

2026 Transition and Call Manual



Southwestern Washington Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Beloved Siblings in Christ of the Southwestern Washington Synod,

If you are reading this packet, you and your congregation have likely entered a time of transition and the call process for a pastor or deacon. This season can hold both excitement and sorrow, hopefulness and uncertainty, discernment and urgency. I encourage you to remain prayerful and patient, while also diligent and committed to the work that lies ahead.

This packet is intended to guide you in the important responsibility entrusted to you on behalf of your congregation. Remember that the call of a rostered minister comes from within the congregation, shaped and guided by the Holy Spirit. As your synod, we are here to walk alongside you: to assist, support, encourage, and guide you through this process. If at any point you need help, please reach out to me or to the synod staff working with you in this journey.

I pray that this time of transition is both life-giving and filled with a renewed sense of calling for your congregation. Know that my prayers are with you in this holy and sacred time. And above all, be assured that Christ goes with you in this and in every season of life.

Blessings,

Bishop Keith Marshall
Southwestern Washington Synod
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Introduction

The primary work of a congregation or organization seeking to call a pastor or deacon is the work of discernment.

For Christians, the practice of discernment has roots in the stories of scripture. When God's people needed a faithful leader, they often gathered to worship and pray, to seek the Spirit's wisdom in choosing someone who had the gifts for the mission at hand.

Discerning has some things in common with Deciding but is distinct in many ways. It is helpful for a congregation to understand these distinctions as they set out on the path of transition. The work of Susan Beaumont and Associates is helpful. (How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You are Going: Leading in a Liminal Season, Roman and Littlefield, 2019 All Rights Reserved)

A Deciding Mindset focuses on defining the problem to be solved, looking for root causes, gathering and interpreting data, brainstorming alternatives, assessing risk and return and deciding on an optimal solution.

A Discerning Mindset grows out the assumption that God is not neutral about our mission or our choices. The Holy Spirit is our indwelling and ongoing guide as we seek what God is disclosing about our future mission. God's will is best discerned within the community... this is not a solo journey or one in which the loudest voice "wins".

A process of discernment is grounded in guiding principles and shedding ego and biases. It involves listening together to the prompting of the Spirit and using our imagination. We take time to weigh options and pause along the way to process the steps we are taking together.

There is a process of discernment that helps us listen, reflect, and practice patience to hear the ways God is calling your church/community into living your mission and vision. Through this process all are asked to participate.

In a process of deciding, authorized leaders are in charge of the decision.

In a process of discernment, all invested parties are included and have an important voice.

The Synod Staff are here to accompany and support you throughout this process of discernment and transition. Bishop's Associate Pastor Michelle de Beauchamp serves as point-person for Transition and Call. She can be reached at michelle.debeauchamp@swwasynod.org or the Synod Office.

Spiritual Practices to Support Discernment

The following passages and practices open us to God's presence and holy work among us. We have included here 2 different practices to ground in scripture. Each time the church, the transition team, or the call committee gather we recommend grounding in scripture at the beginning of the meeting.

Practice: Lectio Divina

Listen to the passage read slowly and deliberately several times.

- First reading—As you listen to the reading ask yourself, "what word or a phrase that stands out to you?"
- Second reading—Meditate silently on word or phrase. What is God saying through this word?
- Third reading—Turn to prayer in response to this word that has settled in your heart. Prayer may be silent, or each person may share a petition.
- Close with a moment or two of silence

Passages to contemplate using Lectio Divina:

Psalms 46	Romans 5:1-5
Psalms 121	Romans 8:38-39
Isaiah 43	Romans 12:1-8
Isaiah 55:10-13	2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Matthew 6:25-34	Philippians 4:4-9

Practice: Ignatian Contemplation (adapted)

Listen to the scripture as it is read slowly and deliberately.

- First reading—Close your eyes and imagine the sensory details of the story. What do you see, hear, smell, touch, taste? Is it hot or cool? Day or night? Is the wind blowing? Where are people standing? What do you notice?
- After 2-3 minutes of silence, share your perceptions with each other.
- Second reading—Close your eyes and imagine that you are IN the story. Which character are you? Or are you off stage, observing the action? How do you feel? What is your response to what is happening in the story? What do you notice?
- After 2-3 minutes of silence, share your experience with each other.

Passages to contemplate using Ignatian Contemplation:

Genesis 32:22-31	Luke 10: 27-37
Ruth 1:6-18	Luke 10: 38-42
Matthew 6:25-34	Luke 15:11-32
Matthew 16:1-16	Luke 24:13-35
Mark 4:34-41	

Four Primary “Movements” of Pastoral Transition



Fulfilling Farewell

- What is the information that we need passed on from the pastor/deacon?
- What events do we want to host to celebrate and give thanks for these pastor years together?
- Who will be the point person for these plans?
- What reports or exit interviews need to happen and filed?

Clarifying Mission (Strategic Discernment)

- What are the key questions we want to ask ourselves during this time of transition?
- How will we invite input from all who would like to offer it?
- Who will serve us as pastor during this Interim time?
- Who will be the people who lead this process and write our Ministry Site Profile? (Transition Team)
- What are the tools we need to use for Strategic Discernment during this time to help us clarify who we are and our mission?

Pastoral Search

- What does our constitution say about a Call Committee?
- Who are the people who will be able to serve this role faithfully on the Call Committee, putting aside their own agenda to discern the work of the Holy Spirit?

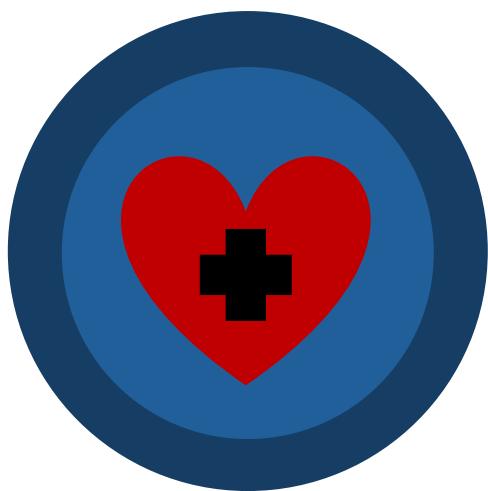
Welcoming the New Pastor or Deacon

- How will we introduce the new leader (and possibly family) to the congregation?
- How will we help him/her/them get settled and oriented in the community?
- What are our hopes and dreams we can work toward with the new Pastor/Deacon in this first year in fulfilling our mission?

The Work of the Transition Team

*(The material in this section will be explored in-depth at the **Transition Team orientation** with Bishop's Associate, Rev. Michelle de Beauchamp. Please contact her when your Team is ready to meet; michelle.debeauchamp@swwasynod.org)*

When a congregation enters a pastoral transition process it can feel disruptive to the regular rhythms and habits of life together. Transition can create anxiety in some people, while also creating excitement in others. Pastoral transition, when undertaken thoughtfully and strategically, can be a time of both increased mission clarity, discernment and renewed engagement. The Transition Team has an important role to play in creating opportunities for people to reflect on where they see the Spirit of God at work and how they are being called to engage in this holy work for the sake of the world.



IDENTITY

At the heart of our life together as Church is the liberating love of God in Christ Jesus. God's love has the power to free us from all that holds us captive, both as individuals and as the human family. Joined to Christ Jesus in baptism, we are called to be his body in the world. This is our identity as Christian people.

VOCATION

How do we both give and receive this love? How does God's love call us to repentance and to new patterns of living? How do we love and care for each other as Jesus instructed? How do we see and respond to the needs of our neighborhood, community and world, following his example? This is our vocation as people joined to Christ.

RESOURCE

When we are grounded in our identity and vocation, we can determine what resources we need to live out our calling as a congregation. Resources is a broad category that includes people (both staff and volunteers), space, finance, and other things.

What often happens in the life of a congregation is that "outer circle" matters begin to move to the center. Resources can become our central concern, especially if we feel that we may not have enough of them to live as we are accustomed to. Transition times in the life of a congregation present wonderful opportunities to put "first things first." This is a time for us to get clarity about our identity, our mission, and listen to how God is calling us to follow and be part of our wider community. The Synod is here to provide tools and support during this time of discernment.

Three Goals for the Transition Team

1. **Increase engagement** among members by providing opportunities for input and involvement in the transition process.
2. Through a process of self-study and using the mission tools taught by the synod, the team is to **grow in clarity about the congregation's mission** and vision for the future.
3. **Complete a Ministry Site Profile** to bring to the congregation for feedback and conversation and to bring to the Church Council for approval.

Appointing a Transition Team

The Church Council appoints a team, usually 5-7 members, to carry out the congregational self-study. Members of the team need to be good listeners and be able to set aside their own opinions and agendas to hear the input of others. The Council can prayerfully discern who has these gifts. It is helpful when members of the team are active members of the congregation and connected to a wide variety of ministries and people. When the Transition Team is appointed, the Bishop's Associate will then schedule an orientation to present the "Mission Tools for Strategic Discernment" and address any questions that the team may have.

Congregational Self-Study for Strategic Discernment

Using the "Mission Tools for Strategic Discernment" the Church Council can assist the work of the Transition Team in identifying core ministries and people to be interviewed as part of the self-study. The Mission Tools will help with identifying the areas needing to be focused on and help identify community partners (i.e. school principal, local food bank etc.) to interview. These interviews can be carried out with groups (i.e. the quilters, the education committee) or with individuals (i.e. the church musician). In addition to scheduling interviews, the team will want to design a process through which all who are interested can offer input (i.e. staffing a table in the fellowship hall over several Sundays).

The group (transition team and/or council) leading the survey is recommended to do a SWOT Analysis before the interview process and after the interview process. This will be a tool to see the progress of where the congregation is going (and blind spots) to use when discerning the MSP. The Bishop's Associate will walk you through this process and teach the tool of SWOT Analysis.

Examples of Interview Prompts/Questions:

- Describe your connection to _____ Church.
- What would someone who observes our congregation conclude about our sense of mission and purpose?
- What is our congregation clearly good at? What ministry activities bring out the best in us and seem to be valued by others? What are we excited about?
- What are the needs of our neighborhood? Where do you see God's presence in our neighborhood and community? What would our neighbors miss if we were not here?
- What have been the challenges? What have been the opportunities?
- What are our top three mission priorities at this time? What is God calling us to focus our attention on in the next 3-5 years?
- What is your hope for this church? What is your hope for this community?

Examples of Questions for Community Partners:

- Are you familiar with _____ Lutheran Church? If so, how did you become familiar?
- How could we be good neighbors to you and/or your organization?
- What is the reputation of _____ Church?
- What are your hopes for our community?

If people offer input on what specific gifts and experience, they desire in the next pastor, take notes. But try to make sure the conversation is not only about the next pastor, but about the vocation of the congregation. When interviews have been completed, the Transition Team reads through all the notes, looking for common themes, concerns and hopes. This information is distilled and becomes part of the Ministry Site Profile for the congregation.

Ministry Site Profile Process

A Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is the instrument which summarizes the identity and direction of the congregation. It is especially useful to the Call Committee when interviewing candidates. The Synod staff will send the Ministry Site Profile to prospective candidates for discernment. While not everything on the Ministry Site Profile is essential, care should be taken to provide the basic information. Some congregations have added even more information as longer explanations on the form, or as additional attachments.

To find essential resources related to the MSP, go to elca.org, click on “Call Process” (upper right), click on blue “Ministry Sites” button (middle of page). You will find a Sample Forms, a guide, as well as a tutorial video.

Some of the information needed for the MSP is available from current church records. Information regarding the community can be drawn from several sources, (i.e. the school district(s), the chamber of commerce, census reports), however the Bishop’s Associate will walk you through during the orientation some tools that might prove to be more helpful in flushing this out (i.e. Mission Maps). Lastly, the third set of information will come from interviewing congregation members, surveys, interviews with community members, and maybe even working with an outside consultant to assist the congregation in looking toward a new future. When working on the “context” section it is recommended not to just do demographics but answer about your community “why would someone want to live here?”

When the Transition Team has completed its draft of the Ministry Site Profile, it is important that the congregation has opportunities to talk about it together. While the MSP does not need formal approval from the congregation, it is important to take time to discuss what has been heard and what has been written. This document represents the voice of the congregation. Taking a “pause” for community conversation around the MSP can be one of the most enlightening and creative times in the transition process. It is a key step in coming together to discern a new leader.

The Ministry Site Profile will need the review of the Church Council when it is completed and discussed. The Council will pay particular attention to the compensation information to see that it is in keeping with the capacity of the congregation’s resources. Once the Council has approved the MSP, it may be uploaded to the ELCA database. If instructions on how to do this are needed, please watch tutorial video mentioned above. Once it is uploaded the Bishop’s Associate will look over the MSP and suggest feedback.

Please note that there is only one copy of the Ministry Site Profile online. Every time you take it down to update some information, or maybe to fix a typo, it is no longer visible to anyone. You MUST resubmit it every time you make a change to the document, so that others can see it.

Transition Team Checklist

- Schedule a Transition Team Orientation with the Bishop's Associate for Mobility. This orientation will include "Mission Tools for Strategic Discernment."
- Have a Transition Team Meeting to create a plan for gathering information. This includes the following:
 - Look at the current mission. Make sure you have a copy of the constitution handy.
 - Do a SWOT Analysis of the congregation right now.
 - How will surveys be collected? What will be on the surveys?
 - What interviews in the church will we do? What questions will we ask consistently?
 - Who will we interview in the community? What questions will we ask?
 - What information do we need to gather at the church or in the community?
- Begin the process of gathering the information. Have regular meetings to go through the information gathered.
- Begin distilling the information and look over the MSP creation process.
- Write the MSP.
- Go over the MSP with the council and congregation.
- Have the Bishop's Associate look over the rough of the MSP and provide feedback.
- Submit the final MSP.

The Work of the Call Committee

(The material in this section will be explored in-depth during the Call Committee Orientation with Bishop's Associate Pastor Michelle de Beauchamp. Please contact her when the Committee is ready to meet; michelle.debeauchamp@swwasynod.org)

Getting Started

The first step is to refer to your congregation's constitution C.13.05 for a description of the process your congregation uses for assembling your Call Committee.

The gifts and skills required for this role: listening skills, commitment to the mission of the congregation, awareness of one's own biases and the ability to "shed" personal preferences, grounded in faith and open to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Whether voted on by the Council or by the congregation, it is important to resist "stacking the deck" in favor of one interest group or age group in the congregation.

Establish Working Rules at the Beginning

No matter how solid your congregation is, a call process is likely to provoke big questions and some fear. Setting working rules in place before beginning your tasks can be extremely beneficial.

Some issues to consider:

- How will you choose your leaders?
- How many will be alternate members? Will they have voice and vote? When?
- What vote percentage in committee will be necessary to nominate a candidate to the congregation?
- How will you keep the congregation informed?
- Do you have a solid sense from the Council as to the salary and benefit range that can be offered by the congregation? Do you have this in writing before interviewing?
- Do you have your own budget? What money is available to bring candidates in for interviewing or to host a "meet-and-greet" event?

Exploring the Ministry Site Profile

At the beginning of its work, it is important for the Call Committee to take time to read and digest the congregation's Ministry Site Profile. If possible, it is a good practice for the Call Committee to meet with the Transition Team to ask any questions they may have and to seek clarification.

The MSP represents the discernment and the voice of the congregation. It will guide the Committee's discernment (rather than personal vision or preferences).

A Few Process Details

Prayer Team - It is helpful to have a group of members "on call" to pray for the committee whenever it is in sessions. The Call Committee will want to pray as it begins and ends each session, including meetings and interviews. At the time of making decisions, allow plenty of time for individual and group prayer. Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit.

Meeting times can fluctuate, but it is best to set a pattern of specific days or evenings. Once a chair has been selected, an agenda can be set up. Each member of the Call Committee will recognize the importance of candor, openness, and a willingness to examine and discuss all the issues and candidates. If the call chair cannot use technology well (i.e. zoom) designate someone on the call committee as the tech specialist.

Interim Ministers are normally not involved in the Call Process, except on those rare occasions when requested by the Bishop. It is not usually recommended for an Interim Minister to be considered as a possible ministerial candidate for your congregation.

Continuing staff (paid) are normally not involved in interviews. Arrangements can be made for candidates to meet with staff as appropriate in each situation. It is helpful to be clear what the role of staff is in providing feedback on the candidates. If feedback is desired, to whom shall it be offered?

Synod Office maintains a list of ELCA ministers who are actively seeking a call. This paperwork is called a Rostered Minister Profile (RMP). The Bishop's Associate contacts those candidates, with permission from their bishops, who appear to be a good match for the congregation, as described in the Ministry Site Profile. Rostered Minister Profiles for these candidates are submitted to the Call Committee.

Interview Process with calling an Associate/Co-Pastor - The Southwestern Washington Synod would like to highlight that a call comes from the congregation and not a pastor and/or staff and the roles will be defined following C9.09 of the Model Constitution.

We have entrusted the call committee with the process of calling a rostered minister and this is their role. Continuing staff are normally not part of the interview process, and the call committee is to not share any confidential paperwork (RMPs) with continuing staff. We recommend that if the interviewing pastor is going to be working with another pastor already serving the congregation that they have an informal meeting after the first or second round of interviews (depending how many names are given). The continuing staff pastor can after said informal meeting provide constructive feedback directly to the call committee in how the committee deems appropriate.

Interviewing

When the Call Committee is ready to consider candidates, the Bishop's Associate will bring Rostered Minister Profiles to a meeting of the committee. This is confidential personal paperwork available only to members of the Call Committee.

All candidates received are to be given an initial interview. This is to promote, equity, equality, and especially allow space for the Holy Spirit to move. Sometimes what a candidate looks like on paper might not be what the church actually needs.

If the Call Committee receives candidate nominations from the congregation using the appropriate form (see page 13), please provide these to the Bishop's Associate who will contact the nominees' bishop.

After reading and discussing the RMPs, the committee will give initial interviews to all the candidates. First interviews are often on Zoom. If the Committee plans to interview more than one candidate, the format of the interviews should be consistent (if one is on Zoom, all are on Zoom).

It is good to prepare interview questions ahead of time and conduct practice interviews. If the Committee would like to practice interviewing with a pastor or deacon (who is NOT in the process), please contact the Bishop's Associate. This can be good experience for a committee, especially if interviewing is a new skill.

The Call Committee will provide the candidate with information about when he/she/they will hear from the committee after the interview. It is important to be faithful to this timetable. If a candidate's name is released, it is up to the Call Committee Chairperson to call that candidate and let him/her/them know as promptly as possible.

When a candidate is brought for an in-person interview, the congregation should offer to pay expenses related to travel, lodging, rental car (if needed) and meals. During the in-person interview, it is good to provide some social time (perhaps a meal) and a tour of the area. If the candidate's family is coming, please plan activities for them during the time of the interview.

Pastoral candidates are not expected to take a Sunday to come and preach in a congregation as part of the interview process. Many times, they are currently serving a congregation and that congregation is their Sunday morning priority. It is not a fair expectation for them to take a vacation Sunday to interview and preach as part of a call process. Call Committee members are free to go to worship in the candidate's congregation (discreetly please) or ask the candidate for online examples of preaching and worship leadership.

Candidate Nominations from Congregation

In some instances, names of possible ministerial candidates surface in the congregation. These names should be directed to the Call Committee Chair using the official CONGREGATIONAL NOMINATION FOR CALL form (see page 13). The nominee must be a person on the ELCA clergy roster, or an approved and available seminary graduate assigned to this Synod. The names will then be submitted to the Synod Office for consideration along with other potential candidates. If the candidate is on the clergy roster of another synod, our Bishop's Associate will need to obtain clearance from the Bishop of that Synod.

Congregational Nomination for Call

Congregational Nomination for Call should be directed to the Call Committee Chair.

The nominee must be a person on the ELCA clergy roster, or an approved and available seminary graduate assigned to this Synod. The names will then be submitted to the Synod Office for consideration along with other potential candidates. If the candidate is on the clergy roster of another synod, our Bishop's Associate will need to obtain clearance from the Bishop of that Synod.

I nominate _____,
(name)

who is currently serving as _____
(position/role)

at _____.
(name of congregation/city)

- Nominations must be submitted in writing, using this nomination form.
- **No** nomination may be made from the floor at the call meeting.
- Nominations must be received by the church office no later than _____.
- 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)

Person Submitting Nomination _____
(name)

Known strengths of this nominee:

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

Please send completed form to the Call Committee Chair, who will send it to Synod Office (michelle.debeauchamp@swwasynod.org)

Sample Questions for Candidate Interviews

The following questions are merely suggestive; however, in forming any particular question the key issue is, "What answer are you looking for? How will you know when it's answered well?" Each question may be evaluated in three ways: (a) What does it have to do with the position? (b) What do we need to know? (c) Would we be willing to answer the same questions about ourselves?

- Tell us about your faith journey.
- Share with us your calling that led you to become a pastor/deacon.
- Describe the areas of ministry which you value as high priorities.
- Talk about the ministry areas you like to do. Why?
- What ministry roles give you the most trouble? Why?
- Discuss your strengths as well as those areas on which you need work.
- Share your thoughts regarding the worship life of the congregation.
- What are your expectations for yourself and lay persons in liturgical practices?
- Describe your preaching philosophy and style. What things do you emphasize in your preaching. What are your ideas regarding children's sermons?
- Discuss your thoughts, expectations and requirements concerning catechetical instruction.
- Discuss in detail your expectations/philosophy of, and pastoral involvement in: Educational Ministry, Evangelism, Stewardship, Benevolence, Youth Ministry and Social Ministry.
- From your perspective, what were the areas in the last parish which gave you personal satisfaction?
- What role do you see the pastor fulfilling in relating to committees?
- How do you see your role in relation to congregation council?
- Describe your philosophy of visitation and pastoral calling.
- Why are you considering accepting this call?
- How do you see yourself involved in our community and the Synod?
- Tell us about your hobbies.
- What is your favorite book you have read this year?

The Committee may want to ask specific questions based on the areas that they have identified as high priority on their Ministry Site Profile. Following are some sample questions in each of the areas:

Worship / Preaching

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

Social Ministry

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

Administrator/Leader

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

Teaching the Faith

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

Evangelism

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

Interpersonal Climate

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

Ministry in Crisis/Counseling

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

Interpreter of Theology

- Describe ways in which you communicate the faith.
- Describe your skills as teacher and preacher.
- What resources keep you theologically and biblically fresh and current?

Innovator

- Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
- Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to capture that vision.
- Think back to your ministry and describe a situation that stagnated or failed and describe how you stepped in to revitalize it.

Denominational Leadership

- Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding their relationship to the greater church
- Describe your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation, including ecumenical relationships, church agencies and institutions.
- Describe what your congregation believes to be their role as a congregation of the ELCA.

Stewardship

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

Personal Growth

- Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.
- How do you work at making yourself more effective in your work?
- Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Your Call to Ministry

- Briefly describe the events which led you to prepare for the ministry.
- Describe the process of deliberation which helps you determine God's call.
- In what ways has your call to ministry changed over the years?

Possible Interview Questions for Associate Pastor and Deacon Candidates

- What are the essential things for maintaining a good and effective relationship with the Lead Pastor and other staff?
- Tell about a time when you had a disagreement with a co-worker or supervisor. How did you react? What was the conclusion of the disagreement? What did you learn?
- Tell about a time when you were unclear about direction from your supervisor or colleagues. How did you handle it? What did you like about your reaction and what would you change?
- [Assuming that the candidate has met with the Lead Pastor, and that pastor is not in the room] After your meeting with the Lead Pastor how do you see your styles complementing each other? What do you see as the potential difficulties in your working relationship?

Questions the Candidate May Ask You

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

Call Committee Checklist

- Schedule a Call Committee Orientation with the Bishop's Associate for Mobility. This orientation will include things about confidentiality, developing questions, etc.
- Have consistent meetings to begin to go over the MSP in depth and to develop the first and second set on interview questions.
- Reach out to the Bishop's Associate when ready to schedule a mock interview (recommended not required).
- Have a mock interview (or 2) and get feedback. Have another meeting to go over the feedback.
- Reach out to Bishop's Associate when the call committee feels ready to begin interviews with candidates.
- Have final zoom meeting with the Bishop's Associate to receive the name(s) of the candidates and go over confidentiality things one more time.
- Conduct first initial interviews with all candidates received.
- Go over findings and release candidates if needed. Schedule 2 and third round of interviews.
- NOTE: The Bishop Associate does have some suggestions if a "different kind" of interview is needed for the third round (i.e. teaching interview etc.).
- Bring the candidate of choice to the Council to vote on. A representative of the call committee should be there to present the name and information on the candidate.
- Hand off contact information of candidate to the council.
- Connect the Council President with the Bishop's Associate about next steps.
- Call Vote with Congregation: It is recommended that a few members of the Call Committee present the information about the candidate to the congregation before the vote.

The Work of the Council

Issuing the call

When the Call Committee recommends a candidate, they have done their work and the process is handed over to the Church Council. The Bishop's Associate will provide the Council President with the step-by-step guide called "Council President Need to Know/Call Process". This document provides detailed steps and recommendations.

The Church Council 3 responsibilities are

1. Hosting a "meet and greet" for the congregation with the candidate.
2. Developing the a Compensation and Benefits package for the candidate; The Council must prepare the document "Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities" before the Special Congregational Meeting. Please go over the SW WA Synod Compensation Guidelines that are updated yearly. Synod Staff will consult with this process.
3. Scheduling the Special Congregational Meeting to vote on Call and Compensation.

A Synod representative must be present to attest a call/compensation vote. Please remember to consult with the Synod Office when selecting a date for your congregational meeting. The Synod Office will provide the Council President the document called "Attesting a Call Vote" that goes step-by-step through the process for attestors.

The Congregation Council is responsible for reporting the results of the meeting to the Synod Office and, if a call is issued, completing the Definition of Compensation form and signing the Letter of Call document that you receive from the Synod Office. Please return both completed/signed items to the Synod Office. Thank you!

Last Things

- The candidate receiving a Letter of Call 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 is accepted and filled, the interim ministry is concluded according to the terms of the Interim Work Agreement.
- The congregation plans a time to thank and bless the Interim Minister.
- The congregation plans events to welcome the new Minister. Ordination (if applicable) and Installation services are planned and carried out with the assistance of the Synod Office.

The Synod Bishop conducts the Ordination of all rostered persons in this synod.

How to conduct a Call Meeting

1. It is the responsibility of the Church Council to conduct the call and compensation vote 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 your church 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. Tellers should be appointed to count the votes. You may choose to do written ballots or have some of your people call in on a teleconference, including Zoom. No one can vote who has not attended the meeting (absentee). No one can vote for someone else (proxy).

If you want to offer a remote option for voting at the congregational meeting, this must be specifically allowed in your constitution, per Washington State law (RCW 24.03A.485). If your constitution does not name this option, all voting must be conducted in-person.

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 and compensation package for the recommended candidate. No other business may be transacted at this meeting. Ensure a quorum is met. (In your constitution C10.04)
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 the Minister (*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.*)

6. A vote to call is taken. If successful, the meeting proceeds with presentation, discussion, and vote on the compensation package. If the vote to call is not successful, the meeting is adjourned with an explanation of the process to follow.

The Congregation Council is responsible for reporting the results of the meeting to the Synod Office and, if a call is issued, completing the Definition of Compensation form and signing the Letter of Call document that you receive from the Synod Office. Please return both completed/signed items to the Synod Office. Thank you!

Voting Ballot - Call

Date _____

Vote to call _____ as _____.
(name) (position title)

Yes

No

Abstain

(Please check your answer)

If the call vote passes, then the congregation may hold the compensation vote.

Voting Ballot - Compensation

Date _____

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

Yes

No

Abstain

(Please check your answer)

Sample Order for Installation and Affirmation of a Call Committee

P Siblings in Christ, God has called us to a new time in our life as Church. It is a time for reflection and prayer, a time for self-examination and seeking, a time for expectation and hope. We need a shepherd to lead our flock, and God has promised that he will provide a shepherd for us.

A The following persons have been appointed/elected to serve as the Call Committee of our church.

As the names are read, those persons present come forward.

P Dear friends, you have been duly appointed/elected to serve as the Call Committee for this congregation in order to seek a minister to shepherd and lead us.

R Yes, and I ask God to help and guide me.

P Will you be diligent in your seeking, careful in your listening, purposeful in your questioning, and respectful in all that you do?

R Yes, and I ask God to help and guide me.

P Will you seek God's guidance through Holy Scripture and prayer and in your deliberations with your fellow committee members until you are brought to one mind and one will in Christ and have chosen God's shepherd for us?

R Yes, and I ask God to help and guide me.

A Let us pray for those who are being installed today and for our church as we seek God's guidance during this special time.

Almighty God, you alone are the great Shepherd of the Sheep, and we turn to you to lead and guide us in all things. As you have raised up faithful servants of your holy word to tend your flock in each time and place, send us now, we pray, a faithful shepherd to lead our flock. Give us a holy patience in this time of our seeking, a patience that trusts in you for our present care, knowing that you will bring our good work to fulfillment in your time. Bless those who are especially called to serve on the Call Committee. Give them the gifts they need to seek and find the minister of your own nurturing, that we might grow in faith and love and ministry. All these things we ask, O God, with whatever else we need, in the name of him who is the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The minister addresses the Call Committee.

P I now declare that you have been installed as the Call Committee of _____.
May God bring you good work to fulfillment and grace in Christ's name. **Amen.**

Sample Installation Rite for an Interim or Bridge Pastor

Presider: We are pleased to welcome Pastor _____ who will pastor (congregation) during this time of transition. As we prepare to live and serve together, we make commitments to one another.

Ask pastor what scripture passage has been important to him/her/them in ministry; Read this passage as part of the Installation

addressing pastor

P Will you preach and teach in accordance with the holy scriptures and with the confessions of the Lutheran church? Will you carry out this ministry in harmony with the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? If so, please answer, "**I will and I ask God to help and guide me**"

pastor responds

Will you be diligent in your study of the holy scriptures and in your use of the means of grace? Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people, nourish them with the word and sacraments, and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

pastor responds

Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

pastor responds

addressing congregation

People of God, will you receive _____ as a messenger of Jesus Christ sent to serve people with the gospel of hope and salvation?

Will you regard him/her/them as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God? If so, please answer "**We will and we ask God to help and guide us**"

congregation responds

Will you pray for _____ help and honor (pronoun) for _____ work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

congregation responds

Blessing

people may be invited forward to lay hands on the pastor, if this is in keeping with local practices

P Hear these words from St. Paul:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about[a] these things. 9 As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.

P _____, the office of Bridge/Interim Pastor is now committed to you in the name of God the Creator, Christ the Savior and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Southwestern Washington Synod

Identity and Vision

We are the congregations, people, communities and ministries of the ELCA in Southwestern Washington. We walk together as communities-in-mission.

Our vision is Shalom - God's love, healing and justice at every level of life.

The Synod staff, in collaboration with the Synod Council, are called to accompany, support, equip and encourage the Synod body through facilitation, resourcing, stewardship, connection and pastoral care.

for the full version of this statement, go to <https://swwasynod.org/about/our-vision>

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