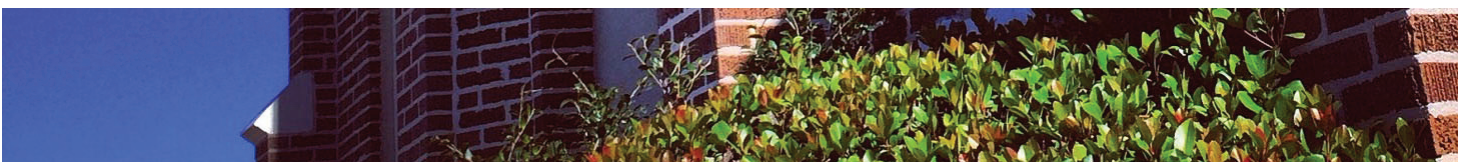




Call Process



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



South Dakota Synod Call Process Staff

Bishop Constanze Hagmaier

chagmaier@sdsynod.org

Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Associate to the Bishop

rsplichallarson@sdsynod.org

Crystal McCormick, Executive

Administrative Assistant

cmccormick@sdsynod.org

South Dakota Synod, ELCA

2001 South Summit Ave

Sioux Falls, SD 57197

605-274-4011

www.sdsynod.org

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OVERVIEW OF STEPS IN SEEKING A NEW PASTOR

- 1. INFORM THE SYNOD OFFICE OF YOUR ROSTERED MINISTER OPENING
Have time for prayer and reflection as your congregation goes through this transition.
- 2. ARRANGE FOR PASTORAL ASSISTANCE DURING THE TRANSITION
- 3. COMPLETE A CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT
Create a call committee.
Complete a Ministry Site Profile (MSP).
- 4. MINISTRY SITE STUDY
- 5. CANDIDATE PROCESS
Candidate profiles are sent to the call committee for their review.
Interviews with candidates are scheduled and completed by call committee.
- 6. RECOMMENDATION
Council takes action on the recommendation of the call committee
- 7. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO VOTE ON THE CANDIDATE
- 8. CANDIDATE DISCERNS CALL
- 9. INSTALLATION

1

STEP ONE INFORM SYNOD OFFICE

When a congregation seeks to call a new rostered minister, the council president informs the Synod Office.

Consult your congregation's constitution and by-laws for your call process guidelines. Updates may be necessary.

Seek prayer and reflection as your congregation goes through the transition of calling a new rostered minister.

2

STEP TWO ARRANGE FOR PASTORAL ASSISTANCE DURING THE TRANSITION

The council president contacts the synod office to arrange Pulpit Supply and/or Interim ministry, depending on what is appropriate for your congregation.

In addition, a list of names for pulpit supply is available at <http://sdsynod.org/how-to/call-process/> under Call Process Resources.

3

STEP THREE CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Your congregation will form a Call Committee according to your constitution to work directly with the Synod. Your Call Committee should reflect the demographics of your congregation.

Complete your congregation's Ministry Site Profile (MSP). This document is the primary tool used to describe your congregation, its mission and ministry needs. This document will introduce your congregation to the candidate. In order to present your congregation in the best light it is important to take plenty of time and prayer as you work on this document.

The MSP can be found online at: www.elca.org/call-process.

A helpful tool for the congregation's MSP is the Vitality Survey found at: www.congregationalvitalitysurvey.com.

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STEP FOUR

MINISTRY SITE STUDY

A ministry site study is scheduled with a member of the Synod Staff and may also include your Conference Dean and/or Conference Lay Person.

At the Ministry Site Study, Synod Staff explains the call process, answers questions, and reviews the MSP with the congregation. For the sake of transparency and keeping people informed, it is important that the whole congregation be invited to attend; leadership, including the Call Committee and Council, should make it a priority to be present.

5

STEP FIVE

CANDIDATES

The Call Committee receives Rostered Minister Profiles (RMPs) from the Synod. These candidate profile(s) are sent from the Synod office to the Call Committee chairperson after the ministry site study has been completed.

Call Committee then receives and reviews RMPs.

After the Call Committee reviews potential candidate(s), the Call Committee chairperson arranges a time for the candidate(s) to be interviewed by the committee. Interviews can take place in-person, via phone, or video call (ex. Skype, FaceTime or GoToMeeting).

During the candidate process, it is the duty of the Call Committee chairperson to communicate clearly and promptly with the candidate(s) of the timeline and progress made by the committee.

[Resources](#)

[Interview](#)

[Questions](#)

[Costs](#)

[Where do candidates come from?](#)

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STEP SIX

RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

With candidate's approval, the Call Committee recommends candidate to council.

The council may choose to move forward or not with a candidate.

If church council approves candidate, then church council

- Chooses to bring candidate back for conversation with council and/or meet and greet with congregation.
- Negotiates compensation, housing, etc. (see synod compensation guidelines)
- Drafts Letter of Call along with the Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities.
- Motions for a congregational meeting for a vote to call the candidate.

If church council rejects candidate or candidate removes their name from the process, return to Step 5.

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STEP SEVEN

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

- The Candidate's profile is presented to the congregation.
- The congregation votes by ballot to call a candidate. Two-thirds majority is required.
- The Call Committee chair informs the candidate of the congregation's decision.
- If the congregation votes to extend a call, sign the Letter of Call and send the Letter of Call along with the Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities to the synod office for the Bishop's signature.

If the congregational vote does not meet the two-thirds majority, return to step 5.

8

STEP EIGHT

CANDIDATE DISCERNS CALL

- A congregation will typically hear from the called candidate within 30 days of the candidate's receipt of the Letter of Call. The candidate may request a meeting with the church council for purposes of further information and clarification on the Letter of Call, moving arrangements, and start date.
- If the response is "yes", then proceed with plans for the candidate's moving, start date, and installation.
- If the response is "no", begin again with Step 5.

9

STEP NINE

INSTALLATION

- The installation is arranged by the council president and new pastor in consultation with the synod office.
- The bishop, associate to the bishop, or conference dean participates in the Service of Installation.
- Welcome your new minister and family.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND RESOURCES

The Call Committee

- Refer to your congregational constitution for your particular rules on forming your Call Committee.
- Name a chairperson or a contact person and provide the synod office with their contact information.
- Members should pledge themselves to conduct their work within the following ethical guidelines:
 - Discussions held within the committee, stay with the committee. Names of potential candidates will not be given to members of the congregation until the name is presented for a congregation wide interview or a meeting is held to vote on extending a call.
 - The committee will exercise due diligence in contacting the references provided by the pastor.
 - The committee will contact references after a face-to-face interview has occurred.
 - The committee will insure the congregation pays the expenses of candidates it invites for interviews.
 - The committee chair will keep the candidate informed of all decisions made by the committee, or congregation concerning the candidate.
- The Call Committee members are encouraged to form the Mutual Ministry Committee for the first year of the new pastor's call.

What happens at the Ministry Site Study?

After the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is complete, a date and place is determined to hold the ministry site study.

The agenda for the one hour meeting will consist of the bishop, or one of the associates from the synod office, meeting with everyone. The MSP will be discussed and conversation about the call process will take place. The synod representative will lead the meeting.

Where do the names of pastor/rostered ministers originate?

1. Bishops, synod offices, and synod ministries
2. Pastor seeking a call
3. Your congregation
4. Other references

SAMPLE VOUCHER

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 from the congregation
to the pastor \$ _____

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This list of possible questions is not comprehensive, but merely suggests issues you might want to raise with the candidate in areas connected with parish life. Select 8-10 questions that will shape the primary part of the interview.

Preaching/Worship Leadership

1. Describe how you go about preparing for the worship service on Sunday morning.
2. Think back in your ministry and tell me about the most difficult sermon you ever preached.
3. Share some of your thoughts about the worship life of a congregation.

Social Ministry

1. Tell me how you evaluate community needs and community strengths.
2. Describe how you have contributed to the quality of life in your community.
3. Describe how you go about motivating members of your congregation to respond to community needs.

Administration

1. Describe the steps you take normally when working with groups to achieve consensus or cohesiveness.
2. How would you describe your style of leadership in overseeing the work of the congregation?
3. Tell me about a period in your life when you had to manage multiple demands in your work and how you determined priorities.

Teaching

1. How do you evaluate the faith development of others?
2. Describe your approach to helping adults to grow in their faith.
3. Describe your approach to teaching children and young people about the Christian faith.

Stewardship

1. Describe how you have helped others grow in their personal stewardship.
2. In what ways have you helped members understand the management of their money and their responsibilities as Christian stewards?
3. Describe the development of your personal sense of Christian stewardship.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CONTINUED

Evangelism/Mission

1. Describe ways in which you typically become acquainted and associate with unchurched people in your community.
2. What kind of guidance and training do you provide members of your congregation for reaching unchurched persons in the community?
3. Describe how you have achieved a multicultural approach to your ministry.

Interpersonal Climate

1. What steps do you take in helping others feel secure, trusted, and open with you?
2. When pressure mounts, how do you maintain your cool in ministry?
3. Describe an experience where conflict arose between you and another person and how resolution was finally achieved.

Ministry in Crisis

1. Describe your style of ministry to persons in crisis.
2. Describe how you have used the establishment of boundaries to strengthen your ministry.
3. How do you assess your own professional limitations when ministering to persons in crisis?

Interpret Theology

1. Describe ways in which you communicate the faith.
2. Describe your skills as teacher and preacher.
3. What resources do you use to remain theologically and Biblically fresh and current?

Innovation/Creativity

1. Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
2. Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to capture that vision.
3. Think back in your ministry and describe a situation that was stagnant or failing and describe how you stepped in to revitalize it.

Participant in the Larger Church

1. Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding their relationship to the greater church.
2. Describe your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation, including ecumenical relationships, church agencies, and institutions.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CONTINUED

3. Describe what your congregation believes to be their role as a congregation of the ELCA.

Personal Growth

1. Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.

2. How do you work at making yourself more effective in your work?

3. Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Call to Ministry

1. Briefly describe the events which led you to prepare for the ministry.

2. Describe the process of deliberation which helps you determine God's call.

3. In what ways has your call to ministry changed over the years?

Questions Candidates May Ask

An effective interview is a two-way street, with the candidate also bringing questions and concerns. Allow time and opportunity for the candidate to ask questions and be prepared to address them.

1. What is the focus of your congregation? Describe your mission.

2. What is the role of staff and what is the role of the laity in your congregation?

3. How many people are involved in leadership roles? How are lay people involved in worship?

4. In your opinion, how are decisions made in your congregation?

5. What long- and short-term goals has the congregation adopted? When was the last time an in-depth self-study was conducted?

6. What is the congregation's commitment to support of and partnership with the synod and the ELCA?

7. How does the congregation respond to change and how are changes made?

8. What part should family members of staff play in the congregation?

9. What would you display on a highway billboard regarding your congregation?

10. Why did the previous pastor leave?

11. Is there any history that I should know in the congregation, good or bad?