioral interviewing
- Guidelines, examples and developing interview questions
- Behavioral interviewing in practice
- Planning a successful interviewing day

CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

- Assessing evidence of skills, knowledge, experience, values and development
- Assessing evidence of positive, effective communication, interpersonal, management and team building skills
- Assessing spiritual leadership and faith life
- Assessing gifts, abilities and interests
- Assessing the worship and preaching experience
- Assessing the match of congregation, community, mission and pastor

MAKING THE RECOMMENDATION

- Presenting the candidate you have selected to the council and to the congregation
- Listening to feedback and clarifying hopes and concerns
- Mutual support and care of God's people as you prepare for a new pastor

PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL MUTUAL MINISTRY

- Designing and implementing a plan for the time of transition
- Designing and implementing a plan and process for mutual support, care, guidance and communication regarding your ministry together

THE CALL COMMITTEE

THE DESIGN

The call committee is usually a group with seven to fifteen members that reflect the wide diversity of the congregation and community.¹ The committee needs to be balanced, that is, women and men, new and long time members, with various ages and ethnic/language backgrounds. Consider the following for your committee.

- People who have been members for a long time and have a sense of the history of the congregation
- People who have become members during the last four or five years who can help you understand what attracts members today.
- Sunday School and Bible Class teachers who are interested in helping people of all ages learn the Scripture and grow in relationship with God and others.
- People under the age of 20 who will help you understand the current culture.
- People who are actively engaged in outreach because they care about others.
- People who are faithful in worship
- People with young children.

It is helpful if call committee members talk with people from the congregation and community about the mission of your congregation and listen to their thoughts and ideas.

FORMING A POSITIVE WORKING TEAM

A diverse committee will need to take time to get acquainted, discover the gifts, interests and understanding of each team member. Take time to grow in openness, care, respect and trust in each other. The group will need to discover what it is about your congregation that helped each of you grow in faith and life. It is important to share faith stories, hopes, dreams and values. Dedicate time together and individually to be in prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance, wisdom and energy. All of this shapes your work, helps you grow together and fosters positive relationships. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak and listen. Draw people out and foster equality. In the end, this will save time and add joy to your life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit through each of you.

¹ Check your congregation's constitution for any specific requirements for the Call Committee. A specific number may be indicated. The constitution may indicate appointment by the Council or election by the congregation. If elected by the congregation, does the Council bring nominations to the congregation, or are candidates identified in some other way?

GUIDANCE

Learn about the Synod guidelines and procedures for calling a pastor.² Work with the Synod staff. In addition to your congregation's profile, communicate to the Synod staff your understanding of the congregation's mission, ministry and community. Share your vision and hopes with the Synod staff person. Talk about the specific pastoral skills, competencies, interests, abilities and qualities you need for mission. The more the Synod staff understands about your congregation and community, the better they can assist you. All candidate names come through the Synod to assure you that the candidate is in good standing, appropriate for your congregation and interested in a new call. If a name is suggested to you, forward it to the Synod staff person.

The Synod offers training workshops for Call Committees. Please schedule your training.

Learn about your congregation's guidelines. What is in your constitution and by-laws? Establish your relationship with the church council. The call committee is not the same as the church council and you will do your work independently and confidentially. You can let the council know where you are in the process, but any specific candidate names or identifying information is not to be shared. That is confidential information and in the best interest of the candidate, congregation and Synod to protect this information.

Establish your own committee guidelines for working together.

Before you begin, the congregation is to have an official commissioning of your committee at a regular worship service. During the time of service, those serving on the Call Committee should be included by name in the weekly prayers of intercession of the congregation.

PROFILE TO PROFILE

You will be reviewing and considering two profiles. One is your own congregation's profile and the other is the profile of the candidate for pastor.

Study your congregation's profile. Discuss and develop a clear understanding of who you are as a congregation. Accurately describe and gain an understanding of your community. Clarify your mission within the congregation, in the community and with the Synod and ELCA.

- Who are the regular, faithful worshippers and who are the occasional worshippers? Who are the visitors and how are they shown hospitality?
- Who are the adult and youth learners and teachers?

² see Appendix

- Who are the evangelists and hospitality people?
- What are the ways your programs and ministry engage the people within and outside your congregation?
- What are the ways you participate in the wider ministry of the church – Synod, ELCA, community?
- What are the gifts, talents, abilities, love and passion of the people of your congregation?
- Describe your community – people, schools, businesses, economy, good things and needs. In what ways does the community present opportunities for mission and ministry?
- If you were making a video of your congregation in action, what would be included in the video? Who would be included? Where does the action take place?

Express and clarify your hopes and dreams for your congregation. Describe what will stay the same. What will be new, vibrant and different in the next year? Next three to five years? Talk about how you believe the Holy Spirit is leading, energizing and blessing your congregation. Be clear and specific about your vision for the future. To get there, you need to see it.

Be specific, realistic and positive about your hopes and expectations of a new pastor. What are the competencies, talents, skills, abilities and qualities in a pastor that will engage you in your mission and ministry? List them. Talk about them. Match them with your ministry today and what you and children need for the future. How do past pastors influence your thinking about what you need now? Who are the “King David” pastors of the past? Honor them, and know that times are different now. How will you grow in support, friendship and partnership with your new pastor? How does this match with your mission?

You have already been working with the Synod staff and praying together for all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Based on your congregational profile and opportunities for mission, the Synod staff has reviewed and selected a candidate for you to consider. You may have one candidate at a time or up to three candidates to consider. Review and discuss the information you have received from the Synod regarding the candidate for pastor. List the qualities, competencies, skills, interests and abilities indicated in this profile and any other information. Note any experiences and skills that may be a surprise of the Holy Spirit and enrich your ministry. In what way does this match your ministry and mission as God’s people in this place? How might you assist a new pastor in learning and gaining new competencies? If you wish more information and references, contact the Synod Office. In each step of the process, be in contact with the Synod staff.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

Behavioral interviewing is based on the fact that past behaviors are the best predictor of future behaviors. Core behaviors of adults generally do not change dramatically. Behaviors are

thinking, speaking, listening, responding, planning, acting, doing, learning, facial expressions, etc. Personality, attitude, values, faith, belief, hope, love, relationships etc. **are expressed by behaviors. To know how a person will be, we need to discover how they have been in the past from real situations, events and actions.** The work of behavioral interviewers is to discover the past behaviors that give **evidence** of knowledge, skills, faith, wisdom, relationships, leadership, trust, caring, decision making, listening communicating, respecting etc. Behavioral interviewing respects the candidate and helps her or him tell the story more fully.

Interviewers ask the candidate to describe past experiences, give specific examples and talk about a particular practice, program, plan or process. Behavioral interviewers ask about outcomes in terms of data and effect on people. Candidates for pastor are asked to describe the work of a Spirit and faith filled ministry. **Behavioral interviewers never ask hypothetical questions** such as, “What would you do if...or in our situation, how would you make it better.” Hypothetical questions invite hypothetical answers and do not yield real evidence. **Behavioral interviewers do not ask leading questions.** “We are thinking strongly about starting a Saturday evening worship service. What do you think about this idea?” This really puts the candidate on a hot seat. It is very uncomfortable and the candidate has no background information.

Interviewers listen 80% of the time. Listen for evidence of competence and caring, faith and the things of the Spirit. Listen for tone, enthusiasm, feelings, fears and frustrations as well as interests, hopes and dreams. Interviewers are good observers of facial and body expressions. These are also evidence.

Do not start with your ideas, expectations and descriptions. It is very important and respectful to begin by inviting the candidate to tell you about her or his work and experiences. Ask your questions and listen fully to the responses. Ask the candidate to elaborate or tell you more about the experience. You want to get to know the candidate well. The candidate deserves the respect and opportunity to help you learn why she or he may be your next pastor.

If you begin with your expectation and descriptions, you invite the candidate to tailor her or his response to your expectations.

Begin with the most recent experience and cluster your questions in specific categories. Ask follow-up questions until you have a clear picture. Ask for specific examples to illustrate the work. Ask for examples of what went well and what would she or he do differently next time. Ask about effectiveness and positive changes as a result of a program or experience. Ask about people – how were they helped, healed, filled with faith and hope. Ask about the way people related to each other, worked as teams and formed groups. Ask about how people cared for each other, welcomed the stranger or new person into the group. Ask about how things came into being, process, decision making, who took part and in what way. Ask about the usual and routine

as well as the complex, complicated and difficult situations. Ask the candidate what gives joy, energy and what he or she loves about the people of the congregation serving. Ask about what disappoints or frustrates. Get a complete picture.

Behavioral interviewing teams plan the interview questions to make sure the most important are explored well and the broad spectrum is included. Behavioral interviewing teams are flexible. See the Resource of Interviewing Questions to assist you in planning interview questions in each category of ministry.

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWING MEETING

1. Hospitality

Hospitality begins with the first phone call by the committee chair to invite the candidate to be your guest for a day of getting acquainted and formal interview. If the candidate has to travel a long distance, the committee arranges accommodations, airport pick-up/return and meals. The candidate's spouse and family may accompany the candidate, but do not take part in the interview meeting. An initial conference call short interview by the entire committee may be helpful when a candidate is from a great distance. This will help you decide if you wish to have the candidate come for a full interview at your expense. Make it comfortable and pleasant for your candidate for pastor. Neither the committee nor the candidate wants to be rushed through an interview. To be respectful of time, keep the day moving at a comfortable pace. Remember, the candidate is also interviewing you.

A suggested schedule - Saturday hospitality and interviewing time together. Plan the day with estimated or allotted time for each section of interviewing and activities. Include the spouse and family in casual time, meals and tours.

Begin with a casual gathering of candidate (spouse, family) and call committee with a continental late breakfast. Break the anxiety and have a pleasant time. Invite the candidate to the first interviewing session.³ Arrange comfortable seating in a circle without a table in the middle. Begin with prayer and a brief devotion by a committee member. After interviewing, tour of the church and parsonage with candidate's spouse. Next is lunch for all. After the afternoon interviewing session, tour the community together. Offer any other kind of hospitality appropriate. Two interviewing sessions is more hospitable and offers casual times to get to know each other.

³ If a spouse and children have accompanied the candidate, provide for a host and possible activity during this time. Plan this ahead of time in conversation with the candidate and her/his family.

2. Be well prepared and organized with the hospitality aspects of the day and the interviewing sessions. At the same time, be flexible, caring, interested and enjoy each other. Keep your focus and energy up. Do not be distracted by phone, other concerns or interruptions. (Put a sign on the door – Interviewing, do not disturb.)
3. Use behavioral interviewing questions. Each committee member asks questions. You may want to have one or two people concentrate on particular categories. Agree about who may ask follow-questions. Allow enough time to explore each category. Ask new graduates to give examples and illustrations from internship, field placement and volunteer work. Candidates may give examples from prior careers or work. Beginning a question with “Why” can be perceived as aggressive or putting the candidate on the spot. “Tell us about how...” is a more winsome alternative.
4. Each committee member will have a list of the planned questions with a lot of space below each for notes. Each committee member takes his or her own notes. **Listen for skills, competency, abilities, outcomes and relationships.**
5. Ask the candidate if there is any other information she or he would like to share as well as questions he or she would like to ask.
6. Describe your congregation, community, mission, dreams and expectations **after** the candidate has had an opportunity to share with you her or his experience and faith.
7. Explore mutual expectations of pastor and people, ministry, way of working together so there are no surprises. Talk about schedules, office hours, compensation, and future of this ministry. Be sure candidate has no further questions or concerns.
8. If you are discerning the candidate is a possibility for you, discuss what the pastor and family need to do well during the transition from one congregation to your congregation. Be clear about what is next: lead a worship service in a neutral-site congregation; recommendation to council; if affirming, contact Synod Office and schedule the Worship and Call Sunday with the recommended candidate leading the worship and preaching. The Call Committee recommends to the Council. The Council recommends candidate to the congregation for Call. Arrange for a hospitality time and meal.
9. Do not pry into the pastor’s private life. See information on illegal and insensitive questions.

10. Ask for references or names for you to contact from past work. You will follow-up on references. (You may check references prior to interviewing. Don't neglect social media and other internet resources.)
11. Make this a day that is pleasant and informative; focused on mission and future; and about caring for God's people in your congregation. Close with prayer.
12. **Expect the Holy Spirit.**

SPECIFIC CATEGORIES FOR INTERVIEWING AND ASSESSMENT

Ministry areas and categories you will explore with candidate using behavioral interviewing techniques, ideas and understanding. Following the interview, these categories will be used in assessing the candidate. Ask questions in each category.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- Adult learning
- Children and youth learning – Sunday School, VBS, week day programs, youth groups.
- Confirmation preparation/Affirmation of Baptism preparation
- Communion and baptism preparation
- Retreats

EVANGELISM/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Climate of hospitality and outreach
- Evangelism planning and preparation
- Evangelism/Outreach programs and events
- Results, follow-up, ongoing evangelism

STEWARDSHIP/MINISTRY OF THE LAY PEOPLE

- Programs for helping people identify and use gifts for ministry and vocation
- Money, tithing and beyond
- Extent of lay involvement in ministry, decision making, activities

WORSHIP LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

- Level of faithful worshippers
- Planning and preparation for worship by pastor
- Involvement of lay leaders in planning, preparation and participation
- Worship style of pastor, congregation and community
- Relationship of worship and daily life

PASTORAL CARE

- Care for the sick, home bound and dying
- Care for people in life transitions or crisis
- Spiritual guidance and ethical dilemmas
- Weddings, baptisms and funerals

PERSONAL FAITH LIFE

- Spiritual development and journey
- Testimony of faith
- People who have been important in spiritual journey
- Things that foster spiritual growth and support of pastor and family
- Care for self and family

CHOICE OF MINISTRY AS VOCATION

- The story of God's call and choice of ordained ministry
- Testimony about the blessings, joy and vitality in parish ministry
- Dealing with difficulties encountered
- Vision of the future in ministry

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Building a relationship and working with church council, committees, groups
- Working with staff and church office routines
- Process for making decisions, setting goals and making changes
- Way of giving oversight, coordination, facilitation and assessment of ministry
- Work style and schedule
- Communication and relationship building within congregation and in community

WORKING TOGETHER TO DO WELL

- Needs and requirements of pastor and family to do well and thrive
- Needs of the congregation to do well in building relationships and working together
- Things that will foster a healthy transition for pastor and congregation
- Mutual support, expectations and goals
- Healthy, faithful ways of working together in mission

ILLEGAL AND INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

- Age or anything inferring age.
- Ethnic origin or race or anything inferring this question.
- Citizenship except for documented legal right to work in this country.
- Disabilities. Reasonable accommodation is required.

- Sex, sexual orientation or any physical characteristic.
- Marital or family status or plans except as they apply to housing, transition and success of pastor.
- Being arrested or stopped by the police.

YOU MAY ASK

Can you provide proof that you are at least 18 years of age should we call you to be our pastor?

Tell us how to pronounce your name correctly.

Do you speak other languages in addition to English?

If we call you, are you able to document eligibility to work in the United States?

Are you capable of performing the essential functions of a pastor with or without reasonable accommodation? (i.e. ramps, elevator, hearing amplification phones, sound system)

Is there anything that would prevent you from being at work when scheduled or required?

(Excluding occasional illness or family emergency)

Have you been convicted of a crime?

Have you ever been removed from the ELCA clergy roster? If yes, please explain.

What caused you to leave _____ congregation or job?

Please furnish us with names of three people who are work references including people in leadership positions. (These may be clergy or lay)

Some questions or comments are in the insensitive or embarrassing category. For example, how the candidate is dressed, or looks, why not married or where met a spouse, etc.

Candidates may voluntarily tell you anything they wish you to know.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS REFERENCE

Review these questions, choose those you wish to ask and add questions of your own. Be sure to ask follow-up questions after listening to the candidate. i.e. tell us more about... What were the results? What did you learn from that experience? Orchestrate who will ask which questions or categories of questions. Each committee member is to receive a copy of the questions to be asked and will write in the follow-up questions. Leave enough space below each question so you can write what you hear as verbatim as possible. Note what you see and feel from the candidate.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Tell us about the adult learning opportunities in your present congregation.

2. Describe the adult Bible class groups you led during the past few years. Tell us who participated, the particular scripture or topics and your preparation for teaching the group.
3. What are the ways lay persons have been leaders in adult Christian education?
4. What did the people enjoy most about Bible study? What suggestions did they make? How did you respond to the suggestions?
5. Describe the way you promoted and fostered adult Bible study in the congregation and community.
6. Describe the congregation's learning opportunities for children.
7. How many of the children in these programs are from the immediate community?
8. Tell us about the faith and church life of the children and youth.
9. How did the teachers and leaders get to know the children, youth and families?
10. In what ways were teachers assisted in clearly presenting the Gospel and helping the children experience God, love, forgiveness and blessing?
11. How were teachers and learning materials chosen?
12. In what ways were children involved in the regular worship services?
13. What difficulties did children's ministries experience in the last 12 to 18 months? How did you and the families respond?
14. Describe the successes of the children and youth ministries.
15. Describe what attracted new families to the congregation's ministries?
16. Tell us about baptism and first communion preparation with children and families.
17. Describe confirmation preparation for children/youth and affirmation of baptism for adults.
18. Give examples of how you built positive relationships with children, youth and families.
19. Describe the way you and the congregation fostered faith formation and discipleship for people of all ages.
20. Tell us about any congregational retreats you led or organized.
21. What did you enjoy about being involved in Christian education?

22. Describe your own personal Bible study.

HOSPITALITY AND EVANGELISM/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

1. Describe the climate and culture of hospitality and welcome in the congregation.
2. How did this come about? What was your role in creating hospitality?
3. Describe the way in which the congregation reached out to the community.
4. How were visitors welcomed, given hospitality and made to feel comfortable?
5. Who followed-up with visitors and in what way?
6. Tell us about the special evangelism/outreach events or activities of the congregation in the last two years. Give examples from other congregations you served.
7. How did you go about assessing the results, celebrating and learning from these events?
8. What attracted new people, families, children and youth to the Congregation?
9. How many new people became members of the congregation during the past year?
10. In what way were new members integrated into the life of the congregation and encouraged to become friends?
11. Describe the spiritual needs of the people of the community?
12. How did you and people of the congregation engage the community regarding their expressed spiritual concerns and needs?
13. In what way did the people of the community find out about the congregation?
14. In what way were members challenged, encouraged and trained to reach out to others and appreciate various cultures?
15. Describe the congregation's ongoing hospitality/evangelism/outreach program. Give specific examples.
16. Describe the specific way the Gospel of Jesus was at the center of evangelism activities.
17. Tell us about the way you personally did the work of hospitality and evangelism.

18. What barriers to hospitality and evangelism did you experience and how did you work to overcome them? What did you learn? How have you grown in hospitality and outreach?
19. Tell us about the challenges of Gospel outreach in our current culture.
20. What did you enjoy about engaging in hospitality and evangelism?

STEWARDSHIP AND MINISTRY OF THE LAY PEOPLE

1. Share with us your understanding of stewardship.
2. Describe the stewardship programs of congregations you served.
3. Tell us about the way you fostered wise and generous stewardship of gifts, talents, money, abilities and time among the community of faith.
4. How were the people of the congregation, including children, helped to identify their gifts, talents and abilities?
5. Give specific examples of way children and adults were trained and encouraged to use abilities, interests and gifts in the congregation and community?
6. Describe how the congregation grew in stewardship during the last few years. What was your role in this growth?
7. Tell us about the current giving level of the congregation for congregational ministry support, benevolence, hunger, seminaries or special ministries.
8. In what way were lay persons, especially leaders, involved with stewardship education?
9. How did congregations learn about synod, church-wide, and companion synod ministries? Describe their response.
10. Describe the way lay people were involved in decision making about mission, focus of ministry and support of the wider work of the church.
11. Tell us about stewardship practices of lay leaders of congregations you served.
12. Share with us your personal stewardship practices and ways you have grown.

WORSHIP LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

1. What was the average number of people at worship on Sundays? Did this increase or decrease during the last year? By how many?

2. Tell us what percent or how many members worshipped every Sunday or most Sundays.
3. Describe the way you planned worship throughout the year, especially for each season and festival.
4. In what way were lay people, including children and youth, involved in worship planning, preparation and leadership? Please give specific examples.
5. Tell us about the way you worked with the church musician(s) in planning and leading worship?
6. Share with us your practices in sermon preparation.
7. Give examples of the way children and youth were engaged in worship in congregations you have served.
8. Describe the worship style of the congregation you presently serve. Tell us about the worship styles of congregations where you were pastor or member.
9. In what way does the worship style of your present congregation reflect the community? Lutheran worship practices?
10. Tell us about your own style of leading worship. What is important for you?
11. What changes in the congregation's worship did you make during the time you were the pastor? Give examples from other congregations you served.
12. In what specific way did the members of the congregation participate in the decisions to do things differently?
13. Please give specific examples of how you related Sunday worship to daily life of the people; to news events or community issues.
14. Share with us how you brought God's good news and the Spirit's good gifts to the people week by week. Give specific examples.
15. Describe what people said and discussed concerning the meaning of worship for daily living? Give specific examples.
16. What have you done to become a more effective and engaging preacher?
17. What feedback have you had from the people about worship – things they liked and didn't like? What was your response?
18. In what way did you make worship inviting and understandable to visitors?

19. Describe a worship experience you found particularly meaningful and wonderful during the past year or two.

20. What is the joy and meaning in worship for you?

PASTORAL CARE

1. Tell us about how you provided pastoral care to a home bound person. Give a specific story or two.
2. In what way were you made aware of members or others who are hospitalized?
3. Describe a recent hospital visit you made and the pastoral care you gave.
4. Tell us how you gave pastoral care to those in nursing homes and on hospice care?
5. In what way did the lay people also give care to the sick, home bound or persons in need?
6. We would like to know the way you gave pastoral care for the dying, those with chronic illnesses and their families. Please give specific example.
7. Share with us how you did funeral planning with a family.
8. How did you care for the grieving family before and after the funeral?
9. Please give us some examples of how you related to and cared about persons in life transitions or crisis (without breaking confidences).
10. What were the spiritual questions and ethical dilemmas about which, people sought you guidance?
11. At what point did you refer people to a professional counselor?
12. Describe how you prepared a family for the baptism of their child.
13. In what way did members of the congregation care for families with babies and young children?
14. Describe how you assisted couples in wedding planning and understanding Christian marriage.
15. Tell us about how you and the congregation strengthened and supported families.

16. Give us examples of members who gave care, healing, hope encouragement and strength to each other. How did you foster this?
17. Describe the way you gave pastoral care in the community? Give a specific example.
18. Where and from whom have you found spiritual and pastoral care for yourself and your family?
19. Tell us about your practice of prayer for others.
20. What are your own personal guidelines for protecting confidential information? Give us a specific example of putting this into practice.

ADMINISTRATION AND BUILDING A POSITIVE COMMUNITY

1. Describe the staff and regular volunteers in your present congregation. In past congregations. Tell us about their roles and responsibilities.
2. Please give us examples of how you formed staff and regular volunteers into positive teams.
3. Describe the essential elements for forming positive, effective teams. What were the specific things you did to promote and foster these elements?
4. How often did you have staff meetings? What were the typical topics and results?
5. How did staff and volunteers know they did a good job? How was this celebrated?
6. How did staff and volunteers engage and assist in making positive changes? What was your role?
7. Describe the way congregations were organized for mission and ministry.
8. Which committees, task forces or groups were particularly effective and energized?
9. What made them effective and energized?
10. Tell us about the significant accomplishments of congregations you served?
11. Describe outstanding leaders of congregations you served or were a member.
12. What made them outstanding?
13. In what way did leaders promote and support the core mission and ministry of congregations? (You may name one or two from the resume)

14. Tell us about the way various committees and groups communicated and worked together. What was effective and helpful and what was not?
15. How have you fostered and modeled positive, effective, inclusive communication? Give specific examples.
16. Describe a recent church council meeting – issues, topics, discussion style, decision making and follow-through, etc.
17. How were decisions made – Who were the decision makers regarding
 - a. Budget and finances
 - b. Use of the building
 - c. Summer programs
 - d. Mission goals of the congregation
 - e. Choice of leaders
18. In what various ways was the entire congregation “kept in the loop” with information, process and changes?
19. Who gave oversight for community formation, organizational development and administration? In your assessment, how did this work?
20. Describe the way you budgeted and managed your time and tasks each week. What were your priorities? Give specific examples.
21. Give an example of how you completed work or a project in a timely way?
22. What have you done to grow, develop, learn and understand as a pastor? What are the things you changed about yourself over the years?

PERSONAL FAITH LIFE

1. Tell us about your own spiritual development and journey of faith.
2. Who were the people important to your faith journey?
3. Share with us your Christian faith – your life of hope and grace.
4. Give us examples from the past of the way you make Jesus the center of all you do.
5. What areas of your faith and life do you want to develop or deepen?
6. In your understanding, what are the core Lutheran teachings of faith?
7. How does this understanding shape, form and encourage you as a pastor?

8. Describe your personal devotional life.
9. Tell us what we can do specifically to support, encourage and guide you in your life of faith and joy?
10. Share with us what you do to care for yourself spiritually, intellectually and physically.

CHOICE AND GOD'S CALL TO ORDAINED MINISTRY AS VOCATION

1. Tell us the story of God's call, your response and choice of the ordained ministry.
2. Share with us the blessings, joy and grace you have experienced in your ministry.
3. What do you enjoy and find exciting about your ministry?
4. Describe some of the difficulties you encountered in the past as a pastor.
5. How did you work through or manage the difficult situations? What was the outcome?
6. Tell us what you loved about the people in your congregations.
7. How did people know you cared about them?
8. What were the things that disappointed you or gave frustration in congregations you served?
9. Give specific examples of what you did in response. What was the result?
10. Share with us ways you developed, grew and matured as a pastor. What do you love about being a pastor?
11. Who were the people who mentored and guided you in your vocation of pastor?
12. What are your hopes, vision, and vocational expectations as pastor?
13. What is it about our congregation and community that prompts your interest in becoming our pastor?
14. In what particular way are you equipped and prepared to be our pastor?
15. What causes you to consider leaving your present congregation?

WORKING TOGETHER TO DO WELL IN MINISTRY

1. Tell us what you (and your family) need to do well among us in our congregation and community? How can we be helpful?
2. What are your expectations of us?
 - a. Leaders
 - b. Members
 - c. Community
3. Share with us how you became acquainted with new people and a new community in the past.
4. How did you (and family) make a successful transition in the past? What contributed to your success?
5. Tell us about your past experience in working with people who are long time members and have a sense of history, traditions and routines.
6. Describe the way you worked with newer members, people who wanted changes and were open to new ways of ministry.
7. Help us understand your process for getting things done in the past. How was this a Gospel process? Give us an example, please.
8. Tell us how you communicated with the people of the congregation and community.
9. From your past experience, give us some examples of working with people of different ages and cultures.
10. Give several examples of how you promoted and fostered mutual trust, respect and appreciation between people.
11. Share with us events and times when you and the congregation had fun together.
12. Tell us what the people of the congregation and community appreciated about you.
13. What do you want to learn to do differently?
14. What are your housing, salary and benefits expectations?

TELLING THE STORY OF YOUR CONGREGATION

1. Each member of the Call Committee participates in telling the story of the congregation. Different people prepare and share the story of the history, mission, and way of doing ministry, hopes, goals, interest and energy for being in mission together, culture of the

congregation and community. Tell something about the people of God in this place. Each member is asked to prepare and focus on only one aspect of your story and tell it succinctly.

2. Each member can share one thing about why he or she loves being a member of this congregation. One sentence!
3. Talk about the most important joys and challenges of your congregation.
4. Describe your community and the opportunities for mission and ministry it presents.
5. Share your ways of accompanying, supporting, working together and loving your pastor.
6. Ask the candidate if she or he would like more information or has further questions.
7. Describe clearly the next steps in the process and a projected time line.
8. Close this part of the day together in a positive, grace filled way. Thank the candidate for coming and sharing life and faith together. Thank the candidate for being interested in your congregation as a place and people to share ministry.
9. Close with prayers and blessings.
10. Organize a tour of the community and any further hospitality.

ASSESSMENT OF THE CANDIDATE

Assess the candidate(s) soon after the interview referring to your notes. **Look for evidence of competencies and qualities that match to your congregation's mission and ministry.**

Competencies are about skills, abilities, knowledge, accomplishment and effective experience.

These things can be learned, improved and developed. **Qualities** are inherent aspects of character and personality and are deeply rooted.

Each candidate must be assessed regarding current competencies for your ministry and future and for evidence of learning, developing and growing. Candidates must be assessed for evidence she or he is filled and led by the Holy Spirit; a person who embodies the Gospel of Jesus and has a deep commitment to the church and ministry of word, sacrament, healing and hope.

Assessment is a matter of prayer and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

PREPARATION FOR ASSESSING THE CANDIDATE

1. Spend time in Scripture and prayer. Ephesians Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4:1-16 are recommended reading. Have in mind clearly and firmly the congregation's mission and ministry for the present and future.
2. Individually and carefully review your notes, highlighting what is significant for you.
3. Each committee member individually completes the assessment tool focusing on evidence of pastoral competency and qualities and faith values of a pastor. Pay attention to what you heard, saw and felt.
4. When everyone is ready, the committee comes together to assess the candidate category by category. First, each committee member is given the opportunity to speak (without interruptions) about his or her assessment in this category. After all have spoken, have an open discussion where all can share and respond. Continue until all are satisfied and agree to conclude discussion.
5. Time for prayer.
6. Chair asks for a first vote. Is this candidate the pastor the Holy Spirit is providing for our mission and ministry now and for the future? You may have voice or written votes.
7. Call the Synod staff person/s you are working with to inform them you are continuing with this candidate.⁴ Also call the synod staff person if you wish a new candidate.
8. If you voted to proceed, make three reference calls, document the response and inform whole Call Committee and Synod staff.
9. Through the synod staff, arrange a Sunday morning to listen to the candidate preach at a neighboring congregation. This could be pre-arranged for the day following the interview.⁵ Committee assesses the sermon and worship experience and takes a final vote.

Reference Questions – Reference questions are also behavioral and focus of the work of a pastor. Do not call the candidate's present congregation unless suggested by synod staff. Introduce yourself and say your congregation is in the process of discerning whether Pastor _____ will be your next pastor.

1. In what way is Pastor _____ an effective pastor? Please be specific.
2. In what way did the congregation changed during her/his time as your pastor?
3. What are the skills, talents, abilities or style of Pastor _____?
4. What did you and others enjoy about having Pastor _____ as your pastor?
5. In what way did Pastor _____ work through any difficulties?

⁴ If you are not continuing with a candidate, the chairperson should also notify the synod staff person you are working with. The chairperson should also notify the candidate as soon as practicable, if possible providing clear and simple reasons why the committee has chosen not to continue with this candidate.

⁵ The call committee may also visit the candidate's congregation if this can be done confidentially. A few members visiting over several weeks would provide a variety of worship opportunities for the committee to compare.

ASSESSING THE QUALITIES AND VALUES OF THE CANDIDATE

1= High Degree 2=Moderate Degree 3=No Information

- _____ Respect for others (listens, values ideas and ministry of others, honors, etc.)
- _____ Keeps Confidences
- _____ Honest and Truthful
- _____ Integrity
- _____ Takes Responsibility
- _____ Kind and Caring
- _____ Common Sense and Wisdom
- _____ Cheerful and positive
- _____ Energetic
- _____ Comfortable and positive relationships with people

ASSESSING COMPETENCY AND NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE CATEGORIES OF MINISTRY

Review your interview notes for evidence from past experience, education, work, life and faith.

Competency in the work of Pastor

Data about skills, knowledge, understanding, organization, communication, leadership, teaching, encouraging, inclusive, outcomes, enthusiasm, energy, fostering community etc. Does the pastor excel in this category or have good and sufficient competency?

Need for development as a Pastor

A pastor cannot be expected to excel in each category of ministry. When a pastor and congregation desire to develop greater competencies and abilities, they need to plan a way for this development to happen together. Both pastor and members will enhance their skills and abilities. Congregations learn from pastors and pastors learn from congregations.

ASSESSMENT WORK PAGES – Make your notations on these pages.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Evidence of competency in the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____ Excellent _____ Good _____ Need more information

EVANGELISM/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Evidence of competency in the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____ Excellent _____ Good _____ Need more information

STEWARDSHIP/MINISTRY OF THE LAY PEOPLE

Evidence of competency in the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____ Excellent _____ Good _____ Need more information

WORSHIP LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Evidence of competency in the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____ Excellent _____ Good _____ Need more information

PASTORAL CARE

Evidence of competency in the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____ Excellent _____ Good _____ Need more information

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Evidence of competency in the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____Excellent _____Good _____Need more information

PERSONAL FAITH LIFE

Evidence appropriate for the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____Excellent _____Good _____Need more information

CHOICE AND GOD'S CALL TO THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

Evidence appropriate for the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____Excellent _____Good _____Need more information

WORKING TOGETHER TO DO WELL

Evidence of competency in the work of Pastor

Need for further development

Match for our ministry _____Excellent _____Good _____Need more information

GROUP ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION BY CALL COMMITTEE

After each committee member individually assesses the candidate, come together for a group discussion and assessment. Share your evidence, experience and wisdom regarding this candidate for your pastor. Each person must have equal time to share and speak.

Note what each committee member says. Ask about concerns or hesitation as well as confidence and affirmation of the candidate. Take time to pray and for silence to discern the work of the Holy Spirit. The chair will ask for the first vote regarding calling this candidate as pastor.

ASSESSING THE CANDIDATE’S SERMON AND WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

The Call Committee arranges with the Synod staff (or Dean, at direction of synod staff person) and candidate for leading worship and preaching at a neighboring congregation. This also is confidential. After worship, assess the experience.

Scripture

1. In what way were you helped to understand and engage with the scripture text?
2. What new insight did you gain?

Gospel

1. In what way did you receive God’s love, forgiveness hope, healing and strength?
2. Describe the way Jesus was present in the sermon.
3. In what way was the sermon God’s good news for you?

Christian Life

1. How were you enabled and empowered to live by God’s grace”
2. Describe the way you were moved by the Holy Spirit for your life of discipleship.
3. Give specific examples of how this sermon was connected with what is happening in the world today.

Presentation

1. Describe the style of the sermon and worship leadership.
2. What did the candidate do to keep you engaged in the sermon?
3. What is it that draws you to come and hear the candidate preach again?

FINAL VOTE

After an open and honest discussion of all you have heard, seen and felt, take time for quietness and prayer. The Chair asks for a final vote to affirm or not affirm this candidate for recommendation to the congregation council as pastor of the congregation.

CONTACT THE SYNOD OFFICE

At the earliest opportunity, the chair will contact the Synod staff person with the decision of the Call Committee. You will receive further guidance to assist you with the required next steps.

RECOMMENDING THE CANDIDATE TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Call Committee chair contacts the Church Council President, requesting a special meeting. Each Call Committee member will present evidence for the recommendation and understanding of the Holy Spirit’s call to the candidate to become pastor. It is important to help the Council members to know the candidate as fully as possible and to learn of your confidence in the candidate and the Spirit’s call. Be willing to answer any questions. You want everyone to have confidence that this candidate matches the congregation’s ministry and future. This meeting is

also confidential. The Church Council will vote to recommend this candidate to the congregation.⁶

CONGREGATION CALL SUNDAY

You are recommending this candidate to fill the position of ordained and called pastor among you. You are recommending this person as pastor, friend, leader and partner in mission and ministry. You are recommending God's messenger of peace, hope, forgiveness and healing. You are asking the congregation to consider this person as the pastor who will be with them in sickness, death, crisis, birth, baptism, marriage and all the events of life.

Preparation

1. Make arrangements together with the Synod staff for an acceptable date for the candidate to lead the worship and preach. Inform and encourage entire congregation to be present.⁷
2. Hospitality – The candidate's family is also to be invited for the weekend.
 - a. Arrange for a Friday evening or Saturday reception with the Church Council and Call Committee. You want the candidate and family to feel comfortable and begin getting acquainted.
 - b. Designate a few people to be at church 45 minutes before worship begins to greet the candidate and respond to any questions and needs.
 - c. Enlist several people to sit with the family and introduce them to others.
 - d. Arrange any accommodations required.

After worship congregational call meeting.

1. You may choose to have the candidate and family present at the beginning of the meeting to introduce them again and perhaps say a sentence or two about themselves. You can consider having the candidate answer a question or two (i.e. Share with us what interests you about becoming our pastor.) Be careful, however, the congregation is not re-interviewing the candidate.
2. The candidate and family are not present for the recommendation, discussion and vote.
3. The Call Committee and Church Council members participate in presenting the recommendation to the congregation. Describe the candidate with enthusiasm, confidence, thoughtfulness and clarity. Give examples of competencies and abilities in each category of ministry. Reflect on the candidate's communication skills and ability to establish positive

⁶ The Council may choose to meet with the candidate prior to bringing a recommendation to the congregation. This meeting is not another interview – the call committee has already done this work. Such a meeting might provide an opportunity for conversation, and for the candidate to meet other leaders of the congregation before a call meeting.

⁷ Consult your constitution for requirements for calling a special congregational meeting. See the appendix for a sample letter to the congregation.

relationships. Share your own experience with the candidate and why you believe he or she is a match for your ministry and a gift from the Holy Spirit.

4. The congregation then engages in discussion and questions. You want them to have the best information and understanding of the candidate. The members need to feel comfortable and confident. Take enough time for this important decision.
5. After Scripture reading, prayer and a brief silence, the Church Council President asks the congregation to vote, by written ballot, regarding calling the candidate as pastor.
6. After the vote, have prayer and an appropriate hymn.
7. You may then invite the candidate and family to join the congregation gathering. Share the good news of the call and give them a hearty applause. Close with a blessing prayer for the candidate and family and congregation.
8. Contact the Synod staff with the results of the congregation meeting.

DOING WELL TOGETHER IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

The Transition Team

The Transition Team consists of people from the Call Committee, since they know the candidate, and those who can assist with all that it takes to make a move, prepare housing and hospitality and befriend the new pastor and family as they get acquainted with the congregation and community.

1. Discuss and decide with the called pastor a realistic time schedule for the move and welcoming.
2. Make the move for the pastor and family as easy as possible. If you have a parsonage, work with the pastor and family and property committee to prepare, repair, paint and make comfortable their new home. If the pastor will need to rent or purchase housing, assist with realtors and others to locate and secure acceptable housing.
3. Welcome the pastor and family upon their arrival. Have food in the house and ask how you may help. Invite them to dinner. Have fun together. Be masters at hospitality.
4. Gather ideas and plan events to help the pastor and family get acquainted with the people of the congregation. One idea is to have small receptions of a dozen people in homes or at church. Wear name tags for the first number of Sundays.
5. In the first months, help the pastor get acquainted with the community, congregation, and the history, how things work, where things and places are etc.
6. Have gatherings and events that are fun, build trust and establish positive relationships.
7. Host welcome gatherings with pastors and families of other community and conference churches.

8. In each worship service and parish meeting, pray for the pastor and for the mission of the congregation. Ask each person of the congregation to pray daily for the pastor and family; for the congregation and community.
9. Establish a **Mutual Ministry Team**. This is a small, diverse group of people who are active in various ministries, various ages and interests and are caring and supportive. The Mutual Ministry Team meets regularly with the pastor to share ideas, interests, support, feedback and mutual care. This team is about seeking joy in ministry now and for the future. This ministry team assists the pastor and congregation to do well together for the sake of the Gospel. The Mutual Ministry Team is not the annual performance review committee.
10. If you or someone else is uncomfortable or concerned about something, don't gossip. Talk with the leaders, mutual ministry team and the pastor privately. All things in prayer.
11. Love and pray for your new pastor and family.
- 12. Expect the Spirit and find joy in your ministry and mission together.**

Additional Resources

Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work (AFP)

Community Builders: 50 Exercises for Church Groups

APPENDIX A
The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod
on the Transition and Call Process⁸

I. Transition

Consistent with *C9.06, when a vacancy in the primary pastoral call to a congregation occurs or is anticipated, a transitional pastor shall be appointed by the bishop to assist the congregation and provide basic pastoral services during the transition. Consistent with *C9.07 a transitional pastor shall have the rights and duties of a regularly called pastor within the congregation, though they may delegate certain duties and responsibilities in consultation with the Congregation Council. Notification of the appointment of a transitional pastor is to be made in writing to the concerned congregation as soon as practicable following the announcement of the vacancy but no later than the departing pastor's last Sunday.

If notice of the impending vacancy is short (less than 30 days), the bishop will appoint a coverage pastor until the needs of the congregation can be discerned.

The time of transition will include a self-study process and evaluation by the congregation that will examine their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and goals for ministry, and challenges to growth, as well as issues relevant to their situation such as: transition issues following a long term pastorate or relational conflict, changes or trends in the community or congregation, and especially the availability of financial resources to implement their vision.

Transitional ministry is described in four categories:

- A. Coverage Pastor
- B. Discernment Pastor
- C. Term-Call Pastor (candidate/non-candidate)
- D. Intentional Interim Pastor (non-candidate)

The first two categories presume less than half-time service. These ordained ministers are appointed by the bishop with the consent of the Congregation Council.

A. Coverage Pastor

These transitional pastors assist the congregation in the administration of the basic operations of the congregation, meet with the Congregation Council, and provide for

⁸ Policy enacted by the 2007 Synod Assembly.

basic pastoral care and services. Ordinarily these pastors will be the dean of the conference or another neighboring pastor who has received basic training in the care of congregations in transition. They will be familiar with the transition and call process and will aid the congregation in understanding the process.

B. Discernment Pastor

These transitional pastors cover all the duties and responsibilities of the coverage pastor along with bringing particular skills and experience in managing transitions. They may spend a greater number of contact hours with the congregation as they help the congregation clarify its needs and goals for the future of their ministry.

The third and fourth categories of transitional ministry reflect the need in some congregations for greater pastoral presence in the time of transition, whether because of on-going program or staffing needs or because of specific issues of transition which the congregation seeks to address in the transitional period. These transitional ministers are appointed by the bishop with the consent of the Congregation Council, but if their service is anticipated to last longer than a year, the Synod Council or congregation may extend a term call under †S14.18. Such term calls will generally be for 12 to 24 months or until the arrival of the newly called pastor whichever comes first. They may be renewed for an additional 12 months, if necessary. Term calls may not exceed three years. Consistent with ELCA 7.41.12, if a first-call pastor is considered for a transitional ministry term-call, the call shall be for a 3-year term.

C. Term-Call Pastor

The duties of these transitional pastors include those of categories A and B, but these pastors also assume a significant level of the day-to-day pastoral work that might be expected of a pastor under regular call.

The bishop may recommend for term-call a pastor who might be a suitable candidate for the regular call. If the transitional pastor is eligible for call in the congregation, when ready to consider candidates the call committee shall determine if they will recommend the term-call pastor for the regular call. If they agree to receive the term-call pastor as a candidate, the congregation may not entertain other candidates until they have released this pastor as a candidate.

If they decline to recommend this candidate, the congregation may ask for the appointment of another transitional pastor at the conclusion of the term.

Once the term-call pastor is no longer a candidate, the congregation may continue the call process in either the one or three candidate options.

If the term-call pastor will not be a candidate for the regular call, the source of the term-call shall be the Synod Council.

D. Intentional Interim Pastor

In this fourth category, the transitional pastor will provide the transitional ministry described earlier, but in these situations, they will also work with the congregation on specific issues prior to entry in the call process. Because this type of ministry requires special skills that the interim pastor receives in specific training provided by the ELCA, it is not appropriate that these transitional ministers entertain candidacy in the congregations they serve so that, once their tasks in a given congregation are complete, they can bring their particular skills to other places of need within the church. As the intentional interim pastor cannot be a candidate for the regular call, the source of interim call shall be the Synod Council.

In all cases, the congregation will pay a stipend to the transitional minister commensurate with the duties and hours required. For service half-time or more, a housing allowance or use of the parsonage should be included in the stipend. Pension and health benefits shall be negotiated under guidelines provided by Portico Benefit Services.

Associate/Assistant Pastors and other Rostered Leaders

It is expected that the calls of associate and assistant pastors are coterminous with the call of the primary pastor. The effective date of the resignation of associate or assistant pastors on staff shall be set in consultation with the bishop and the Congregation Council but should be before the arrival of the new pastor. Consistent with *C9.09, this restriction shall be incorporated into the letter of call before it is submitted to the bishop for attestation.

This same principle may be applied to the calls of other rostered leaders, depending on the nature of their position and their duties described in their Letter of Call. Exceptions shall be at the discretion of the bishop.

The portion of this policy regarding the appointment of transitional ministers is not applicable to the position of an assistant or associate pastor. The bishop will consult with congregations with regard to their needs during vacancies in secondary staff ministries.

II. Call Process

Before a transitional ministry begins, the synod will provide for an exit interview with both the pastor who is leaving and the Congregation Council (or leadership) so that appropriate decisions about the level of transitional ministry needed may be made.

The congregation will conduct a self-study. Using materials provided by the synod they will assess the needs and goals of the congregation and prepare the congregational profile using the forms and guidelines provided through the ELCA. The congregation will also determine the resources available to fund the pastoral compensation package and disclose this information to the synod.

Following the self-study, the congregation will appoint or elect a call committee in a manner consistent with the constitution and bylaws of the congregation [c.f. C13.05.].

The call committee will participate in at least one call committee training session. The call committee then decides, after appropriate consultation with congregation leadership, how to proceed in the process of interviewing candidates for the call to the congregation. Two options will be available.

One candidate at a time. In this option, the call committee will have exclusive interview privileges with the recommended candidate for the first interview and an opportunity to hear the candidate preach and conduct worship. The period of exclusivity shall last for thirty days following the initial interview, after which the candidate may entertain interviews with other congregations.

Congregational settings appropriate for “first call” candidates will operate under the “one-candidate-at-a-time” option.

Up to three candidates at a time. In this option, the congregation may interview and hear up to three candidates before making any recommendation to call a candidate. Candidates considered under this option may interview in several ministry settings concurrently. When a call committee has voted to recommend a candidate to the congregation, the other candidates will be released and may not be considered further. Candidates who are recommended for call must notify all other interviewing congregations that a call vote is pending or must withdraw from the call process where they have been recommended. Both candidates and congregations should notify their counterparts at the earliest opportunity if it becomes clear that they are no longer interested in pursuing the call.

These procedures for calling ministers may be used as deemed appropriate for the calling of assistant or associate pastors and other rostered laypersons to staff positions in congregational settings.

Pastors. Ordained ministers seeking call shall prepare profile documents provided by the ELCA. When their names are to be submitted to a congregation, they shall be informed as to the interview process being used (one or three candidates). Ordained ministers may request that they be considered only under the one candidate option. Pastors shall make their minimum salary needs known to the synod.

APPENDIX B

CONFIDENTIALITY

*Send forth your light and your truth,
Let them guide [us].
Psalm 43:3*

The selection of a new pastor is of interest to every member of a congregation. We hope to have deep emotional and spiritual ties with our pastor. Entrusting this to a select few is not an easy thing to do. Feelings are compounded when the call committee must work with confidentiality, for it seems almost “secretive.” But there are three important reasons why call committees must work with confidentiality:

1. **To preserve the current ministry of the pastor being considered.** Call committees do not share the name of the pastor or where the pastor is from so that they do not damage the effectiveness of the pastor’s current ministry. When a congregation hears its pastor is interviewing for another call, members become distressed. They lose focus on their ministry and worry about the future. They may feel betrayed by the pastor and shut the pastor out. They may feel pressure to make the pastor happier so s/he won’t leave. The pastor can become a “lame duck” And of course, it may be months or years before the pastor actually receives and accepts a call. It’s important to let the pastor be the one to share this information when and how and if s/he wishes to share it.
2. **To protect the families or friends of pastors being considered.** Call committees do not share the name or locations of pastors being considered, for if the word reaches the pastor’s community, it may disrupt the spouse’s employment or promotion opportunities, the children’s sense of security, or the friendships upon which the pastor depends.
3. **To allow the call committee members to “talk out” the decision.** In some ways, the best call committees are like a “jury room” where each member can speak openly and freely, and the group moves towards a consensus. Remember when the disciples reported, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...?” It’s difficult to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and one’s fellow call committee members if everyone else is giving their opinions and advice.

You may have those who think, “Well, the candidate’s from California, who’s going to know?” The world, let alone the Lutheran church, is small. **Practice confidentiality.**

APPENDIX C

COMMUNICATION

Strong, healthy communities are based on good communication. The call process, especially because everyone is invested in its outcome, needs a call chair who is sensitive to people's need for information while at the same time understanding of the need to maintain confidentiality. It is important for the call chair to keep the council and the congregation informed with updates and with requests for prayer.

Remember, it's not about secrecy but about confidentiality. It's about protecting the pastoral candidate's ministry and family—not about keeping the congregation in the dark. It is totally appropriate to share with the congregation, "We have a candidate whom we are excited about interviewing. Please pray that our conversation goes well." The congregation needs to feel that they are part of the process.

If no candidates are lined up, it's still important to communicate to the congregation. For example, the call committee knows the Assistant to the Bishop is attending an assignment at the seminary to find a candidate; the congregation does not. Tell them. Positive communication keeps anxiety down and hope and openness to God alive.

Communication with the bishop's office

If the bishop's office doesn't know there is an interview, we can't pray for God to bless it. If we don't know an interested candidate has been turned down, we don't know to call and console. If a candidate calls the synod office, hoping for information and finds we are ignorant of what is transpiring, their opinion of the congregation is affected. The word synod means walking with, companionship; the call process at its best is a partnership.

Communication with the candidate

Candidates in a call process have a sense of uncertainty; they have opened the door to the possibility that their and their families lives could be facing radical change: a new home, a new school, a new faith community, the beginning of ordained ministry. It is important throughout the process for the call committee to attend to their work in a timely fashion and for the call chair to communicate decisions to the candidates as soon as possible, whether that communication is about continuing or ending the process. If you have decided to not go forward with a candidate, write them *immediately* and provide some reason and relevant feedback. This is helpful not only for the candidate, but for the bishop's office as well. It helps us have a deeper sense of the candidate and provides guidance for us in our search for appropriate candidates for the congregation.

The call chair's thoughtful, caring communication skills *communicate* much about a congregation to a prospective candidate. **Practice good communication.**