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Northeastern Minnesota Synod

FIVE STEPS OF CALL PROCESS

Condensed Version for Call Committee & Church Council

1. PASTORAL VACANCY OCCURS

- a. Pastor resigns or retires
- b. Synod informed of resignation/retirement
- c. Honor the outgoing pastor/family
- d. Conduct an exit interview with pastor
- e. Settle all accounts with pastor.
- f. Attest that all parochial reports are current (Parochial forms available on ELCA website. Form stating records are in good order is included in the Church Council Pastoral Transition packet.)
- g. Synod staff member meets with council to explain next steps.

2. INTERIM PERIOD

- a. Transitional Ministry Forms
 - i. Pulpit Supply - Sunday worship and possible emergency pastoral care (list of those who may provide pulpit supply is found on the NEMN Synod Website www.nemnsynod.org - click resources.)
 - ii. Part time Supply - pastoral supply beyond basic needs...may be half to full time depending upon needs. Contact synod to arrange.
 - iii. Intentional Interim - a trained or experienced Interim Pastor who will focus on specific issues and needs with the congregation to be fully prepared for the call process. Contact synod to arrange.
- b. Selection of Call Committee - congregational constitution determines the number and selection.
- c. Role of Church Council is to focus on mission, oversee ongoing ministries, communicate with congregation, arrange for pastoral care.

3. CALL PROCESS

- a. Synod staff member meets with whole Call Committee to explain the process.
- b. Call Committee completes the Ministry Site Profile (Call Committee can use transition team, council and congregation to assist in compiling the information.)
- c. MSP received by Synod staff person working with Call Committee - search begins.



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d. Names of pastoral candidates are sought.

- i. Synod staff searches for appropriate candidates to submit for congregational consideration.
 - ii. Names of potential candidates can be received from members of the congregation. Chair of the Call Committee contacts Synod staff with name and follow-up ensues.
 - iii. Pastors may nominate themselves for consideration.
- e. Candidate characteristics to be considered availability, congregational “fit” and ability. Age, sex, race and marital status are not to be considered as primary Factors. Congregations are not under an obligation to consider the names of candidates who are in a same-gendered partnered relationship (ELCA Church Wide Assembly decision 2009)
- f. Any expenses incurred by the Call Committee are to be paid by the congregation I.e.mileage, hotel, etc.

g. The Interview.

- i. Call Committee receives and reviews pastor’s Rostered Leader Profile.
CONFIDENTIALITY IS TO BE MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES!
- ii. Call Committee may receive multiple Rostered Leader Profile’s simultaneously for interview consideration.
- iii. Call Committee is encouraged to conduct a “mock” interview with a nearby pastor who is not available for them to call. Synod staff will arrange for the interview should the Call Committee so desire.
- iv. The interview includes a formal interview, a tour of facilities (parsonage, if available) and community, and, most often, a meal at which informal conversation takes place. It is helpful if the Call Committee can compile a “hospitality” packet of the area and congregation (Chamber of Commerce publications, real estate guides, prior year Annual Meeting report, church newsletter and bulletin, local newspaper, pertinent brochures which relate to congregational ministry.)
- v. Following the interview, the Call Committee may go to hear a candidate preach in his/her congregation. If candidate is “On Leave from Call” status or is called to a congregation outside of the state, it may be possible for Synod staff to arrange for the candidate to preach at a congregation closer to the congregation. You may also ask the candidate if they have a DVD, audio resource or youtube site available.
- vi. **Candidate of Choice** should be unanimous or consensus decision by the Call Committee.



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- vii. Call Committee recommends "Candidate of Choice" to the Church Council after informing the candidate that she/he has been selected.
- viii. Congregations are responsible for conducting the appropriate background check on the candidate. They are also responsible for providing proof to of a completed/cleared background check to the synod office.

4. CALLING THE NEW PASTOR

- a. Candidate of Choice and family are invited to worship with the congregation. They are introduced and have an opportunity to meet members of the congregation. A time to Meet with the Church Council is generally scheduled during this time.
- b. Church Council does not re-interview candidate. Items for discussion generally concern compensation, as well as the mission and ministry of the congregation.
- c. Church Council sets date for a special congregational meeting to vote to elect the Candidate of Choice as pastor. Two paper ballot votes are taken at that congregational meeting:
 - i. To extend the Letter of Call to The Rev. _____ to serve as Pastor at _____ Lutheran Church.
 - ii. To accept the compensation package as proposed by Congregation Council.
- d. The "Letter of Call" (received from the synod office) is sent to the Bishop with appropriate signatures following a favorable vote. After receiving the Letter of Call, and the completion of the MN Statute 604.20 (sexual misconduct) background check, the Bishop signs the Letter of Call and it is sent to the pastor-elect. Congregations are responsible for providing proof that a reputable back ground check has been done on the Candidate of Choice (with their permission) and that it has come back "clear." The Bishop will not sign a Letter of Call until the synod office has a copy of that documentation.
- e. The pastor-elect has 30 days to accept or reject the Call.
- f. When the Call is accepted, the transition time is negotiated, usually within 45 days of accepting the Call. If the pastor is in a current call, a 30 day notice must be given to the congregation.

5. WELCOME AND INSTALLATION

- a. Congregation is responsible for moving expenses.
- b. In the first 4-6 weeks, pastor is to be installed by the Bishop or Bishop's designee. Church Council and Call Committee help with the arrangements.