



Upper Susquehanna Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Manual for Call Committees

May 18, 2017

C13.05. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a **Call Committee** of no more than six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

I. CALL COMMITTEE

A. Definition

The call committee, seeking God's will for the congregation through prayer, interviews, consulting of references, and conversation with one another, unanimously and wholeheartedly recommends a candidate to the Congregation Council for their consideration. Members of this committee may be invited to serve as a transition team for the newly called pastor's early ministry.

B. Accountability

The call committee is responsible to the council and to the council alone.

C. Composition

Normally, the call committee consists of six persons, no more than two of whom are members of the council, as specified by the congregation's constitution. Non-council members must be responsible voting members of the congregation. The call committee's membership should reflect the composition of the congregation; seek gender balance and include persons of various ages and length of congregational membership.

ORGANIZATION AND ORIENTATION

A. Call Committee Orientation

The conference dean will meet with the call committee to provide a basic orientation which will include an explanation of both responsibilities and procedures.

B. ORGANIZATION.

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

1. CHAIR OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

Communication among the candidate, call committee, and bishop's office is the responsibility of the chair of the call committee. The chair is responsible for leading meetings and also ensures that the candidate(s) and committee members are appropriately reimbursed for expenses (Appendix 6). All call committee and candidates' expenses 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 conference dean who, in turn, contacts the bishop's office.

2. SECRETARY OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

The secretary is to record the actions of the committee and to forward minutes of the committee to the conference dean. The secretary also writes letters of thanks and communicates with candidates following interviews. Conversations regarding candidates are not recorded.

3. CHAPLAIN OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

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

C. INSTALLATION OF THE CALL COMMITTEE.

This is an opportunity for prayerful commitment of the call committee members to their task, to ask God's blessings, to invite the prayers of the congregation throughout the process and to introduce the call committee to the congregation. The order in Appendix 1 is a sample order.

II. THE WORK OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

A. JOINT MEETING WITH COUNCIL/ MINISTRY SITE PROFILE (MSP)

The call committee meets jointly with the congregation council, the conference dean, and the assistant to the bishop, to review the "Ministry Site Profile." At this meeting the council has the opportunity to explain in detail information on the MSP as well as share any information they believe will help the call committee in its search process. The call committee can also ask questions of the council and synod representatives about the process and the MSP.

The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) provides congregations (single and multiple point parishes) a single, common form to use to describe their mission and their search for a rostered leader. Once completed and submitted, the MSP is stored within the ELCA's mobility database. Ministry Opportunities will make it possible for rostered leaders and others to search the database of MSPs to learn of ministry openings, to read a basic snapshot of information about each opening, and to learn about the appropriate contact person for each call process.

B. BISHOP AND ASSISTANT SELECT NAMES

The bishop and assistant to the bishop meet together to pray for congregations and pastors in the call process and to make recommendations to call committees needing names. Congregational profile materials (MSP) are shared with the bishop and assistant and needs of the congregation are discussed before names are selected. Normally the call committee is asked to work with up to three candidates at a time. Exception is made for "first-call" candidates so that the call committee works with only one candidate. Candidates recommended to the congregation may come from across the 65 synods of the ELCA and may include:

1. Seminarians requested and assigned to our synod. Assignments are made in the spring and fall.
2. Pastors who submit “Rostered Minister Profiles” and thereby express a willingness to be available for call.
3. Pastors recommended by members of the congregation (Appendix 2).
4. Pastors who ask to have their names submitted to a particular congregation.
5. Pastors who are asked to complete a “Rostered Minister Profile” and have conversation with a congregation because the study seems to indicate they would be an appropriate fit for ministry in a particular place.

All candidates *must be cleared by their bishops* in order to be considered for call. The call committee’s receipt of a “Rostered Leader Profile” from the bishop’s office is the assurance that this clearance has taken place. *Call Committees shall not approach a candidate directly*, including those recommended by congregation members, until the bishop’s office has been contacted and clearance has been received so that a candidate’s “Rostered Minister Profile” and the confidential recommendation of his/her synodical bishop can be reviewed.

C. THE COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS CANDIDATES.

The expectation is that call committees make contact with each candidate for whom “Rostered Minister Profiles” are received. When “Rostered Leader Profiles” are submitted to the call committee, the assistant to the bishop notifies the candidate that he or she is under consideration. The candidate will expect to hear from the call committee in a timely fashion. Initial interviews should be planned for the convenience of the candidate and the committee, and arranged by the committee chair. Normally a candidate is invited to the congregation or community for a first interview, but for candidates at a great distance the first conversation may be by Skype, a telephone conference call or by combining the interview with the visit to hear a candidate preach and see him/her preside at worship, assuming the candidate agrees. Call committees should provide candidates with forms to submit travel and other expenses for reimbursement (Appendix 6). Attention to hospitality is important. Candidates should be offered good directions, meals while in the community, and reservations at a hotel or motel if the interview involves traveling a significant distance. At this interview the candidate is forming an initial impression of the congregation and the community in the same way that the committee is forming an initial impression of the candidate.

D. 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 by the call committee. Sample letters are provided (Appendix 7). A telephone call would also be appropriate. The committee chair should be in touch with a candidate *at least once a month* while he/she is being considered, or when any decisions are made.

THE COMMITTEE MAY DECIDE:

1. TO CONTINUE WITH A CANDIDATE

The committee may decide to continue with a candidate in which case the committee will want to experience the candidate's preaching and worship leadership. Normally a neutral site is arranged by the conference dean. If that is not possible, the bishop's office will arrange for the candidate to preach in a congregation near enough for the call committee to visit. It is not possible for the candidate to be invited to the call committee's congregation to preach. The conversation with the candidate may continue until the call committee determines that this is not the person to be called, and returns the name to the bishop's office, or until the committee is ready to name the candidate as primary candidate.

2. TO RETURN CANDIDATE'S NAME

When the committee has determined that a candidate is not to be called to the congregation, the candidate is thanked and reimbursement for expenses is provided. All copies of the "Rostered Minister Profile" should be destroyed. Confidentiality is critical. Releasing even the name of a pastor who was considered but not recommended is always open to misrepresentation and may result in unnecessary difficulties in the congregation(s) currently served by a pastor.

E. THE COMMITTEE REPORTS THE INTERVIEW OUTCOME TO THE CONFERENCE DEAN AND ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP AND REQUESTS AN ADDITIONAL NAME IF NECESSARY.

A written evaluation (Appendix 8) of the candidate is mailed, or e-mailed, to the conference dean, who, in turns, shares it with the office of the bishop. Anything learned in the interview that might help to further identify candidates who would be appropriate matches is also shared.

III. RECOMMENDING A PRIMARY CANDIDATE TO THE COUNCIL

When the call committee is ready to *unanimously and wholeheartedly* recommend a primary candidate, the chair of the call committee contacts the pastor and invites him/her to be the primary candidate for referral to the congregation council. Following that decision, the chair of the call committee informs the bishop's office that such an invitation has been extended.

A. CLARIFICATION WITH PASTOR ABOUT BEING PRIMARY CANDIDATE.

If the pastor agrees to be the primary candidate, that pastor is not to be in conversation with any other call committee in any synod until this possibility for call is resolved. Also, the call committee considers no other pastor until this pastor's call is either extended or fails to be approved by the congregation council for recommendation to the

congregation. At this time any other candidates that have been interviewed are released from the process.

B. ARRANGE A JOINT MEETING

The call committee chair and council president arrange for a joint meeting of both the call committee and council with the candidate.

C. PRIOR TO THE MEETING WITH COUNCIL

The call committee shall provide copies of the candidate's Rostered Minister Profile and other important information to council members prior to their meeting. Such information shall be treated by council members as confidential and shall be destroyed if the candidate is not recommended by the council or called by the congregation.

D. THE CALL COMMITTEE MEETS WITH THE COUNCIL

At least one half hour prior to a joint meeting with the primary candidate, the call committee and council shall meet together to review materials and share with the council their reasons for recommending the candidate.

OR

It is also possible for the call committee to schedule a separate meeting with the council prior to the meeting among the candidate, call committee, and council. In such a case, the joint meeting would be scheduled for a later date.

E. THE DISCUSSION WITH THE PRIMARY CANDIDATE IS CARRIED TO ITS CONCLUSION.

The following topics need to be discussed between the pastor and a joint meeting with the congregation council and call committee: compensation and benefits package, vacation/continuing education, sick leave policy, sabbatical policy, parental leave, job description, and timeline for how the process will continue to unfold. The call committee may be asked to prepare a draft Letter of Call and Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor; however, the congregation council is finally responsible for the negotiation with the pastor. (Appendix 9; pages 25-27)

Discussion with the primary candidate continues to its conclusion, which might result in one of two possibilities:

1. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person IS NOT the one the Spirit is leading to be called by this congregation, the chair of the call committee communicates with the pastor and contacts the conference dean 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, a council vote is taken; and, if at least 2/3 agree to *recommend* the candidate to the congregation, the call committee chair person contacts the conference dean who, in turn, contacts the bishop's office.

The bishop is notified of the congregational meeting date and appoints the person who will preside (usually this person is a member of the synod council). At this time, the bishop's office sends: 1) a letter empowering the person conducting the congregational meeting; 2) the "Letter of Call" and 3) "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" form to be completed by the council chair (Appendix 9; pages 25-27; a fillable PDF can be downloaded from <http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>).

The date for the congregational meeting is determined after consulting the congregation's constitutional requirements for such special meetings.

Prior to the congregational meeting, the bishop's office determines that all papers are in order and consistent with synodical guidelines.

Arrangements are made by the council with the candidate for the candidate and his/her family to meet the congregation's members prior to the congregational meeting.

IV. THE CONGREGATION CONSIDERS THE CALL.

At the congregational meeting called to recommend the pastor at the agreed upon compensation/benefits package and starting date, a printed ballot giving an approval by a 2/3 majority of the votes cast will be required to issue a call.

The candidate presides at worship and preaches at the worship Service prior to the meeting. Immediately after the Service, the president of the congregation council opens the meeting, confirms that a quorum is present, states the purpose of the meeting, reads the council's recommendation to call the pastor, states the congregation's eligibility requirements for voting, and turns the meeting over to the synodical representative.

The synodical representative reads the call with all pertinent data, including the compensation and benefits package. An opportunity for questions by the members of the congregation shall be provided. The candidate for call may be asked to leave the meeting for a time of questions to the council and call committee and for the vote. If this happens, the call committee chaplain should accompany the candidate to a waiting area and remain with the candidate until the time for the announcement of the vote tally, at which time the candidate must be present.

Tellers shall be provided by the council to distribute, collect, and count the ballots. There should be four to six tellers who can then divide the ballots into two or three sections to hasten the balloting process. Ballots are provided by the synod office. Pencils are not needed. Normally the congregation waits until the vote is tabulated.

The synodical representative will provide the tellers with ballots when all questions have been answered. Absentee ballots are not permitted.

In a parish with more than one congregation, 2/3 of *all* the votes cast, and majority of the votes in *each* congregation shall be required for call.

A motion is not in order to have the vote declared unanimous by acclamation.

The results of the voting are announced to the congregation and to the candidate by the synodical representative. The meeting is then turned back to the council president who closes the meeting.

1. **IF THE CONGREGATION DOES NOT ISSUE THE CALL**, the decision is communicated to the conference dean and the bishop's office. The conference dean then contacts the chair of the call committee to discuss how best to proceed.
2. **IF THE CONGREGATION ISSUES THE CALL**, three copies of the "Letter of Call" and "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" forms are completed in their entirety, signed by the congregation president and secretary (in a multi-congregational setting by the joint council president and secretary), and mailed immediately to the bishop's office for the bishop's signature. The pastor may respond to the call immediately but shall take no longer than 10 days. If the call is accepted, it is appropriate for the call committee to be invited to serve as a transition committee (See Section X.B.).
3. **IF THE CONGREGATION ISSUES THE CALL AND THE PASTOR DECLINES THE CALL**, the president of the congregation council communicates this information to the congregation, the conference dean and the bishop's office immediately. The conference dean then contacts the call committee and/or the congregation council to discuss how best to proceed.
4. **WHEN THE CANDIDATE IS A SEMINARIAN**, a conversation needs to occur between the candidate and the bishop's office to address:
 - a) **ORDINATION**: A service of ordination is planned in consultation with the bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. The service normally takes place at the annual synod assembly, but, with the bishop's approval, may also occur in the congregation that has extended the call, or in the candidate's home congregation. Ordinations normally take place in the synod to which the ordinand is called.
 - b) **FIRST CALL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**: The ELCA has adopted a special continuing education process to help recent seminary graduates and the congregations they serve during the first three years of service under call. Participation in First Call Theological Education should be included on the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" attached to the "Letter of Call" (pages 25-27).

V. THE CALL IS ACCEPTED

This can be an exciting time of thanksgiving and looking ahead for a congregation and their pastor-elect. At the same time, it can be a difficult time for the pastor being called and his/her family. A congregation must be sensitive to the needs of its new pastor who is

leaving one ministry and moving to a new ministry that may be very different. A pastor who accepts a call must be sensitive to the congregation he or she is entering, and also to the congregation he or she is leaving. Each congregation is experiencing a transition, which includes both joy and grief.

There are six basic areas for consideration when a pastor has accepted a call. They are listed here, not necessarily in the order of their importance, but in the general order in which they occur.

A. STARTING TIME.

The time frame from acceptance of call to arrival may vary and should be agreed upon by both the pastor and congregation. The chair of the congregation council should consult with the newly called pastor to determine when the acceptance can be announced publicly. The acceptance of the call, the date it can be made public, and the starting date should be conveyed promptly to the conference dean who, in turn, contacts the bishop's office.

B. THE TRANSITION TEAM.

During this new ministry transition it is important for a congregation and its new pastor to share their expectations openly and negotiate priorities. A transition team can be very helpful during this time. It may be appropriate for the congregation council to ask the call committee to serve in this capacity, at least for six months, since they are often the ones who know the new pastor the best. In the course of selection, they have already enjoyed a frank and open relationship, and have begun to develop a sense of mutual ministry. If some members of the call committee feel they cannot serve, they can be replaced as needed. A transition team can meet regularly with the pastor and other staff persons to discuss mutual concerns. Together they can seek to develop and strengthen their ministry. Some beginning activities in which the transition team might be involved include the initial move and settling in of the new pastor and his/her family. Arrangements for moving are made between the council and the new pastor. (Note: The congregation is responsible for all moving expenses.)

C. THE INSTALLATION.

A date and time for the installation is established between the new pastor, the congregation, the dean of the conference and the bishop's office. The dean or bishop normally presides until the peace and then the newly installed pastor presides; the conference dean or the bishop normally presides over the liturgy of installation of the newly called pastor and the reception of his/her family as members of the congregation. The reception of the family may occur at another time if agreed upon by the pastor and his family. The new pastor and members of the congregation arrange the service and select other participants. A Eucharist is desired. The new pastor may choose to invite another pastor to preach or the dean will preach. The service of installation is held as soon as possible after the new pastor's arrival. The installation is normally scheduled for a Sunday afternoon or evening which enables

the conference dean, area rostered persons, and others in the community to attend. The pastor, in consultation with the congregation council, may want to designate an installation offering for a special cause. It is good to include a social event at the time of installation.

D. CARING FOR THE NEW PASTOR.

Caring for caregivers is a ministry that congregations can provide for their pastors. The transition team should keep the council and congregation aware of the need for adequate time for the pastor's spiritual, physical and emotional self-care. The needs of the pastor's family should be considered during the transition. The transition team should ensure that their new pastor has time for personal study, study in the company of others, participation in programs of continuing education and extended study. The congregation is expected to provide the new pastor the assistance, understanding, and financial resources needed for such study. Continuing education is an important time of renewal and learning for a pastor. Recent seminary graduates are expected to be involved in First Call Theological Education.

E. MINISTRY EVALUATION.

Evaluation is a normal process and is often scheduled for six months after the installation and annually thereafter. The leadership for this procedure may lie with the transition team, mutual ministry committee (staff support committee), or a committee established for this purpose. Such a process provides a way to periodically review how the ministry of the pastor and congregation meets shared expectations. Conflicts are reduced and effective ministry is enhanced when mutual expectations are clearly discussed. A list of resources for mutual ministry committees and a sample six-month ministry review are available. (<http://www.uss-elca.org/administration/>)

Contact information:

Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

P.O. Box 36

Lewisburg, PA 17837-0036

Voice: 570-524-9778 Fax: 570-524-9757

Email addresses:

Bishop Barbara Collins bpcollins@uss-elca.org

Pastor Craig Miller, Assistant to the Bishop, prcmiller@uss-elca.org

Mrs. Brenda Krouse, Office Manager, brenda@uss-elca.org

Conference Deans

Buffalo Valley Conference

Dean William Henderson, Christ, Lewisburg

pastor.celc@gmail.com

Office (570) 524-0745

Juniata Valley Conference

Dean James Park Bricker, Retired

gymbri@embarqmail.com

Cell (717) 512-1026

Middle Creek Conference

Dean Robert Doll, Sharon, Selinsgrove

robert.doll@sharonlc.org

Office (570) 374-8444

North Branch Conference

Dean John Koons

revjerk@hotmail.com

Office (570) 784-5035

Tulpehocken Conference

Dean Richard Fangmann, Zion, Sunbury

pastorrich@ptd.net

Office (570) 286-6459

West Branch Conference

Dean Kerry Aucker, St. John, Jersey Shore

kaucker1@comcast.net

Office (570) 398-1676

<p>APPENDIX 1:</p> <p>SERVICE OF INSTALLATION OF THE CALL COMMITTEE</p>

THIS ORDER FOLLOWS THE CREED. THE PEOPLE ARE SEATED

Presider: The following persons, having been chosen/elected to be the Call Committee, are asked to come forward as their names are read:

Presider:

Saint Paul writes: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability for some particular service to everyone. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. You have been appointed to a position of leadership and trust in this congregation. You are to seek the will of God and the mind and spirit of the congregation with regard to our pastoral needs.

You will examine the qualifications of prospective pastors, interview those who appear to be suitable candidates, and recommend only one person to the Congregation Council for its approval and recommendation regarding the issuance of a call by the congregation. In all your deliberations, you are to be examples of faith active in love, seeking to maintain the life, harmony and ministry of this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I now ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the Call Committee?

Response: We will

THE COMMITTEE FACES THE CONGREGATION, WHICH STANDS.

Pastor: People of God, I ask you, will you support these, your brothers and sisters in Christ, in their task,

and will you undergird their efforts with your prayers?

Cong.: **We will**

Presider: I now declare you installed as the Call Committee of this congregation in the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. God bless you and your work together in His name.

HERE FOLLOWS THE PRAYERS AND THE PEACE.

APPENDIX 2:
CONGREGATIONAL FORM FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations for Pastoral Candidates

The Call Committee welcomes your suggestion of possible candidates for our next pastor. Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be called as pastor. Clergy on the roster of our full communion partner churches may be considered under special circumstances and with the approval both of our synod's bishop and the candidate's bishop/judicatory head. The committee will take all nominations seriously and share those names with the office of the bishop. Please be aware, however, that candidates must be cleared by their bishops. Please do not approach a candidate directly.

I would like the call committee to consider this person for our next pastor:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Synod _____

Reason for Recommending _____

Your name _____

Phone number _____

Your congregation's name _____

Location of congregation _____

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

<p style="text-align: center;">APPENDIX 3: WORKING WITH “ROSTERED MINISTER PROFILES”</p>
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THE FORMS

The “Rostered Minister Profile” is a document that is common across the ELCA. This form is completed by the candidate and provides a candidate’s assessment of him/herself.

HOW CANDIDATES AND FORMS ARE SCREENED/PROCESSED AT SYNODICAL LEVEL:

Prior to providing the names of candidates and copies of their “Rostered Person Profile” to a call committee the following steps are taken by the Bishop and bishop’s staff:

1. Candidates’ consideration for call come from a variety of sources:
 - a. Profiles received from candidates from other synods interested in moving to the Upper Susquehanna Synod. These profiles have been cleared by the bishop of their synod.
 - b. Pastors from the Upper Susquehanna Synod who have indicated a willingness to be open to a new call.
 - c. Potential candidate names recommended by congregational members. Call committee chair shares appropriate names with synod. Once cleared through bishop’s office of the appropriate synod, the individuals are contacted to determine their willingness to consider a call at this time.
 - d. Pastors who request to have their names considered by a particular congregation.
 - e. Seminarians assigned to the Upper Susquehanna Synod.
 - f. Bishop’s staff sometimes asks a particular pastor to consider submitting forms because they feel that pastor has gifts that match a particular congregation.
3. Candidates who have gifts for serving our congregations are interviewed by a member of the bishop’s staff to get a better understanding of a candidate’s strengths, the preferred congregation size/setting, and other key factors that will help match them to particular congregations.
4. Each week 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. Names are shared with the call committee chair person and Rostered Minister Profile forms sent to the call committee. The candidate is informed by the bishop’s office that his/her name has been shared with the specific congregation and a copy of the Ministry Site Profile is sent to him/her. Receiving Rostered Minister Profile forms from the bishop’s office is a guarantee that the forms have come through proper channels.

HOW CALL COMMITTEES ARE ASKED TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS:

1. It is anticipated that call committees will make personal contact with each candidate. Therefore the profiles the committee receives are not for prescreening. The profiles are sent to help the call committee develop conversation and appropriate questions for a personal contact and interview(s) with the candidate. Use profiles as a springboard for conversation. Never dismiss a candidate on the basis of the profile alone. Always feel free to contact the bishop’s staff person with questions and/or concerns prior to contacting a candidate. That person will gladly share the reasons a particular profile was provided to the committee.

2. Remember that the profiles are completed by the candidates. The “essay” answers give a great wealth of information on leadership styles, worship preferences, theological stances, and ministry priorities. Pay attention to these to help design questions and generate conversation. The ranking sheets are so subjective that they are of little value in evaluation but again can provide opportunity for conversation. Feel free to ask about any ranking if you have questions.
3. One person from the call committee can have initial conversation with the candidate and set up a time for an interview. Face to face interviews are by far the best. If the candidate has to travel a long distance an initial phone interview might be held and/or the conversation may be combined with the visit to see and hear the candidate at a neutral site. The candidate is aware you have their “Rostered Minister Profile” so having it present at the interview is perfectly acceptable.
4. You are reminded that though this process is not secretive, it is confidential. Therefore be sure that “Rostered Minister Profiles” are kept only to the hands and eyes of the call committee. If you duplicate the profiles for the committee make sure a committee member does the duplication process. Profiles should be destroyed following their use.
5. The ““Rostered Minister Profile” contains references. Check references usually after a first interview if you think the conversation will go further.
6. Background checks are required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for pastors beginning every new call. (See the Synod’s Child Protection Policy for additional information about how to obtain clearances. www.uss-elca.org) These clearances need only be obtained from the candidate that you recommend to the congregation council.

<p>APPENDIX 4:</p> <p>CONGREGATION AND COMMUNITY PACKET</p>

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

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

Helpful items to include in the packet are

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

APPENDIX 5:
PREPARING FOR THE FIRST CONVERSATION WITH A CANDIDATE
IDENTIFYING COMPETENCIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

As the call committee reflects on the needs of the congregation, it should develop a list of competencies and characteristics, based on the congregation's profile, it believes will complement the congregation. "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 CONVERSATION

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

EXAMPLES

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

If the desired competency is "clearly articulates Christian faith," the committee might say, "Give us a specific example of a time when someone came to you with a crisis of faith. Tell us your response and why you responded in the way you did. What was the outcome of your involvement in this person's crisis of faith?" This competency can also be discerned by listening to a sermon, in person (typically after the first interview) and/or by video or audio tape. If the desired characteristic is "good relational gifts" that characteristic should be observed during the interview through the candidate's eye contact, body language, facial expression, attitude, conversational style, etc.

“THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE CANDIDATE PASTOR AND THE CALL COMMITTEE”

The following is a listing of "conversation points" for a discussion between the Candidate Pastor and the Call Committee. The questions and areas of discussion are purely suggestions. The initiative of the pastor and the committee will be brought into action as the discussion/proceeds. The basic objective of the conversation is to secure an understanding of the concepts of the ministry, one to the other.

Call committees might want to discuss their own responses to these questions before interviewing candidates. Such a conversation could help to determine which questions you want to ask and how you want to ask them.

I. THE IMAGE OF THE MINISTRY

- How do you conceive of the work of the ministry in the congregation?
- What is your style of ministry?
- What is the place of the laity in ministry?
- How do you view the following:
 - "The purpose of the pastor is to assist the laity to be the church in worship, nurture, and at work in the world!"
- From a review of the congregation's Mission Statement and Congregational Mission Profile, do you see areas of conflict?
- How do you see the pastor and laity assisting each other in your concept of ministry?
 - What roles or functions do you see the pastor assuming? The laity assuming?
- What concepts do you hold relating to "innovation" in traditional worship? What are your views of contemporary worship?
- What is the chief function of the pastor in worship?
- What is the place of worship in private life, family life, and the corporate Body of Christ in the local congregation?
- What are your concepts of worship?

II. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

- What do you expect the sermon is doing for us in worship?
- What is the role of the laity in worship?
- What is the place of Holy Communion in worship? How often should it be celebrated?
- At what age do you believe someone should be admitted to first Holy Communion?

III. OF PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. How do you look upon the position of the pastor in visitation, such as:
 - a. to the elderly;
 - b. to the shut-ins;
 - c. to the sick and hospitalized;
 - d. to persons in distress;
 - e. to persons with moral problems;
 - f. to persons with marital problems;
 - g. for social purposes?
2. How much of the responsibility for visitation should be shared by trained groups of the laity? Which areas should be the pastor's sole responsibility?
3. What are your concepts of:
 - a. premarital counseling/education;
 - b. pre-baptismal counseling;
 - c. pre-confirmation counseling?
4. What is the role of the pastor and the laity at the time of death in the congregation? Would there be a need to establish some procedural principles in this regard?
5. What is your concept of assisting the laity to perform their tasks in the church?

IV. EVANGELISM

1. What is your concept of evangelism?
2. What type of plan do you envision for training children, youth and adults for church membership? Do you see this as the pastor's responsibility?
3. If the laity are to be involved here, do you feel qualified to train the laity for it?
4. What types of involvement do you see in order to maintain and increase spiritual growth and understanding of post-confirmation youth?
5. What is your understanding of membership in a congregation as opposed to discipleship?

V. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. How do you view Christian Education and its role in the parish program?
2. Do you have special gifts in any special areas or ages for Christian Education?
3. What is your view of Confirmation Ministry? Do you believe the pastor should be the instructor?
4. What are your views of first communion instruction? Do you believe the pastor should be the instructor?
5. What are your views on training, assisting and supervising lay teachers?
6. How about such other items as: qualifications for teaching; short- term teaching; recruitment methods; the utilization of talents?

VI. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- How do you view this statement:
Organizationally, the health of the congregation would be evidenced by an increase in
 - spiritual depth and witness of members;
 - group interdependency;
 - the maximum use of both human and physical resources;
 - goals toward which these resources are matched and directed;
 - each group performing its function to the welfare and progress of the
 - whole;
 - the ability to resolve conflict, constructively;
 - the ability to identify the Mission and purposes of the church and
 - to pursue it with commitment.
- In planning, would you support and encourage committee planning;
 - committee development of resource needs;
 - annual evaluations by working committees;
 - goals set annually by committee evaluations;?
- How do you feel about an annual parish review and evaluation, made between the key laity and the pastor, including such items as:
 - goal attainment;
 - membership and other parochial report items;
 - the degree of accomplishment by pastor and congregation toward their mutually agreed upon role in the church's mission?
- Would you favor the establishment of criteria for parish, pastoral and lay evaluation to enable pastor and laity to measure their mutual effectiveness?
- What are your thoughts about an "assimilation plan" whereby new members are introduced into church service immediately upon their reception as members?

VII. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ACTION

- What is your concept of the pastor's role in community activities?
- How do you view the speaking on social or political issues by the pastor?
- What is the place of the pastor in social action?

VIII. CONNECTIONAL INVOLVEMENTS

- To what extent do you see your role in Conference; Synod, Churchwide?
- What are your thoughts about local and synodical mission support (benevolence)?
- What are your views on ecumenical involvements at the local level?
- How do you help a congregation to be connected to the Conference, Synod, Churchwide?

IX. CAMPUS MINISTRY

- What role do you see in campus ministry as pastor; as congregation?
- How do you view this ministry in conjunction with the local parish?

X. PERSONAL LIFE AND THE PARISH FAMILY

- What views do you and your spouse/ family have relating to their involvement in parish life? -in community affairs- employment, etc.
- Have you included continuing education as a part of your regular activities?
- What has been your experience of living in a parsonage? of living in the same community as the church? of living outside the community of the church?
- How important is it for the pastor to live in the same community as the congregation?

XI. GENERAL

- What is your experience of the Mutual Ministry Committee?
- Would you be open to the Call Committee serving as a Transition Committee for the first six months prior to the appointment of a Mutual Ministry Committee?
- What other items would you wish to discuss with the committee?

XII. SPECIAL EMPHASES OF THE PARISH

(Here, special probing would be desirable in the areas of the special Needs of the congregation as may have been secured through the "Congregational Mission Profile."

<p style="text-align: center;">APPENDIX 6: STATEMENT OF EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE CALL PROCESS</p>

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State Zip _____

Description of Expenses:

Travel: _____

Auto: miles @ (current IRS Standard) \$ _____

Air Fare: \$ _____

Auto Rental: \$ _____

Meals: \$ _____

Lodging: \$ _____

Telephone, Postage, Fax: \$ _____

Other Expenses (please list): \$ _____

TOTAL EXPENSES TO BE REIMBURSED \$ _____

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

APPENDIX 7:
SAMPLE LETTERS FROM A CALL COMMITTEE

Dear ,

On behalf of the call committee, I want to thank you (and spouse's name) for visiting with us as a beginning step toward consideration of a call to _____ Church. We were pleased with the openness and depth of our conversation. If it is agreeable with you, we would like to leave your name on our call list with the understanding that we are still in the process of deciding on a primary candidate. We will continue to keep you informed of our progress.

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

Sincerely,
Call Committee Chair

cc: bishop or bishop's staff person

Dear ,

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

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

Again, we thank you for your time and interest. If you return the enclosed form to me I will see that you are reimbursed for your expenses.

Please feel free to call me if you have questions or concerns.

Our prayers are with you in your ministry.

Sincerely,
Call Committee Chair
cc: bishop or bishop's staff person

APPENDIX 8: CANDIDATE EVALUATION FORM

Name of Candidate:

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

- 1. What kind of contact did you have?**
- 2. For which of your competencies and characteristics was this candidate a good match?**
- 3. For which of your competencies and characteristics was this candidate not a good match?**
- 4. What were the major strengths of the candidate?**
- 5. What were significant areas of growth for the candidate?**
- 6. What words would you use to describe this candidate's ministry style?**
- 7. What other factors affected your decision?**

Please mail, e-mail or FAX to the bishop's staff person working with you. (FAX 570-524-9757)

DO YOU NEED AN ADDITIONAL NAME? ☐ Yes ☐ No


Call Committee Chair

Congregation:

City / State: Zip:

**APPENDIX 9: LETTER OF CALL
DEFINITION OF COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF
THE PASTOR
OTHER RESOURCES**

The bishop's office will prepare copies of the Letter of Call for signature by the congregation president and vice president following the vote to call the pastor.


LETTER OF CALL
TO AN ORDAINED MINISTER OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,
AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

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

a congregation of the

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
meeting on

extends to you this call to serve as

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

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

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

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

President

Secretary

Attested by _____
Bishop of the _____
Date of bishop's signing _____

Additional important resources:

Portico Benefits Services EmployerLink has helpful calculators for determining pension and health care costs (<https://.employerlink.porticobenefits.org/home>, look under the "Resources" tab.

Compensation guidelines for the Upper Susquehanna Synod can be found on the website (<http://www.uss-elca.org/administration/> in the Finances heading.

Definition of Compensation, Benefits, And Responsibilities of the Pastor

(A FILLABLE PDF VERSION OF THIS FORM IS AVAILABLE ON [THE ELCA WEBSITE](http://www.elca.org))

Prepared by _____
for the Reverend _____
for the period: _____ to _____

A. COMPENSATION

The congregation will provide the following annual compensation:

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

B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS

The congregation will sponsor the pastor in the Pension and Other Benefits Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which provides retirement, disability, survivor, and medical-dental coverage.

(Sponsorship will include medical-dental coverage for the individual's spouse and children unless they have other employer-provided group medical insurance coverage and the individual consents to waiving medical-dental coverage for them under the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program.)

1. ELCA Pension at _____ % of defined compensation
2. ELCA Medical-and-Dental Insurance (check one below):
☐ a. Member only ☐ c. Member and children ☐ e. Coverage waived
☐ b. Member and spouse ☐ d. Member, spouse, and children
3. Other insurance or benefits: _____ \$ _____
_____ \$ _____

C. EXPENSES

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

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

D. AGREEMENT

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

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

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

<or the following may be completed>

E. OTHER PROVISIONS

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

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

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

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

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

F. OTHER MATTERS

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

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

Congregation President

Council Secretary

Date: _____

