

**The ELCA Call Process**  
- By Pastor Ron Hoyum -

*[Pastor Ron Hoyum is the Assistant to the Bishop in the Southwestern Washington Synod responsible for the call process.]*

James Reddick asked that I share with you some helpful information about the call process. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers. I look forward to meeting with your call committee this fall as they begin their work.

1. What documents govern the call process?

Two documents can be found on the ELCA website (elca.org) – the Ministry Site Profile and the Rostered Leader Profile. The first is filled out by your Transition Team and describes the congregation and its leadership needs. The second is the “resume” of the pastor that describes the gifts and skills of the pastor as well as their vision and style of pastoral ministry.

Two other documents can be found on the synod website (lutheranssw.org, then click on ‘Resources and Links’) – the Call Manual and the Clergy Compensation Guidelines. The manual is not a rule book to be slavishly followed but a handbook to guide you through an effective call process. It includes both forms and advice for call committees.

2. What are the responsibilities of a call committee?

The Call Committee interviews pastoral candidates on behalf of the congregation. Their work is confidential until the committee is ready to recommend a name to the congregation. Confidentiality is a courtesy to those pastors who are being interviewed. It also gives the Call Committee the needed freedom and flexibility to do their work.

3. Where does the synod office get candidates for the call committee?

The first place is through the congregational nomination process. The call committee will give congregation members an opportunity to nominate pastors that they believe would be good candidates for their church.

The second place we look is to the pastors in our own synod who are open for call. We have many fine pastors who serve faithfully and well. When they are ready to move we help them find a new call.

Finally, we consult with our colleagues in the synod offices closest to us – in Region I. We also look at pastors from around the country who have expressed an interest in serving in the Southwestern Washington Synod using an ELCA database.

4. How does the synod office select names for the call committee?

First of all, we compare your Ministry Site Profile with the Rostered Leader Profiles of the pastoral candidates. We are looking to see how your leadership needs match up with their leadership skills and vice versa.

We also talk with the Bishop in the synod where the pastor is currently rostered. We ask them for their assessment of the particular pastor's gifts and strengths for ministry.

Normally, a Call Committee will receive between three and five names of pastors to evaluate and interview.

5. How long will the call process take?

I normally tell call committees (and congregations) that the process will normally take about six months – from the time when the Transition Team writes the Ministry Site Profile and the Call Committee receives names to interview to the time when the new pastor begins his or her new call.

I have had the privilege of working with the congregations in our synod for the past 10 years in the call process. It is an exciting time in the life of the congregation and I am always amazed and gratified to see how God's hand is at work leading and guiding the process.

May God bless St. Mark as it anticipates welcoming a new pastor!

-Pastor Ron Hoyum