

GUIDELINES FOR PASTOR OR OTHER ROSTERED LEADER IN SEARCH OF CALL

The following guidelines have been prepared to give direction as you move through the call process in the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Included are the steps to be followed and basic information that may be of help as you seek to discern the leading of the Spirit.

1. If you are serving in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, let the Bishop know of your openness to another call. If you are serving in another synod and are interested in being called in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ask your bishop to forward your signed mobility forms to our Bishop. We must have clearance from your bishop before we may be in contact with you.
2. If you are serving in the Lower Susquehanna Synod and would like to transfer to another synod, indicate on the *ELCA Rostered Leader Profile* the synods you are interested in. You may not be in contact with another synod without clearance from your synodical bishop.
3. Complete the *Rostered Leader Profile* obtained from the ELCA website. Prepare it prayerfully and honestly. Mobility forms that are not submitted thru the ELCA Mobility Database website will not be accepted!
4. If you are interested in being considered for a specific call in this synod, contact the bishop and/or the appropriate assistant to the bishop and convey this information.
5. If/when the bishop recommends you to a Call Committee, you will receive a copy of the *Mission Site Profile*. Within a few days after receipt of the profile, contact the assistant to the bishop and indicate whether or not you would like to be a candidate in this particular setting for ministry.
6. Once you have made this contact, your mobility forms will be taken to the Call Committee.
7. You will be contacted by the chair of the Call Committee. Because the committee is to request recommendations from your references before interviewing you, your initial interview may not take place until a few weeks after the committee has received your *Rostered Leader Profile*.
8. Before your interview you should receive from the Call Committee a packet of additional information about the congregation and community. In return, you may be asked to provide additional materials for the Call Committee, e.g., copies of newsletters, bulletins, annual reports, sermon tape.
9. The initial interview with the Call Committee is to be with you alone. Your spouse, if you have one, is not to be included.
10. During the interview, be open and honest about your gifts for ministry, your growth, and your expectations. Expect the same openness and honesty from the Call Committee and council, especially concerning their expectations and areas in which they have a special need for leadership.
11. After the initial interview, if the Call Committee wants to continue with you in the process, it will arrange to observe you leading worship and preaching. If you are a pastor of this synod, the

committee will come to the congregation you are serving. They will inform you a day or two before they come. If you are from out of synod or are a first-call candidate, we will arrange for the use of a congregation as a neutral site in which you may preach and lead worship. The synod will not arrange for a neutral site for pastors serving in the Lower Susquehanna Synod.

12. A second interview may be requested by either the Call Committee or you. At this interview, your spouse, if you have one, may be included.
13. A second observation of worship leadership may be arranged, if so desired.
14. At any time after the initial interview, the Call Committee or you may end the process. If the Call Committee drops you from consideration, it is to inform you by letter and is to include the specific reasons why it is not continuing with you. If you withdraw from the process, you are to inform the committee in writing and include specific reasons why. A copy of this letter is to be sent to the assistant to the bishop.
15. After the Call Committee has voted unanimously to recommend you to the Congregation Council, you will participate in an interview with the council. At, just prior to, or within a day or two after this interview, compensation and benefits will be discussed. The council and you must agree on compensation and benefits before the congregation is informed of the meeting to vote on calling you.
16. The date of the call vote is scheduled according to the convenience of the congregation and you.
17. During the afternoon or evening prior to the call vote, the congregation will host a gathering at which you will have the opportunity to meet the members and they will have the opportunity to meet your family and you. At some point during this gathering, the congregation and you will engage in mutual conversation using a question and answer format. You may want to give a short presentation about your expectations and vision for ministry.
18. Prior to the call vote, you will preside at worship and preach.
19. Following worship, your family and you will leave the nave and go to the room previously designated as the place where you can await the results of the vote. The synod representative will inform you of the vote tally before announcing it to the congregation.
20. If the vote is positive one (two-thirds majority affirmative), you will be invited to speak to the congregation. Although you have thirty days in which to respond to the call, you may accept or reject it at this meeting. You will need to announce also the date the call is effective, i.e., your starting date.
21. Once you accept the call, you will receive a paper entitled "Steps Following Acceptance of a Call." Please follow these steps carefully.

Other Information

1. Because in the Lower Susquehanna Synod Call Committees receive mobility materials for one candidate at a time, you may be a candidate in only one call process at a time.
2. Do not visit or worship with a congregation in which you are interested in being a candidate. Driving by “to take a look” is appropriate, but going inside the building is not.
3. You must contact the Call Committee or council in writing when you are withdrawing from the call process. The bishop’s office will not do it for you. Please mail a copy of your letter to the assistant to the bishop.
4. If you have indicated an interest in being considered for a call by a particular congregation and the bishop has not recommended you, you may or may not receive a reason for not being recommended. The bishop has the dual responsibility of caring for congregations and rostered leaders while seeking appropriate matching for the sake of effective ministry.
5. If during the call process you are serving in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, submit your mileage to the calling congregation for reimbursement. If you are serving in another synod, submit the receipts or your lodging, meals, and transportation costs to the assistant to the bishop. The synod will reimburse you directly and bill the congregation for its share. You are to be reimbursed whether or not you receive/accept the call. If your spouse and/or children travel with you for the council interview or the call vote, clarify beforehand with the council how the cost will be covered. The synod does not share in covering these costs.
6. If you supply in a congregation that is in the call process, you are **not eligible** to be considered for call to that congregation.
7. If you are serving as interim pastor for a congregation, you are **not eligible** to be considered for call to that congregation.
8. Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers are not free to contact pastors or congregations concerning a new call nor are pastors or congregations free to make direct contact with these rostered leaders. As with the call process for pastors, all inquiries are to be made directly to the bishop and his/her staff.
9. Remember that what happens in the call process is **confidential** until the council recommends a candidate to the congregation. Please do not discuss your candidacy with colleagues in the ministry. Word travels quickly. Call Committees, who are charged with confidentiality, become concerned when they hear “rumors” about the identity of candidates in the community and/or congregation.