

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church of Greenville, MI at 6:30 pm
Notes from Call Procedure Information Meeting September 14, 2022
Rev. Glenn Schaeffer, Rev. Randy Johnson and Rev. Dr. David Maier

Chairman of Board of Elders Dave Gantz opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Special guests were introduced: Rev. Dr. Maier, Rev. Johnson, Rev. Schaeffer.

Rev. Glenn Schaeffer (Circuit Visitor) led a devotion on the Parable of the Lost Sheep and Shepherd, noting that Jesus will guide us through the call process to find a new shepherd, as well as lead US to be shepherds, seeking the lost.

Rev. Randy Johnson talked about the calling process as Pastor Jeff Wilhelm steps back, the church doesn't walk alone and it is an opportunity for the future. The process involves several forms including an inventory, online survey, in church surveys, etc. He will also return Thursday, October 13 and Friday, October 14 to interview the leadership and any others who wish to provide information about the church and pastoral needs. All this information is compiled to make a Pastor Profile of what kind of a pastor is needed and it is returned to church to be sure the profile is accurate in what it says. [An appointment form of half hour times was available after the meeting for people to sign up to meet with Rev. Johnson]

Rev. Dr. Maier is stepping down as Michigan District President after 13 years of service. Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life ... to the fullest!" We ALL are shepherds wherever we are. Our purpose is to be salt and light – to lead others.

The Survey: What is needed in a new pastor – want everyone's input

The Call Committee: The Elders, plus youth, women, preschool rep – up to 10 or so members, but ALL congregation members are involved through Prayer:

PRAY – for our congregation, for Wilhelms, for unity, for stamina

PRAY – for the pastor to come, for his heart to consider, for his family as they find out, for God's guidance as we are all instruments of the Holy Spirit to call or be called; this pastor also prays.

PRAY - for the congregation of the pastor who is called. We are all on the same team!

CALL COMMITTEE: Needs to communicate all the time, every service has an announcement even if nothing is happening, so everyone knows what's happening – nothing in secret.

How to find a pastor – PRAY!

Once the Pastor Profile is completed with all the information considered, it is returned to the congregation for approval. Members may also nominate pastors on Nomination Form, sharing who they are, why you think a good match, what their gifts are. Best not to be a relative!!!

The final need profile is returned to District office and prayerfully sorted several times and compared to pastor profiles to find the right pastor possibilities for the congregation. From 7 to 15 possibilities might be selected for a call list. (Not easy, since there are fewer pastors now, some don't want to leave their present parish for various reasons, Covid made it difficult.)

A personal information form (PIF) on each possible candidate is compiled and sent with the pastors' names. (New rules have made some changes.)

Each Call Committee member gets info for each candidate; a copy will also be kept in church office for others who wish to see the list and information, but it is to stay in the office. Each candidate can be contacted via phone, zoom, facetime – same 7-10 questions asked of each candidate (same person should ask same question of each).

Once contacts are made and information gathered, Call Committee discusses the results without any decisions for a time to get everyone's input. Don't ask for favorites for at least the first half hour to allow full communication of everyone. When voting, a simple majority decides and then another vote taken for a hopefully unanimous vote prior to the actual call.

Call Committee should have available ALL information like Salary, Benefits, Letters of Support from Youth, Bible Study groups, LWML, etc. as well as information about Greenville, schools, real estate (CEF loans), etc. so all information can be FedExed overnight so candidate has information ASAP to help make decision. DO NO PUBLICIZE THE CALL until he has told his present congregation.

Once contact is made and pastor is interested, invite for a visit to meet many people, enjoy a meal or whatever. Then the Holy Spirit works!

If he accepts – REJOICE!

If he declines – can take another name from original list, or add more names to the list, or if a new list is needed, it gets priority at District office.

Procedures are not like before; things change. Honor God and depend on HIS leading.

Possible timeline:

By end of October have Pastor Information Profile approved.

About six weeks to get a call list.

Hopefully can issue call by Lent or Easter.

Rev. Schaeffer led the closing devotion, indicating that the call process is in God's hands and in God's timing. We need to be patient and know that God's purpose will be fulfilled.

He led a closing prayer with all joining to pray the Lord's Prayer, followed by the benediction from Hebrews 13:20-21:

"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Notes taken by Judy Gager