

Enrich and Transform

Welcoming LGBTQ Candidates into the Call Process

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

—Romans 12:2



EXTRAORDINARY
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Whenever we embrace those on the margins of church or society, we open ourselves to transformation. We must always see transformation as our ultimate goal, not assimilation. Differences must not be merely tolerated but celebrated as change agents that first challenge us but then both enrich and transform us.

An offered guide for call committees considering the diverse gifts of candidates, including those who are LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer).

Purpose of this Resource

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. —Romans 15:7

This guide is offered by Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM) in response to congregations and synods who have asked for resources to help open their doors more widely to the gifts of LGBTQ leaders in our church. ELCA Churchwide and Synod offices provide guidance on the call process in general and this guide is not a duplication of their important work. Our guide is an additional resource for call committees during the process of discernment and exploration with candidates.

We hope this resource will provide call committees with some tips, questions, and inspiration as you explore openness to the full diversity of gifted and called leaders in our church, including LGBTQ persons.

Let the Holy Spirit guide and lead you through the entire process.

*—John Hedlund, Call Committee Member
Light of the World Lutheran Church, Farmington, MN*



Rev. Jenny Mason
Light of the World Lutheran Church, Farmington, MN

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Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries

Freed and compelled by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to proclaim God's love and seek justice for all, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries envisions a church where all may serve God according to their callings.

Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries affirms and supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) rostered leaders and those pursuing a call to rostered leadership, while engaging allied congregations and ministries to proclaim God's love and justice for all people. Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries does this work through three main programs: Candidacy Accompaniment, Ministry Engagement, and Proclaim—a professional community for LGBTQ rostered leaders and seminarians. Learn more at www.elm.org.

Introduction:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!
— 1 Corinthians 5:17

Great challenges are taking place in the lives of many congregations. These challenges can be exciting and energizing. One way to capture the excitement of the future of congregational ministry would be to talk to a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ) seminarian, pastor, or rostered leader in our church. LGBTQ identified people in committed relationships were welcomed onto the ELCA roster in 2009. This marks a new day for our whole church. The Spirit is indeed moving! And we believe LGBTQ leaders have unique gifts to offer our church in this new day.

With the shift in church policies new doors are opening. These open doors permit the entrance of gifts that have not always been fully recognized by the church and invite people of all kinds who have perhaps never felt welcomed in the church before. LGBTQ seminarians, candidates, and rostered leaders are eager to engage this New Day in partnership with congregations and ministries.

Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries has made a brief 6 minute video overview of our work. This video, ELM Today, gives you a sense of the current state of LGBTQ leaders in our church - both the gifts they have to offer and the need for communities to welcome and embrace those gifts. The video is on the front page of our website (www.elm.org).

It was exciting that God provided and called a wonderfully gifted, strong Lutheran pastor to minister to our children, youth and young adults. Just 5 years ago, this call wouldn't have been possible. We all (congregations as well as Pastor Laura) would have lost out on so much. Now, as the mother of daughters, I'm excited that they have Pastor Laura as an example and a spiritual leader.

— Lynn Kriser, Call Committee member,
St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church, Michigan



Rev. Laura Kuntz Calvary Lutheran Church,
St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Lansing, MI

This is the most positive group of colleagues that I gather with. Everywhere else in the church, people are wringing their hands and pulling their hair out and talking about the fear and the anxiety and here we're talking about dreams, and we're talking about the future and we're talking about hope. And so I love getting together with the folks here at Proclaim because they have a vision for what the church is becoming, and I'm just not hearing that and finding that in other areas of the church right now.

— Rev. Mark Erson,
St John's Lutheran Church, New York City, NY



Experiencing a Diversity of Leaders

The need for a supply pastor or preacher is often part of the early stages of the call process. This is a perfect chance to get to know some diverse pastors with different styles. ELM has a list of LGBTQ pastors, candidates, and seminarians who want to do pulpit supply (www.elm.org/proclaim-pulipt-supply). Also ask your synod for their list of supply pastors, paying particular attention to those who are different from your previous pastor. Now is a good time to shake things up and see different leadership and preaching styles.

Beginning your Work

Thank you for answering YES to this call to serve on the call committee. Your team is now entrusted with the process of mutual discernment to choose the best person to be your new pastor. Call committees are selected to be representative of the congregation and to include diverse voices that may not often be heard. Throughout the process, you can always be looking for ways to include others' voices and perspectives, even if they don't sit on the committee.

It may be easiest to think about a new pastor in comparison with previous pastors. Work to be open to diverse people who are quite different from your previous pastor. Remember that this is an opportunity for transformation in your congregation!

In the midst of this process be open and honest about your fears and concerns, including if you are nervous about LGBTQ candidates. Seek to challenge your own stereotypes. Engage in dialogue together. Pray. Don't let fears guide your process.

Also, we'd encourage you not to preemptively rule candidates out. Perhaps you are in a rural setting or conservative area or you don't have any LGBTQ families in your community.

I'd love to at some point in time serve in a rural setting. Mainly for me it's about community--knowing and being known. I think the thing that I learned is to not immediately dismiss a congregation because of their size or location. I did some pulpit supply in a small rural town in Minnesota and Maja and I were welcomed warmly. People felt LGBT folk in the church and in the pulpit wasn't an issue for them anymore. They were more concerned that I wasn't a Packers fan!

—Cara Knutson, First Call Candidate

If these are concerns of yours, engage in conversation with a candidate about them, but don't automatically rule a candidate out or make assumptions. There are LGBTQ candidates who feel called to rural ministry or to serve in more conservative contexts. The LGBTQ community is a diverse community of individuals.

Your call committee may watch videos provided by your synod about the call process. These are helpful. We really recommend you also take the time to watch, *Sailing on Faith*, a 25 minute video about the experience of a call committee who opened up to the Holy Spirit as they called a new leader. The experience ended up very differently from what they had initially expected! The video will help your committee think about diverse candidates in the call process. This video was made by the United Church in Christ, a full communion partner of the ELCA. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4_WlEXBjqQ&feature=relmfu

You may also want to show this video at an adult forum so others in the congregation can join the conversation about considering diverse candidates.

Beginning Your Ministry Site Profile

The call process brings people closer together and really makes the congregation take a hard look at what is important to them and what their mission in this world is.

—Marybeth Newton, Call Committee Chair St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA

One of the first steps in the call process is developing a profile of your congregation or ministry site. This is a good opportunity to introduce the idea of considering LGBTQ or otherwise diverse candidates for your new pastor. You may be creating a survey for your congregation or hosting a conversation as you develop your site profile. Here are a few suggested questions your congregation or call committee may want to consider at this point in the process:

- What are the ministry needs of the greater community? What are some of the cultures/people/issues that we want to engage with the message of the Gospel and the ministries of our church?
- What do we want to say about ourselves as we call a pastor – what statement do we want to make? Do we want to announce to our community that we are open, and are excited about ministries of justice and reconciliation? How can the call we extend become a statement of the ministry we are attempting to engage?

Spend enough time together to develop trust around all the issues you and the congregation want to see in a new pastor. Sexual orientation is just one aspect and probably not the most important issue. Try to separate your own responses from what you think the congregation response is likely to be. Remember that you really don't know what others responses will be so don't assume. Talk about it.

—Ruth Rinard, Call Committee Member Immanuel Lutheran Church, Amherst, MA

- To what sort of mission and ministry is the Spirit of God calling us? Developing a spirituality of openness and challenge allows the process itself to become an agent of the work of the Spirit of God.
- How would our congregation feel about calling a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person to serve as our pastor?

After you consider the opportunities for ministry in your community, and you begin to broaden the range of mission and pastoral directions, then you can ask:

What sort of person can best work with us to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit in our church and in our community?

The process to call a new senior pastor following the retirement of our former senior pastor was deliberative. We spent a good deal of time developing a congregational profile, which called forth the needs of the congregation now and projected its needs into the future. In presenting the candidate, we mapped our analysis of the gifts of the candidate to the defined needs of the congregation. We were able to demonstrate, through the written comments of the candidate, the information that emerged in our interviews with him, and comments we heard in extensive reference checking, that the gifts of the candidate we recommended aligned nearly perfectly with the defined needs of the congregation. In our presentation, we certainly disclosed his sexual orientation and his role in the historic actions of the church, but we focused primarily on his gifts for ministry.

—Claire Hoyum, Call Committee member Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN

Why Consider Calling an LGBTQ Pastor

The church asks candidates to be open to the call of the whole church. We invite you to also be open to and celebrate the whole diversity of candidates that God has called to serve the church.

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.
—Romans 12:4-8

Why consider calling an LGBTQ pastor?
Here are a variety of responses from LGBTQ seminarians, candidates, and rostered leaders:

Many people think “If they can deal with that Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Trans minister, they’ll have no problem with me being _____.”
— Dug Swank

Great evangelism effort, if [churches] will call a gay/partnered pastor the door opens wide.
— Rev. Terry Hagensen

We see the margins and thin places in life and know from experience that is where God is working.
— Alex Raabe

Because kids need to see and know that everyone is welcome. —Rev. Angela Nelson

It also makes a powerful statement of welcome to the community. They are not just making a statement of welcome, they are living it.
—Rev. Dr. Dawn Roginski

A congregation should consider calling an LGBTQ candidate because, like any other candidate, we bring our own set of skills and abilities to their local congregation. In June, my congregation hung the pride flag at church throughout June. I reminded my church council that the flag “wasn’t just about being inviting to ‘the gays,’ but that it was a sort of ‘code’ to the

community that Trinity is an open, thoughtful, progressive congregation.” Having an openly LGBTQ pastor accomplishes the same thing!
— Rev. Peggy Yingst

In the first couple of months of ministry I’ve already encountered people who feel comfortable sharing parts of their lives and their family members’ lives with me in a way that they haven’t been able to with a pastor before. Because I’m open about my sexuality they know I am safe to talk to, and when that happens it is a gift given to both of us.
— Rev. Laura Kuntz

There are some amazing LGBTQ rostered leaders who, against all odds, desire to answer God’s call to serve in ministry. So, here are a few characteristics that I see as being good reasons to considering calling someone like myself: faithfulness, creativity, perseverance, honesty, loyalty, truth-telling, humility, etc. (I was going to write all the fruits of the Spirit, but I think you get the idea.) —Rev. Jenny Mason



Most of us have had to learn something about a costly love for a broken-yet-holy church. It’s a good moment in history to have a pastor who has begun the work of learning to love the church in this way, and while many non-LGBTQ pastors may have done this work, almost all LGBTQ pastors will have had to do it as a core part of their preparation for ministry.
—Carolina Glauster, First Call Candidate



I began my call as a tall, white, educated, straight man... since coming out, my eyes have been opened to injustice in remarkable ways- and not just my own personal experiences with it. My heart is just more in tune with it. I notice it as I walk the streets and ride the buses, as I interact with people of all sorts... I think as LGBT folk, we carry unique stories lived experiences that make us very in tune to the cries of the marginalized.
 —Rev. Paul Clark,
 Fresno State University Campus Ministry

LGBTQ candidates provide a call committee with candidates who are, more than most candidates,
 --able to understand the faith challenges to young adults who have mostly abandoned church traditions that they see as hypocritical,
 --able to walk with people through the wildernesses of their lives, because they have been in and through those wildernesses,
 --able to value and care for each child of God in a congregation, because they have learned what it means to be accepted by Jesus,
 --able and excited to preach the Gospel, for the Good News has, for most, been denied them in the past.

— Chris Wogaman, First Call Candidate



LGBTQ candidates bring a much needed trajectory for ministry in today's world. We've been excluded and included. In the past few decades there aren't many groups of people who can say that. I think one of the big barriers for churches is the ability to speak to the experience of those who feel unwelcome or left out. Christians have tended to only include those who align with their narrow interpretations...so many people view the church as a closed off place. I think LGBTQ people bring just the right combination of experiences to allow them to connect those who have known the church for their whole lives and those who feel the church has repeatedly rejected or abused them. We are a group of healers.
 —Rev. Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA

Working with the congregation

If you feel like the whole congregation needs to be involved in the conversation of opening up your call process to include LGBTQ candidates, here are some ideas:

- Have a local LGBTQ pastor come and talk about their call to ministry.
- If you are not Reconciling in Christ (RIC), consider entering into that process of public welcome of LGBTQ people. <http://www.reconcilingworks.org/what/ric/about-reconciling-in-christ>
- Have an adult education forum about Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries. Invite someone from the congregation who is connected with ELM to speak. Or, contact ELM to see if we might have someone in your area who could come and be part of your discussion.
- Host a panel discussion. Depending on your local resources, panel members could include: a member of another congregation who has been through a call process with an LGBTQ pastor, a local LGBTQ pastor or intern, supportive synod staff member, a person connected with ELM (be in touch - we might have someone in your area!), a member of an internship committee that supported an LGBTQ intern, etc.
- Watch the ELM Today video - 6 minutes, available on the ELM website. Or the Sailing on Faith video mentioned above (25 minutes). Why consider opening your call process to a gifted and called LGBTQ leader?
- Include a question or two in your congregational study/discernment about considering diverse candidates, and LGBTQ candidates specifically.



It helps to have already affirmed and embraced our RIC status. The congregation is open and affirming in an area (Vallejo and Solano County) where LGBTQ people have few welcomes, and that is an important part of the congregation's self-identity.

*—Marilyn Matevia, Call Committee member
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Vallejo, CA*



Seminarian Gus Barnes, Jr. and Rev. Angela Nelson

Be open about what you are doing ... but in an organic way. Discussions need to occur in smaller groups - or in some less than overt way. For our congregation in upper middle class suburbs - we needed to tread lightly. Waving a rainbow flag would not have been productive.

*—Gary Clark, Call Committee member Abiding
Presence Lutheran Church, Rochester Hills, MI*

Considering a First Call Candidate

For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. —Romans 1:11-12

Has your congregation considered a First Call candidate?

This might be a good conversation to have among your call committee members and perhaps with your synod staff. Being a First Call congregation has blessings and challenges and is worth exploring. Here are some reasons you might consider opening your call process to First Call candidates:

- candidates often come fresh out of seminary with lots of ideas, energy, excitement
- there's room for mutual learning - you are both teacher and learner
- your community can be instrumental in helping shape a pastor for the rest of their ministry - this is a gift to the whole church
- many first call pastors bring experience from previous careers
- the synod supports first call candidates through First Call Theological Education
- you get to be part of an ordination or a consecration
- candidates are aware of current trends in theology and church planning
- there is curiosity and excitement to work together

We as a committee made a conscious decision to focus on the qualities and qualifications the candidate needed to be the pastor of our church. We prayed and thought whether our congregation was ready to be supportive to an LGBTQ candidate and a "new" pastor. We realized that this was an opportunity to grow and practice what we believe. We were resolved that some people might leave.
—Call Committee member

Getting the Word Out

If you are open to exploring LGBTQ candidates, it's a good idea to explicitly and proactively let the synod know you are open to the full diversity of candidates that God has called, including LGBTQ candidates.

You are also invited to let Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries know about your call opportunity. Because there are still fewer call possibilities for LGBTQ candidates and people might not hear about such openings, letting us spread the word is another way to expand your reach for the right fit for ministry. Interested candidates would contact your synod office and go through the same channels as other candidates. Contact information for ELM is at the end of this guide.

My only suggestion is that congregations focus first and only on the needs of the congregation's ministry and mission. Many gifted LGBTQ candidates have been waiting far too long for their gospel gifts to be recognized and invited into ministry. Congregations should not constrain their access to those gifts by artificially limiting the pool of candidates they are willing to consider.
—Claire Hoyum, Call Committee member
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN



Interviewing Candidates

Depending on your synod, synod staff will provide candidate profiles for one or more candidates. The written materials should be used as an introduction, not as a comprehensive description of this person's gifts and fit for your ministry. Stretch yourself to consider candidates who are different from your previous pastor. Let the Holy Spirit surprise you!

Face to face interviews give everyone involved a chance to see each other as real people. This means you can cut through superficial issues to focus on the passions and ministry ideas of both the candidate and the congregation.

Plan your questions to bring out stories of the candidate's experiences of life and background. When interviewing an LGBTQ candidate, most questions will be the same as those you would ask any candidate. If members of the call committee are nervous or unsure about interviewing an LGBTQ candidate, ELM may be able to arrange a practice interview with a pastor from Proclaim, the professional community for publicly identified LGBTQ Lutheran rostered leaders, candidates, and seminarians. Additionally, we, and maybe the synod, are able to connect you with a member of a congregation who has served on a call committee and engaged with LGBTQ candidates.

Sometimes, if people are unfamiliar with LGBTQ folks, they can feel awkward, not wanting to ask the wrong question or use the wrong words. Below are a few sample questions and tips. We also have an attached glossary of terms that may help. But openness, honesty and a bit of grace will serve you well!

Sample Questions

- How do you see being LGBTQ as a gift to your ministry and to the wider church?
- Being a pastor is challenging work for anyone, but the discrimination that LGBTQ

pastors sometimes experience in the church and society could add additional stress to your work as a pastor. What are some ways you take care of yourself when life gets stressful?

- How do you define family? If you do not have the support of your family of origin, what are some of the other ways you have created family or participate in communities of accountability?
- Are there ways in which your coming out story and your call to ministry are linked?
- How is your identity as an LGBTQ person linked with your identity as a child of God?
- When so much of the church has said 'no' to LGBTQ people, why did you choose to remain part of the church?
- How as a congregation can we support you as a publicly identified LGBTQ pastor? What challenges do you anticipate, and in what ways can we partner with you to meet those challenges? What joys do you anticipate? How can we celebrate those with you?

Be prepared for a variety of responses to your questions. Perhaps you will hear some things you didn't expect. For example, LGBTQ people come from and create many different kinds of families that may or may not look like your own. Or, some LGBTQ people might have experienced a lot of pain and hurt from the church, which may be hard to hear if that is not your experience. Take time to process responses and try to keep an open mind. Seek to uncover the whole person, rather than just focusing on one aspect of their experience or identity.

When I came out, [the call committee] asked themselves and invited me to be part of the conversation, "How might calling an LGBTQ candidate help us better live out our commitment to an inclusive welcome?"

—Rev. Steven Wilco,
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Amherst, MA

What words to use?

How do I not offend someone?

It is always best to let a candidate choose if and how they want to self-identify (pronouns, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, etc). Additionally, candidates should be encouraged to self-identify in terms of their relationship. LGBTQ couples may use various terms to describe their relationship, including partner, spouse, wife, husband, etc. Ask how the candidate identifies their relationship and then use those terms respectfully.

As a general guide, don't ask questions you wouldn't feel comfortable answering yourself. And be patient with the process and with yourselves. Trust that the Spirit is working!

I remember they asked me how I would handle people in the congregation who might not be super comfortable with the idea of an out gay pastor. I felt good about my response which was that I wasn't going to argue with anyone or try to "defend" my call. I told them I had no interest in "convincing" anyone that gay people can be pastors...that sort of posture only leads to more consternation. Instead, I'd be happy to orchestrate Bible Studies and Forums around LGBTQ topics so we can learn and grow together.

— Rev. Caleb Crainer, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA



The call committee held all its meetings and interviews with candidates at the home of one of our members. We lit a candle at the start of each meeting, a symbol of our invitation to the Holy Spirit to enter our conversations and deliberations. Our committee worked long and hard and faithfully, guided by the Holy Spirit. The pastor we recommended and the congregation called has been a gift to all, evidence of the Spirit's work among us.

— Claire Hoyum, Call Committee member, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN



Acknowledge concerns, anxieties, and hopes up front. If the committee is unsure of the appropriateness of a question, say so. Treat the candidate like a pastor. Educate yourself beforehand if there are sexuality questions you have (read an issue of Out or The Advocate, check the Human Rights Campaign website, etc), but try and keep the conversation on the paperwork of the candidate.

— Rev. Angela Nelson, Christ Our Emmanuel, Chatham, NY

Discerning

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. —Romans 12:2

Hopefully when you meet the right candidate the whole committee will be on the same page and you can easily move to the next step, clear in the Spirit's call. But sometimes there may be division within the committee. If the candidate is LGBTQ, there may be division about whether that candidate is the right recommendation, or perhaps someone on your committee is not open to calling an LGBTQ person at all. Try to get to the root of the objection. Is it fear? Lack of knowledge? Concern for others might react? A sincere belief that same-sex relationships are wrong? Immerse yourself in prayer. Seek guidance from the synod or others who may help you in this challenge.

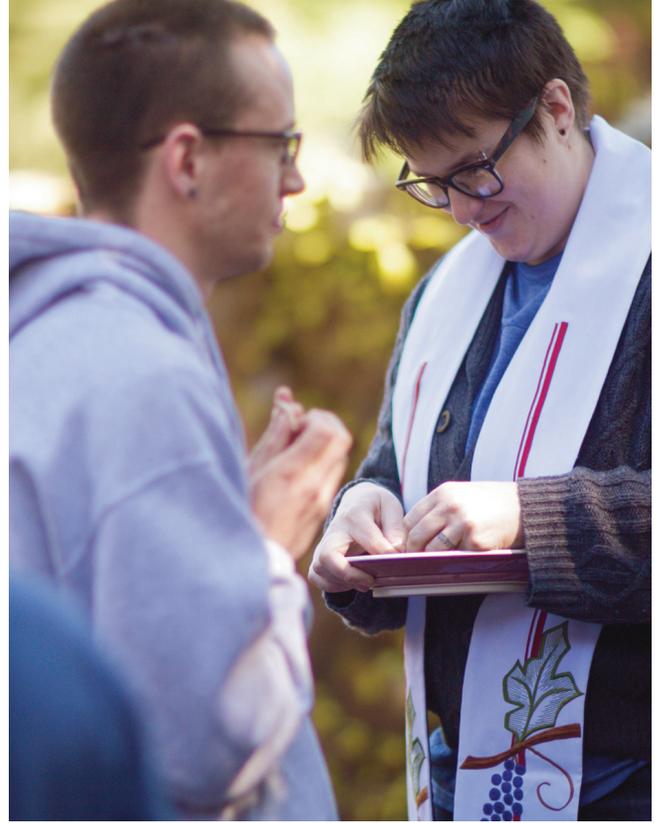
A common concern is wondering if some people will leave the congregation if you put an LGBTQ candidate forward. The reality is that you will probably lose and gain members in any transition. Try not to let that overshadow your sense of the Spirit's calling. In some congregations where a group of people is unhappy about calling an LGBTQ pastor, the call committee or church leadership has urged those folks to commit to trying it out for 6 months. When people are actively engaged in relationship and ministry together often times hearts will change. But in the end, it still may happen that someone will leave. And, it may happen that many will arrive.

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart.

—2 Corinthians 4:1

As head of the call committee, I made a PowerPoint presentation with an edited video interview series that I put together with Pastor Caleb so the congregation could "get to know him" further prior to a vote.

—Marybeth Newton, Call Committee Chair St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles



When we presented the candidate, we received overwhelmingly positive response. But we also received messages of concern. Several committed, long-term members were deeply troubled. The call vote was 91.5% positive--more supportive than the vote to call the first woman as senior pastor. We lost about a dozen members over the call decision, and the congregation continues to grieve those losses. But we have also seen tremendous growth since the call decision. The candidate's warmth and outreach to those who did not support his call have helped bring some of those who were concerned into the community of support. Many of our new members have been attracted to our congregation because of its commitment to warm liturgical worship, fine preaching, excellent music, outreach locally and abroad, and joyful welcome to all. We are larger and more energetic than we were before the call over two years ago.

—Claire Hoyum, Call Committee member, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN

Recommending a Candidate to the Congregation

Once you have made a decision, communicate the call committee's enthusiasm about this candidate to the congregation! Explain why the chosen candidate is the right one by focusing on what excited the committee about this potential ministry partnership. In many synods the candidate would come to meet congregation members in person before the vote. If this is not the practice in your synod and you think it might be helpful, consider talking with the synod about this possibility. This provides the congregation with a good opportunity to meet and engage with the real person. Or, if that's not possible, perhaps create a video or use Skype. There are lots of creative options!

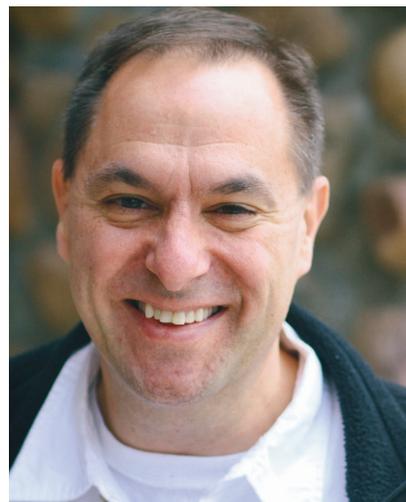
When introducing an LGBTQ candidate to the congregation, talk with the candidate about how they want to be introduced and if a spouse or family will be accompanying them. If there is a time for open questions with the congregation, perhaps have a member of the call committee moderate. Make sure this candidate is able to talk about their gifts and vision for ministry and that the whole discussion doesn't become only about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

It's really important to welcome our spouses, if we have them. For them, it's a completely new thing to be an out pastor's spouse, and it takes some getting used to. And know that we are still pinching ourselves for a quite a while that we get to do this thing called rostered ministry again. It makes us kind of giddy!

—Rev. Jenny Mason,
Light of the World, Farmington, MN

Right now I'm inviting myself over to peoples' homes to get to know them better and it means a lot when they ask if my partner would like to come along.

—Rev. Laura Kuntz,
Calvary Lutheran Church,
St. Stephen Lutheran Church, both in Lansing, MI



Rev. Bradley Schmeling
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN

One of the biggest blessings for me was that an individual from the congregation approached me after I began and initiated conversations that would eventually lead to our attaining Reconciling In Christ status. I think congregations who aren't already RIC, should remember that joining that community needs to come from the congregation and council first instead of being led by the new gay pastor. I think our RIC status helped me and the congregation communicate more effectively about stresses and histories when thinking through our LGBTQ welcome.

—Rev. Caleb Crainer,
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA

Welcoming a New LGBTQ Pastor

Congratulations on your new partnership in ministry! Your work as a call committee is almost done.

As you welcome your new pastor, we encourage you to:

- Talk openly with your new leader about if/how their family wants to be involved
- Help connect them with ELM and Proclaim if they are not already
- Help connect them with other LGBTQ-friendly pastors and people in the area
- Provide continuing education funds for your pastor to keep learning and being sustained in ministry (the annual Proclaim Retreat is an excellent source of both continuing education and sustaining for ministry)
- Help them set up a Mutual Ministry Committee for reflection and support
- Enjoy getting to know one another!



Conclusion:

This resource has been prepared by Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries to assist call committees in considering a candidate who is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer. It may also be helpful to interim pastoral leadership, collegial pastoral networks, transition study groups, congregational profile committees, and other who may be involved in these processes. This resource is not definitive nor comprehensive. However, we do hope this resource can accompany and inform your discernment, address some of your possible concerns, and invite space for the Holy Spirit's work among you.

Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

— 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Contact Information

For more information, questions, feedback, or comments, or to let ELM know about a call opportunity in your community, please contact:

Amalia Vagts, Executive Director
director@elm.org
563-382-6277

Rev. Jen Rude, Program Director
programdirector@elm.org

You can also find additional information and resources on our website: www.elm.org

Photo Credit: All photos taken by Emily Ann Garcia, www.emilyanngarcia.com

Short Glossary of Terms

Accompaniment: Program of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries – Grassroots, candidate-driven accompaniment for LGBTQ people in Lutheran candidacy. Support and advocacy for LGBTQ persons in the Lutheran candidacy process through direct work with candidates, and relationship and resource development for synods, seminaries, candidacy committees and other church leaders. www.elm.org/candidacy

Asexual: In its broadest sense, asexual describes individuals who are not sexually attracted to others or are not interested in sex. Those who identify as asexual may still be romantically attracted to others.

Bisexual: A person emotionally, romantically, sexually and relationally attracted to more than one sex and/or gender, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Because bisexual assumes a binary, male/female paradigm, some individuals now use the term pansexual.

Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries

(ELM): ELM is a self-funded social ministry organization that affirms and supports publicly identified LGBTQ Lutheran rostered leaders and those pursuing a call to rostered leadership while engaging allied congregations and ministries to proclaim God’s love and seek justice for all. Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries does this work through three main programs: Proclaim, Accompaniment, and Ministry Engagement. Through this work, ELM ensures that LGBTQ leaders and the ministries they lead can proclaim God’s love and seek justice for all people. www.elm.org

Gay: A word describing a man or a woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually and relationally attracted to members of the same sex.

Gender Identity: One’s innermost concept of self as male or female or both or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they

call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different than the sex assigned at birth. Individuals are conscious of this between the ages 18 months and 3 years. Most people develop a gender identity that matches their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological or assigned sex. Some of these individuals choose to socially, hormonally and/or surgically change their sex to more fully match their gender identity.

Gender Expression: Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. Gender expression also works the other way as people assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms, and other gendered characteristics. Sometimes, transgender people seek to match their physical expression with their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex. Gender expression should not be viewed as an indication of sexual orientation.

Genderqueer: A word people use to describe their own non-standard gender identity or expression.

Gender Role: This is the set of roles, activities, expectations and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Many cultures recognize two basic gender roles: masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females). People who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender. Some cultures have three or more gender roles.

Intersex: People who are born with physical sex markers (genitals, hormones, gonads or chromosomes) that are neither clearly male nor female

Lesbian: A woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually and relationally attracted to other women.

LGBTQ: Often used as shorthand to refer to a variety of people with diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identity. The letters commonly refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.

Ministry Engagement: Program of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries – Engaging with congregations and ministries. Seeking to support and create more calls for LGBTQ leaders, while celebrating and highlighting extraordinary congregations and ministries.

Proclaim: Program of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries – the professional community for publicly identified LGBTQ Lutheran rostered leaders, candidates, and seminarians. This community gathers annually in retreat for learning and renewal, and connects throughout the year for networking and mutual support. Proclaim is a witness to the Church.

Queer: Anyone who chooses to identify as such. This can include, but is not limited to, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and asexual people, etc. This term has different meanings to different people. Some still find it offensive, while others reclaim it to encompass the broader sense of history of the gay rights movement. Can also be used as an umbrella term like LGBT, as in “the queer community.”

Sexual orientation: Sexual orientation is an enduring personal quality that inclines people to feel romantic or sexual attraction (or a combination of these) to persons of another sex or gender, the same sex or gender, or to both sexes or more than one gender.

Transgender. Sometimes used as an umbrella to describe anyone whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. More narrowly defined, it refers to an individual whose gender identity does not match their assigned birth gender. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation (attraction to people of a specific gender.) Therefore, transgender people may additionally

identify as straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Transsexual: Individuals who do not identify with their birth-assigned genders and physically alter their bodies surgically and/or hormonally. This physical transition is a complicated, multi-step process that may take years and may include, but is not limited to, sex reassignment surgery. Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) is a term used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person’s “sex”. Not all transgender people choose to, or can afford to, have SRS. While this procedure is often referred to as a sex change operation in popular culture, SRS is the preferred term.

Additional definitions of terms related to sexuality and gender can be found here:

www.hrc.org/resources/entry/glossary-of-terms

www.genderspectrum.org

www.tolerance.org/LGBT-best-practices-terms

www.thegenderbook.com



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