

(1.1-4)

CALL PROCESS POLICY

Northern Great Lakes Synod

Adopted by Synod Council – January 2017

The Congregation Council is responsible for proceeding according to the Constitution adopted by the congregation and the Constitution adopted by the Northern Great Lakes Synod in the process of calling a pastor.

The ELCA Model Constitution (C9.01. and C9.02.) reads:

“Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation] [the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

Only a member of the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.”

In this synod, the Bishop recommends candidates to a Congregation Council or Call Committee. The Congregation Council or Call Committee nominates to the congregation and the congregation elects and calls through the vote of a congregational meeting.

Prior to the Departure of Current Pastor

- The departing pastor will notify the Synod Bishop in writing of his or her resignation, being sure to include the date the resignation takes effect.
- In consultation with the Congregation Council President, an administrative interim or an Intentional interim pastor will be assigned by the synod bishop. A part-time or full-time intentional interim may be employed by the congregation upon the recommendation of the bishop and approval of the Congregation Council.
- The departing pastor completes the “Congregational Information Form” (page 1:5-8) and “Salary Package and Support Information” form (page 1:9)

Administrative Interims assist congregational leaders and congregations in planning and providing for the continuation of ministry during a pastoral vacancy. Usually, administrative interims also serve as parish pastor in a nearby congregation. Among their main responsibilities are to arrange for weekly pulpit supply, attend congregational council meetings when possible, and provide for pastoral care.

Intentional Interims are resident pastors who serve full time or part time. Usually intentional interims are pastors who have received specialized training and experience in interim ministry. Generally, these pastors contract with congregation(s) with regard to compensation and responsibilities specific to the setting, but may be called by the synod specifically for intentional interim work.

- Appropriate compensation shall be agreed upon at the beginning of his or her appointment as Administrative Interim Pastor or employment as Intentional Interim Pastor.
- The Congregation Council is to work with the Interim Pastor to arrange for leadership of worship, confirmation program, pastoral acts, times of council meetings, etc.
- The Interim Pastor (part-time or full-time, administrative or intentional) is not eligible to be the next regularly called pastor of the congregation(s).
 - An exit meeting with the Congregation Council, the departing pastor, interim pastor, and bishop (or the bishop's representative) is scheduled.
 - The Secretary of the Congregation Council and the Congregational President confirm, in writing to the Synod Bishop, that parish records are in order. (page 1:10)
 - If not already in process, plans begin for a recognition of ministry event for the departing pastor.

During the Interim

The Congregation Council or Call Committee will have opportunity to engage in Devotions and Bible studies (See page 12:1-4). In addition, Congregation Councils and Call Committees are strongly encouraged to study scripture and participate in prayer whenever meetings are held.

- The Congregation Council is responsible for completing a Ministry Site Profile. This, along with information about how to download and best use this form, is available online at https://webapps.elca.org/call/Login.aspx?_ga=1.196901487.215521331.1398879695
Note: the Ministry Site Profile must be filled out online.
- Upon completion, submit the Ministry Site Profile to the ELCA Database. The bishop will review the profile and, if necessary, offer suggestions for changes. Once completed it will be designated as an active profile.
- Following the activation of the Ministry Site Profile, and when an appropriate pastoral candidate is available, the bishop (or the bishop's representative) returns to meet with the Congregation Council or Call Committee and submits name(s) and Rostered Leader Profile(s) of candidate(s) for consideration. A majority voice vote is required to decide upon interviewing candidate(s).
- Before the meeting at which a candidate is interviewed, the Congregation Council or Call Committee and candidate reach agreement on a proposed compensation package. The Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop will facilitate this process. A majority voice vote is required to recommend the proposed compensation package to the congregation if the process moves forward to a congregation meeting to vote on a Call.

- The Congregation Council President, Call Committee Chair, or other designee contacts the candidate(s) to make arrangements for the interview using either Option 1(pages 10:1-2) or Option 2 (pages 10:3-4).
- The following information should be sent by the Congregation Council President or the Call Committee Chair to the candidate prior to the interview:
 - Annual Report for the past two years
 - Other helpful materials about the congregation and community
 - Congregation and community website information
- Following the initial interview, references provided by the pastoral candidate are contacted by either the Congregation Council president, the chair of the Call Committee, or an individual designated by the Congregation Council or Call Committee.
- The Congregation Council or Call Committee votes, using a written ballot, to nominate a candidate to the congregation. Two-thirds of all votes cast are needed for nomination. When two or more congregations are yoked together for the purpose of sharing a pastor, two-thirds of all votes cast from **each** Congregation Council or Call Committee are needed for nomination. When more than one candidate has been interviewed by the Congregation Council or Call Committee, only one candidate may be nominated to the congregation.
- The Congregation Council or Call Committee sets the date for the congregation call meeting. Review and follow your Congregation Constitution for procedural steps in holding the congregational meeting and electing a pastor. Refer to Chapter 9 (C9.01. and C9.02. quoted on page 1 of this document) and Chapter 10 (C10.02. and C10.03.) of the ELCA Congregation Model Constitution.

The approved Model Constitution for congregations reads as follows (C10.03.): “Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays **and** by mail to all (voting) members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.”

- If the vote fails, the Bishop or his/her assistant is consulted.
- If the vote passes, the congregation sends the following information to all members prior to the congregational meeting:
 - ✓ Biographical information of nominated pastoral candidate
 - ✓ Proposed Salary and Benefit Package
 - ✓ Official notice of the Congregational Call Meeting
 - ✓ Quotation from the Congregational Constitution defining who is a *voting Member*

The Congregational Call Meeting

- At the Congregational Call Meeting, two votes are required. The motion to call requires a two-thirds majority vote by written secret ballot. The second motion pertaining to the salary and benefits package requires a majority vote, by voice, for adoption.

“Shall _____ be called as Pastor of _____
Lutheran Church?”

“Shall the budget of the congregation be amended to allow for the following compensation for the pastor-elect: (Please list the details of the compensation package in the motion.)

- Immediately following the congregational meeting, the President of the Congregation Council or the Chair of the Call Committee notify the candidate regarding the outcome of the vote. The Congregation Council president or the chair of the Call Committee then notifies the Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop by phone or email.
- If the pastor is elected, the Congregation Council or Call Committee executes the Letter of Call and the compensation documentation. The blank Letter of Call and compensation documents will be sent by the Synod Office to the congregation. The Council Secretary sends the original forms to the Bishop, who will affix his or her signature and forward the Letter of Call to the pastor-elect. A copy should be retained by the Council Secretary for the church files. The pastor is to retain the original.

Following the Congregational Call Meeting

- Normally, a pastor-elect has thirty days to respond to the Letter of Call. S14.12. of the ELCA Model Constitution reads: *“No ordained minister shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. An ordained minister shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to the Letter of Call within thirty days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the President of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional fifteen days may be granted to respond to a Letter of Call.”*
- Assist the pastor-elect with moving arrangements.
- In consultation with the pastor-elect and the Bishop or the Assistant to the Bishop arrange a date for the pastor to be installed.
- Interim Pastor completes and sends to the Synod Office the “Parochial Records Audit – Interim” form. (page 1:11)
- Upon conclusion of the Interim Pastor’s ministry, the Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop will thank the Interim Pastor for his/her service to the congregation and see that all agreed-upon compensation and expenses of the Interim Pastor are settled.
- Enjoy the new partnership of congregation and pastor in God’s service!