

What to expect in the Call Process for Clergy



Most importantly, the call process is about God and God's love for the whole world. Prayer is a vital part of the entire process. We encourage you to be in prayer and discernment throughout each step.

In general, the call process follows these steps:

- 1** Update your Rostered Minister Profile (RMP).
- 2** Contact the SD Synod Office and ask for a discernment conversation with synod staff.
- 3** The Synod Office will send you Ministry Site Profiles to consider.
- 4** The Synod Office will follow up with you. Written permission is needed to send your RMP to the call committees of congregations in which you are interested.

- * Please note, in the SD Synod, it is possible for you to be in multiple call processes at the same time, whether in the SD Synod, or in other synods. If you are in multiple call processes at the same time, we ask that as soon as you give your permission to have a call committee recommend your name for call to the church council, that you withdraw your name from all other call processes.
- * It is also possible that call committees may have multiple candidates to consider at the same time, with the exception of a first call process.

Your RMP will be electronically forwarded to the call chair once written permission is received. The call chair is responsible for distributing your RMP to the other members of the call committee. The call committee is asked to keep your RMP strictly confidential until they recommend you for call to their church council.

The call chair is responsible for communicating with you to introduce themselves, and arrange an interview. If you don't hear anything from a call chair within two weeks of your RMP being sent, contact the SD Synod Office and let them know. If a call committee decides to not interview you, the call chair will let you know that.

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An initial interview may be done by phone, virtually, or in-person, eventually followed by an in-person meeting. As a candidate, you may ask for as many conversations as needed to aid in your own discernment. The interview process is for both the candidate and congregation.

- * Remember that you can ask for the documents the congregation indicates they have (i.e. a congregational history, a budget, a strategic plan, etc.).
- * Also remember that your social media sites are public and committees will naturally visit them as they will be curious about you. Be mindful of what is posted.

After the interview process, the call committee will determine whether or not to move your name forward in the call process. If the call committee votes to recommend you for call, they will ask your permission to bring your name before the church council. The council and call committee will meet and the council will accept or reject the call committee's recommendation.

If the recommendation is accepted, the church council will do the following:

- 1 Set up a meeting with you.
- 2 Work on compensation, benefits, and responsibilities.
- 3 Arrange a date for a meet and greet with the congregation that accommodates your schedule. The congregation may ask you to preach and lead worship. You can determine if you are willing to do so. They may also ask you to record a short introduction of yourself to be shown on the day of the vote.
- 4 Set a congregational vote date according to their constitution.

- * At any point in the process, you can withdraw your name.

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You are responsible for carrying out these steps:

- 1 Informing your references that you are in the call process.
- 2 Asking for what you need in your discernment. It may or may not include:
 - a tour of the city and parsonage (if they have one)
 - meeting with a realtor
 - meeting with someone from the school(s)
 - daycare possibilities
 - meetings with church committees and/or existing staff
 - meetings with other clergy in the community if possible
 - discussing moving costs and needs
 - start date, etc.
- 3 Negotiating compensation, benefits, and responsibilities. Ask the Synod Office if you need assistance or clarification.
- 4 Communicating directly with the call chair and church council chair, and synod staff, as well as leadership in your current call.
- 5 Contacting Portico to ask relevant questions regarding a change of call.

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The day of the vote:

- 1 A special congregational meeting will be held for the purpose of calling their next pastor/deacon.
- 2 The call committee and council will present to the congregation why they believe the Spirit is raising you up to be their next pastor and be available for questions.
- 3 A vote will be taken by written ballot.
- 4 If 2/3 majority vote “yes”, a call has officially been extended to you by the congregation.
- 5 The call chair or council president will contact you after the meeting on the day of the vote to inform you of the result.
 - You can ask for exact numbers of the vote.
 - Know that a call is not finalized until all paperwork from all parties is signed.
 - You technically have 30 days to determine whether or not you will accept the call from the time you receive the signed paperwork from the Synod Office.
 - That said, if you let your name go forward to a congregational vote, the assumption is you are seriously considering the call and can officially accept the extended call as soon as you receive signed paperwork.
- 6 **Appropriate responses from you are these:**
 - “Thank you. I look forward to receiving and reviewing the paperwork.”
 - “Pending the paperwork, I plan to accept the call.”
 - “Thank you for the phone call. I need to let you know that I am unable to accept the call.”

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In the weeks following you can expect the following to be completed:

- 1 A "Letter of Call," and "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities," are completed and signed by the congregational leadership, and sent to the synod office for review and the Bishop's signature.
- 2 Once the documents arrive in the synod office, the Bishop will review and sign the documents and an electronic copy will be sent to you immediately, followed by hard copies in the mail.
- 3 When you receive the paperwork, you can ask questions, or it can be edited as needed, or you can sign it. A copy of the signed paperwork should be sent back to the synod office for filing.
- 4 Arrange a start date with the congregation and schedule a date of installation (and ordination if first call) that works for the congregation and the Bishop's office.

* Be sure to pay attention to your current call's constitution when scheduling the last day or your current call (refer to "How to Leave Well" document).
- 5 Implement agreed upon moving process.

Continue in prayer, asking for God's help and grace in leading the congregation to do God's work as you step into this new adventure that God has for you.