



**Southeastern Minnesota Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
(507-280-9457)  
[semnsynod.org](http://semnsynod.org)

## **Call Process Manual**

### **Phase Four**

Closing of the Work of the Call Committee  
Preparing for And Welcoming the New Pastor  
Six Month Check-In

## **Phase Four: Preparing for the New Pastor**

Issuing and accepting a call is not the end of the transition process. Careful attention should also be given to the rostered minister's arrival and settling in.

**Moving:** The new pastor and officers of the congregation council should agree on arrangements for moving. **The congregation is encouraged to assist in moving expenses of settled call pastors.** In addition, offering moving help and/or providing food on moving day is a welcome sign of hospitality.

**Installation:** The congregation president and the pastor-elect confer with the Office of the Bishop staff to set a date for the installation service, which is led by a member of the synod staff and normally set inside the Sunday morning (or usual) worship services of the congregation. The Service of Installation Liturgies are printed in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services* and in *Sundays and Seasons*. Often the day of installation involves a special reception or luncheon to which the congregation and neighboring congregations and church leaders are invited.

**First Call Candidates:** If a first call rostered minister has been called, the synod will arrange for the ordination of the rostered leader, which needs to occur before the installation. If the ordination takes place in the congregation where the rostered leader will be serving, the service of installation can be part of the Ordination Service.

## **Phase Four: Welcoming the New Pastor**

**Thanking the Call Committee:** In the weeks after the congregational vote and before your new pastor arrives, it would be appropriate to acknowledge the work of the call committee and thank them publically in worship. A Liturgy of Thanksgiving for the Work of the Call Committee is included in the back of this booklet.

**Welcome and Getting Acquainted:** Members of the congregation council and call committee are encouraged to stay in contact with the newly-arrived rostered leader in the first weeks and months of the call. Close communication for both professional and personal matters is appreciated by the leader and family and establishes a good practice of mutual support. Planned events (such as cottage meetings) to welcome the new rostered leader and to help the new pastor get to know the congregation also set a tone for strong working relationships. It is also important to remember the family of the rostered leader as you think about how to welcome and acquaint them with your community.

**Staff Relationship Building:** In multiple staff situations, it is very helpful to take an extra step – to invite the newly called rostered leader to join with existing staff to spend time with a consultant in staff dynamics. Synod staff can assist in identifying consultants skilled in doing this. During this time, the staff can explore how to build positive ways to relate to one another.

**Six Month Review:** It is helpful for the congregation council and the rostered leader to schedule a time six (6) to (9) months into the call for a “check-in.” The purpose of this review is to provide an opportunity to compare expectations with what is actually happening. The MSP is reviewed to see how well that document described the congregation and context that the rostered leader is experiencing. The review is intended to be a non-threatening, supportive conversation for raising any concerns or issues from the perspective of the newly called leader and that of the lay leadership. If desired, a synod staff person can be invited to participate in this review. A Six Month Review form can be found at the back of this booklet.

**Moving Forward: Periodic Review and Evaluation**

It is important for rostered ministers, as well as lay staff members, in a congregation to engage in periodic review and evaluation of the mission and ministry of the whole congregation. This can be a life-giving conversation and a way of setting goals for the future. Information on periodic reviews can be found on the Southeastern Minnesota Synod's website: [www.semnsynod.org](http://www.semnsynod.org). Enter pastoral review in the search box and information on how to conduct such a review will be described.

## **A Liturgy of Thanksgiving for the Work of the Call Committee**

Congregational Council President or other council representative may lead this liturgy

*To the Congregation:*

The following people, at the (request of the council, or elected by congregation) have served on the call committee of this congregation: (Add names of call committee members). I ask them to come forward at this time.

*To the Call Committee:*

You were called to serve as members of the call committee of this congregation. You have a variety of gifts, by the grace of God. You used these gifts in speaking and serving to help the congregation discern the will of God. You listened to the voices of the Holy Spirit to discern which pastor God has set apart to serve this congregation.

You accepted your commission in the confidence that it came from God. You promised to be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures and faithful in your use of the means of grace and in prayer. You put your trust in God's care, seeking to grow in love for the whole church, striving for wisdom and understanding. And you were diligent in carrying out your task. Now your task is complete. You discerned that God was calling Pastor (Name) to serve this congregation. Now that Pastor (Name) has come to serve our congregation, the responsibility you have had in the call process is over, trusting in the congregational council and the congregation as a whole to accept responsibility for developing the ministry partnership with Pastor (Name).

*To the Congregation:*

People of God: Will you accept the responsibility for your partnership in ministry with Pastor (Name)? Will you pray for him / her, welcome him / her and (family) and help him / her / them to become a part of this congregation? If so, answer: "Yes, by the help of God."

St. Paul writes: "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from this day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ".

*To the Call Committee:*

On behalf of your brothers and sisters in Christ, I give thanks to God for your sharing in the Gospel and your faithful service on the call committee.

*To the congregation:* Please feel free to express your appreciation.

*To the Call Committee:*

May Almighty God, who has guided you on this task, continue to bless you and guide you in all that you do. Amen.

## **Six Month Review Conversation**

It is helpful for the council, the newly installed rostered minister, and members of the rostered minister's call committee to come back together 6 months or so after the beginning of the new ministry for conversation. The purpose is to provide opportunity to use this early stage to compare expectations with actual happenings.

The Ministry Site Profile can be reviewed, and questions posed to each:

- What were you expecting as you entered in this Call?
- How has reality compared?
- What are the pleasant surprises?
- What may some unexpected findings be?
- What has been the focus of the first 6 months?
- Would it be good to think about some early course corrections?
- As part of the overall evaluation, how did the call process benefit the candidate, the Call Committee and the congregation?

Some questions that evaluate the impact of this process might be:

- Does the decision to call this pastor still "feel right?" Explain
- What have you learned about your pastor that is consistent with the image you had of him/her during the call process?
- What have you learned about your pastor that varies from the image you had of him/her during the call process?
- What impact has the pastor made since he/she started?
- What progress has the congregation made toward fulfilling its missional objectives?
- What have you learned about being on a call committee that you feel may benefit others who will serve in the future?

Generally, these conversations are very affirming. The review provides a non-threatening, supportive setting for raising any concern or issues from either perspective. It is helpful to review the unfolding ministry before patterns become too ingrained. The pastor and/or congregational leadership may contact the synod staff if it would be helpful for one of the assistants to the bishop to be present for this review.