

## **CALL COMMITTEE GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LUTHERAN CHURCHES**

The Constitution of The AALC sets forth the following parameters delineating the Call process for congregations and pastors of The AALC. Article VI states:

- 06.02.02.01.** The local congregation calls its own pastor, owns its property, provides for its maintenance, and conducts its own program.
- 06.02.02.02.** The American Association of Lutheran Churches has no claim to a local congregation's property in any way whatsoever, unless the local congregation specifically deeds such property to The American Association of Lutheran Churches.
- 6.02.02.05.01.** To insure faithful adherence to the doctrines as confessed by this Association (see Article III). Congregations shall call pastors from The AALC Roster of Pastors or, in the case of an interim pastor who is not on The AALC Roster of Pastors, the same must be interviewed by the Regional Pastor and/or someone appointed by him to determine whether the pastor subscribes to the doctrine confessed by the Association (see Article III).

The Office of the Presiding Pastor of The AALC, to assist congregations in this Call process requests that the following steps be taken by the congregation:

- A. Please notify the Regional Pastor and the Office of the Presiding Pastor when a pastor resigns.
- B. The Regional Pastor will schedule an exit interview with the outgoing pastor and the congregation's council (board). He will assist you with beginning the Call process.
- C. Notify the Presiding Pastor's Office (260) 452-3213 with the name of the Call Committee chairman after this person is chosen.
- D. You will be sent a Congregational Profile and Pastor's Profile to be filled out and returned to the Presiding Pastor's Office. After this is received the Call process can begin.
- E. The Presiding Pastor in coordination with the Regional Pastor will recommend to the Call Committee names of possible candidates. If the Call Committee wishes to suggest names for consideration, please call the AALC National Office with this list. The Presiding Pastor makes it a practice to personally contact the men considered and inquire if they wish to have their names listed for Call. This is done before he recommends any candidates, thus eliminating those who do not wish to be considered, so that the Call Committee will only expend its efforts on viable candidates.
- F. Names and resumes will be sent to the congregation from the Presiding Pastor's Office. The congregation then may proceed to consider those recommended. It is the responsibility of the congregations to pay for travel expenses incurred if an interview is conducted. In the past some congregations have used telephone interviews with pastors to save travel expenses. Others have asked the Pastor to come and preach on a Sunday and meet with the Call Committee. If this is not possible, a time to meet with the Call Committee could be worked out on a mutually agreeable occasion. The congregation always has the option to reject a name outright as well as ask for additional names.

- G. Regardless of the procedure used, it is essential that the Call Committee Chairman, or his representative, telephone the recommended pastor, upon receiving the resume to inform him that they are considering him. It is also absolutely necessary that all the pastors whose names are recommended be notified either by phone or by letter, if they are not being considered any further. This should be done as soon as the decision is made about them.
- H. Please keep the Presiding Pastor's Office informed during this procedure so that this office can better assist in the Call process (260) 452-3213.
- I. When the Congregation has voted to call a candidate as its Pastor, it communicates this decision via its Letter of Call. The AALC Letter of Call is to be used for this purpose. This specifies the particular responsibilities of the Office of Holy Ministry to which the Pastor is called as well as provisions promised by the congregation to enable him to fulfill them. The congregations may use the resource; *Caring for Those Who Care for You*, to determine to specific base salary, housing allowance and other provisions for its Letter of Call. In addition, the congregation may also consult with: 1) the local district guidelines of the Lutheran church – Missouri Synod; 2) the local synodical guidelines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); and 3) the local public school guidelines for compensation of a teacher or official with a master's degree. It is hoped that these resources will reflect sensitivity to the economic realities which mark the locale of the congregation itself. Our desire is to enable the pastor to serve full time without needing to supplement his family's income otherwise. *"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain,' 'The laborer deserves his wages'"* (I Timothy 5:17-18).
- J. When the Letter of Call has been completed, it should be signed by officers representing the congregation and, in the case of a Letter of one called to be an Associate or Assistant Pastor, by the Senior Pastor as well.
- K. The Letter of Call is then mailed to the Office of the Presiding Pastor for attestation. If any provisions are unclear or further specification is needed, the Presiding Pastor may contact the congregation before The AALC seal is added to the Letter and it is sent on to the candidate. The pastoral candidate is to contact the congregation to verify receipt of the Letter of Call and is given four weeks prayerfully to consider his decision. Clarification of its provisions should have been made by the Presiding Pastor previously. Neither the congregation nor the candidate should use this time to negotiate specific terms of the Call, and the candidate's decision is to be either "yea" or "nay."
- L. Once the Letter of Call has been accepted, the Call Committee's task is accomplished. The Pastor under Call is to notify the Office of the Presiding Pastor who in consultation with the Regional Pastor will arrange for the service of installation with the congregation.

*"Let all things be done decently and in order."*

-I Corinthians 14:40