

PASTORAL TRANSITIONS

THE CALL PROCESS AT A GLANCE

1. Council and Congregation receive resignation of the pastor.
 - *(Copy of resignation letter sent to bishop by pastor)*
2. The Bishop meets with the council either when the pastor's resignation is tendered or soon thereafter.
3. Council/Congregation bring about appropriate closure with resigning pastor.
 - *(Copy of letter certifying records are in order sent by council secretary to bishop)*
4. Council and bishop discuss interim ministry.
5. Council, Conference Dean, and Interim Pastor meet to complete a letter of agreement regarding interim ministry.
 - *(Copy of interim agreement sent to synod. See appendix 7 in "A Guide for Congregation Councils re: Pastoral Vacancies")*
6. Interim pastor at a regularly called council meeting discusses the process for congregation self-study in preparation for completing the Ministry Site Profile (MSP).
 - Council arranges for the self-study process to involve as many members or the congregation and its surrounding community as possible.
7. Council meets with the dean or Assistant to the Bishop for a brief explanation of call process and a discussion of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP).
 - *Copies are provided of "Frequently Asked Questions About the Call Process" and "the Call Process at a Glance."*
 - *The Council President is provided a copy of the Manual for Call Committees that eventually will be shared with the Call Committee.*
8. Council determines compensation range for new pastor and decides if they are seeking a pastor who is fulltime/part-time and appropriate years of service.
9. Council and others meet jointly to work on "Ministry Site Profile."
 - *The completed profile is reviewed by the conference dean.*
 - *The final profile is posted on the ELCA website and shared with the congregation.*
10. Call Committee is appointed/elected according to the congregation's constitution (usually six members no more than two of whom may be council members).
11. Call committee receives orientation from synod staff, selects committee chair, secretary and chaplain, and discusses the call process in detail.
12. Call committee is installed near the time their work of interviewing candidates begins.
13. Bishop's staff reviews Rostered Leader Profiles for possible candidates to refer to the call committee including any nominations from congregation.
 - *(Bishop's staff verifies proper "Rostered Leader Profiles" through a candidate's synod office and contacts candidates to determine potential interest in call process)*
14. Call committee seeks God's guidance as they begin interview process for pastor.

15. Call committee receives “Rostered Leader Profile(s)” from bishop’s office.
16. Call committee makes contact with candidate(s) shortly after “Rostered Leader Profile(s)” are received from bishop’s office.
 - Interaction with each candidate usually follows a progressive process until a candidate is either released or is recommended to council: 1) phone contact; 2) initial interview; 3) phone follow-up; 4) arranging opportunity to hear/see candidate preach/preside at a neutral site; 5) phone or face-to-face follow-up; 6) 2nd interview with call committee if desired; 7) meeting of call committee with council to make a unanimous recommendation; 7) primary candidate meets with council to discuss compensation and benefits; 8) primary candidate recommended by council (at least 2/3 vote) to congregation for call vote.
17. Call committee continues the interview process keeping in frequent contact with council, congregation and conference dean.
 - Communication with congregation is essential. Names of candidates are NOT revealed until congregation is informed of call vote.
18. Call committee narrows selection to one candidate whom they believe has been led to them by God, and asks that person to be the primary candidate. A unanimous recommendation is required.
19. Call committee meets with council to recommend primary candidate.
20. Council meets with the candidate and makes a recommendation to extend call after having discussed compensation and benefits (this may take more than one meeting). At least a 2/3 vote is required.
21. Special congregational meeting is called in accordance with the constitution; bishop’s office and candidate are notified first. Bishop’s office appoints synod council member to attend and conduct voting. Bishop’s office mails paperwork appropriate for meeting to synod council representative and council president.
22. Council president or designee completes “Letter of Call” and “Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor” form and mails to bishop’s office for approval prior to meeting.
23. Council announces meeting date to congregation and makes arrangements for candidate’s visit.
24. Candidate is normally introduced to congregation’s members prior to congregational meeting.
25. Candidate normally preaches and presides at the worship service on the same day as the congregational meeting.
26. Council president calls congregational meeting to order. Synodical representative conducts the meeting’s business and congregational vote. Congregation votes to extend the call and approves compensation package.
27. Pastor discerns and accepts or declines the call either immediately or within 10 days.

If the pastor accepts the call:

28. Call paperwork is completed and sent to bishop's office.
 - (Three copies of signed "Letter of Call" and "Definitions of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of Pastor")
29. Plans are made to welcome the new pastor.
30. Installation arranged with new pastor, congregation and conference dean.
 - (Ordination service for a seminarian is planned by the bishop's office.)
31. Transition Team (often the former Call Committee) assists the newly called pastor in his/her transition to the community and congregation.

If the pastor declines the call:

28. The conference dean and bishop are immediately informed.
29. The call committee is provided additional candidates and the process resumes.