



THE BRIDGE



A Monthly Resource from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod

CALL PROCESS:

WHAT IS IT?

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“Call process is one of the most important ministries of the Office of the Bishop,” reflects Rev. Susan Miller, Assistant to the Bishop for the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Congregations need rostered ministers to equip and empower them. Rostered ministers need congregations to serve and accompany. The steps that facilitate the connection between rostered ministers and congregations comprise what is called the “call process.” Miller expresses, “Call process is an important partnership between the Office of the Bishop and congregations. We absolutely want to make sure that congregations in call process have the next best chapter...both for them and for the new pastor!”

Call process is the way by which the synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) engage their congregations and rostered ministers in a time of discernment of the way God may be drawing each toward the other for the sake of the mission of the church. Said more succinctly, call process is the series of steps that connect a church and a leader.

Described broadly, these steps include:

- **Step 1:** A Time for Farewell
- **Step 2:** A Time for Interim Ministry
- **Step 3:** A Time for Self-Study
- **Step 4:** Elect a Call Committee
- **Step 5:** The Work of the Call Committee
- **Step 6:** Calling the New Rostered Minister
- **Step 7:** Welcome & Installation

The Office of the Bishop accompanies the congregation and leader throughout the entire process. The team members most involved from the

synod are Rev. Susan Miller (miller@semnsynod.org) and Cheryse Brenno (brenno@semnsynod.org). They are both highly experienced and find great joy in the ways the Spirit works through the call process.

Rev. Shane Koepke was called last year to serve Grace Lutheran Church in Albert Lea. He found the process energizing. Koepke reflects, “Honoring where a congregation has been and dreaming of where God is calling can be an exciting and hope-filled part of the call process.”

Rev. Grace Gravelle went through the call process last year and is now serving the two-point parish, Fountain Lutheran Church & Root Prairie Lutheran Church. She shares, “The most life-giving part of the process was being able to sit down with Rev. Susan Miller to talk about why I was looking for a new call and what openings there were that matched my passions and abilities.”

The blessings of the call process are experienced by both the rostered ministers and the congregations. Each congregation has a call committee with an identified chair. Elloyce Queensland served as the call committee chair for Trinity Lutheran Church in Blue Earth when they called Rev. Jeanette Bidne last summer. “The congregation had a great deal of input, the committee spent a year and a half reading resumes, interviewing several candidates and praying that what was best would happen. During this time, we knew that we would not settle on anyone but the best and Trinity has a gem for a leader. Rev. Jeanette Bidne is a blessing and the whole congregation celebrates her and her joy-filled Christian leadership.”

The Office of the Bishop is committed to doing all they can to ensure every call process leads congregations and rostered ministers into their next best chapter. Thanks be to God for the Holy Spirit’s work in the midst of all the steps of this important function of the synod.