

Call Manual



Southwestern Washington Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Revised 2010



SOUTHWESTERN WASHINGTON SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
The Rev. Robert D. Hofstad, Bishop

God's Beloved People:

Those of you who find this call manual in your hands are, most likely, about to begin the frightening and exhilarating process of calling a new pastor.

Many thoughts might occupy your minds:

- How, when the grieving is still so real, can we even think of calling a new pastor?
- How, given the variety of folk in our parish, can we ever find a leader for all of us?
- How will God's Holy Spirit work among us?
- How will we stay vital and mission-minded during the interim?

Those of us who will be working with you in your call process know your questions are many and your expectations high.

We would have you think of this process as one in which your community draws together--aided by the larger church--to fulfill one of its essential functions. The church has been doing this for centuries. The advisor and helper is God's Spirit, promised to the gathered church (Matthew 18:20) and now ready to empower you for your task.

Elsewhere in this manual you will find some resources available for your use. They are provided because your church thinks they are helpful. We hope you will take advantage of them.

Although we cannot tell you how long your process will take, (probably somewhere between six and ten months), we can promise to aid you in the timeliest way possible. The process you are entering is broad and deep, something more than hiring staff. During the process you will have pastoral care and worship leadership. True ministry will be done among you during this process. We invite you to take advantage of this interim ministry and relax into the process of calling, letting your best thoughts of your common future dominate. "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7)

Sincerely in Christ

Robert D. Hofstad
Bishop

CALL PROCESS OVERVIEW

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

- The Synod is notified of the vacancy or new position.
- The Assistant to the Bishop visits the congregation to discuss ministry needs during the transition period.
- The congregation arranges for an exit interview with the departing staff.
- The vacancy is announced in normal channels by the Synod.
- An interim pastor is called by the synod to serve providing pastoral care to the congregation.

LET'S GET BUSY!

The congregation begins the call process by:

- Completing the Ministry Site Profile.
- Selecting or electing a Transition Team.
- Designating bulletin board space or other means by which the congregation will be kept informed as to process as it goes along.
- Making available nomination forms and compiling a list of those nominated by congregational members (if any).

MATCH-MAKING

The process continues at the Synod level with the following:

- The Bishop maintains a list of pastors who have submitted their names for consideration in call processes within our Synod.
- The Bishop's Office contact those candidates (and their respective bishops) and clears their names for submission to the congregation
- The Bishop's Office selects up to five best candidates for presentation to the congregation's call committee.
- The Bishop's Office presents to the call committee the names of up to five candidates available to consider the call.

READY--SET--INTERVIEW!

The Congregational Call Committee:

- Reviews names submitted.
- Sends names of people nominated by congregational members to the Synod Office for review.
- Releases names of candidates they decide not to interview, sharing this information with the Synod Office. The candidate is informed of this decision.
- Arranges dates, times, and other details of interviews, including a preparation session for the interviewers.
- Interview candidates.

ISSUING THE CALL

- The Congregational Call Committee, after deliberation, presents for congregational vote a recommendation for call. Ideally the candidate will have been presented to the congregation in a social setting prior to the vote.

- The names of interviewed candidates not recommended for call are released. The Congregational Call Committee informs these candidates and the Synod Office of their being released.
- At an officially called special congregational meeting attended by a representative of the Bishop's Office, a call vote is taken.
- If the vote to call is successful (2/3), the congregation notifies the Bishop, who attests the call. The Letter of Call is signed by the Council President and Secretary and forwarded to the Synod Office for the Bishop's signature and seal, and they send to the candidate for call.
- If the vote to call is not successful, the process is repeated beginning with a review of the Ministry Site Profile.

LAST THINGS

- The one who receives a letter of call/appointment has 30 days to accept or decline.
- If the call is accepted, the process continues.
- If the call is declined, the process begins again with a review of the Ministry Site Profile.
- Once the call/appointment is accepted and filled, the interim ministry is concluded with thanksgiving and the action is noted by the Bishop's Office.
- Time for Celebration! Ordination (if applicable) and installation services are planned and carried out with the assistance of the Synod Office. The synod bishop or designee needs to conduct the ordination and installation of all rostered persons in this synod.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE CALL PROCESS

YOUR CONGREGATION: Initiates and has primary responsibility for calling staff

- YOU WILL:**
- ✓ Conduct a study of your ministry.
 - ✓ Create the Call Committee.
 - ✓ Nominate and receive nominations.
 - ✓ Interview candidates.
 - ✓ With the assistance of the synod Bishop, call new staff.

YOUR BISHOP'S OFFICE: Has constitutional responsibility in your call process.

- THE BISHOP WILL:**
- ✓ See that pastoral care is provided for your congregation during the interim period.
 - ✓ Assist you as needed, including seeking candidates for your consideration.
 - ✓ Represent the interests of the Southwestern Washington Synod and the ELCA.
 - ✓ Attest your Letter of Call.

CALL COMMITTEE ROSTER

Name of Congregation _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Chairperson _____

Address

City, State and Zip

Home Phone

Work Phone

Secretary

Address

City, State and Zip

Home Phone

Work Phone

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Congregational Call Committee: elected or appointed

By: Congregation or Church Council on _____
date

PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO THE SYNOD OFFICE

Email: swwsynod@plu.edu

Fax: 253-535-8315

HELP IN APPOINTING OR ELECTING A CALL COMMITTEE

- ✓ First refer to your congregation's constitution. The by-laws may prescribe a process for assembling your Call Committee.
- ✓ If your constitution's by-laws do not mandate a process you should proceed in the fashion most likely to find broad acceptance in your congregation.
- ✓ One method is to allow congregation members to nominate themselves or others and then hold an election.
- ✓ Another method some congregations use is to have the council seek nominees from the variety of groups in the congregation and then have the nominees (as a group) confirmed by congregational vote.
- ✓ Some congregations have their council appoint the Call Committee. While this may seem like the simplest method, though it is open to criticism as "too controlled".
- ✓ Whatever the method, operate openly, communicate, encourage questions, and resist the temptation to "stack the deck" in favor of one interest group over all others.

A SPECIAL NOTE ON THE WORKING RULES OF YOUR CALL COMMITTEE

No matter how solid your congregation, a call process is likely to provoke big questions and fears. The best favor your Call Committee can do for itself is to set its working rules in place before it begins making decisions.

Issues To Resolve

- ✓ How will you choose your leaders?
- ✓ Will there be alternate members of the Call Committee? How and when will they "have voice" and vote?
- ✓ Are you going to operate by Robert's Rules or by some form of consensus decision-making?
- ✓ What vote in committee will be necessary to nominate a candidate to the congregation?
- ✓ How will you keep the congregation informed?
- ✓ Do you have the authority to take a nomination to the council or the congregation?
- ✓ Are you strong enough as a committee to face the possibility that the council or congregation may reject your nominee?
- ✓ Do you have a solid sense from council as to the salary and benefit range that can be offered by the congregation? Do you have this information before interviewing?
- ✓ Do you have your own budget? What money is available to bring candidates in for interviewing?

MINISTRY SITE PROFILE

The Ministry Site Profile is a document that describes your congregation's history, ministry, membership, community, future direction and leadership needs. You need to complete this form electronically by accessing it from the ELCA website (www.elca.org) You will need to download the free software program, Formatta Filler, in order to use it. Both the software program and the form are available on the ELCA website on the same page at:

Go to the ELCA web site for the form: <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Rostered-Leadership/Call-Process/Call-Process-Forms.aspx>

Soon after you submit the form online, the synod office will receive a notice that it is completed and we will access it from our office. Potential candidates for this position want to learn about the congregation as soon as possible, and the quickest method is for them to access it on the ELCA website.

CONGREGATIONAL NOMINATION FOR CALL

NOMINATION FOR _____ of _____
Position Location Congregation &

Please keep the following facts in mind when considering a nomination:

1. All congregational nominations must be submitted in writing, using this nomination form. **No** nomination may be made from the floor at the call meeting.
2. After a person has served three years in his/her present call, he/she is eligible for nomination for other positions.
3. Interim pastors serving our congregation during the next months are not eligible to be considered for our call, unless stated in their Letter of Call or ministry contract.
4. Nominations must be received by the church office no later than _____
5. The Synod staff will be able to better evaluate the nominee's qualifications with the information requested below. (Use other side of sheet, if necessary)

NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

Presently serving as _____ of _____
Position Congregation(s) & Location

OR as _____ at _____
Position: Chaplain, Admin., etc. Agency/Institution & Location

Known strengths of this nominee:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Reasons why I feel he/she should be nominated for Call to our congregation:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My nomination is prompted by:

_____ Personal acquaintance _____ Word from other(s)
_____ Request from the person involved _____ Other: Use back of sheet

This person does _____ / does not _____ have relatives in the congregation.

Date _____ Submitted by: _____

RELEASE OF CANDIDATE(S) NOT SELECTED FOR INTERVIEW

Congregation _____ City _____

Call Committee Chair _____

Date _____

Having reviewed the profile(s) of the candidate(s) sent to us, we have decided NOT to interview the following people and hereby release these person(s):

Name _____

Have you notified this person of the decision to release their name? (please circle)
Yes No

Name _____

Have you notified this person of the decision to release their name? (please circle)
Yes No

Name _____

Have you notified this person of the decision to release their name? (please circle)
Yes No

Name _____

Have you notified this person of the decision to release their name? (please circle)
Yes No

Please send this form to the Synod Office:

Southwestern Washington Synod
420 121st Street South
Tacoma, WA 98444-5218

Fax: 253-535-8315

Email: swwsynod@plu.edu

MATERIALS TO SEND EACH CANDIDATE PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

This list is intended to help you put together an excellent packet of materials for the candidates so that they arrive with solid background on the call. Please add contents that you think may assist the candidate in getting "The Big Picture" of your congregation, such as:

Congregational Records:

- ✓ Annual Reports for at least the past five years.
- ✓ Copies of the yearly Parochial Report (Churchwide Form A and C) for the past five years.
- ✓ Any congregational history that may have been written.
- ✓ Copies of newspaper articles or other publicity that focuses on the congregation.

Community Records:

- ✓ Chamber of Commerce brochures on your community.
- ✓ A map of your community.
- ✓ A sample of the local newspaper.
- ✓ Other promotional materials the community produces.

The Interview Visit Agenda:

- ✓ Social opportunities.
- ✓ Where will the candidate be housed?
- ✓ If the candidate's family is coming, what will they do during the interview, etc?
Hospitality for the spouse, child care, etc?
- ✓ Any questions you would like the candidate to consider before arriving.

INTERVIEW HELP

In your search for a new staff person you may decide to interview one or more candidates. If so, it is wise to begin with the assumption that for each candidate interviewed, two distinct interviews actually take place. Remember that the candidate being interviewed is also interviewing you. This fact points to a definite need for a common agenda. Since both the candidate and your call committee have natural private agendas, you may each be tuned in to different frequencies of concern and response. A common agenda or some basic guidelines for your discussion is very important to both parties in a wholesome, candid manner. How can you develop such an agenda? Here are two ways:

1. Build an interview agenda based upon important information about yourselves as a congregation and about the visiting candidate.
 - a. The Ministry Site Profile should provide a careful, updated view of your membership and ministries.
 - b. The candidate's "biographical record" should assist you in pursuing any particulars about the staff person during the interview.

OR

2. Build an interview agenda with the Ministry Site Profile and candidate's "biographical record" information, as noted above, but supplement this information with existing interview guidelines. The attachments to this section provide some helpful samples.

In summary, it is important to consciously build the interview agenda on substantiated information. Failure to do this may project a "good old days" description of the congregation. The prospective candidate may then base his/her response to your call on stereotyped impressions that bear little relation to the present or future of your parish.

SOME SUGGESTED "DO'S AND DON'TS"

1. **Do** begin with prayer. **Don't** feel pressured to undertake this responsibility without adequate support and assistance from the congregation in terms of their prayers for you.
2. **Do** plan time for the guest candidate to present his/her agenda items. **Don't** bypass or soft-pedal his/her concerns. Such questions will tell much about the person being interviewed. Your responses will tell you much about yourselves.
3. **Do** allow the candidate to express any particular personal or family needs. (Example: For a number of understandable reasons the staff person may prefer a housing allowance rather than parsonage housing.)
4. **Do** expect that the interview will give you a good idea of the candidate's interest and availability. **Don't** press the candidate to answer the question as to what he/she would do with the call if you extended it. Don't even ask the question!!
5. **Do** expect God to do great things in these interviews! (Example: You may gain as much or more new insight into your own congregation as into the person(s) you've

interviewed.) **Don't** become impatient in the process. Take the time you need. You'll need the time you take.

6. **Do** follow up each interview with a note to the candidate, updating him/her on the status of the interview process, the date of the congregational meeting (once the date is set) and thank him/her for his/her willingness to be interviewed. **Don't** leave him/her dangling with little or no information about your schedule and plans.
7. **Do** keep the congregation informed during the interview process (parish paper, bulletin board, Sunday bulletins, verbal announcements, etc.). **Don't** assume they know what you (church council/call committee) are doing, why, or when. Chances are good they need regular reminders.
8. **REGARDING THE CALL ITSELF: Do** make contact immediately with the Synod Office, if the church council, call committee or congregation has serious questions or misgivings about the remuneration package, or about any staff person to whom the call may be extended, or, as in some instances, has already been extended. **Don't** enter into private counsel or individual negotiations with the called person. The synod staff can best assist you in these circumstances.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In a behavioral interview, the candidate will have to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities by giving specific examples from their past experiences. As the interviewer you want to know not that they can do something, but that they have done it. As the committee, prior to the interview, you have determined what you are interested in through the completion of your Ministry Site Profile. Now you develop a series of questions that will allow you to find out if the candidate possesses the necessary competencies to meet your congregation's needs. The basic premise of the behavioral interview is that past performance is a good predictor of future performance.

USE THESE SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO BUILD YOUR OWN LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS. THESE QUESTIONS ARE GENERAL IN NATURE AND DO NOT REPRESENT YOUR CONGREGATION'S UNIQUE INTERESTS OR NEEDS.

A. THE IMAGE OF THE MINISTRY

1. Tell us about your style of ministry.
2. What is the role of the laity in your ministry? How do you view the following: "The purpose of the staff, the lay leaders and the various organizations is to assist the laity to be the Church in worship, nurture, witness, and in service to the world."
3. From your review of our Ministry Site Profile, do you see areas of particular ministry needs for our congregation?
4. How do you see you and laity assisting each other, as a community of faith, for maximum use of abilities and resources in ministry?
5. What functions do you see yourself assuming; the laity assuming?
6. Tell us your process on the decision-making process for the leadership of a congregation.

B. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

1. Tell us about your concepts of worship
2. What is your chief function in worship?
3. Tell us your views on traditional, contemporary and innovative worship.
4. Tell us what role you view the sermon having in worship
5. Tell us about a time when your sermon really got the intended message across to your congregation members. Tell us a time when your sermon did NOT get your intended message across to your congregation. What happened? What did you do?
6. How can the laity help the staff person maintain a high level of sermon quality?

C. EVANGELISM

1. Tell us about your concept of evangelism.
2. What is your vision for preparing children, youth, and adults for church membership? Do you see this as a pastoral responsibility?
3. How qualified do you feel to train the laity for organized programs of evangelism "outreach" in the community or "inreach" to nominal members? Please explain.

D. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. What do you see as the role of Christian Education in the parish program?
2. Tell us about any special emphasis - areas or ages – you have for Christian Education.
3. Tell us about some fresh patterns that you have employed in a Christian Education program.

4. What are your views on training and supervising the teaching staff?
5. Tell us about your preferred curriculum and practices for Christian Education.

E. THEIR PLACE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. Tell us about how you would work with laity members in our congregation.
2. What do you view as your strengths and weaknesses?
3. What makes you interested in accepting a call to our congregation?
4. What would you see as your role in visitation, to persons in distress; to persons with marital problems; for social purposes.
5. Tell us about a time when you were disappointed in your performance?
6. Tell us your views of the responsibility for visitation. Which areas should be your sole responsibility? Trained Laities responsibility?
7. What are your concepts for premarital, pre-baptismal, and pre-confirmation counseling? General pastoral counseling? Do you have any curriculum you like to use for any of these?
8. What do you see as your role and the laity's role at the time of death in the congregation?
9. What are your preferences regarding your teaching role in the congregation? Which classes do you prefer to teach and why?
10. Tell us about a time that you made a major sacrifice to achieve an important goal.

F. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1. Tell us about a time when you encouraged people to support ideas that they had had the opportunity to formulate? How did you accomplish this?
2. Tell us about a time when you achieved a great deal in a short period of time.
3. What is your view of establishing a congregational vision to focus attention on, and participation in, high priority programs? How would you measure progress?
4. Tell us about a time that you were able to sell your idea to a key person/group. Tell us about a time that you were unable to sell your idea to a key person/group.
5. Tell us your views on annual reviews and evaluations of pastoral, church council, and committee ministries? How would you best like to see this happen?
6. Tell us about a time that you were able to build team spirit in a time of low morale.
7. Tell us your views on congregational self-study once every two or three years, including such items as: goal attainment, major ongoing ministries, areas of need, expectations of parishioners, etc.?
8. Tell us about a time that you supported the establishment of goals by the council and committees with an annual evaluation of the goals?
9. Tell us about a time when you were very effective in your problem-solving ability.
10. What are your views on an annual council retreat? What purpose do you see it fulfilling?
11. Tell us your relationship with your church council at your last call.
12. What is your response to this statement? "In the context of congregational life, church members (including the leaders) quickly learn to avoid conflict and often seek peace at most any price."
13. What is your response to this statement? "To lead you must let go. You must delegate responsibility."
14. Tell us about a time when you found it necessary to tactfully but forcefully say things that others did not want to hear. What happened? What did you do?

G. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ACTION

1. What is your concept of your role in community betterment activities?
2. Tell us about a time that you spoke on social justice issues?
3. What is your place in social action?

4. Tell us about a time when you made an intentional effort to get to know someone from another culture.

H. WIDER CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

1. What will be your role in the Conference, Synod, Region, and ELCA?
2. What are your thoughts about local, synod, regional, and ELCA benevolences?

I. GENERAL

1. Tell us your views on having a Mutual Ministry Committee to work with the staff in the parish? How would you like members to be chosen?

A **Mutual Ministry Committee** is most often a small group of carefully chosen persons who relate to the pastor and the entire church staff. They meet periodically with the staff and with individual staff members, as requested, to talk over matters of mutual interest and concern. More specifically, this committee normally functions to develop harmonious interpersonal staff relationships and to offer their counsel in ironing out difficulties and conflicts that may arise.

2. Tell us how you would join your family life with that of the parish, if at all.
3. Tell us how you joined your family and parish in your last call.
4. What methods do you use to balance your personal and parish life?
5. Are there any significant needs concerning the parsonage (if offered), its condition or use?
6. Should we consider the possibility of a housing allowance instead of a parsonage?
7. What do you want to do for continuing education?
8. What other items would you wish to discuss? Any special potentials or problems in the parish?

QUESTIONS THE CANDIDATE MAY WISH TO ASK YOU

1. What is the focus of the congregation's ministry?
2. What is the rostered staff person's role, the lay staff person's role and what is the laity's role?
3. What is the congregation's history: stewardship, age levels, leadership?
4. How many interest groups and organizations are there?
5. How many innovative worship services have you had during the year, and what was the response?
6. How many people are involved in leadership roles? How are lay people involved in worship?
7. How involved do you like your staff person to be in the community?
8. Describe your administrative structure.
9. What has been done in:
 - a. Evangelism?
 - b. Finance?
 - c. Social Ministry?
 - d. Christian Education?
 - e. Stewardship?
 - f. Outreach?
10. Is there a need for a building program? How do you rate your facilities?
11. Details of Call: salary, housing, benefits, and what will be done in the future?
12. What long- and short-term goals has the congregation adopted? When was the last in-depth self-analysis of the congregation's program/function done?
13. What are the links between this congregation and the community; other churches?
14. Describe the "personality" of your congregation.
15. What does the congregation provide for my continuing education?
16. What other staff is employed? Are changes in these positions expected?
17. How does the congregation respond to change?
18. What is the congregation's benevolence record for the last three years?
19. What part should my spouse and family take in the parish? What are your expectations for my family's involvement in the parish?

INTERVIEW EXPENSE VOUCHER

Congregation _____ City _____

Call Committee Chair _____

Travel by air from _____ to _____

Travel by car from _____ to _____

_____ miles at _____ cents/mile

Meals: _____

Taxi/limousine/bus/parking: _____

Miscellaneous: _____

TOTAL _____

Please attach all receipts.

Signed: _____

Candidate

Date

Address

City, State, Zip

Approved: _____

Call Committee Chair

Date

Check sent to candidate on _____

REPORT OF NOMINATION AND RELEASE OF CANDIDATES

Congregation _____ City _____

Call/Appointment Committee Chair _____

By action of the Lutheran Church Call Committee on _____
date

following candidate will be recommended to the congregation for call

A Congregational Meeting has been called on _____ at _____ AM/PM.
Our vote will be taken at that time.

The following candidates who were interviewed are released from our consideration:

**WE HAVE CONTACTED EACH OF THESE CANDIDATES
TO INFORM THEM OF OUR ACTION.**

Please return this form to the Synod Office:
Southwestern Washington Synod
420 121st Street South
Tacoma, WA 98444-5218
Fax: 253-535-8315
Email: swwsynod@plu.edu

Sample letter of thanks to those candidates interviewed but not recommended to the congregation. *Print on church letterhead.*

Dear _____ ,

By action of the Call Committee at _____ Lutheran Church, we are recommending another pastoral candidate for the call to ministry with us. In doing so, we have released your name to the Southwestern Washington Synod for consideration by other congregations.

We thank you for the opportunity to interview you and get to know you. We wish you God's peace and ask that you keep our congregation in your prayers during this call period.

Thank you again for being with us. If you have not yet received reimbursement for expenses related to the interview, please let us know by calling our Call Committee Chair _____ at (phone/email).

In Mission With You,

Secretary

_____ Lutheran Church Call Committee

HOW TO CONDUCT A CALL MEETING

1. It is the responsibility of the Church Council to conduct the call meeting. The president of the congregation or an appointee of the council should conduct the meeting.
2. **NOTICES:**
 - ✓ Verify that the congregation has been properly notified of the meeting according to the constitution.
 - ✓ Verify that the Synod Office has been properly notified of the meeting time and place and that a representative of the Bishop's Office will be present.
 - ✓ Verify that a quorum exists according to the requirements of your church constitution.
3. Since a written ballot will be required, be sure that paper ballots and pencils are available. Tellers should be appointed for counting the vote.
4. Open the meeting with prayer followed by introductions of any visitors attending the meeting. Explain that this is a special meeting of the congregation and that the only business before the congregation is the call. No other business may be transacted at this meeting.
5. Explain what will happen at the meeting:
 - ✓ a nomination will be brought by the call committee;
 - ✓ discussion of the merits of the candidate;
 - ✓ two votes will be taken: one to call (*vote is written and requires at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose -Model Constitution for Congregations *C9.0*) and one to approve the salary and benefits package (*vote may be written, by show of hands, or voice. It requires a simple majority vote.*) *The ELCAModel Constitution for Congregations does not permit voting by proxy or absentee ballot (C10.50).*
6. A representative of the call committee presents the candidate for nomination and introduces the merits of the candidate. Discussion and clarification follow.
7. A vote to call is taken. If successful, the meeting proceeds with presentation, discussion, and vote on the salary package. If the vote to call is not successful, the meeting is adjourned with an explanation of the process to follow.
8. Following the meeting, the council is responsible to:
Report the vote of the congregation to the Bishop's Office.
If the vote was successful, complete the working copy of the Letter of Call and Definition of Compensation forms and sign the original Letter of Call sent from the Synod Office.

**CONGREGATION REPORT TO SYNOD OFFICE ON
CALL VOTE MEETING**

Date _____

A congregational meeting was held by _____
Congregation Name

at _____ at _____ .
Address Time

A quorum of _____ was present to vote on the recommendation
List number in attendance

of the Church Council/ Call Committee to extend a Letter of Call/Appointment to

_____,
Name of Candidate

to serve as _____ .
Title of Position to be Filled

In a secret ballot _____ votes were cast to call and _____ votes
Votes in Favor Votes Against

were cast against this call. _____ chose to abstain.
Abstaining

Respectfully submitted,

President of Church Council

Secretary of Church Council

Sample Voting Ballots

(date vote held)

Vote to Call Pastor _____ (name) _____ as _____ (position title) _____.

Yes _____

No _____

Abstain _____

(date vote held)

Vote to approve compensation package for Pastor _____ (name) _____ as outlined in supporting documentation.

Yes _____

No _____

Abstain _____

Instructions for completing the actual Letter of Call and Definition of Compensation Form when calling a Pastor or AIM.

You will receive a copy of this letter in the Call Packet sent to the congregational Council President.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our prayers are with you during this time of important decisions for the ministry of your congregation.

Enclosed are the blank original Letter of Call form, the vote tally sheet, instructions on how to conduct a call meeting, plus instructions on where to find and how to complete the Definition of Compensation form on the ELCA web site. Listed below are the directions for easily and quickly completing these forms:

- 1. Please COMPLETE the CALL VOTE RECORD.**
- 2. SIGN and DATE (only) the ORIGINAL (colored ink at top) LETTER OF CALL form.** Do NOT fill in the details of the form-it will be completed at the synod office. This form must be signed by both your Council President and Secretary. Please do not substitute the signature of another council officer.
- 3. FILL OUT AND SIGN THE DEFINITION OF COMPENSATION FORM.**
Please complete the final copy of the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" (2007 form) on the internet at <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/Congregation-Administration/Official-Guidelines.aspx> . Please fill in the information on this form on your computer, but you cannot save it! You must print out the completed form and have it signed by both your Council President and Secretary. The signature line for Rostered Person is to be signed by the called person upon acceptance of the call. Please review the copies to see that they have been filled out in their entirety, and double-check the figures for the compensation package to ensure they are correct.
- 4. RETURN the VOTE RECORD, the HANDWRITTEN LETTER OF CALL FORM, the ORIGINAL (signed) LETTER OF CALL and THE COMPLETED (and signed) DEFINITION OF COMPENSATION to the Synod Office** for completion of the originals with the Bishop's signature and synod seal. Please do not use your congregation's seal. Do not fold these documents--Use the cardboard piece in the envelope, so they won't bend in the mail, please. (SW WA Synod, 420-121st St. S, Tacoma, WA 98444.)

We will send the final documents to your pastor as soon as they are completed and signed by the Bishop. A copy will also be returned to the Congregational President, as well as kept in the pastor's and congregation's files in the synod office. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Ronald Hoyum
Assistant to the Bishop

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS — AN OVERVIEW OF THE CALL PROCESS

Who is responsible for keeping the congregation going until we have a new pastor? *Your church council, in consultation with the synod bishop. Together they will decide how to best provide for pastoral leadership and care during the call process.*

Will we be able to save a little on the budget while we don't have a "real" pastor? *Probably not. The interim will be asked to do the same tasks your former pastor did and will be paid on the same scale as your former pastor. In addition, there will be some additional expenses related to the call process. It's also a realistic fact that during a pastoral change some sense of loyalty to the parish is lost. This is a good time for each member to reaffirm their pledge to the common ministry and stay consistent in their giving.*

Will we have a "real ministry" during the interim process? *Absolutely! Used well, the period of transition between permanent pastors can be intensely rewarding.*

How long will it take before we have a new pastor? *Each congregation will be unique. Factors include the length of the previous pastor's tenure, any problems there may have been during that tenure, the clarity of mission among the membership, etc. Even the time of year can make some difference as committee meetings are more difficult around holidays and summer vacations. In an average congregation and under the best circumstances, the call process will take six to nine months.*

My daughter was going to be married this summer. Can our old pastor come back and do the wedding? *You and your pastor will have to settle these ticklish questions. As a rule it is usually better for there to be a clean break in the former relationships. Just plain common sense is the key.*

Can we trust the Synod Office? *In my old congregation they really dumped a "loser" on us! It is very important that the congregation find a way to ferret out strong feelings like these. In all likelihood more than one member will have misgivings about "interference" from the synod, memories of a difficult call process, or a story to tell about a pastor that didn't work out. **Trust is the most important word in the process.** Open communication is the avenue to trust. Ask your questions, encourage the call committee and council to post their meeting minutes, be involved, and pray for one another and the call process. The Synod's goals are the same as yours: A vital ministry of proclamation, sacramental depth, and service.*

Who selects the congregation's call committee? *Refer to your constitution for this information. In most cases it is the church council after receiving nominations from congregation members.*

Is there any collected wisdom about the make-up of the congregation's call committee? *It's usually wise to find a way for the diverse interests of the congregation to be represented on the call committee. Some councils ask for representatives of the various groups and committees. If there is any wisdom it is to operate openly, encourage questions, and resist the temptation to "stack the deck" in favor of one interest group over all others. Five to seven members is a manageable size and permits inclusive (male/female, non-caucasian, older/younger etc.) representation.*

Some of us are not familiar with this language about "calling." Aren't we simply hiring church staff? *In Luther's understanding a Calling was that which the believer did in response to the gift of the Grace, the forgiveness of sins. There are many motivations in a hiring process. To respond to a call is different and involves very different factors. A congregation should feel a great confidence in its prayerful decision to call, even if traditional "hiring" motivations don't seem to be present. A good example of this is the assumption that because a pastor has had a certain salary level in the past, he or she is unavailable where the salary is less. While this may be true in a hiring situation, it should not be a bar to the issuance of a call, nor will it be an automatic bar to prayerful discernment by a Lutheran pastor. If salary is less than Synod Compensation Guidelines, the possibility of a part-time call will be discussed.*

It says here that we're supposed to "study" ourselves. Good Grief! Our congregation is so diverse this seems impossible! Who is supposed to lead us in this process? *This is the responsibility of your Council. In some cases it will be assigned to the Transition Team. Though the task may seem impossible it can also be very satisfying because it results in a clearer sense of mission. Look forward to it as an opportunity to gain focus on the future and take pride in the diverse gifts of your church family.*

We did a "self-study" just four years ago. Do we really have to do another one? *At the very least it should be reviewed and updated with some deliberateness. You may look much the same but the need in your neighborhood may have significantly changed.*

How is our interim pastor related to our call process? *Officially, not at all. Interim pastors have a limited call and will have been asked by the Bishop to refrain from "assisting" in your process. The interim's task is to provide regular continuity in the essential tasks of your parish life. They will have experience and/or special training in the particular challenges of interim ministry, but the future ministry of your parish is your responsibility, working in concert with the Bishop.*

Speaking of rules, somebody is going to pull out the "rule-book" sooner or later. Can you give it to us briefly? What are the rules of the church we have to follow? *They are very straightforward. The calling process is to be conducted in consultation with the Synod Bishop. You need to call a pastor on the roster of the ELCA. Your vote must be by secret, written ballot at a properly called meeting. It takes a 2/3's vote to call. For a complete run-down, see your church constitution and the information in tis Call Manual.*

My brother-in-law's son from his first marriage is a pastor in Atlanta. Could he be our new pastor? *Yes. Any pastor on the ELCA clergy roster is open to your call. Any congregation member may nominate a pastor to the congregation's call committee. Since there may be an initial nomination of several candidates from various parts of the church, it is the task of the synod and the Bishop's staff to produce a manageable list of up to five qualified candidates for you.*

We would like to consider our Associate Pastor for the lead pastor position. Do you have any concerns about that? *Generally speaking, it is difficult for an associate to make the transition from a limited job description as associate to the overall responsibility of a lead position. The situation may still call for an interim ministry period in order to clarify the mission priorities of the parish. In such a case the associate might be among those interviewed for the new phase of mission in the congregation.*

What happens after we find some pastors on our own that we think we would like to know more about? *Use the nomination form found in the call manual and forward it to your call committee or council. They will submit their list to the Synod Office to be reviewed along*

with all other nominees. The Bishop's Office will then present up to five of the strongest candidates to your Call Committee.

In our last call process we had a great candidate from Minnesota but it was too expensive to fly her out. Aren't we practically limited to pastors in this area? It probably will be more expensive to interview out of state candidates but this should not prohibit you from doing so. This is one of the big reasons to covenant to hold your church budget together during the change--so you can cover these important expenses. You will be pleased to discover that ways can often be found to interview candidates who want to interview. Remember, it is in the best interests of the ELCA to have some movement of pastors across synod lines. You are the party with primary responsibility for call expenses but you are not the only party in the process who can assist.

*We're pretty sure we need a 25-30 year old man with a young family and a wife at home. Do you have any candidates like that? Of course! But you would be misinterpreting the heart of "calling" to limit yourself to such a candidate. A wide variety of candidates will be available to you and interested in your position. It would be a grave mistake to let one factor (like age or sex) predetermine who can respond to God's calling to do ministry in your midst. And remember, our culture is not nearly so homogeneous as it has been in the past. For example, if you live in an urban area with a high concentration of singles as your mission field, a "classic" clergy family like that described above may be a serious mistake. Remember! Let your **Mission** determine your pastoral choice!*

Can we send a delegation to visit at the church of a pastor we're interested in? Yes. Good manners suggest you call ahead and inform the pastor of your intention to do so. You may also want to be sure the pastor is leading worship, etc. that day.

If the pastor comes to the congregation for an interview, will the rest of us get a chance to meet him or her? Out of consideration for those being interviewed as well as for the congregations where they presently serve, the names of the candidates you are interviewing need to remain confidential. When you have selected the candidate you will recommend to your congregation for call, you may provide an opportunity for the congregation to meet this candidate prior to their voting on calling that person to serve as your pastor.

After we've seen some candidates, what if we would really like to call our Interim Pastor? The possibility of that will be determined by the interim contract signed by your congregation, the Interim Pastor, and the synod Bishop. In almost all cases it will not be possible to call the Interim. Think about it this way. When a woman is pregnant it is often wise to seek the medical assistance of a specialist, an obstetrician/gynecologist. But once the baby is born the need is for a pediatrician. The interim pastor will come to you with specific goals and objectives for ministry in your midst during the interim period. The best chance for accomplishing those goals will be if they are the sole concern of the interim. Otherwise interim ministry simply becomes a months-long "interview" and the special goals of the interim period are sacrificed for other interests.

So when it comes down to it, who makes the decision to call? Do we take a vote or something? Does anyone have veto power? When the call committee has reached a careful decision they will forward this information to the council. (REMEMBER: At the beginning of the call committee's work it must be determined what percentage vote of the committee is necessary to take a nomination to the congregation!) The council then calls a special congregational meeting, according to the congregation's bylaws, at which time the sole item of business (along with the salary package) will be the issuance of a call. The call requires a 2/3 vote by secret ballot and the Bishop must be represented at the meeting.

Assuming all goes well, the only remaining requirement is the signature of the Bishop on the Letter of Call. If the Bishop has been a part of the process all along, there is little reason to doubt the letter will be signed.

Who, how, when is the financial package negotiated? Do we dare offer a pastor less money than the pastor is making now? Details of the salary package are the responsibility of the council. Some details will be known before the call committee selects a nominee. Other details must be worked out in cooperation with the candidate to be nominated, the Synod Office, and the council before the call meeting. As was previously stated, the salary is only one component of a call. When you issue a call, the candidate will prayerfully consider all the factors. It would be wrong to allow one factor, like salary, to derail what the congregation felt was a genuine call. Each circumstance is unique, of course. For example, a pastor who is 55 years old may seem out of reach for a smaller congregation because of salary considerations. Again, if salary is less than Synod guidelines, the possibility of a part time call remains.

After we issue the Letter of Call, what happens? What if we are turned down? Once the Letter has been issued, the pastor has 30 days to respond. Your other candidates should be informed that a call has been issued and that they will be notified of the result. Only one call can be issued at a time. The pastor is responsible to respond in a timely manner. Occasionally there will be contact with the pastor to clarify details of the call. If the call is accepted, the call committee's task is over and the council handles the details. If the call is "returned" (not accepted) then the call committee reconvenes and reviews its work and the Ministry Site Profile, asks for new candidates, holds new interviews, and nominates another pastor to the congregation.

What is that question you are burning to ask? Everyone in the process must constantly remember that a lack of information breeds suspicion and mistrust. Every question is an important question. Try to find ways to give your members an opportunity to ask their special questions. Regular reporting helps even (especially!) if you don't think much progress has been made since the last meeting. Some ideas:

- ✓ make the call committee selection process an open one;*
- ✓ set aside a prominent bulletin board for the process and use it for minutes, pictures of candidates, an explanation of the process, your timeline and perhaps a copy of these questions;*
- ✓ be redundant in reporting. That means use a bulletin board, mail out reports with the monthly mailing, make candidate information available to all, AND send call committee members to other church committee meetings for reporting and questions, etc.;*
- ✓ **remember where you started--with a prayer for God's guidance. God answers prayer and asks us to be patient.***

A DOZEN QUESTIONS FOR THE EXIT INTERVIEW
(These are questions you ask of the current rostered staff that is leaving this position.)

1. _____ , you came to us ___ years ago. If you can remember, what were the compelling reasons for coming here? What made this parish so attractive?
2. In your ministry here, did you find what you expected?
3. What five things have given you the greatest sense of fulfillment? What has given you the greatest frustration?
4. Was there a climax in your ministry here? When was this, and when did you first consider making a change?
5. What elements are present in the new call that caused you to make the change?
6. How do you view our strengths and our weaknesses as you leave us?
7. In the light of what you have said, what type of ministry do you feel we need? Where should we place our emphasis for the future? What are the important areas to maintain?
8. What do you think the laity might do to strengthen the incoming rostered person? Where do you think we should take a look at ourselves in order that we might break through some of our barriers?
9. If you were to "dream" the future for this parish, with no restraints, how would you picture our parish ten years from now?
10. What are the restraints, as you see it, which would keep us from reaching these goals?
11. As you see us, what attributes and capabilities in a future rostered leader would best serve this congregation during the next several years?
12. Is there anything we can do to assist you and your family in the transition that is about to take place?

Maximum Tenure Length of an Associate Pastor Following the Call of a Senior/Lead Pastor

Congregations extending a call to a new senior/lead pastor have, in that call, expressed a new direction and mission for the congregation. The Synod wants to encourage congregations in their pursuit of that mission as servants of the living Jesus Christ.

With regard to Associate Pastors and Associates in Ministry:

- ✓ We assume that all other calls and appointments in the congregation were intended to be co-terminus with the resignation of the lead pastor unless specific, intentional exceptions were noted in the letters of call and appointment to those staff persons.
- ✓ We encourage the new senior/lead pastor and council to act deliberately within six months of installation to call the associate staff members to new ministry in the congregation or to encourage them to consider ministry beyond that congregation.
- ✓ If associate staff members are not called to new service in the congregation, the synod office will do everything possible to assist in securing new calls or appointments in this Synod or in other appropriate fields of ministry.
- ✓ If the associates have not secured new calls within six months of the new senior/lead pastor's installation, we recommend that the church council and staff support committees engage in an internal consultation concerning the future process of disengagement by the associate(s). After a process has been determined, there should be consultation with the Synod Office concerning the conclusion of that individual's ministry in that setting. It is our normal recommendation that the associate(s) be given three months severance pay and be encouraged to move on to some other ministry in order that the congregation may pursue its mission, ministry and staffing needs.