



Below are the basic steps that are usually taken in the call process. Because each congregation is unique, some steps may be altered by synod staff. This has been prepared to give you an overall picture of a typical call process in this synod.

NOTIFICATION TO BISHOP

- The pastor notifies the bishop and congregation that s/he is leaving due to retirement, another call, or resignation.

EXIT INTERVIEW AND INTERIM/SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS

- A synod staff member or designee facilitates a time of closure with the pastor and the council.
- The bishop or synod staff, in conversation with the council president and/or council, advises regarding interim or supply pastor(s).
- Council arranges audit of the Parish register, finances, and completes any financial obligations.
- Complete "End of Call Notification" with the ELCA Board of Pensions (www.elcabop.com)
- Plan farewell events.

APPOINTMENT OF CALL COMMITTEE

- The council forms a call committee, according to the congregation's constitution.
 - It should include a cross-section of the congregation, preferably including two or more confirmed youth/young adults.
 - A committee of 10-12 works best and if your constitution stipulates less, appoint non-voting representatives to achieve this number.
 - The council president may serve as a non-voting liaison to the call committee. Limit other council members on call committee.
 - The chair of the call committee is appointed by the council.
 - The council president submits a list of call committee members, with the chair's telephone and email, to the bishop.

PREPARATION OF MINISTRY SITE PROFILE

- Ministry Site Profiles are completed and focus on the mission and context.
- This form is found on the ELCA website: <http://www.elca.org/call>, click on Call Process Forms.
- When completed, follow the directions and submit the form. The call committee may wish to present the completed profile to the congregation council before submitting the form. Once the synod has reviewed this form, you may be asked to complete one or more questions on "Seven Reflections."

NAME(S) OF CANDIDATES

- The names of candidates are prepared by the bishop and synod staff. The Ministry Site Profile is sent to the candidates. Rostered Leader Profiles will be mailed to the call committee chair for those candidates who agree to have their name submitted.
- The call committee reviews the Rostered Leader Profile and decides whether to proceed with interviews.
 - For all contact with the candidates, use only the candidates' preferred methods of being reached.
 - The call committee keeps the congregation informed of progress, yet maintains confidentiality in relationship to specific candidates.
 - For First Call Candidates (recent graduates from seminary), it is the procedure of the NWL MI Synod that one candidate interview at a time. For experienced rostered leaders, congregations may interview more than one depending on availability of candidates.

INTERVIEWS

- The call committee prepares questions and concerns. (Remember that the candidate is also interviewing the congregation!) An audio or videotape of a recent worship service may be requested. A "Pastoral Interview Guide" with sample questions is available.
 - The congregation is responsible for travel costs, meals and overnight lodging.
 - It is good hospitality to drive the candidate and his/her spouse (if married) around the community and to have information about the schools if the candidate has children.

- It may be desirable to hold the interview off-site, but providing an opportunity for a tour of the congregational building/parsonage.
- As a courtesy to candidates interviewing, it is helpful if the call committee chair updates those being interviewed on the process.

VISITATION OPTION

- The call committee may send a maximum of two call committee members per Sunday to visit the candidate's current parish.
- If interviewing a first call pastor, it may be possible to arrange the candidate to preach at a neighboring congregation and have the call committee attend.

RECOMMENDATION OF CANDIDATE

- The call committee, by consensus or a strong majority (75% or higher), agrees on one candidate to be recommended to the congregation for a vote at a special congregational meeting.
- The call committee chair contacts, by phone, the candidate, council president and bishop/synod staff.
- The council calls a special congregational meeting, according to the provisions of the congregation's constitution, for the purpose of voting to issue a Letter of Call to the candidate.
- The council president, council and bishop's office work out the salary/benefit package BEFORE the congregational meeting so that this information can be available at the congregational meeting.
- The call committee may recommend a return visit of the candidate/family for an "open house reception" prior to the congregational meeting and vote.
- Once a candidate has been recommended, the need for confidentiality is lessened, although it is recommended that the candidate's name and information be circulated "in-house" only (e.g. not in the newsletter, which may go to other congregations and people in the synod.)

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- There needs to be a quorum, as defined by the congregation's constitution, and the vote needs to be a WRITTEN BALLOT by 2/3 majority approval of those present.
 - The call committee chair should telephone the recommended candidate and the bishop immediately after the meeting.
 - The Letter of Call is completed and signed by two officers of the congregation and forwarded to the bishop for signature and mailing to candidate. Along with the Letter of Call, the completed Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor is also forwarded to the bishop.
 - Current compensation guidelines are found at http://www.mittensynod.org/news/pdfs/2008_09_Docs/2009_ELCA_Compensation_Guidelines.pdf

IF THE CANDIDATE ACCEPTS THE CALL

- Call committee chair contacts the pastor by telephone and welcomes him/her to the congregation.
- Call committee chair informs the bishop. Starting date for the pastor is set by congregation and pastor, in consultation with the bishop.
- Installation date will be set between the pastor, congregation and synod staff.
- Call committee chair sends a letter of thanks to the candidates no longer under consideration, and does so in a timely fashion.
- If there is a parsonage, any necessary repairs, renovations and cleaning should be completed before the pastor and family arrive.

IF THE CANDIDATE DOES NOT ACCEPT THE CALL

- Call committee chair informs the bishop/synod staff. Call committee chair send a letter of thanks to the candidate for considering the call. The bishop or bishop's designee will be in touch with the call committee chair to give directions for proceeding.

**All Rostered Leader Profiles should be shredded at the end of the process, or at any time interviewing with a candidate ceases.