

Five Sources of Potential Pastoral Nominees

When a congregation is looking for its next pastor, Bishop Roth and the Central/Southern Illinois Synod staff work hard to find a pastor whose gifts and passions will help the congregation faithfully carry out God's mission. Two factors that make this task more challenging are:

- 1) More pastors are reaching retirement age and are retiring; and
- 2) Fewer students are entering seminary to study to become pastors.

Because there is a decreasing pool of pastors who are available to serve, in some cases, it may seem like congregations are waiting a long time before they receive the names of potential pastoral nominees. In a continuing effort to provide congregations with the names of prospective pastors, the synod routinely uses the following five sources of potential pastoral nominees:

- 1) All pastors who desire to enter into the call process complete and submit a **Rostered Leader Profile (RLP)**. On the RLP, pastors indicate their preferences for specific synods in which they would like to serve. When pastors indicate that the Central/Southern Illinois Synod is one of their synods of preference and their gifts and competencies are a good fit for one or more congregations in our synod who are ready to interview nominees, a conversation and/or an interview with that pastor is usually scheduled as soon as possible. NOTE: The ELCA has 65 synods and the Central/Southern Illinois Synod is not always a synod of preference.
- 2) Once a pastor has completed an RLP, it is made available to synod staff who have oversight of the call process. As synod staff read the RLPs, consideration may also be given to those who indicate a desire to serve in a congregational context in a neighboring synod that is similar to a congregation in our synod who is looking for a pastor. For example, a pastor may indicate a preference to serve in a rural setting in Iowa or Nebraska; or in a larger congregation in northern Illinois. If the interests and gifts of the pastor fit a congregation in our synod, synod staff may contact that pastor to see if he/she would be open to serving in one of the congregations in central or southern Illinois.
- 3) Through the Call Committee Chair, congregations may suggest the name of a potential nominee that they would like to interview, to synod staff. The synod staff will report back to the Call Committee Chair on the potential nominee's availability for nomination. The process is as follows:
 - a) The Call Committee Chair submits the name of the potential nominee to the synod staff.
 - b) If the potential nominee has already submitted an RLP, a synod staff member will review the RLP and contact the pastor to determine if that person is interested in considering a call to that congregation and/or our synod.
 - c) If the potential nominee has not submitted an RLP and serves in the C/SIS, the bishop will contact him/her to see if that person is open to considering a call at this time.
 - d) If the potential nominee has not submitted an RLP and serves in a different synod, the bishop will contact the potential nominee's bishop for permission to talk to him/her.

- e) In every case, a potential nominee must complete and submit an RLP for review by synod staff, before a nomination can be made. The RLP is reviewed and an interview is conducted to determine the pastor's gifts and passions for ministry. In all situations, the most crucial question for synod staff is: Is this pastor a good nominee for this congregation?
 - f) Because of the nature of the call process, it is the responsibility of the synod to contact potential pastoral nominees before the name of a nominee is forwarded to the Call Committee. It is the responsibility of the Call Committee to contact potential pastoral nominees after their names have been forwarded to them by the synod. The Call Committee does **not** contact any potential pastoral nominee directly, until that pastor has been nominated to the congregation by the bishop.
- 4) In some instances, pastors may hear that a particular congregation is looking for a pastor and may contact the synod office to inquire about the congregation. If, after reviewing the pastor's RLP and conducting an interview, it is determined that the pastor, who is making the inquiry, and the congregation are well suited for each other, a nomination may be forwarded to the Call Committee.
- 5) In some cases, because the bishop is familiar with synod congregations and pastors, the bishop may ask a pastor if he/she is interested in considering a call to a particular congregation. The pastor always has the right to say "Yes" or "No". Pastors are not coerced into considering particular calls. If the pastor says "Yes", the RLP and other necessary documents need to be completed before a nomination can be made.

Please know that the bishop and synod staff are doing everything in their power to provide you and your congregation with the names of quality prospective pastoral nominees. We thank you for your understanding throughout the call process and we invite your prayers for all of those who are involved in the process.