



Sierra Pacific Synod
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www.spselca.org

The Interview Process for Call Committees

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The Interview Process

When the congregation's Ministry Site Profile is submitted and complete, and after the call committee has met with your synod staff person, they will work with the synod executive staff to find the best candidates for your congregation. It is normal for this search to take more than 6 weeks. All candidates being invited to interview with you will be vetted by the Bishop and their staff, including any names raised from within the congregation.

It is important to remember that the call process and these interviews are a means of discernment about a mission partnership between a rostered leader and a congregation. The call process is not the same as the hiring process in other parts of society. The pattern that includes head hunting, résumé shuffling, or personality contests is highly inappropriate in the calling of a pastor. Neither is the call process like a popularity contest in which hosts of candidates present themselves to their best advantage so the call committee can select one as the winner. The ELCA call process is unique because it is an effort to discern what God wants for this congregation and for the whole church, in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

It is not appropriate for a call committee to be guided by questions such as: “Will the congregation like this pastor?” “Will they approve of the call committee’s choice of candidates?” “Will people feel good having this pastor around on Sunday morning?” “Will this person do for now until a better pastor comes along?” “How will this person look to the rest of the community?”

The foremost question for the call committee always should be “Is this is the person God intends this congregation to have as its pastor or deacon?” Human preferences and personalities should never come before the mission to which God calls the church. That is why every meeting of the call committee includes prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

This means that candidates for the call will not be submitted to questions about (and should not be evaluated on the basis of) age, gender, race, physical abilities, or sexual orientation. The call is about the spiritual gifts needed for leading and facilitating ministry in a particular setting; nothing more, and nothing less.

Preparing for the Interviews

While the synod staff is searching for candidates, the call committee can take this time to prepare their questions for the interviews. At first, you will want to identify which questions will help you get to know the candidate. These questions will help you. When you enter into more substantive discussion, the Ministry Site Profile will serve as the outline for forming your questions.

Avoid asking questions which can be answered with a simple yes or no. For example, do not ask, "Do you think you are effective in your ministry to youth?" The candidate will almost surely answer, "Yes." Ask instead, "Tell us about your approach to ministry with youth," or "Give us some examples of how you have worked effectively with youth in your present or former parish."

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?

The following are some examples of questions that you can ask in your interview or use to form your own interview questions.

Example Questions for the Initial Interview

- Tell us about yourself and your life of faith.
- Why are you an ELCA pastor?
- Tell us about what gives you life in parish ministry.
- Who have been the most influential people in your life?
- Tell us about your faith journey.
- Share with us your calling that led you to become a pastor.
- Describe the areas of ministry which you value as high priorities.
- Talk about the ministry areas you like to do. Why?
- What pastoral roles give you the most trouble? Why?
- Discuss your strengths as well as those areas on which you need work.
- What are your expectations for yourself and lay persons in liturgical practices (worship)?
- Describe your preaching philosophy and style.
- Discuss your thoughts, expectations, and requirements concerning catechetical instruction.
- Discuss in detail your expectations (or philosophy) of and pastoral involvement in educational ministry (or evangelism, stewardship, benevolence, youth ministry, or social ministry).
- From your perspective, what were the areas in your last/current call which gave you personal satisfaction?

- What role do you see the pastor fulfilling in the administrative responsibilities of a congregation?
- How do you see your role in relation to congregation council?
- Describe your philosophy of visitation and pastoral care.
- Why are you considering accepting this call?
- How do you see yourself involved in our community and our synod?
- Tell us about your spiritual practices.
- Tell us about your wellness practices.
- What would you like to know about us?

Confidentiality

For the integrity of the process and out of respect for the candidate, it is critical that everyone involved must agree to maintain and respect confidentiality during the interview process. Prematurely divulging information about the consideration of a candidate may jeopardize the ministry of a pastor or deacon, or sow division with a congregation. Conversations during the call process should remain confidential to the official meetings of the call committee. Committee meetings (and interviews) are not open to those who are not on the call committee.

Communication by the Call Committee to the Congregation

Names of candidates must remain confidential, but the call committee should otherwise regularly communicate to the congregation in general terms about its progress in the call process. The congregation should be made aware of the committee's hard work, and the committee should likewise ask for the prayers of the entire congregation during the call process. Some appropriate ways of sharing are regular announcements such as "The Call Committee has received applications of candidates and is commencing their interviews" or "The Call Committee has determined that the current candidates are not appropriate matches and will be seeking a new slate of candidates for interview."

Gathering Your Materials

Before the interviewing begins, the call committee needs to meet, perhaps several times, to study carefully the oral and written information about each candidate given by the Office of the Bishop.

Call committee members may wish to see some ministry samples from candidates by means of gathering context and information. This may happen before the initial interview or after the initial interview. Suggested items to request from the candidate prior to the interview are:

- Video (or audio) recording of a worship and/or preaching occasion
- A recent newsletter article or other writing they have done
- An annual report from their most recent ministry
- Letters of Reference
- Resume or Curriculum vitae

It is understandable that call committees will seek information about the candidates they are interviewing by searching for information about them online. During the candidacy process this is appropriate though, such searching should be careful not to breach the confidentiality of the process. For example, while we might find information about a candidate on social media, it is not appropriate to "friend" or "follow" a candidate on social media.

Materials to share with the Candidate

Information packets should also be prepared by the committee and sent to each candidate prior to their interview. Suggested items to include in the packet are:

a recent annual report

worship bulletins

newsletters

a listing of staff

a list of congregation council members and call committee members

a picture of the call committee

the congregation's constitution and mission statement

Many of these items may exist online, so giving a candidate a list of links is appropriate, rather than, or in addition to, mailing hard copies. You may also opt to include links to relevant local partners in ministry such as non profits, schools, businesses, or local government.

The Initial Interview

After the committee has obtained all the research and materials they need, discussed the details of the candidates profile, and prepared their questions, it is appropriate to schedule the initial video interview. The initial video interview is an opportunity for candidates and committee members to get to know one another.

The interview should occur with equipment that allows all members of the call committee to be visible and to interact with the candidate. If you need assistance setting up such an interview, the synod staff person helping you with your process is able to set up a video meeting or facilitate the technology to help you.

The interview should last 60-90 minutes. This is enough time for the committee to make their introductions, ask their questions, to ask relevant follow-up questions if necessary, and allow the candidate to ask their own questions.

Here is a sample agenda for the initial interview:

- Opening prayer
- Introductions of the Committee Members
- Introduction of the Candidate
- Committee Members ask their questions
- Candidate is invited to ask their questions
- Closing Prayer

The initial interview should begin and end with prayer. It is appropriate for a member of the committee to be designated to lead the group in prayer. It is also appropriate to ask the candidate to pray for the group.

The Ministry Site Profile, together with the other items you have previously sent to the candidate, will give the candidate an initial impression of the congregation.

When the plan is to interview more than one candidate in person, an attempt should be made to conduct each interview in the same setting and manner.

For example, if the call committee meets with one candidate over Zoom, the same pattern should be followed with any subsequent candidates. The call committee should be consistent in having the same person lead the interview each time and plan for committee members to ask the same basic questions of each candidate. This will ensure that all the bases are covered in each instance once the interview process begins.

The main goal of this conversation is to make introductions and get a general feeling for each candidate. The committee should also be flexible and understand that a give-and-take conversation will not necessarily allow you to ask the questions in predictable order.

The most important interview tool: Active Listening

To be a good listener, several elements are important.

After the Initial Interview

If you have not yet done so, each member of the committee should study the materials shared by the candidates they interviewed (for example, the videos of worship and preaching and written materials). Additionally, the committee should contact the references provided in each candidates RMP.

Once all the materials have been reviewed and references contacted, the committee should gather to share in discernment. Conversation should include an assessment of the interviews, impressions of the shared materials, findings of the reference conversations, and prayer. All members of the committee do not need to agree in their final assessments. At this time, the committee only needs to decide which candidates they would like to invite to an in-person interview and which candidates they would not recommend for a call to the congregation.

If it is determined not to invite a candidate to an in-person interview, the committee must release the candidate from the interview process. A letter or email should be sent to the candidate and copied to the synod staff person relating to your committee. (see below) Once released, a candidate may not be reconsidered.

If the committee is having difficulty in reaching a consensus on which candidates to invite to a site visit and which candidates to release you may want to consider inviting a conversation with your synod staff person or the Bishop of this synod to aid in your discernment. The committee may also consider asking for additional materials from the candidate that will provide additional context or information. Lastly, the committee may consider having a second Zoom interview with the candidates to hone in on the areas or questions that will help them discern their next action.

Sample Release Letter

Dear Pastor So-and-So,

On behalf of the Call Committee of [Church Name], I would like to thank you for your willingness to be considered as a candidate for the position of [Pastor/Deacon].

We were impressed by [insert some of the qualities you admired in the candidate]. At this time we do not believe you would be a good match for our congregation [include some of the details about why this is not a good match for your congregation].

At this time, we are releasing you from the interview process. We wish you blessings upon your continued ministry.

Sincerely,

F. Surname, Chair

[Church Name] Call Committee

The Site Visit

It is ideal to invite as many viable candidates as possible to a site visit with the call committee. This is a time when the committee can get to know a candidate in-depth and explore options for mutual ministry. However, the obligations and cost of a site visit may make it difficult for congregations to invite more than one candidate for a site visit.

Again, we offer the suggestion to contact your synod staff person for assistance or prepare a second Zoom interview to aid in your discernment before inviting candidates for a site visit and in-person interview.

Preparing for the Site Visit

The site visit may last one or two days and is an opportunity for the candidate to get to know the call committee and community in depth. Suggested activities for the site visit are:

A tour of the physical plant of the congregation. Be sure to honor the confidentiality of the candidate by scheduling this tour at a time when the property is not occupied by committees, staff, or congregation member.

A tour of the community including any major industries or businesses, ministry partners, neighborhoods where members live, schools, and local ecology.

A shared meal with the call committee to provide an opportunity for social gathering and a more relaxed opportunity to share stories and make a connection.

A formal interview lasting 2 or more hours with the opportunity to dive deeply into questions of faith, mutual ministry, and discernment.

If appropriate (as in the interview of an associate pastor) a site visit might also be an opportunity for the candidate to meet the other executive staff of the congregation for one-on-one conversation.

All expenses for the site visit are covered by the congregation. One person from the call committee should be appointed to host the candidate. The host should communicate early and often with the candidate to make arrangements.

The host should:

1. Set up dates and times for interviews, tours, and other activities, taking into account any differences in time zone that might affect the candidate's schedule.
2. Arrange for travel, lodging (hotel/motel), and meals.
3. If the candidate is flying, provide pick-up/drop-off or a car rental.
4. Determine which committee members will initially meet and welcome the candidate.
5. Show the candidate (and their spouse/family, if applicable) around the area and provide periods of unstructured time for them to decompress away from the call committee.
6. Arrange meals for the candidate and their spouse/family if applicable.
7. Escort the candidate to the formal interview if applicable.
8. Ensure that many different call committee members have a chance to interact informally with the candidate. For example, the person who provides transportation should be different from the people with which the candidate shares meals.

The Formal Interview

The call committee should designate one member to host the candidate at the interview site. If the member is not accompanying the candidate to the interview, be certain that they are on-hand well before the candidate's anticipated arrival at the interview location.

The committee member chosen to direct the interview should outline the anticipated interview procedure for the candidate and indicate the time allotted for the interview. The candidate should be briefed on the "question and answer" format and alerted that they will have a chance to ask questions of the call committee. The lead interviewer is responsible for keeping the interview within the time allotted. Have all members of the call committee briefly introduce themselves to the candidate again, identifying their vocation and their role played in the congregation. It may be helpful to have the candidate begin the interview with a brief prayer, but if you choose to do this, be sure they are aware of this long before they arrive!

Before the committee begins asking the interview questions, it is appropriate for the committee chairperson to ask the candidate to briefly tell the committee something about themselves (this should take no more than five to seven minutes). After this, the formal questioning may begin. Questions may be assigned to various members of the call committee, assuring that all members are actively participating. Do not hesitate to ask follow-up or clarifying questions if an answer is unclear to all members. Remember, the interview is intended to be a dialogue, not an inquisition! Just as the committee members are discerning the candidate's viability for the congregation, so is the candidate discerning whether the congregation is a good fit.

One committee member may be designated to take notes on the candidate's responses during the interview for later review by the committee. Note-taking should be done as unobtrusively as possible and the lead interviewer should alert the candidate beforehand that notes will be taken.

In concluding the interview, the candidate may be invited to answer any questions not asked or make any other comments. The candidate should be thanked for coming and encouraged to be in phone contact with a designated member of the call committee if any additional questions arise. The call committee should indicate the approximate time table involved in the completion of the congregation's call process. If possible, at the conclusion of the interview, the committee should reimburse the candidate for any expenses incurred, such as travel costs, overnight accommodations, and meals. If the reimbursement cannot occur at the time of the interview, it should be completed within the following week and an appropriate explanation given to the candidate.

Example Questions for the Formal Interview

- Tell us about a worship that you planned and led or describe your method of planning worship.
- Tell us about a time administering the sacraments was meaningful for you.
- Tell us about the most difficult sermon you ever preached.
- Describe how you have contributed to the quality of life for the most vulnerable in your community.
- Tell us about an act of service that was meaningful in your life.
- Tell us about a time when you were a leader and a time when you were not a leader.
- How would you describe your style of conflict?
- Tell us about a period in your life when you had to manage multiple demands in your work and how you determined priorities.
- Describe your approach to catechism.
- Describe your approach to (or philosophy of) youth (or children) ministry.
- Tell us about a time when you led your congregation in intergenerational ministry.
- Describe how you engage in life-long learning?
- What resources keep you theologically and Biblically current?
- Describe how you might help this congregation to practice evangelism in our daily lives.
- Tell us about the steps you are taking to minimize your own bias and increase your cultural competency.
- Tell us about a time when you encountered a culture other than the one you identify with.
- How might you help our congregation be committed to anti-racism?
- What steps do you take in helping others feel secure, trusted, and open with you?
- When stress mounts how do you care for yourself and remain an effective leader?
- What is the role of the Church in the world?
- Tell us about your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation including synod, ecumenical, and para-church ministries.
- How might you help the members of this congregation be involved in their faith beyond the walls of this congregation?
- Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to catch that vision.
- Share a situation that was stagnant or failing and describe how you revitalized it.
- Tell us about your stewardship practices.
- Describe a time when you engaged others in the stewardship of their gifts.
- Tell us about some of the creative or innovative funding strategies you've tried.
- Describe your style of ministry to people in crisis.
- Describe how you have used the establishment of boundaries to strengthen your ministry.
- In your experience what are the differences between the role and the relationship of a pastor to their congregation?
- How do you assess your own professional limitations when ministering to persons in crisis?
- Describe your practice of accountability and goal setting for yourself.

- Tell us about a time when you were responsible for managing others.
- Tell us your reflections on the structure of our staffing.
- Tell us about a time when you had a disagreement with a co-worker / congregation leader. how did you react? What was the conclusion of the disagreement? What did you learn? What would you do differently?

Example Questions for a Co-Pastor / Associate Pastor

- What are the essential things for maintaining a good and effective relationship with the senior pastor and other staff?
- Tell us 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 do differently?
- [Assuming that the candidate has met with the senior pastor and the senior pastor is not in the room] After your meeting with the senior pastor how do you see your styles complementing each other? What do you see as the potential difficulties in your working relationship?
- [Who does the Assoc Pastor report to? Who does their evaluations?] What are your reflections on the structure of our staffing?

Example Closing Questions for the Interview

- What are two or three things that we should know about you that we didn't ask?
- Do you have any further questions that you want us to answer?

Possible Questions Candidates Might Ask

Remember that candidates will also bring their own questions to the interviews with you. They may not ask all of their questions in the initial interview. We encourage you to welcome questions from the candidate as this is an opportunity for you to see what kind of insight this candidate might bring. It will behoove your discernment for the committee to consider your answers to these questions in advance of the interview.

1. What do you think people like about this congregation?
2. What are some of the things you hope this congregation will do in the future that would benefit you? others?
3. What are some of the reasons why you are members of this congregation and not some other one?
4. What kind of organizations do you relate to?
5. What kinds of activities take place on a weekly/monthly basis?
6. How do you welcome and assimilate new members?
7. What plans has the council made for doing additional self-study and goal setting?
8. What structure of government does this congregation have?
9. What kind of benevolence do you support?
10. In what area(s) of social concern has the congregation been active?
11. What kind of priority do you give to the functions of a pastor, both in terms of importance and number of hours? What gets deferred if time runs out?
12. What view does the congregation have about continuing education? What about time off? financial support? Will the pastor be encouraged to attend the annual pastors' conference? Who will pay the expenses?
13. How does the pastor's family receive support? Are there expectations of the pastor's family?
14. Administratively, who prepares the council and congregational meeting agendas?
15. Who chairs meetings?
16. What are the housing opportunities in the neighborhood? What present financial arrangements have been made for the pastor's housing? Has the council and/or congregation envisioned any future ideas for the pastor's housing (shared equity, mortgage loan from the congregation, etc.)?
17. What is the school situation in this area?
18. (In the case of multiple-staff ministries) How do you describe the task divisions, lines of authority, conflict management and reporting methods for the pastoral staff, council, congregation and committees?
19. Describe what the community's image of the congregations is (if you can tell).
20. What hardships has the congregation experienced in the past? Have there been any major conflicts?
21. What is the attitude of the congregation toward the church at large? Synod? ELCA?
22. What are the possibilities for growth in size and involvement?
23. How many pastors has this ministry had in the past twenty years?
24. How is the pastor's leadership accepted by the congregation?
25. What kind of secretarial service will the congregation provide?

After the Interview

Follow Up

The committee should send a letter, email, or note of appreciation to each candidate for their willingness to be interviewed. This letter may encourage the candidate to address any additional questions or concerns to the call committee. Any expense reimbursement not made at the time of the interview should be made now. Again, a promise of keeping the candidate current regarding the call process is essential.

It is crucial that the call committee immediately notify the candidate when they are no longer being considered. The decision should also be submitted immediately to the contact person from the Office of the Bishop who is assisting you with the call process.

Discern

As soon as possible, definitely within one week of the interview, the call committee should meet to share initial impressions. It is important that these shared impressions are recorded for later reference.

As the committee engages in the process of selecting one candidate to recommend to the congregation, it will be important to do several things:

- Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Clarify what it means for the committee to reach a consensus. We strongly discourage voting as a committee on candidates. The best practice is for prayer, conversation, and discernment to continue until consensus can be reached. A united front is the most effective way to communicate to the congregation that this candidate is the right match.
- Allow ample time for each committee member to speak and be heard.
- Come to a decision that takes into account the five top leadership needs of the congregation.
- Choose the most suitable candidate, not necessarily the one you think is most likely to accept the call.
- While listening to your own heart and impressions, go beyond asking “Which candidate do I favor?” Instead, ask “Which pastor can best serve our congregation?”

Discussion should continue until one of two possibilities is reached:

Possibility 1

The discussion leads to the conclusion that this person is not the one the Holy Spirit is leading the congregation to call.

In this case, the call committee chairperson should inform the candidate and release them from the process. They should also inform the staff person relating to them in the Office of the Bishop. At this point the Office of the Bishop will prepare a new slate of candidates for the committee to interview.

Possibility 2

The discussion leads to the conclusion that this person is the one whom the Holy Spirit is leading the congregation to call.

In this case, the call committee chairperson should make a formal recommendation to the congregation council that this candidate be called to the congregation. This should be done at a specially called meeting of the council and a full report on the candidate shall be given to the entirety of the council. The committee should also inform the candidate and the Office of the Bishop of their recommendation.

Releasing Candidates

Courtesy and professionalism are essential during this process. The call committee needs to communicate openly and honestly with each candidate and shall continually inform the candidate about the status of their process.

Upon releasing a candidate from further consideration – whether after a phone, video, or a face-to-face interview – it is helpful for the candidate to hear the reasons why you do not think they would be a good match for your congregation at this time. This information is helpful to both the call committee and the candidate because it fosters clarity in the selection process and gives the candidate an opportunity for growth.

As a reminder, the courtesy of confidentiality of the candidate's name shall be honored by the council as the candidate is recommended to them. As the discernment is not yet resolved, it is still the right of the candidate to share their discernment on their own schedule and in their own way.

Discerning Compensation

If the council consents to the call committee's recommendation, it is then appropriate for the council and the candidate to begin discussing a compensation package.

At this point, the synod staff person relating to your congregation will schedule a meeting with the candidate and the council for the purpose of explaining the compensation options and recommendations and walking all parties through the compensation worksheet.

After this initial meeting it will be a cooperative effort between the candidate and the council to find an equitable and sustainable compensation arrangement. This may be a series of emails but we recommend in-person or Zoom conversations to be sure that needs and viewpoints are being heard and honored. It will be helpful for a member of the call committee to make themselves available and assist with these negotiations as they are familiar with both the council people and the candidate.

Pastors serve congregations with their whole hearts and a large portion of their lives. Every rostered minister comes to their ordination with advanced academic degrees, a multitude of field education experiences, and various trainings in their formation. Compensation, therefore must be sustainable enough to ensure that they are free to serve God in the needs of the congregation and community.

The document "Definitions of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities for Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament Under Call" is the form by which a pastor's compensation package is determined. To begin this calculation the Synod has prepared a workbook. Both documents will be a part of the initial meeting with your synod staff person.

Recommending a Candidate to the Congregation

When the council has agreed upon a compensation package with the candidate, it is time to recommend the candidate to the congregation.

The congregation president shall call a special meeting of the congregation. The council will establish a date, time, and place for the special meeting of the congregation to vote on the call of the pastor and the compensation. Arrangements should be made to notify the congregation of the meeting according to the congregation's constitution.

Additionally, these groups will notify the Office of the Bishop. The bishop's office will supply the council and call committee with the needed documents, some sample help, and will arrange to have a representative of the Office of the Bishop present at the special congregational meeting where the vote is taken.

Meet and Greet

When the call committee has identified a final candidate to recommend to the congregation, a Meet and Greet weekend is highly recommended. This provides the members and friends of the ministry to meet the candidate (and their family, if applicable), to interact informally and maybe in some more formal ways. This time also allows the candidate to see the congregation in worship, spend time in the area, and research specific areas of interest or need. All costs for this weekend should be covered by the congregation. Be mindful of any changes in time zone the candidate will need to be navigating as you set the schedule.

The Meet and Greet should be scheduled in tandem with the special congregational meeting for the purposes of voting on the call.

A sample schedule is below. Please modify to meet the needs of the congregation and the candidate.

Friday

The candidate (and their family) arrive and settle into the hotel

A rental car - or the lending of a car is helpful so they can move about on their own

An informal dinner or BBQ at someone's home with the call committee, council, staff members, and their families. This allows time for more informal interaction and some good interpersonal time.

Saturday

This day is customized to meet the needs of the candidate (and their family). Be sure to schedule in some 'down time' in this day.

Saturday is the most opportune time for the members of the congregation to meet and interact with the candidate (and their family, if desired by the candidate). There are many options for how this can happen.

- A more formal Q&A where people have the opportunity to ask the candidate questions directly in a large group setting
- A more informal model is to have the candidate move from table to table during a fellowship time to have conversation with different people.
- A moderated conversation in a large group setting with questions that have been submitted ahead of time.

Sunday

You may want to invite the candidate and their family to join you for worship on Sunday. However, it is not appropriate to have the candidate pastor preach or preside at the table on this visit. Alternatives may be to introduce them during the welcome or have them say a few words of greeting during the announcements.

Other options for this day's schedule are:

Meet with realtor

tour rental properties

talk with people knowledgeable about school districts

free time to drive, walk, hike, or bike in the area

an extensive tour of the community

meet with ministry partners in the area

meet with staff members

The Special Congregational Meeting

The person presiding at the meeting will determine that a quorum is present according to the congregation's constitution and by laws.

At the special congregation meeting, there may only be two motions on the agenda. No other business may be conducted. The first motion made by the call committee chair, is that the congregation vote to call the pastor. It will be seconded and discussed. The call committee will present information about the candidate, why they were led to recommend this candidate to the congregation, and the strengths and gifts that the candidate offers to the ministry of the congregation.

Only the one name recommended by the call committee can be voted on at this meeting. The vote shall be by secret written ballot. No absentee or proxy votes shall be accepted. The vote to call the pastor must be at least 2/3 affirmative votes, as stated in the model constitution for congregations C9.01.

If the vote to call the pastor is successful, the second motion presented by the congregation council will be to approve the compensation package to be offered to the pastor. It will be seconded, discussed, and voted on by the congregation. Amendments to the package recommended by the council can be made by majority vote of the congregation.

The vote needed to approve the compensation package is a simple majority. It may be taken by voice vote, show of hands, or written ballot. It will be noted that if the amounts in the package differ from the approved budget, then a favorable vote, in effect, changes the budget for the year. Beyond constitutional limit, a separate motion must be brought to approve the new budget.

After the call and compensation package have been approved, a personal contact by the call committee chair, or designee, will be immediately made with the person being called.

The pastor will send a letter of acceptance or decline of the call to both the congregation and the Office of the Bishop within thirty (30) days, unless otherwise agreed upon.

If the Pastor accepts the call

If the call is accepted, the president or vice-president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities for a Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament Under Call", including signatures of the president, secretary of the congregation, and sending them to the Office of the Bishop for the bishop's signature.

The newly-called pastor, along with the congregation council, will set the date when ministry will begin together. The president or vice-president of the congregation council will consult with the newly-called minister to determine when the acceptance may be publicly announced.

If the call is not approved by the Congregation

In the event that the call is not approved, the secretary of the congregation council will draft a letter/email to the candidate to report officially the results of the congregation meeting and to conclude the call process. The call committee chairperson shall also make personal contact with the candidate before the letter/email is sent. The Office of the Bishop will also be immediately notified.

If the Pastor declines the call

In the event that the pastor does not accept the call, the process will begin again with the Office of the Bishop offering a new slate of candidates to the call committee for interview.