



## The Call Process

Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area  
Sowing and Growing Disciples of Jesus

# Congregational Meeting to Call

### Information for the Congregation as It Meets To Call New Leadership

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Whenever a congregational meeting is called to elect a pastor or a lay rostered minister, the constitution requires that certain procedures be followed. This information bulletin offers guidance for the conduct of such meetings.*

### Calling the Meeting

Your constitution will specify how much advance notice must be given and in what format it must come (announcements and/or in writing). Follow the requirements of your constitution exactly.

### A Meeting to Call

A congregational meeting to extend a Letter of Call to a pastor or lay rostered leader is among the most significant actions a congregation can take. It is recommended, therefore, that such a meeting be a specially called meeting (rather than a regular meeting) and that the only item of business on the agenda be the election. Be certain to notify the mission area office of the day and time of the meeting.

### A Parliamentarian

It might be helpful if the president of the congregation sought the help of a respected member of the congregation to serve as parliamentarian. This person is present so that no one can later question the validity of the proceedings. Their task is to help ensure that the election takes place in a manner consistent with the congregation's constitution. In order to do

this, the parliamentarian and congregational president should review the constitution's provisions and discuss the election procedure in advance. In general, the parliamentarian is to pay attention to three items: (1) verify that a quorum is present at the meeting; (2) be certain that the election takes place by secret ballot; and (3) be certain that the required 2/3 vote for election occurs. Please note that no absentee or proxy voting is permitted and that there is no need following the election for a motion "to make it unanimous." Following the vote on the Letter of Call, a motion on the compensation package must also pass—by a simple majority.

### Notification

After the meeting the congregational president should phone the candidate to share the results. The president should also inform the Bishop's Office and send to the Bishop the completed Letter of Call and Compensation form (the "Green Sheet").

### Helpful Information

The following is recommended to you unless the congregation's constitution requires something to the contrary:

- The Call Committee may only recommend one candidate to the Congregational Council; the Congregational Council must vote by 2/3 to recommend that candidate to the congregation.

- The date, time, and purpose of the meeting ("...to vote on extending a Letter of Call to \_\_\_\_\_") should be set by the Congregational Council and announced to the congregation in accordance with the provisions in the congregation's constitution. A meeting to elect a pastor or lay rostered minister should be the only item of business on the agenda of this kind of congregational meeting.
- The congregational president arranges to have a parliamentarian assist with the planning and conduct of the meeting.
- The congregational meeting is chaired by the chief lay officer. After opening prayer and the announcement of the procedure for election, it should be determined that a quorum is present (consult the constitution). The chair of the Call Committee should then present the information on the candidate and offer the motion to call the candidate. No substitute motion is in order since that would violate the stated purpose of the meeting.
- Voting on the motion must be done by secret ballot (yes or no) with a 2/3 majority of the votes cast needed for issuing the Letter of Call.
- In the event that the vote does not achieve the 2/3 majority, the meeting is adjourned. The chief lay officer and the chair of the Call Committee should contact the Bishop's Office to determine the next step in the process.
- If a 2/3 majority is achieved and election has taken place, the congregation may then consider the compensation package. Care should be taken that the discussion about calling a pastor is separated from discussion concerning compensation; these are two separate discussions and actions. The Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor form, also known as the "Green Sheet" should be prepared prior to the congregational meeting so that the compensation can be presented.

Adoption of a motion regarding compensation requires a simple majority of votes cast. The motion on compensation can simply state that "...the compensation [including cash salary, housing allowance and social security allowance] for Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ be set at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year, plus pension and medical benefits." Note that this resolution need not include any reference to other allowances (automobile, continuing education, professional expenses) since these are not a part of compensation but a part of the congregation's administrative expense (i.e. reimbursements).

- The Letter of Call form and the Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor form should be completed, signed by the chief lay officer and secretary, sealed with the congregation's seal (if available), and forwarded to the Bishop's Office as soon as possible. The Bishop will forward the Letter of Call and Compensation form to the candidate, after attesting the validity of the call with his signature.

### Remember to Say Thanks

If the vote goes well, start planning on a public way to say thanks to the Transition Team and Call Committee for their hard work. Plan, perhaps, to recognize their work in a worship service, or by prayer, or in a certificate of appreciation, or a reception. Show them that you are grateful for their diligence!

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#### Information Bulletin #5

To the Congregational President