Call Committee

Information Packet

FOR THE

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

CONGREGATION

A Matter for Prayer

The selection of the Call Committee is an important first step in the pastoral call process. We encourage everyone at Immanuel to begin praying now.

Pray for God's wisdom and guidance.
Pray for the people who will be nominated and elected.
Pray for unity within our congregation.
Pray for the pastor God is preparing to serve Immanuel.

Most importantly, let us approach this process with confidence that **Christ is Lord of His Church** and that our responsibility is to faithfully seek His will.

> *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."*
> *— James 1:5*

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT CALL AND MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

(from the NALC Call Process Manual)

Lutherans believe that God calls each of us to discipleship within the Body of Christ to save lost sinners, to witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to serve those in need in our world as a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ. Within the Body of Christ, all are called to mission and ministry in Jesus' name.

Our call of vocation is how God wishes to use us and gives us gifts and blessings to fulfill our calling. We may be called to minister to the poor, to feed the hungry, to lead music in worship, to sing in the choir, or to serve as a Sunday school teacher. Our calling or vocation may also be to serve God as spouse, parent, or neighbor. Our "job" may or may not be our particular vocation. Our job may be an instrument God provides for us to fulfill our calling in our daily lives.

At the same time, God calls certain persons from the Body of Christ to serve as ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament. As Lutherans, we believe that God calls such persons, and the call is affirmed by the Church. In the Scriptures, we see repeatedly that God calls persons to serve Him.

We believe that it is God who controls the call process of a pastor, and the congregation seeks to discern God's will through prayer, interviews, conversation, and finally, the vote of the congregation. The congregation votes to extend a call to a pastor, recognizing that this is the person God intends to be the next pastor of this congregation.

This is why the congregational call process and the discernment of the pastor available for call must involve prayer, attention to God's Word, and a yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Pastoral Call Committee Information

What Will the Call Committee Do?

The Call Committee will work on behalf of the congregation throughout the pastoral call process. Its work will include:

- Seeking God's guidance through prayer and Scripture.
- Becoming familiar with the needs, mission, ministry, and future direction of Immanuel.
- Helping identify the qualities and gifts that will be important in our next pastor.
- Reviewing information about pastoral candidates.
- Participating in conversations and/or interviews with potential candidates.
- Carefully and prayerfully discerning which candidate may best serve Immanuel's ministry.
- Bringing a recommendation to the congregation according to our established call process.
- Communicating appropriately with the congregation throughout the process.
- Maintaining confidentiality when dealing with sensitive candidate information.

The committee should approach this work with **prayer, humility, openness, careful listening, and a willingness to seek God's will rather than simply advocating for personal preferences.**

What Qualities Are We Looking For?

A person serving on the Call Committee should be someone who:

- Has a strong and growing faith in Jesus Christ.
- Is able to attend regular meetings locally and not virtually.
- Is not an officer of the Council
- Is committed to the mission and ministry of Immanuel Lutheran Church.
- Is prayerful and willing to seek God's guidance throughout the process.
- Is willing to listen carefully to others and consider different perspectives.
- Can work cooperatively with people who may have different opinions.
- Can distinguish personal preferences from the broader needs of the congregation.
- Is able to maintain **confidentiality.**
- Is willing to ask thoughtful questions and carefully evaluate information.
- Can approach pastoral candidates fairly and objectively.
- Is willing to devote the necessary time to meetings, conversations, interviews, prayer, and discernment.
- Is willing to communicate respectfully and appropriately with members of the congregation.
- Can make decisions thoughtfully and prayerfully, even when there are differing opinions within the committee.

We are **not looking for people who all have the same background, personality, or perspective**. A healthy committee will benefit from a variety of gifts, experiences, and perspectives while remaining united in faith and in its desire to serve Immanuel.

What Kind of Commitment Is Involved?

Serving on the Call Committee is a significant responsibility. Members should expect to participate in:

- Regular committee meetings – possibly evenings or weekends.
- Prayer and individual preparation between meetings.
- Reviewing information about potential candidates.
- Interviews or conversations with candidates.
- Discussions regarding the congregation's ministry needs and pastoral priorities.
- Additional meetings or conversations as the call process requires.

The amount of time required cannot be predicted in advance because it will depend upon the candidates available, God's plan for Immanuel and the progress of the call process.

Confidentiality will be especially important. Committee members may receive personal, professional, or other sensitive information about pastoral candidates. Members must be willing to protect that information and follow the confidentiality expectations established by the committee and congregation.

Before You Nominate Someone

Please prayerfully consider:

1. **Does this person have the spiritual maturity and discernment needed for this responsibility?**
2. **Will this person be willing and able to devote the necessary time?**
3. **Can this person listen well and work constructively with others?**
4. **Can this person maintain confidentiality?**
5. **Will this person approach candidates fairly rather than advocating for a predetermined choice?**
6. **Will this person be willing to seek God's direction throughout the process?**

We strongly encourage you to **talk with the person before submitting their name** and make sure they understand the commitment and are willing to serve if elected.

Please do not nominate someone simply because you think they would be a good person for the committee. First, make sure they understand what the responsibility involves and are willing to consider serving.

Call Committee Nomination Process and Election Timeline

October 22 – October 25 (Email announcement and Sunday church announcement)

- **Announce:**
  - Who and what makes a good call committee?
  - Prayerfulness – because God may have the playbook on this.
  - Nomination Process – congregation can make nominations.
  - The council will have the authority and duty to select a balanced slate for the congregation.
  - Extensive duties and time commitment for call committee, etc.
  - This information is being provided so that members can prayerfully consider the responsibility before making a nomination.
- **Transition Steering Team has a summary in the newsletter of goals and visions moving forward.**

November 1 Educational Session with Christian Huntley after worship for those who can attend.

- Transition Team shares brief overview of listening sessions' top findings
- Presentation on Nomination process – congregation submits nominations – council holds special meeting to pick final balanced slate for the election
- Expectations and commitment of call committees – Christian Huntley will attend virtually via Zoom.

November 1: Nominations Open

- Members may submit nominations for eligible members of the congregation who are willing to serve.
- Members are reminded that the final slate to be voted on is determined by the council.
- Nomination form and guidelines prepared by November 1

November 13: Mail 30-day Notice

- Because we are proposing a slight constitutional amendment that allows for a call committee of five (rather than six) and an alternate, we need to send an official 30-day notice.

November 15, 11:00 Nominations close

- All nominations must be submitted by this date. Following the nomination period, nominees will be contacted to confirm their willingness to serve and their eligibility.
- After nominations close, Council will review nominees and select a final slate for the December 13 vote.
- A sample ballot with brief candidate bios will be prepared

November 16 or proposed date for Special Council Meeting to select a final slate

- Council and/or council subcommittee reviews nominations and selects a balanced slate of candidates to present to the congregation in bios and ballot form. The final slate of number TBD to be on the ballot for final selection of five and one alternate.

November 17 Council Meeting

- Approves final slate and mailing of final Notice to congregation with ballot info.
- Agenda as normal
- Set proposed budget for Call Committee
- Budget recommendations for new pastor
- Prepare mailing and example bio for candidates

November 30 Mail

- Bios, Election, official notice of meeting; nomination recommendations; prayers

December 13

Special Congregational Meeting and Election

- Hear Transition Team report summary
- Vote on constitution amendment for a recommended odd number on the Call Committee and an alternate.
- If the amendment passes, congregation will elect five voting members and one alternate to serve on the Call Committee

Additional information about the final candidates and the election procedure will be provided before the congregational meeting.

Determine Guidelines and Formation of Call Committee

From LCMC

Organize the Call Committee

The process of a search starts with prayer and continues with prayer!

- It's not always the "obvious" people who should be on the team.
- Five to seven people is good guideline.
- Include other sharp influencers in the church who have great people and interviewing skills.
- Involve those who have spiritual gifts of wisdom and discernment.
- All members of the call committee should be faithful and committed to the church:
  - ☐ involved in ministry,
  - ☐ faithful in tithing,
  - ☐ demonstrate maturity, and
  - ☐ active in the church for at least one year.
- Cross-section of congregation – if you don't know each other, **spend time getting acquainted**. Nothing is more vital to their proper functioning than learning to trust one another.
- Call Committees have **no place for secret agendas**, hidden reservations, personal backbiting, or power struggles. Pray for Christian unity.
- Understand/explore the conviction that pastors are *called,* not *hired*.
- Appoint chairperson (parliamentary procedure)
- Appoint secretary
- Perhaps appoint someone to manage correspondence, resumes, sermon CDs/Videos
- Acknowledge all correspondence so that candidates know their material has been received. It is a matter of common courtesy to let a candidate know when he or she is no longer under consideration.
- Establish budget for Call Committee (usually done by Church Council).
- Create job description for Pastor (can be done with Church Council).
- Insure **confidentiality** of all conversations, deliberations, and interviews!
- Develop list of possible candidates, gather resumes, etc.
- Develop interview process – generate questions, scenarios. Know the questions you want to ask and the information you want to convey.
- Read resumes and initial recommendations – begin to eliminate
- Arrange telephone/Skype or other video interviews

The questions asked and the conduct of the interview is absolutely critical to the success of a call process. Don't shortchange yourselves by not allowing enough time to develop *singularly* appropriate questions and thoroughly discuss the interview process.

This Call Committee Information Packet has been prepared to help guide the congregation in preparation for nominating and electing a call committee at a special congregation meeting scheduled for Sunday, December 13.

If there are any questions about the process, please bring those questions to the November 1st Educational session or call the church office, 218-546-6010.