



CALL PROCESS

for the
Central / Southern Illinois Synod
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The following is a general outline of the call process for a pastor in the Central / Southern Illinois Synod. Local circumstances may require variations.

1. The pastor resigns from his/her current call from the congregation.
 2. Congregational president contacts the synod office to determine interim ministry needs and to discuss the appointment of an interim pastor.
 3. The congregational secretary certifies to the bishop the accuracy and completeness of the congregational membership records.
 4. The bishop appoints an Interim Pastor, subject to the approval of the Congregation Council.
 5. After the resigning pastor's ministry with the congregation has ended, Synod staff liaison meets with the Congregation Council to introduce the call process, including participating in discussing pastoral priorities, congregational emphasis, explaining specifically the Ministry Site Profile and the Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context.
 6. Congregation Council completes the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and the Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context. The Congregation Council and the person serving as the Reference submit the forms online. Once submitted, the forms are available to synod staff for review and activation.
 7. The Congregation Council sends hard copies of additional congregational information (as indicated on the "Documentation Check List"), to the synod office.
 8. A Call Committee is elected or appointed in accordance with the congregation's constitution.
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9. Synod staff liaison meets with Call Committee to discuss committee responsibilities and to coach on effective interviewing.
 10. The bishop nominates potential pastor(s) to be considered by the Call Committee. All nominees are confidential to the Call Committee at this point. Please do not share the name or any other information about the nominee beyond the Call Committee.
 11. The Call Committee interviews nominee(s) and may arrange to hear them preach.
 - a. The Call Committee is responsible for at least one interview with each nominee. The initial interview may be a conference call or video conference interview. Synod staff liaison may help to arrange neutral preaching point, if that is desired.
 - b. If the Call Committee declines to continue with a nominee, the Call Committee should release a nominee from the call process in writing or by phone immediately after making that decision. The Call Committee should let the synod staff liaison know immediately when a nominee is being released from the call process. Once a nominee is released by the Call Committee, that person normally may not be reconsidered. If the Call Committee decides not to recommend any current nominee to the Congregation Council, the synod staff liaison will contact the Call Committee Chair to discern how best to move the process forward again.
 - c. The Call Committee may choose one nominee to recommend to the Congregation Council.
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12. The recommended nominee's Rostered Leader Profile and other information are shared with Congregation Council. The nominee's name is confidential to the Congregation Council at this point. The Congregation Council meets and interviews the nominee, discusses the proposed salary/benefits package with the nominee, and votes on whether to recommend the nominee to the congregation.
 - a. If the Congregation Council decides not to recommend to the congregation the current nominee, the synod staff liaison contacts the Call Committee Chair to discern how best to move the process forward again.
 - b. The Congregation Council may vote to recommend the nominee to the congregation for a call prior to the nominee indicating that the proposed salary/benefits package would be acceptable if the call were to be extended and accepted. But a congregational meeting should not be scheduled or announced without the nominee's prior agreement that the proposed salary/benefits package would be acceptable. In other words, we do not want a congregational meeting set up before we know that an agreement has been reached on financial considerations; and that ministry considerations determine whether the nominee accepts or declines the call.
13. The Congregation Council arranges for the nominee to meet congregation members in an informal setting that may include devotional worship time led by the nominee. We do not advise that the nominee to preach at regular worship of the calling congregation.
14. The Congregation Council sets a date for a congregational meeting and calls the meeting according to the congregation's constitution. [The Congregation Council immediately informs the synod office of the date and time of the congregational call meeting.](#)
15. Prior to the meeting, the bishop sends "Letter of Call" and "Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor" documents to the council president.
16. The bishop or the bishop's representative attends the congregational vote meeting, if the congregation or the bishop requests this.
17. The congregation votes. A 2/3 majority of those present and voting is required to call a pastor.
18. The Congregational Council notifies the bishop and the nominee of the results of the congregational meeting, the day of the congregational meeting.
19. Congregational leaders sign the "Letter of Call", and complete and sign the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor." They then forward these documents to the synod office for the bishop's signature.
20. The synod office forwards the "Letter of Call" and "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor" to the nominee.
21. Within 30 days of the vote, the nominee accepts or declines the call.
22. If nominee accepts call, he/she and the Congregation Council establish a starting date and, with the bishop, schedule an installation date.
23. If nominee declines call, the process begins with new nominee(s) at step 11.
24. The Call Committee disbands following the acceptance of a call.

For additional information contact:

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