



Call Process

STEP 5: THE WORK OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

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ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

The Call Committee Chairperson can be appointed by the Church Council or be elected by the Committee itself. The leaders include a Chair, Recording Secretary, and a Correspondent. It is advisable to have one Church Council member as a liaison/advisor on the Call Committee.

- **Chair** convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, may be the primary contact with candidates, will likely also be the contact person with the Bishop's Office and oversees the Call Process.
- **Secretary** keeps the minutes of Call Committee meetings. While motions may not necessarily be made, committee assignments need to be recorded for future reference. The Secretary may also be responsible for final preparation of the Congregational Profile.
- **Correspondent** is responsible for written communication between candidates and the committee (letters informing candidates of committee's time line and the interview process to be used, confirming invitations, travel arrangements, thank you notes, and letters informing candidates of decisions reached), sends copies of correspondence to the synod office, and may write the newsletter articles, notes for Sunday bulletins, etc. which keep the congregation informed of committee's progress. The Secretary can act as the correspondent.

CONFIDENTIALITY in the Call Committee discussions should be clearly agreed upon at the first meeting. Issues that are discussed about candidates need to be open and forthright among the members of the committee. However, these discussions should be kept in confidence between the Call Committee members.

A specific time line for the Call Committee should be put into place, and announced to the congregation, so that everyone is relating to the same schedule. This time line may be modified as the Call Process unfolds, and any changes also need to be communicated to the congregation.

A plan for regular communication to the congregation should be developed. This would include Sunday bulletin information, Sunday short informational updates, newsletter articles, bulletin board updates from the call committee. It is important to never disclose names of candidates being interviewed, but comments about "interviews being conducted" or "reviewing names of potential candidates for interview" are okay.

A biography page or vitae and picture of candidate and family can be printed and shared with hand-outs only on the day of the congregational vote so members can see some information about the candidate and comments from the call committee presenting rationale for the recommended candidate.

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A THEOLOGICAL PREFACE OF THE CALL

What the Augsburg Confessions Says:

We cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works or satisfactions. We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us¹.

To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, and those who hear the Gospel².

Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call³.

All Christians are called to the ministry of serving God and neighbor, but for the sake of good order in the church certain Christians are specially called to the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The Call to Ordained Ministry and the Call to a Specific Ministry

It is through the church that God calls certain Christians to ordained ministry. Once that call is discerned, the candidate devotes years to study, training and preparation under the guidance of the whole church through the Bishop and the Candidacy Committee.

In a similar way, it is through the church that God calls ordained ministers to a specific pastorate. Not only does the local congregation participate in the call process, but so does the whole church through the office of the Bishop. Just as the whole church took an active role in the call to ordination, so now the whole church takes an active role in the call to a specific ministry.

This is shown in the fact that once a person is approved for ordination, the candidate must receive and accept a call to a specific ministry in order to be ordained. Ordination may occur in a local church, but it is always ordination by the whole church as shown in the presence of the Bishop at the ordination service.

The Partnership Between the Whole Church and the Local Church

The local church is fully the church, but the local church is not all the church there is. The local church calls a person to be its pastor, but the whole church everywhere has a stake in who is called and how the call process is handled.

The Call Committee, the Congregation Council, and eventually the entire congregation all participate fully in the process, but so does the Bishop, who represents both the interest and the commitment of the whole church in seeing that the pastor called is suited to ministry under the call that is extended.

The Bishop has deep concern for the well being of the congregation's life and ministry, having reviewed its profile carefully. The Bishop also has deep concern about the person and gifts of the prospective pastor. In the call process the Bishop, the congregation and the prospective pastor work together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring about a new partnership that is faithful to the Gospel, empowers the local church in its ministry, and strengthens the whole church as people of God.

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The Call Process is Unique

On the basis of our Lutheran theology, a pastor is *called* to serve a congregation, *not hired*. The call process is not the same as the hiring process in other parts of society. Any pattern that includes head hunting, resume shuffling, or high anxiety interviews is highly inappropriate in the calling of a pastor.

Neither is the call process like a beauty contest in which hosts of candidates present themselves to their best advantage so the Call Committee can select one as the winner.

The Lutheran call process is unique because it is an effort to discern what God wants for this local church and for the whole church, in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

The Right Question

Therefore it is not appropriate for a Call Committee to be guided chiefly by such questions as these: Will the congregation like this pastor? Will it approve of the Call Committee's choice of candidates? Will people feel good having this pastor around on Sunday morning? Will this person do for now until a better pastor comes along?

The foremost question for the Call Committee always is whether this is the person God requires this congregation to have as its pastor. Human preferences and personalities never come before the mission to which God calls his church. That is why every meeting of the Call Committee will include prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

The Significance of Service on a Call Committee

Many people report that serving on a Call Committee turned out to be one of the most important things they ever did as members of the church. It allowed them to experience firsthand how the Holy Spirit works through committed Christians to help the church be faithful to its calling. It gave them an opportunity to see how the local church is vitally connected to the whole church. And it let them participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their church as part of the history-long, worldwide Church of Jesus Christ.

¹ Article IV, The Augsburg Confession, Fortress Press, 1959

² Article V, The Augsburg Confession, Fortress Press, 1959

³ Article XIV, The Augsburg Confession, Fortress Press, 1959

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ARE PASTORS CALLED OR HIRED TO DO MINISTRY?

It's a question that pastors and parishioners haggle over from time to time. Be careful how you answer, though. The question is trickier than it appears at first to be.

Some church folk, especially clergy, assume that the best—if not the only—answer is that pastors are *called*. That's why we appoint call committees to lead churches through the call process before issuing a Letter of Call to a new pastor. There's a long history and a rich set of faith convictions behind that little verb *call*.

Saying that pastors are called acknowledges that God is at work in the process whereby some folks end up presiding at pulpits, altars and baptismal fonts. God uses common, ordinary means to bring us the gospel—water, words, bread, wine. To that list we might well add *vocal cords*. God stoops to visit us in the Word that pastors are called to proclaim.

We believe that "the Church's call is God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament" (from the liturgy for ordination in *Occasional Service Book*, p.193). And there is comfort in that for pastors and for parishioners alike. Pastors can go about their work with a lively sense that God has commandeered them for service. Members of congregations can look past their pastor's foibles and failings, knowing that God stands behind the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Are pastors called or hired? They are most certainly called! But how do we say that in a way that avoids elitism or clericalism, holding up instead the servant nature of pastoral ministry? Pastors are well advised to remember that although they are called—by the Church and by God—they remain accountable to both.

Pros and Cons of "Hired" Language

Some Christians find it more natural to talk about pastors being *hired* to do ministry. The Letter of Call, they point out, looks a lot like an employment contract. Congregations and pastors state expectations of one another. Pastors expect a spirit of cooperation and adequate compensation. Congregations expect hard work and faithfulness.

There is danger in emphasizing the "hired" aspect of pastoral ministry too much. Congregations can start to think they have the pastor in their back pocket. They then risk forgetting that pastors are under obligation to speak the "whole counsel of God," telling parishioners not just what they *want* to hear but what they *need* to hear. With good reason, the writer of 2 Timothy warned about a time "when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth, and will wander away to myths" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Ignoring or downplaying the "hired" aspect of pastoral ministry poses other problems. The Church is a complicated reality. It is a spiritual communion created by God. It also lives in the world as one of many institutions. As such, the church has structures and defining documents and ways of mobilizing resources and people—all to advance the mission God has given us.

Insofar as pastors work at the behest of and on behalf of a church that is incarnated institutionally, they are not only called but also *hired*. As hired servants of the church, pastors should be regarded with respect and treated with fairness. In very tangible ways they will also be held accountable by the church.

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A Holy Synergy

So what is the correct answer: "Are pastors *called* or *hired*?" Any response that fails to take seriously *both* verbs, falls short. Are pastors called or hired? The answer is: Yes!

If neither verb—called or hired— exhausts the meaning of the relationship between pastor and people, have we said enough? No.

We must go one step farther. The Apostle Paul used two related terms to speak of his friend Titus: "He is my partner and co-worker in your service" (2 Cor. 8:23).

Paul spoke of Titus as a *partner*. The word in the original language of the New Testament is related to the idea of *koinonia*, that deep and abiding fellowship shared by all who are in Christ.

Paul also described Titus as a *co-worker*. The original Greek word here is *synergos*, from which we derive the modern term *synergy*. A synergy is set up when two realities interact in ways that move far beyond what either reality—on its own—might accomplish.

Here we arrive at language that suggests how pastors and parishioners might move beyond the "called/hired" debate. What is *God* up to in bringing pastors and people together? God is creating a holy synergy, forging a partnership for the sake of the Gospel in which both partners *together* will do far more than they might ever accomplish individually.

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EXPECTATIONS

What do you and this congregation expect of your pastor?

In...

- Worship
- Learning, Teaching
- Stewardship leadership
- Fellowship leadership
- Witness, Evangelism, Outreach
- Pastoral Care
- Communication
- Administration
- Ecumenical leadership
- Leadership in Synod/Wider Church
- Service Projects
- Other

What can or should your pastor expect of you?

In...

- Support of family and time for family life, or personal time if single
- Compensation package
- Continuing education opportunities
- Opportunities to lead in Synod and Churchwide
- Support through your prayers
- Honor and respect him/her as a leader in our Church
- Other...

You may wish to review the Service of Installation of a Pastor in Step 7 of this manual as regards to the questions of the pastor and the congregation's responses in regard to expectations for the pastor and congregation.

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HOW DO YOU GET NAMES OF CANDIDATES?

1. **Ask the congregation to nominate candidates.**

- ▶ **The Pastoral Candidate Nomination Form-** is included in the Addendum of this Step 5. It is recommended that you announce that you are receiving names from the congregation and give a deadline for submission of names. This list of candidates should then be sent to the synod office.

2. **Pastors in the SEMN Synod who hear of a vacancy can call the synod office** and ask that their name and Rostered Leader Profile be submitted to a congregation for call.

3. **The bishop and synod staff nominate candidates.**

On the basis of the Ministry Site Profile and job description, the bishop and synod staff will submit to the call committee the names of pastors who seem to "match" the profile.

ALL CANDIDATES PAPERS - (Rostered Leader Profiles) will be sent by e-mail to the CALL CHAIR in a PDF FORMAT to be reviewed with the CALL COMMITTEE.

All candidates presented for consideration should be contacted (at least by phone). The candidates receive a copy of the congregation's Ministry Site Profile and they are told that they will be contacted by the call committee. Please do not eliminate a candidate without at least one conversation. If you choose not to interview a candidate please send that candidate a letter explaining that you will not be interviewing him/her. (Letter Samples are contained in the Addendum of this Step 5.)

For Your Information

Listed here is a summary of some reasons a pastor may not be available to interview at the present time:

1. The pastor has been in his/her present call a fairly short time. Across the ELCA, normally a pastor is not recommended for a new call if that pastor has served in their present setting for 3 years or less.
2. Family considerations can play a significant role for some pastors and their availability. The age and schooling of children, the spouse's occupation, or care for parents or other family members are all examples.
3. Sometimes a pastor is restricted to a particular area due to matters like custody of children or other obligations.
4. Some pastors do not feel comfortable serving in certain settings. A person raised in a city may not be a good leader in a rural setting, or vice versa, for example. This may also be an issue for other family members, too.
5. The congregation where the pastor currently is serving may be in the midst of a major project or program. A new building program is an example. This might cause a pastor to feel the need to not be considered.

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INTERVIEWING A PASTOR

TIMING IS EVERYTHING!

One of the most interesting and exciting parts of the call process is meeting and interviewing a candidate for call. Once you have decided to interview a candidate, invite the candidate to come to your community for an interview with the call committee. It usually saves time to make these arrangements by telephone.

I. Preparing for the Interview

- A. Call a meeting before any interviews are held.
- B. At this meeting decide:
 - 1. What questions will be asked each candidate
 - 2. Length of time each interview will run
 - 3. Whether or not the spouse will be invited
- C. Send the following information to each candidate prior to the interview:
 - 1. Annual report
 - 2. Recent bulletins
 - 3. Newsletter
 - 4. Constitution
 - 5. Mission statement
 - 6. Community information such as schools, parks, local newspaper, cultural opportunities, recreational opportunities
 - 7. Other information you consider pertinent to your situation
- D. The Synod will provide each candidate with a copy of the Ministry Site Profile.
- E. Consistency is most important. The same questions should be asked, the same time should be allowed, the same person should chair the interviews and the circumstances of the interview should be the same for each candidate.
- F. Members of the Call Committee should meet together for a few minutes prior to each interview to review the procedure for the formal interview.

II. The Interview

- A. Getting acquainted. This may include a tour (community, church, parsonage), a meal or other fellowship time. You may choose to include the spouse in this.
- B. Devotions. These should be conducted by a member of the call committee.
- C. Warm-up. As you gather for the formal interview you may want to start with introductions. This is your opportunity to get to know the individual as a person. Suggest that the candidate briefly tell something about him/herself, using statements such as:
 - 1. Tell us about your family.
 - 2. Describe your education and ministry experiences.

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- D. Selected questions. This is the formal part of the interview where you will ask your pre-selected questions. Again, remember that it is important to ask the same questions of each candidate. (Possible questions and notes on asking and listening skills are attached.)
- E. Follow up questions. These are appropriate after each question to clarify what has been heard. Following the final questions, call committee members have the opportunity to ask questions that pick up on and lead beyond information that has already been shared. The chair takes responsibility for regulating time for each section of the interview, making sure each member of the committee has an opportunity to speak.
- F. Pastor's questions and response. Ask the candidate what more he/she would like to tell the committee and what the candidate would like to ask the committee.

III. Conclusion of Interview

- A. When the interview is completed
 1. Thank the candidate for coming
 2. Make arrangements for the payment of expenses related to the interview (travel, meals, lodging)
 3. Complete the **Report of the Interview** form on each candidate and return it to the synod office within a week of the interview.
- B. Let the candidate know that you will keep him/her informed of your progress until a decision has been reached. Doing this says a great deal about you and your congregation. **It is crucial to notify the candidate immediately when they are no longer being considered by your committee.** (A sample letter is attached that can be used to notify candidates that they are no longer being considered.)

IV. Helps

- A. The Art of Listening
Two of the most crucial interviewing skills are the ability to ask the appropriate questions and the art of listening. Listening is more than just hearing words. A young student in a music appreciation class, when asked to distinguish between listening and hearing, replied, "Listening is wanting to hear."

To be a good listener, the following items are important:

1. Interest. Consider the person as a vital candidate for your parish who has invested time and effort to be with you. Therefore, the pastor is worthy of your interest and attention.
2. Patience. Give the person time to give thoughtful answers.
3. Linking. Build the interview on what the applicant has already said asking questions that pick up on and lead beyond information that has already been shared in the interview. Probing indicates to the person that you are listening and also eliminates the distracting necessity of trying to think up the next question.
4. Alertness. Listen for key words and phrases to be sure that they are understood.
5. Concentration. Listen for main ideas, not just facts and figures. Ask yourself, "What is the person telling me?"

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6. Clarify questions. Ask clarifying questions to make certain that you are really understanding what the person is saying. If something isn't clear, by all means ask that it be clarified. This does not reflect ignorance or inability on your part. Instead, it demonstrates that you are truly interested and are trying to understand what the person is attempting to communicate.
7. Deliberation. Withhold evaluation and decision until the interview is completed. Hear the person out before deciding.

B. Asking Questions

It is important to keep in mind the distinction between closed and open-ended questions. With closed questions, they call for only a short, undeveloped response, with responses being only yes or no or short factual answers. They can give you some basic facts or statistics, but little explanation of the response. Open-ended questions are much more helpful and require more developed and thorough responses. A brief example of each is as follows:

- **Closed** – Are you married? How many children do you have?
- **Open-ended** – Tell us about your family. Describe what you would consider your most enjoyable kind of ministry and tell us why.

It is key for call committees to ask open-ended questions during interviews in order to invite the candidates being interviewed to share more thoughtful and developed responses.

C. Composing Questions

Prepare about 10 questions you wish to ask each candidate. You may use these questions as a guide for preparing the questions you want to ask your candidate. It is not necessary to use any of these questions. Write questions appropriate to your own situation. It is suggested that the Call Committee meet privately to review the interview procedure and the questions to be asked before inviting the candidate into the room for the interview.

Some call committees have found it helpful to ask the interim pastor or a local pastor who is not a candidate for call to do a mock interview with the call committee to hold a kind of practice session. This allows the call committee to practice and refine any questions that seem ill-worded or uncomfortable before an actual interview occurs. It also allows the call committee to develop a procedure that makes the actual interview flow better when the real interviews occur.

- Tell us about your theology and how that gives direction to your ministry.
- What are your goals in ministry?
- What areas of ministry have you found frustrating and/or difficult?
- What are some dreams that you have as a parish pastor?
- Tell us about your call to be a pastor.
- What does it mean to be a good pastor in our world today?
- Share a specific story that has shaped your life and faith.
- How would you describe your style of ministry?
- How do you view your ministry as related to: singles, senior citizens, WELCA, men's groups, young children, youth?

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- What is your understanding of worship in the life of the congregation? How important is the sermon? Baptism? Holy Communion?
- As you are preparing the worship service and sermon, what do you hope will happen to a person worshipping?
- How do you select your sermon topics?
- What is your understanding of pastoral care in a parish? How do you balance these needs with worship and teaching responsibilities?
- What do you see as a pastor's role in counseling?
- How would you emphasize mission?
- What role would you take in the education program of the congregation? Sunday School? Vacation Bible School? Confirmation? Adult Education? Church Women? Youth?
- How do you understand evangelism and how would it be implemented during your ministry?
- What are some things a parish can do to attract a person who does not come to church, does not send children to Sunday School, and does not otherwise seek out the help of the pastor?
- What is stewardship and what role does stewardship education play in your ministry?
- Considering today's world and our North American culture, what do you think the church should be saying and doing? Is there anything special that we as Lutherans ought to be saying and doing?
- How do you see the connections between the local congregation, the mission of the ELCA and the Christian church on earth?
- What do you see as the church's involvement in the community and how do you see yourself involved in the community?
- What do you do for growth in your spiritual and devotional life?
- What kind of continuing educational opportunities have you found most meaningful?
- Give an example of how you have dealt with conflicting points of view.

It is always important to ask a couple questions at the end –

- What else would you like us to know about you?
- What would you like to know about us?

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D. Role of the Candidate's Family

If the pastor is married, the call committee should remember that they are interviewing and calling the pastor and not the spouse. Therefore, normally the spouse would not be present during the interview.

Please invite the spouse to join in all other parts of the visit such as a tour of the community, tour of the church buildings and parsonage, etc. The committee should see that the spouse is entertained during the interview. Check with the pastor to see if children will be coming. If so, be sure that proper child care is available. Please be consistent.

E. Terms of the Call

Normally terms of the call would not be discussed at the first interview. Salary and compensation should be discussed at the second interview. Do not wait for the candidate to bring this up. The Call Committee should discuss salary and compensation with synod staff and the candidate prior to the congregational call meeting.

When discussing the terms of the call, the call committee should take seriously the synod salary guidelines. The guidelines have been worked out carefully to consider the experience and training of the pastor as well as the ministry demands of the parish and have been passed by the Synod Assembly. Sometimes these details must be worked out in consultation with the church council following the decision to recommend a certain pastor. They must be authorized either by the church council or the congregation before a call can be extended to a specific pastor. These should include salary, benefits, (such as vacation time, continuing education time and funds, pension and medical coverage), whether there will be a parsonage or housing allowance, and other concerns related to the call. Travel allowance is a business expense of the congregation, not a benefit to the pastor, and should also be included with the terms of the call. (A copy of the Synod salary guidelines was provided by the Synod Staff person in the packet you received at the first meeting.)

F. Checklist

1. Phone candidates to arrange interview.
2. Send information packet to candidates.
3. Make arrangements for meals and tours and overnight accommodations if necessary.
4. Send thank you letters and expense checks after the interview.
5. Be hospitable. Designate someone to greet and welcome the candidate and host him/her until the call committee is ready to begin the interview.
6. Complete **Call Committee Report of Interview** form-(**See Addendum**) and return it to the synod office.
7. Immediately notify the candidates who are no longer being considered. A sample letter has been provided for your use (**See Addendum**). Also, a copy of the release letter should be sent to the synod office.

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Suggestions for Second Interviews

The second interviews with candidates are different than the initial first interviews in some significant ways.

The second interviews would not normally have as many interview questions, but there may be some need to go into greater depth than the first round questions. It would be the time to further explore some questions that were not fully addressed at the first interview. You may also wish to pose a situation, setting and a problem and then ask the candidate to tell you how they would go about analyzing and suggesting a way to address the scenario posed.

This is also a time to possibly ask the candidate to prepare a short sermon that they will deliver in the sanctuary to the call committee when they come for the second interview. This allows the whole call committee to see the pastor present a sermon so they can all witness in person to observe delivery style as well as composition. (This does not mean it is presented to the whole congregation, just the call committee and maybe some staff.)

It is an important time to tour the church, community and perhaps the school (especially if the candidate has children who will be attending school there). This is especially true if the first interview was by Skype or phone or if there was not time for a tour of the church or community earlier.

It is also the time where it would be good to invite the candidate's spouse and possibly family if possible. This is not always possible, especially on the first interview.

This is also the time for the candidates to meet other staff and have a chance to visit with them. If this is an associate pastor position, then the senior pastor should have a significant time with the candidate and asked afterwards for their evaluation of the candidate. If the senior pastor has major reservations about working with this candidate, then it could mean that the call committee would not consider that candidate further. With any candidate, it is good for the call committee to question the staff for their observations after they have met the prospective pastor.

It is also okay to introduce other people to meet and talk with this second round candidate, such as council members or key volunteers, such as an education superintendent or perhaps an organist or choir director. The call committee should seek their observations after they have met the prospective pastor. **Confidentiality** is still important, and any additional people meeting this prospective pastor should not discuss their name or share their observations with others outside the call committee.

It is important to go over the salary and benefit package with the candidate at the second interview. The salary range may have been mentioned earlier, but at this stage the specifics of the salary for their years of experience, the benefits determined, particularly the medical coverage necessary, i.e. "pastor only", "pastor and spouse," or "pastor, spouse and children." It is important to discuss

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specifically because the salary guidelines vary widely by the respective synod of the candidate. It is also possible that the candidate was above the salary level by years from ordination, where possible prior experience in another career was reflected by adjusting the years of experience. This should always be discussed in detail before any potential congregational date of vote for any final candidate is set.

The treasurer, personnel chair, business manager or executive committee could be called in to go over the salary and benefit package at this point. They are in a better position to discuss and address questions or concerns. So it is not necessarily the work of the call committee at this stage, other than making sure the specific discussion takes place at this second interview stage. Some congregations feel more comfortable asking the candidate back for a third visit to discuss this specifically. That is fine, but it does need to occur before the congregational vote on extending a call is taken.

Once again, it is important that any other congregational staff or committee members should be reminded that they need to keep the names and information discussed **confidential** during this stage. Until the candidate is contacted with the results of the congregational vote, it is important that word not be spread about their engagement in the call process that could come back to their congregation. The only exception is checking with the candidate's references.

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PASTORAL CANDIDATE NOMINATION FORM
SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD

Your name (person who is bringing this candidate forward): _____

Your phone number: _____

Name of pastor to consider: _____

Name of church & city where pastor currently serves: _____

Additional information: _____

Signed by Call Committee Chair: _____

Congregation name and city: _____

Please complete and fax, email, or mail to:

Ms. Cheryse Brenno-Sloan
Southeastern Minnesota Synod
1001 14th St NW, Suite 300
Rochester MN 55901-2551
sloan@semnsynod.org or fax to 507-280-8824.

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CALL COMMITTEE REPORT OF INTERVIEW

You will be sent the link to this form so that it can be filled out online. Your response to this questionnaire will be helpful to us as we work with pastors and congregations in the call process. You should complete a report for each candidate interviewed and send a copy to the synod office by email attachment as soon as possible after your interview. Your comments will be shared with the candidate unless you request us not to.

Pastor interviewed: _____

Your congregation: _____

City: _____ Date of Interview: _____

List some of the positive qualities you discovered in this pastor _____

Did you note any significant weaknesses? _____

Will this pastor, in your opinion, meet the needs and provide the pastoral leadership for which you are looking at this time? _____

Where was the interview held? _____

Have you reimbursed the pastor for travel, meal and lodging expenses? _____

If the candidate was not interviewed, please tell us the reason(s). _____

Have you notified the candidate that he/she will not be interviewed? _____

Have you sent a follow up letter to the candidate who was interviewed? _____

Check if you do not want your comments shared with the candidate.

Please complete and fax, email, or mail to:

Ms. Cheryse Brenno-Sloan
Southeastern Minnesota Synod
1001 14th St NW, Suite 300
Rochester MN 55901-2551
sloan@semnsynod.org or fax to 507-280-8824.

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SAMPLE LETTER FOR INTERVIEWED CANDIDATES

(Interviewed –Retaining Candidate)

Date

The Rev. _____
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Pastor _____,

On behalf of the Call Committee at _____ Lutheran Church, I wish to again thank you for interviewing with us. During this time of decision we are pleased that we had the opportunity to meet strong candidates with many talents. (Make reference to some of their talents here.)

The Call Committee has made the decision to retain your name as a candidate for further consideration here at (Congregation's Name) and have informed the synod office of this decision. We will keep you informed as to where we are in the call process, and if you have any questions or need more information about your status during this call process, please feel free to contact me or (Council Chair).

We thank you for taking the time to visit with us and we appreciate your patience and understanding as we consider a few other candidates before we make a final decision.

Sincerely,

Chairperson of Call Committee

cc: Southeastern Minnesota Synod

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SAMPLE LETTER FOR INTERVIEWED CANDIDATES

(Interviewed –Releasing Candidate)

Date

The Rev. _____
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Pastor _____,

On behalf of the Call Committee at _____ Lutheran Church, I wish to again thank you for interviewing with us. During this time of decision we are pleased that we had the opportunity to meet strong candidates with many talents. (Make reference to some of their talents here.)

After much deliberation and prayer, the Call Committee has made the decision to release you from further consideration and have informed the synod office of this decision. I hope you will not interpret this decision as a personal reflection on your skills as a pastor. It is a reflection on our assessment of the current leadership needs of this congregation and an effort to find the person who best meets these criteria.

We appreciate your interest in our congregation and wish you continued success in your ministry.

Sincerely,

Chairperson of Call Committee

cc: Southeastern Minnesota Synod

Call Process Step 5

SAMPLE LETTER FOR CONGREGATION-NOMINATED CANDIDATE WITHOUT INTERVIEW

(NO Interview –Releasing Candidate)

Date

The Rev. _____
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Pastor _____,

On behalf of the Call Committee at _____ Lutheran Church, I wish to thank you for allowing us to review your papers and information. During this call discernment time we value the opportunity to consider candidates with many gifts for ministry. **(You may wish to make reference to some of their gifts for ministry here.)**

After much deliberation and prayer, the Call Committee has made the decision not to call you for an interview and have informed the synod office of this decision. I hope you will not interpret this decision as a personal reflection on your skills as a pastor. It is a reflection on our assessment of the current leadership needs of this congregation and an effort to find the person who best meets these criteria.

We appreciate your interest in our congregation and wish you continued success in your ministry.

Sincerely,

Chairperson of Call Committee

cc: Southeastern Minnesota Synod

Call Process Step 5

CALL COMMITTEE INTERVIEW EXPENSE VOUCHER

Name of pastor: _____

Mailing address: _____

Date of interview: _____

Place of interview: _____

Car round trip _____ miles @ IRS guidelines/mile \$ _____

Lodging expenses \$ _____

Meals \$ _____

Total expenses to be reimbursed by the congregation to the pastor \$ _____

Call Process Step 5
Reference Check Form

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____

Reference from: _____ Relationship: _____

Top three strengths/assets observed by reference contact

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Areas of concern as observed by Call Committee that need to be addressed:

If speaking with other staff, what do you think they would say about this pastor candidate's

Leadership style: _____

Preaching style: _____

Connection with youth/young adults: _____

Effective educator: _____

Visitation approach: _____

Other comments that may be helpful for us as the call committee?

Reference call made by: _____

Call Process Step 5

Sample Interview Evaluation Form

Name of Pastoral Candidate: _____ Date: _____

What are the positive qualities?

What are the candidate's significant weaknesses or reasons for concern?

What are your unanswered questions, doubts or concerns about this candidate?

What are the candidate's areas of interest?

What questions did the candidate ask?

Did the candidate:

Yes/No	Make good eye contact?
Yes/No	Seem comfortable with the group?
Yes/No	Answer the questions concisely?
Yes/No	Seem engaged throughout the interview?

Evaluate our needs in relation to the candidate: 1 (low) 10 (high)

Worship leadership/preaching	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Transformational/spiritual growth	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Youth/ young family connection	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Visitation/pastoral care	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Administration	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Outreach ministry	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Stewardship	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Personality style	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Crisis Management	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Shared leadership	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Your overall rating of the candidate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10