



## Advice for a Call Committee from a *Pastor's* Perspective

Remember that when you interview a candidate to decide whether he or she could be your next pastor, that person is also trying to decide if your congregation and community could be a place where they would be prepared to serve. Here are some things that you can do to make your congregation and community more attractive:

- **Show Hospitality** – Put the candidate at ease by letting him/her know when to be at your church and any directions that are needed to find the church – even which door to use. Are they to have a devotion prepared or bring any information? When they arrive, have someone ready to greet them and show them around the community and the church facility. Host them at a meal. This may be in a private area of a restaurant, a “home-cooked” meal at the church, or even take-out eaten at the church, but help him or her to feel welcome.
- **Be Organized** – Have your plan for the interview (see the Synod resources), knowing who will ask which questions.
- **Be Generous** – *Tell* the candidate, “We want to pay for your mileage/expenses. Please let us know how many miles you have driven.” (Don’t make them have to ask about mileage – very awkward!) Then make sure that your treasurer gets the information to send a check.
- **Be Confidential** – People in the congregation will be anxious to hear about how things are going. If they figure out, though, that “Pastor X” is being considered and word gets back to the congregation Pastor X is currently serving, it can be detrimental – leaving the pastor as something of a “lame duck” even if you decide not to call that person.
- **Stay in Touch** – A day or so after the interview, send them a thank-you for coming to visit with you, and letting them know your tentative plans for the near future. If there will be a long delay, let the candidates know, such as, “We decided it’s too hard to get together in the month of December, but we will be in touch with you right after the first of the year.” Then, as you come to some discernment, let the candidate know, “We’d like to have you back for a second interview,” or, “We appreciated visiting with you, but we have decided to focus on some other candidates.” It is better to have bad news than no news and be left wondering what is going on. (And keep the Synod staff up to date, too!)

Of course, the final decision about giving and accepting a call will be about deeper issues such as the match between the gifts of the candidate and the needs of the parish, guided by God’s Holy Spirit. These suggestions, though, treat the candidates with respect and may keep the pathway open by which the Spirit will lead a candidate to become your next pastor.