

## Sample Interview Questions

This list of possible questions is not comprehensive, but merely suggests issues you might want to raise with the candidate in areas connected with parish life. **Select 8-10 questions** that will shape the primary part of the interview.

Before beginning with questions, take the time to get acquainted with the candidate. Have someone from the committee begin with prayer. (You might want to ask the candidate to close the meeting with prayer.) Introduce yourselves and share your roles in the congregation. Ask the candidate to tell you briefly about themselves.

**While a candidate may offer information regarding the following, Call Committee members should refrain from asking questions about a candidate's health, age, sexual orientation, or family members.**

### Preaching/Worship Leadership

1. Describe how you go about preparing for the worship service on Sunday morning.
2. Think back in your ministry and tell me about the most difficult sermon you ever preached.
3. Share some of your thoughts about the worship life of a congregation.
4. Describe your preaching style.
  - a. What themes do you tend to emphasize in preaching?
5. What is the purpose of a sermon?

### Social Ministry

1. Tell us how you evaluate community needs and community strengths.
2. Describe how you have contributed to the quality of life in your community.
3. Describe how you go about motivating members of your congregation to respond to community needs.

### Administration

1. Describe the steps you take normally when working with groups to achieve consensus or cohesiveness.
2. How would you describe your style of leadership in overseeing the work of the congregation?
3. Tell us about a period in your life when you had to manage multiple demands in your work and how you determined priorities.

### Teaching

1. How do you evaluate the faith development of others?
2. Describe your approach to helping adults to grow in their faith.
3. Describe your approach to teaching children and young people about the Christian faith.

### Stewardship

1. Describe how you have helped others grow in their personal stewardship.
2. In what ways have you helped members understand the management of their money and their responsibilities as Christian stewards?
3. Describe the development of your personal sense of Christian stewardship.



### **Evangelism/Mission**

1. Describe God's Mission regarding the Church?
  - a. What is the role of the rostered leader and the congregation in relation to that mission?
2. Describe ways in which you typically become acquainted and associate with unchurched people in your community.
3. How have you kept yourself up to date on evangelical outreach principles and practices?
4. How have you equipped and encouraged others to be engaged in evangelical outreach?
5. Describe how you have achieved a multicultural approach to your ministry.
6. How do you put your finger on the pulse and culture of the community surrounding your church? Or the community in which you live?
7. How have you shifted church priorities to be responsive to needs in the local community?
8. What guidance or training do you provide other Christians for reaching the unchurched?
9. In what areas do you relate best with unchurched? Describe a current relationship you have with an unchurched person.

### **Inter-personal Climate**

1. What steps do you take in helping others feel secure, trusted, and open with you?
2. When pressure mounts, how do you maintain your cool in ministry?
3. Describe an experience where conflict arose between you and another person and how resolution was finally achieved.
4. What are your feelings about inclusivity and welcome, as they relate to the life of the whole congregation?
5. How would you help us involve people of all ages in church activities?

### **Ministry in Crisis**

1. Describe your style of ministry to persons in crisis.
2. Describe how you have used the establishment of boundaries to strengthen your ministry.
3. How do you assess your own professional limitations when ministering to persons in crisis?

### **Interpret Theology**

1. Describe ways in which you communicate the faith.
2. Describe your skills as teacher and preacher.
3. What resources do you use to remain theologically and biblically fresh and current?
4. Describe how you interpret the Bible.

### **Innovation/Creativity**

1. Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
2. Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to capture that vision.
3. Think back in your ministry and describe a situation that was stagnant or failing and describe how you stepped in to revitalize it.
4. When was the last time you created an opportunity out of an obstacle? How did you create that opportunity?
5. Describe a situation that was stagnant or failing and you stepped in to revitalize it.



### **Participant in the Larger Church**

1. Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding their relationship to the greater church.
2. Describe your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation, including ecumenical relationships, church agencies, and institutions.
3. How does your congregation participate in ministry of the ELCA?
4. What have you done to enable your congregation to become fully a partner with the ELCA?

### **Personal Growth**

1. Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.
2. How do you work at making yourself more effective in your work?
3. Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.
4. How do you observe Sabbath time?
5. How have you participated in lifelong learning? How have you chosen the areas where you have pursued more growth?
6. Share a recent (or past) experience that challenged your thinking, inspired you, or deepened your understanding of your ministry and/or life (e.g. a book, lecture, movie, event, program, article, travels, etc.).
7. What are your goals for continued personal and professional growth?
8. How would you help us involve people of all ages in church activities?

### **Call to Ministry**

1. Briefly describe the events which led you to prepare for the ministry.
2. Describe the process of deliberation which helps you determine God's call.
3. In what ways has your call to ministry changed over the years?
4. Tell us about the Spirit's work in your life.

### **Personal Faith Practices**

1. Describe your relationship with Jesus.
2. Describe your stewardship and devotional life.
3. Tell us about your personal faith practices.

### **Personal Ministry Practices**

1. What are the top three skills you would bring to our congregation?
  - a. How have you used those skills in your ministry?
2. What are your growth areas?
3. What aspect of ministry is most satisfying to you?
4. What aspect of ministry is most dissatisfying to you?
5. Describe your basic work orientation?
  - a. Where and when do you work best?
  - b. How do you prioritize tasks?
6. Describe your most important accomplishments. How did you go about reaching your goals?
7. How do you include pastoral visitation in your ministry? Crisis Visiting?
8. What has given you the greatest feeling of accomplishment in your ministry? How was that effort initiated and what obstacles did you overcome in carrying it out?



9. Tell us about your best effort in moving people beyond the maintenance mentality of ministry.
10. How do you typically give ministry away?
11. Tell us about a relationship you salvaged after a conflict or falling out with the person.
12. Describe a time when you effectively handled opposition to your calling and responsibilities as pastor and leader.
13. Describe a situation when your ministry expectations were high, but the outcome was unexpectedly disappointing. What was your response to the disappointment?
14. Describe a time when you handled unfounded criticism against you.
15. Are you current in Boundary Training? When is the last time you attended a workshop, and do you have a certificate of completion or letter verifying such? If not within the last three years, what are your plans for meeting the requirements in our synod.
16. What is your concept of Stewardship? Evangelism? Social Ministry?
17. What do you think about fund-raising activities?

### **Leadership**

1. Describe your leadership style.
2. What do you believe is the primary role of a congregation council?
3. Describe how you work with committees?
4. How do you work with other staff?
5. Communication is an important part of parish life. Give us examples of ways that you plan to communicate within our congregation.
6. What do you see as the role of lay members in a congregation, specifically in relation to the functions of worship, learning, witness, service, and support? What functions would belong uniquely to your position?
7. How do you cultivate giftedness in others?
8. Describe a good example of someone you helped to recognize and use spiritual gifts they were unaware they possessed.
9. Describe a time when members of your church were divided over an important issue. What did you do to resolve the conflict?
10. What is your best example of developing a ministry team? How did you develop the team and what was accomplished?

### **Multicultural Ministry**

1. Tell us about significant relationships you have had with someone who is different than yourself. Describe how you learned about their culture. Describe how you shared your culture or understanding with them.
2. How have you overcome some of your own biases and prejudices as you work with people who are unlike you? How have you helped others understand their prejudices? What have you done to help overcome your own prejudices?

### **Financial**

1. The Ministry Profile has provided some information about financial arrangements. You may wish to explore financially related concerns, such as salary, housing, and equity allowance.