



SECTION 3

The Call Committee Is Selected

Readiness to Enter the Call Process

The decision that a congregation is ready to move forward into the call process is a mutual decision of the bishop and the Congregation Council. The decision will be based upon the sense of health and strength of the congregation. Often this will involve the completion of a ministry assessment and/or a conflict resolution process. When the bishop and the council agree that the congregation is ready to move into the call process, a representative of the Office of the Bishop will meet with the council to review the process for forming a Call Committee.

The Role of the Call Committee

The role of a Call Committee is of critical importance as it leads the congregation through the process of discerning God's will for this congregation and its mission. The committee is given the responsibility and privilege of interviewing the potential pastoral candidates and selecting a pastor to present to the council for recommendation to the congregation. This is a holy task that is to be done prayerfully and carefully. It recognizes that the church's call to a pastor to serve as its shepherd is much different than a hiring process.

The foremost question for the Call Committee in its beginning is: What is the mission, ministry and future to which God is beckoning this congregation? In other words, what is God's will for this congregation? The Call Committee leads the congregation in a self-study and the development of a mission profile described more fully in Section 5 of this manual.

When the profile is complete and a call list is prepared by the Office of the Bishop, the Call Committee's focus becomes: Is this the person God desires to shepherd this congregation in its particular mission and setting?

Process for Forming a Call Committee

The congregation's constitution provides a process for electing or appointing a Call Committee of usually six to eight persons. Sometimes there are provisions for selecting alternates to serve should a member of the Call Committee become unable to serve. The Congregation Council will carefully review procedures for selecting members to serve on the Call Committee.

Forming a Call Committee is a task of discernment. The Call Committee should be as representative of the whole congregation as is possible, giving consideration to the inclusion of newer members and longer term members, older and younger members (perhaps a youth), ethnic diversity, and a balance of female and male members. Persons who represent various ministries and programs of the congregation would be an important factor in the selection process.

Included at the end of this Section 3 is a most important resource entitled ***Guidelines for Choosing Call Committee Members***. The council will want to review it carefully and share this information with all who are involved in the selection of nominees for the Call Committee. This is an important selection process and it is never wise to simply ask for volunteers to serve on a Call Committee. It should also be noted that if the call process is for an associate or assistant pastor, the senior pastor serves as a member of the Call Committee.

When the Call Committee has been appointed or elected, the council notifies the Office of the Bishop and provides the name and contact information for the committee's chairperson, or, an initial contact person on the Call Committee until the committee selects its chairperson. A copy of a service for the ***Installation of a Call Committee with Prayers for a Shepherd*** is included at the end of this Section 3.

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Guidelines for Choosing Members of the Call Committee

Those responsible for selecting persons as nominees for the Call Committee have a very important task and should prayerfully approach their work seeking God's guidance. The constitution should be reviewed to determine any restrictions relating to the number of persons to serve on the committee, the method of election or appointment, whether alternates will be selected, and the nominating process that may be required. It is never wise to simply solicit volunteers for a Call Committee. Rather, a careful and thoughtful discernment process should be followed to ensure that the best possible candidates are considered and selected to serve.

General characteristics and expectations of ALL persons who serve on the Call Committee include the following:

Strong evidence of faith - Faithful worship participation should be a prerequisite for any person chosen to serve on the Call Committee. These people should be persons of prayer who will faithfully and carefully seek to discern God's will for this congregation.

Active in the life of the congregation - Call Committee members should be involved the life and ministry of the congregation beyond worship, and familiar with its programs and activities. They will represent the importance of these ministries to potential pastors.

Positive and enthusiastic spirit - The Call Committee will represent the congregation to the pastoral candidates during the interview process. They should have a deep sense of the vision and mission of the congregation. This is not a place for chronic complainers.

Faithful stewards - Those who serve on the Call Committee should recognize that all that they have and are belongs to God. As good stewards, they are persons who share their gifts of time, talent and treasures in the ministry of God's Kingdom.

Commitment and follow-through - The Call Committee is charged with a significant responsibility on behalf of the whole congregation. Meetings may be frequent and a willingness to share and participate faithfully in the work of the committee is critical.

Further, the Call Committee should be as representative of the whole congregation as is possible. Special consideration should be given to including:

- Newer members and longer term members;
- Older and younger members, perhaps including a youth;
- Ethnic and cultural diversity;
- Balance of female and male members;
- Representation of various ministries and programs of the congregation.

Special notes:

1. Congregation members who are also employees or staff members of this congregation should not serve on the Call Committee because of potential conflict of interest.
2. Rostered persons, active or retired, or their spouses should not serve on a Call Committee. There are other ways for these folks to share their input. An exception is that the senior pastor serves on the Call Committee to call an additional rostered leader.

3. It is not necessary for any council members to serve on the Call Committee, and the maximum should be one or two; the council president should not serve on the Call Committee.

0501

Installation of a Call Committee with Prayers for a Shepherd

P = *Presiding Minister* A = *Assisting Minister* R = *Call Committee* C = *Congregation*

The order follows the Creed and replaces the Prayer of the Church. The congregation may be seated.

P. Sisters and brothers in Christ, God has called us to a new time in our life as _____ Church. It is a time for reflection and prayer, a time for self-examination and seeking, a time for expectation and hope. We need a shepherd to lead our flock, and God has promised that he will provide a shepherd for us.

A. The following persons have been appointed/elected to serve as the Call Committee of our church.

As the names are read, those persons present come forward to the chancel.

P. Dear friends, you have been duly *appointed/elected* to serve as the Call Committee for this congregation in order to seek a pastor to shepherd and lead us.

Sacred scripture guides us in our task, to seek a pastor who strives for righteousness and godliness, faith and love, endurance and gentleness -- a pastor who is a servant as Christ himself was a servant -- a pastor who is not domineering or quarrelsome, but who leads with care and concern for God's flock -- a pastor who is filled with the Holy Spirit and a trustworthy steward of the mysteries of God.

Yours is a spiritual endeavor on behalf of this congregation. Are you willing therefore to be open to the Spirit's leading, and, by prayer and holy conversation, to undertake this calling to seek a shepherd for us?

R. Yes, by the help of God.

P. Will you be diligent in your seeking, careful in your listening, purposeful in your questioning, and respectful in all that you do?

R. Yes, by the help of God.

P. Will you seek the Lord's guidance through Holy Scripture and prayer and in your deliberations with your fellow committee members until you are brought to one mind and one will in Christ and have chosen God's shepherd for us?

R. Yes, by the help of God.

All stand.

A. Let us pray for those who are being installed today and for our church as we seek the Lord's guidance during this special time.

Almighty God, you alone are the great Shepherd of the sheep, and we turn to you to lead and guide us in all things. Our trust and our hope is in you.

C. You are the way, the truth and the life.

- A. As you have raised up faithful servants of your holy word to tend your flock in each time and place, send us now, we pray, a faithful shepherd to lead our flock.
C. Send us a shepherd, O Lord.
- A. Send us a shepherd of goodness and grace, of strength and faith, of righteousness in your sight.
C. Send us a shepherd, O Lord.
- A. Send us a shepherd to comfort and care for us, to preach your word, to teach our children, to baptize and commune, to marry and counsel, to visit the sick and lay to rest, to guide us and pray for us.
C. Send us a shepherd, O Lord.
- A. Give us a holy patience in this time of our seeking, a patience that trusts in you for our present care, knowing that you will bring our good work to fulfillment in your time.
C. O Lord, hear our prayer.
- A. Keep us faithful in mission, regular in worship, responsible in stewardship, mindful of the needy, and diligent in prayer.
C. O Lord, hear our prayer.
- A. Fill us all with your Holy Spirit and magnify our gifts of discernment, that we might follow your will and leading into a future yet unknown.
C. O Lord, hear our prayer.
- A. Bless those who are especially called to serve on the Call Committee. Give them the gifts they need to seek and find the pastor of your own nurturing, the shepherd of your own choosing, that we might be fed by your holy word and sacraments and grow in faith and love and ministry.
C. O Lord, hear our prayer.
- P. All these things we ask, O God, with whatever else we need, in the name of him who is the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.
C. Amen

The minister addresses the Call Committee.

- P. I now declare that you have been installed as the Call Committee of _____ Church.
 May God bring your good work to fulfillment and grace in Christ's name.
C. Amen
- P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C. And also with you.

*All share the peace of the Lord.
 The liturgy continues as is customary after the peace.*