

## **FAQs #2 (“Frequently Asked Questions”) about the pastoral transition process**

*During this time of pastoral transition, the following is the second in a series of “Frequently Asked Questions” (and answers) to provide additional assurance about the Call Process. For the first edition of the FAQs and all of the information available to date, see “Messiah’s Pastoral Transition” webpage at: <https://www.messiahchurchfairview.org/Transition.aspx>.*

Q: What is the purpose of a “Call Committee”?

A: The purpose of the Call Committee is to identify the candidate who is best suited to accompany Messiah’s congregation into God’s future. One of the first objectives of the committee will be to develop a profile or description of our congregation and the type of pastor we are seeking, for which we have a good start. Just as the Transition Team’s work with our original survey and focus groups gathered important information, so has the discernment process. Combined, this important information will allow the Call Committee to proceed efficiently and effectively.

The work of the call committee is that of discernment. Therefore, their work must be done prayerfully, and the committee members must be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in identifying someone who best fulfills our needs and whose needs are also fulfilled by our particular congregation. Once selected and installed, the committee is given the authority to act in the best interests of the congregation to identify the candidate that is ultimately voted on by the entire congregation.

Q: Who serves on the Call Committee?

A: Messiah’s constitution specifies that “a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council.” The composition of the committee should reflect the diversity of the congregation. Members will vary by age, gender, length of time as a member, levels of involvement in the congregation’s mission, ministry areas (worship, music, youth, education, social ministry, care and visitation, etc.), and attendance at worship. When the pastor we identify is eventually called and installed, the Call Committee’s work is officially completed. If you are interested in being considered as a candidate for the call committee, please contact any member of our church council.

Q: What is a “call”?

A: On the basis of our Lutheran theology, a pastor is called, not hired, to serve a congregation. The call process is not the same as the hiring process in other parts of society. A call is one element in the Church’s seeking and following God’s movement into the future. The call process is not a pageant, in which contestants present themselves to their best advantage so they will be the winners. The Lutheran call process is unique because it is an effort to discern what God wants for the local congregation *and* for the whole Church in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

Q: How long will it take to call a pastor to Messiah?

A: The short answer is “as long as is needed.” The call process is intentionally deliberate. The time required to arrive at a decision with the Holy Spirit depends on many factors such as the time to study demographic changes, trends, and challenges in Messiah’s community; time to clarify the congregation’s purpose, mission, goals, and needs for pastoral leadership; and time for the appropriate candidates to be identified, interviewed, and ultimately called to Messiah. As we have asked for the congregation’s trust in the discernment process, we encourage the same as we step into the Call Process phase. These past several months of discernment have been a time of uncertainty for all of us. Questions have been raised and concerns voiced about Messiah’s future direction and of Pastor Seth’s plans. Pastor Steve addressed this uncertainty, characteristic of pastoral transitions, in his November letter reminding us, “Jesus’ first disciples were also often fearful, anxious and unsure, even when he was right there with him.”

Q: I have questions...who may I contact?

A: When the Call Committee is elected, more information will be provided about their work at that time. In the meantime, you may direct questions to the attention of Alan Parrott, Council President ( [alan.parrott@gmail.com](mailto:alan.parrott@gmail.com) ), or any other member of the Discernment Committee. All available information will continue to be provided on “Messiah’s Pastoral Transition” webpage at: <https://www.messiahchurchfairview.org/Transition.aspx>.

In this busy season of Lent as we approach Holy Week, the church office staff are increasingly busy, so we respectfully ask that you refrain from considering the office as a resource for questions on these topics.