



**Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

(507-280-9457)

semnsynod.org

Call Process Manual

Phase Two

Self Study Process

Ministry Site Profile (MSP) Completion

Phase Two: Introduction

When a rostered leader leaves, the challenge facing the congregation is more than that of calling another rostered leader. The congregation needs to do important work to lay the foundation for a successful next chapter of ministry. The self-study process, led by the call committee, allows the congregation to define future directions and priorities for the mission and ministry of the congregation. It culminates in the development of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), which is a snapshot of the congregation, its history and its future directions. The MSP describes in detail the identity of the congregation and where the congregation believes God is calling it to go in mission. It also describes the qualities needed in a new rostered leader, based on the congregation's goals.

The Holy Spirit guides the entire call process through prayer, study and conversation. The goal of this process is to discern the particular rostered leader whom the committee will recommend to the congregation.

Structure of the Call Committee:

- **Chairperson:** Unless otherwise specified by the constitution, at its first meeting, the committee should designate a chairperson to oversee the call process. This person will convene meetings, set meeting agendas and be the primary point of contact with pastoral candidates and the Office of the Bishop staff. The call committee chairperson should complete the Call Committee Member Form (found at the back of this packet) and return it to the synod staff person noted on the form (mailed or scanned/mailed).
- **Secretary:** This person might be described as the Communication Secretary. It is the secretary who ensures transparent and frequent communication with the congregation happens throughout the process. This person may write the newsletter articles, notes for Sunday bulletins and other materials that keep the congregation informed of the committee's progress. The secretary may work with the chairperson on written communications between candidates and the committee, including letters/emails informing candidates of the committee's timeline and the interview process, confirming invitations, travel arrangements, thank you notes and letters informing candidates of decisions reached. The secretary may be the one to send copies of formal correspondence to the synod office and may, unless otherwise delegated. The chairperson and secretary can determine this.

Possible forms of Communication. The call process itself is not secret. In fact, communication with the congregation council and the congregation about the progress of the call process is vital. Frequent and consistent communication about the process builds trust in the call committee. A plan for regular communication with the congregation should be developed. This communication may include:

- Newsletter articles explaining the call process, with follow up articles each time another stage in the process is reached.
 - Notes in Sunday morning bulletins
 - Temple talks by members of the call committee
 - Forums during education hours where call committee members can update the congregation about the progress of its work.
 - Maintenance of a chart/timeline describing the call process that is displayed in a public place and may be modified as the call process unfolds.
- **Office of the Bishop Staff Person:** The calling of a rostered minister represents a valuable partnership between God, the calling congregation and the Office of the Bishop. This person will guide, coach and assist the committee. This person will orient the call committee throughout the process as the committee moves into each phase. This person will also vet and bring candidates' names to the committee.

- **The Transition-time Pastor:** *It is not the responsibility of the transition-time pastor to keep the call process moving; that is the work of the council and call committee.* The transition-time pastor should be utilized as a resource and guide during Phase Two, but will not be involved in Phase Three or Phase Four of the call process. The transition-time pastor will not be privy to the names of candidates who are being considered and is not to influence the selection process.

Call Committee Expectations:

- **Prayer:** The call committee should pray often through the call process and encourage the congregation to also pray for the call committee members, the candidates and the congregation.
- **Confidentiality.** It is vital that the call committee members maintain strict confidentiality as to any information regarding specific candidates. The boundaries of confidentiality should be discussed and agreed upon at the first meeting. Conversation about candidates needs to be open and forthright among members of the committee. However, these discussions need to be kept in confidence between Call Committee members.

Ground rules for the functioning of the Call Committee

It is important to establish some agreed upon guidelines for how the call committee will work together. Some suggested ground rules are listed here. It is essential that at one of its first meetings, the call committee discuss and agree to the ground rules to which they will adhere. After these ground rules are established, review and modify them throughout the process and hold each other accountable.

- All meetings start and end with prayer
- Listen to each other.
- Keep comments succinct and as complete as possible.
- Everyone expresses their thoughts at the meetings. (not afterwards in the parking lot or to only one or two people on the committee.)
- Respect each other's opinions
- Don't interrupt
- Keep all comments made in the call committee confidential.
- When having important conversations, take a moment for silence so that all members may collect their thoughts.
- Give each other positive feedback and appreciation for each member's gifts.
- Respect the energy level of the group. If people are tired or the meeting has gotten long, perhaps it is time to recess and set another meeting date.
- Ask questions if you have concerns or need clarification.
- Keep confidentiality about names of people interviewed.
- Be willing to "trust your gut" and to trust the others in the group to listen to your concerns.
- Unanimity is not necessary, but consensus of the whole group is necessary in making decisions, especially as the final recommendation for call occurs.
- Take time to laugh and enjoy this important work and each other.

Phase Two: Self-Study Process

The Self- Study process provides:

- an opportunity for the congregation to review its priorities and assess whether they are aligned with the congregation's mission.
- information to the call committee and future candidates about the congregation.
- call committee with a description of the leadership needs which will guide the work of the call committee.
- direction for the Office of the Bishop staff as they consider appropriate candidates to recommend.

Elements of the process: The self-study process is designed so that the members of the congregation can listen to God, one another, and the community as they consider their ministry and mission. The process enables the congregation to:

- identify and address issues of conflict, grief and/or guilt that affect congregational life and ministry
- review its life and mission
- consider and discuss the challenges and opportunities it faces in the next 5-10 years.
- evaluate its present strengths
- identify specific areas where it feels called to strengthen its ministry.
- identify its present context for mission (its community context)
- identify the gifts that are most important for the next pastor to possess.

The movement of the self-study process is as follows:

Who are we? \rightleftarrows What are the needs of our community? \rightleftarrows What are our ministry priorities? \rightleftarrows
What kind of leader do we need to get us there?

Note: All workshops referred to in the following steps are found at the back of this booklet.

Step 1: Who We Are

The goals of the internal assessment are to name where the congregation has been and where it sees itself now and to identify possible directions for its mission and ministry.

Questions include:

- What is our history?
- What do we say about ourselves?
- How do others describe us?
- What are the gifts that our congregation offers our members and our community?
- Why is it important that we continue to exist?
- What are our core values?
- What are we willing to give up in order to carry out our key purpose?

Two workshops that the congregation might wish to engage in during this time are a history workshop *Celebrating our Foundations* and a workshop to develop a shared vision and mission *Hopes and Dreams*.

Step 2: Mission in the Community and in the World

During this step, the congregation looks at the needs of community in which it finds itself.

Questions include:

- What are the needs and assets of our community?
- Who are the invisible people? (those who experience: poverty, being an immigrant, loneliness, hunger, homelessness, hopelessness, those who are mentally or physically differently abled, etc.)
- What services are needed and what services are available?

- What is God up to in our community?
- What is our outreach?
- Are there opportunities for partnership available to our congregation: Locally, at the synod level, nationally, and globally?
- How has our community changed in the past decade? What changes might we expect going forward?

A workshop that can assist in this work is the *Community Audit*. Also, information from the local government and from the latest census are helpful places to discover information about your community

Step 3: Assessment and Understanding Your Ministry Priorities

At this time, the congregation is ready to assess the information gathered in steps 1 and 2. As the congregation seeks to define its top mission priorities, we need to consider not just the needs and desires of the existing membership, but also those people to whom the congregation is called to serve.

Questions include:

- What have we learned about our mission and ourselves?
- What is the relationship of the congregation and the community?
- Has our mission changed?
- Who are the new people God is calling us to reach? How might we begin to connect with them?
- How might the congregation look in 5-10 years, if we do the work God is calling us to do?

One workshop that can be used to do this work is *Play It Forward*.

Step 4: Determining Leadership Needs

The goal of this step is to take what has been learned and identify the characteristics and gifts for ministry that are sought in the next rostered minister. While most people think primarily in terms of worship, pastoral care and preaching, it is important to ask what are the unique needs of this congregation and the unique ways this congregation is being called to serve. What are the unique gifts that the next rostered minister needs in order to help the congregation carry out its mission?

It is helpful during this step to create a **Job Description** for the next rostered minister if you have more than one. This is essential if the congregation has more than one rostered minister or additional professional staff.

The section of the MSP entitled *Ministry Tasks and Gifts for Ministry* (included in this packet) can also be used as a congregational survey during this step. It is important to first identify the mission and goals of the congregation in order to identify pastoral qualities desired in the next rostered minister.

Step 5: Putting it all together – The Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

The Ministry Site Profile is used throughout the ELCA by congregations who are seeking a new rostered minister.

Before the call committee begins its work completing the MSP, the congregational council should be consulted regarding the level of financial compensation the congregation desires to indicate on the MSP. Also, the call committee will indicate the desired number of years of experience the congregation desires in the next rostered leader. The answer to this can be thought of in two ways:

1. How much experience do we desire our next rostered minister to have coming into your congregation?
2. At what level of experience are we able to compensate?

Please refer to the [SEMN Synod Minimum Compensation Guidelines](http://semnsynod.org) (found at semnsynod.org under the equipping congregations tab) as these questions are considered.

To begin work on the Ministry Site Profile:

1. Determine if your congregation currently has an account used previously to complete an MSP.
 - a. If yes, the same email and password used previously must be used again. You may not set up another account if your congregation already has one.
 - b. If no, you will need to set up a congregational account. It is recommended that the email used is the church email. Keep the email and password on file where it can be accessed in future call processes.
2. The MSP can be accessed on line at www.elca.org.
 - a. Click on the Call Process button in the upper right portion of the screen.
 - b. Then click Ministry Sites in the blue boxes on the left. There are resources available at this site for creating the profile including a sample version of the MSP.
 - c. **SAVE FREQUENTLY AND AFTER EVERY PAGE!**
3. Once the MSP has been completed save a copy for your records AND send a copy to the assistant to the bishop for review.

NOTE: You will NOT SUBMIT the MSP until AFTER STEP 6

Step 6: The Town Hall Meeting

Throughout this self-study phase, the congregation should be fully informed of the work of the call committee in multiple ways. This report would include the completed MSP and any other materials that will be illustrative of the conclusions outlined in the MSP. The congregation is then invited to come together for a town hall discussion of the MSP. Date and time for this meeting is determined in collaboration with the assistant to the bishop who will be working with the congregation during the call process.

At the town hall meeting, the call committee presents their work on the MSP. The purpose of this meeting is to gain clear congregational affirmation and to ensure a common ground of understanding between congregation, the Office of the Bishop, and call committee. The meeting ends with an affirmation of the MSP.

Step 7: Submitting the MSP and Activating Reference Recommendation

After the town hall meeting, the call committee will make final edits to the MSP and SUBMIT it on the ELCA website.

It is also very important that the call committee also **ACTIVATE THE REFERENCE RECOMMENDATION** found in the congregations account information on the ELCA website for call process. If there are questions about step 8, contact the assistant to the bishop.

Call Committee Members Form

_____ Lutheran Church, _____, MN

(Please type or print.)

Name	Position on Call Committee	Phone Number	Email
	Chairperson		
	Secretary		

Please complete and fax, email, or mail to:

**Ms. Cheryse Brenno
Southeastern Minnesota Synod
1001 14th St NW, Suite 300
Rochester MN 55901-2551**

brenno@semnsynod.org or fax to 507-280-8824.

Celebrating our Foundations A History Event

Workshop Design: 2 Hours

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27

Song: Built on a Rock and Rock of Ages

Supplies needed: Poster Board, Masking Tape, Markers

Introduction

1. Good to gather here today. Glad to be with you... always great to be with a congregation to celebrate your history and to peer into your future together.

2. One of the things we have learned over time is that just like families and peoples, churches have histories. And just like in your families and in your own life, it is sometimes important to look back at that history – to see if there are any issues or patterns that we can find there that we might want to build on or to change.

Examples: Immigrant Church

Sexual Misconduct Church

3. Our task today – explore the past.

- See if there are strengths in the past that you want to carry into the future.
- See if there are issues from the past that you want to be aware of so that they don't unduly influence your future.
- See if there are passions from the past that have been put on the back burner that you would like to bring to the forefront again.

Icebreaker

4. Ready to go? First thing I'd like to do – give you just a few minutes to get to talk with each other. Since we are talking about foundations and rocks, I'd like to ask you to think about a rock that has been important in your life. Examples: Engagement Ring, Worry stone, mountain you climbed (figuratively or literally)

Take a moment and turn to the person next to you and share your name and what the rock is and its important...

Now, I'd like you and your partner to join with two other people and come up with a Rock that is important to all of you... example: Plymouth Rock, Rock of Ages, Jesus as cornerstone...

5. Anyone have an unusual Rock to share? Anything one of your partners said really tickle you

CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE...

Timeline Work (40 minutes)

In your small groups it's time to develop a timeline

Example: prehistory/ by pastorates/ by decades.

Give out group instructions:

1. Have people in your group introduce themselves. Keep this very brief.
2. You will need some people in your group to be “scribes” – using the markers and poster boards to record the work of your group. Try to find some volunteers to do this before you begin your discussion.
3. Your group will be thinking and talking together about significant events in the congregation's history for your time period. You will have 30 minutes to complete the following three steps:
 - A. Start this process by remembering key international and national events. What major significant things were going on in the world and in the US at this time? What about town/city? What was the community like? What was happening in the neighborhood? Use one of your poster boards to jot down important events and dates.
 - B. Next, think about the congregation. What was it like during this time period? What was the size of the church? What was the worship style like? How were decisions made? What significant events took place in the congregation's life? Who were the significant people? Is there anything that people avoid talking about from this time in your history, any congregational secrets? Use another poster board to jot down important events, dates and information about the congregation...
 - C. In a few moments your group will give a five-minute synopsis of your work. Decide who would feel comfortable being up in front to do this. Talk about the highlights for the congregation during this time period. What were the major points of celebration and loss? Try to summarize what you have worked on. As you look at what your time period means, what part of it do you think we carry out now?

Before you begin, a couple of general comments:

Some discussion of each event is helpful because it can shed light on the emotions surrounding the event. But the timeline is more of a “brainstorming” activity, so don't want you to get bogged down. If there are any events of a questionable (negative) nature, they should also be recorded, with as little emotional baggage as possible.

For example, “disagreement about...” “rumors of”

This is not a time to keep things silent. Jesus says: “nothing covered that will not be made known.”

Group Analysis (30 minutes)

1. Looking back at the history, what were the watershed events? Significant moments? Accomplishments?
2. What were the strengths/weaknesses of former pastorates?
3. What are the things which have bound people together? Bound people to the church?
4. Acknowledge both the good and the bad of the past. What is it that needs healing and/or celebrated?
5. What is important and worthwhile to carry into the future?

Closing

Closing Prayer

Sing: Rock of Ages

Hopes and Dreams - A Process

(Developed from A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation: Embarking on a Journey of Transformation, by Rick Rouse and Craig van Gelder. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008, pp. 50-52.)

This process can be done either through cottage meetings (small group meetings in homes of members) or in a congregation wide event (plan for two and a half hours.)

Introduction: (5 minutes):

Team members welcome everyone and outline the purpose of the meeting.

Dwelling in the Word (10 minutes):

The interim pastor continues with an opening prayer and a short Bible study based on the Great Commission (Matthew 28.16-20) or another appropriate scripture.

Individual Reflection: (15 minutes): A list of questions is passed out to everyone and people are given several minutes to consider their answers individually. Some people may wish to write answers to these questions, others to ponder the answers. It is important to expect silence during this time.

- How long have you been a member or associated with this congregation?
- What are three words that describe this congregation?
- What are some of the strengths of this congregation? What do you especially appreciate about this congregation? List at least three things.
- What are your hopes and dreams for the congregation's ministry? What would you like to see happen in the next one to five years?
- What are the primary changes or challenges in our larger community that you believe God is leading us to address?
- If you could dream big, what could we accomplish in our ministry together in seeking to serve our large community?
- What are the assets and resources that are available within this congregation for making this dream a reality?

Large group introduction:(15 minutes)

The interim pastor or congregational leader invites everyone to share their name and to answer the first two questions. A recorder will write down the words which people use to describe the congregation.

If this is done as a congregation wide event, the next part takes place around tables of 6 to 8 people. Spouses and good friends are encouraged NOT to sit together. (If this is done as a cottage meeting, then everyone can participate together.)

Conversation around tables:(30 minutes – about 5 minutes per question. One of the leadership team can act as a timekeeper, encouraging people to move to the next question.)

Each table will need a recorder. Each person shares their answers to the next questions and their answers are recorded. When everyone at the table has finished sharing their answer to the questions, the table will discuss whether there is any consensus and what they would like to share with the large group.

Break – 15 minutes

Reassemble as a large group

Large Group Sharing: (30 Minutes) The leader (interim pastor or lay congregational leader) now reads each of the remaining questions in turn and asks each table to share one or two “consensus” answers from their tables. The recorder writes down the answers.

After each table has had the opportunity to share their answers to one question, the leader will ask whether the large group has any comments? Did they notice any patterns? Any surprises? Was there something said that needed to be attended to? The recorder will again write down the answers.

Large Group Reflection and Evaluation (15 minutes):

The leader asks people to reflect on the event...

- What was helpful?
- What was surprising?
- What was challenging?
- What are some tentative conclusions that the large group has in terms of the purpose and the mission of the congregation?

All notes – individual, table and large group recorders – are collected for further review and study.

Conclusion: (5 minutes)

The interim pastor thanks the people for coming and for their dedication to the mission of the congregation. The interim pastor closes the event with a word of prayer/blessing.

External/Community Audit

Questions

1. What are the greatest challenges and strengths in our community?
2. What significant changes have you seen in the last 1-5 years?
3. What new opportunities/threats do those changes bring?
4. What do you know about our church and the ministries and programs we offer our community?
5. How do/can faith communities make a difference in strengthening our community?
6. What individual/community needs aren't being fully met that a church like ours could help address?

Recommendations

We recommend having 15-25 conversations with the following people/groups in your community. Typically, these should be no more than 30-45 minutes in length.

- Mayor, City Council members, other community officials
- Principals of elementary, middle, and high schools
- College, Community College, Vocational school leaders
- Police Department
- Business owners
- Community Service leaders (food shelf, LSS, Catholic Charities)
- Sampling of non-member community members
- Other

Taking the time to listen to neighborhood and community leaders and residents about needs, opportunities, and ways churches and faith communities can make a difference is always an important step in any visioning or planning.

Play it Forward

Invite the congregation to a “Play it Forward” event following Sunday morning worship – or at another convenient time. Plan for a two-hour event. Invite everyone, provide drinks, food and a comfortable space to gather.

What you will need:

- Hospitality food and drink
- Cups, plates, napkins and utensils
- Tables and chairs
- Large open wall space
- Large pieces of paper with choices listed
- Markers in dark, bold colors
- Half sheet pieces of paper
- Pens for everyone
- Post-it flags.

Welcome and Devotions (10 minutes)

Meal or snacks and fellowship (20 minutes)

The interim pastor or congregational leader introduces the exercises with these or similar words:

Today we will begin to “Play it forward.” We’ll think about what kind of congregation we are today and we will dream about what we want in the future. In each exercise we encourage you to consider what you know and have learned about our congregation.

EXERCISE ONE: Forced Choice Exercise (30 minutes)

Using the forced choice exercise from the MSP Ministry Site Characteristics page, invite congregational members to “Stand up” for what they believe.

Make one end of the wall the left side choices (we tend to be formal and programmatic) and the other end of the wall the right side choices (we tend to be informal and spontaneous.)

Invite people to take their place along the wall based on their understanding of congregational dynamics. The leader should note where people are standing (and share that information with the Transition Team for the MSP.) When people have taken their places, invite them to take a minute or two to talk with one another about why they chose where they are standing. It is important to have this conversation if there is a wide diversity along the wall. If people cluster around one answer, the leader might ask what it would look like if the congregation were more like the other choice.

Another Option – Another way to utilize the MSP Ministry Site Characteristics page is to offer it to the congregation as a survey; however, this particular page can be confusing so MUCH instruction is recommended.

EXERCISE TWO: With God all things are possible

- Give each individual a half sheet of paper with the words: *If this congregation truly believes that “with God, all things are possible” in the next three years, I would see....*
- Have each person write an answer and then post their answers on a wall.
- The leader reads all the answers and groups related answers (with the assembly’s agreement)
- Give everyone five post-it flags. Instruct them to choose their top five priorities or preferences.
- Tally the responses and review the top five priorities that have emerged.

As a large group, reflect on these questions:

- How do the priorities fit with the goals we have set for the congregation?
- How do the priorities fit with the community needs assessment?
- What kind of opportunities do these provide?
- What are the threats to making these happen?

Conclusion: (10 minutes)

Thank the gathered group for their participation.

Remind them of the members of the transition team, in case they wish to give additional input to the team.

Share the next steps in the development of the MSP and the transition process.

Close with a word of prayer and blessing.

Ministry Site Characteristics (taken from MSP)

AS A COMMUNITY

	A lot like us	A little like us	A little like us	A lot like us	
We tend to be formal and programmatic					We tend to be informal and spontaneous
We have clearly defined goals and plans for our future					We have no stated goals or plans
We are racially and economically diverse					We are demographically homogeneous

OUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

	A lot like us	A little like us	A little like us	A lot like us	
We welcome ideas that are provoking and challenging					We prefer ideas that are tried and true
We rely on our leaders for direction					We rely on group decision-making
We have learned how to use conflict constructively					We tend to perceive conflict as something destructive.

OUR PROGRAMMING

	A lot like us	A little like us	A little like us	A lot like us	
Our facilities are often used by community groups					Our facilities are only used for our activities
We train people to minister outside our walls					We train people to minister inside our walls
We focus on ideas and beliefs					We focus on skills and action

OUR THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

	A lot like us	A little like us	A little like us	A lot like us	
We are obviously Lutheran in identify and practice					We are less obvious about our Lutheran heritage
We participate in synod and ELCA activities					We are not very active in the synod and ELCA
We focus on Biblical studies and doctrine					We focus on contemporary issues and topics

Top Five Ministry Tasks (taken from the MSP)

Please mark the five most critical tasks required in this position.

Administration	Building a Sense of Community	Campus / Young Adult Ministry
Chaplaincy	Children's Ministry	Christian Education
Communications/ Media	Community Organizing	Conflict Management
Counseling/ Social Work	Early Childhood Administration	Ecumenical Work
Evangelism/ Mission	Financial Management	Global Service
Innovation / Creativity	Interim Ministry	Interpret Theology
Inter-personal Climate	Ministry in Crisis	Ministry in Daily Life
Ministry with Seniors	Multicultural Ministry	Music / Worship / Arts
Outdoor/ Camping Ministry	Parish Nurse / Health	Participant in the Larger Church
Pastoral Care and Visitation	Preaching / Worship	Public Policy / Advocacy
Recruit and Equip Leaders	Self-Care / Family Life	Small Group Ministry
Social Ministry	Spiritual Formation / Direction	Stewardship
Strategic Mission Planning	Teaching	Volunteer Coordination
Youth and Family Ministry		

Gifts for Ministry (taken from the MSP)

Mark the five gifts essential in this position, and the five that are very helpful in this position.

	Top Priority	Very Helpful
Help people develop their spiritual life.		
Help people understand and act upon issues of social justice.		
Provide care and nurture.		
Be active in visitation of members and non-members.		
Be effective in working with children.		
Build a sense of community among the people with whom he/she works.		
Help others develop their leadership abilities and skills for ministry.		
Be an effective administrator.		
Be an effective communicator.		
Be an effective teacher.		
Encourage support of the Church's wider mission.		
Work regularly in the development of stewardship growth.		
Be active in ecumenical relationships.		
Be effective in working with youth.		
Organize people for community action.		
Be skilled in planning and leading programs.		
Have a strong commitment and loyalty to the Lutheran Church.		
Understand and interpret the mission of the Church from a global perspective.		
Deal effectively with conflict.		
Bring joy and good humor to relationships.		
Be able to share leadership and work in a team.		
Be creative and innovative about his or her tasks.		
Be able to use technology and media.		
Appreciate cultural diversity in language and customs.		
Have talents in the areas of music, arts and writing.		