



FORMING THE CALL COMMITTEE

SIGNIFICANCE OF SERVICE ON A CALL COMMITTEE.

Many people report that serving on a call committee turned out to be one of the most important things they ever did as members of the church. It allowed them to experience firsthand how the Holy Spirit works through committed Christians to help the church be faithful to its calling. It gave them an opportunity to see how the local church is vitally connected to the whole church. It let them participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their church as part of the history-long, worldwide Church of Jesus Christ.

STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEE.

The call committee is formed by following the congregation's constitution. The committee should intentionally reflect the makeup of the congregation regarding gender, age, and ethnic/racial identity, as well as various segments of the ministry of the congregation – worship, youth, Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, education, evangelism, etc.

Members of the call committee are normally not members currently serving on the congregation council. Exceptions are made when the congregation constitution states otherwise or when there is a shortage of members on the call committee itself.

For parishes or congregations under contract with another, see your parish agreements when forming the call committee. If this is not discussed or there are still questions, contact the synod office.

The call committee chair can be appointed by the congregation council or elected by the committee itself. Committee leaders include the chair, who convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, is the primary contact with candidates, contact person with the synod office, and oversees the call process; the secretary, who keeps minutes of call committee meetings; and you may also decide to elect a liaison and/or communication person.

Prayer is very important for the call committee and the entire congregation throughout the process. Call committee members are encouraged to commit themselves to pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation. Special prayer at worship and during other meetings of the congregation is encouraged.

COMMUNICATION.

It is important for members of the congregation to clearly understand the process of calling a pastor. This includes the role of the council, the synod office, the congregation, and the committee itself. The committee should make every effort to bring updates whenever possible.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINISTRY OF THE CALL COMMITTEE.

It is important that the ministry of those selected to serve on the call committee be recognized in some formal way by the congregation. They will spend numerous hours in meetings, expending significant energy over many months during the course of their service on the call committee. It is a ministry requiring dedication and commitment by persons who will provide leadership for the process which will bring about the selection and eventual call of the new pastor.

OPENESS WITH CONFIDENTIALITY.

Reporting regularly to the council and congregation helps keep everyone on the same level of understanding about the process. However, the call committee must keep all verbal and written information about candidates strictly confidential.

Confidentiality is extremely important to the candidates interviewing. Committee members should establish ground rules and boundaries, not only with the congregation, but also in their home and/or place of employment.