

Memorial Requesting that the ELCA Evaluate and Update the Call Process

WHEREAS, Research into non-profit organizations has shown that they, like other organizations, suffer negatively during extended leadership transitions, with the effects most pronounced in smaller organizations; and

WHEREAS, The ELCA call process routinely leaves congregations without settled pastors for over a year; and

WHEREAS, Research is needed into the impact of the length of various types of vacancies (e.g. a long interim or a relatively short one); and

WHEREAS, The Holy Spirit always guides the call process but should not be expected to carry the work of discernment when we ourselves have not done all in our power to widely network and share information; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

1. Request the creation of a task force to evaluate and update the call process; and
2. That the task force would research the median length of pastoral vacancies in congregations, including congregations that have filled their vacancy(s) within the last 3 years and congregations that have not; and
3. That the task force use simple measures including, but not limited to, worship attendance, giving, and member involvement, to assess the correlation between length of settled pastoral vacancy and vitality of the congregation; and
4. That the task force initiate conversation with synodical bishops and staff, ecumenical partners, congregational call teams, interim ministry organizations, as well as businesses and nonprofits, to better discern what is and is not helpful for congregations, synodically authorized worshiping communities, and other ministry sites in the current call process; and
5. That based on the findings from the above work, the Churchwide organization would revise the call process in a way that is equitable to all stakeholders (congregations/ministry sites/worshiping communities, rostered ministry candidates, and synodical leaders), maximizing creativity and flexibility for the sake of the Gospel, and
6. That the task force be empowered to make recommendations towards updating the Ministry Site Profile and Rostered Minister Profile based on the above research, and
7. That this work begin as soon as possible.