

Suggested Interview Questions for Use by Call Committees and Councils

1. Questions believed to be helpful for enlightened decision-making include the following:
(Council asks pastor)
 - How would you describe (a) your basic work orientation, (b) your theology and view of the Bible, (c) fundamental purpose of the church/pastor/congregation, (d) your mode of operation?
 - What goals do you have for your own personal growth in ministry?
 - What parts of the pastor's role do you enjoy the most?
 - In what areas do you feel you are most skilled?
 - How do you determine what priorities to put on tasks you must do?
 - What kind of continuing education do you think is most helpful for a pastor and the congregation? What was the last continuing education opportunity in which you were involved? What did you learn from it?
 - What do you see as the primary roles of the church council members?
 - What are your views about pastoral calling? On members? Lapsed members? Prospects?
 - How do you feel about "Mission Outreach" (benevolence)?
 - What are your thoughts relative to the pastor's role in the community?
 - Would you care to share any of your weaknesses with us?
 - What financial expectations do you have?
 - What are your feelings relative to an annual review of the congregation's program, leadership, and staff?
 - Do you feel planning is important?
 - What are your future plans for continued personal and professional growth?
 - How would you go about introducing any change that you feel is needed in the congregation?
 - Without bragging, but being as honest as you can, what do you believe you have to offer to our parish that would serve us well?

2. Although we do not consider the next set of questions crucial to the decision on calling a pastor, church councils often raise them. We list them, recognizing your potential interest – encouraging the actual decision to be made on bases covered in Section 1.
 - What "extra parish" church responsibilities do you now have and envision in the future? (Conference, Synodical, and ELCA Committees, etc.)
 - How do you like to spend your free time?
 - What do you see as the role of your spouse and family in the life of the congregation?
 - What kind of relationship do you appreciate among other clergy, Lutheran and non-Lutheran?

3. You will want to be prepared to answer such questions as those following, since most pastors ask some or all of them during an interview.

Suggested Interview Questions for Use by Pastors

Suggested interview questions may provide a stimulus for the pastor's thinking.

- What do you think individual like about this congregation?
- What are some of the things you hope this congregation will do in the future for yourself? For others?
- What are some of the reasons why you are a member of this congregation and not some other one?
- If this congregation were wiped out in some disaster, what would you do relative to your church membership?
- What plans have the council made for doing additional self-study and goal setting?
- How many hours a week do you expect the pastor to work in the parish?
- What kind of priority do you give to the functions of a pastor? (Both in terms of importance, number of hours, what gets put off if time runs out?)
- What view does the congregation have about continuing education? (Time off? Financial support? Professional Leaders' Aid for Continuing Education?) Will the pastor be permitted to attend the annual pastors' conference? Who will pay the expense?
- Administratively, who prepares the council and congregational meeting agendas? Who chairs meetings?
- Relative to the usual duties of the pastor (stewardship, evangelism, parish education, etc.), how do you see the pastoral role – doer, teller, or enabler?
- Complete this sentence: “I really get upset when our pastor...” “I feel really good when our pastor...”
- Ask the council to complete this sentence: “I would most likely leave the congregation if...”
- How do you usually spend your leisure time?
- What plans do you have for regular salary increments (cost of living, merit, etc.)? What is the financial package you're offering?
- What is the situation relative to housing in the area? Parsonage? Housing allowance? Second mortgage loan from the congregation? Etc.
- What do you see as the role of spouse and family of the pastor?
- If there are children, what is the school situation?
- (In case of staff ministries.) How do you describe the task divisions, lines of authority, conflict management and reporting methods for the pastoral staff, council, congregation, and committees?
- If a family visited the congregation, why do you think they might come back? Or look elsewhere for a church home?
- What administrative role does the pastor have?
- Do you have a lay president? What is your rationale for your arrangement?
- What arrangements do you make for moving the pastor, family, and their household goods? Will you permit us to use a commercial mover?
- What desires do you have for improving the congregation's ministry?
- What are the five most important programs for the next three years?
- What kind of secretarial service will the congregation provide?
- Will the church council be willing to participate in an overnight Friday evening/all day Saturday planning retreat at least once a year?
- What will be expected of the pastor's spouse?
- What questions ought to be asked that people are afraid to ask?