

Appendix B Call Process Checklist

- Step 1:** Notify the District President, the Congregational Mission and Ministry Facilitator, the Regional Vice-President, and the Circuit Visitor as soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs

This should be done:

- In writing (Email is sufficient)
- As soon as you become aware of the vacancy
- By 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
- 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. If so, it should be followed.
- 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 CEF’s MissionInSite for robust tools to gather this information.
 - Your Congregation – The CMMF will assist you in conducting the Congregational Profile survey. In addition, the Call committee is encouraged to interview the staff and vital congregational leaders.
 - 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. That will guide the nomination process and aid the District in finding appropriate candidates.
- Complete the “Self-Study Tool for Congregations,” at minimum, “Appendix E.
- Consider the circumstances related to an assistant or associate pastor who wants to be considered a lead/senior pastor role. See Appendix F.
- Consult your CMMF for advice and assistance with your congregational self-study.

Step 6: Receive the Congregational self-study and pastoral profile results from the CMMF.

- The CMMF will present the results of the Congregational inventory and the pastoral profile to the congregation in an open informational forum.
- The CMMF will prepare a summary report distributed to the congregation.
- Both documents will be used to identify pastoral candidates who are most likely to possess the proper leadership style, ministry values, and skills to work well within the congregation’s culture and community environment.

Step 7: Receive Congregational Nominations for the Office of Pastor

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

Step 8: Forward all 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 qualified candidates to the Call list, evaluate nominees, and compile comprehensive information on them to provide to the Call committee for evaluation.

Step 9: 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 must NOT 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 will be destroyed.
- If a name is not included on the Call list, it is only because the District President has 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 10: 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 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 letter is also acceptable.
 - Send detailed information for those wanting to engage, 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, 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 a 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 11: Establishment of compensation and Call document preparation

- Before the Call meeting, the appropriate board or committee should establish the compensation package, laying out the basic parameters. 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 michigandistrict.org for salary guidelines.
- Call documents should be completed before the Call meeting (other than the called pastor's information), and reviewed by the Circuit Visitor.

- Step 12: Establish the date and procedure for the Call Meeting**
 - Establish a date for the Call meeting and publish it to the congregation, along with recommended names and 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 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.
 - After 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 contacting him.
- Step 13: 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.
 - 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 14: Notify the District President that the Call has been sent**
 - Phone or email the news to the CMMF and the District President's office.
- Step 15: 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 recommend 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 16: 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.