



**Pacific Southwest District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

CALLING A PASTOR

**A Manual for
Congregations Engaged in the Call Process**

*Note: The web version of the call manual
(available at psd-lcms.org/call-manual) will be the
most current version vs. this document*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Section I: The Pastoral Vacancy Support System | 5 |
| Section II: The Pastoral Call and the Relationship Between Pastor and People – A Biblical Perspective..... | 8 |
| Section III: The Process of Calling a Pastor | 10 |
| Section IV: Glossary: Terms You Will Hear and Use..... | 23 |
| | |
| APPENDIX A: Sample Vacancy Pastor Agreement | 31 |
| APPENDIX B: Call Process Checklist | 32 |
| APPENDIX C: Sample Resolution to Establish a Call Process..... | 36 |
| APPENDIX D: Forming Your Call Committee | 37 |
| APPENDIX E: A Self-Study Tool for Congregations..... | 41 |
| APPENDIX F: Building a Congregational and Pastoral Profile | 50 |
| APPENDIX G: Important notes on Assistant/Associate Pastors in a Senior/Lead Pastor call process..... | 54 |
| APPENDIX H: Nomination Form | 55 |
| APPENDIX I: Pre-Call Interviews..... | 56 |
| APPENDIX J: Prayerfully Evaluating Candidates..... | 65 |
| APPENDIX K: Call Documents..... | 67 |
| APPENDIX L: Sample Call Worship Service..... | 68 |
| APPENDIX M: For Pastors: Communicating You Received a Call | 71 |
| APPENDIX N: Sample Installation/Ordination Services..... | 73 |
| APPENDIX O: Building a Relationship Between a Pastor and Congregation..... | 74 |
| APPENDIX P: Background Checks..... | 79 |
| APPENDIX Q: Communications Samples..... | 80 |

CALLING A PASTOR

A Manual for Congregations Engaged in the Call Process

A regular agenda item at every meeting of the District President and Circuit Visitors is the process by which congregations elect a pastor through the Holy Spirit's leading. Our purpose in giving this matter so much attention is to make it a process through which congregations can lay hold of God's vision for their mission in their context, and call the pastor whom the Lord has selected to lead them.

This manual is one more attempt to live up to that opportunity. In the succeeding pages you will find resources in the following areas:

- Understanding the Pastoral Vacancy Support System - Section I
- Enriching Your Understanding of the Pastoral Call and the Relationship between Pastor and People - Section II
- Understanding the Process of Calling of a Pastor - Section III
- Understanding Terms That You Will Hear and Use - Section IV
- Multiple appendices that provide additional information, samples of various related materials, and more

This call manual is updated periodically – the latest version is available online from the Pacific Southwest District website at www.psd-lcms.org/call-manual. You'll also see that many of the samples and other information in the Appendices points to the online repository. This enables us to continue to make good resources available and accessible

Because we have committed ourselves to make the calling process an opportunity rather than a burden, feel free to share any suggestions you have. As your District President, I will appreciate hearing from you.

Rev. Dr. Mike Gibson, President
Pacific Southwest District–LCMS
[Date]

Section I

THE PASTORAL VACANCY SUPPORT SYSTEM

When a congregation experiences the departure of its pastor, there are people who will come alongside the congregation to provide help and share their experience through the process. Look especially to the following:

THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

The District President assists the congregation with three special responsibilities:

- Ensures the continuation of the Gospel Ministry of Word and Sacrament.
- Assists in the process by which the congregation calls a pastor.
- Provides the congregation with a list of pastors for call consideration (call list).

Your District President is:

Rev. Dr. Mike Gibson
mike.gibson@psd-lcms.org
949.854.3232 ext. 202

THE STAFF OF THE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Normally there are individuals in the District office from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Anyone can take your message.

Your principal contact at the office is:

Barbara Farley
Executive Assistant to the President
949.854.3232 ext. 201
barbara.farley@psd-lcms.org

For information regarding Intentional Interim Ministry (see description below):

Rev. Dr. Richard Paul
pastor@faithhb.org
714.962.5571

The office of the Pacific Southwest District is located at:

1540 Concordia Drive East
Irvine, CA 92612-3203
Telephone: 949.854.3232 or 855-856-5350
Fax: 949.854.8140

THE CIRCUIT VISITOR

The Circuit Visitor has been elected by the congregations of your circuit and by the convention of the Pacific Southwest District. He will serve as the District President's on-the-scene representative and is

available to advise you. Congregations are encouraged to reimburse him for his expenses. Specifically, the Circuit Visitor helps in these ways:

- Assists the congregation in the selection of a *vacancy* pastor if they choose to have one.
- Actively assists the congregation in identifying resources and addressing issues.
- Secures assistance for preaching, Holy Communion, confirmation instruction, weddings, funerals, baptisms, visitation, etc.
- Helps the call committee to assess the needs and opportunities of the parish.
- Attends meetings related to the calling of a pastor as the representative of the District President.
- Attends meetings of the church council and/or voters' assembly as requested by the congregation, the District President, or as the Circuit Visitor deems necessary.
- Assists in the arrival and installation of the new pastor.

Your Circuit Visitor is:

[CV Name]
[CV Congregation Name]
[Street Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
Phone:
Email:

THE REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

The Regional Vice President is also elected by the District in convention. He will support the Circuit Visitor and be available to assist in the Circuit Visitor's absence.

Your Regional Vice President is:

[Regional VP Name]
[Regional VP Congregation Name]
[Street Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
Phone:
Email

THE VACANCY PASTOR

- Provides pastoral services during the pastoral vacancy. He is responsible for the services of worship, visitation and catechism instruction as agreed upon with the congregation. He normally attends voters'/church council meetings and any other activities that the congregation deems necessary, as available and as determined by mutual agreement with the congregation.
- Specific responsibilities and compensation of the vacancy pastor should be clearly defined by the congregation and agreed to, in writing, by the congregation and the vacancy pastor. A sample agreement between a congregation and a vacancy pastor is shown in [Appendix A](#).
- The Circuit Visitor may be the vacancy pastor, or another area pastor may be chosen.
- A vacancy pastor is almost never to be placed on the congregation's call list, except under extraordinary circumstances, in consultation with the District President.

THE INTENTIONAL INTERIM MINISTER

An Intentional Interim Minister is a specially trained pastor designed to help a congregation in an intentional way, for a specific period of time, to address and resolve specific concerns or to help in a transitional period following a special need experienced by the congregation. An Intentional Interim Minister also performs all the responsibilities of a vacancy pastor and is not to be placed on the congregation's call list. The Circuit Visitor and office of the president will assist in determining the need and availability of an Intentional Interim Minister. For more information on intentional interim ministry, visit interimministrylcms.org.

THE CONGREGATIONS AND PASTORS OF YOUR CIRCUIT

The congregations and pastors of your circuit will be happy to assist you if you encounter an emergency and are unable to contact your Circuit Visitor or the District President for immediate assistance. **If immediate pastoral help is needed, please attempt to contact the interim/vacancy pastor or Circuit Visitor first.**

Here is a listing of congregations and pastors of your circuit:

[Congregation Name]

[Address]

[City, State, ZIP]

[Phone]

[Email]

[Pastor Name]

Section II

THE PASTORAL CALL AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PASTOR AND PEOPLE – A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

God calls His people through His Word to fellowship with Him and to serve in the world with the good news of the Gospel and the good life of Christian love.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life -- the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us -- that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3)

God's people in a specific place, after sincere consideration and prayer, call a pastor from the larger Christian family to inspire and equip them for their ministry. The pastor's focus of service is the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments, loving acts of pastoral care, an exemplary Christian life and concentrated efforts for the growth of the church.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lusius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)

His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ... (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word". (Acts 6:1-4)

...appoint elders in every town, as I directed you, choose a man who is blameless, the husband of one wife, whose children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate and insubordinate. For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled; he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it. (Titus 1:5b-9)

The pastor, professionally competent and, above all, a man of faith, recognizes his Call by the congregation to be a Call from God and conducts his ministry with care, humility, and dedication.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy scriptures, the Gospel concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations, including yourself who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1-6)

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which He obtained with the blood of His own Son. (Acts 20:28)

...even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28)

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested, you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Members of the congregation hold their pastor in high regard as God's servant, a gift of divine grace. They offer him and his family the best of their love, prayers and support.

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1)

In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:14)

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages". (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

Pastor and people consider each other as joyful partners in the Gospel, each making contribution to God's work according to their calling and ability and measure of faith.

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:1-5)

Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. (Galatians 6:6)

Section III

THE PROCESS OF CALLING A PASTOR

From time to time, in the life of every congregation, there arises the need to call a pastor, whether for a sole pastor, assistant, associate, senior or other pastoral role. Be comforted by the fact that yours is not the first parish to do so. The District President, Circuit Visitor, and other District staff are here to help you through the calling process.

The help and wisdom available to you as you begin this process has been memorialized as part of the bylaws of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod:

Bylaw 2.5 Calling Ministers of Religion by Congregations

2.5.1 Congregations, school associations, agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations of the Synod shall seek the counsel of the appropriate district presidents when calling ordained or commissioned ministers.

(as amended at the 2019 convention)

The following process is a highly recommended call procedure, developed and refined over time within the Pacific Southwest District based on the experience of many hundreds of calling congregations. Confident in the Lord's presence and provision, commit to follow through the process prayerfully and deliberately. Take the time and do the sometimes challenging work of earnestly seeking the Lord's will for your congregation - go thoughtfully...go carefully...and go in prayer.

When Your Pastor Leaves: A Significant Time of Transition

The time of pastoral change is a significant time of transition within the congregation. Transition can be a very emotional and anxious time. But, under the Spirit's guidance and blessing, this transition time can be a growing and strengthening experience for your congregation and its mission. **This is why deliberate, earnest, ongoing prayer is not optional – it is essential.**

Change is taking place. We are often not comfortable with change, but we know it happens. The transition typically has three phases:

1. **an ending** - letting go, saying "good-bye" in positive and healthy ways.
2. **a transition period** - an in-between time, a time for conducting self-study, assessing your future in mission and for creativity in lay leadership.
3. **a new beginning** – welcoming the new pastor and a new phase in ministry.

This transitional time can be one of great blessing and opportunity as the congregation reflects on the past and plans for its future mission and ministry. However, this does not minimize the emotions and feelings of loss which ordinarily occur when a pastor leaves. Most members in a congregation are in a state of surprise when their pastor decides to accept another call. They may anticipate being all alone and without help that they had counted on. Often there are natural questions:

- Why did our pastor leave?
- Didn't he like us?
- Who will take care of my family if someone dies?
- Who will teach the confirmation class?
- Can we continue as effectively as in the past?
- What about members who seemed deeply attached to the former pastor? Will they continue their association with the congregation now that he is gone?
- What will happen if our pastoral vacancy lasts longer than a year or two? Who will help us?

- What about that practical member who says “Without Pastor _____ we’re going to splinter apart!”? (No matter how often they say it, it does not have to happen!)

As those and many other questions arise, it is easy to be discouraged and anxious. But remember several great truths! You were all drawn into the relationship of faith by the One who sows the seeds of faith, God Himself. He will never leave you or forsake you. In addition, your brothers and sisters in your circuit and in the Pacific Southwest District will contribute their influence and effort to bolster you and supply your needs for pastoral service. We will not abandon you, and are here to help lead you through the transition.

Also keep in mind that the decision to accept the call to another congregation, retire, or resign, generates many feelings and memories for your pastor. Regardless of the circumstances of his leaving, a grieving process begins for everyone. To help make the departing transition as pleasant as possible, an exit interview with your pastor may be appropriate. This could be conducted by the Board of Elders or other group assigned to this responsibility. Such an interview can provide information valuable in future planning as well as helping to determine the gifts, abilities, and strengths of the pastor to be called to fill the pastoral office.

You probably have no real idea how strong you are as a congregation. Just because you haven't done certain things does not mean that you can't! Trust the One who has never failed you and begin the calling process confident that this process, surrounded by God's gracious care, will help you discover your next pastor as you move into the wonderful future God has in mind for your congregation.

CALL PROCESS STEPS

See [Appendix B](#) for a Call Process Checklist based on these steps.

NOTE: If your congregation's constitution and/or by-laws stipulates a specific call procedure different from what is provided below, follow what is stated in your constitution/by-laws.

Additionally, note that the following guidelines are written with the understanding that most congregations are served by one pastor. They may need to be modified to meet the needs of calling a pastor to a multi-staff position.

STEP 1: NOTIFY THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT, THE REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT AND THE CIRCUIT VISITOR AS SOON AS IT IS KNOWN THAT A PASTORAL VACANCY WILL OR HAS OCCURRED

This should be done in writing as soon as you become aware that the office of the pastoral ministry in your congregation will be vacated. The chairperson of the congregation or Board of Elders usually sends this letter.

If a pastor has received and accepted a call to another congregation, he should:

- a) Notify the president of the District he is in and the District to which he is going (if different) of his decision.
- b) Ask the congregation for a peaceful release in writing from his call.

STEP 2: MANAGE THE DETAILS OF CLOSING THE PASTORAL-CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIP: EXIT INTERVIEW, FUTURE RELATIONSHIP, FINANCIAL ISSUES, APPROPRIATE FAREWELL

Exit Interview: The pastor who is leaving or retiring should not take an active role in choosing his successor or in directing the call committee in its work. It is wise, however, to seek his opinions on the strengths and challenges of the congregation before he leaves. Your Circuit Visitor can assist you in developing an appropriate exit interview with the departing pastor.

Future Relationship: When a pastor departs or retires from a congregation, it is especially important to clarify his relationship with the congregation and with his successor. Going forward, it is proper and beneficial that the departing pastor is not to be involved in the ongoing mission and ministry of the congregation.

Financial Issues: When a pastor leaves, there are often financial issues which need to be addressed. Is there a down payment loan or other loan which must be repaid? What conditions are attached to that? Is the pastor due compensation for vacation time? Has an orderly transition been planned so that health benefits will be covered by either the old or the new congregation during the transitional period? In certain cases, when a pastor is not moving to retirement or immediately to another call, a transitional compensation package is appropriate. Generosity is encouraged concerning the transitional care of the pastor, especially where no other support system exists. These and other financial issues need to be discussed and acted upon before the pastor leaves.

Plan an Appropriate Farewell: When your pastor leaves, an appropriate farewell event or service of thanksgiving can give people the opportunity to express their appreciation of his ministry and to wish him

and his family God's blessings as they leave. In the case of a pastor who is retiring, a more elaborate farewell may be planned and a special service of thanksgiving in recognition of his years of ministry is very appropriate.

Communication: Clear, open and frequent communication is critical during this time. The Barna Group provides important perspective and research on this topic – search or click the following: [“Communication Is Key In Periods of Pastoral Transition.”](#)

STEP 3: SELECT AN INTENTIONAL INTERIM MINISTER, VACANCY PASTOR OR PULPIT SUPPLY PASTOR, DEFINE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF HIS WORK AND NEGOTIATE HIS COMPENSATION PACKAGE

As soon as the District President and the Circuit Visitor receive notice that your congregation will be needing a pastor, one of them will make arrangements for a meeting with your congregation's governing board or council. Consult your congregation's constitution to see if it designates a group to handle this responsibility.

The District President will work through the congregation chairperson to arrange for a meeting with your congregation, the Circuit Visitor and/or the Regional Vice-President. Depending on the circumstance, this meeting may be held before your present pastor transitions. This meeting will outline procedures, provide background information, and discuss your concerns.

At the meeting, there should be discussion concerning pastoral services and procedures during the pastoral vacancy. The Circuit Visitor or Regional Vice-President president will describe three levels of interim pastoral services as well as compensation for any vacancy pastoral services. Briefly stated the three levels are as follows:

- **Intentional Interim Minister (Divine Call):** It may be recommended that your congregation consider calling an Intentional Interim Minister. Increasingly, congregations are deciding to intentionally delay the calling of the permanent pastor and take time for self-study, healing following conflict, review of mission, etc. In these instances, the services of an Intentional Interim Minister are strongly recommended. These are pastors who have special training and certification which enables them to provide not only full-time pastoral services during a vacancy, but skilled guidance in effectively working through the transition, including guiding you through your self-study period, developing a congregational and pastoral profile, and more. An Intentional Interim Minister is arranged for through the District President and is divinely called according to the manner specified in your congregation's Constitution & Bylaws. It is District policy that the person who serves as Intentional Interim Minister is not to be considered as a candidate for the call. For more information on intentional interim ministry, visit interimministrylcms.org.
- **Vacancy Pastor:** This is a pastor who is engaged by the congregation to provide pastoral services and coverage for worship on a regular basis. That basis may be either full-time or part-time, depending upon congregational needs. Very often the Vacancy Pastor is an active or retired pastor in your area. Specific responsibilities and compensation for the vacancy pastor should be clearly defined in writing. Your Circuit Visitor will assist you by recommending Vacancy Pastors and appropriate compensation guidelines. It is District policy that the person who serves as Vacancy Pastor is not to be considered as a candidate for the call. See [Appendix A](#) for a sample vacancy pastor agreement.
- **Pulpit Supply Pastor:** The Pulpit Supply Pastor is one who confines his ministry to preaching at services or performing other very limited functions. The Pulpit Supply Pastor is not to be involved in church

governance. Frequently more than one supply pastor serves the congregation, meaning that several pastors may take turns in a schedule of preaching duties. *This is not recommended under ordinary circumstances.* There are many drawbacks to this arrangement since it does not always provide the stability of a regular pastoral presence. At times, however, this is the only option available. It is also used as a temporary option to fill the pulpit until the congregation makes a decision regarding ongoing pastoral services during the vacancy. Your Circuit Visitor will assist you by recommending Pulpit Supply Pastors and appropriate compensation guidelines. It is District policy that the person who serves as Pulpit Supply Pastor is not to be considered as a candidate for the call.

It is also important to note that any pastor serving your congregation must be in good standing on the Clergy Roster of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Congregations calling a non-LCMS pastor can be expelled from Synod.

STEP 4: ESTABLISH A CONGREGATIONAL CALLING PROCESS (UNLESS THE PROCESS IS ALREADY SPECIFIED IN YOUR CONSTITUTION) AND A CALL COMMITTEE

Some congregations have the calling process clearly outlined in their constitution. If so, follow it. If not, determine whether there should be a special call committee, or whether the Board of Elders or the church council will serve in this capacity. [Appendix C](#) is a sample resolution that can help address this important matter.

As part of the process, your congregation will want to answer certain questions like, “When will meetings be held?”, “Who may vote at call meetings?”, and the like. Subsequent to the first meeting, the process for calling will be offered to the appropriate congregational group for adoption. Procedurally, from that time on, the congregation should be guided by whatever process its governing body has chosen. Spiritually, the congregation should be consistently and continually in prayer for God’s divine guidance through the whole calling process. Calling a pastor is not to be taken lightly but must be approached with the deepest level of spiritual conviction and fervor.

Assembling your call committee is one of the most important parts of your call process – be very prayerful for and mindful of whom you select. It is strongly recommended that the call committee be representative of the congregation (male, female, variety of years in membership, seniors, youth, attendees from different services, etc.). The call committee should not be comprised of a majority of present leadership, generally speaking. Ordained and commissioned workers may serve on the call committee provided they are not potential candidates and present no conflict of interest, and whose service will not impede your goal of representing your congregation as a whole. Your call committee should not include more than 9 or 10 people.

Be very wary of those who eagerly volunteer to serve on the call committee – they may have a hidden agenda that is not conducive to thoroughly and prayerfully going through the process. See [Appendix D](#) for tips on how to form your call committee, along with a sample questionnaire for prospective call committee members. See [Appendix Q](#) for sample communications related to forming the call committee.

STEP 5: COMPLETE A SELF-STUDY OF YOUR CONGREGATION'S LIFE, MINISTRY & MISSION, AND A PASTORAL PROFILE

Congregations normally desire to move toward calling a new pastor as quickly as possible. **It is critical that the call process move according to God's timing, is bathed in prayer and is not rushed.** An important part of this deliberate, thorough effort is conducting a self-study process, which should be initiated at the beginning of the pastoral vacancy. At a minimum, the congregation must complete the "Congregational Profile" form – see [Appendix E](#). **This profile MUST be completed prior to calling for congregational nominations (see Step 6) and prior to sending your list of nominees to the District President. This information is critical to enable the District President to match potential candidates with the gifts, skills and attributes needed by your congregation.**

Taking the time to do a thorough, honest self-study, however, will benefit your congregation in multiple ways as you conduct the call process. Your self-study should include the following elements (samples are available in [Appendix F](#)):

- **Your Context** – Gain a current understanding of the neighborhood, community demographics and context in which your congregation has been called to do ministry.

An incredible, **free** tool to help you easily access powerful information on your context is Lutheran Church Extension Fund's (LCEF) **MissionInSite**. MissionInSite's PeopleView System™ uniquely integrates information about your congregants with demographic information to determine the best opportunities for advancing your ministry. To gain access to this information, simply contact Gail Kanneg in the District office at gail.kanneg@psd-lcms.org.

- **Your Congregation** – Discover and come to a mutual understanding or affirmation of your congregation's history, mission, vision, values, strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities. Congregational surveys, staff and leadership interviews, congregational focus groups and other methods are important ways to compile this information and ensure your congregation is heard. Ensure your study includes your school ministries, including preschool, K-8 school, etc. Also provide information about any preschools, schools or other entities to whom you rent space of facilities.
- **Pastoral Profile** – As part of your survey, interview and focus group efforts, collect congregational feedback on the attributes needed in your next pastor. Themes will emerge from this data that will lead to a pastoral profile, essentially a description of the type of pastor your congregation needs to effectively fill the role as defined in a position description.

All people, including pastors have been uniquely created and gifted by God. In addition, each congregation has a unique context in which it does ministry, along with a unique body of members. Thus, it is important to align congregational needs with a pastor who has the specific gifts, talents, abilities and specialized skills your congregation requires. The self-study enables you to clearly identify what is needed for your ministry. [Appendix F](#) includes samples of self-study templates and reports.

Does your congregation have an assistant or associate pastor who is a potential candidate for a lead/senior pastor role? If so, there are special steps to take in order to preserve congregational unity and treat the pastor sensitively and appropriately. See [Appendix G](#) for more information.

Consult your Circuit Visitor for advice and assistance with your congregational self-study. Once completed, share the results of the self-study with the congregation. The self-study results should be submitted to the District office before the call list is compiled by the District President.

See [Appendix Q](#) for sample communications related to the self-study.

STEP 6: RECEIVE CONGREGATIONAL NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

Unless otherwise stipulated in the constitution or bylaws of your congregation, all communicant members have the right to nominate any pastor in good standing on the Clergy Roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. See [Appendix H](#) for a sample nomination form. (Other members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod may also submit nominations for your congregation to the District President.) It is to be noted that though a pastor may be "in good standing on the Clergy Roster of the LCMS," there may be circumstances known to the District President's office that would preclude a pastor's name from a call list. For example, pastors who have served less than three years in their present parish are generally not considered as viable candidates.

Establish a deadline for the congregation to submit nominations – a two-week period is recommended. (Additional nominations may be made at any time during the vacancy but they will not necessarily be considered for the call list if they are received after a published deadline.) After the nomination period ends, send a letter to each person who submitted a nomination acknowledging receipt and include the name(s) of the nominees they submitted. See [Appendix Q](#) for sample communications.

IMPORTANT - Please be sure to instruct the members of your congregation to ***nominate only those pastors who possess the qualifications and experience necessary for the pastor of your congregation, as determined by the Pastoral Profile and the Congregational Self-Study. Nominated pastors also must be in good standing on the Clergy Roster of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.*** This means that nominations from the members of your congregation should be neither requested nor received until ***AFTER*** Step 5 of this process has been completed and the results of the self-study have been shared with the congregation.

Nominated pastors must be in good standing on the Clergy Roster of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Congregations calling a non-LCMS pastor can be expelled from Synod.

STEP 7: FORWARD ALL NOMINEE NAMES RECEIVED TO THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Upon receipt of the list of nominees, the Pastoral Profile and the Congregation's Self-Study, the District President will request a Pastor's Information Form (PIF) from each out-of-District nominee's District President. This form, completed by the nominee's District President, is returned to the Pacific Southwest District President and contains basic information about age, education, previous areas of service, family size and health. The Pacific Southwest District President will also request a copy of the Self Evaluation Tool (SET) completed by each nominee. For nominees currently in the Pacific Southwest District, the information described above will normally already be available to the Pacific Southwest District

President's office. The District President will normally add additional qualified candidates to the congregation's call list.

NOTE: Any congregation wishing to consider calling a candidate from an LCMS seminary or church bodies in fellowship with the LCMS **must** contact the District President for special instructions.

STEP 8: RECEIVE YOUR CALL PACKET FROM THE DISTRICT

After an evaluation of all the nominees, with the assistance of the other District staff, the District President will prepare the call list. This process can take from 4-6 weeks. The length of time is determined by a number of factors, many over which the District President has little or no control, e.g., the length of time it takes to receive information about pastors from other Districts or how long a pastor takes to update his PIF (Personal Information Form) or SET (Self-Evaluation Tool) if it is out of date.

After it has been reviewed by the District President, the call list, along with the PIF, SET and current congregation statistics for each nominee, will be sent to the congregation through the Circuit Visitor. In some cases, the Circuit Visitor may direct the call list to be sent directly to the congregation. *(The PIF and SET documents are confidential and for the call committee's use ONLY. They are NOT to be duplicated for the whole congregation or distributed electronically. All printed copies should be collected and destroyed after a pastor accepts a call to fill the vacancy. The call committee is encouraged to write and publish a summary in preparation for the call meeting. See [Appendix I](#) for a sample summary.)*

As mentioned before, men who have served less than three years in their present parish are not considered as viable candidates. Candidates may not be placed on the call list submitted to your congregation for any one of a number of reasons, ranging from personal problems, to service in a critical ministry, to personal desire, to evaluated inability to serve the unique ministry of your area, etc. Remember that if a name is not returned, it is **only** because the District President feels there are good and sufficient reasons, based on the needs of the congregation, the pastor involved, and the church-at-large. The District President will be happy to communicate such matters to the call committee and will provide information on individual candidates, at the committee's request, as long as such information does not break confidence nor defame the man involved.

It is not acceptable to place the name of the Pulpit Supply, Vacancy or Intentional Interim Minister on the call list, although congregations sometimes feel the desire to nominate him. Two reasons this is the case:

1. Being the pastor in that place at that time gives this pastor a distinct advantage over a pastor who is lesser known and/or who lives at a greater distance, even though he may be very suited for the call.
2. A vacancy pastor may treat the congregation differently if he thought he would be a candidate for their pastor than if he knew he would not be. By the same token, men currently serving in your circuit or in a neighboring circuit will ordinarily not be placed on your congregation's call list.

When the District President returns a list of candidates for the office of ministry to a congregation, the first reaction may be disappointment at the modest amount of information apparently available. Every congregation desires substantial facts to aid them in the consideration of candidates. Answers to questions such as *"Can we be sure he will understand our needs?"* or *"Can we be sure our congregation will like his style of ministry and preaching?"* are simply impossible to provide. Pre-call interviews and

onsite visits are recommended to give you more of that type of insight and understanding. See [Appendix I](#) for more information on handling interviews and onsite visits.

As a call list is prepared, factors considered include:

1. The candidate has met the standards of academic preparation, has faced and successfully responded to the minimum emotional, psychological and theological standards of his training, vicarage and practice as a pastor prior to his ordination and initial placement.
2. The candidate's health, the number and ages of the members of his family, his length of service in a given congregation, how many congregations he has served and for how long, are part of the information you receive and may wish to evaluate.
3. Each pastor on your list has been evaluated by his current District President in a number of categories. It is assumed that most of our pastors have more than average capability in all categories. Significant strengths or weaknesses, whether in character, ability or theology, will be included in his District President's report to your District President. This includes comments on family health, personal abilities and potential for different kinds of ministry in different kinds of places. Your District President evaluates this and, where it is appropriate, sends it on to you through your Circuit Visitor. We are very careful that, at this level, the Spirit is not impeded or that information that might be injurious to the candidate's good name is not broadcast. However, sincere and honest attempts are made to ensure that all important information is always given to the congregation.
4. Non-PSD candidates on your call list have been contacted by their District by phone to determine whether there is anything going on in his life or ministry that would make it very difficult for him to seriously consider saying 'yes' to your call if the Lord leads you to extend it to him. The Call Committee may wish to phone PSD candidates to ask the same question.
5. All candidates on the call list have had an opportunity to complete the Self Evaluation Tool (SET), a comprehensive questionnaire enabling the communication of a man's pastoral and theological beliefs and practices. Your call committee will receive and should thoroughly study the SET of each candidate for whom it is available, understanding that some men, for a variety of reasons, elect not to complete the SET. Likewise, when asked, some pastors may or may not agree to complete personality or other evaluation tools. A decision not to participate should not be used to prejudge a candidate.

STEP 9: PRAYERFULLY EVALUATE CANDIDATES AND KEEP YOUR CONGREGATION INFORMED

When the call packet is received from the District office, ask the congregation to pray for the call committee as they evaluate the candidates towards the ultimate goal of narrowing the list to three or four names. Provide the congregation with a preview of the next steps you're taking towards bring the congregation together to vote on whom to call as your pastor. **It is important, however, that the full list of names of candidates are NOT disclosed to the congregation at this point.** If names were disclosed, others in the congregation who are not part of the call committee will likely begin to do their own evaluations and make premature decisions in the absence of the information and discussions the committee has. This short-circuits what the call committee has been tasked to do.

A recommended process for evaluating candidates is available in [Appendix J](#). Your Circuit Visitor is also ready and available to provide consultation in this area. The major steps in the process are:

1. First Contact: Availability and Willingness

After completing your initial evaluation of candidates based on PIF and SET information, agree on the initial list of candidates you want to contact. The goal for this initial contact is determine their availability and willingness to engage with your congregation at this stage in the call process. It is proper to ask “Is there any reason why you could not, at this time, give serious consideration to a call?” and “Are you willing to be on a call list at this time?”

This initial contact should include a letter and some brief information on your congregation. See [Appendix Q](#) for sample communications with candidates.

For candidates that respond that they are unavailable or unwilling to participate at this time, send a letter thanking them for their consideration and blessing them in their future ministry.

2. Follow-up: Detailed Information and Scheduling Phone/Video Interviews

For those candidates responding that they are available and willing to participate, provide them with a second packet of detailed information about your congregation. Provide materials such as your self-study report, history of your congregation, vision/mission/values, descriptions of your governance board, staff position descriptions and profiles, information on your community, relevant web links, etc. Along with these materials, communicate your next steps and timeframe to the candidate. This will include scheduling phone or video interviews with candidates.

3. Interviews

Your District President strongly encourages pre-call interviews. Make use of phone calls, video calls and face-to-face visits – these are tools available to help in seeking the Lord’s will. Pre-call interviews are encouraged based on the account of the filling of an apostolic vacancy by the first group of Christian believers as described in Acts 1:15-26 and on the basis of the successful experience of many congregations who have chosen to follow this suggestion.

NOTE: Not every LCMS pastor will consent to a pre-call interview. ***This should not disqualify the candidate from consideration.***

The goal of the phone/video interviews is to give you a fuller picture of the candidate, how he communicates and personally relates, his experience and perspective on ministry, success and challenges, etc., all leading to the development of your short list of candidates to bring on to your campus for visits. It’s also an opportunity for the candidate to learn more about the congregation, mission and ministry. See [Appendix I](#) for information on the propriety of conducting pre-call interviews and guidelines on conducting interviews.

It is very important that the call committee debrief as soon as possible after each interview, discussing their impressions and personal evaluation of the candidate. A written summary of the interview should be prepared and used as a basis for providing information to the congregation about the candidate if they are on your short list.

4. Onsite Visits

Once your call committee has conducted interviews and arrived at a short list, you will likely want to bring them to your campus for visits. These are important opportunities to meet staff, tour facilities and communities, and engage in conversation and Q&A with your congregation. Publish the names of the candidates who will visit and their biographical information. ***It is important that visits do not include candidates being asked to preach.*** See [Appendix I](#) for information on pre-call visits. See [Appendix Q](#) for a sample onsite visit agenda.

5. Background Checks

See [Appendix P](#) for information on conducting background checks.

Be led by the Holy Spirit

Remember that the historic position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on the question of calling pastors is a theological position. We believe God has a pastor for our congregations and that, through the Holy Spirit, He will guide you to find this person for your congregation. For this reason, we always extend calls in the context of prayer for God's guidance. People of God have constantly recognized the limitations of their own human abilities to choose ministerial candidates correctly and have joyfully lived within the boundaries of that limitation, expecting God to act and speak through the minds of His people. Place no artificial barriers in the way of a Spirit-led process! Place no limitations on God's power to act!

Use every means available to develop as clear an understanding as possible of each candidate's unique qualifications – yes, the Holy Spirit works through means! But remember that even with computerized facts, psychological tests, in-depth personal interviews and the like, apparent failures may occur. This at least suggests that these methods are not infallible.

Even a study of past performance leaves much to be desired, for there is no assurance that the same conditions exist that will permit a repetition of that past performance. Nor will you always know the reason why, at another time and place, a man did very well, or failed rather miserably. The facts of the past and face-to-face interviews are extremely important, when approached with the prayer that God will speak to and through the congregation in the calling process.

STEP 10: ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION AND CALL DOCUMENT PREPARATION

Prior to the call Meeting, the appropriate board or committee should establish the salary and other fiscal compensation, vacation, education benefits, specialized needs and expectations, and a ministry description. Questions of unique duties and other aspects should be considered before the call meeting as it applies to the respective candidates. There may be a need to make some individual adjustments, but the basic parameters should have been laid out. Appropriate allowances and provisions may be needed for specific areas of tenure and experience, e.g., Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI), sabbatical or Post Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS). See the District salary guidelines available from www.psd-lcms.org to assist in determining appropriate compensation for church workers. Note that these are only guidelines for compensation – your particular context and situation may call for adjustments to the compensation package.

Call Documents

Call documents should be completed before the call meeting. Prepare to have all signatories present at the call meeting, i.e. president of the congregation, chair of the call committee, etc. See [Appendix K](#) for information on obtaining and completing call documents. You should consider questions of salary, unique duties, and other questions before the call meeting as it applies to the respective candidates. These are matters for discussion and resolution during the vacancy period. The Circuit Visitor and the congregation should review salary guidelines from the District to assist them in providing appropriate salary, housing, benefits and expense reimbursements for their pastor-elect and his family.

It is strongly recommended that the Circuit Visitor reviews the call document packet before sending.

STEP 11: ESTABLISH THE DATE AND PROCEDURE FOR THE CALL MEETING

Once the call list is received, the process for evaluating each pastor's qualifications is completed, establish a date for a call meeting and make this date known to the congregation, along with the names to be recommended and their biographical information. Please remember that any procedures outlined in your constitution take precedence for assembling your list to bring before the voters at the call meeting.

The call meeting may be a Call Service. In the context of worship, the process of calling is very meaningful and uplifting. This service should be developed in consultation with the Circuit Visitor. See [Appendix L](#) for a sample Call Meeting Worship.

Whether you call in the context of a worship service or a meeting, normally a written ballot should be used in the selection with the names of those being considered as clarified by your Constitution or agreed upon in Step 3. *Voting by proxy is strongly discouraged. Absentee ballots should not be permitted.* The basic intent is that the activity of balloting should reflect the latest and best information disclosed at the meeting. In addition, balloting takes place within the context of Scripture readings and prayers.

When one candidate has a majority, unless otherwise stipulated by the constitution of the congregation, the balloting is complete. If this is not achieved on the first ballot, the candidate with the least number of votes should be dropped and a second ballot taken. If a third ballot is required to achieve a majority, the congregation may follow the same procedure and continue until the necessary majority is achieved.

At the conclusion of the balloting, it is recommended that a resolution be requested to make the selection unanimous. The president may say (while not required by our Constitution or Bylaws), "I would be very happy to receive a motion to make the ballot unanimous." The failure of such a resolution, by the way, would not invalidate the election. It is intended only as a sign of unity and commitment to a common cause, and for the called pastor to know the congregation is united in calling him.

STEP 12: IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE PASTOR-ELECT OF HIS SELECTION AND SEND THE PROPER CALL DOCUMENTS

The president of the congregation, chair of the call committee or the Circuit Visitor should attempt to notify the pastor-elect of his election immediately by phone while the meeting is still in session. If some unforeseen circumstance indicates that the pastor-elect cannot give serious consideration to the call, there would still be time to elect another.

Where others must participate in the call, as in the instance of financially assisted parishes, secure the proper congregational signatures on the documents and forward them to the other participants as quickly as possible.

Normally the pastor-elect should be sent the Call Document and other supporting materials, documents and information within a day or two. (See [Appendix K](#).) Scanning and emailing a copy of the completed call documents after the meeting provides the pastor-elect an opportunity to begin deliberating the call

right away but does not eliminate the need to send the hard copies in a timely fashion. In addition, a printed copy of the call documents should be sent to the District President.

Inform the pastor-elect that a background check will be done, with the call extended pending a clear report. Provide the proper forms for the pastor-elect to complete in order to conduct the background check. See [Appendix P](#) for more information.

Once the call has been issued, the pastor-elect and his family can be invited for a post-call visit with all expenses paid by the congregation. Keep your pastor-elect in your prayers and be prepared to do all within your power to assist him in his decision. Your District staff will do the same.

Contact those who were interviewed but not called

As a matter of courtesy on the part of the Circuit Visitor or the congregation, also notify the individuals who were under consideration, but not called. Send a very simple note to thank them for their patience, openness and willingness to participate.

Negotiating the call

A natural, beneficial part of the call process is discussion and negotiation between the pastor-elect and the calling congregation. You should maintain an attitude of flexibility, openness and transparency as you answer questions from the pastor-elect and his wife as they deliberate over the call. Provide sincere consideration to requests for adjustments to the compensation package, handling of moving expenses, potential dates and timeframes for the transition, etc.

Do not feel that simply because the pastor-elect is raising questions or offering options that he is minimizing the divine nature of the call. Nor should you feel compelled to fulfill any and all requests from the pastor-elect simply because he asks. As you engage with the pastor-elect in these discussions, strive to come to a mutually beneficial arrangement for compensation and other elements of the call. Working towards this goal helps to lay the groundwork for a lasting, fruitful relationship for the congregation and pastor.

STEP 13: NOTIFY THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT THAT THE CALL HAS BEEN SENT

Even though a copy of the call documents have been sent to the office of the District President, it's also helpful to phone or email the news to the president's office. Keep your pastor-elect in your prayers and be prepared to do all within your power to aid him in his decision. Your District President, Regional Vice President and Circuit Visitor will do the same.

Note for Pastors: It is important that you communicate well when you have received a call, especially if you are serving an existing congregation. See [Appendix M](#) for some information on how best to communicate that you have received a call.

STEP 14: THE CALL IS ACCEPTED OR DECLINED

STEP 14a: IF THE CALL IS ACCEPTED, PLAN FOR ARRIVAL, INSTALLATION AND ONGOING MUTUAL MINISTRY

When your pastor-elect notifies you of his acceptance of the call which has been extended by your congregation, it is important that you be in touch with him to arrange for such things as moving schedule, transfer of responsibility for benefits plans, and a service of installation. Your Circuit Visitor and District office can be of help in planning these things. Authorization for installation must be granted by the District President.

Installation Service

Your incoming pastor usually is the one who plans the service of installation. They can, however, defer to the congregation. See [Appendix N](#) for sample installation and ordination/installation services.

Note that it is highly suggested that the words of installation are not printed in the installation service folder. This is to help ensure the congregation's attention is focused on the rite of installation. Contact the President's office at the District for guidance on installation services.

Building a Smooth Transition and a Good Relationship

Begin a process of transition by being flexible and supportive. There are many matters to address in his present ministry. This takes time. Don't wait for them (him, his wife and family) to ask for assistance, offer it. Issues like schools, finances, banking, grocery stores, doctors, immediate housing, etc., are all needs to be addressed. Show them the Christian love and support that led you to call him to be your pastor.

It is critical that a good relationship is built between the pastor and the congregation. This is foundational to a beneficial, effective partnership in your ministry and mission together. See [Appendix O](#) for information on building that relationship.

A recommended resource that provides important guidance for congregations on supporting their church workers is ***Holding Up the Prophet's Hands: Supporting Church Workers*** by Dr. Bruce M. Hartung. It's available from Concordia Publishing House (cph.org). This book presents the challenges church workers face daily, along with positive and encouraging strategies for how you and your congregation can support your pastor and other church workers. Come alongside your church workers to support them in body and spirit as they nurture the body of Christ.

STEP 14b: IN CASE THE FIRST PASTOR YOU CALL DECLINES

It is entirely possible, as you might realize, that the first pastor you call may, after due consideration, decline to accept the Call. It is important to inform the Circuit Visitor, Regional Vice-President, and District President that the call was declined. The call committee normally then consults with the Circuit Visitor and District President to form a recommendation about continuing with the current list of candidates or whether to pause in the process to add names to the list. It is also important for the individual members of your congregation to know that names may be offered to the call committee for consideration and reviewed by the District President up to a stated deadline.

As you provide a communication to the declining pastor acknowledging his decision, you may wish to ask the reasons they declined. This can be valuable information and perspective for your congregation as you continue with the call process.

STEP 15: EXPRESS THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Once your elected candidate has accepted the call to become your new pastor and been installed, one person you should remember is your Circuit Visitor. He does not receive a stipend for his work as Circuit Visitor, unless he also serves as vacancy pastor, which involves separate responsibilities and appropriate compensation. Rather, he usually takes time away from his own work or from his family time to do the extra work of a Circuit Visitor guiding a congregation through the phases of the calling process. It is appropriate to plan some way of saying thanks to him for his ministry in your midst during the time of your pastoral vacancy.

Section IV GLOSSARY: TERMS YOU WILL HEAR AND USE

There are terms which you will hear and use during the time of your pastoral vacancy. While most of them are easily understood, it may be helpful to list them here:

Alternate Route

Alternate routes seek to further the spiritual, academic and personal development of men to equip them for the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacraments in the LCMS. Unlike the M.Div. Program, these alternate routes do not lead to either an academic or a professional degree. Instead, the student who successfully finishes one of these programs receives a certificate indicating that a prescribed course of studies has been completed and a theological diploma that certifies eligibility for ordination.

Assistant Pastor

An ordained pastor who accepts specific responsibilities in a parish under the supervision of another pastor. May be an *advisory* delegate at conventions of District or Synod.

Associate Pastor

An ordained pastor who shares equal responsibility in a congregation for the pastoral office with a senior/administrative pastor. May be a *voting* delegate at conventions of district or synod.

Bi-Vocational Pastor (See also Worker-Priest)

An ordained pastor who serves a congregation part-time and financially supports himself partially or fully through secular employment.

Call (Divine Call)

The solemn agreement between a pastor and a congregation designating the responsibilities that each undertakes in support of the other in fulfillment of Christ's mission. Because congregations elect pastors to fulfill God's mandate that there be someone to fill the pastoral office, only after asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is appropriate to speak of a "Divine Call."

Call/Search Committee

A committee of the congregation, usually appointed by and responsible to the church council or Board of Directors, charged with guiding and guarding the process of calling a pastor. The committee does not make decisions for the congregation but ensures that members have full information about and access to the decisions rightfully belonging to the entire congregation. The committee will make recommendations, but the congregation issues the call. The constituency and procedure of the call committee is often stipulated in the congregation's bylaws.

Call Documents

Documents which: (1) express the solemn nature of the agreement ready to be instituted between a congregation and a pastor and (2) state that each is ready to assume responsibilities for the good of the other and in support of furthering the mission Christ gives to the congregation.

Calling Congregation

A popular way of describing a congregation which is without the services of a regularly called pastor. Sometimes people refer to a "vacant" congregation, but that is not accurate. The congregation, of course, is not "vacant"; only the office of pastor.

Calling From the Field

Describes the process of issuing a call to a pastor who is serving another congregation or is on “candidate” status.

When a pastor has two calls, one from the congregation he serves and the other from a different congregation or entity of Synod, he must prayerfully consider the challenges and opportunities of each. He asks: “Where does the Lord want me to serve in His church?”

Call List

The list of pastoral candidates, including those nominated by the congregation, and recommended by the District President, from which the congregation will elect and call a pastor according to the process prescribed by the congregation’s constitution and bylaws and adopted by earlier congregational resolution.

Call Meeting or Call Service

The congregational meeting (service) at which the pastor-elect is chosen according to the process prescribed by the congregation’s constitution and bylaws and adopted by earlier congregational resolution.

Normally the constitution and bylaws require that there be sufficient notice of such a call meeting. This requirement should be faithfully observed.

The Circuit Visitor should be notified in advance so that he is able to attend the call meeting. Even if not prescribed by the congregation’s bylaws, it is certainly wise for the congregation to have the services of the Circuit Visitor in such an important meeting.

Candidate/Candidate Status

It is used to designate a pastor in good standing on the clergy roster (ordained minister of the Gospel) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, currently not serving in a called position in a congregation or other LCMS ministry position, but eligible and available for such a call.

This term is also used in reference to a seminary graduate who is ready for his first call and placement through the process used by the seminary placement officers and the Council of Presidents.

Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS)

Spanish-language pastoral formation program of Concordia Seminary. Students who satisfactorily complete the 18-course curriculum are eligible to be certified, receive a call and be rostered into the ministerium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Students take online courses as well as week-long intensive courses on the Seminary campus or other approved sites to study under faculty who have experience working with Hispanic/Latino churches and communities.

Chaplain

An ordained pastor who serves an institution (hospital, prison, the military, campus, etc.) rather than a congregation.

Circuit

A local grouping of congregations within one of the Synod’s districts. Circuits typically include 8 to 12 congregations.

Circuit Visitor

An ordained pastor who helps to oversee the other pastors within a circuit. The position is best

understood as a peer advisor, as the LCMS has traditionally been strongly congregational, as opposed to hierarchical, in its extra-congregational structure. The District President supervises the Circuit Visitors and is ultimately responsible for the pastors and congregations.

CMC/Cross-cultural Ministry Center

Cross-cultural Ministry Center (CMC) is committed to forming faithful missionary pastors to initiate and develop culture-crossing ministries. CMC students will simultaneously serve as a vicar in a local congregation during all four years of their studies.

Close(d) Communion

The terms “close” and “closed” communion often have multiple understandings of what they mean. At the 1998 St Louis Convention, Resolution 3-28 was adopting and states the following:

WHEREAS, Both “Close Communion” and “Closed Communion” refer to the same practice which seeks to prevent a profession of confessional unity in faith where there is, in fact, disunity and disagreement; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention clarify that the terms “Close Communion” and “Closed Communion” are synonymous terms; and be it further

Resolved, That this understanding be incorporated in future studies and dialog regarding the historic and faithful practice of “Close(d) Communion” within the member churches of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

However, so the District President can understand the nuances of the practice at your congregation and identify candidates that align with your communion practice, for purposes of this manual we define these terms as follows:

Close communion – In addition to members of your congregation, participation in the Lord’s Supper is available to those who believe in the Real Presence doctrine for the forgiveness of sins, whereby Jesus’ body and blood are present in, with and under the bread and wine.

Closed communion – In addition to the above, participation in the Lord’s Supper is available only to the members of your congregation.

Colloquy Applicant

To become a colloquy student for the pastoral ministry, a person must meet certain eligibility requirements, such as: a male Christian day school teacher with ten years of experience or a pastor in good standing in another Christian denomination. Such an individual receives seminary training, perhaps somewhat abbreviated, and may then be certified for clergy roster status by the LCMS Colloquy Committee for placement normally in the District from which he came.

Deferred/Delayed Vicar

The traditional seminary model consists of four years of education. The first two and fourth years are academic on campus and the third year is a “vicarage” in a parish. Due to age, educational experience, and other factors, a seminarian may be assigned a vicarage at the end of the program rather than after two years. This is referred to as a “deferred/delayed vicar.” Though technically serving as a vicar, the placement is usually to a congregation that would seriously consider calling him to be its pastor upon graduation. As with the usual model, the vicar would have an experienced pastor serve as his supervisor during that year.

District President

Elected at District conventions, the District President is the ecclesiastical supervisor over the congregations in his district, which are further subdivided into local circuits. The position of president is roughly analogous to the role of bishop in many church bodies, but LCMS doctrine

supports a generally congregationalist polity as opposed to an exclusively hierarchical governance.

Divine Call

The solemn agreement between a pastor and a congregation designating the responsibilities that each undertakes in support of the other in fulfillment of Christ's mission. Because congregations elect pastors to fulfill God's mandate that there be someone to fill the pastoral office, only after asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is appropriate to speak of a "Divine Call."

EIIT/Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology

A specialized program of preparation for men who want to serve as pastors and women who want to serve as deaconesses in immigrant and ethnic minority communities in North America.

Installation

The installation service, or "Rite of Installation," is the event in which the congregation publicly commits the exercise of the Office of the Keys and other desired pastoral functions to the pastor. It is also the festival service of worship celebrating the pastor's arrival and affirming his acceptance of the call.

Under the practice and policy of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the District President is to authorize the installation of all within the Pacific Southwest District. This authorization is sent after the District President is informed by the Circuit Visitor of the details of the installation service.

The District President will conduct the Rite of Installation, or, if not available, will authorize a pastor to conduct the Rite - usually the Regional Vice-President or Circuit Visitor.

Intentional Interim Minister

A pastor who is called/contracted to provide specialized pastoral services during an extended pastoral vacancy. This may be necessitated by conflict within the congregation, between the congregation and its previous pastor, or following the termination of a lengthy pastorate by retirement, resignation or removal from office.

The Intentional Interim Minister (IIM) selected by the congregation, with input from the Circuit Visitor and office of the District President. He usually serves for a limited time (6-24 months) and is not eligible for the call list of the congregation.

For more information on intentional interim ministry, visit interimministrylcms.org.

M.Div./Master of Divinity

The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree is the normative route to certification for ordained ministry in congregations and other ministry settings.

Open Communion

Anyone is invited to participate in the Lord's Supper. (This is not the stated position of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.)

Ordained Pastor

A pastor who has been certified for parish ministry by the church-at-large (LCMS through its seminaries) and has been called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament by a congregation or agency of our church.

Ordination

The festival service that publicly affirms the church's certification for the pastoral ministry. Ordination may take place at the candidate's home congregation with the authorization of the president of the district to which he has been called to serve. Otherwise, ordination takes place in the presence of the congregation to which the candidate has been called. The District President will conduct the Rite of Ordination or, if not available, may authorize the Regional Vice-President, Circuit Visitor or another pastor.

Pastor-Elect

A term used for the pastor who has received the call of the congregation, but who has not yet accepted the call.

Pastor Emeritus

An ordained pastor who has retired, or for reasons of total and permanent disability is no longer serving a full-time ministry but is still on the roster of Synod. He continues to be a communicant member of a congregation of Synod. The term is also used as an honorary title given by a congregation to a retired pastor, with or without specific duties. In *The Lutheran Annual*, a retired pastor is identified by "EM" after his name.

Pastoral Office (Office of Public Ministry)

The office of public ministry is divinely established and referred to in Scripture as "shepherd," "elder," or "overseer." Within this office are contained all the functions of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the church.

Residential Alternate Route

The alternate route most closely parallel to the M.Div. Program. Students in this program study alongside those in the M.Div. Program, including the study of the New Testament on the basis of its original language, Greek. The key differences from the M.Div. Program are a reduced number of courses and Old Testament studies are carried out on the basis of the English language.

Restricted Status

An ordained pastor of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who may or may not be presently serving under a call, but is not eligible for another call, until restricted status is removed by his District President.

Seminary Graduate

A pastoral candidate who has recently graduated from the seminary, has been certified by the faculty and is eligible for placement. The call for a seminary graduate must be submitted through the office of the District President. The deadline is usually around February 15 of each year, although there are some graduates ready for placement at other times during the year as well. Check with the District President.

Senior Pastor

An ordained pastor serving as the lead and/or administrative pastor of a congregation, with assistant(s) and/or associate(s) pastor(s) and other commissioned or contracted staff serving under him.

Sole Pastor

An ordained pastor serving as the only pastor of a congregation.

SMP/Specific Ministry Pastor

A Specific Ministry Pastor is serving in a specific ministry context under the supervision of a

general pastor. This seminary training is an alternate route program which enables one whose leadership is raised up within a home congregation. (See SMP to GPC)

SMP/Specific Ministry Pastor to GPC (General Pastor Certification)

A certification track designed specifically for pastors who have completed the SMP program and desire to continue study in order to be eligible for roster as a General Pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Vacancy Pastor

A pastor who agrees to provide pastoral services to a congregation during the period of a vacancy of the pastoral office. (See Section I for more information.)

Specific responsibilities and compensation for the vacancy pastor should be clearly defined. Your Circuit Visitor is ready to assist you by recommending a pastor and an appropriate compensation guideline. The Circuit Visitor may be the vacancy pastor, or another area pastor may be chosen. A vacancy pastor is almost never to be placed on the congregation's call list, except under extraordinary circumstances, in consultation with the District President.

Vicar

A seminary student who serves in internship under the supervision of a called pastor in a congregation for a period of one year, receiving required seminary credit. Vicarage is an integral part of seminary training. It is usually the third year of the four-year seminary education. (See "Deferred/Delayed" Vicar above.)

Worker-Priest (See also Bi-Vocational Pastor)

An ordained pastor who serves a congregation part-time and financially supports himself partially or fully through secular employment.

APPENDIX A
Sample Vacancy Pastor Agreement

We, the voting members of (church name) _____ Lutheran Church of (city, state) _____, on (date) _____ voted to extend an agreement with Rev. _____, to be our pastor. As such, he is to preach the Word of God in its truth and purity and administer the Sacraments to God's people as given in Scripture. He is also to fulfill other pastoral functions, e.g., teach confirmation classes to both youth and adults, visit the hospitalized and shut-ins, appropriately prepare self and others for leading and conducting Sunday and other special worship services, and fulfill general administrative duties as agreed upon by the pastor and the congregation.

This agreement becomes effective (date) _____ and will terminate upon the installation of a newly called pastor or upon a date agreed upon by both the vacancy pastor and the congregation.

The congregation is to pay Rev. _____ for his services with a salary of \$ _____ per week/month, paid every two weeks/on the 15th and 30th of each month. He will receive _____ per mile for all travel expenses incurred for the services of the congregation. The congregation will: provide him with a cell phone/cover his cell phone expenses/pay for all long distance calls. The congregation may cover other expenses, e.g., medical insurance; conference registration, printer ink and paper costs, mileage, etc., that are incurred as a result of services to this congregation, as per agreed upon between the congregation and the Vacancy Pastor prior to incurring those expenses. Expenses are reimbursed upon adequate documentation to the _____ (Bd. of Elders/Trustees/Treasurer).

If Rev. _____ is unable to fulfill his services for a short or an extended time, he is to inform the Bd. of Elders and seek to find a replacement to serve during that time. The circuit visitor and president's office would be available for assisting in this matter as well.

If the vacancy pastor serves another congregation, the following sentence should be added:

We understand this agreement is entered into with the full knowledge and support of (church name) _____ Lutheran Church of (city, state) _____, which is served on a full- time basis by Rev. _____. We express our thanks to _____ Lutheran Church for allowing their pastor to also serve us.

APPENDIX B

Call Process Checklist

STEP 1: NOTIFY THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT, THE REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT, AND THE CIRCUIT VISITOR AS SOON AS A PASTORAL VACANCY OCCURS

Should be:

- In writing
 - As soon as you become aware of the vacancy
 - From the chairperson of the congregation or Board of Elders
-

STEP 2: MANAGE THE DETAILS OF CLOSING THE PASTORAL-CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIP: EXIT INTERVIEW, FUTURE RELATIONSHIP, FINANCIAL ISSUES, APPROPRIATE FAREWELL

You should:

- Conduct an exit interview with the pastor
 - Clearly establish the departing pastor's future relationship with your congregation
 - Resolve any financial issues and ensure a smooth transition and generous care for the pastor
 - Plan an appropriate farewell
-

STEP 3: SELECT AN INTENTIONAL INTERIM MINISTER, VACANCY PASTOR OR PULPIT SUPPLY PASTOR, DEFINE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF HIS WORK AND NEGOTIATE HIS COMPENSATION PACKAGE

Work with the District President, Circuit Visitor and or Regional Vice-President to:

- Arrange a meeting with your congregation's governing board or council
 - Determine how pastoral services, procedures and compensation will be handled during the vacancy:
 - Intentional Interim Minister (Divine Call)
 - Vacancy Pastor
 - Pulpit Supply Pastor
-

STEP 4: ESTABLISH A CONGREGATIONAL CALLING PROCESS (UNLESS THE PROCESS IS ALREADY SPECIFIED IN YOUR CONSTITUTION) AND A CALL COMMITTEE

- Determine if your constitution includes a prescribed calling process and, if so, follow it.
 - If no calling process is prescribed, determine whether a special call committee, the Board of Elders or church council will serve as the call committee.
 - Assemble your call committee, taking care to provide broad representation from the congregation but limiting to no more than 9 or 10 people.
-

STEP 5: COMPLETE A SELF-STUDY OF YOUR CONGREGATION'S LIFE, MINISTRY & MISSION, AND A PASTORAL PROFILE

- Resist the temptation to rush in calling a new pastor and take the time to do a thorough self-study

- Ensure your study includes:
 - Your Context – Analyze your neighborhood, community and demographics. Use LCEF’s MissionInSite for powerful tools to gather this information.
 - Your Congregation – Through surveys, focus groups, interviews and whatever other means you can determine, gather feedback from your members, staff and community about your strengths, challenges, opportunities and needed attributes of the next pastor. Ensure your congregation is heard!
 - Pastoral Profile – As you collect congregational feedback on the attributes needed in your next pastor, determine the themes that arise that describe the type of pastor your congregation needs, and that will guide the nomination process and aid the District in finding appropriate candidates.
 - At a minimum, complete the “Self-Study Tool for Congregations”, [Appendix E](#).
 - Consider the special circumstances related to an assistant or associate pastor who wants to be considered for a lead/senior pastor role. See [Appendix G](#).
 - Consult your Circuit Visitor for advice and assistance with your congregational self-study.
-

☐ STEP 6: RECEIVE CONGREGATIONAL NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

- See [Appendix H](#) for a nominations form sample.
 - Instruct the congregation to only submit nominees that are in good standing on the Clergy Roster of the LCMS, and that fit your Congregational and Pastoral Profile.
 - Normally only communicant members may submit nominations – refer to your constitution.
 - Establish a deadline for the congregation to submit nominations – a two-week period is recommended.
 - Provide a letter to nominators acknowledging receipt of nominees after the nomination period ends.
-

☐ STEP 7: FORWARD ALL NOMINEE NAMES RECEIVED TO THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

- Once your nominating period ends, send the list of nominees to the District President’s office as soon as possible.
 - The District President will perform a search to add additional qualified candidates to the call list, evaluate nominees and compile comprehensive information on them to provide to the call committee for evaluation.
-

☐ STEP 8: RECEIVE YOUR CALL PACKET FROM THE DISTRICT

- The process for the District to compile a call list for your consideration takes 4-6 weeks.
- The comprehensive candidate information compiled by the District will be delivered to the call committee by the Circuit Visitor. This information is confidential and for the committee’s use ONLY, and is to be duplicated (except for the call committee) or distributed electronically. Once the call process is completed, the PIF and SET forms that comprise this information are to be destroyed.
- If a name is not included on the call list, it is **only** because the District President feels there are good and sufficient reasons. He will be happy to communicate such matters to the call committee.
- It is not acceptable to place Pulpit Supply, Vacancy or Intentional Interim Ministers on the call list.

☐ STEP 9: PRAYERFULLY EVALUATE CANDIDATES AND KEEP YOUR CONGREGATION INFORMED

- Request the congregation pray for the call committee as they begin evaluating candidates.
- Conduct evaluation as follows:
 - Complete an initial evaluation based on the information provided, and determine which candidates you would like to consider.
 - Send a letter and some brief information on your congregation to the list of candidates you selected from the initial evaluation, asking for their availability and willingness to engage with you in the call process. Emailing this information in addition to the printed matter is also acceptable.
 - For those wanting to engage, send detailed information including the report from your self-study, congregational history, vision/mission/values, governance board description, community information, etc.
 - Schedule phone/video interviews. Debrief as soon as possible after the interviews.
 - Determine your “short list” of candidates to bring to your church for in-person interviews.
 - Schedule these visits to include meeting opportunities with leadership and church/school staff, community tours, and congregational meet-and-greet and Q&A forums.
 - After the visits, convene your call committee and discuss which candidate(s) to recommend to the congregation for vote.
- In all of these matters, earnestly strive to be led by the Holy Spirit. Calls are always extended in the context of prayer for God’s guidance.

☐ STEP 10: ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION AND CALL DOCUMENT PREPARATION

- The appropriate board or committee should establish the compensation package prior to the call meeting, laying out the basic parameters of compensation. Individual adjustments may need to be made based on the situation.
- Elements of the compensation package include salary, vacation, benefits, etc., and should be influenced by education, experience, special skills and expectations, ministry role, etc.
- See www.psd-lcms.org for salary guidelines.
- Call documents should be completed prior to the call meeting (other than the called pastor’s information), and reviewed by the Circuit Visitor.

☐ STEP 11: ESTABLISH THE DATE AND PROCEDURE FOR THE CALL MEETING

- Establish a date for the call meeting and publish to the congregation, along with recommended names and their biographical information.
- Follow any procedures outlined in your constitution related to the candidates to bring before the voters or the communication and conduct of the Call Meeting.
- The Call Meeting is very meaningful in the context of worship as a Call Service. See [Appendix L](#) for a sample format.
- Use written ballots. Voting by proxy is strongly discouraged, and absentee ballots should not be permitted.
- Balloting is complete when one candidate has a majority. Multiple ballots may be needed to arrive at a majority.

- At the conclusion of balloting, it is recommended that a resolution be requested to make the selection unanimous. This is a sign of unity and commitment to a common cause, and for the called pastor to know the congregation is united in calling him.
-

☐ STEP 12: IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE PASTOR-ELECT OF HIS SELECTION AND SEND THE PROPER CALL DOCUMENTS

- Notify the pastor-elect immediately of his election by phone while the meeting is still in session (usually done by the congregational president or Circuit Visitor).
 - Invite the pastor-elect and family for a post-call visit, and be prepared to do all within your power to assist him in his decision. Your District is here to do the same.
 - Call documents should be immediately sent to the pastor-elect, with a copy to the District office.
 - Complete background check. The call is extended pending a clear report.
 - Notify the individual(s) who were under consideration but not called thanking them for their patience, openness and willingness to participate.
 - Be open and prepared to engage in discussions and negotiations with the pastor-elect.
-

☐ STEP 13: NOTIFY THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT THAT THE CALL HAS BEEN SENT

- Phone or email the news to the District President's office.
-

☐ STEP 14: THE CALL IS ACCEPTED OR DECLINED

- If the call is accepted, plan for the pastor's arrival, installation and ongoing mutual ministry.
 - Work with the pastor to plan the Installation Service.
 - Be flexible and supportive as you begin and through the transition. Building a good relationship is critical.
 - If the call is declined, consult with the Circuit Visitor and District President to form a recommendation about continuing with the current list of candidates or pausing the process to add names to the list. You may wish to ask the declining pastor the reasons he declined.
-

☐ STEP 15: EXPRESS THANKS AND APPRECIATION

- Remember to plan some way to express thanks and appreciation to the Circuit Visitor and/or the Regional Vice-President for his ministry in your midst during the time of your pastoral vacancy.

APPENDIX C

Sample Resolution to Establish a Call Process

ESTABLISHING A CONGREGATION'S CALL PROCESS

- Whereas, (Name of Congregation) is now without the ministry of a resident pastor and desires to call another; and
- Whereas, the procedures for calling a pastor should derive from the good experience of other congregations and become a process which unites us as a congregation; therefore be it
- Resolved, that as a congregation we follow in general the process suggested in the document "So You Want to Call a Pastor" as explained to us by the DISTRICT PRESIDENT OR REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT OR CIRCUIT VISITOR of the Pacific Southwest District; and be it further
- Resolved, that we encourage individual members of the congregation to nominate pastors for consideration; and be it further
- Resolved, that we forward the names to the President of the Pacific Southwest District along with a Congregational and Pastoral Profile and statement of our expectations for the ministry of a pastor among us; and be it further
- Resolved, that we request the District President to review the names submitted by us and respond from that list and from other names known to him with a list of candidates for adoption by us as the official list of candidates; and be it further
- Resolved, that we urge our call committee to share with each member of the congregation as much pertinent information on each candidate as possible; and be it finally
- Resolved, that we invite Circuit Visitor (Name) to conduct a Call Service during which time, in the setting of appropriate Scripture readings, hymns, praise songs, and prayers, we elect according to the procedures of our Constitution and Bylaws an individual to serve as pastor of this congregation.

APPENDIX D

Forming Your Call Committee

The congregation's constitution may prescribe appointment or election of a call committee. It is recommended that most of the members of the call committee will be persons not currently serving on the congregation council. 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, seniors, school/preschool families, education, evangelism, missions, etc. The committee should include no more than 9 or 10 people.

Because of additional demands on the lay president of the congregation council during a pastoral transition, it is recommended that the lay president not be the chair of the call committee. It is a good practice, however, to have the president sit on the committee as an ex officio member and act as a liaison with your governing board or council.

Questionnaire

You may find it helpful to use a questionnaire when selecting possible call committee members (see sample below). In addition to helping you ensure the committee reflects your congregation as much as possible, it is helpful in gathering information on previous and current involvement in the congregation, perspectives on congregational health, and the gifts needed in your next pastor.

Importantly, a questionnaire is also useful as an aid in discovering potential hidden agendas. Be very cautious about members who eagerly volunteer to serve on the call committee as they may have ulterior motives that aren't in alignment with seeking God's will for your congregation. You may also want to interview potential call committee members after receiving questionnaires to further delve into their viewpoints.

Prayer

Prayer is a critical activity for the call committee and the entire congregation throughout this process. Call committee members should 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. When the call committee is selected, the names of the members are made public, with request that special prayers be made on their behalf.

Committee Structure

The call committee chair can be appointed by the congregation board or council, or be elected by the committee itself. Committee leaders and roles include:

- Chair - convenes meetings, sets meeting agendas, primary contact with candidates, single point of contact with the District office, oversees the call process and keeps it on-track.
- Recording Secretary - keeps minutes of call committee meetings for future reference, may be responsible for final preparation of the call documents.
- Communications - responsible for written communication between candidates and committee, sends copies of correspondence to the District office, may write newsletter articles, notes for bulletins, etc., to keep the congregation informed of the committee's progress.
- Hospitality – manages logistics and volunteers related to meals and activities during meetings, candidate visits, etc.
- Data Analysis – a person or team that leads analysis and findings from the self-study activities, including surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- Prayer – gathers and manages the call committee prayer list

Salary and benefits matters

The congregation's governing board or council will need to provide the call committee salary and benefit possibilities that the congregation can offer. Salary and benefit considerations are not matters to be negotiated between the candidate and call committee. The board or council also needs to authorize funding to the call committee for its use in carrying out its responsibilities. This is discussed under "Call Committee Budget" below.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality in the call committee discussions should be clearly agreed upon at the first meeting. It is recommended that your committee members sign a covenant that details the need for confidentiality, prayer and support for one another. Issues that are discussed about candidates need to be open and forthright among the members of the committee; however, these discussions should be kept in confidence among the call committee members.

Confidentiality cannot be overemphasized in the task of calling a pastor. Mention of specific candidates outside the call committee is inappropriate until the committee is ready with its recommendation to the congregation's board or council. It is important to keep all names and both verbal and written information about prospective candidates within the confines of the committee. This means committee members will need to establish ground rules and boundaries, not only with the congregation at large, but also with those in their household or place of work.

Call Committee Budget

One of the first tasks of the call committee is to establish a budget with the congregational board or council. Although some of these expenses are difficult to accurately determine ahead of time, every effort should be made to set aside the needed finances for the call process. Items to include in the budget:

- Travel/meal expenses for committee members
- Travel/meal expenses for candidate(s)
- Office expenses (i.e., photocopying, data entry, postage, etc.)
- Miscellaneous expenses

Note: Although the moving expenses for your newly called pastor will not be the responsibility of the call committee, it should be noted to the congregational board or council and your congregation's finance committee that the congregation is responsible for the moving expenses of your new pastor.

Openness vs. Holding Confidence

Reporting regularly to council and congregation helps keep everyone on the same level of understanding about the process. As noted above, the call committee must keep all verbal and written information about each and every candidate strictly confidential. However, ***communication is very important!*** With the exception of confidential materials, there is no such thing as too much information.

Some options to be utilized to keep the members of the congregation informed about the call committee's work and progress include:

- Newsletter articles explaining the call process to the congregation, with follow-up articles each time another stage in the process is reached.
- Notes in the Sunday bulletin announcing that the call committee is meeting, reporting progress, communicating what will happen next, etc.
- Periodic talks or announcements by a member of the call committee, even if the report is that there have been no changes since the last report, "Nothing has changed from last week." Remember there will likely be multiple audiences in your congregation who you will need to provide updates to at different times, i.e. multiple worship services, those who receive congregational emails and those who don't, etc.

Points to include in communications:

- Description of process
- Status of progress, including what's been done, what you're currently doing, and what happens next
- List of actions taken
- The preferred process for communicating with the members of the call committee

Planning a comprehensive communications strategy and consistently communicating to the congregation will deliver many benefits, including:

- The congregation will clearly understand the process, including the roles of the Circuit Visitor, District office, congregation boards or council, call committee, and congregation.
- Clear identification of the members of the call committee.
- Congregation members will have a clear understanding of the proper process for communicating with the members of the call committee.

Point of Contact with the District

It is important that there is only one point of contact between the District office/District President and the call committee. This should be the call committee chairperson. A single point of contact ensures clear, efficient lines of communication throughout the process.

The Right Question

It is not appropriate for a call committee to be guided chiefly by such questions as these: Will the congregation like this pastor? Will it 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?

The foremost question for the call committee always is whether this is the person God desires this congregation to have as its pastor. Human preferences and personalities never come before the mission to which God calls his church. That is why every meeting of the call committee will include prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

The 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.

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR POTENTIAL CALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name:

Preferred Email:

Preferred Phone:

1. How long have you been a member of this congregation? Which worship service do you normally attend? How many times per month, on average?
2. In what types of church activities/service have you participated? Any previous call committee experience?
3. What do you think are the 3 best qualities of this congregation? How would you assess the current health of the congregation?
4. How would you describe this congregation's mission today and for the future? How would you describe the most important role of the next pastor, and the most important gifts or attributes that person will need?
5. In finding the next pastor, what do you think the primary focus of the call committee should be?
6. What do you think would be your most important contribution(s) in serving on the call committee? Any other comments you'd like to add?

APPENDIX E

A Self-Study Tool for Congregations

Section One Basic Questions

A number of years ago, the Council of Presidents of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod began the practice of asking each pastor to fill out a Self-Evaluation Tool (SET) describing his basic approach to ministry and his practice with regard to selected issues. Congregations have found this SET to be extremely helpful in evaluating the qualities of candidates for the pastoral office in their congregation.

The instrument below is based on the pastoral SET. It is our hope that it will be a help in discerning the proper match between pastor and congregation.

Name of Congregation: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

1. What is your understanding of the mission of the church?

2. Why was your congregation founded? Why does it exist today? What have been the joys and struggles you've experienced over the past 5-10 years?

3. Describe your commitment to the doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

4. What are the chief priorities in your present ministry?

5. Our congregation's strengths in ministry are . . .

6. Areas in our ministry needing improvement are . . .

7. In what community outreach or service activities does your congregation participate?

8. Briefly describe your congregational practice and/or preference toward the following:

a. The Lutheran Hymnal / Lutheran Worship / Lutheran Book of Worship / Other

b. Pastoral services (weddings, funerals, visitation, etc.) to non-members, non-Lutherans. or the unchurched.

c. The Charismatic / Renewal Movement

d. Describe how women serve in your church

In our congregation women may serve as . . .

_____ Voters

_____ President

_____ Board members

_____ Vice President

_____ Board chair

_____ Elders

_____ Lectors

_____ Ushers

_____ Communion Assistants

_____ Other (Describe)

e. The place and participation of lay people in the life of the church. What is your understanding of the role of the laity in the congregation?

9. Describe your church's relationship with the previous pastor, and the relationship with him going forward:

10. What is your understanding of the role of the ordained ministry in the church?

11. If there is a multi-staff ministry at your church (i.e. Lead/Senior Pastor – Assistant/Associate Pastor, Pastor – DCE, Pastor – School staff, etc.), describe how that's conducted at your church?

12. Describe your feelings about the church's involvement in social ministries in the community.

13. Describe briefly your congregational practice or preference toward the following:

a. Writing of "own liturgies" or special services.

b. The frequency of the Lord's Supper

c. The priority of the Lord's Supper in parish worship.

d. The use of common or individual cups.

e. The use of lay people to assist in worship.

f. Do you have a Lutheran School or are you planning to start one? How do you understand the ministry of the Lutheran School?

g. An interview by a calling congregation before a call is issued.

h. First communion: Before or after confirmation

i. What is your communion policy with regard to those who are not members of your congregation? If you print a communion policy in your Sunday bulletin, please include it here. (See definitions of close, closed and open communion in the Glossary)

j. Inter-Lutheran relationships (relationships between your church and other Lutheran organizations)

k. Inter-Christian relationships (relationships between your church and other Christian organizations)

14. What provision in time and finances do you make for the pastor's continuing education?

15. How can the District / Synod assist you to have a more effective ministry?

16. What strengths or ministries would you like to share with other congregations?

17. What provision for housing is offered to the pastor?

_____ parsonage (please provide condition, floorplan, photos, etc.)

_____ housing allowance

_____ negotiable

18. Is there anything else in your present ministry that you would like to share that might be pertinent to a new pastor?

19. Use of this Self Evaluation Tool:

a. Who prepared the answers to this document?

b. Was the District and Circuit Visitor consulted? (Note that the outgoing pastor should not be driving the self-evaluation. The District and Circuit Visitor will provide invaluable assistance and perspective as you undertake your self-evaluation – it is highly recommend that you consult with them.)

c. Was this information shared with and discussed by the congregation?

d. Was a congregational survey done? If so, attach results.

e. It is very important that you share this information with the pastor you are calling. Has it been shared with him? When and how?

Date completed: _____

Section Two Demographics

1. Please complete the following:

| | Current | 5 years ago | 10 years ago |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| Average attendance | | | |
| Baptized membership | | | |
| Communicant membership | | | |
| Sunday School enrollment | | | |
| Bible Class enrollment | | | |
| Total budget for current expense | | | |

2. An incredible, free tool to help you easily access powerful information on your context is Lutheran Church Extension Fund's (LCEF) MissionInSite. MissionInSite's PeopleView System™ uniquely integrates information about your congregants with demographic information to determine the best opportunities for advancing your ministry. To gain access to this information, simply contact Gail Kanneg in the District office at gail.kanneg@psd-lcms.org.

Please describe your community giving attention to . . .

Size of community:

Economy:

Racial composition:

Growth projections:

General description:

Does your congregation reflect the general population of the community? Explain:

Section Three

Financial Information

1. Please provide your latest plus 1-3 years of financial reports, including budget, indebtedness, profit/loss statements, etc.

2. What salary did you pay your last pastor? (Include housing in salary figure.)

3. What salary do you plan to pay your next pastor? Give a figure or a range. (Include housing in salary figure.)

4. Do you offer Concordia Plans Benefits? Describe coverage. If not, how do you make allowance for your pastor's and family's care?

5. Compare your compensation figures with the District guidelines. If your figures fall short, how will this impact your ability to call a pastor? (Note that the pastor determines his housing amount, which can be included within the total. The pastor is responsible to annually designate his housing amount, which should be recorded in congregational minutes for tax recording purposes.)

6. When was the last time you had an organized stewardship campaign directed primarily towards financial commitment? What kind of program did you use? What was the effect/results?

7. If you have a preschool and/or day school, please provide a description of its current status and health. What is the financial situation? What are the enrollment trends? What are your accreditations?

Section Four

Missional Information

1. If possible, attach a missional history of the congregation -- not just dates and names, but the story of significant attempts at mission and outreach. Share stories of how you shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with individuals and your community.
2. If you have one, attach a copy of your mission statement or vision statement.
3. If you have a list of your core values, please attach. If not, please answer the following question:

Any pastor coming to serve this congregation should know the following things about us -- for good or for bad: (List things like "We are a conservative/ progressive/ traditional congregation." "We value diversity" "We don't know how to handle conflict." "We like to fight." "We like variety in our worship." "We are very liturgical and want someone who can chant well." etc.) Include a congregational history that describes your "DNA".
4. Is there an ethnic group within your church? If yes, is this a rental/landlord relationship, or are you in ministry partnership together?

APPENDIX F

Building a Congregational and Pastoral Profile

Your congregation is embarking on a process that will lead to the most important decision you as a congregation will make for years to come -- the calling of a new pastor. Congregations are not always sure what kind of information they should provide to the District President as he seeks to assist with the formation of a call list and to the new pastor as he considers a call. It is strongly recommended that your call committee undertake a prayerful, thorough self-study, and develop a congregational and pastoral profile based on the results of that study. This profile will greatly aid the District President in finding pastoral candidates, as well as your congregation in understanding your context, your ministry and the attributes and gifts you need in your next pastor.

The congregational and pastoral profile which has three beneficial uses:

1. To help the congregation understand itself and its unique call to ministry. (You should not call for nominations from the congregation until you have completed the congregational and pastoral profile and discussed it with the congregation.)
2. To help the District President understand the needs and opportunities of the congregation.
3. To help the pastor you have called evaluate how well his gifts match the congregation's needs and opportunities.

During the call process you will be assisted by the District President, your Circuit Visitor and/or your Regional Vice President. The Circuit Visitor can assist you with building the profile as well as once you get into the actual calling process. Please do not hesitate to call upon him for help with this important step.

Above all, remember that God is at work in this process. He already knows who your next pastor should be. It is our job to discern His will through prayer and study of the Word. Use this important time to draw closer to Him as you seek His will.

At a minimum, you need to complete the Self-Study Tool for Congregations as found in [Appendix E](#).

The tool consists of four sections:

- Basic questions
- Demographics
- Finances
- Missional Information

You are strongly encouraged, however, to undertake a more comprehensive process. Ensure that you capture your context in which you do ministry, who your congregation has been, currently is, and seeks to be, and the needed attributes and gifts in your next pastor to help you accomplish the mission God has planned for your congregation.

This process means gathering feedback and ensuring your congregation is heard. Important elements of this effort include developing and completing a congregational survey, conducting focus groups with your members and perhaps even your community, and interviewing leadership and church/school staff. The basic information you want to gather is:

- What are our strengths?
- What are our challenges?
- What are our opportunities?
- What are the attributes, gifts and skills needed in our next pastor?

Once you have gathered this information, your call committee should then spend significant time digesting this information individually and together as a group. Identify major themes that emerge. Discuss your experiences and conversations you had with the congregation. Document what you've learned and compile into a report that captures the profile of your congregation and needed pastoral attributes.

Samples of surveys, focus group and interview questions, and congregational and pastoral profiles to help provide guidance are available online at www.psd-lcms.org/call-manual-appdix.

Sample A

The following paragraphs offer a way in which one congregation (Fictional name: *Shalom Lutheran Church*) gave expression to its understanding about its own history, direction, and needs and how these translated into a set of expectations for its next pastor. See additional templates and samples www.psd-lcms.org/call-manual-appdix.

OUR PERSPECTIVE OF SHALOM LUTHERAN CHURCH'S MINISTRIES AND PASTORAL NEEDS

During our ## year history we have been richly blessed with pastors who, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, have preached and taught us God's Word, and who have faithfully administered the Sacraments for our spiritual strengthening. *We pray for a pastor who will continue to serve the Lord at Shalom Lutheran Church in this same manner.*

Also, we have been blessed by stimulating and varied settings for worship. Our director of music, _____, serves a dual calling to the church and to Shalom Lutheran School. He actively participates with the pastor in planning worship services around a variety of Lutheran liturgies that often includes choirs and accompaniment by piano, organ, stringed and brass instruments. As yet, we have not planned for purchasing the new hymnal, but we anticipate beginning the process soon. Presently, we have a single worship service on Sunday, although if our growth in attendance continues we will have to return to two services because of seating and parking limitations. *We pray for a pastor who enjoys variety in worship and who will continue to lead in its planning and preparation.*

Our congregation follows a planning process for most of its ten departments that is structured according to program areas and long range and short-range objectives. The programs are being implemented by lay leadership and active committees involving more than 125 people. The scope and effectiveness of this planning process will benefit from a continuing pastoral involvement in which the pastor serves as a resource person in planning and a motivator in attaining successful implementation. *We pray for a pastor who has leadership and organizational skills to help provide ideas, given encouragement and develop the God-given skills of members.*

Shalom Lutheran Church places much emphasis on Christian education. We support Shalom Lutheran School which has a program for Kindergarten through grade eight . . . For adults we normally have two Sunday morning Bible studies, four mid-week Bible studies in homes, and a core of members who have been trained and are capable of leading studies. Our Sunday School in the pre-confirmation ages could benefit from regular pastoral involvement in teaching God's Word and encouraging its study. In addition, our worship service has occasionally included special object lessons and songs for young children and this has been a special blessing to our youth. *We pray for a pastor who supports Christian education at all age level and will be an active participant in both our parish and parochial education program.*

Our congregation, perhaps because of its urban setting, has need for all types of counseling. The membership has benefited from skilled professional counseling by our previous pastor and the congregation has supported seminars and workshops for improving his counseling skills. *We pray for a pastor who is willing and able to counsel others.*

Our area is also one where people move rather frequently. We perceive our congregation as being very friendly toward strangers and welcome those who visit and those who wish to join us. We have a process administered by the Board of Elders for introducing, informing, and integrating new members into active

parish life. We welcome members of all nationalities and ethnic backgrounds and in recent years we have been blessed by an increasingly diverse heritage. Usually new members are asked to participate in important committees within a few months after joining. Among our organizations that provide fellowship opportunities along with other important functions are the Mary and Martha Guild made up of five circles, the Shalom Adult Fellowship, the Young Adult Fellowship, the Lutheran Youth Fellowship, Cub Scouts, adult and youth choirs, and our Aid Association for Lutherans Branch. *We pray for a pastor who is warm, friendly, and loving in his interaction with people and who can stimulate those feelings in others. We also pray for a pastor who values fellowship and has the capacity to direct its use to the spiritual up building of our members.*

Historically, we have been served by a staff consisting of the Pastor, a part-time (called) Director of Music, a full-time secretary, and a part-time janitor. The seven teachers who belong to Shalom have voluntarily teamed together to support the pastor and have followed the practice of meeting at least twice a year to evaluate their roles in the parish. Recently, we began the process of calling an associate pastor to work primarily in Christian education and youth ministry. This process has now been stopped until the senior pastoral office is again filled. At that time we probably will be receptive to calling a second pastor. *We pray for a pastor with physical abilities by way of age, health, and stamina to deal with our challenging ministry. We further pray that he will be able to work effectively with other professional staff such as the school faculty and a possible second pastor.*

In summary, we pray for a pastor who is filled with the Holy Spirit to teach us, lead us, and stimulate us to grow in Christ and to know Him better and in knowing Him better to help others to know Him also. These things are our prayers, but above all we pray that God's will may be done to His glory.

Yours in Christ,

Call Committee

_____ , Chairperson

APPENDIX G

Important notes on Assistant/Associate Pastors in a Senior/Lead Pastor call process

Your congregation may have more than one pastor on staff. When the Senior or Lead Pastor role is vacant, there are several important considerations of which the call committee and governing body need to be aware.

First, there may be pressure from the congregation to simply “promote” an Assistant or Associate Pastor into the Senior Pastor position. Not only is this an inadvisable practice, but it completely discounts the nature of the Divine Call as described above. The call process is a critical opportunity for the congregation to seek the Holy Spirit’s leading, do its due diligence in self-study and discovering its mission and ministry for the next season, and come to a unified, God-pleasing conclusion on who should lead the congregation. While the Assistant or Associate may be whom God has chosen, this can never be a simple assumption. It is always strongly recommended that the congregation undertake the whole call process.

Second, Assistants or Associates should be asked as the call process begins whether they want to be considered for Senior Pastor role. It is not uncommon at all for Assistants/Associates to decline to be considered for a variety of reasons. Whatever the reasons, this question should be clearly asked and then it should be clearly communicated to the congregation if they decline consideration.

Finally, if the Assistant or Associate does want to be considered as a candidate, they should be the first candidate the call committee evaluates in comparison to the profile generated out of your self-study. Interviews should take place according to the process you planned for external candidates. If the call committee determines the Assistant or Associate meets all requirements of your profile, and feels there is no need to look at other candidates and that he should be recommended to the congregation, the congregation should vote on whether to call the Assistant or Associate.

On the other hand, if the call committee determines that the Assistant or Associate does not align with the stated profile, before proceeding further the Assistant or Associate should be privately informed of the call committee’s decision. The Assistant or Associate should then be requested to remove his name from further consideration, and this should be communicated to the congregation.

The sensitive handling of situations as described above is very important to congregational unity and ongoing ministry. Calling an Intentional Interim Minister is a very wise and highly recommended option to help navigate these types of situations. Your Circuit Visitor, Regional Vice President, and District President are also important resources to call upon for guidance.

APPENDIX H
Pastoral Candidate Nomination Form

(A fillable PDF version of this appendix is available at www.psd-lcms.org/call-manual-appdix.)

We hereby nominate the following individual as a candidate for pastoral call to:

(Name of Church) (City, State)

NAME: _____

PRESENT PARISH: _____ HOW LONG: _____

LOCATION: _____

PERSONAL: (Approximate age, marital status, number of children, state of health, etc.)

PASTORAL APPROACH:

THEOLOGICAL STANCE:

STRONG POINTS:

WEAK POINTS:

OTHER COMMENTS: (e.g. explain any relationship with this nominee, how long you have known him and under what circumstances.)

Submitted by _____

Date _____

APPENDIX I

Pre-Call Interviews

The following is based on information provided by the Council of Presidents.

Pre-call interviews, visits and post-call visitations are not prohibited by the Holy Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions. In fact, we highly recommended that these elements are part of your candidate evaluation process. Each congregation has the right to determine procedures for reviewing candidates; however the congregation needs to function in such a way that the dignity and divine nature of the call is maintained. And it is important that the process remain the same for all candidates.

Remember: the congregation is not simply “hiring an employee” but is seeking the full measure of the Holy Spirit’s guidance and insight in discerning the person to fill the office of Holy Ministry.

Most congregations today are finding it helpful to conduct pre-call interviews and visits to assist the pastor and congregation in learning more about one another. These interviews and visits enable the candidate and congregation to share a sense of their vision of ministry with each other and provide “first impressions” which may prove helpful in considering and deliberating about a potential call.

Note that the pre-call interview or visit should never be the only impression of value – it is important that congregations consider all the information and credentials provided on candidates.

Also note that not every LCMS pastor will consent to a pre-call interview. **This should not disqualify the candidate from consideration.**

Benefits and Potential Risks

The decision to call a pastor is among the most important that a congregation ever makes. While pre-call interviews are neither commanded nor forbidden by Holy Scripture or the Lutheran Confessions, it is recommended that you make these interviews part of your call process. It is important to exercise care and understand potential risks.

Pre-call interviews are valuable ways to become more familiar with the candidate’s theology, interests, experience, skills, and leadership style so that the congregation can equip itself to make an informed decision at its call meeting. Telephone, video and face-to-face interviews provide both the pastor and congregation insight into each other, and the potential fit between them.

Pre-call interviews can involve risks of which you should be aware. Answers during interviews may give a misleading picture - the pastor and the congregation may not present themselves as they really are. It is imperative that interviews be based on honest, open and frank conversation, which is honoring to the Holy Spirit and each party involved as together they seek His will.

Personal interviews may also place undue emphasis on the outward aspects of the call (e.g. appearance of the sanctuary, the condition of parsonage, the neighborhood, the community, the people, etc.) rather than on the challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry. Furthermore, personal interviews entail costs for lodging, meals, events, etc.

Considering the risks as noted above, pre-call interviews are important and recommended steps in the journey towards calling a pastor as the Holy Spirit leads.

Guidelines

Following are some general guidelines regarding pre-call interviews. If you have questions about these guidelines, do not hesitate to contact your Circuit Visitor, Regional Vice President or District President.

1. A pre-call interview should not be conducted until after the congregation has completed a careful and thorough self-study. The congregation needs to have a clear understanding of its mission and ministry and its current situation. Congregations should wait to decide on whether or not to conduct pre-call interviews until after they have received their call list, reviewed the information provided by the District President, and conducted an evaluation to determine who are the top candidates they would like to interview.
2. Pre-call interviews should only be conducted with those individuals who are named on the call list provided by the District President. Also, at this point in the call process it is important that you do not add any last-minute candidates without the review and support of the District President.
3. Congregations choosing to conduct pre-call interviews must be careful to maintain the dignity and divine nature of the call. When calling a pastor, congregations are **not** hiring an employee, but asking God to send them a pastor. The entire call process should be surrounded with fervent prayer.
4. The actual interviewing will normally be done by members of the Call Committee. (The Call Committee and the Interview Committee may be the same group of individuals or two different groups of individuals or a sub-committee of the Call Committee as the congregation directs or as the Call Committee structures itself for its work. Throughout this document, it is understood that references to 'the committee' speak of the group—whatever its title—that undertakes the interviewing task.)
 - a. If the congregation's constitution does not provide for a Call Committee, an enabling resolution should be adopted by the voters' assembly establishing both the make-up and the duties of the Call Committee.
 - b. The candidates for interview will be taken from the Call List as prepared by the District President.
 - c. Congregations should work closely with the Circuit Visitor, Regional Vice President, District President or his representative in conducting pre-call interviews, including requesting assistance in developing questions, determining the best process and inviting them to participate in the actual interviews.
5. After contacting your top candidates to inquire of their willingness and ability to engage in the call process, it is recommended that interviews with willing candidates occur in two phases:
 - a. Initial interviews - 60-90 minute interviews using video (Skype, Go-to-Meeting, Google Meet, etc.) to determine the list of candidates you would like to bring to your campus for onsite visits.
 - b. Onsite visits – Face-to-face meetings with the candidate and his wife over a weekend or 1.5-2.5 days during the week with staff, school faculty, meet-and-greet/Q&A with congregation, attending worship, touring the campus and community, fellowship etc. Make sure to be flexible and attend to the comfort of the candidate and his wife.
6. See below for a sample interview format. The Interview Committee will be careful to conduct each candidate interview in the same way. Questions should be formulated based on the results

of your self-study. For example, challenges and opportunities that you uncovered in your self-study should lead you to create questions that ask the candidate how he would address similar situations. The Committee should limit the number of questions addressed to the candidates, with the same questions asked of each of the candidates. The congregation can be given the opportunity to submit questions or subjects to the Call Committee to be touched upon in the interviews. "Trick" questions have no place in these interviews.

7. Ensure your interview questions can be covered adequately in the allotted time for the interview. As you formulate questions, evaluate them in three ways:
 - a. What does it have to do with the position?
 - b. Why do we need to know?
 - c. Would we be willing to answer the same question about ourselves?

8. Avoid "yes/no" or other short answer questions. Examples of good questions that focus on behavior include:
 - a. Tell us about a time when...
 - b. What do you want us to know about...
 - c. Give us an example of...
 - d. You say. . . about yourself. How has this been demonstrated?
 - e. Describe an experience where...

9. In conducting the interview, focus on how the pastor functions rather than on the ideas and concepts he expresses. Remember that the manner in which a person has handled a situation in the past may well indicate how he might act in the future given the same or similar circumstances. Note especially expressions of energy, conviction, enthusiasm, respect for acceptable differences and the way personal faith is shared. Listen carefully in order to ascertain how the pastor draws naturally, winsomely, and confidently on the resources of his education, experience, and faith.

10. A written summary of each interview should be made and distributed to each member of the Call Committee. It is from these summaries that a report can be made to the congregation, and a candidate or candidates can be recommended. As the Holy Spirit leads, there may be only one candidate who the committee feels should be recommended, or more than one. A slate of three candidates from which the congregation makes their choice is a good target. Your congregation's constitution may provide guidelines. See below for a sample report to the congregation.

11. As a matter of courtesy, the call committee should communicate with each candidate who has been interviewed, expressing appreciation for his participation.

12. Remember that the committee does not act on its own behalf, but as the representative and servant of the entire congregation. Its agenda should be what's best for the congregation and not some private or individual agenda. At the same time, the committee is chartered to do this work on behalf of the congregation, and so should go about this important business diligently, thoroughly and confidently, seeking the Holy Spirit's leading and using the gifts God has provided each member to arrive at a God-pleasing recommendation.

Sample Interview Format

Some areas of concern and typical questions relating to them may be of benefit to you as you structure your interview process. The following statements or questions are meant to serve as thought starters in developing your interview format. Your statements or questions, of course, should be based on your own congregational situation and on the information about the candidates being interviewed.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP AND PREACHING

When a change in pastors takes place, changes are also likely to take place in the worship practice of the congregation. The principle concern in the interview is for the committee to determine the candidate's attitudes and convictions about worship, preaching, and the liturgy.

Preaching, teaching, and leading worship are important aspects of the pastor's work. However, there is often a variety of attitudes concerning what constitutes a "good" sermon, a "good" Bible class, and "good" worship. Therefore, some issues to discuss in this area might be:

1. Describe how you make decisions about worship.
2. Describe how you have introduced changes in the worship practice of your present congregation.
3. Describe your convictions about the importance of the liturgy and the Sacrament of the Altar and how you carry out these convictions.
4. Describe how you go about preparing your sermons.
5. Describe your satisfactions and disappointments in preparing and delivering sermons.
6. In preparing sermons, describe what use you make of the Bible, the church year, the Scripture lessons, personal experiences (your own or others), current events, contemporary issues in culture and society.
7. What is the average length of your sermons?
8. Describe how important you consider preaching to be in the life of the church.
9. Describe how you use guest preachers.

You should remember that the style and schedule of worship in the candidate's present congregation is not necessarily what he prefers or would choose or would try to duplicate in another situation.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Your objective in this area is to discover what might happen if this candidate and your congregation undertake a spiritual journey together. You will be concerned here not only about the candidate's spiritual/devotional life, but also about the spiritual life, growth, and health of your congregation.

In discussing Christian education, your committee will be interested in some of the following elements in the candidate's responses: his level of creative energy, the range of resources he has used, his familiarity with various educational materials and curricula, his views on the training and involvement of lay people in various roles, and his level of direct personal involvement and competence in education.

Your committee will want to discuss all levels of congregational education as it now exists and as you hope it will develop including Bible classes, Sunday School, Confirmation instruction, youth programs, and topics for auxiliary organizations. Questions may include:

1. Describe how you and your present congregation have grown in spiritual life, separately and together.

2. Describe how you view Christian education and its role in the life of the congregation.
3. Describe some of the resources you use to enhance the spiritual life of the congregation.
4. Describe what you expect adults and children to learn and retain through the congregational education program.
5. Describe some of your favorite tools and resources for Bible study, Sunday School, and catechism.
6. Describe what curriculum material you use and why.
7. Describe how you recruit, train, assist, support, and supervise a teaching staff.
8. Describe how you involve parents in the Christian education of children.
9. Describe how you teach people to pray.
10. Describe your experience with various traditions of spiritual life, for example, retreats, prayer disciplines, private confession, observance of church festivals, etc.
11. Describe what resources refresh you personally.

PASTORAL CARE

At all times, but especially in time of personal crisis or transition—birth, death, marriage, divorce, vocational stress or change, physical or mental illness—parishioners look to the pastor for pastoral care. They want to know and be convinced that their pastor really cares about them, that he will be available in time of need, and that he will apply the resources of the Gospel to their need. Parishioners are also interested in knowing how the pastor deals with problem situations. It is appropriate to visit with the candidate about his response to specific situations. For example:

1. Describe what kinds of pastoral care and counseling congregational members can expect from you.
2. Describe how you visit your parishioners (hospital calls, nursing homes, homebound, other).
3. Describe how you prepare a couple for marriage (pre-marital counseling).
4. Describe how you address the issue of couples living together outside of marriage.
5. Describe how you address LGBTQ realities in the church, school or community
6. Describe how you handle unwed pregnancies.
7. Describe how you work with:
 - a. troubled teenagers.
 - b. persons involved in abuse of alcohol or drugs.
 - c. patient and family members in a terminal illness situation.
8. Describe how you minister to those afflicted with bereavement.
9. Describe what you do about people who are nonmembers but come to you for pastoral care or counseling.
10. Describe how you deal with your own limitations in counseling.
11. Describe how you provide for pastoral care when you are not there (e.g. on your day off or during vacation).

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

As the "overseer" of the congregation, a pastor faces a wide range of administrative responsibilities. In covering this area during an interview, you will want to keep your congregational situation in mind and concentrate on it rather than on the candidate's present situation.

During this part of the interview your committee may wish to ask the candidate to:

1. Describe how you relate to the staff, boards, committees, and other leadership groups in the congregation. How do you maintain a balance of power among the various groups of the congregation?

2. Describe how you handle conflict in the congregation. Talk about a relationship you salvaged after a conflict or falling out with the person.
3. Describe how you deal with staff changes.
4. Describe how you intentionally identify, equip and launch leaders.
5. Describe how you recruit and train volunteers.
6. Describe familiarity with different church governance systems (i.e. church council, policy-based governance), and any preference.
7. Describe how the agenda is prepared for Council/Board of Directors and Voters' meetings.

Indications as to the candidate's administrative skills can also emerge in the way he handles the correspondence and arrangements for the interview.

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

When a school or preschool is part of your mission and ministry, it is important to gauge the candidate's philosophy towards and experience with this important part of your congregation. Your Board of Education or whoever is responsible for its operation will undoubtedly have a list of questions or concerns related to the school. Possible issues for discussion with candidates might include:

An appropriate approach here might be to ask the candidate:

1. Articulate your philosophy of church and school growth and how you have implemented that philosophy.
2. What steps do you take to help students, parents and staff feel secure, trusting and open with you?
3. Describe the pastor-school administrator relationship you have attained and describe how it affects church and school climate.
4. To what extent are you the initiator in developing relationships? Tell me about a relationship you built.
5. How do you help others develop positive relationships?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Many personal questions are illegal to ask during pre-employment discussions. In addition, you need to be guided by the principle: "Don't ask a question that you would not answer for yourself." You should not raise questions about the candidate's marital history, sexuality, personal financial matters, or past history of alcoholism or mental illness. If such matters are of concern to your committee, a means of dealing with them should be worked out before the interview with input from the District President and Circuit Visitor.

At the same time, a pastor is to some degree a public person so your congregation will naturally have some interest in the candidate as a person.

An appropriate approach here might be to ask the candidate to:

1. Describe your goals for your own personal development.
2. Describe how you schedule and use your time off.
3. Tell us what books you are reading.
4. Describe what you do for fun.
5. Describe your likes and dislikes about the way your life and ministry have gone thus far.
6. Describe your appearance and dress while in the office, attending meetings, or making calls.

CONCLUSION

Finally, your committee may find it useful to conclude each interview by asking the candidate one final question—Is there anything that we should know about you that we didn't ask?

EVALUATION

Although each interview will be personal and unique, it is to be hoped that there will be enough uniformity of process and content so that conclusions about each candidate interviewed can be arrived at and compared with fairness and accuracy. One recommended way to conduct a fair and thorough evaluation is for the call committee to agree upon a ranking system for the candidate's response to each question, for example 1 to 5 with 1 being a poor response to 5 being an outstanding response. This can serve as a good starting point for discussion, along with each individual committee members notes on responses.

Sample Interview Report to Congregation

(Provide information to the congregation that illustrates how the pastors you interviewed possess the gifts and attributes described in your pastoral profile.

Include a photo of the pastor, or the pastor and his family if available.)

Rev. John Smith

Age: 39

Current Congregation: First Lutheran Church and School, Anytown, CA; 700+ worshippers each Sunday

Role: Senior Pastor since 2014. Pastor Smith has served churches in Big City, Florida, and Suburb, AZ, starting new church campuses in Florida and metro Big City.

Education: Concordia Irvine, Concordia Seminary - St Louis

Family: Mary [Jones] Smith (married 2003), 3 children, ages 8-12

Mission-minded Visionary Leader – Pastor Smith was invited to engage with a local faith coalition when he first arrived in Anytown. The coalition works to create an all-faith group focused on nurturing a sense of community and collaboration to building partnerships with neighborhoods, businesses, schools, non-profits, city leaders and the faith community. Under Pastor Smith’s leadership, they established a ministry to feed the homeless and provide a mobile shower service. He has found great joy in the congregation catching and repeating the vision to reach into the community. Pastor Smith takes his family on mission trips to instill a sense of service and excitement for extending the Kingdom.

Inspiring and Relevant Preacher – Pastor Smith is a high energy, relevant preacher that believes a healthy congregation is exemplified by exciting worship, a desire for fellowship outside of worship and a willingness to take risks for the sake of the gospel. He has extensive experience using a high level of technology in worship.

Strong Leader and Administrator – Pastor Smith bases his ministry with transparency anchored in relationships as the foundation. He takes a proactive approach to problem solving with personal reconciliation as the basis for resolving conflict. He believes that the mission (sharing the fullness of life in Jesus) is more important than any one individual. First Lutheran centers their message in Worship, School Ministries and Life Groups. He oversees a full- and part-time church and school staff of 83 people.

Church/School Bridge Builder – First Lutheran School is the church’s primary mission field. Mary Smith started the Children’s Ministry as a bridge between the church and school and the team organizes 9 family events throughout the year. The school has grown to 360+ preschool through 8th grade students with two classrooms per grade. Pastor Smith is present in the school daily and takes the attitude that 80 church and school staff are one team. All of Pastor Smith’s pastoral experience has been at churches with schools.

Early to Mid-Career Standout – Pastor Smith was ordained in 2006 and has been a Church Planter, Associate Pastor and Senior Pastor, with wide range of experience in different settings. He endeavors to learn from multiple mentors throughout the LCMS and faith community, and leverage the gifts God places within the church.

Relational, Approachable Spiritual Leader – Pastor Smith is outgoing, engaging and exhibits a high level of energy. He is an encourager, and eager to come alongside people to discover their gifts and find the joy of a full life in Christ, extending the love of Jesus through whatever means necessary.

Rev. Ned Jones

Age: 50

Current Congregation: Faith Lutheran Church and School, Anytown, TX; 500+ worshippers each Sunday

Role: Senior Pastor since 2013.

Education: Concordia-Irvine, MPCP/Concordia Seminary-St. Louis

Family: Jenny [Brown] Jones (married 1995), 5 children ages 19-25

Mission-minded Visionary Leader – Pastor Jones believes in humbly creating a place of love and safety in Jesus for sinners, so that as many of the lost are reached as possible. Faith is a large established church (founded in 1874) that went through a significant rejuvenation under his leadership as he led them to a new vision for future ministry. Pastor Jones believes that the vision must be proclaimed often and demonstrated consistently. Pastor Jones believes that the biggest open door to bringing people to faith is by loving our neighbors.

Inspiring and Relevant Preacher – Pastor Jones loves preaching and takes the attitude that we are all sinners under the cross pointing each other to Jesus through the word and sacraments. His sermons provide relevant learning coupled with strong a call to action.

Strong Leader and Administrator – Pastor Jones provided skilled, effective leadership to his current congregation in the transition from long-time strong leadership to his own. He is not afraid to lead and challenge the congregation through growth and sacrifice for the sake of reaching the lost. He leads 20+ church and 40+ school staff.

Church/School Bridge Builder – Pastor Jones closely partners with the preschool through 8th grade school faculty and staff. Over 725 students are served at the school with each grade supporting 2-3 classes of students. Pastor Jones has only served congregations with a strong school ministry and strongly believes that the church and school must join in close partnership as one mission for the benefit of the families. He also serves on the Board of Directors of a mission to Kenya based at his congregation.

Early to Mid-Career Standout – Pastor Jones provides strong leadership in preaching, vision casting, and strategic ministry development, and in moving the congregation towards the vision and mission God has determined for them. He believes in engaging the unchurched through love and care ministries that effect life change and lead others to becoming disciples of Christ.

Relational, Approachable Spiritual Leader – Pastor Jones is personable and warm, with a gift of “speaking the truth in love” and motivating people to grow and mature in Christ. He also has a humble vulnerability that enables him to share his struggles and joys in ways that build unity and trust.

APPENDIX J

Prayerfully Evaluating Candidates

One of the critical tasks that the call committee is charged with is prayerfully evaluating candidates. It is helpful to have a commonly understood and employed process across your call committee so that you are able to have consistent discussion and points of comparison. Creating and agreeing on a process and tools will enable the call committee to more easily reach consensus on the candidates to 1) ask to engage in the call process with you, 2) conduct phone or video interviews with, 3) invite to your campus for visits and in-person meetings and interviews, and 4) put forward as the recommended candidate(s) for the congregational vote. Following are some best practices when evaluating candidates.

Prayer is critical

From the very first moment your call process starts, you and your call committee, along with your congregation, should be in earnest, consistent prayer asking for the Holy Spirit's leading. At each stage of evaluating candidates, whether during individual study time or when the committee meets as a group, prayer is the first step. Continually bring forward to your congregation requests for prayer as you progress through the different stages of evaluation.

Individual and Group Evaluation

Candidate evaluation includes each call committee member taking the time individually to pray, study information provided and document impressions. Then, each member is prepared and able to speak to their findings when the call committee comes together to discuss candidates as a group. The combination of individual and group evaluation provides beneficial and comprehensive perspective.

First Round: PIF/SET Evaluation

The first round of evaluations are based on the Personal Information Forms (PIFs) and the Self-Evaluation Tool (SETs) on pastors as provided by the District on the call list. The goal after reviewing this information is to agree on a number of candidates that seem to meet your profile criteria and that you want to contact about engaging with you in the call process.

Evaluation Criteria/System

Before beginning evaluation, discuss a system with the call committee that each committee member will use as they study the PIF/SET information. For example, you may want to use a 1-5 rating scale for quality or thoroughness of responses in the SETs, where a 1 would indicate a very weak response and 5 would indicate an incisive, informative and thorough response. There may be specific questions in the SET that you choose to use the rating system on based on their applicability to your pastoral profile.

Another rating system would be an A-B-C model. Based on all the PIF and SET information provided, an A rating would indicate a candidate that meets or virtually meets all of your pastoral profile criteria, and that you definitely want to contact. B ratings would be for candidates meeting most of the criteria with a few areas of concern but you'd want to contact to learn more, and a C rating would indicate candidates who don't meet most of the criteria and for which there are several areas of concern, and whom you would not contact.

Whatever system you agree upon, your ratings will help guide you to those candidates the call committee feels should be contacted about engaging in your call process.

Second Round: Phone/Video Interviews

The second round of evaluations come from phone or video interviews with the candidates who indicated they would engage in your call process. These interviews should be 60-90 minutes in length, and should be conducted using the same method with all candidates. Before conducting interviews,

your call committee should develop and agree upon a set of questions to ask the candidate related to your pastoral profile, your mission and ministry, and your context. It's a good practice to assign different call committee members specific questions to ask, and then allow for follow-up questions from any call committee member.

Allow time after each interview for the call committee to discuss their impressions. Assign a notetaker to ensure your discussion is captured. These notes will prove useful as you complete interviews and discuss the candidates with whom you would like to move forward.

Once all of your phone/video interviews are complete, the call committee then will need to discuss and decide which candidates and wives you would like to bring to your campus for visits. The number of candidates to bring onsite is up to you, but more than three is expensive and difficult to manage. You also may only have one candidate you feel is strong enough to meet face-to-face.

Ensure the candidates you select to visit are a strong fit to your pastoral profile. Provide information to the congregation on the candidates whom will be visiting that aligns with the pastoral profile (see [Appendix I](#) for sample information.)

Third Round: Onsite Visits

The third round of evaluations come from your face-to-face experience with candidates during their visits. In addition to time spent in further interviews with your call committee, these visits should include time with church and school staff and leadership, meet-and-greets, community tours, and with the congregation during worship and in a Q&A forum. See [Appendix Q](#) for a sample agenda for onsite visits.

Once visits are complete, the call committee should meet soon after and decide which candidates to recommend to the congregation to vote upon for issuing a call. This may be one or two candidates. More than two is not recommended as it would likely be difficult to arrive at a clear majority vote.

Ask for assistance

During the evaluation process, if you have questions or would like guidance or input, do not hesitate to contact your Circuit Visitor, Regional Vice President or District President.

APPENDIX K

Call Documents

The call committee should be acquainted with the call documents and be prepared to complete the documents and have them signed on the occasion of the call meeting or immediately on the following day. It is recommended that they be scanned and emailed to the pastor-elect along with being mailed so they can immediately begin deliberating.

The documents should be sent by registered mail with a copy sent to the District President.

Accompanying materials may include:

- The latest annual report
- Recent newsletters and bulletins
- Pictures of the church property
- Information about the community and area, as well as real estate information
- A copy of the congregation's Constitution and Bylaws
- Current Budget and Financial Reports
- Pertinent documentation from any self-study conducted by the congregation
- Demographic study of community, i.e. MissionInSite report from LCEF
- A letter of explanation & encouragement from the congregational president

NOTE: Always send copies of pertinent communications to the District President and Circuit Visitor. Of course, be sure to retain a copy of all communications and pertinent materials for the congregation's files.

Obtaining Call Documents

The call document can be obtained online at the Holybytes website:

<https://www.holybytes.com/cop/cornerstone/> You will need a username and password to access the Call Document for Ordained Ministers, acquire this by contacting:

Barbara Farley
Executive Assistant to the President
949.854.3232 ext. 201
barbara.farley@psd-lcms.org

Please read through the "Instructions for Call Document" for complete step by step instructions on how to complete the form. A completed call document will consist of the following parts:

1. Diploma of Vocation (must be printed on parchment paper)
2. Supplement to the diploma (4 pages)
3. Church information section (5 pages)

APPENDIX L

Sample Call Worship Services

Sample A

Hymn: *O Holy Spirit*, Enter In vs. 1,2,3 (TLH 235, LBW 459, LW 160)

Versicles page 41 (TLH), 131 (LBW), 208 (LW)

Message from Pastor _____

Prayer

Silence for Meditation

First Vote

Hymn: *With the Lord Begin Thy Task* vs. 1,2,5 (TLH 540, LBW 444, LW 483)

Hymn: *Come, Oh, Come, thou Quickening Spirit* vs. 1,2,5 (TLH 226, LBW 478, LW 165)

(If during any count additional hymns are needed to fill the time, select one from the list on the last page.)

First Reading

But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.

Romans 10:14-17

Moses said to the Lord, "Let the Lord, the God of the Spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which have no shepherd."

Numbers 27:15-17

Prayer

Silence

Second Vote

Hymn: *What God Ordains Is Always Good* vs. 1,2,5 (TLH 521, LBW 446, LW 422,)

Choir Anthem: *God Be In My Head*

Results of count

Second Reading

I will gather the remnant of my flock..... and bring them again to their folds.... and I will set shepherds over them which shall feed them and they shall fear no more....

Jeremiah 23:3-4

When Jesus handed over to Simon Peter the charge of the Christian church, he was careful to use the possessive pronoun "my". "Simon, son of Jonas, feed my lambs. They are not yours, they are mine, but I wish you to look after them for a little while. Guard them, feed them, guide them, be good to them for my sake. Remember my goodness, my watchfulness, my considerateness, my patience, my compassion, my readiness to help, my swiftness to heal, my gladness to sacrifice. Be the kind of shepherd to my lambs and my sheep that I have been to you. Follow me!"

Charles E. Jefferson, 1912

Prayer

Silence

Third Vote

Hymn 436 (TLH) *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want* (TLH 436, LBW 451, LW 416)

Hymn: *All Depends on Our Possessing* vs. 1,2,5 (TLH 425, LBW 447, LW 415)

Results of count

Third Reading

If the church is called a flock, the minister is the shepherd to seek the lost, to comfort the sick, to tend the flock in exercises of tenderness, consideration, and care. If the church is a household, the minister is the steward faithful and wise, dispensing the provision of the house according to the needs of its members. If the church of God is a city, he is the watchman to wake and warn slumberers of their peril. If it is a garden, he is the gardener to plant and water the soil, to cleanse the earth, to watch the growth of the plant, and to bring forth the harvest. If it is a building, he is the master-builder, building on Christ the sure foundation with living stones. Building a spiritual house, a dwelling place of God through the Spirit.

Charles Bridges 1856

Prayer

Silence

Fourth Vote

Hymn: *Send, O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit* (TLH 491, LW 263)

Hymn: *If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee* vs. 1,7 (TLH 518, LBW 453, LW 420)

Results of Count

Fourth Reading

There is no dearer treasure, nor any more precious thing on earth or in this life than a real and faithful pastor or preacher. He does great and mighty works. He seeks to inform and instruct those people in his care; comfort and advise those who are troubled, help to maintain peace and to settle differences, teach obedience, morals, discipline, and honor. By his work and by his word the kingdom of God is maintained in the world; so, too, are kept the name and the honor and the glory of God, the true knowledge of God, the right faith and understanding of Christ, the fruits of the suffering, blood and death of Christ, the gifts and works and power of the Holy Spirit, the true and saving use of baptism and the sacrament, and the right and pure doctrine of the gospel.

Martin Luther, 1530

Prayer

Silence

Fifth Vote

Choir Anthem: *O God, Send Heralds* (LBW 283)

Hymn: *May we Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill* (TLH 412, LBW 353,186, LH 389,327)

Results of Count

Closing Hymn: *On What has Now been Sown* vs. 1,2 (TLH 46, LBW 261, LW 217)

Extra Hymns: TLH 36,39, 234, 416, 514

LBW 257, 480, 483, 533, 543, 545

LW 166, 392, 426, 443, 444, 460

Hymn listings are suggestions only.

Sample B

Welcome – (Congregational President)

Opening Prayer

Song: Be Thou My Vision

Scripture Reading: Romans 10:14-17

Prayer

Scripture Reading: Numbers 27:15-17

Call Committee Report – (Call Committee Chairperson)

Discussion of Voting Procedure – (Congregational President or Board Secretary)

Song: Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling (LSB 650)

Voting

Request Motion for Unanimous Vote

Explain Next Steps (Including immediate phone call to pastor elect, a few weeks for he and his family to seek the Holy Spirit's will, etc.)

Closing Prayer

APPENDIX M

For Pastors: Communicating You Received a Call

What to Do When You Receive a Call

Call your current circuit counselor soon after you get the phone call and tell him that you have received a call and that the call documents are coming. Do not announce to your congregation that you have received a call without the call documents.

Refrain from telling specific individuals in your congregation about your call before informing the congregation. They all deserve to hear it from you. Announce it on a Sunday at a normally scheduled service. Tell them that you have two calls from God: one to serve them and one to serve these other people. You will be considering both of them, praying about it, and would welcome their advice and prayers. You will make a decision and announce it in a few weeks, again on a Sunday.

Send a letter of acknowledgment to the calling congregation. Ask for their prayers and advice also. Inform them, too, of the deadline. Copy both District Presidents and both Circuit Counselors. If possible and you are serious about accepting the call, arrange a visit to the calling congregation. Don't hesitate to arrange for phone calls with the calling congregation as well.

Announcing Your Decision

If you absolutely need more time than anticipated to make a decision, announce that to your current congregation. Do not delay for more than a week, however. When you have reached a decision, send a letter to the calling congregation with your announcement. Copy both district presidents and both circuit counselors. If there will be a duration of time between their receiving the letter from you and your announcement to your current congregation, ensure the calling congregation, Circuit Visitor and District President understand that and know to keep your decision confidential until you announce it to your current congregation.

Announce it to your current congregation on a Sunday. Even if you don't normally make announcements at the beginning of the Service, make this one at the beginning. Do not keep your congregation in suspense. If you are accepting the call, you must make sure there is no chance that it could somehow get to a member of your current congregation before your announcement. The congregation you currently serve gets the priority. You may also call your contact at the calling congregation and allow them to announce it on Sunday morning.

If You Accept the Call

Leaving a congregation is not easy - don't drag out the process. Communicate that even though it breaks your heart to leave, you think this is the right decision and God wants you there. Express thankfulness for your time with them, and that you will keep them in prayer. Plan to leave quickly after you announce that you have accepted the other call. Your announcement should include the date of your final Sunday. Two or three weeks is ideal. The longer there is any delay, the longer you endure the awkwardness of the situation. They are also needing to move on and get started with the vacancy and looking for a new pastor.

If you live in a parsonage you should meet with whatever governing board you have as soon as possible and negotiate the terms of your leaving. How long can you stay in the parsonage after your final Sunday? You should make a list of things that need repair and attention during the vacancy. Do your successor a favor and be very detailed, including things that were broken or substandard when you got there, right down to saying that the living room needs to be painted in a neutral tone or the refrigerator isn't big enough for a modern family of four.

If You Decline the Call

Express your gratitude to the calling congregation. Thank them for the care and kindness they showed to you (and your wife) during the calling process. Give the calling congregation a reason for declining. Be gracious and straightforward. If there is a problem, such as low salary, substandard housing, or even obvious trouble in the congregation, they need to hear it clearly as it will assist them in the next round of their calling process. If it is because of your current family situation or needs, there is no problem with telling them that as well. Whatever it is, explain it, so they have an opportunity to address it as needed.

APPENDIX N
Sample Installation/Ordination Services

Sample installation and ordination services are available online at:
www.psd-lcms.org/call-manual-appdix

APPENDIX O

Building a Relationship Between a Pastor and Congregation

As the call process unfolds, members experience a growing desire that the relationship about to be established between the congregation and the new pastor be as mutually beneficial and productive as possible. This desire is analogous to that experienced by a bride and groom as they enter into their new and unique relationship. Each recognizes and accepts that neither is perfect. There will be differences requiring understanding and adjustment by each. However, their hope is certain that with God's help they will overcome their differences through love and will work together toward common goals.

To make their hope a reality, the congregation must recognize that the covenant relationship established with their pastor through the call process is in accord with God's plan. His plan is that each Christians serve God by serving one another. The servant relationship makes it possible for the congregation and pastor to develop a level of trust and concern so that each desires to hear the other's burdens, to do good to one another as God instructs, and through such service to witness to their unity in Christ. Working early toward such a relationship means that there will be not only a good honeymoon, but a significant marriage between congregation and pastor.

In the Diploma of Vocation and in the self-study findings, the congregation identifies its corporate needs, priorities, and expectations. By his acceptance, the pastor vows that with God's help he will serve the congregation, give it pastoral leadership, and help the congregation achieve its mission and ministry objectives.

From the congregation's viewpoint, its needs, priorities, and expectations are likely to be of primary importance. However, by its call the congregation commits itself with God's help to make every effort to meet the pastor's needs and expectations, and to serve him and his family. This commitment by the congregation is of equal importance to the congregation as it is to the pastor. When the congregation fulfills its commitment, it cements a feeling of oneness in Christ which encourages and motivates both the congregation and the pastor to strive to give their best to one another. The result is that both congregation and pastor serve the Lord as He intends.

The attitudes communicated by the congregation and perceived by the pastor and his family can enhance the prospects that the relationship between congregation and pastor will be a good one. The following are examples of communicating good attitudes:

- We are happy that God has sent you to us. We desire to serve the Lord with you.
- We feel good about ourselves and are ready to face up to our weaknesses.
- We recognize that we are all imperfect human instruments of God. Pastor, we do not expect you to be great in everything either.
- We desire to make the best use of your time and talents, pastor. We as laity desire to use our talents to complement yours to achieve the congregation's mission and ministry objectives.
- We value you and your family and desire to assist all of you to become an integral part of our congregation and community. We will do our best to provide adequate financial support for your work and family's needs.

The Desire to Serve the Lord Together

It is a warm and joyous feeling to be welcome and needed. This is even more so when the message expressed is the feeling that the Lord has sent you. There are many opportunities to

make clear the congregation's desire to serve the Lord under the special pastoral leadership of the pastor being called. The thought here is to express orally and in writing your happiness and thanks that God, through His Holy Spirit, has led you to the particular person you are calling. Expressions of the value you place on him and his family and your desire to serve the Lord with them are especially meaningful.

The first opportunity to communicate your feelings occurs following the congregation's decision reached in the Call Meeting or Call Service. Normally, a telephone call is made to the pastor the same day, or next day, as appropriate. The next opportunity occurs in the letter transmitting the Diploma of Vocation and related call documents. Other opportunities arise should the pastor visit the congregation prior to or after acceptance. Following installation, there is no end to the opportunities for sharing your feelings with the pastor and his family.

Willingness to Deal Honestly with Weakness

The areas in which the congregation needs strengthening are identified in the self-study. Often they are humanly difficult to deal with but can be most productive with God's help. What is required is a willingness to accept their reality and to strive to find solutions. Emphasis should be given to what can be done to overcome a weakness rather than to excuse, defend or lay blame for it. The pastor is encouraged and inspired when the congregation communicates that it feels good about itself, the opportunities or challenges it recognizes, its strengths and the talents available, and that it is anxious to get on with its ministries.

The Pastor Is Human, Too

Do not expect the impossible! Avoid making the pastor feel guilty or defensive. The congregation has every right to expect the pastor to administer the Office of the Keys and carry out the pastoral duties enumerated in the Diploma of Vocation. At the same time, the pastor is human and is unlikely to have all the talents to the degree necessary to perform all of his assigned responsibilities equally well. Encourage and allow him to be himself and to call upon the lay and staffing talents available to complement his ministry in those areas in which others may be better qualified. In the most productive relationship, the congregation and pastor recognize and agree upon those talents best provided by the pastor and the laity.

Best Use of the Pastor's Time

Demands on a pastor's time frequently exceed the amount of time available. Needs by individual members for pastoral assistance due to personal crisis, death of a family member, illness, surgery, accident, etc., often arise unexpectedly. Events such as meetings of the Council, Voters and Elders often require the pastor's presence. Also, the pastor must have time for planning worship services, sermon preparation, counseling of members, confirmation and new member instruction, weddings and travel to and from the activities cited.

However, there are other activities and meetings where only his occasional presence is essential. Good stewardship requires that there be determination and agreement as to the best use of the pastor's time and talents. Many ministry needs can be met by the laity under the pastor's direction. Such complementary ministry strengthens the body of Christ and, in the process, God is glorified.

Assisting the Pastor and His Family

The Call documents sent to the pastor normally include materials to help orient him to the congregation and community. Examples are:

- A brief history of the congregation
- A congregational directory and pictorial directory if available
- A copy of the congregational newsletter or similar periodic communication sent to the members
- A copy of the Constitution and Bylaws
- A copy of the Governance Policy, if applicable
- A copy of the current budget, report comparing budget to actuals
- A description of current congregational objectives, policies and decisions or plans that the pastor would be expected to support or carry out
- Self-study findings, including LCEF MissionInSite study
- A current, detailed map of the area the congregation serves indicating the location of hospitals members generally use; area in which most members reside; and schools most members' children attend
- A brief explanation of the type of community served, types of housing available and current price ranges

It is also helpful to make clear what expenses the congregation will pay (transportation, lodging, meals, etc.) and if his wife's expenses will be included, should the pastor decide to visit prior to acceptance of the Call or to locate housing.

It may be very helpful if the congregation designates a competent member who offers his/her services to assist the pastor with relocation. Referral of the pastor to a local realtor is usually most helpful. The realtor will be familiar with local mortgage companies, rates and other valuable information.

The pastor should be offered the opportunity to meet with the Council/Board of Directors and Call Committee. The purpose of this meeting is to answer questions either the congregation or pastor might wish to raise, and to acquaint him with local customs and informal processes of decision-making and communication normally followed in the congregation.

After installation, the Council/Board of Directors should have ready for the pastor a briefing that includes written summaries of the plans of the congregation and boards, and a talent inventory of members. The briefing should include any special ministries, such as a list of members who are shut-in and background data on each.

Recognize that it will take the pastor several months or more, depending on the size of the congregation, to get to know each member as an individual and to gain an understanding of the skills each has to offer. About six months after the pastor's installation might be an appropriate time to review with him the Diploma of Vocation and the congregation's self-study findings, existing plans and objectives.

Throughout the orientation process, the pastor's wife and family should be remembered and included, when appropriate, in orientation events and invited to join or participate in congregational activities and organizations. At the same time, undue expectations should not be

placed upon the pastor's wife and family. Related to their congregational life, they should be allowed to exercise their judgment and use the gifts God has given them according to how they feel God leads them.

Providing the pastor and his family the kinds of assistance described is one of the ways the congregation communicates its love for them and its thanks to God for having sent them. It helps them to become productive members of the congregation more quickly. It also helps to establish a level of trust and open communication.

Support for the Pastor's Work and His Family

One of the ingredients of the Call is the remuneration and related benefits offered the pastor for support of his work and his family. Financial items related to the pastoral office in a congregation usually include but are not limited to:

- Concordia Plan Services (Concordia Health and Retirement Plans)
- Automobile allowance
- Housing allowance or provision of a parsonage
- Utility allowance
- Salary
- Social Security (FICA)/403 (B)
- Continuing education allowance
- Library allowance
- Pulpit substitute allowance (Sickness and/or vacation)
- Sabbatical (three months encouraged after seven years of service)
- PLI (Pastoral Leadership Institute)
- MAP (Ministry Applied Practice) West Coast - for newly ordained pastors

The Pastor's Family Time

The pastor has the same God-given responsibilities toward his wife and family as does every Christian. It is essential that there be regularly scheduled time set aside each week for this purpose.

There should also be a definite amount of annual vacation time authorized that the pastor and his family can count on and plan to use as they wish.

Evaluation of the Pastor's Needs

An important ingredient in the congregation/pastor relationship is to fix responsibility for an annual evaluation of the pastor's needs and that of his family. The evaluation should include recommendations to the Budget Committee for appropriate revisions in each of the elements that relate to the financial support provided the pastor. He should participate in the evaluation and furnish data regarding expenses. Responsibility for initiating the evaluation and preparing recommendations could be placed with the Board of Elders since this board has a close and continuing working relationship with the pastor.

References

There are a number of helpful references to serve as a guide to the Call Committee and congregation in preparing the information referred to in this Section. The references below are

limited to those that must normally be secured from the Synod, the Pacific Southwest District or the Federal Internal Revenue Service.

- LCMS Concordia Plan Services (888-927-7526)
- LCMS Tax and General Information Bulletin
- Pacific Southwest District Salary & Allowance Guideline (www.psd-lcms.org)
- Church and Clergy Finance Newsletter
- IRS Publication -- Your Federal Income Tax
- IRS Publication -- Social Security for Members of the Clergy Religious Workers

APPENDIX P
Background Checks

(content forthcoming)

APPENDIX Q

Communications Samples

Communications samples are available online at:
www.psd-lcms.org/call-manual-appdix