

FAQs

Who decides the format and protocols of the call process?

Our Synod has a very clear procedure that we must follow throughout the call process.

How does the call process work?

The call committee was appointed by the Church Council. Once installed, we became an autonomous group, independent of Council. The committee prepared a profile of St. James, which was posted for potential pastoral candidates to view. After that, we waited until our Synod pastoral liaison, Pastor Severson, presented us with a slate of potential candidates. We are currently in the process of holding first-round interviews.

What happens after the first round of interviews?

If there are candidates that we feel we would like to move forward with, and they feel they would like to move forward with us, we move to second-round interviews. Once we have identified one candidate that we feel is a good match for St. James, and if they feel the same, we make a recommendation to the Council, who will vote on whether or not to accept the recommendation. After that, we introduce the candidate to the congregation, who will vote on the call.

What if we don't think any of the candidates are a good fit?

We release the candidates and wait for a new slate of potential candidates from the Synod.

What if we aren't totally sure; can we hold on to a candidate while waiting for the new slate?

No, we need to release the candidates and allow them to be available for other potential calls.

It sounds like this could take a long time.

Yes, it can take many months, or even longer than a year, to find the right candidate. Luckily, we are in good hands with Pastor Mark.

Speaking of Pastor Mark, he seems to be a good fit for our congregation. Can we just call him?

No, we are not allowed to call Pastor Mark. He is serving as our interim pastor, and he is not eligible to be called to serve here as our regular pastor. But the good news is that his presence here allows the call committee to take our time to make sure we are calling the best candidate.

Will the final candidates come to St. James to guest preach, and will the congregation weigh in on the final candidates to help decide?

The final candidates will not come to St. James to preach. We must maintain strict confidentiality regarding the candidates before we offer a call.

Why is there so much secrecy surrounding the process?

It's very important that other congregations not know that their pastor is looking to move to another congregation. If they do not end up being called by us, they will remain in their current congregation, and they have to maintain the trust of their parishioners to do their job effectively. Also, within our own congregation, our next pastor will need to be able to build unity. That would be very difficult to do if we were to hold a vote between multiple finalists, because there would always be people who voted for "the other candidate."

What if members want to learn something about the candidate and hear them preach and lead worship before voting on the call?

Though the recommended candidate will not preach here at St. James before the congregational vote, this Covid era of church means that congregation members can see sermons and hear the candidate lead worship on YouTube during the time between the introduction and the vote.

How can the congregation make their opinions known throughout this process? Should people speak to the Council President or members of the Council?

No, the Council President and other members of Council are not involved with the call process. The congregation is always invited to share their feelings and priorities directly with any member of the call committee at any point throughout the process. The call committee shares and discusses all congregational feedback.

Is there any reason why the specific interview questions are not published in the Call Committee communications on the KIOSK?

At this stage, interview questions are tailored based in part upon the candidate's first-round interview and upon the candidate's particular situation. Sharing those questions outside the committee would risk compromising the confidentiality of a candidate's identity.