

Interim Ministry Resources

Chapter 18 Transitions

Transitions (1)

Contents	1
Introduction	3
Part 1 Departing Pastor	
	<u>Page</u> <u>Topic</u>
	6 Ending Well
	6 Passages: A Bible Study for Congregations and Pastoral Leaders in Healthy Transition
	7 Ending Well—Step by Step
	9 Our pastor is leaving. What do we do?
	11 Some Thoughts on Letters
	11 Sample Letter to the Congregation
	12 A Sample Message for the Congregation on Pastoral Acts by Former Pastors
	12 Termination Tasks – For Congregational Leaders
	13 Termination Tasks – For Pastors
	14 Hospitality in the Ending Process
	14 Saying Good-bye Well
	15 Healthy Transitions
	15 Saying Goodbye
	15 Model Covenant for Congregations
	16 Model Covenant for Departing Pastor
	16 Model Covenant for Departing Pastor’s Family Members
	17 A Reflection
	17 Letter of agreement between a former pastor & congregation
	18 Suggested Prayers
	18 Exit Interview – Sample Questions
	19 Certification of Completion of Parochial Records
	19 Certification of Completion of Financial Obligations
	19 Informational “Survival” Kit for a New Pastor
	20 Exit Checklist
	21 For the Pastor Leaving the Congregation
	22 Guidelines for Retired Ordained Ministers
	22 Pastor’s Relationship with his/her Former Congregation
	23 Pastoral Ethics and Leave Taking: Toward a Pastoral Ethic upon Leaving a Congregation
	25 For the Pastor Leaving the Congregation
	25 ELCA Policy on Former Pastors
	26 Importance of Healthy Boundaries
	26 A Word about Professional Ethical Boundaries
	27 Future Pastoral Acts of Former Pastors
	27 Expectations of a Pastor upon Resignation from a Congregation
	27 Interim Pastor Explaining Appropriate Involvement of Previous Pastors
	28 Personal Letter from a Departing Pastor
	28 Letter of Agreement between a Former Pastor & Congregation
	29 Resources
Part 2 Interim Ministry	
	31 Introduction
	31 Model Constitution Congregation 2016
	34 Theological Context for Transitional Ministry
	35 Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
	36 Proposed Synod Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry
	37 The Transition Team: A Ministry Team to Help During the Time of Pastoral Vacancy
	38 Proposed Letter of Agreement for Interim Pastoral Ministry
	40 Addendum to Letter of Agreement for Interim Pastoral Ministry
	41 Interim Assessment Guide
	41 Recognition and Blessing of the Interim Pastor
	42 Congregational Ministry Assessment
	43 Interim and Self-Study
	45 Monthly Interim Ministry Report
	46 Quarterly Congregation Report

47	Terms of Dissolution Form for Interim Pastor
48	Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies
48	Updating Your Constitution
50	Disengagement from the Interim Period
50	Exit Interview for Interim Pastors with the Congregation
51	A Litany of Farewell for the Interim Pastor

Part 3 Transition Dynamics

52	Heritage
55	Identity
60	Vision
61	Mission
63	Leadership
65	Connections

Introduction

The goal of the call process is that the bishop and staff, congregation, and incoming pastor work together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring about a new partnership that is faithful to the Gospel, empowers the local congregation in its ministry, and strengthens the whole church as people of God. The task before entering into the call process is to bid farewell to the departing pastor. This involves a celebration of ministry, a covenant of the congregation and pastor, a farewell to pastor and family, healthy boundaries discussed and confirmed, and attending to the parish records.

An interim pastor is assigned by the bishop with the concurrence of the Congregation Council. The interim period becomes a time to ask the questions of past, present, and future: "Where have we been?", "Where are we now?", and "Where is God leading us?" The interim pastor will work with the congregation in order to claim the future with hope using the following transition dynamics.

	Reflection	
Heritage Identity Vision	Past Present Future	Where have we been? Where are we at? Where is God leading?
Action		
Mission Leadership Connections	Definition Operation Cooperation	What is God's purpose for this congregation? How is God's purpose to be carried out? Who are the partners in mission God provides?

- Heritage appreciate how the past of the congregation informs the present
- Identity discover who the congregation is in the current context
- Vision discern what it is this congregation understands God is calling this congregation to be
- Mission define purpose and direction for the congregation in God's mission
- Leadership engage people of the congregation in God's mission
- Connections explore all the relationships a congregation shares beyond itself

Consult the following resource for an overview flow chart

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

Overview flow chart of the Transition and Call Process

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

Page 6

[Images for Overview flow chart of the Transition and Pastoral Call Process](#)

Synod staff play an active role in the call process:

- A synod staff conducts an exit interview with departing pastor. That can be done by phone to save a drive.
- A synod staff meets with the Congregation Council prior to the current pastor's taking a new call/retirement. This is mainly to help cope with their anxiety and let them know synod staff and congregation are going to journey through this together. A synod staff also talks about doing the work of ending well with the departing pastor.
- A synod staff meets with a Congregation Council and proposed interim pastor for a concurrence interview.
- A synod staff meets with the Congregation Council to orientate them to the entire call process. Sometimes this is done on a Sunday so a synod staff can also do an adult forum, or a temple talk in the congregation so the whole congregation understands what they will be going through. One size does not fit all, if it ever did, so this needs to be tailored to the congregation and its unique context.
- A synod staff meets with the Transition Task Force (TTF) to orientate them to their work in the call process. When the TTF completes the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), a synod staff holds an open meeting where the entire congregation is welcome to attend to review the MSP.
- A synod staff meets with Call Committee to orientate them to the critical role they play in the calling a new pastor.
- A synod staff installs the newly called pastor.
- Occasionally a synod staff adds a final meeting with the Call Committee for the purpose of them giving feedback about how the process went.
- A synod staff on average meets face to face with congregations seven times. In some cases, a synod staff meets several times with a Call Committee if the process is taking longer than expected.
- A synod staff often meets face to face with the interim pastor at least once, sometimes more, while the interim pastor is serving a particular congregation in transition. This is helpful in assessing how things are going and how the synod staff is being perceived.
- A synod staff can be in almost weekly contact with congregations and/or their interim pastor as they go through the process. This is usually by email, so that synod staff has a record of what has been said and done.

Printed resource provided by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

A **Transition Task Force** consisting of four to six trusted and talented members of the congregation, at least one whom is also a member of the Congregation Council, attends to the following tasks:

1. To facilitate the closure activities for the ministry of the departing pastor.
2. To determine the congregation's readiness for the call process.
3. To work on the Ministry Site Profile.
4. To monitor the needs of the congregation and advise the interim pastor.
5. To work together with the congregation to explore the transition dynamics.
6. To facilitate the beginning of the new pastor's ministry by planning welcoming events and the installation and by presenting policies and procedures, as well as by introducing the new pastor to people, committees, and community networks.

Call Committee Covenant

Pray for guidance of the Holy Spirit

- Trust and believe that God will provide a pastor for our church.
- Lay aside personal agendas and biases.
- Pray for the long-term mission of the whole congregation.
- Pray for the candidate(s) you will interview and for the present staff.

Pledge to attend all interviews

- Prepare well for the interviews: pray, establish questions, do a practice interview.
- Become very familiar with our Ministry Site Profile; the candidates will know it well.
- If you or the congregation surface candidate names, pass on those names to the synod staff.
- Interview all the candidates whose names are provided to you; the number will vary depending upon availability of candidates who match your mission needs.
- Interview in person, not on the telephone (Long distance may require an initial interview by Skype.).
- You may arrange to have candidates provide a tape or video.
- Welcome and show hospitality to candidates; give a tour; eat a meal together.
- Invite spouses to sit in on interview if they wish (but they should not be asked questions).
- Determine how you will evaluate candidates; reflect and debrief immediately after interviews.
- Interview all candidates within 10–14 days.
- Ask questions that get to the heart of mission and ministry.

Practice confidentiality

- Respect the confidentiality of all candidates.
- The circle of confidentiality grows to include the Congregation Council when you recommend a candidate.
- Those candidates not selected must forever remain in confidence.

Communicate

- Explain to the congregation frequently what is happening in writing and orally.
- After receiving the names of candidates, schedule interviews and arrange for lodging and meals, mail a packet to each that contains the Ministry Site Profile, supplemental material from the church and information about the surrounding community.
- After interviews, thank candidates, report your decision as soon as possible, and arrange for reimbursement of travel, lodging, or meal expenses.
- Stay in contact with candidates after interviews.
- Inform candidates in writing of your decision to recommend for call or release from consideration immediately after decision is made.

Bring a united decision to the congregation

- Come to a consensus on one candidate.
 - Be positive and unified in public support of the chosen candidate.
 - Remember there are no perfect pastors or perfect congregations.
 - Bring recommendation to the Congregation Council to approve salary and benefits.
 - Bring complete information about the candidate, salary and benefits to the congregational meeting for the vote (2/3 majority required).
- It is a privilege, a joy, and a responsibility to be on a Call Committee. Plan to work hard and you will meet some fine candidates. Pray that God will provide a pastor who will faithfully and effectively lead and serve your congregation.

[PDF] Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf
Call Process Booklet - Yumpu
<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>
[Images for Call Committee Covenant](#)

Page 86

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Congregation Council do and when?

- Plans farewell for installed pastor.
- Meets with synod staff for call process orientation and interim pastor concurrence.
- Develops a communication strategy.
- Maintains community with the synod staff.
- Selects the group responsible for the development of the Ministry Site Profile.
- Develops the salary range for the next pastor.
- Sets the open meeting for reviewing the Ministry Site Profile with the synod staff.
- Selects a Call Committee according to the constitution.
- Receives and votes on the Call Committee recommendation.
- Works with synod staff to prepare the salary package.
- Sets the date for congregation meeting to extend a call.
- Plans farewell for interim pastor.
- Plans welcome for new installed pastor.
- Introduces pastor to the Mutual Ministry Committee.
- Coordinates with synod staff and pastor for installation.

How does the congregation participate in the process?

- Participates in the farewell for installed pastor.
- Learns about the call process from the Congregation Council.
- Participates as invited in the Ministry Site Profile.
- Participates in the review of the Ministry Site Profile.
- Votes on the recommended candidate for installed pastor.
- Participates in the farewell for interim pastor.
- Welcomes the new installed pastor.

When can we form the Call Committee?

- After a month or two, the Congregation Council appoints the Transition Task Force, which may or may not be the same as the Call Committee.
- When the Ministry Site Profile is complete, the Congregation Council selects the Call Committee, which may or may not be the same as the Transition Task Force, although at least one or two people on both teams is helpful.

Why is a Ministry Site Profile so important?

- The Ministry Site Profile is an opportunity to directly assess the strengths and growth areas of the congregation.
- It is how you introduce your congregation to potential candidates before they interview.
- It may reveal aspects of ministry that have been neglected or help you to see how you are making a difference in God's world – or both!

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Page 6

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Frequently Asked Questions Pastoral Call Process Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

**Calling a pastor is discerning the will of God – candidate, synod staff, congregation.
When these three agree, we are bold to state we have discerned whom God is calling.**

Part 1 Departing Pastor

Ending Well

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1.3–6)

Thanksgiving and Praise

A pastoral transition can be a difficult and emotional time. For many, a pastor leaving means uncertainty and sadness. For a few, it may be the day they have been waiting for. For others, it can feel like a death. No matter what the relationship has been—positive, negative or lukewarm—the final weeks of a pastorate are very important to a healthy transition.

These weeks will be filled with detail work. The pastor will be making sure that records are up to date and visiting as many members as possible—in addition to packing up a household. The Congregation Council will be meeting several times to ensure a smooth transition into the interim period. If there are other staff members, they will most likely be taking on additional responsibilities. It may feel overwhelming at times.

Through all of this essential work it will be important to remember to celebrate. In all but the most difficult situations, pastor and congregation will have many things to reflect on and celebrate. Remember to thank and praise God for all the good that has happened during the pastorate. Think about appropriate ways to thank a pastor. Never forget that the focus of the church is always on God and yet God uses people to further the kingdom. This time will be an opportunity to do something that the church ought to do more often: celebrate with great Joy!

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Page 21

Call Process Booklet - Yumpu

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin A pastoral transition can be a difficult and emotional time.](#)

Passages: A Bible Study for Congregations and Pastoral Leaders in Healthy Transition

Reflection

Mitch Albom in his novel, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* begins with the following:

“This is a story about a man named Eddie and it begins at the end, with Eddie dying in the sun. It might seem strange to start a story with an ending, but all endings are also beginnings. We just don’t know it at the time.”

- Does that ring true? How so? How not?

Think of a transitional time in your life (graduation, geographical move, marriage, divorce, illness, death of a loved one, new job, promotion, children off to college, etc.) that was experienced as an ending but later was understood as a beginning.

How did you feel at the time?

- What created anxiety for you at the time?
- Where did you turn for strength and comfort?

Bible Reading

St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians gives us an opportunity to study how a leader prepares themselves and those whom they lead for a difficult transitional time. Paul is imprisoned and facing death. There is a real possibility that Paul will never see those he has taught and loved again. The Philippians are facing the reality of a future without Paul at a time when there is dissension within the church and oppression from the outside. Throughout the entire letter Paul is a model of a leader whose faith in Jesus Christ gives him joy, courage, and hope during a difficult transition.

Read Philippians 4:1-9

This is the conclusion of Paul’s letter. How is Paul communicating his affection for the Philippians?

What does he say about his relationship with them and why does he say it?

In verses 2 and 3 Paul addresses a conflict within the congregation. Why does he do this now? How does he suggest that the conflict be resolved?

How does Paul suggest the Philippians move through this transitional time? What values and practices will be essential to transform this ending into a beginning? How can these same values and practices be incorporated into a transition you are facing now?

In verse 8, Paul suggests that the recipients of this letter intentionally focus on certain things. What are they? What dynamics, relationships, activities, and plans in your current situation could be described by the words in this verse?

“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put into practice.” Here Paul is hinting at the legacy he is leaving behind. What would you hope to be the legacy that you leave when you move from one stage, place, or condition to another? What do you want others to learn, receive, or hear from you? What do you need to learn, receive, or hear from others who may be leaving you and your circumstances?

Further Study

The Bible is a compilation of “passage” stories. God’s people are described as those who are always experiencing change. They move from place to place, from doubt to faith, from life to death and to life again. Think about the great heroes and heroines in both the Old and New Testament. Moses, Ruth, Elijah, Jeremiah, Mary and Joseph, the disciples, Jesus, and others. Read about how they faced the difficult transitions in their lives. What resources did they rely on? How did each of them communicate their values to those who were affected by the transition? How did each of these Biblical “endings” become a “beginning”?

Reflection on Our Present Transition

Where are we now as a congregation?
What have we learned in this study that will help us in the transition?
How have we said “goodbye” to other pastoral leaders? Here in this congregation? In other congregations?
How did those pastors leave? Did they retire? Die? Leave for another call? Others?
Where is God leading us as a congregation now?

Philippians is scriptural “passage” story. Is there another story or scriptural text that describes us?

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[Images for Passages: A Bible Study for Congregations and Pastoral Leaders in Healthy Transition](#)

Page 16

A Prayer for Beginnings

I Tremble on the Edge of a Maybe

O God of beginnings, as your Spirit moved
Over the face of the deep on the first day of creation,
Move with me now in my time of beginnings,
when the air is rain-washed, the bloom is on the bush,
and the world seems fresh and full of possibilities,
and I feel ready and full

I tremble on the edge of a maybe,
A first time, a new thing, a tentative start,
And the wonder of it lays its fingers on my lips

In silence, Lord
I share now my eagerness and my uneasiness
about this something different
I would be or do;
And I listen for your leading
To help me separate the light from the darkness
In the change I seek to shape
And which is shaping me.

[Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle](http://www.amazon.com/Guerrillas-Of-Grace-Prayers-Battle/dp/0806690542)

<http://www.amazon.com/Guerrillas-Of-Grace-Prayers-Battle/dp/0806690542>

[Images for Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle](#)

Read through the prayer silently.

What words or phrases speak to you as you contemplate transitions in your own life and in the life of your congregation?

What are the beginnings you hope will guide you through this time of endings?

What is your prayer for the congregation, your departing pastor and their family?

Close by praying for one another, your pastoral leader, the congregation, followed by praying together the prayer/poem, and the Lord's Prayer.

Eternal God,
we thank you for our pastor
and for our life together
in this congregation and community.
As they have been a blessing to us,
so now send them forth
to be a blessing to others;
through Jesus Christ,
our Savior and Lord. Amen.

[Healthy Transitions Packet - Upstate New York Synod](#)

5. Passages: A Bible Study (white)

http://www.upstatenysynod.org/phocadownload/complete_healthy_transitions_packet_8-08%20_2.pdf

[Images for Healthy Transitions Packet - Upstate New York Synod 5. Passages: A Bible Study](#)

Ending Well—Step by Step

- The Congregation Council receives the resignation of the pastor and notifies the congregation and synod staff.
- The Congregation Council and synod staff meet to review the call process and consider the pastoral needs during the interim period.
- The Congregation Council interviews an interim candidate proposed by synod staff.
- The Congregation Council may conduct an exit interview of its outgoing pastor.
- The Congregation Council helps the congregation to understand the role of former pastors with the congregations they have served.
- The Congregation Council plans and appropriately celebrates the farewell of its outgoing pastor.

Congregation Council

- Pray for a meaningful celebration of the shared ministry of the pastor and congregation, a smooth transition into the interim period, and your local needs.
- Be ready to meet with the synod staff contact person twice in the month prior to your pastor leaving: once for a call process overview and to determine any special needs during the interim period, and once for a concurrence interview with a prospective interim candidate. Be aware that other meetings of the council may be necessary during this period.
- Study the role of the interim pastor.
- Plan to appropriately celebrate the shared ministry of the pastor and congregation.
- Consider using the Healthy Transitions materials found in Chapter 1 resources.
- Help the congregation to understand a pastor's involvement following a call.
- Receive the pastor's final report or conduct an exit interview with the departing pastor. An interview can be done with the whole council, the executive committee or a group of three to five leaders in the congregation.
- Direct all committees/teams/etc. to collect the information necessary for a smooth transition for the interim pastor (educational curriculum that the pastor oversees, homebound member list, etc.)
- Complete the definition of compensation form and send it by mail or email to your synod staff contact person. (Page 19)
- The secretary of the congregation must sign and send the Certification of Completion of Congregational Records to the synod office. (Page 18)
- Be sure that all forms of compensation according to the letter of call and your current budget (pro-rated for the partial year) are granted by the end date of service. The treasurer and secretary of the congregation must sign and send the Certification of Completion of All Financial Obligations to the Bishop. (Page 18)

Congregation

- Pray for a meaningful celebration of the shared ministry of the pastor and congregation.
- Appropriately celebrate the shared ministry of the pastor and congregation.
- Prayerfully respect the boundaries of the pastoral office. Be clear not to ask them to perform duties of their office.
- Listen to the information shared by the Congregation Council regarding the calling of a new pastor and the role of an interim pastor.

Departing Pastor

- Pray first.
- Send a copy of the letter of resignation to the Bishop.
- Set the date for the final worship service and the last official working day including vacation.
- Inform Portico of effective dates of change of billing or retirement.
- Put all things in order, such as the homebound visitation list, names of area hospitals that members often go to, confirmation curriculum, policy manuals, etc.
- Provide a list of upcoming pastoral acts to appropriate leadership people (weddings, baptisms, etc.) This would include names, phone numbers, dates, locations, directions, and other pertinent information.
- Make yourself available for those who wish to say goodbye personally or at the congregation's farewell celebration.
- Save enough time to say your own goodbyes, as well as for the moving chores.
- Read one of the suggested resources in the Healthy Transitions Bibliography.
- If resigning without another call, write to the bishop requesting to remain rostered as On Leave from Call. If retiring, request Synod Council approval naming the effective date.
- Be sure that the parochial reports are completely up to date before you leave.
- Complete all financial obligations to and from the congregation, while signing off on a form stating this intention and return it to the bishop.
- Do an exit interview with your Congregation Council and contact the synod office to schedule one with the synod staff contact person.
- If there is a parsonage, leave it clean.
- Do everything you can to make the next pastorate a success, including avoiding the temptation to continue your influence after you leave.

Meetings

- The synod staff contact person meets with the Congregation Council to discuss the call process and assess the needs of the congregation during the interim period.
- The synod staff contact meets a second time with the Congregation Council to introduce the proposed interim pastor for concurrence. (An additional meeting may be necessary if the council does not vote to concur with the bishop on the first candidate or if the recommended candidate declines the appointment following the interview.)

Pray

It is important to remember that we are people of prayer at every step of the call process. This may be an excellent opportunity to deepen the prayer life of the congregation or the leadership within the congregation. Take your worries, your hopes and your thanksgivings to God in prayer.

Celebrate!

Whether the pastorate which is ending was extremely fulfilling for the congregation or challenging or anything in between, an appropriate celebration of the shared ministry of the pastor and the congregation is important. When a pastor leaves under good circumstances, as in most cases, the congregation ought to celebrate with great joy.

When a pastor leaves under a cloud, the congregation ought to be honest but also be grounded in God's grace and hope. All congregations should strive to "end well" with their departing pastor.

"What should we do?" Do whatever is in the character of your congregation. Many consider farewell gifts; nearly all celebrate with food—we're Lutheran! Be sure the whole congregation and any people from the community who were impacted by the ministry of the pastor are invited.

Be Aware of Anxiety

For many, a pastoral transition brings anxiety. Leaders in your congregation will need to manage their own anxiety and help others to deal with theirs. Simple awareness of this feeling is important. Communication and education are also essential: tell the congregation where you are in the process weekly or monthly; tell them what to expect and thank them for their continued patience and prayers. You may wish to include some fun or meaningful words of encouragement in your bulletin, newsletter, parish announcements, etc. Scripture, prayers and other quotes are included throughout this document. Feel free to share others that are meaningful to you with your synod staff contact.

Keep in Regular Contact with Your Synod Staff

Your synod staff is here to serve you. If you have any questions along the way, be sure to contact them by phone, postal mail or email.

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Page 23

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[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Ending Well-Step by Step](#)

Our pastor is leaving. What do we do?

Phase I – Our Pastor is leaving. What do we do?

- When a rostered leader resigns, he or she submits a letter of resignation to the Congregational Council.
- The letter of resignation is copied and distributed to the Synod Office and to the congregation, along with a letter from the council accepting the resignation and detailing any plans being made for a farewell event (if known).
- A synod staff person will be in contact with the congregational president to begin a closer relationship during the transition process.
- The pastor and council complete any obligations to one another (i.e. updating parochial records, completing any financial obligations between pastor and the congregation, etc.).
- The council clarifies the new relationship and expectations of the departing Pastor, complete the Letter of Agreement and notify the congregation.
- An exit interview is scheduled between the pastor and the Synod Office.
- The congregation holds a farewell event for the pastor.

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com](#)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

Page 8

[Images for The Call Process Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Our pastor is leaving. What do we do?](#)

1: Concluding the Partnership with your Pastor

There are many reasons for a pastor to leave a congregation: retirement, another call, or personal reasons. No matter the reason, there will be a period of adjustment for the congregation. Some members of the congregation might feel sad, abandoned, or betrayed, while others might feel relief or even joy at a pastor's departure. From both ends of the emotional spectrum, there will be some who want to move ahead quickly, often ignoring the emotional work that is critical in transition time. Congregation members must be allowed to process their feelings in order to prepare for the next pastor. Processing emotions takes time and should not be minimized. Transitions are an opportunity to develop new ways of being that offer revitalization. Saying good-bye well can pave the way for a healthy new relationship later on. Congregations are not alone during these times of transition. The Synod Office is always in partnership with congregations and pastors, and will walk even more closely with congregations during pastoral transitions. As one pastor is leaving and the congregation prepares to welcome a new pastor into the future ministry, the Synod Office offers specific and constitutionally mandated recommendations for congregations. The relationship among the Synod Office, the congregation and the pastor is a partnership where each one holds the other accountable to be who God is creating us to be: the body of Christ.

2: Consultation with the Synod Office

- A. The current outgoing pastor indicates to the Bishop and to the congregational council that s/he will be leaving.
- B. The council president contacts the Synod Office to begin the transition process and sets up a meeting with the Congregational Council and rostered minister. A representative of the Synod Office visits with the Council to answer questions, to get to know the particular needs of the congregation, and to explain to the council how the call process works. This document should form the core of that conversation.
- C. The council president may schedule an exit Interview with the exiting pastor.

3: Congregation Council Accepts the Pastor's Letter of Resignation

- A. When a pastor resigns, the letter of resignation should be submitted to the congregation. Unless specified in the letter, the recommended thirty-day notice starts with the date on the letter. A letter of resignation is not voted upon.
- B. The Congregational Council shall promptly inform all members of the congregation of the pastor's resignation. The announcement may be made orally and in writing. An appropriate action would be a letter to all the members of the congregation, which includes:
 1. Notice that the congregational council has accepted the pastor's letter of resignation;
 2. The last date the pastor will serve the congregation and any plans for a farewell event;
 3. Expressions of gratitude to the rostered ministers;
 4. A copy of the pastor's letter of resignation.
- C. The council president schedules an exit interview with the exiting pastor and church council. The purpose of the exit interview are: (Appendix 1)
 - To evaluate the ministry;
 - To identify areas of potential growth for the pastor and the congregation;

- To celebrate the ministry;
- To articulate appropriate boundaries and establish a covenant of behavior between the pastor and the congregation for the future health and well-being of the congregation (Appendix 2)

4: Complete All Obligations

- Portico Benefits: The president and treasurer ensure that an End of Call form is completed in order to cease billing from Portico. The document can be found at www.porticobenefits.org. The congregation is responsible for the pension and benefits until this document is completed. The exiting pastor must complete a Change of Call form to inform Portico where to mail upcoming invoices.
- Parsonage: If there is a parsonage, consider scheduling a walk-through with the current pastor to plan for the resolution of any issues identified in the walk-through.
- Future correspondence: Obtain a forwarding address, phone number, and e-mail address to forward any mail that the pastor may receive and to mail anything that is not completed by the time of departure. It is helpful if this information is communicated to the Synod Office as well.
- Receive the Parochial Reports and financial record: Upon the pastor's departure, the secretary of the congregation council will meet with the departing pastor to review and receive parochial reports and financial records. The parochial reports of each congregation should be kept in a separate book and will remain the property of the congregation. The secretary addresses and completes the Certificate of Church Records and Certification and Completion of Financial Records (Appendix 3, Appendix 4).
- Settle financial accounts with the resigning Pastor: A congregation under financial obligation to its former pastor must make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling another pastor. Such financial obligations may include loans on housing, grants, vacation pay, etc. In the same manner, any financial obligations of the pastor to the congregation must also be satisfied.

5: Saying Farewell to Your Pastor

Because a resignation signals the end of an important covenantal relationship, it is common for congregation members to experience feelings of grief, sadness, anger, anxiety, etc. In order to help the congregation move through this experience, the council should arrange a farewell event (or events) for the exiting pastor and his or her family. You may consider using a Service of Farewell and Godspeed in the final worship service (Appendix The congregation council should plan appropriate expressions of appreciation for the resigning pastor and his or her family. This may take several forms, such as:

- A service and/or reception which may include invitations to fellow pastors and community leaders
- A seated dinner or an informal potluck dinner
- A farewell gift

A special committee may be appointed to plan the event(s) and coordinate all congregational expressions of appreciation.

6: Planning for Transition

While the congregation is preparing for the final weeks of the current pastor's call, the congregational council works with the Synod Office to plan for the transition process. The first question to consider is the viability of the congregation. All leadership should ask themselves whether this congregation has the financial and human resources to continue in full time ministry. If a congregation's viability is in doubt, significant conversation should take place between the Synod Office and the congregational leadership. If there are major outstanding debts or financial obligations, the holder of that debt may also need to be included in deciding an appropriate plan to move forward. Possible options may include:

- Supply Pastor – Consult the list of pastors found on the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin website www.nswwi.org/leadership/congregations
- Bridge Pastor – Under special circumstances, the Synod Office can appoint a pastor for long-term supply for Word and Sacrament ministry. This is a contracted position or a called position.
- Redevelopment Pastor – In consultation with the Synod Office, a specially- trained Redevelopment Pastor may be appointed to work with a congregation whose focus and direction in mission have changed due to a changing neighborhood or membership. This is a term call (1-7 years).
- Interim Pastor – In consultation with the Synod Office, an Interim Pastor is selected by the congregation council. An Interim Pastor is contracted by the congregation and called by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Council.
- Term Call Pastor: A pastor who is called by the congregation for a specific period of time renewable if the congregation, pastor and synod agree. This call can be changed to a regular call at completion of the term.

7: Things to Remember

Every context is different

If the interim process is appropriate for the congregation, the Synod Office will provide an interim pastor for a concurrence interview with the congregational council. The council then interviews the pastor and determines if he/she is a good fit for the congregation. If the council does not concur with the bishop's selection, the synod office will continue to look for an appropriate candidate. The council negotiates a time frame and compensation package with the interim pastor. In most interim situations, the congregation contracts with the pastor while the official call comes from the Synod Council. While waiting for an interim pastor, the council can invite a supply pastor to conduct worship and provide pastoral care. (A list of supply pastors is available on the synod website www.nswwi.org)

Compensation package for an Interim Pastor

Recommendations by the Synod Office:

- Non-negotiable: Benefits, vacation, and involvement in the life of the Synod (Synod Assembly and conference gatherings).
- Negotiable: Salary. This is negotiated by factoring in the exiting pastor's salary, the potential range of the new pastor's salary, continuing education, mileage, percentage of time needed, and Social Security offset.

Everyone needs to know his or her role

Remember, God is in charge!

Synod Office: Responsible for holding you in prayer throughout the whole transition process, articulating the purpose of the intentional interim process, providing resources as needed to assist you, and providing appropriate and qualified candidates to the call committee.

Interim Pastor: Responsible for leading the ongoing ministry of the congregation, providing pastoral care, leading worship and administering the sacraments and leading the transition team/call committee through the transition process.
 Congregational Leadership: Responsible for supporting and leading the congregation in its ongoing ministry and providing prayerful support and encouragement to the transition team and the call committee.
 Congregation: Responsible for supporting its ongoing ministries: baptisms, worship, faith formation, service, sacraments, stewardship, and relationship with the wider church. Also, responsible for holding the transition team, interim pastor, and the call committee in prayer.
 Outgoing Pastor: Responsible for maintaining professional distance from the congregation once they have departed by not contacting the congregation or its members and not getting involved in their work and ministry.
 Future Pastor: Responsible for prayerfully discerning God's call.

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](http://s3.amazonaws.com)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

Page 12

[Images for The Call Process Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Concluding the Partnership with Your Pastor](#)

Some Thoughts on Letters

1. The pastor and the Congregation Council shall observe confidentiality about the pastor's decision to depart until the pastor informs the congregation by letter. Maintaining confidentiality allows all members to receive the same information at the same time. The pastor shall meet with the congregation staff at the same time the pastor's letter is mailed to the congregation.
2. The pastor's letter to the congregation should include the reason(s) and other pertinent information about the decision to depart. Doing so will be very beneficial to both the congregation and the pastor as they begin to experience the dynamics of separation which will result from the ending of their relationship. However, the pastor should not be expected to discuss matters of a personal nature or disclose information pertaining to health concerns.
3. The Congregation Council may also send a letter about the pastor's decision if it feels it is necessary. However, it is recommended that such a letter be sent after the Congregation Council meets with the assistant to the bishop. This will allow the Congregation Council to include information about intentional transition ministry and the communication with the assistant to the bishop and the dean of interim ministry.
4. The content of all communications needs to be consistent throughout the time of transition. Copies of all letters should be sent to the synod office.
5. In the event the pastor's call is involuntarily ended, the Congregation Council, with guidance of the bishop or assistant to the bishop, shall, in writing, inform the congregation and the congregation staff of pertinent information as deemed appropriate. The pastor shall not participate in the preparation of the letter.
6. The same process described in Paragraph 5 above shall be used when the congregation and the pastor end their relationship by mutual agreement. However, in this situation, the pastor shall participate in the preparation of the communication.
7. In the situations described above in Paragraphs 5 and 6, it is very important that the communication set forth the reason(s) in a manner which will help both the congregation and pastor to conclude their relationship in a Christ-like manner. Judgmental statements, allegations, differences of opinions, and blaming are not in the best interests of the congregation and the pastor and, therefore, should not be included regardless of the circumstances.

[Pastoral Leadership Transition Process](#)

A Guide for Lay Leaders/Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA

Some Thoughts on Letters

http://gracelutherandh.com/documents/2011/Transition_Guide_Final_12-3-2010.pdf

Page 16

[Images for Pastoral Leadership Transition Process A Guide for Lay Leaders/Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](#)
[Some Thoughts on Letters](#)

Sample Letter to the Congregation

To Members of _____ Lutheran Church

As you know, our pastor has resigned. This raises questions about what happens next. First, we will continue all normal church services, programs, and events. If necessary, we will make arrangements for short-term pastoral services. The Synod's Office of the Bishop uses a carefully designed process to assist us in this time of transition, which is based on the most up-to-date research and techniques available. I want to share with you an outline of this process and share what this means for our life together.

Phase One – After a Pastor Resigns. We are in this phase right now. We are planning how to best say goodbye and celebrate our time and ministry together with Pastor _____. We will keep you posted as plans unfold. At the same time, we are in contact with the synod office to identify an interim pastor to guide us through this transition.

Phase Two – Self-Study and Visioning Process. In order to select our next pastor, we will work with the interim pastor to conduct a study of our congregation and our situation, to develop a vision of the future mission to which God is calling this congregation, and to discern the type of pastor and the pastoral characteristics needed to lead the congregation to fulfill that vision.

Phase Three – The Call Process. After Phase Two is completed, the Congregation Council will appoint a Call Committee who will interview pastoral candidates and recommend a candidate to the Congregation Council. Finally, a new pastor will be called to serve our congregation through a vote of the congregation at a special meeting.

Phase Four – Implementation. This is when we welcome our new pastor and work toward the vision of future ministry that we developed during this period of transition.

How long will this take? As soon as possible, the Congregation Council will agree on an interim pastor. This means that from an early stage we will have an interim pastor. The process of developing a vision for the future and the detailed information needed for the Ministry Site Profile will take at least eight months. This entire process may take about 12 to 18 months to do properly. In the meantime, we will have the services of our interim pastor.

We ask the congregation members to keep the Congregation Council and the congregation in your prayers as we embark on this carefully-designed process to search for our next pastor. We are willing to answer any questions you have.
Yours in Christ,

Congregation President

Pastoral Leadership Transition Process

A Guide for Lay Leaders/Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA
Sample Letter to the Congregation

http://gracelutherandh.com/documents/2011/Transition_Guide_Final_12-3-2010.pdf

Page 17

[Images for Pastoral Leadership Transition Process A Guide for Lay Leaders/Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA Sample Letter to the Congregation](#)

A Sample Message for the Congregation on Pastoral Acts by Former Pastors

This sample article may be helpful to your congregation at this time of transition. It may be more effective to put it into your own words. While it may be most effective when used as part of a final pastor's reflection in the newsletter, an open letter from the Council president, or a joint reflection from the pastor and the Council president. Keep in mind that this is not a commandment from God, but a healthy practice for the good of the whole church and especially your future ministry as a congregation.

For the health and vitality of congregations it is essential that they fully embrace and support the ministry of their currently called pastor, whether that be under regular call or interim call. This means that when a pastor leaves a congregation it is not appropriate for them to continue to function in the pastoral role. A departing pastor should not preside at baptisms, funerals or weddings (inside or outside of the church proper), continue in any counseling relationship with a parishioner, be involved in any way in the call process or comment on a particular candidate, or influence in any manner the future of the congregation. This can be very difficult for some people to understand. Just as you may be tempted to call upon your former pastor because of the relationship that you have had, so you are stunting any future relationship that could be possible with your new pastor. A clear line needs to be drawn from the ministry of the former pastor to that of the next pastor. Therefore, it is important that you understand that after the farewell service, Pastor _____ cannot come back to do funerals, weddings, or baptisms, come back to lead worship services (other than by the invitation of the Congregation Council as the "former pastor" to help celebrate special events such as anniversaries), visit you in the hospital, accept appointments with you.

Regarding this matter, you may contact the pastor until the last day of service or any Council member to discuss this important aspect of our pastoral transition.

Love in Christ,

Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 12

Call Process Booklet - Yumpu

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin A Sample Message for the Congregation on Pastoral Acts by Former Pastors](#)

Termination Tasks – For Congregational Leaders

Consider this an offering of helpful suggestions rather than a step-by-step guide to follow.

Your pastor has just announced at a Congregation Council meeting that he/she is going to accept a new call either to another church or to retirement. Such news always comes as somewhat of a shock. What are some tasks that the congregation should be about?

First of all, understand what an emotionally powerful time it is for both your pastor and for congregational members. Once the shock of the initial announcement wears off, people will crave understanding and they will need to give their sorrow words.

Helpful to the understanding process and grieving process is open communication between pastor and congregation. Encourage good communication through newsletter articles, letters and conversations. When pastors can be clear about their reasons for leaving/retiring it is very helpful to the congregation. When pastors can share their discernment process this difficult time can become a wonderful teachable moment. The best good-byes are well planned. Pastoral good-byes are a time to celebrate what is best about the body of Christ. Think about how your congregation can do it well.

• How might you honor the pastor's family in this busy and stressful time in their life? Will they need help in preparing for their move? Where will they eat once their kitchen is boxed up? Where will they stay the night the moving truck comes?

• Are there ways to help the pastor's spouse and children find good closure to their time in your community? A photo album of community schools, parks, businesses, and gathering places makes a nice keepsake for young people.

• Appoint a committee to plan any farewells. Work in concert with the pastor's family honoring their feelings and the need of the congregation to express their feelings.

Consider farewells both inside and outside the context of worship.

• Are there important people (relatives, friends, community leaders, neighboring pastors, past colleagues) who should receive a special invitation to a farewell event?

• Is the farewell a church event or open to the community? One church rented a billboard to say thank you to its retiring pastor and to invite the community to the farewell celebration.

• What kind of gift is appropriate? Some congregations encourage members to pool their money together to purchase a travel voucher or gift certificate. One congregation had an artist depict its pastor in caricature with scenes of favorite memories together.

• Will all ages have a chance to say thank you? How might the younger saints of God be able to express themselves?

- Think about a lasting memory you want people to have of your pastor, and make sure people get to experience that memory in a farewell event. For example, if a pastor is known for having a rapport with the youngest saints, then arrange one more time for them to have fun singing, learning or playing together at the farewell.
- Learn what worked well for other congregations in your synod that have recently said good-bye to a pastor.

“When a pastor leaves...” - La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA

TERMINATION TASKS - FOR CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

http://www.lacrosseareasynd.org/wp-content/uploads/When_a_Pastor_Leaves_booklet.pdf Page 4

[Images for “When a pastor leaves...” - La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA TERMINATION TASKS - FOR CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS](#)

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly

Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call

Page 111

<http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/8432/Evangelical-Lutheran-Worship-Occasional-Services-for-the-Assembly>

[Images for Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call](#)

Termination Tasks – For Pastors

The resignation of a pastor from his/her congregation has been described as a “dangerous opportunity.” It is “dangerous” because years of solid ministry can be undone by a poor leaving process. There is the temptation for many to deny dealing with the personal feelings or to avoid showing emotions. Consequently, pastors try to find ways to, at least emotionally, steal off into the night when they take leave from a parish.

A resignation is also an “opportunity” in that it is a special time of learning and seeing things in a new light. It is a time of intense emotional upheaval but also a time of intense awareness and possibility. Too often the emotions, stresses and growth of this transition are underestimated. The stresses involved in the resignation process should not be underestimated. It is a wise thing to slow down, take time for self and family, and find resources to help with your journey through this transition.

Taking Care of the Home Front

- Slow down and be gentle with yourself and your feelings.
- Feel your feelings. Keep a journal of your emotions throughout the leaving process.
- Recognize your family’s need for extra time from you to bring order/stability for them.
- Answer the question, “Who is my pastor?” and ask that person to journey with you.

Breaking the News

- Announce your resignation 4-8 weeks in advance. This gives yourself and your congregation ample time to work on your good-byes. Note: lay people feel strongly that extended notice and delayed leaving is very difficult for the congregation.
- Be straight and clear about your reasons for leaving/retiring. Take full responsibility for the call you’ve heard to leave this position. Share appropriately your process of spiritual discernment.
- Keep people informed. Share information through newsletters, letters and conversations. Consider publishing one or both of the articles in this booklet on Pastoral Transitions.
- Express your gratitude for the valuable gifts you’ve received from the parish.
- Publicize a written agreement about your future relationship with the parish (See Sample Announcement).

Determine

- Who are special people and require personal good-byes?
- Who are people who will need attention because your relationship has been difficult?
- Who will need at least a phone call?
- Who do I want to write a personal letter to?
- Which groups do I need to drop in on?

Organize

- Your congregation will notice how you leave things. Let them be proud of your ministry.
- Help the congregation find a sense of closure. (A congregation’s unresolved work often turns the next pastor into an unintended interim.)
- Having your affairs in order helps with your own sense of closure. (If the termination process has not been done well clergy arrive in their new calling with fatigue and depression as part of their start-up period).
- Make sure the church records are up to date.
- Leave no tasks, commitments, or appointments dangling.
- Make sure policies are written down and up to date.
- Leave transition helps for your successor.

“When a pastor leaves...” - La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA

TERMINATION TASKS - FOR PASTORS

http://www.lacrosseareasynd.org/wp-content/uploads/When_a_Pastor_Leaves_booklet.pdf Page 5

[Images for “When a pastor leaves...” - La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA TERMINATION TASKS - FOR PASTORS](#)

Resources

Preaching Through Pulpit Transitions - Preaching Magazine

The period of leadership transition would be an excellent time to preach a sermon on a congregation's responsibility to their future pastor. A good possible text is I Timothy 5:17, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." Other options are I Thessalonians 5:12-13 and Ephesians

4:11-16. While tact and wisdom appropriate to your circumstances are called for, should not you, as the resigning pastor, do what you can to breed good beginnings for your successor?

<http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11563823/>

[Images for Preaching Through Pulpit Transitions - Preaching Magazine](#)

Hospitality in the Ending Process

Whatever the reason for the pastor's leaving, there are certain courtesies and practices that should be considered. It will be a difficult time for the pastor and members of the congregation. It's important to pay attention to the emotional needs of everyone. The council could appoint an Ending Task Force whose duties would be to make the ending process as helpful and as positive as possible.

Your congregation constitution will direct you on how to make the official notifications regarding the pastor's leaving but you will want to make sure the shut-ins and those who might not get the official announcement are notified in person. The pastor may intend to meet with each of them on a regular round or may ask that Stephen Ministers or other visitors pass the word along. Ask the pastor about the best way to reach these members and what would be most helpful to him/her.

Ask the pastor what ways would make his/her transition easiest. We all know that it is the "job" of the church to be caring, but we can underestimate the amount of caring that may be needed during a pastoral transition. Pastors' families too often "suffer in silence" as they are uprooted, change schools and jobs, and leave friends and familiar communities. Be sure that someone on the Ending Task Force is paying attention to the needs of the pastor and the pastor's family.

Whatever else is needed to care for the family, a celebration of ministry is almost mandatory. It can take a variety of forms but is an important part of ending well. Various congregations have celebrated with catered dinners, pot lucks, and special receptions after church. Any would be appropriate in a given circumstance. You might schedule it in conjunction with a final service. You will know what is most appropriate for your congregation by what your congregation values and by your discussions with other members of the council. Consider inviting other community leaders, funeral directors, neighboring pastors, the bishop, synod council representatives, friends of the pastor's family, and others with whom the pastor has built relationships over the years. Ask the pastor for suggestions in this regard. This event is a time to celebrate your ministry together and to wish the pastor well in a new venue.

A departing gift for the pastor and/or family has been the practice of many congregations. It is quite appropriate to remember the pastor this way but the gift should reflect the identity of the congregation. For some that might mean a vacation or a dinner certificate, for others it might mean a set of books or a single volume, and still others might make a special quilt or vestment. Regardless of where there is a "main gift," the Ending Task Force should invite cards and letters of appreciation from members and friends. These can be gathered into a memory book or given to the pastor in a gift basket. "Train letters" are letters to be opened on the trip to the new home and may also become a part of your celebration.

Sometimes a congregation wants to "roast" the pastor. This should be done carefully, since this is a time of high emotion and may not be received by all members of the congregation or even the pastor in the way it is intended.

While the care of the pastor and the pastor's family is going on, another task force should be paying attention to the ongoing care needs of the rest of the congregation as well. This may be through an established group in the congregation, such as Stephen Ministers, or a special Care Team Task Force established for the interim period. Someone in leadership may be available to hear what members are feeling and saying during this transition.

[congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod](#)

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf> 1-12

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod Hospitality in the Ending Process](#)

Saying Good-bye Well

Some examples of ways of saying thank you and good-bye to the pastor

(Choose which ones are most appropriate for you.)

- a. Meal/banquet with testimonies and/or roast
- b. Photo wall of ministry together – invite congregation to pull photos from their albums to add to the wall
- c. Thank-you note basket/box for individual thankyou notes
- d. Small group dinners/gatherings recalling memories of ministry together
- e. Litany of goodbye during final worship
- f. Signing of covenants of support for one another
- g. Opportunity to contribute to a gift from congregation. What type of gift(s) is appropriate?
- h. Quilt gift with squares designed by different ministries in the congregation
- i. Slide/PowerPoint show to share times of ministry together
- j. Gift that reflects congregation in some way
- k. A series of events for sharing: funniest moments, moving ministry memories, special occasion stories, "walking with" stories
- l. Scrap book(s) of i. Photos, ii. Letters, iii. Children's drawings, iv. Newsletter stories, v. Community, as well as congregational activities
- m. Assist in the moving process. Help pack and box. Assist with meals once the kitchen is boxed. Provide a place to stay the night the moving truck comes.
- n. Are there ways to help the pastor's spouse and children find good closure to their time in your community? A photo album of community schools, parks, businesses, and gathering places makes a nice keepsake for young people.

Other considerations

(Consider farewells both inside and outside the context of worship.)

- Are there important people (relatives, friends, community leaders, neighboring pastors, or past colleagues) who should receive a special invitation to a farewell event? Work with the pastor/family to determine appropriate persons outside the congregation to invite to certain events.
- Is the farewell a church event or open to the community? One church rented a billboard to say thank you to its retiring pastor and to invite the community to the farewell celebration.
- What kind of gift is appropriate? Some congregations encourage members to pool their money together to purchase a travel voucher or gift certificate. One congregation had an artist depict its pastor in caricature with scenes of favorite memories together.
- Will all ages have a chance to say thank you? How might the younger saints of God be able to express themselves?
- Think about a lasting memory you want people to have of your pastor, and make sure people get to experience that memory in a farewell event. For example, if a pastor is known for having a rapport with the youngest saints, then arrange one more time for them to have fun singing, learning or playing together at the farewell.
- Learn what worked well for other congregations in your synod that have recently said good-bye to a pastor.

Pastor Transition/Closure - North Carolina Synod

<http://www.nclutheran.org/forms/documents/congregations/Booklet1-PASTOR-TRANSITION-CLOSURE.pdf>

[Images for Pastor Transition/Closure - North Carolina Synod Saying Good-bye Well](#)

Resources

congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod

Section 1 – Concluding the Partnership with Your Pastor

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf>

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod Section 1 – Concluding the Partnership with Your Pastor](#)

The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com

5: Saying Farewell to Your Pastor

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for The Call Process - 5: Saying Farewell to Your Pastor](#)

Page 14

Healthy Transitions

Saying Goodbye

By The Rev. Cynthia K. Hileman - Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The resignation of a pastor from their congregation is a difficult transition. It is challenging for both the pastor and the parishioners as the pastoral relationship ends and new relationship boundaries are established. For congregations, it can be a time of grief, anxiety, and confusion. Saying goodbye is never easy.

A good pastoral relationship is a blessing. Congregations who have been served competently and compassionately by a pastor often want the continued pastoral relationship and presence of the former pastor at their family's wedding, funeral, or baptism. When a pastor resigns, they may be asked to do numerous "special occasions." This is a delicate area and painful for lay people and pastors alike. Upon leaving a congregation, it is not appropriate for the former pastor to continue to function in that role by performing pastoral acts for former parishioners. This can be difficult for people to comprehend. The pastoral act of presiding at those services, however, belongs to the interim or newly called pastor.

Former Pastor: The responsibility of establishing boundaries is yours. When asked by former parishioners, respond immediately. "It's simply not proper for me to do that. I'm not your pastor anymore, but thanks for considering me. I would love to come as a guest, if able, as your other friends do."

Parishioners: Don't ask. It is awkward for both the current and former pastors. Honor your former pastor by inviting them to come as a guest. Show respect and regard to the new pastor by allowing them to perform their pastoral duties.

Current Pastor: Speak a good and positive word about your predecessor and the relationship the former pastor had with the congregation, but do not yield your pastoral role.

The transition from one pastor to another, while an exciting journey, is also one that is difficult to navigate. Yet, with God's help, we can discover the life-giving opportunity that is change. With the Spirit's power, we can let go of the old and reach out for the new.

Model Covenant for Congregations

As Christians, we are all baptized into the priesthood of Christ to offer ourselves to the Lord of the Church in thanksgiving for what he has done and continues to do for us. It has been our privilege to recognize and support the mission and ministry of Pastor _____ as pastor of _____ Church at _____.

The Congregation Council on behalf of the congregation has in prayerful conversation discussed the intent of the Healthy Transition documents of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and enter into the following covenant:

We promise:

1. To pray for the ongoing mission of our congregation and for our pastoral leadership past, present and future.
2. To respect the terms of the attached covenant of Rev. _____.
3. To interpret the terms of the covenant to the congregation.
4. To incorporate the covenant in the minutes of a called Congregation Council meeting.

5. To communicate in writing and conversation the terms of the covenant, which terminates the pastoral relationship with named pastor.
6. To refrain from asking the former pastor to perform pastoral functions and to remind members likewise to refrain from making requests.
7. To show respect and regard for our new pastoral leader (interim and successor) by allowing them to perform their pastoral duties.
8. To encourage members to come to the new pastoral leader; and
9. To celebrate what will be as we honor what was; and further
10. To _____

Date: _____
 Pastor _____ (signature)
 Congregation Council President _____ (signature)
 Congregation Council Secretary _____ (signature)

Date witnessed by Congregation Council _____ Date shared with congregation _____
 Attested to by _____ Representative of Synod or Bishop

Model Covenant for Departing Pastor

As Christians, we are all baptized into the priesthood of Christ to offer ourselves to the Lord of the Church in thanksgiving for what he has done and continues to do for us. It has been my privilege to recognize and support the mission and ministry of _____ Church at _____ as pastor.

I, Pastor _____, in prayerful conversation with the Congregation Council, discussed the intent of the Healthy Transition documents of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and enter into the following covenant:

I pledge to support the continuing ministry of this congregation and its future called and ordained pastor.

I promise:

1. To continue to pray, support and respect the ministry of the congregation and a new pastoral leader.
2. To abide by the guidelines established by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
3. To not be involved in any leadership or advisory role (public or private).
4. To not intervene, support or give advice to anyone involved in a congregation disagreement or dispute and to refrain from language or behavior that could undermine the transitions necessary for the congregation and the development of the relationship between the congregation and a new pastoral leader.
5. To refuse requests for pastoral services made by members of the congregation, including visiting the sick and homebound.
6. To consult with the (interim or successor) pastor regarding visiting, attending worship or special events; and
7. To not officiate in any special events or in the lives of members of the congregation, including weddings, funerals, baptisms, worship leadership, church anniversary activities, other than on the rare occasions when the new pastoral leader may invite a predecessor pastor to participate in a congregational event.
8. To refrain from giving opinions or directions regarding church business that could undermine the transitions necessary for the congregation and the development of the relationship between the congregation and a new pastoral leader.
9. To encourage my family members to support me in maintaining the covenant and to support the ministry of the new pastoral leader; and further
10. To _____

Pastor _____ (signature)
 Congregation Council President _____ (signature)
 Congregation Council Secretary _____ (signature)

Date witnessed by Congregation Council _____ Date shared with congregation _____
 Attested to by _____ Representative of synod or Bishop

Model Covenant for Departing Pastor's Family Members

(This is an optional model that may be used if predecessor pastoral family members wish to participate in the covenant.)

As Christians, we are all baptized into the priesthood of Christ to offer ourselves to the Lord of the Church in thanksgiving for what he has done and continues to do for us. It has been our privilege to recognize and support the mission and ministry of _____ Church as our husband/wife/parent/sibling served as its pastor. We, the family of the Rev. _____, in

prayerful conversation with the Congregation Council, discussed the intent of the Healthy Transition documents of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and enter into the following covenant:

We pledge to support the continuing ministry of the congregation and its future called and ordained pastor, as well as his/her family.

We promise:

1. To continue to pray for and support the congregation as it lives out its mission and ministry; and
2. To consult with the new pastoral leader regarding involvement in the life and ministry of the congregation; and
3. To refer requests for pastoral services to the new pastoral leader; and
4. To refrain from language or behavior that could undermine the transitions necessary for the congregation and the development of the relationship between the congregation and a new pastoral leader; and further
5. To _____

Pastor _____ (signature)
 Congregation Council President _____ (signature)
 Congregation Council Secretary _____ (signature)

Date witnessed by Congregation Council _____ Date shared with congregation _____

Attested to by _____

Representative of Synod or Bishop

A Reflection by Pastor Kerry Nelson • Houston, TX • April 6, 2009

Greetings,

I didn't write a devotion for today. I'm realizing that this will be a very mixed week for me and for a lot of other people. Easter Sunday will be my last Sunday in the pulpit of the congregation that has consumed my thoughts, heart and life for the past 15 years.

Given that many of you have been reading the daily devotions for a long time, and you have heard much about my personal life in them, I feel free to tell you that the grief I am feeling has become an ever heavier weight. I've known for some time that my ministry at Covenant would one day end. But I never imagined what that ending would be like. There are moments when I'm able to see the good that has been done here, the hand of God blessing us and helping us through, faith that has grown and people who have been well served—but those moments are too often drowned out by my awareness of mistakes I've made, time I've wasted, leadership needs I wasn't able to provide, opportunities that were squandered and relationships that were wounded or broken. Leaving is like a little death, there is so much that can't be undone or redone and there are now no more second chances.

Covenant Lutheran Church will do fine. I think my leaving now will prove to be the best exercise of leadership I could do at this stage of the congregation's life. My prayer is that the congregation rallies together, the machinery of the larger Church comes alongside them as they discern their future, and that the office of senior pastor is filled with just the right person to help Covenant move forward in mission. I share all of this with you, my electronic congregation of friends, so that you will understand why I won't be writing devotions for a while. I sat at a blank keyboard for a long time this morning, full of the emptiness one feels when they have nothing at all to offer or say. Writing devotions has been a part of the rhythm of my life, which means the rhythm of my ministry at Covenant, since 1997. I need some time to adjust to the new rhythms that lie ahead.

I fully intend to resume writing once I get a sense of how my new position will feel. It represents a new way of doing ministry for me, and that is going to mean a new way of hearing the Bible speak. I need to live into those changes for a bit without the daily expectation of writing devotions. Just give me some time and we'll be back on track.

For now, the best thing you can do in our devotions partnership is to pray. My prayer is that the Spirit of healing and encouragement comes to touch us—all of us—in a powerful and life-giving way as we move through the memories and meanings of Holy Week.

Healthy Transitions Packet - Upstate New York Synod

- 8. Model Covenant for Congregations in Transition (gray)
- 9. Model Covenant for Departing Pastoral Leader (gray)
- 10. Optional Model Covenant for Departing Pastor Families (yellow)
- 11. Optional Model Covenant for Arriving Pastoral Leader (yellow)
- 12. "Saying Good-bye" by the Cynthia K. Hileman, Metropolitan Chicago Synod (goldenrod)

http://www.upstatenysynod.org/phocadownload/complete_healthy_transitions_packet_8-08%20_2.pdf

[Images for Healthy Transitions Packet - Upstate New York Synod](#)

Letter of agreement between a former pastor & congregation

1. The pastor's resignation, effective _____, signifies his/her understanding that all pastoral and administrative duties in this congregation are terminated as of that date.
2. It is mutually understood that this termination of responsibilities applies also to the Interim period before another pastor is called, since the congregation needs some time and space between pastors to discover who they are now, where they want to go, and with what new leadership. It is agreed that the congregation council will make provision with the Synod Office for interim pastoral leadership for the congregation.
3. The former pastor agrees that he/she will not officiate or assist at any baptism, wedding, or funerals in this congregation, but may attend as a worshipper on occasion. This is to prevent divided loyalties in the congregation and pressures on either the former for future pastors or interim pastors.
4. The former pastor agrees that he/she will not continue to make pastoral visits on members of the congregation. Circumstances make it necessary for exception for limited involvement in the following instances:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
5. The former pastor agrees further that if attending this congregation in the future, it will only be as worshipper and participant and that he/she will neither say or listen to any uncomplimentary or critical remarks in social or other gatherings concerning the interim, past or future pastors.
6. The former pastor will not do services (wedding, baptism, funeral, etc.) unless it is the specific initiation and request of the current pastor and/or council (rather than member).
7. If, after approximately one year, there is a desire on the part of the next pastor to review any of the above items, the former pastor pledges to accept the guidance and instruction of the next pastor and congregation council about any participation in the life of _____ Lutheran Church.
8. The former pastor will remove his/her vestments, equipment, books, and possessions by _____. All items belonging to the congregation will remain in the congregation. Keys to the building will be returned to the church office, no; later than _____. 9. The former pastor will continue serving in the community in the following capacities:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____

The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for The Call Process Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Letter of agreement between a former pastor & congregation](#)

Suggested Prayers

For the departing pastor

Gracious God, you have united us all in one body. We give you thanks for the work of Pastor _____ among us. As he/she leaves to a new congregation/retirement surround him/her with your Spirit. Give us the courage to release him/her to a new call and bless our remembering of the work that has been done among us. Guide Pastor _____ and us as we continue to seek to share the Good News of salvation through your son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Guidance

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

A prayer of Augustine of Hippo

O loving God, to turn away from you is to fall, to turn toward you is to rise, and to stand before you is to abide forever. Grant us, dear God, in all our duties your help; in all our uncertainties your guidance; in all our dangers your protection; and in all our sorrows your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Byzantine Benediction

Go now with God.

Be not tempted to stay in the safety of known places.

Move from where you are to where God points.

Go now with God.

Be not tempted to go only in your time,

when it suits, when it is sure,

for now is God's time.

Go now with God.

Choose not to go alone.

Go in the faith that there is no wilderness so vast, no way so confused, that God is not already there to show you the way. Amen.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf)

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Suggested Prayers](#)

Page 9

Exit Interview – Sample Questions

Questions the committee might ask:

1. What would you say was the most satisfying part of your ministry?
2. What would be some of the most frustrating parts of your ministry here? What would make those areas less frustrating for the next pastor?
3. Are there any organizational or structural issues that you see could be improved? Do you have any recommendations in that regard?
4. What strengths of special talents do you see in this congregation? So, you have recommendations on how we might use or continue to use those gifts to the best advantage in the future?
5. What opportunities for ministry do you see in this community that we as a congregation might address in the future?
6. What was your assessment of this congregation when you first came? How has that assessment changed during your time here?
7. If you had a chance to start your ministry over gain in this congregation, what might you do differently?
8. What have been the areas of growth in this congregation during your ministry here with us?
9. What would you like to see us doing five years from now? What unfulfilled goals of yours would you like to see carried forward?
10. How can we be helpful to you in your leaving?
11. What did we not ask you that we should have asked?
12. What has been your relationship with the leadership of the congregation? How might lay leaders be more effective in leading the congregation?

Questions the pastor might ask:

1. What are your visions and hopes when you called me to minister with you here? How are they different now?
2. What did you see as my greatest contribution to your ministry here?
3. What do you think were the highlights of our ministry together?
4. If we had an imaginary chance to do this ministry together again, what might we do differently?
5. Are there any unfinished matters that we should discuss before I leave?
6. How has the congregation grow/changed in our time together?

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

[f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

[Images for Call Process - Exit Interview Sample Questions](#)

Page 35

Certification of Completion of Parochial Records

In accordance with your Synod constitution:

- *S14.15. The parochial records of each congregation shall be kept in a separate book which shall remain its property. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this Synod that such records have been placed in his/her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:
 - a. installation in another field of labor, or
 - b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.

Before a pastor leaves the present field of service, such pastor must bring the record books to the secretary of the congregation for review. Upon finding them in good order, the secretary shall complete the form below and forward it to the synod bishop. Also enter the form into the minutes of a Congregation Council meeting.

This is to certify that I have examined the parochial records of _____ Lutheran Church of
Congregation

_____ and find them in good order.
City, State

Secretary of the Congregation Council Date

Certification of Completion of Financial Obligations

*S14.16. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another field of labor, or
- b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.

Upon completion of all financial obligations, the pastor and treasurer of the congregation shall complete the form below and forward it to the synod bishop. Also, enter the form into the minutes of a Congregation Council meeting.

All financial obligations, salary, pension, health, death benefits and allowances, together with continuing education funds have been met and paid to the Rev. _____ up to the effective date of termination of services.

Also, satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations has been made by the
Rev. _____ to _____ Lutheran Church

Treasurer of the Congregation Date

Pastor Date

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https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for Call Process Certification of Completion of Parochial Records](#)

[Images for Call Process Certification of Completion of Financial Obligations](#)

Informational "Survival" Kit for a New Pastor

- Membership list: including phone numbers, pictorial directory (if available), family membership list
- Annual reports (past three years)
- Newsletters (past year)
- Worship bulletins; average attendance for worship and church school
- Financial reports, current budget; next year's proposed budget, status of indebtedness and/or investments
- Minutes: boards, committees, etc.
- Job descriptions and specific assignments of employees and volunteer leadership
- Listing of church officers, committees and other leaders (include church school, fellowship groups)
- Calendar of special/annual events
- Calendar of regular meetings and programs
- Maps: location of church members, map of community, map of state
- Chamber of Commerce welcome packet
- List of places where church does business (office supply, grocery, plumber, etc.)
- List of "cooperative" churches (ecumenical) and regular activities
- Church history - special information - stories - etc.

- Constitution and bylaws, policies (use of building, weddings, memorial funds, etc.),
- Procedure manuals
- Information about what was accomplished during interim period
- Keys to every door with locks in church building and parsonage
- Instructions about heating system, sound system, etc.
- Worship resource - hymnal, order of worship for special occasions, traditions and common practices/patterns (list of hymns known by congregation)
- Community services - school system, local taxes, welcome wagon, hospitals, organizations and services, funeral homes, etc.
- List of persons with special needs (shut-ins, recent change in family, job status, people who have been close to previous pastor or interim)
- Goals - long range and short-term

[Interim Ministry Handbook for Interim Pastors – Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area](#)

Section V. Informational “Survival” Kit for a New Pastor

<http://ntnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Interim-Ministry-Handbook-Interim-Pastor.pdf>

Page 21

[Images for Informational “Survival” Kit for a New Pastor](#)

Exit Checklist

This checklist is provided to assist the leaders of the congregation and especially the secretary of the congregation in determining that the congregational records are in good order and that the leaders know the location of various important documents.

PARISH RECORD BOOK: Are the following records up to date?

Baptisms - Deaths - Weddings - Communion - Confirmations - Transfers In - Transfers Out - Others:

RECORDS OF MEMBERSHIP: Are there lists of the following?

Members in good standing - Members in college - Inactive members - Members in military service

Is the active membership roster realistic?

When was the roster last reviewed and updated?

POTENTIAL MEMBERS

Is there any prospect list? Where?

Any adult baptism or adult instruction potentials?

Any families needing infant baptism?

Catechetical instruction list. What is the next step for them?

PAROCHIAL REPORTS

Annual parochial records are kept where?

Pastor's record is kept where?

CONGREGATION COUNCIL RECORDS: List the locations of:

Current year's minutes

Past year's minutes

Committee reports

Parish goals, long-range plans,

Unfinished council business

CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS: List the locations of the following:

Minutes of congregational meetings

Church archives

PARISH CORRESPONDENCE:

Where is correspondence kept? Any pending matters?

FINANCIAL CONCERNS: Where are the following located?

Financial records

What is process for paying bills?

Bank accounts (Who manages them?)

Deeds

Endowments

Insurance Policies

PASTORAL CARE:

List of persons in need of ministry

Particular problems needing attention

List of shut-ins

From the Constitution of the La Crosse Area Synod -

S14.15 The parochial records of each congregation shall be kept in a separate book which shall remain the congregation's property.

The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his/her hands in good order by a departing pastor...

[“When a pastor leaves...” - La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA](#)

EXIT CHECKLIST

http://www.lacrosseareasynd.org/wp-content/uploads/When_a_Pastor_Leaves_booklet.pdf

Page 8

[Images for “When a pastor leaves...” - La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA EXIT CHECKLIST](#)

For the Pastor Leaving the Congregation

As it says at the beginning of this section, there are many reasons for leaving a congregation. You may have been waiting a long time to retire or to receive another call and now you feel some relief and joy. Or you may have been asked to leave the congregation over some conflict and now feel some anger, sadness, or depression, as well as relief. But, whatever the reasons and whatever the feelings of the moment, when you leave you will be starting something new, whether it be retirement, a new call, more schooling, a new setting for your spouse's job, or another ministry or job in your own future. Starting well in this new phase of your life will be influenced by how well you leave this call.

The leaving process begins once it has been determined that you are leaving. Your thoughts and conversations with your family and friends will be about the excitement of the future but they also will be mingled with feelings of reluctance and grief over what was, what might have been, or what has been left undone. Your grieving will be mingled with the individual grief of your family members who may be leaving good friends and familiar patterns. Congregational members with whom you have built solid relationships will have their own moments of grief as well. Be sure to take time to recognize and experience this grief, knowing that with every death/loss, there is the promise of resurrection.

There are the official things that you must attend to in your leaving including the Attestation of Record and Financial Requirements. The Exit Interview, which may include a written summary, can help to bring closure to your ministry in this setting in a positive way. Think about your own goals, accomplished and unmet, the congregation's direction and focus of ministry, things that you might have done differently, things that were unexpected along the way, and the joys you have experienced as you have ministered with these people. How can both you and the congregation learn from your experience together?

And there are the unofficial things that make for a good closure as well. Be sure you say thank you, corporately and individually, to the members of the congregation. And then seek peace with those with whom you have not had as good a relationship. No matter how friendly a pastor is or how well like she/he is, there will be people who have been offended or hurt during your tenure by something you did or said. By the same token, there will be others who have offended you in some way. Be intentional about making peace with these people before you leave. Forgiveness is a gift that Christians are called to share. It will make your start in a new place much easier. Be attentive to the needs of your family. They may not be looking forward to this change as eagerly as you are. Ask them individually what would make the transition easier for them. Let them express their feelings and, if appropriate, go together to a counselor. Consultation to Clergy is available to all rostered people in this synod and may be contacted at 206.623.8193. In any case, be patient with your family as they make this transition with you.

And, please note, it is important that they make the transition with you. If your reason for leaving is to retirement, on leave from call, or some other ministry, this may be the first time in your life together that you will be able to find a new congregation together. Take advantage of that and embrace the future as a new beginning. If you are taking a call in a new congregation, your family will want to be part of that community, just as they have been in your past congregation. Think about the statement you are making in your new congregation if your family stays behind and is unwilling to engage this new people of God.

You have been a family unit within the congregation you are now leaving, and your spouse and family have been in the role of "pastor's family." They have interfaced the congregation in a variety of ways with varying levels of autonomy. It is important for the congregation that you continue as a family in your new location and that your leaving is not seen as a cause of splitting the family. No matter how many friends you/they have in the congregation, no one wants to be the cause of dividing your family (even if it was your family's choice to stay with the old congregation).

Along with that is the fact that the presence of your spouse/family maintains your presence in the congregation as well. Even if your spouse/family is not overtly expected to be the "go-between," there is some level of expectation that information about the congregation and its members will be shared with you. That can make it difficult for new directions, new patterns, and new ideas to be expressed and exercised. It makes it difficult for a new pastor to fully live out his/her own leadership without always being compared to you and how you would have done "it." It makes for no real closure to your ministry and no clean beginning for the congregation as they build a new pastoral relationship.

Once you have ended your ministry in a particular setting, congregation members need to know clearly that you are no longer their pastor. Some will ask you to do a wedding, a baptism, or a funeral, to "come back" for confirmation events or hospital visits. Those requests are pleas to keep you as their pastor. They don't want to let go of the relationship that they found so comfortable. So, it is up to you, though it may be difficult, to remind them that you are no longer their pastor and that you are not doing pastoral work for them. Your response will direct them to their new pastor and in a professionally collegial way you should call the new pastor and inform him/her of the request.

Our understanding of ministry is so clear on this issue that it is written into the synod constitution:

+S14.14. *Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.*

You will be doing your colleagues a great favor by not asking to be invited to do pastoral acts for members of the congregation you are leaving. You will undoubtedly recall the conversations in seminary about "the pastoral office." Those conversations emphasized the point that once you are ordained you are no longer acting as an individual, but now everything you do reflects on all who are called to be pastors. You know from your own experience that our authority as pastors comes from the trust that people give us. And trust comes from the integrity with which we execute our tasks.

Are there exceptions to this rule? There might be if it were your daughter's wedding or your mother's funeral or your grandchild's baptism. But even then, consider how you might benefit from the care of another pastor. Consider how God's mission might be enhanced by your example. Consider how we are vessels of the gospel, not the gospel itself, and should be considering always how "he must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

The Apostle Paul left many congregations in his time of ministry and might serve as an example for us in these days. The account is his leaving Miletus in Acts 20:17ff is a beautiful example of healthy closure for the sake of the gospel. The important thing to remember is

that your closure with this present ministry will affect and influence what else you do in the new phase which you are beginning. May it be blessed with joy and prosperity as you continue to serve the Lord.

[congregational handbook for pastoral transitions](#)

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf>

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions - For the Pastor Leaving the Congregation](#)

Guidelines for Retired Ordained Ministers

Ordained ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ordained ministers of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, or upon disability, and continue to be listed on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of a Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster . . . (bylaw 7.41.17. in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

Persons who have served within the ordained ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and who have determined that they will enter retirement are not only to be honored for their past service but are seen as important resources for ministry within the life of this church. To enter this new phase of one's life is always a significant milestone. It is a transition into another important stage of life for every retired person. It is true also for the retired pastor (and spouse if the pastor is so blessed).

The following statement is a guideline for retired pastors, the congregations they served, and synodical bishops in understanding the new status of a retired pastor to give directions which seek to avoid some pitfalls that can present themselves to the retired pastor, and to new areas of service and support.

II. CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

A retired pastor should not remain a member of the congregation served at the time of retirement. Transferring one's membership to another congregation allows the successor pastor to assume pastoral leadership more readily. It also provides an opportunity for the retired pastor to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about the pastor's retired role.

III. PASTORAL SERVICE

At the time of retirement, a pastor is no longer pastor of a congregation and therefore must discontinue the functions of the pastoral office in the congregation unless specifically authorized to do so.

The service of retired pastors is governed by the Constitution for Synods [†S14.14.], which describes the role of ordained ministers in congregations in which they do not serve:

"Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council" (†S14.14. in the Constitution for Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

IV. INTERIM MINISTRY

One area of potential service for the retired pastor is interim ministry. Many retired pastors provide valuable and needed ministry to congregations in time of transition following the resignation of a pastor. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America invites retired pastors to consider this important arena of ministry.

A retired pastor may serve as an interim pastor during a time of pastoral vacancy only by the authorization of the synodical bishop. Retired pastors who wish to serve under call in an interim ministry must return to the active roster of ordained ministers.

V. COMPENSATION

Retirement benefits provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the Board of Pensions, combined with Social Security benefits, are intended to provide adequate compensation to pastors in retirement. Therefore, there shall be no financial commitment by a congregation or agency to retired pastors or their spouses.

A. A retired pastor who is authorized to serve (not under call) in a congregation for a stated period of time and for pastoral services may be compensated according to compensation practices within the synod.

B. The title of Pastor Emeritus has no official standing and carries with it no compensation or authorization for service or for other responsibilities.

VI. CONSULTATION WITH SYNODICAL BISHOP

As part of the bishop's pastoral care of retired pastors, a synodical bishop or a member of the bishop's staff is encouraged to meet with a pastor at the time of retirement to discuss these guidelines, the pastor's new retired status, and its implications.

Adopted by the Church Council as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, November 1998 [CC98.11.45]

[Guidelines for Retired Ordained Ministers - Amazon Web](#)

<http://worshiptimesmedia.s3.amazonaws.com/gulfcoast/files/2013/06/GuidelinesforRetiredOrdainedMinisters.pdf>

[Images for Guidelines for ELCA Retired Ordained Ministers](#)

[Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

Guidelines for Retired Ordained Ministers

Page 35

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Policies_Procedures_Roster_Mgmt.pdf

[Images for Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

[Guidelines for Retired Ordained Ministers](#)

Pastor's Relationship with his/her Former Congregation

A pastor's leaving can be a very emotional time. Once the pastoral relationship with the congregation has ended by resignation or retirement, the former pastor should not return to do official pastoral acts such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc. The former pastor may return after a period of time at the newly called pastor's invitation to preach for an anniversary or other special occasion. A pastor should never maintain friendships with members of a former congregation in ways that might undermine the developing relationship

between the new pastor and congregation. A former pastor should remove him/herself as completely as possible from the life and ministry of his/her former congregation.

[Transition into a New Call | Upper Susquehanna Synod](#)

G. Pastor's relationship with his/her former congregation

<http://www.uss-elca.org/for-rostered-leaders/resources/transition-into-a-new-call>

[Images for Transition into a New Call G. Pastor's relationship with his/her former congregation](#)

Pastoral Ethics and Leave-Taking: Toward a Pastoral Ethic upon Leaving a Congregation

The following draws heavily upon the following Alban Institute publication by Edward A. White:

[Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors](#)

Leaving a pastorate is hard on both congregation and pastor. Learn how to make this transition a growth experience for all. Written for congregations and pastors, *Saying Goodbye* skillfully weaves accounts from clergy, laity, and educators of seven denominations with White's own insight as a former General Presbyterian to create a resource for meaningful and healthy partings. Includes examples of a "farewell" worship service and litany for closure of a ministry.

<http://www.amazon.com/Saying-Goodbye-Growth-Congregations-Pastors/dp/1566990378>

[Images for Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors](#)

PASTORAL ETHICS

Changing Roles

When a pastor leaves a congregation, members may feel they have lost a trusted friend. Like the eternal presence of God, the presence of God's ministers takes on an aura of permanence, and members are surprised and hurt when the relationship must end. The break is often as hard for the congregation as for the pastor.

It is extremely difficult to shift roles. The pastor ceases to be the pastor and a friend, and becomes friend only; members cease being one's flock and friends, and become friends only. Relationships must be redefined apart from the ecclesiastical roles. The pain of such change only compounds the sense of mutual loss and grief.

Making Contact

Before a pastor's departure, it was customary for members to seek (and for pastors to give) friendly concern, sympathy, visits, cards, letters, hospital calls, sacramental services, taped sermons, and conversation about the congregation's life and future. After the pastor's departure there is often a persistent tendency to continue these contacts as if to —hang on to each other and to the good that was. These contacts very often occur in a covert way, as though it is not OK for the new leaders to know about them, since continuing contacts are private matters —just between old friends.

A member in contact with a former pastor, however, generally focuses individually on that relationship and may not see how maintaining that connection affects other members or impedes developing a healthy and proper relationship with the new pastor.

The contact usually takes one of the following forms by retired and former pastors:

- Returning to former congregations to perform weddings, funerals or baptisms.
- Continuing to make pastoral visits on members of the congregation.
- Injecting themselves into the life and problems of former congregations and/or advising members on these issues.
- Criticizing the successor pastor to members of the congregation or becoming the confidant of those who wish to express criticism.

The Problem

The problem may lie in our understanding of the church. If the church is centered in the relationship of the pastor and the people, then it might be argued that a pastor's congregation is all those people throughout the land who have come to rely on them as their pastor. But, if the church is centered in Christ and a pastor is but a servant of that one Lord, then a pastor's congregation is those who — in this time and place only — have been entrusted to them. It is then an issue of pastoral ethics to fail to recognize that the church currently installed pastor of the congregation is the pastor of the congregation and to undermine that person's ministry is a betrayal of one's ordination vow and the constitutional requirements of the larger church.

-At the time of retirement, a pastor is no longer pastor of a congregation and therefore must discontinue the functions of the pastoral office in the congregation unless authorized to do so. (*On Ordained Ministers: Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters*, ELCA Section III). Furthermore:

-A retired pastor should not remain a member of the congregation served at the time of retirement. Transferring one's membership to another congregation allows the successor pastor to assume pastoral leadership more readily. (Section II).

-Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council. (*Mission Area Constitution*, S14.14).

Effects of Continuing Contact

Consider what happens when a pastor fails to let go of his/her former pastorate:

- Members delay or deny the necessary grief work and get emotionally stuck.
- When the congregation must work through a problem, the unseen (or seen) presence of a former pastor complicates the ability to have an open dialog.
- When members turn privately to a former pastor for comfort and care, it deprives the community the opportunity to build the strength that comes from shared struggles.
- Private contacts direct members' energy outside the congregation when that energy may be needed within the community.
- Private contacts encourage —holding on to the past and fighting former battles; they decrease the congregation's ability to struggle with present realities and create a new future.

- Contacts confuse members about where and how to focus their commitment.
- Private contacts place the resident pastor in the awkward position of interloper.
- By surfacing implicit comparisons between new and old, the new pastor is forced to contend with ghosts.
- Private contacts keep the new pastor on the defensive and subvert that pastor's morale and effectiveness.

Members are confused. Pastors are hurt. Congregational life may be brought to conflict. And the church's true *passion*—which is to be consumed by the mission of Christ—is diverted instead to personal loyalties and relationships. It is clear that former pastors and members need to manage interpersonal contacts appropriately.

When Asked, What Shall I Say?

The request is common enough, and very powerful, ("Pastor, you baptized and confirmed our daughter, we think it would be so very meaningful if you performed the wedding also.") Care must be taken not to put the current pastor on the spot. ("I'd be delighted to come back and do your wedding if the present pastor agrees.") Instead, the pastor's response might more helpfully be, ("I am honored that you ask, but it really would not be appropriate for me to do the wedding since I am no longer pastor of the congregation. Call Pastor _____; I'm certain he/she will want to celebrate the day with you as your pastor. And I'll be among your guests that day, celebrating with you too.") Similar responses can be offered in the instances of illness, sympathy, or death. A former pastor can respond as any congregational member would: sending a card, writing a letter to the family, calling on the phone, attending the worship, and visiting the funeral home.

Leave Taking

It would not be difficult for clergy to develop destructive or negative behaviors in order to defend themselves or to handle the pain of grief and loss. At a time of transition, the pastor may be overwhelmed by feelings of eagerness, anger, or confusion. But publicly wavering on one's decision, or withdrawing the resignation, or being publicly elated at being able to leave, or using the occasion to accuse one's accusers, or fault the congregation's circumstances, or leaving in the dead of night can easily have the effect of feeding rumors, stunting the congregation's emotional processes, or polarizing the congregation. *To give pain to others in order to ease pain in oneself is not a reflection of Christ's love nor the pastor's vows.*

What to Do?

Terminating a relationship is not accomplished by an announcement. It is a process—an ongoing sequence of events, feelings, actions, and interactions. Making the decision to leave and announcing it to the congregation is the beginning of the process, not the end of it. The process will continue for the pastor into his/her tenure in the new parish.

The process need not be destructive. The pastor begins by being intentionally and persistently aware of the transitional process and the emotional reactions that accompany it. To do a good and helpful job of —saying goodbye, the pastor needs to be:

Spiritually aware

This is clearly a time to operate out of a rich personal spiritual life. Taking a spiritual retreat, listening for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, asking for ongoing prayer support, studying again the pastoral epistles to find guidance in ministry, or seeking out a spiritual director can be very helpful.

Clear about Timing

Notice of departure needs to be given to the chief lay officer first, then the Congregation Council, then the whole congregation. Thirty days in advance is adequate; sixty days is too much. Clergy who are preparing to retire may make their announcement of departure earlier, but still not more than three months in advance.

In Touch with Their Moods

Don't be driven by emotions that are beyond immediate awareness and control.

Open to Sharing Pertinent Information

Let the congregation know what is happening and how the busyness of transitioning is going; be open about the ambivalent feelings that may be present.

Clear about Boundaries

Maintain appropriate communications but keep them focused on the day-to-day operations of the congregation. Do not attempt to help them initiate a Call Committee or the call process.

Requesting an Exit Interview

A pastor can tie up loose ends and help a congregation consider its future by offering some careful, thoughtful, and constructive comments about the opportunities and challenges of the congregation in the coming years. To do so is not a boundary violation. A consultant who is a fellow pastor can facilitate the interview and will probably be more objective if he/she does not live in the same community with you.

Grateful

Be thankful in an abundant and honest fashion for the love and support of the people. Accept their appreciative comments and gifts graciously. Acknowledge the accomplishments that have occurred in the years of your service. Maintain integrity and authenticity.

Termination Tasks

When a pastor says good-bye, there are five termination tasks, four of which are similar to the task confronting a person near the end of life.

1. The need to take control of what remains of —this life. The pastor needs to be intentional about using the time between the announcement of the resignation and the actual departure to bring closure with the various individuals and groups in the congregation. Saying good-bye may be an almost full-time job for the duration of the pastor's time in the congregation.
2. The need to get affairs in order. Responsibilities must be turned over to others so that the life of the congregation can continue decently and in order.
3. The need to let old grudges go. That may mean visiting with people with whom there had been differences at one time or another. The ability to —begin well (for either the pastor in a new location, or for the congregation with its new pastor) is largely a consequence of having —ended well. Good closure involves processing the feelings that might otherwise become the emotional baggage of the next relationship.
4. The need to say, "thank you." It is unfortunate that all people so often fail to express appreciation until the end is near. But that is why it is ever so important to at least do it then.
5. The need to be straight and clear about reasons for leaving. Nature abhors a vacuum. If a person is not clear about the reasons for leaving, people will fill the vacuum with their imaginations. What they imagine will invariably be worse than the reality and may initiate unfounded feelings of anger or guilt.

Letters of Agreement

Some pastors have found that there is great wisdom in helping their congregations be very aware of the way the relationship between pastor and people is changing. The clarity helps in the grieving and healing process and makes it more likely that the congregation will be able to turn in anticipation and readiness for the next chapter of its history. To document and declare the changing relationship, Letters of Agreement may be helpful.

—As part of the bishop's pastoral care of retired pastors, a synodical bishop or a member of the bishop's staff is encouraged to meet with a pastor at the time of retirement to discuss these guidelines, the pastor's new retired status, and its implications (*Retired Pastors in the ELCA*, a statement adopted by the Conference of Bishops).

Accepting the Challenge

Every pastor and lay rostered leader in the mission area is challenged to live up to the highest standard of personal, professional, and moral ethics. Rostered leaders are not unaccustomed to the fact that in so doing they will experience tension and ambiguity in their decision-making, relationships, and behavior. These guidelines are offered to help the leadership be aware of the issues, dynamics, and requirements of being faithful stewards of their office.

Your bishop and mission area staff welcomes your conversation and concerns as you seek to live a life fully worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod

The Call Process/Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area

Pastoral Ethics and Leave-Taking: Toward a Pastoral Ethic upon Leaving a Congregation

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

[Images for The Call Process/Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area Pastoral Ethics and Leave-Taking: Toward a Pastoral Ethic upon Leaving a Congregation](#)

For the Pastor Leaving the Congregation

Once you have ended your ministry in a particular setting, congregation members need to know clearly that you are no longer their pastor. Some will ask you to do a wedding, a baptism, or a funeral, to "come back" for confirmation events or hospital visits. Those requests are pleas to keep you as their pastor. They don't want to let go of the relationship they have found so comfortable. So, it is up to you, though it may be difficult, to remind them that you are no longer their pastor and that you are not doing pastoral work for them. Your response will direct them to their new pastor and in a professionally collegial way you should call the new pastor and inform him/her of the request.

Our understanding of ministry is so clear on this issue that it is written into the synod constitution:

+S14.14. Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

You will be doing your colleagues a great favor by not asking to be invited to do pastoral acts for members of the congregation you are leaving. You will undoubtedly recall the conversations in seminary about the "pastoral office." Those conversations emphasized the point that once you are ordained you are no longer acting as an individual, but now everything you do reflects on all who are called to be pastors. You know from your own experience that our authority as pastors comes from the trust that people give us. And trust comes from the integrity with which we execute our tasks.

congregational handbook for pastoral transitions - Northwest Washington Synod

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf> I-14

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions - Northwest Washington Synod](#)

ELCA Policy on Former Pastors

Synod Constitutions define the relationship between the departing pastor and the congregation in Constitution for Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

S14.14: +S14.14. Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

For retiring pastors, ELCA policy further states:

II. Congregational Membership A retired pastor should not remain a member of the congregation served at the time of retirement. Transferring one's membership to another congregation allows the successor pastor to assume pastoral leadership more readily. It also provides an opportunity for the retired pastor to enter fully into the life of a different congregation with clarity about the pastor's retired role.

III. Pastoral Service At the time of retirement a pastor is no longer pastor of a congregation and therefore must discontinue the functions of the pastoral office in the congregation unless specifically authorized to do so. The service of retired pastors is governed by the Constitution for Synods [S14.14.], which describes the role of ordained ministers in congregations in which they do not serve.

From "Retired Pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," adopted by the Church Council as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America under churchwide bylaw 7.41.17. November 13, 1998

Sample Announcements for Newsletters and Bulletins

A sample announcement for a Pastor who is leaving:

After Pastor ___ leaves our congregation, he/she will not be available to conduct or even participate in such events as funerals, weddings, hospital calls, emergency calls, or any other functions normally carried out by a pastor in a congregation.

A sample announcement for a Pastor who is retiring and remaining in the same community:

Pastor ___ will be transferring his/her membership to _____ Lutheran Church. He/she will not be available to take on any kind of leadership role within our congregation, nor will he/ she be available to conduct or even participate in such events as funerals, weddings, hospital calls, emergency calls, or any other functions normally carried out by a pastor in a congregation.

Advice for Former Pastors: The responsibility of establishing new relationship boundaries is yours. When asked by former parishioners, respond immediately, "It is simply not proper for me to do that. I am not your pastor anymore, but thanks for considering me."

Advice for Parishioners: Don't ask. It is awkward for both the new and the former pastor. Honor your former pastor by inviting him or her to come as a guest. Show respect and regard to the new pastor by allowing him or her to perform his or her pastoral duties.

[PDF] [The Call Process - Southeastern Iowa Synod](#)

http://seiasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/03/call_process_councils.pdf

Page 9

[Images for The Call Process - Southeastern Iowa Synod ELCA Policy on Former Pastors](#)

Importance of Healthy Boundaries

Many congregation members do not understand how a continuing pastoral relationship with the previous pastor (either a departing regularly-called pastor or the Interim Pastor) can have a negative effect on the next pastor and the congregation's relationship with the next pastor.

However, a congregation can have only one pastor at a time. When a previous pastor continues to perform pastoral functions, it interferes with next pastor's ability to develop a pastoral relationship with members. Furthermore, any new pastor will necessarily and naturally make changes within the congregation. It may be very difficult for the previous pastor to avoid commentary by word or facial expression on the actions of a new pastor. Such commentary will often be viewed as "interference," whether or not intended as such. In most cases, the departing pastor understands the need to relinquish any pastoral relationship with members of the congregation previously served. The church council and church leadership should assist the previous pastor and the next pastor in this transition by understanding the need for establishing and maintaining proper boundaries.

Congregation members can assist the transition by not making requests of the previous pastor that create awkward situations, such as asking the previous pastor to officiate at a baptism, wedding, or funeral. The departing pastor can help to clarify the situation by sending a letter to congregation members describing the boundaries that will be maintained.

While some may feel such boundaries are insensitive or even harsh, experience has shown that problems inevitably arise when the congregation and the former pastor continue their pastoral relationship in any way. The involvement of the former pastor after the next pastor has been called undermines and prevents the new relationship from forming. In particular, the trust that is essential to the pastor-congregation relationship cannot fully develop. This, in turn, negatively affects the ability of the congregation and the next pastor to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ.

[Pastoral Leadership Transition Process ~ A Guide for Lay Leaders /Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA](#)

Importance of Healthy Boundaries

Page 13

<http://ministrylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pastoral-Transition-A-Guide-for-Lay-Leaders-Edition-3.2-7-7-2013.pdf>

[Images for Pastoral Leadership Transition Process - Importance of Healthy Boundaries](#)

A Word about Professional Ethical Boundaries

For a congregation, the most difficult part of saying "Goodbye" to a pastor or rostered staff person is fully understanding the meaning of "Goodbye." The same is often true for the pastor or rostered staff person. Simply put, when a pastor leaves a congregation he/she is no longer holds the office of pastor in that congregation. This means that he/she is no longer available for: baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, hospital visits, or any other pastoral acts in that congregation. None. The reasons for this are at least twofold:

1. A pastor's or staff person's continued involvement in the life of a congregation (or in the lives of congregants) impedes the grief and transition process by fostering a "snapping back" to the past. This will hinder the ability of the new pastor or staff person to fulfill the office to which they are called. The "ghost" of the previous pastor is often difficult enough for his or her successor; "embodied spirits" are even worse!
2. Just as pastor's or staff person's continued "peripheral" involvement in his/her former ministry is unhelpful to that congregation, neither is it helpful or fair to his/her new calling. It is incumbent upon the departing pastor, the Congregational Council, and the Transition Coach to clearly communicate these professional boundaries to the congregation - and then maintain them.

Retirement Boundaries

When a pastor retires, there is sometimes the temptation to "retire into" the congregation last served. "Pastor Emeritus" is even a status sometimes officially (or unofficially) granted. However, upon retirement, pastors should never retain membership in the congregation

they last served. They must seek membership in another congregation. It is sometimes relatively easy to point out situations when the presence of a retired clergy person caused difficulty for their successor. However, even in situations where it seems to be “going well,” the truth is that there is no way of knowing the unintentional and often subtle detrimental effects the presence of former pastors can have on the ability of a congregation to move forward in ministry with its new pastor. Everybody needs to “move on!”

[Call Process Resources - Gulf Coast Synod](#)

A Word about Professional Ethical Boundaries

Section 2/Page 3

<http://worshiptimesmedia.s3.amazonaws.com/gulfcoast/files/2013/06/2013TransitionProcessHandbook.pdf>

[Images for Call Process Resources - Gulf Coast Synod A Word about Professional Ethical Boundaries](#)

Future Pastoral Acts of Former Pastors

One of the most commonly troublesome issues in ministry is the matter of former pastors continuing to perform pastoral acts for former parishioners. It is unethical for pastors to do so, but in any given instance it seems so natural and even desirous.... (See Chapter 12, Appendix B for two letters. One is from an interim pastor explaining appropriate involvement of previous pastors, and one a personal letter from a departing pastor.)

[Call Process Manual - Saint Paul Area Synod](#)

http://www.spas-elca.org/sites/default/files/files/Call%20Process%20Manual_August%202012.pdf Page 2

[Images for Call Process Manual - Saint Paul Area Synod Future Pastoral Acts of Former Pastors](#)

Expectations of a Pastor upon Resignation from a Congregation

The following expectations apply when a pastor is leaving a congregation whether for retirement or a change of call. The transition time can be stressful for both the resigning/retiring pastor and the congregation. These expectations are provided to make clear the expectations of the Office of the Bishop regarding the resigning/retiring pastor and his/her relationship with the congregation. These expectations are discussed during the exit interview with the resigning/retiring pastor.

1. The pastor who is resigning or retiring will immediately move his/her congregational membership to another congregation, and if at all possible, relocate to another town. Parish ministry is built on relationships. There is an absolute need for space so that relationships, particularly new ones, can develop. This encourages the congregation to be truly intentional about the new parish-pastor relationship.
2. The retiring/resigning pastor is not to return to the congregation until invited to do so by his/her successor. The appropriate response when asked by parishioners to return is that it is not appropriate at this point in time. The rubric says no weddings, no baptisms, no funerals after the resignation date. In a rare instance of extenuating circumstance, in the early part of the transition period when there is as yet no regularly called pastor, permission may be given by the office of the bishop to return for a specific purpose. This, however, will be the remote exception to the rule.
3. The resigning/retiring pastor needs to be clear with the bishop about resignation/retirement plans/dates as soon as possible. Identify the last Sunday as early as possible so that the presence of someone representing the wider church can be arranged.
4. The resigning/retiring pastor should read the synod call process document, but not attempt to explain the process to the council or congregation. Let the bishop's designee do that as either an early, anxiety lessening summary of the process at a council meeting, or as the regular step at the appropriate time in the process.
5. The resigning/retiring pastor is not to get involved in selecting the call committee. The process and the bishop's designee provide that guidance to lay leaders.
6. The resigning/retiring pastor should write a letter to the congregation clarifying the ground rules for leaving. The pastor should ask the congregation not to put him/her in an awkward position with requests for pastoral ministry after the resignation date.
7. The resigning/retiring pastor will need to set the boundaries regarding ongoing contact with members via social media networks. The pastor should be removed from group email / text messages regarding congregation announcements (the exception being an electronic newsletter) or conversation. Decisions regarding "friending / unfriending", subscribing, following, etc. should be clearly discussed between the pastor and congregation.

Taken from "Parish Ministry Transition and Retirement: Expectations for the Sake of the Church" E. Roy Riley, Bishop, 8.1.96

[The Pastoral Call Process - New Jersey Synod](#)

<https://www.njsynod.org/call-process>

[Pastoral Call Process - \(revised November 2018\)](#) Exhibit E

Page 22

[Images for The Pastoral Call Process - New Jersey Synod Expectations of a Pastor upon Resignation from a Congregation](#)

Interim Pastor Explaining Appropriate Involvement of Previous Pastors

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This is one conflict I had hoped to avoid for now. The subject matter is the relationship between pastor and people. I would have preferred to deal with it at a later (more convenient) time, but it is a constantly recurring problem, so I will address it now. It is a problem that is not unique to this Lutheran Church, but that does not make dealing with it any easier.

The relationship bond between people and their pastor(s) is a special one. Much of the time these relationships are good and positive, but there are times when these personal relationships can be detrimental to the health of the congregation as a whole. This can happen in a number of ways.

It is natural for mutual affection to develop between individuals and their pastor(s); when this occurs, there is a tendency to “blur the boundaries.” It becomes difficult to distinguish between being one’s pastor and being one’s friend. When boundaries become blurred it is more likely that relationships will be violated. It is always the pastor’s responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries because of the sacred trust which is entrusted to the person who occupies the office of ministry.

It is inappropriate for pastors to use their relationship with parishioners for their own personal benefit (this includes financial favors or gifts, employment opportunities, etc. for one’s self or family members). Sometimes sexual boundaries are crossed – it is now

recognized that the pastor who violates this sacred trust must be removed from the clergy roster and criminal charges applied (when appropriate). Sexual misconduct in the pastoral officer must have zero tolerance. (Minnesota Statute §148A)
The violation of pastoral ethics also occurs in more subtle ways. It is inappropriate for any former pastor(s) of the congregation to function in a pastoral capacity within the congregation. This includes baptisms, weddings, funerals, counseling, hospital visitations, etc. When asked by parishioners to perform a pastoral function, it is the responsibility of the former pastor to say, "No, I am no longer a pastor of the congregation, and it would not be appropriate for me to do so." Former pastors who continually return are detrimental in allowing the current pastor(s) to become a pastor to the people of the congregation. It is essential that we honor the call of the current pastor(s) to the congregation.

The only time former pastors are encouraged to return in the role of a pastor is when invited by the Congregation Council for a specific event, such as the celebration of a church anniversary. Former pastors can best serve the congregation as a whole by sending an appropriate card or letter to individuals and families they had become close to during their time of service to the congregation. Although it is not advised, some pastors remain members of the congregation they once served. This is a difficult thing to manage for the former pastor, the congregation, and the current pastor(s). Roles have changed. If the new relationships are going to work, everyone must be very clear about the new role and boundaries of the former pastor(s). Former pastors should not function in any leadership capacity within the congregation they once served; not on council, call committee, special projects, or any other committee.

I am sure this letter will find people who disagree with what I have written. I would encourage you to come and talk to me concerning it. It is essential that we continue to *build up the body of Christ* and do all that we can to promote health, healing, and reconciliation within the congregation.

Your brother in Christ and partner in ministry,

Pastor Larry

Interim Senior Pastor

[Appendix B - Saint Paul Area Synod](#)

<http://www.spas-elca.org/sites/default/files/files/Appendix%20B%202012.pdf>

[Images for Interim Pastor Explaining Appropriate Involvement of Previous Pastors](#)

Personal Letter from a Departing Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul's,

After a long ministry here, Mary and I will be leaving for my retirement. At one point in my life, retirement was so far in the future that it never even entered my thoughts. But as it looms in the immediate future, we are getting more and more excited about it.

My pastorate at this church has not only been long – it has also been healthy and good. With the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit many wonderful things have happened here in these last 23 years. And to keep it all in perspective – we've been able to build on the work of the pastors and people who have gone before us.

Leaving is difficult, probably more difficult than anything I've been called to do in my ministry. The love and affection that you have shown us over the years have made a deep impression on our whole family. One of the happiest decisions in my ministry was one that brought us here.

Now that it is time to say good-bye, there are several things I must ask of you. It is important that you begin the process of preparation for a new pastor. This will be made easier if Mary and I are longer part of this congregation. Some congregations have had severe difficulties in making the transition to a new pastor. Because of this, the Bishop, rightly, insists that a retiring pastor resign from his present church and become part of a new congregation.

When a new pastor is called, his or her style of ministry may be very different from mine. Change can be very healthy and can lead to a period of growth and deepening faith. Let the Spirit work among you – and He will, for the blessing of all concerned.

With all this in mind, I will never be critical of your new pastor, or of the decisions and style of ministry that will be his or hers.

One of the most difficult things I must ask you to do with those moments in our lives when the church touches us most deeply. These include funerals, weddings, and the Sacrament of Baptism. After September 30, I will no longer be able to officiate at these high points in our lives.

The past 23 years have been happy and fruitful. My prayer is that the same will be said after another 23 years have gone by, with someone else being your pastor.

Mary and I leave this congregation with deep feelings of thanksgiving for a wonderful congregation that has tried always to live up to the motto we hold dear – "Blessed to be a blessing."

May the Lord always be with you!

Pastor David

[Appendix B - Saint Paul Area Synod](#)

<http://www.spas-elca.org/sites/default/files/files/Appendix%20B%202012.pdf>

[Images for Personal Letter from a Departing Pastor no longer able to officiate](#)

Letter of Agreement between a Former Pastor & Congregation

This is a letter of agreement at the time of resignation/retirement between

Pastor _____ and the Congregation Council of _____ in _____ city, _____ state.

It is a clarification of the former pastor's role in relationship to this congregation. It is to be shared throughout the congregation so that others may understand changes in responsibilities and can cooperate together as the congregation and former pastor move into another phase of their respective lives.

1. The pastor's resignation, effective _____, signifies his/her understanding that all pastoral and administrative duties in this congregation are terminated as of that date.

2. It is mutually understood that this termination of responsibilities applies also to the Interim period before another pastor is called, since the congregation needs some time and space between pastors to discover who they are now, where they want to go, and with

what new leadership. It is agreed that the congregation council will make provision with the Synod Office for interim pastoral leadership for the congregation.

3. The former pastor agrees that he/she will not officiate or assist at any baptism, wedding, or funerals in this congregation, but may attend as a worshipper on occasion. This is to prevent divided loyalties in the congregation and pressures on either the former for future pastors or interim pastors.

4. The former pastor agrees that he/she will not continue to make pastoral visits on members of the congregation. Circumstances make it necessary for exception for limited involvement in the following instances:

- a) _____
- b) _____

5. The former pastor agrees further that if attending this congregation in the future, it will only be as worshipper and participant and that he/she will neither say or listen to any uncomplimentary or critical remarks in social or other gatherings concerning the interim, past or future pastors.

6. The former pastor will not do services (wedding, baptism, funeral, etc.) unless it is the specific initiation and request of the current pastor and/or council (rather than member).

7. If, after approximately one year, there is a desire on the part of the next pastor to review any of the above items, the former pastor pledges to accept the guidance and instruction of the next pastor and congregation council about any participation in the life of _____ Lutheran Church.

8. The former pastor will remove his/her vestments, equipment, books, and possessions by _____. All items belonging to the congregation will remain in the congregation. Keys to the building will be returned to the church office, no; later than _____.

9. The former pastor will continue serving in the community in the following capacities:

- a) _____
- b) _____

The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

Page 37

[Images for The Call Process Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - Letter of agreement between a former pastor & congregation](#)

Resources

A Change of Pastors... and How It Affects Change in the Congregation by Loren B. Mead (Author)

Twenty years after *Critical Moment of Ministry* was first published, Loren Mead returns to his groundbreaking work on one of the most important times in a congregation's life—the time between one pastor's leaving and another's arrival. In this revised edition, *A Change of Pastors*, he shares wisdom gained from 35 years of studying congregations, wisdom he hopes will allow congregations to take full advantage of this "extraordinarily pregnant moment" during which incredible congregational change can happen.

<http://www.amazon.com/Change-Pastors-How-Affects-Congregation/dp/1566993091>

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781566993098/A-Change-of-Pastors-...-and-How-it-Affects-Change-in-the-Congregation>

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2282134.A_Change_of_Pastors_and_How_It_Affects_Change_in_the_Congregation

<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=1566994543>

https://books.google.com/books/about/A_Change_of_Pastors.html?id=sIHDPAAACAAJ

<https://alban.org/archive/congregational-leadership-and-pastoral-transitions/>

[Images for A Change of Pastors... and How It Affects Change in the Congregation by Loren B. Mead \(Author\)](#)

A Time for Lasts - Alban - Building up Congregations

"For everything there is a season." Transformation from which new life springs is bought at the price of abandonment of old routines and letting go of old ways of self-definition. The leaves must fall from the tree to create mulch to support springtime's renewal of life. Springtime's new blooms eventually rise but not without the death of the old self and its habitual patterns. In such transitional moments, a pastor's calling is to claim *kairos* time amid the fifty or more unstructured hours of *chronos* time that once defined each week's tasks. What initially seems like a void in the few weeks following retirement may shortly thereafter become the womb of new possibilities for those who awaken to new pathways of spirituality, vocation, and relationship. What the psalmist described as numbering our days will mean embracing the joy of new adventures and new talents, rather than simply passing time in preoccupation with the past.

Alban at Duke Divinity School » A Time for Lasts - Alban Institute

<https://alban.org/archive/a-time-for-lasts/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Four-Seasons-Ministry-Gathering-Righteousness/dp/1566993660>

[Images for Four-Seasons-Ministry-Gathering-Righteousness](#)

Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions [Roy M. Oswald, James Heath, Ann Heath]

Beginning Ministry Together is about the transition period between the announcement that one pastor is leaving and the time when another pastor is well settled. The message brought by Roy Oswald and colleagues Jim and Ann Heath is that this is not an impossible time to be survived only with a lot of expert help. Rather, even though the task is complex, committed congregational leaders can handle it—with the help of people who have been on this journey before. Oswald describes how clergy and congregations can better end and begin pastorates. He shows them how to say good-bye and discern their needs for the future—how to use the open space between pastorates for evaluation and preparation for a new day.

<http://www.amazon.com/Beginning-Ministry-Together-Handbook-Transitions/dp/1566992850>

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/260799.Beginning_Ministry_Together

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/beginning-ministry-together-roy-m-oswald/1007606251>
<https://www.waterstones.com/book/beginning-ministry-together/roy-m-oswald/james-heath/9781566992855>
<https://www.cokesbury.com/9781566992855-Beginning-Ministry-Together?refq=Lay%20Servant%20ministries>
Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy for Clergy Transitions
<https://imnedu.org/imn-library/beginning-ministry-together-the-alban-handbook-for-clergy-transitions/>
<http://www.lifeandleadership.com/book-summaries/oswald-beginning-ministry-together.html>
<https://alban.org/archive/maintaining-confidentiality-in-search-committees/>
[Images for Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions \[Roy M. Oswald, James Heath, Ann Heath\]](#)

Ending Well, Starting Strong: Your Personal Pastorate Start-up Workshop [Roy Oswald]

Alban research shows that the first twelve months in a new pastorate determine the course of one's entire ministry in that congregation. This two-day workshop in audiocassette format prepares you to face the issues in and develop your strategies for leaving one pastorate and going to another. You will:

- reflect on how you left earlier pastorates, closure style, termination stress, and emotions (yours and the congregation's);
- explore appropriate management styles for various church sizes and reflect on your management and leadership styles;
- discover the key tasks of the first nine to twelve months that are critical to a successful beginning; and
- learn how to develop a ministry plan for the first year of a new pastorate.

The accompanying study guide provides self-scoring assessment instruments and supplemental material. This is a must for all clergy contemplating or in the midst of changing pastorates. A complete self-study in six audio CDs and guide.

<http://www.amazon.com/Ending-Well-Starting-Strong-Pastorate/dp/1566991439>
[Images for Ending Well, Starting Strong: Your Personal Pastorate Start-up Workshop \[Roy Oswald\]](#)

Running through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship with a Parish [Roy M. Oswald]

Can how you leave a church affect your feelings about leaving or create "baggage" you take to your new congregation? Gain insight into termination styles and how they affect both you and your parishioners. Using real-life illustrations, Oswald guides you through Alban Institute research findings to help you prepare for a departure.

<http://www.amazon.com/Running-Through-Thistles-Terminating-Relationship/dp/1566990041>
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1016938.Running_Through_the_Thistles
<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/running-through-the-thistles-roy-m-oswald/1118908258>
<https://www.christianbook.com/running-through-thistles-terminating-ministerial-relationship/roy-oswald/9781566990042/pd/990042>
http://books.google.com/books/about/Running_Through_the_Thistles.html?id=wVCpPQAACAAJ
<https://imnedu.org/imn-library/running-through-the-thistles-terminating-a-ministerial-relationship-with-a-parish/>
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54c7d7ede4b03a45e09cd270/t/5aa00b43652dea8c73c46299/1520438089615/HowToMinisterEffectivelyInFamilyPastoralProgramandCorporate-SizedChurches.pdf>
[Images for Running through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship with a Parish \[Roy M. Oswald\]](#)

Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors [Edward A. White]

Leaving a pastorate is hard on both congregation and pastor. Learn how to make this transition a growth experience for all. Written for congregations and pastors, *Saying Goodbye* skillfully weaves accounts from clergy, laity, and educators of seven denominations with White's own insight as a former General Presbyterian to create a resource for meaningful and healthy partings. Includes examples of a "farewell" worship service and litany for closure of a ministry.

<http://www.amazon.com/Saying-Goodbye-Growth-Congregations-Pastors/dp/1566990378>
http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/424632.Saying_Goodbye
<https://www.bookdepository.com/Saying-Goodbye-Edward-White/9781566990370>
<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781566990370/Saying-Goodbye-A-Time-of-Growth-for-Congregations-and-Pastors>
<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=1566996244>
Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors
<http://www.lifeandleadership.com/book-summaries/white-saying-goodbye.html>
<http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org/files/Guidelines%20&%20Policies/32%20Separation%20Ethics%201-12-10.pdf>
[Images for Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors \[Edward A. White\]](#)

Part 2 Interim Ministry

Introduction

For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. (Jeremiah 29.10–14)

Taking Time and Looking Forward

They were difficult days when the Israelites were taken away into exile. The interim period can feel a little like that—what had been comfortable and familiar is gone. What comes next? Uncertainty and anxiety can cripple people. But God speaks a word of hope in the midst of confusion: I have your future in my hands and I will bring you home. As one of our seasoned interim pastors says often, "It's pretty tough right now, but things are already getting better." Once the initial waves have passed, this interim period is an opportunity to reflect upon who you are as a congregation and discover what God is calling you to next. Not only are you, as a congregation, in transition; we as a church are in transition. How will we speak God's word of grace and peace in this new age? How will we engage in mission in our own backyard? How will we pass on the faith to our children and our neighbors? The interim period is for taking time and for looking forward. Your interim pastor will lead you through this time, as will your synod staff, in order to claim our "future with hope."

[PDF]Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 49

Call Process Booklet - Yumpu

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Taking Time and Looking Forward](#)

[DOC]Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository

Chapter 9.

ROSTERED MINISTER

- *C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.02. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for the congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- *C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
 - a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
 - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline; and
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin of the ELCA.
- *C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.05. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:
 - a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;

- 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

***C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, the congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.

- *C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:
- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;
 - b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
 - c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- *C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.
- C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synodical bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between the congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation.
- *C9.21.** Authority to call a minister of Word and Service shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.22.** Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synodical bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.
- *C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
 - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
 - d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
 - e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
 - f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
 - g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
 - h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
 - i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.
- *C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or

- 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- *C9.26.** The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- installation in another field of labor, or
 - the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.
- *C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
- *C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.
- *C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- *C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

<https://www.elca.org/constitution> 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations

<https://download.elca.org> > ELCA Resource Repository > Model Constitution

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

[Images for At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.](#)

Theological Context for Transitional Ministry

Congregations in transition are shaped by the uniqueness of their individual contexts.

Yet, the Word of God transcends each and every context, moving and bringing forth that which the congregation may need and aspire to. Transitional ministry, whether a congregation is served by a supply pastor, an intentional interim, or a long-term supply, for example, finds its theological grounding within the Holy Scriptures. Consider the transitional ministries of some of the Bible's greatest leaders who encountered change in their context: Moses, Abraham and Sarah, and Deborah in the book of Judges. And that's just in the Hebrew Scriptures.

We can turn to the New Testament and find equal biblical and theological grounding for transitional ministry.... After all, isn't transitional ministry all about transformation? The Apostle Paul was transformed and became a transformational leader. There was John the Baptist, and, of course, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ himself. From death to resurrection, scripture points us to change and reformation. History tells us that every congregation and every ministry within each congregation is limited by time and scope. For Moses - his life and ministry were, in part, spent wandering in the wilderness.

Congregations in transition enter this wilderness experience immediately upon learning that there is to be a pastoral shift in their leadership. Margaret Morris and Joan Mabon, pioneering intentional interim pastors and trainers, have written in the Interim Ministry Network newsletter, *The In-Between Times*: Perhaps more than any other, the biblical motif “wilderness” emerges most strongly as the metaphors for a congregation between installed pastors. “Wilderness” is that place of sudden freedom, uncertain leadership, changed relationships, possible deprivation—temptations, hopes and disappointments. That place where all old fears reappear most threateningly... but where all the hopeful futures take on new promise. “Wilderness” becomes a paradigm for the interim time” (transition time).

As far as biblical precedents go, John the Baptist just might be considered the first ever transitional pastor. Most definitely he is a model for Intentional Interim pastors. All transitional pastors strive to be the voice in the midst of the wilderness of any congregation in transition.

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. The transitional pastor prepares the way, in this case, the congregation, for the coming of the new called pastor, or a new direction the congregation will decide to take. John prepared the way for the new day. Transitional pastors do the same thing.

Specifically, Intentional Interim pastors, for example, work within the congregational context, lifting a mirror so as to reflect to the congregation the culture within its very walls of operation. The transition time led by the transitional pastor is one where the congregation does the work, preparing itself to receive the newly called pastor. A Transitional Pastor, no matter what kind, works to work himself or herself out of a job. The words of John the Baptist come to mind. In John 3:30, John points to the one who was called by God to take up ministry among the people. His words about Jesus then were, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John the Baptist passed his ministry on to Jesus. Jesus in turn traveled throughout the countryside and into the villages and cities, constantly preparing his disciples to succeed him. The work of any congregation flows from the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, in, with, though, and under, the will of God. Hence, transitional ministry in a congregation centers, first and foremost, on God.

Everyone needs to know their role

- Who is in charge? God.
- Office of the Bishop: Is responsible to hold you in prayer throughout the whole transition process, to articulating the purpose of the Intentional Interim process, to providing resources as needed to assist you in the process and to provide appropriate and qualified candidates to the call committee.
- Transitional Pastoral Leadership: Is responsible to lead the ongoing ministry of the congregation, provide pastoral care and lead worship, administer the sacraments, and lead the transition team through the transition process.
- Congregational Leadership: Is responsible for supporting and leading the congregation in the ongoing ministry of the congregation and provide prayerful support and encouragement to the transition team and the call committee.
- Congregation: Is responsible for supporting the ongoing ministry of the congregation (baptisms, worship, faith formation, service, sacraments, stewardship, maintain relationship with the wider church, and to hold the transition team and the call committee in prayer.
- Outgoing Pastor: Is responsible for maintaining professional distance from the congregation once they have departed, by not contacting or getting involved in the work and ministry of the congregation or its members.
- Future Pastor: Is responsible to prayerfully discern Gods call.

Congregations in Transition: Moving to the Future

Pages 18-19

http://rmselca.org/synod/assembly14/PreAssembly%20Packet/DRAFT_1_RMS_Congregational_Transitions_Booklet.pdf
[Images for Congregations in Transition: Moving to the Future Theological Context for Transitional Ministry](#)

Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America periodically experience transitions in pastoral leadership. Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide for the care of congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy through the appointment by the bishop of the synod of an ordained minister to provide pastoral care on an interim basis. An interim pastor is appointed by the synod bishop with the consent of the congregation or the Congregational Council (C.9.06). Pastoral care is then provided on a contract basis, either through appointment or a term letter of call. The following policy statement describes the guidelines by which interim ministry is provided to congregations.

Congregations in Transition

Because of the importance of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to insure appropriate pastoral leadership for congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy. Interim ministry is provided by synods during the time of transition following the completion of service by the congregation’s former pastor and prior to the calling of a new pastor. This is also provided for in a congregation served by a multi-pastoral staff when a senior pastor leaves, or when an associate pastor or other pastoral staff leaves. The interim period is thus a time in which the synod provides pastoral care for a congregation as they move through a process of self-study and change toward new pastoral leadership. A congregation facing the normal range of congregational concerns related to pastoral transition may be served by an interim pastor without formal training. The synod bishop arranges for the congregation to receive Word and Sacrament leadership during the period prior to the regular calling of a pastor through the appointment of an interim pastor. An appointed interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to an ‘interim supply pastor’ with the consent of the synod bishop (S.14.17). The interim pastor normally serves the congregation in a contracted and compensated arrangement. A congregation in a situation of significant concerns and stress related to a pastoral transition may benefit from the leadership of an experienced and trained interim pastor. Situations in which this is particularly appropriate include the transition following a long pastorate, a congregation facing new mission opportunities and/or a changed context for ministry, a transition following the resignation of a pastor related to disciplinary action by the synod, or a transition marked by significant discord or upheaval within a congregation.

Appointed or Called Interim Ministry

An interim pastor may either be appointed by the synod bishop or may serve under a term call extended by the Synod Council (7.41.1 1.b.) Calls to interim ministry may not be extended by a congregation. A pastor serving either under appointment by the bishop or under a term Letter of Call normally serves the congregation in a contracted and compensated arrangement. Unless previously agreed to by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served during this time of transition and shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. (C9.97.).

Guidelines for Called Interim Pastoral Ministry

1. A called interim pastor shall provide a minimum of a half-time ministry (at least twenty hours per week) to the congregation with commensurate compensation in accordance with synod guidelines, and consistent with the ELCA guidelines for shared-time calls. A call to interim ministry shall be primarily for the benefit of the congregation served, not for the status of the ordained minister. Such a call may either be a term call to a specific congregation, or a term call to interim ministry in the synod. The determination of this will be with the concurrence of the congregation being served.
2. Prior to being eligible for a call to interim ministry, the pastor shall normally receive appropriate training for interim ministry. The Division for Ministry will review interim ministry training programs and serve as consultant to synods in evaluating such programs.
3. Only pastors who have served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years are eligible to serve in a called interim ministry.
4. The interim ministry agreement between the congregation and the called interim pastor will specify compensation, benefits, and the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry. The Letter of Call issued by the Synod Council may include salary and benefit matters. Normally, however, matters of compensation and benefits are stipulated in the interim ministry agreement with the congregation.
5. In issuing a call to interim ministry, the synod assumes no responsibility for guaranteeing continuous employment, compensation, or benefits for the pastor under call (7.43). It is understood that compensation and benefits are normally provided entirely by the congregation or ministry setting being served. Where possible, continuity of Board of Pensions health benefits will be advocated by the synod. It is explicitly understood that the synod is the calling agent and not the employer of record at any time during the service of an interim pastor under call from the Synod Council.
6. Call to interim service within a synod may be issued for a one to three-year term of service, with an annual review by the Synod Council or its designated committee. However, if a pastor under a term call to interim ministry has not served in a congregation during the preceding twelve months, the call may be terminated by the Synod Council. A term letter of Call issued by the Synod Council may also be coterminous with the duration of service within the congregation served. The term call may be terminated by action of the Synod Council. A pastor may resign a call to interim ministry at any time.
7. Initial issuance of a call to interim ministry by the Synod Council shall be upon the recommendation of the bishop. The initial interim ministry agreement with a congregation may be reviewed by the bishop or synod staff prior to the acceptance of the contractual arrangement by the interim pastor.

Guidelines of Appointed Interim Ministry

1. An appointed interim pastor is authorized to provide Word and sacrament ministry to a congregation by the synod bishop with the concurrence of the Congregational Council. The interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The appointed interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the synod bishop. (S 14.17.).
2. A retired pastor or pastor on leave from call who serves an interim ministry is recommended by the bishop and signs an interim ministry agreement with the congregation which provides for the compensation, benefits, and the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry.
3. Normally, only pastors who have previously served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years will be eligible to serve in an appointed interim ministry.

Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry

Page 36

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Policies_Procedures_Roster_Mgmt.pdf

[Images for Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

[Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry](#)

Proposed Synod Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry

1. Interim ministry shall be primarily for the benefit of the congregation served and not for the status of the ordained minister.
2. Prior to being eligible for interim ministry, the pastor shall normally receive appropriate training for interim ministry.
3. An interim pastor is expected to take advantage of ongoing interim ministry training, attend the synod interim ministry gathering, and make monthly reports to the synod office.
4. Only pastors who have served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years are eligible to serve in interim ministry.
5. The letter of agreement between the congregation and the interim pastor will specify compensation, benefits, the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry and length of service. The total compensation package or a ratio of the total compensation package will normally be based upon that received by the previous installed pastor.
6. In appointing a pastor to interim ministry, the synod assumes no responsibility for guaranteeing continuous employment, compensation, or benefits for the pastor under call. It is understood that compensation and benefits are normally provided entirely by the congregation or ministry setting being served. Where possible, continuity of Portico health benefits will be advocated by the synod. It is explicitly understood that the synod is the calling agent and not the employer of record at any time during the service of an interim pastor under call from the Synod Council.

7. Appointment to interim service within a synod may be issued for a term of service, with an annual review by the Synod Council or its designated committee. However, if a pastor under a term call to interim ministry has not served in a congregation during the preceding twelve months, the call may be terminated by the Synod Council. A term letter of agreement issued by the Synod Council may also be coterminous with the duration of service within the congregation served. The term agreement may be terminated by action of the Synod Council. A pastor may resign a call to interim ministry at any time.
8. Initial issuance of a call to interim ministry by the Synod Council shall be upon the recommendation of the bishop. The initial interim ministry agreement with a congregation may be reviewed by the bishop or synod staff prior to the acceptance of the contractual arrangement by the interim pastor.
9. The interim pastor and the congregation are expected to attend to the following transition dynamics:
 - Heritage appreciate how the past of the congregation informs the present
 - Identity discover who the congregation is in the current context
 - Vision discern what it is this congregation understands God is calling this congregation to be
 - Mission define a sense of purpose and direction for the congregation
 - Leadership engage people of the congregation in God's mission
 - Connections explore all the relationships a congregation shares beyond itself
10. The interim pastor is expected to assist the congregation leadership, as needed, in the preparation of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP). This is the official document needed for entering the call process of this synod. After the MSP has been submitted to the synod office, the interim pastor will be available to offer advice on any matters of process or procedure as the call process moves forward. However, the interim pastor shall not participate in or influence the selection of candidates in any way.

The Transition Team: A Ministry Team to Help During the Time of Pastoral Vacancy

Change. Many people have a natural and strong reaction to change – any change. They resist it; they get anxious about it; they work hard at stopping it. But change cannot NOT happen when a pastor, or other rostered leader, announces his or her resignation. One chapter in the congregation's life has to end, and another must find a way to begin. It is a time of uncertainty, of anticipation, of apprehension, and of hope. Just going through the procedures and tasks associated with the call process does not deal with the grief, confusion and emotional issues that will wash over the congregation. The Congregation Council along with the interim pastor will do what they can to attend to the pastoral and emotional needs of the congregation, but a **Transition Team** can add depth to the ministry that must be provided to the congregation.

A Transition Team is a ministry team. It cares for the experience of change, anxiety and grief in the congregation. It is not a governing body, management group, or Call Committee.

The team consists of four to six trusted and talented members of the congregation, at least one of whom is also a member of the Congregation Council. The president of the congregation is an *ex officio* member of the Transition Team. The team is accountable to the Congregation Council and makes regular reports to the council. The team can make decisions only insofar as it is empowered to do so by the council. It is encouraged to call on the synod office for guidance and support.

The Transition Team has four primary areas of responsibility:

First task: to facilitate the closure activities for the ministry of the departing pastor

- Help the pastor to end well: plan events, gifts, remembrances and thanksgivings.
- Encourage closure conversations between the pastor and shut-ins, children and various groups.
- Invite pastor's verbal and written observations and concerns about the ministry.
- Determine the unfinished pastoral care responsibilities that the pastor needs to place in the committee's care.
- Ensure that council and pastor have signed off on the statements regarding finances and parochial records.

Second task: to determine the congregation's readiness for call process

- Farewell activities are completed, and the pastor has left the community.
- Interim pastor is in place, installed, and situated to the ministry of the congregation.
- Congregation has stabilized in its organization and pastoral tasks.
- Conflict, grief, and financial issues are deemed not to be a barrier to the call process.
- Initiate a consultation among council, bishop, interim pastor, and team to determine that it is time to appoint the Call Committee.

Third task: to monitor the needs of the congregation during the interim and advise the interim pastor

- Welcome and help situate the interim pastor.
- Attend to grief, loss and pastoral care issues that arise.
- Address ministry tasks that have fallen through the cracks.
- Monitor the general health and needs of the congregation.
- Educate the congregation on transition issues, new styles of pastoral leadership, etc.

Fourth task: to facilitate the beginning of the new pastor's ministry

- Plan welcoming events and the service of installation.
- Prepare the *Survival Tool Kit* for the pastor.
- Help the pastor connect with members and with the community.
- Council appoints a Mutual Ministry Committee as the successor group to the Transition Team. The committee begins meeting with the pastor.
- The work of the Transition Team is then complete; it is dissolved with thanks.

Call Process Documents for Download - Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod
Transition Team

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

Proposed Letter of Agreement for Interim Pastoral Ministry

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our ministry comes from Christ through the Church and belongs to the whole people of God. The Gospel calls all Christians to be ministers in word and deed. So, it is the privilege of every Christian to be a steward of the gospel of God's reconciling love. The whole church ministers as it celebrates God's presence, shares the good news, cares for those in need, and witnesses to the power of God's love.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) holds the congregation and the office of ordained ministry in high regard. Consequently, this church body invests substantial resources in support of the congregations during times of change in pastoral leadership. The congregation's ministry is ongoing: a pastor serving such a congregation is doing interim ministry, a temporary but necessary pastoral ministry. Interim pastoral service conditions are stated in the Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry.

In keeping with the policies and practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and in order to set forth clearly the agreement for interim service between the congregation and pastor,

Congregation

Location

agrees that

Pastor

will serve as interim pastor on a

part-time full-time basis

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Rostered Leaders

2020 Minimum Standards for Compensation and Benefits

<http://nswwi.org/leadership/rostered-leaders> 2020 Compensation Standards

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/2020_Salary_Standards.pdf

Part-Time Ministry Guidelines for Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

<http://nswwi.org/leadership/rostered-leaders> Part Time Ministry Compensation Standards

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/d4/d4da0816-c57d-4910-84d6-acc527a9a8/documents/part-time_ministry_salary_guidelines-feb_14_2014.pdf

open ended time frame or from _____ to _____

in accord with the following conditions and mutual promises:

Together the congregation and interim pastor will:

A. Attend to the transition dynamics

Heritage	appreciate how the past of the congregation informs the present
Identity	discover who the congregation is in the current context
Vision	discern what it is this congregation understands God is calling this congregation to be
Mission	define purpose and direction for the congregation in God's mission
Leadership	engage people of the congregation in God's mission
Connections	explore all the relationships a congregation shares beyond itself

B. Identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.

C. Align the congregation in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and update the congregation's constitution as needed.

D. Facilitate the call process with the understanding that the interim pastor shall refrain from exercising influence over the selection of a candidate.

E. In the case of part-time ministry, agree to the following schedule of service:

The interim pastor will:

A. Preach and teach the Word of God.

B. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according the practice of the ELCA.

- C. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs, visit as necessary, officiate at weddings, baptisms, confirmation, funerals, and uphold the members in prayer.
- D. Give pastoral leadership for the meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
- E. Encourage support of the total ministry of the ELCA.
- F. Be responsible for the recording of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals, attendance at Holy Communion, and the maintenance of the membership rosters; and report the statistics of the parish promptly and fully, as requested by the ELCA.
- G. Agree under no circumstances to be available for call to be the installed pastor of this congregation.
- H. Agree not to become a member of this congregation after this agreement terminates.
- I. Participate in the synod structure for the support and training of interim pastors.
- J. During this transition, give special attention to:

The congregation will:

- A. Commit to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship activities.
- B. Support the ministry of the congregation through service and gifts.
- C. Accept the interim pastor, uphold in prayer, and accord love, respect, and good will.
- D. Expect the interim pastor to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and other rites of the church.
- E. Agree that the interim pastor will not be considered for call to be the installed pastor of this congregation.
- F. Compensate the interim pastor in the following ways:

Consult following resources for forms.

[PDF] [Definition of Compensation, Benefits, And Responsibilities of the Pastor – ELCA Resource Repository](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Compensation_and_Benefits_for_a_Pastor_Form.pdf?_ga=1.72113111.537152160.1467910353)
http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Compensation_and_Benefits_for_a_Pastor_Form.pdf?_ga=1.72113111.537152160.1467910353
http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Compensation_and_Benefits_for_a_Pastor_Guide.pdf?_ga=1.75709649.537152160.1467910353

Compensation and Benefits for Rostered Leaders

I. COMPENSATION 4	
A. BASE SALARY	4
B. HOUSING FOR ORDAINED CLERGY	6
C. SOCIAL SECURITY, IRS REPORTING, AND WORKER’S COMPENSATION	7
II. BENEFITS	7
A. PENSION AND MAJOR MEDICAL/DENTAL BENEFITS	7
B. MEDICAL FLEXIBLE SPENDING PLAN	8
C. PAID LEAVES	8
D. OTHER INSURANCE, OPTIONAL PENSION PLAN PAYMENTS	8
III. REIMBURSED PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES	9
A. AUTOMOBILE ALLOWANCE (Recommended: lease/purchase or IRS mileage rate)	9
B. CONTINUING EDUCATION (Recommended: \$900)	9
C. PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY EXPENSES (Recommended: \$300)	10
D. OFFICIAL MEETINGS (Recommended: \$600)	10
E. MOVING EXPENSES	10
IV. WEEKLY, ANNUAL AND SABBATICAL TIME COMPENSATION	11
A. SABBATH DAY (Recommended: 40 to 45 hours per week; at least one full day off)	11
B. VACATION TIME (Recommended: 4 weeks; 11+ years of experience: 5 weeks)	11
C. CONTINUING EDUCATION TIME (Recommended: two weeks)	12

See also

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](http://s3.amazonaws.com)

Letter of Agreement for Interim Pastoral Ministry

Page 69

Letter of Agreement for Bridge Pastor Ministry

Page 75

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

This agreement terminates on the date specified on page one of this agreement or thirty days after a new pastor has declared acceptance of the call to this congregation, whichever comes first; or upon thirty (30) days written notice from the congregation, the interim pastor, or the bishop of the synod. All financial obligations between the interim pastor and the congregation shall be fulfilled by or on the date of termination.

This agreement may be amended or extended upon the mutual agreement of the Congregation Council and the interim pastor, after consultation with the bishop of the synod, by written addendum attached hereto.

We, the undersigned, accept the terms of this agreement:

_____	_____
President or Secretary	Date
_____	_____
Interim Pastor	Date
_____	_____
Reviewed by	
_____	_____
Bishop	Date

Upon signature, copies will be distributed as follows:
 1. Original to the Interim Pastor
 2. Copy to the President of this Congregation Council
 3. Copy to the Bishop of this synod

Addendum to Letter of Agreement for Interim Pastoral Ministry

 Congregation
 _____,
 Location

and

 Pastor
 agree that:
 the original agreement dated _____,

_____ is hereby extended by this addendum to: _____
 _____ Date

_____ is amended by this addendum as follows:

We, the undersigned, accept the terms of this addendum:

_____	_____
Congregation Council President or Secretary	Date
_____	_____
Interim Pastor	Date
_____	_____
Reviewed by	
_____	_____
Bishop	Date

Upon signature, copies will be distributed as follows:
 1. Original to the interim pastor
 2. Copy to the Congregation Council president
 3. Copy to the synod office

See also

- [Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf)
- http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf
- [Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet)
- <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

Interim Assessment Guide

1. What are some concerns or issues about which the interim pastor will need or want to know?
2. What is the projected budget and spending plan for the next 6 months?
3. What is the average Sunday attendance?
4. What is the attendance of other regular services that you have (off site or on site)?
5. What concerns would you like the synod office need to address?
6. What else would be helpful for the bishop to know in selecting an interim pastor?

[congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod](#)

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf>

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod Interim Assessment Guide](#)

Recognition and Blessing of the Interim Pastor

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America holds the congregation and the office of ordained ministry in high regard. Consequently, the ELCA invests resources in support of congregations during times of change in pastoral leadership. The interim between permanent pastors provides opportunity for evaluation, renewal, and transition from the extended service of a previous pastor, and can help congregations to remain faithful, creative, and vital in mission and ministry.

When possible, a member of the synod staff will attend this service to preside over the assignment of the interim minister. When that is not possible, the congregation president, a member of the Executive Committee, a deacon, an assisting minister, or other designated congregation leader may take the role of the presiding minister for this portion of the service.

Congregation President

Pastor _____ has been nominated by Bishop (*name*), of the (*synod*) of the ELCA to serve as our interim pastor. On (date), _____ the Congregation Council of _____ Lutheran Church approved Pastor _____ to serve as interim pastor. I present Pastor _____ for reception into this ministry among us. We celebrate this time of new beginnings for our church family, and we look to the time ahead that we will share with Pastor _____ as our interim pastor. We anticipate that what we build together with one another will be good and pleasing to God.

We trust God to lead us toward greater goodness, faithfulness, hope and joy.

Congregation President

The transition time between installed pastors is an exciting and meaningful time in the life of our congregation. This is not a time for just maintaining the status quo, but it is a time for preparation, a time when we can come to understand more clearly who we are, who we want to become, and what God intends our ministry and life together to be.

At this time of transition, we promise that what is past is past, to cherish what has been good, and to let go of what we no longer need. We promise to reach for the future that is coming, for we believe that God is leading us toward it.

Congregation President

This is a time for discovering the qualities, gifts, and abilities, which you will want and need in our next installed pastor. For this in-between time, God has sent Pastor _____ to us to be our interim pastor, to aid us in continuing our work and witness in this community and in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin of the ELCA, and to help us see the possibilities for the new vision.

Interim Pastor

As we begin this interim time together, we begin new relationships. With God's help, I promise to be a partner in ministry as God's servant among you. I promise to participate in the life of this congregation assisting you in this time of transition. I promise to be a pastor for you, standing with you in times of joy or trouble. I promise to serve and lead you with faithfulness and integrity during my time here. I will pray for you, listen to you, assist you in the dynamics of this transition period, encouraging and challenging you as we move through this time together. I will give you the best of my gifts, my talents, my time and my energy.

With God's help, we promise to accept and support you as our interim pastor. We will encourage you and pray for you, as well as share together during this transition period in the life and service of our congregation. As we seek to respond to God's leading, we promise to deal with one another in love, respect, honesty, humor, and creativity.

Congregation President

Upon these mutual commitments – from you, Pastor _____, and us, _____ Lutheran Church – it is my great pleasure to welcome you as our interim pastor. May God bless this beginning, and bring us joyfully through this time of transition, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, the head of the Church.

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we thank you for your faithful leading of _____ Lutheran Church throughout the years. We thank you for the ways in which you continue to bless us, challenge us, forgive us, and continue to invite us into being your faithful people. We offer our gratitude for having Pastor _____ partner with us in ministry during this in-between time. We thank you for his gifts, and faith, and vision, and for all the ways you have made him ready for this task. Bless him and our church family as they seek to live out the promises we have made this day. Empower us by your Holy Spirit and lead us all in the steps of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Resources for Congregations: Interim Ministry Association

Recognition and Blessing of the Interim Pastor

<http://interimministry.org/resources/resources-for-congregations/>

[Images for Resources for Congregations: Interim Ministry Association Recognition and Blessing of the Interim Pastor](#)

See also

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](#)

Liturgy for Receiving an Interim Pastor – Appendix 6

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for The Call Process - Liturgy for Receiving an Interim Pastor](#)

Page 43

Congregational Ministry Assessment

The following is a list of important areas of congregational life that can be productively explored by the lay and pastoral leadership of the congregation during the interim between called pastors. Addressing these nine areas will assure that things are in good order in the congregation in anticipation of calling a new pastor.

History (Organizational Genogram)

- List of pastors who have served the congregation
- List of presidents who have served recently or at crucial moments
- Major events in the life of the congregation
- Identification of informal power structures in the congregation (past and present)
- Other significant data

Mission and Purposes

- When were the mission statement and purposes last updated? By what process?
- How well understood are they by the congregation?
- How intentionally are they pursued?

Constitution and Bylaws

- When were they last revised?
- What was the process?
- Are they adhered to? If not, in what areas?

Governance

- Do you have an organizational chart?
- Describe how the Congregation Council functions.
- What are strengths and weaknesses of the Congregation Council?
- Describe how committees function in relation to the Congregation Council.
- Are the committees functioning congruent with their charge in the Bylaws?
- What changes in leadership have affected governance?

Whole Life Stewardship

- What is the congregation's approach to stewardship?
- How does it function?
- Do committees and the Congregation Council set and follow annual goals?
- Are the programmatic goals tied to the mission plan?
- Are strategies and timelines for implementation of goals developed and followed?

Ministry and Programs

- Describe the most significant ministries, initiatives, and programs of the congregation.
- What ministries, initiatives, and programs have failed or are most needed?
- Describe a vision for the ministry and programs of the future.

Relationship to the Synod, ELCA, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Organizations

- Describe briefly the congregation's significant relationships with the broader faith community.
- How are these relationships maintained?
- What is the vision for renewing relationships with the synod during the interim?

Issues

- What are the significant issues facing the congregation today?
- Is there any conflict in the congregation? What is it? How is it being managed?
- Have issues and/or conflict been identified and acknowledged? By whom? What was the process?
- How is the leadership of the congregation dealing with these issues?
- What is needed to address unresolved issues?

Tasks during the Interim

- What challenges and opportunities face the congregation during the interim?
- What specific tasks need to be accomplished during the interim?
- Who will be the major players?
- Who will provide leadership? What will be the process?
- What will be the role of the pastor during the interim regarding issues and tasks?

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for The Call Process Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Congregational Ministry Assessment](#)

Page 48

Interim and Self-Study

1: Intentional Interim Begins

- Liturgy for Receiving an Interim Pastor (Appendix 6)

2: Self-Study: Encountering God in our Midst

A. The Purpose of the Transition Team

The purpose of the transition team is to mobilize discovery and generate the capacity to thrive anew. The two major goals are 1) to discover a new and deepened sense of identity and purpose for the congregation and 2) to establish a healthy relationship with the next pastoral leader who will walk with the congregation toward the renewed sense of purpose. This team allows the Congregational Council to focus on continuing to support the ministries of the congregation and the regular business of the church. Other purposes of the transition team are:

- To help congregational members grieve after the loss of their pastor and to gain perspective on the chapter of congregational life that has now ended.
- To gather the feelings and ideas of both members of the congregation and people living in the surrounding community about their church.
- To provide a forum for sharing and focusing hopes and aspirations for the future.
- To help the congregation move from a preoccupation with the past to a state of readiness for a new chapter in its life under the leadership of a new pastor.
- To involve the congregation in accomplishing the developmental tasks of the interim period.

The members of the transition team commit to the unique opportunity presented in the transition time. It is a time of high challenge for any congregation, a time for self-assessment, and a time for visioning and recommitment to mission and ministry. The overall goal is to bring the congregation into a state of readiness to move forward under the leadership of a new pastor.

B. Forming a Transition Team

The Holy Spirit is on the move in a congregation in transition. In the weeks following the arrival of the interim pastor, it is highly recommended that a transition team be created. This team will be responsible for research, analysis, documentation, and study. The team (which is normally different than the Call Committee) will be appointed by the Congregational Council and is responsible for getting the congregation ready before the Call Committee begins the work of writing the Ministry Site Profile and interviewing candidates. This process will take as long as needed to gather and assess information before a Call Committee is in place. The interim pastor will lead you through this process using a variety of tools. Outside consultants are most helpful at this stage of the process. The five to seven individuals on the transition team work closely with the interim pastor to plan and guide a process that invites the whole congregation into a time of self-reflection, preparing the congregation for a new future with a new called pastor.

A transition team will:

- Value each team member's contributions and take suggestions and ideas seriously.
- Become acquainted with resources for gathering and evaluating information.
- Hold and honor confidentiality.
- Foster the trust of the church membership.
- Gather the information needed to create a congregational vision, establish goals, and define activities for the future ministry of the church.
- Collate and interpret information gathered from the congregation and its life and vision of the future.

C. The Work of the Transition Team: The Five Developmental Tasks

The transition team will work with the congregation to focus on five central developmental tasks.

1. Coming to terms with history

The congregation gathers to remember all the stories. They tell one another (especially those who have recently joined) the congregational stories, reminding one another who the congregation has been. They make sense of how God has been active in their history, through the ups and downs of the past. They tell public stories (and even personal ones) of who and what they have loved and lost. In addition, churches sometimes have "old issues" or conflict which never was fully resolved and which tends to re-surface in unsettling times. All of this remembering is critical so that the community can be invited to let go before they are asked to imagine a new future with a new pastor.

2. Discovering a new identity

The congregation is asked a variety of questions: Who and what are they becoming as a congregation, and how has our context changed over the years? What gifts (assets) define us; not simply our building or staff, but our changing participants and neighbors? We need to watch and listen, not only for what to conserve, but for what might be emerging in the midst of this new identity.

3. Managing shifts in leadership

Congregations in an interim time often experience shifts in power of leadership depending on the relationships of individuals to the former pastor. This is also a time for considering whether, as a whole, patterns of involvement in the church are healthy or unhealthy, empowering or disempowering for most of the congregation. The task is to see that leadership develops in positive and creative ways for the good of the whole church.

4. Strengthening our sense of being the church together

We are not only a local congregation, but part of a regional, national, and global church. How closely do we identify with our Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and the national church body of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? What has been our connection with our ecumenical brothers and sisters? What can we ask of them and offer to them? How are we living into our relationship with our companion church in Malawi?

5. Committing to our new future and a new leadership

As the work of the preceding four developmental tasks (coming to terms with our history, discovering a new identity, managing shifts in leadership, and strengthening our sense of being the church together) comes to maturity, the congregation becomes clear about their future so they can invite an appropriate new pastoral leader to lead them into that new future. Other new staffing should be considered on conditional basis, so that the called pastor has the opportunity to determine future staffing.

D. The Work of the Transition Team: Other Tasks

The transition team will also attend to the following details, with the help of the Interim Pastor:

- Update the current congregational constitution
- Study the congregation and the surrounding community
- Establish and/or affirm core values
- Develop and/or affirm mission statement
- Affirm vision statement
- Review staffing needs and concerns and update job descriptions
- Review policies and procedures
- Assess the congregation's financial reality
- Assess the congregation's stewardship of resources
- Assess the congregation's structural and property issues

E. Helpful Documents for the Transition Team

- Review of the Congregation's History (Appendix 7)
- Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies (Appendix 8)
- Congregational Ministry Assessment (Appendix 9)

3: Report from the Transition Team

After the congregation has spent time in self-study, collecting data, and tightening up the infrastructure of the congregation, the transition team will prepare a transition report to be shared with the Council, the congregation and the Synod Office. This transition document will be handed to the Call Committee. The Call Committee will take this information and use it to write up the Ministry Site Profile (MSP).

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for The Call Process Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Interim and Self-Study](#)

Monthly Interim Ministry Report

Congregation(s)
Interim Pastor
Date

[Describe how the interim pastor and the congregation are attending to the following during this transition.]

Pastoral Ministry

Worship

Preaching

Governance

Infrastructure

Personnel

Stewardship

Constitution

Collegiality

Other

Transition Dynamics

Heritage

Identity

Vision

Mission

Leadership

Connections

Call Process

Other Matters

Summary and Additional Comments

Quarterly Congregation Report

Congregation
President
Date

[Describe how the interim pastor and the congregation are attending to the following during this transition.]

Pastoral Ministry

Worship

Preaching

Governance

Infrastructure

Personnel

Stewardship

Constitution

Collegiality

Other

Transition Dynamics

Heritage

Identity

Vision

Mission

Leadership

Connections

Call Process

Other Matters

Summary and Additional Comments

Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies

It will be important that your constitution is updated so that your call process goes smoothly. Review what you have extent and compare it to the model constitution of the ELCA. You can download the model constitution from the ELCA web site www.ELCA.org. The model constitution has various changes, usually minor, every three years after the ELCA church wide assembly in August. Every congregation council should have on their regular agenda, an update of the constitution at least every other year.

As you are reviewing your constitution in transition period, make note of the sections and lines that must be in your constitution and the things that are optional or have various options. If you haven't updated your constitution for a long while, you may find that there are quite a number of decisions to be made about changes.

When you have updated your constitution, you may send it to the synod office for review by the synod's constitution reviewer: Rev. Lowell Bolstad. The reviewer will make sure that you don't have conflicting statements in sections and that it is consistent with the ELCA model constitution. Remember that a change in the constitution, even an update, takes a congregational vote, so be sure to do this early in the transition process.

While this task is assigned to the oversight of the transition team, it is likely there are one or two people in the congregation who are gifted and interested in this particular task. Let those people work out the draft and bring it to the church council for review and revision. At the same time that you are reviewing your constitution, be sure that your congregation policies are in place and up to date. At a minimum, every congregation should have a current personnel policy and financial policy including endowments and investments. You should also look at creating a mutual ministry policy, wedding and funeral policy, memorials policy, safe children policies, publications policy, policies regarding use of building and special equipment, etc.

It may seem like a lot of work if you have none of these in place, but it is important for incorporated entities to have procedures in place so that decisions are made in an orderly manner and reflect the core values of the congregation. You will find that decision making is streamlined as they provide guidance and framework for committees, boards, and individual members. Begin work on these policies during the interim period so that your new pastor won't have to search for them in old archives.

[The Call Process - S3 amazonaws com](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies](#)

Page 55

Updating Your Constitution

One of the basic congregational tasks that easily slips through the cracks is keeping your constitution up to date. Typically, changes are made to the model constitution at each Churchwide Assembly; these should be adopted by the congregation at their next annual meeting. Some congregations still need to adopt the model constitution as their own. The interim period is a great time to do these tasks. You may also want to consider deeper structural changes to committee organization or other flexible parts of the constitution.

This may be something to consider during the interim, or it may be better to simply lay the groundwork for these changes and wait for input from your next regularly called pastor. Your interim pastor will be able to give you advice on the best way forward. It is very important that all sections marked with an asterisk in the model constitution be adopted in the exact form printed in the model. If you have not updated your constitution since the inception of the ELCA, you should begin with the model constitution.

Once you have identified the changes that you wish to make send your whole constitution with the changes highlighted or underlined to the synod office for review. This will streamline the process for you by helping you to avoid presenting unconstitutional changes to your congregation.

When the review is complete and no adjustments are necessary, check your constitution for the requirements necessary to update it. Typically, if you have adopted the provisions of the model constitution in the past, only a simple majority is necessary to adopt the changes to the provisions in the model marked with an asterisk. All other changes typically require two votes: (1) a simple majority vote at a legally called meeting of the congregation to approve the change and (2) a two-thirds majority vote at the next annual meeting of the congregation to ratify the change.

[\[PDF\] Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf Page 60

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Updating Your Constitution](#)

[\[DOC\]Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository](#)

Chapter 16.

AMENDMENTS

***C16.01.** Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least _____ voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:

- a. be approved at a legally called Congregation Meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;

- b. be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution² and noted in the constitution.

***C16.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

***C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Chapter 17.

BYLAWS

***C17.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C17.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C17.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.04.** Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

<https://www.elca.org/constitution> [2019 Model Constitution for Congregations](#)

<https://download.elca.org> › [ELCA Resource Repository](#) › [Model Constitution](#)

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

[Images for Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository Chapter 16. AMENDMENTS](#)

² Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C16.03. to allow time for synodical review of the amendment.

Disengagement from the Interim Period

The last of the major tasks of interim pastors is to prepare for the next pastor. This includes making sure that the basics of the office of ministry are handed off cleanly (visitation lists, confirmation curriculum, other), that the lay leadership of the congregation is committed to continuing the work begun in the self-assessment, and that the congregation welcomes the new leader with open arms and a loving spirit.

After the candidate has announced that the candidate will accept the call and has signed the Letter of Call, the interim period begins to wind down. Interim pastors often conduct an exit interview with the Congregation Council or a larger segment of the congregation. This is a way to review the transition process and to see how far the congregation has come during the interim period. The Congregation Council should also review the interim period and share insights with the synod staff.

Once the Congregation Council has negotiated the starting date with the new pastor, they should coordinate the schedule of the next few weeks with the interim pastor. It is wise to allow one or two Sundays between the end of the interim pastor's work and the beginning of the new pastorate. Plan to celebrate the ministry of the interim pastor, while also preparing for the reception of the new pastor.

The same expectations for clear boundaries regarding pastoral acts also applies to interim pastors. They should not engage in any sacramental ministry work with members of the congregation following their last official day.

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 109

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Disengagement from the Interim Period](#)

Exit Interview for Interim Pastors with the Congregation

The exit interview is intended as a review of the interim journey and to provide information that will be helpful to the congregation as it prepares for and begins a new pastoral ministry. This may be used with the Congregation Council, an adult forum, or other large group gathering.

Suggested questions for congregational members and leaders:

- What were 3 major concerns when the previous pastor resigned?
- What are 3 major concerns as a new pastor begins ministry in this parish?
- What are some helpful things that occurred during this interim ministry?
- In what ways has this congregation's relationship with the synod changed during this interim ministry?
- Are there any areas that you had hoped that the synod would have been more helpful?
- In what ways has the decision-making process in the congregation changed during this interim ministry? What were the leadership changes during this period?
- Are members of the congregation presently more or less satisfied about congregational life? Why?
- What have you learned about this congregation during this interim ministry?
- In what ways has this congregation prepared for new pastoral leadership?
- What were things you wanted the interim pastor to do that were not done?
- What advice would you give a friend whose congregation has lost its pastor?

Suggested questions that may be asked the interim pastor (or maybe congregation)

- What were 3 major concerns/issues you discovered about this congregation when you began your interim ministry?
- What major concerns do you now have about our congregation as we begin ministry with a new pastor?
- What are some significant things that occurred during this interim ministry?
- How well were ELCA and synodical resources used during this interim journey?
- What frustrations or disappointments did you have during this interim ministry?
- What do you see as strengths of this congregation?
- What are areas of improvement needed by this congregation?
- What type(s) of ministry do you see as needed in the future in this parish?
- In what ways have you felt supported by the congregation during your ministry here?
- What are some of the things you wished you had done in this congregation?
- What are unresolved issues or challenges you see in this congregation?
- Have the requirements of the congregational constitution been fulfilled by you and this congregation during this interim ministry?
- What are unresolved obligations between you and the congregation, if any?

[Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 118

[Call Process Booklet - Yumpu](#)

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Exit Interview for Interim Pastors with the Congregation](#)

A Litany of Farewell for the Interim Pastor

Leader

A church community is constantly changing. Loved ones come to the end of their lives; new lives are born and baptized into the faith community. Individuals and families come and go throughout our life together. It is important for us to recognize and mark well these times of passage, these endings and beginnings. Today we bid farewell and Godspeed to Pastor _____ who has served us as pastor for the interim for the past _____ months, whose time with us has now drawn to a close.

Pastor

I thank you, the people of _____ Church, both members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support you have shown me these past months. I thank you for accepting my leadership and receiving me as pastor in your midst for this time of transition. I recall with joy the many things we have been able to accomplish together, and with sadness the things we were not able to do. I ask your understanding and your forgiveness for the mistakes I have made and for the times I may have let you down.

We receive with thankfulness the ministry you have offered us in the time we have shared. We accept that you now leave us to minister elsewhere, trusting that God goes with you on that journey. Your presence among us will not be forgotten. We are grateful for the time you have been with us and ask your forgiveness for our own shortcomings and our sometimes flagging faith.

Pastor

I forgive you your failures, as Christ has forgiven me, and graciously accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to the Christ we are called to serve.

Leader

Do you, the members and friends of _____ Church, now release Pastor _____ from the duties of pastor for the interim?
We do, with the help of God.

Leader

Do you, Pastor _____, release _____ Church from turning to you and relying on you to serve them as pastor?

Pastor

I do, with the help of God.

Leader

Do you, Pastor _____, offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here at _____ Church?

Pastor

I do, with the help of God.

Leader

Let us pray.

O God of all creation, whose love for all is trustworthy and true, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. During our time together, we have experienced laughter and tears, hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we carry these cherished memories with us in new directions until that time when we are one with you and with one another. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Leader

Go now, Pastor _____, with our blessing, surrounded by our love and led by the promises of God, the presence of Christ Jesus, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry

Litany of Farewell (adapted)

Page 183

<http://www.amazon.com/Temporary-Shepherds-Congregational-Handbook-Ministry/dp/1566992087>

[Images for Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry Litany of Farewell](#)

See also

The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com

A Litany of Farewell for the Interim Pastor

Page 67

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for Litany of Farewell for the Interim Pastor](#)

Part 3 Transition Dynamics

Transition Dynamics

Reflection

Heritage	Past	Where have we been?
Identity	Present	Where are we at?
Vision	Future	Where is God leading?

Action

Mission	Definition	What is God's purpose for this congregation?
Leadership	Operation	How is God's purpose to be carried out?
Connections	Cooperation	Who are the partners in mission God provides?

- Heritage appreciate how the past of the congregation informs the present
- Identity discover who the congregation is in the current context
- Vision discern what it is this congregation understands God is calling this congregation to be
- Mission define purpose and direction for the congregation in God's mission
- Leadership engage people of the congregation in God's mission
- Connections explore all the relationships a congregation shares beyond itself

Resources - Heritage

Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation by Craig L. Nesson (Author)

Visionary yet practical, Nesson's influential book makes a persuasive case for the centrality of mission in the life of the church. Nesson's model of mission-driven leadership is strongly centered on the community of faith's worship and draws unique connections between the worship life of a congregation and every aspect of the church's ministry. Around the twin foci of congregational identity and mission, the chapters in this dynamic book provide solid theological and radical direction on the themes of worship, education, fellowship, stewardship, evangelism, global connections, and social ministry.

2. First, Listen

Congregational Story

Cultural Story

Biblical Story

<http://store.fortresspress.com/store/productgroup/463/Beyond-Maintenance-to-Mission-A-Theology-of-the-Congregation>

http://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Maintenance-Mission-Theology-Congregation/dp/0800663268#reader_0800663268

https://books.google.com/books/about/Beyond_Maintenance_to_Mission.html?id=VnAtxY2KY9UC

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7190175-beyond-maintenance-to-mission>

https://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article_id=3334

<http://www.wartburgseminary.edu/people/dr-craig-l-nessan/>

[Images for Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation by Craig L. Nesson \(Author\) First, Listen Congregational Story Cultural Story Biblical Story](#)

Book of Faith - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

In order to delve deeper in the word, the Book of Faith Initiative recommends a four-fold method for reading the Bible: devotional, **historical**, literary and Lutheran theological reading. It's up to you and your faith community to decide how the Book of Faith Initiative will become a vital part of your ministry so that together we grow in our deep engagement with the word of God.

<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Book-of-Faith>

[Images for Book of Faith - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reading the bible: historical](#)

Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod

Issues

- putting the tenure of the last and former pastors in perspective
- acknowledging the **past** and accepting the "good and the bad"
- deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future
- appropriate ventilation of feelings, grieving, accepting, and moving on

Toolbox

- tell the church's story, make a time-line for the church
- write, update, and appropriately edit church history for distribution
- teach the grief process and provide for safe ventilation of feelings
- list strengths and weaknesses of previous pastor(s)
- hang portraits of past clergy
- hold small group meetings to reminisce and ventilate feelings
- listen, and teach listening skills

- "roast" the pastor before his or her departure
- review covenants, update files, records, resource, and member lists
- question the whys of traditions and maintain healthy traditions
- identify watersheds in the congregation's life
- celebrate important past events
- heal the congregation's corporate pain
- church history "trivia" questions and answers in the newsletter

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- living in the past and ghosts(s) of pastor(s) past
- selective memory (memory gaps)
- stuck in grief: anger, denial, guilt, alienation
- declining membership, giving, participation
- unwillingness to consider the why of traditions
- trying to clone the previous pastor or find his or her exact opposite

Signs of Resolution

- living in the present while accepting the past
- movement through the grief process
- stabilizing membership, giving, participation
- articulate about tradition, open to change
- asking process questions: where are we going? what do we do now?
- investment in current and future issues
- healthy humor

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

Interim Ministry Handbook for Interim Pastors

Page 16

Congregational Ministry Assessment

The following is a list of important areas of congregational life that can be productively explored by the congregation and pastoral leadership of the congregation during the interim between called pastors. Addressing these areas will assure that things are in good order in the congregation in anticipation of calling a new pastor.

History (Organizational Genogram)

- List of pastors who have served the congregation
- List of presidents who have served recently or at crucial moments
- Major events in the life of the congregation
- Identification of informal power structures in the congregation (past and present)
- Other significant data

Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

Page 60

Call Process Booklet - Yumpu

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Congregational Ministry Assessment](#)

Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach Roy M. Oswald, Robert E. Friedrich, Alban Institute

<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=1566991749>

Chapter 4 AN EVENING OF HISTORICAL REFLECTION

<http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Roy-Oswald/892724082>

<http://www.amazon.com/Discerning-Your-Congregations-Future-Strategic/dp/1566991749>

[Images for Discerning Your Congregation's Future Chapter 4 AN EVENING OF HISTORICAL REFLECTION](#)

Emotional Needs of the Congregation II-12

Review of the Congregation's History

Your interim pastor will have some ideas on how to help the transition team lead through this review of history but here are some suggestions you might want to consider.

Have a history day and invite people to bring old snapshots of past church events. Plan an album by decade or by year where these pictures can be put and invite people to tell and write stories about them in the album. Make it a day of celebration.

Make a timeline of the church putting years of pastors' service, building projects, significant events of the congregation on the line. And then ask members to write on the time line when they joined or were married or were baptized. Ask them to write memories on the time line that were significant for them. Talk about the events and what they mean to people. Don't be afraid to talk about why a pastor left or why a pastor served only a short time. Name the emotions that people experience in the memory.

Put a church trivia quiz in each newsletter. Be sure to publish the answers since knowledge of history is what this is about.

Do an Archive, Preserve, Avoid analysis with various focus groups.

If you notice that the congregation is generally "living in the past," that is, they long for things to "return" to the way they were; if they are unwilling to look at the why of traditions and practices; if they are stuck in anger, denial, grief, or alienation; or if they exhibit selective memory of the congregation's past, then addressing the history in a creative way will be important to moving on.

congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod

Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue by Edwin H. Friedman (Author), Gary Emanuel (Foreword), Mickie Crimone (Foreword)

An acclaimed, influential work now available in paper for the first time, this bestselling book applies the concepts of systemic family therapy to the emotional life of congregations. Edwin H. Friedman shows how the same understanding of family process that can aid clergy in their pastoral role also has important ramifications for negotiating congregational dynamics and functioning as an effective leader. Clergy from diverse denominations, as well as family therapists and counselors, have found that this book directly addresses the dilemmas and crises they encounter daily. It is widely used as a text in courses on family systems and pastoral care.

<http://www.amazon.com/Generation-Process-Synagogue-Guilford-Therapy/dp/1609182367>

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/151886.Generation_to_Generation

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/generation-to-generation-edwin-h-friedman/1116750884>

<https://www.waterstones.com/book/generation-to-generation/edwin-h-friedman/9781609182366>

<https://www.guilford.com/books/Generation-to-Generation/Edwin-Friedman/9781609182366>

https://books.google.com/books/about/Generation_to_Generation.html?id=9uTlv4w8nRYC

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/paperbacktheology/2010/01/generation-to-generation-book-review.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Friedman

[Images for Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue by Edwin H. Friedman \(Author\), Gary Emanuel \(Foreword\), Mickie Crimone \(Foreword\)](#)

Helpful Terms in Understanding Congregations in Transition: Interim Ministry Association

Predecessor Organizations

What groups, if any, contributed to the start of this congregation? What groups still influence it?

Financial History

When were the stable times? When were the challenging times? Has any group or individual attempted to hold the congregation hostage financially? What values does the use of money reveal? What tends to be underfunded in this parish? How openly are financial matters discussed?

The Good Old Days: when were they and what made them such?

<http://interiministry.org/resources/helpful-terms/>

[Images for Helpful Terms in Understanding Congregations in Transition: Interim Ministry Association Predecessor Organizations](#)

How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems by Peter Steinke

Drawing on the work of Bowen, Friedman, and his own many years' counseling experience, Peter Steinke shows how to recognize and deal with the emotional roots of such issues as church conflict, leadership roles, congregational change, irresponsible behavior, and the effect of family of origin on current relationships. Discover why working relationships may be "stuck" in certain behaviors. Psychologically sound, theologically grounded, and practically illustrated with case studies, *How Your Church Family Works* will help you better understand how your congregation works and how to keep it healthy. Featuring a new preface and a fresh redesign, the book is a classic work by one of the most respected names in congregational consulting.

<http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/10208/How-Your-Church-Family-Works>

<http://www.amazon.com/Your-Church-Family-Works-Understanding/dp/1566993296>

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/49292.How_Your_Church_Family_Works

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/how-your-church-family-works-peter-l-steinke/1100893156>

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781566993296/How-Your-Church-Family-Works-Understanding-Congregations-as-Emotional-Systems>

<https://imnedu.org/imn-library/how-your-church-family-works-understanding-congregations-as-emotional-systems/>

<https://imnedu.org/authors/peter-l-steinke/>

<http://www.lifeandleadership.com/book-summaries/steinke-how-your-church-family-works-healthy-congregations.html>

<https://divinitymusings.wordpress.com/2010/10/26/how-your-church-family-works/>

[Images for How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems by Peter Steinke](#)

Restoring Hope: Appreciative Strategies to Resolve Grief and Resentment by Robert J. Voyle

209 page manual with extensive exercises and scripts for resolving grief and resentment. Rather than talking about the importance or need for hope this book will teach you how to restore someone's hope!

Restoring Hope Training Program: Appreciative Inquiry Based Strategies to Resolve Grief and Resentment

<https://www.appreciativeway.com/hope/hope.cfm>

[Images for Restoring Hope: Appreciative Strategies to Resolve Grief and Resentment by Robert J. Voyle](#)

Review of the congregation's history – Appendix 7

The interim time should be filled with the telling of stories, remembering the happy events of the past and talking out loud about the sad ones. The sharing helps members get a perspective on their past, helps the "remember" things they may not personally have experienced, and frees them from unexpected and seemingly unexplainable actions that might pop up later.

The Call Process - S3 amazonaws.com

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for The Call Process - Review of the congregation's history](#)

Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry [Roger S. Nicholson]

Chapter 6. **Coming to Terms with History.**

Page 65

Tool 2 Bible Studies for the Journey

Page 162

Tool 3 Engaging the Developmental Tasks.

Page 166

Effective interim ministry depends on strong partnership between the interim minister and congregation. Lay leaders of congregations preparing for such a transition will value the expert guidance provided by over a dozen experienced interim pastors. What is interim ministry all about? What needs to happen during the interim? What should leaders and members expect from the interim pastor and themselves during this transition? What other resources are available for congregations?

<http://www.amazon.com/Temporary-Shepherds-Congregational-Handbook-Ministry/dp/1566992087>

[Images for Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry \[Roger S. Nicholson\] Chapter 6. Coming to Terms with History.](#)

Resources - Identity

Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change by David L Cooperrider (Author), Diana Whitney (Author)

Written by the originators and leaders of the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) movement itself, this short, practical guide offers an approach to organizational change based on the possibility of a more desirable future, experience with the whole system, and activities that signal "something different is happening this time." That difference systematically taps the potential of human beings to make themselves, their organizations, and their communities more adaptive and more effective. AI, a theory of collaborative change, erases the winner/loser paradigm in favor of coordinated actions and closer relationships that lead to solutions at once simpler and more effective.

<http://www.amazon.com/Appreciative-Inquiry-Positive-Revolution-Change/dp/1576753565>

<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/whatisai.pdf>

http://www.appreciativeliving.com/files/Kelm_AI_Principle_Summary.pdf

https://books.google.com/books/about/Appreciative_Inquiry.html?id=sTI9HgheQBgC

https://books.google.com/books/about/Appreciative_Inquiry.html?id=bJBgktz2Oa8C

<http://www.2012waic.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Ludema-Cooperrider-Barrett-goed.pdf>

http://www.clevelandconsultinggroup.com/pdfs/appreciative_inquiry.pdf

[Images for Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change by David L Cooperrider \(Author\), Diana Whitney \(Author\)](#)

Appreciative Leaders: In the Eye of the Beholder [Marjorie Schiller, Deanna Riley, Bea Mah Holland]

This 200-page volume presents a model of Appreciative Leadership based on twenty-eight interviews, fifteen of which are included in the book. This small but comprehensive sample reveals the outstanding characteristics of appreciative leaders and their predominant behavioral attributes. The ways appreciative leaders engage in their daily practices are outlined in detail. "This is a landmark book," according to Jane Watkins, an originator of Appreciative Inquiry. "It is an invaluable contribution to the literature that addresses the critically important question: What kinds of leaders will shape the radically different organizations called for by our constantly changing environment?" Appreciative Inquiry leader, David Cooperrider writes, "Appreciative modes of management may be to our new self-organizing systems what deficit or problem-oriented methods have been to command-and-control bureaucracies."

<http://www.amazon.com/Appreciative-Leaders-In-Eye-Beholder/dp/0971231206>

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/appreciative-leaders-in-the-eye-of-the-beholder>

<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/practice/toolsPackDetail.cfm?coid=792>

http://www.kubicalaforestconsulting.com/docs/appreciative_leaders_tk.pdf

[Images for Appreciative Leaders: In the Eye of the Beholder \[Marjorie Schiller, Deanna Riley, Bea Mah Holland\]](#)

Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod

Issues

- determining whether the congregation's image is realistic
- seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth
- the congregation sees itself as an entity without a pastor, separating the church's identity from the former pastor's personality and style

Toolbox

- affirm and push for ongoing reality testing
- conduct congregational analysis
- conduct analysis of neighborhood ministry needs
- do a self-study, encourage and affirm accurate data gathering
- encourage program and resource assessments
- engage in the cooperative building of expectations about the future
- develop broad vision of congregation's future
- hold cottage meetings to talk about what we are like and what we want to become
- envision what we want to be like in the future, specifically in 20__
- hold leadership training retreats

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- focus is on the past
- resistance to self-assessment

- unrealistic myths are still operative
- emphasis is on blaming, what's wrong
- low trust level, lack of authentic sharing
- identity confusion: who are we?
- leaders and others continue to consult the previous pastor
- maintain same old programs, even when they don't fit present needs
- rush through the interim

Signs of Resolution

- focus on present or future
- willingness to do self-assessment
- congregation faces reality
- affirm who we really are
- growing excitement and energy for the congregation's envisioned future
- process questions: where are we going?
- inclusiveness
- rising trust level, humor, and patience with the search process
- vision and goals fit present reality

Resources

Sizing Up the Congregation, Rothauge

The Developmental Tasks of a Congregation in Search of a Pastor, Mead

Looking in the Mirror, Schaller

Handbook for Congregational Studies, Carroll, Dudley and McKinney

The Inviting Church, Oswald and Leas, Alban

Center for Social and Religious Research (surveys), Hartford Seminary

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

Interim Ministry Handbook for Pastors

Page 17

Development/Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement III-6

Every church has a purpose. We know that we have been sent “to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19) And we know that churches function in the areas of faith, fellowship, and service. A mission statement that reflects those three things could be applied to almost any Christian church. But no two churches are exactly the same. Each one has a different personality, a different ambience, a different realm in which it functions best. Each one has its own set of core values, some of which may be similar to other churches, but there are some core values that make your church unique. These are the lenses through which you see the world, the priorities you have established for yourselves. As you begin to evaluate and update your mission statement, try to list 4 or 5 core values for your congregation.

Core values are more about being:

Each one will describe what people experience in your congregation.

Together they capture the uniqueness which is your congregation.

They are fundamental to the way your beliefs are lived out.

Example: Empowerment, hospitality, challenge, journey, community.

So, let's think about the process you might engage in order to develop or redefine your core values, vision, mission. Let's begin with core values. Core values are intended to communicate what the congregation stands for and on what principles it operates. They guide the everyday actions of members and staff as well as congregational planning. We assume that a congregation which demonstrates its core values at a high level will be more effective in its ministry and will be easier to be identified by others. One way to help people discover and **identify** their core values would be to invite all congregation members to gather in focus groups after church on Sunday. It will actually take two Sundays, two weeks apart, and they should both be scheduled before you have the first one. Make it celebratory and not a drudging “duty.” What could be more exciting than discovering what God is calling you to do? As they are seated at tables, tell them that you are going to articulate your core values in order to be focused in your ministry. Define core values in a way that is clear to all, maybe as simply as using the definition above.

Ask them to write on sticky notes (one comment per note), the things that they personally live by. For example, some may write kindness, honesty, hospitality, friendliness, privacy, or integrity. Others may include things like family, friends, relationships, achievement, jokes, and humor. All of those things reflect values as individuals. Ask them to go put all those sticky notes on the wall someplace where all may see them.

On a different sticky note, ask them to write the things that reflect the values of the congregation. What are some words that reflect how the congregation makes decisions, treats people, and does ministry? Some of the words might be the same, but new words may be added as well.

Then there will be a time of “story telling.” Ask people to tell about a time when one of those “congregational values” was demonstrated. Keep that conversation going until everyone has had a time to share. Ask if there have been times when the congregation has acted in ways that reflect other values than those listed. Add those values to the list. Ask if there are things on the personal values list that should be added to the congregation's values list. Add those values to the list.

Let people think about the values as they leave this session and let them know that they will gather the values posted somewhere in the church where people have access to them. Ask people to add to the list if they think of something during the next two weeks.

At the second meeting, two weeks later, give each person 10 sticky dots and ask them to put the dots by the ten values that they feel the congregation should claim as its core values. In other words, what are the top ten things to live by as a congregation? Have some more discussion about those ten values: How have they seen them reflected? How might they be guides in decision making? How have those values formed their thinking? How have those values shaped their faith journeys? Then ask the members to select the top five core values. They may decide they want to name them something different in order to incorporate one or more values. For example, they may have kindness and helpfulness as core values but may decide to change the word to compassion in order to incorporate both words.

Post the core values in a place where people can see them and begin to talk about them in terms of stories that reflect those values. Bring up the values at council meetings as decisions are being made and ask what decision would best reflect our values. Live with them for a while and get feedback through the council. Note differences between the preferred values (what is listed) and the true values (what is demonstrated) of the congregation. Set a time to talk about those at a later date.

There are many resources to help you develop your mission, vision, and values statements. One site online would be http://www.managementhelp.org/plan_plan/stmnets.htm#anchor519441. But there are many others as well. Your interim pastor will help you put together your discovery process.

congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf>

[Images for congregational handbook for pastoral transitions – Northwest Washington Synod - Development/Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement](#)

Discovering the Congregation's Norms - PBS

An Event for Examining Unwritten Practices and Expectations

A good way to conduct this process is to devote time to examining how the congregation behaves and what its expectations are. Such an event will resemble the one of historical reflection, although its focus will be quite different. The first requirement is to recruit a leader. An outsider - the pastor of another congregation, a transition companion, or an experienced lay volunteer from another congregation - may be the best choice for facilitator, because she or he will probably have a less biased perspective. The facilitator should meet ahead of time with the new pastor and a small group from the congregation to determine areas where the pastor and leaders suspect current norms are inhibiting ministry, or about which they think discussion is needed. These areas might include:

- *Worship*: What kinds of lay participation do we want in worship? What kind of music do we prefer? What kind of sermons do we want?
- *Male and female roles*: what are the expectations of men and women? What roles or activities have traditionally been reserved for either men or women?
- *Children*: how are they expected to behave in different contexts? Are preschoolers excluded from certain things?
- *Use of the church buildings*: what sorts of things do we expect to happen outside of church services? What do we expect of members and community groups that use the building? How is the use of the buildings monitored?
- *Money matters*: who knows how much different people give to the church? In what circumstances are money matters an acceptable topic of discussion? What do we do when we have a shortfall? What would we do with a large bequest?
- *Welcoming people*: how do we welcome or not welcome people? Do we welcome different groups of people in different ways? Are there any people we would not welcome?
- *Conflict*: how do people express disagreement with one another? Are people welcome to express an opinion that differs from the majority? When people disagree, do they deal with it at the time, or argue later in private? Is gossip tolerated?
- *Membership*: what does membership in the congregation entail? Are there different categories of member? Are they recognized in appropriate ways? When is someone considered a member of the congregation?

<http://www.pbs.org/thecongregation/indepth/discovering.html>

[Images for Discovering the Congregation's Norms - PBS An Event for Examining Unwritten Practices and Expectations](#)

<http://www.amazon.com/Discerning-Your-Congregations-Future-Strategic/dp/1566991749>

[Images for Discerning-Your-Congregations-Future-Strategic](#)

Dying Church/Living Church

Dying Church

Pastor is chaplain
 Pastor tends insiders
 Pastor holds hands
 Church is family
 Personal need/self-focus
 Comfort
 Me
 Religion in moderation
 Church life when convenient
 God fills one's perceived needs
 Experience the good life
 Maximize personal opportunities
 Chapel
 Token financial giving

Living Church

Pastor is mission leader
 Pastor and people reach outsiders
 Pastor equips ministers
 Church is team
 God focus
 Challenge
 Mission
 Faith always in action
 Ministry a priority
 True self found in God
 Good life is following where God leads
 Offer self to God
 Mission outpost
 Fully funds ministry

Anxious about decline
 Declining resources
 Increasing fights over resources
 Blames leaders for decline
 Museum
 Institutional preservation
 Inward focus
 Enticing the world into the church
 Stiff
 Protect status quo
 Tradition means clinging to the past
 Says nothing new
 Faith/church about being good
 Structures
 Provides services
 Religious pros talk about outreach
 Decreasingly reflects local demographics
 Go to church
 Come to church
 Cultural traditions are key to identity
 Worries about controllers
 Appease the few disgruntled people
 Keep peace at any price
 Kingdom of the church
 An institution

Excited about Great Commission work
 Instead discussion about Great Commission work
 Figuring how to do Great Commission
 Together we go on to God's future
 Workshop
 Change as God leads
 Outward focus
 Going out to the world
 Flexible
 Destabilize to force growth
 Tradition is a guide to the future
 Says nothing new in ever new ways
 Wholistic lifestyle
 Organic
 Changes lives
 Everyone does outreach
 Reflects local demographics
 Be the church
 Sent from church
 Bible is key to identity
 Worries about unbelievers
 Sheds some people
 Use conflict as yeast to grow
 Church of the kingdom
 A movement

Pastor Will Mowchan – Pilgrim Lutheran Church – Superior, Wisconsin
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Identifying the Congregation's Personality: An Introduction to Congregational Type

This guide is designed to introduce you anew to your congregation. Through deeper understanding of its corporate personality you will grow in your understanding and appreciation for your congregation. Each congregation displays its own unique personality. The personality guides the development of congregational values. The values coalesce into a spiritual posture and in turn shape likes and dislikes, behaviors and activities. What a congregation values in scripture, in preaching and teaching, and what it values in doing mission, outreach and service are all functions of its personality.

[Benefits - Congregationalidentity.org](http://congregationalidentity.org)

http://congregationalidentity.org/Institute_for_Congregational_Identity/Benefits.html

[Images for Identifying the Congregation's Personality: An Introduction to Congregational Type](#)

Rethinking Interim Ministry by Anthony B. Robinson » Alban at Duke Divinity School

But a second task for interims today is a new one. It is to help congregations understand the seismic shifts in American culture that I and others describe as "the ending of North American Christendom," and "the waning of modernity." On the ground, the way most congregations experience these shifts is suggested by comments like, "How come when we do what we've always done, it doesn't seem to work anymore?" Or, to invoke the title of a book on cultural change, "Who Moved My Cheese?" Most congregations learned to be and do church in a period when the culture at large was more, even highly, supportive of Christian churches. And most formed their patterns when the ethos and values of modernity, including commitments to reason, tolerance and objectivity, were firmly entrenched. All of this has changed now. While much of this is familiar to the clergy from reading, conferences, and seminary study, often laity with little experience outside their own congregation lack names for these shifts and for the challenges and opportunities they bring. An interim minister is in a good position to raise awareness and create conversation about the shifting context.

A third task for an interim is to actually do a congregational assessment. Before change can or should be undertaken it is important to know, as accurately as possible, what's going on—what a congregation's current reality is. One tried and true method for doing such an assessment is to interview a broad sample of a congregation's members. Get their confidential perspective on what's working and what isn't. Study the trend lines regarding membership, attendance, and member giving. Talk, as well, to people in the wider community about their perception of the congregation and the role it plays. Review the history of the congregation, including its beginnings and key decision points. And take a close look at the demographics of the area and region. An interim who puts all this together in a 15 to 20-page portrait of a congregation's current reality will have provided an important service.

<https://alban.org/archive/rethinking-interim-ministry/>

[Images for Rethinking Interim Ministry by Anthony B. Robinson » Alban at Duke Divinity School](#)

[Images for second task for an interim pastor help congregation understand seismic shifts in American culture images](#)

[Images for third task for an interim pastor congregational assessment](#)

Rethinking Transitional Ministry by Norman Bendroth – Alban at Duke Divinity School

Robinson also focuses on helping congregations get a clear fix on their identity. "If people do not know who they are and what they value they will never discover what they are to do," he says.

<https://alban.org/archive/rethinking-transitional-ministry/>

http://macucc.s3.amazonaws.com/71BBE2C7B9B049B0883D51809D9A1E82_Rethinking%20Transitional%20Ministry.pdf
<https://alban.org/2015/03/06/norman-bendroth-transitional-ministry-today/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Transitional-Ministry-Today-Successful-Strategies/dp/156699750X>
[Images for Transitional Ministry help congregations get a clear fix on their identity](#)

Size Transitions in Congregations (Harvesting the Learnings): Beth Ann Gaede

Congregations that seek growth are often frustrated at hitting a plateau-caught in a transition zone between sizes. The Alban Institute has long been recognized as a leader in size transition research and learning, and this anthology offers an in-depth collection of resources, through new articles developed for the book as well as previously published and highly regarded pieces that inform and provoke.

<http://www.amazon.com/Size-Transitions-Congregations-Harvesting-Learnings/dp/156699246X>
http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1455244.Size_Transitions_in_Congregations_Harvesting_the_Learnings
[Images for Size Transitions in Congregations \(Harvesting the Learnings\): Beth Ann Gaede](#)

Sizing Up a Congregation for New Member Ministry: Arlin J. Rothauge

Rothauge's book has become the standard by which church sizes are categorized. Though this book was written specifically about new member ministry, it contains enough information to be useful in understanding how churches of different sizes operate. The information on new member ministry is very helpful, since it talks about the strengths each church size has to offer in attracting and keeping new members.

<http://www.amazon.com/Sizing-Congregation-New-Member-Ministry/dp/9996536033>
[http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/CDR_series1\(1\).pdf](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/CDR_series1(1).pdf)
<http://www.congregationalresources.org/sizing-congregation-new-member-ministry>
<https://alban.org/archive/building-blocks-an-anthropological-approach-to-congregational-size/>
[Images for Sizing Up a Congregation for New Member Ministry: Arlin J. Rothauge](#)

Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry [Roger S. Nicholson]

Chapter 2	Characteristics of the Interim Congregation	Page 14
Chapter 3	The Church in Transition as a Human System	Page 26
Chapter 7	Discovering a New Identity	Page 75
Tool 2	Bible Studies for the Journey	Page 163
Tool 3	Engaging the Developmental Tasks	Page 168

Effective interim ministry depends on strong partnership between the interim minister and congregation. Lay leaders of congregations preparing for such a transition will value the expert guidance provided by over a dozen experienced interim pastors. What is interim ministry all about? What needs to happen during the interim? What should leaders and members expect from the interim pastor and themselves during this transition? What other resources are available for congregations?

<http://www.amazon.com/Temporary-Shepherds-Congregational-Handbook-Ministry/dp/1566992087>
[Images for Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry \[Roger S. Nicholson\] Chapter 7 Discovering a New Identity](#)

Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore. | philosiblog

What does that mean?

This saying has become a cultural metaphor in English speaking countries (and perhaps other places as well) which means we are not in a place with which we are familiar. It implies different rules, different customs, and few, if any familiar objects or activities, which is exactly where Dorothy ended up.

The quote is stated by Dorothy, the main character, to her dog near the beginning of an epic tale of discovery, where the journey was even more important than the destination, where the lessons learned were life-changing, and the dangers and challenges helped the characters grow.

In the story, she changes from a scared and insecure little girl to a relatively self-reliant and responsible young adult. Along the way, she makes some friends, and together they solve their problems and grow along the way.

All because they were not, in fact, in Kansas anymore. She was out of her comfort zone, and needed to grow, adapt, and learn in order to survive. She learned to help her friends and to accept help from them, as well as accepting responsibility for her actions, or the lack thereof.

<http://philosiblog.com/2012/05/15/toto-i-have-a-feeling-were-not-in-kansas-anymore/>
[Images for Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore. | philosiblog](#)

Who Is Our Church? Imagining Congregational Identity by Janet R. Cawley (Author)

After congregations have considered their history, added up all the statistics, and tried to be honest about their core values, the question still remains: "Who are we, really?" Author Janet Cawley offers a creative, engaging, and faithful way to answer just that question. Cawley demonstrates how to use a congregation's knowledge of itself to construct a metaphor of the congregation as a person and then draw on that metaphor to generate options for future mission. Cawley makes the case that congregations with a clear, well-articulated identity—those that know, accept, and love who they are—can be flexible and respond to change and new initiatives from the Holy Spirit with boldness because their basic sense of themselves is affirmed rather than threatened. They can make faithful and appropriate choices about what they should do. Congregations will find this intuitive, imaginative approach is useful, accurate, and lots of fun!

<http://www.amazon.com/Who-Church-Imagining-Congregational-Identity/dp/1566993210>

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781566993210/Who-Is-Our-Church?-Imagining-Congregational-Identity>
<https://alban.org/archive/imagining-congregational-identity/>
[Images for Who Is Our Church? Imagining Congregational Identity by Janet R. Cawley \(Author\)](#)

Resources - Vision

Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod

Issues

- consensus and excitement about the shared **vision** for the future
- getting a good match between the pastor and the congregation
- clear and shared expectations between clergy and congregation
- clean exit of interim pastor and consultant

Toolbox

- planning for start-up period
- modeling clear exiting skills
- interim shares insight with incoming pastor
- ministers-in-transition support programs
- make sure transition rituals are in place

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- anxiety and rushing the search process
- trying to hire the interim
- unrealistic or unclear expectations of the new pastor
- inability to agree on choice of pastor
- low energy level, lack of humor
- failure to issue a call

Signs of Resolution

- focus on the future
- enthusiastic preparations (housing, installation, start-up) for new pastor
- clarity and consensus on leadership style desired of new pastor
- increasing levels of involvement and ownership in process
- appreciation of interim process and leaders
- willingness to say goodbye to interim
- evident energy and healthy humor

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

Interim Ministry Handbook for Pastors

Page 20

Development/Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement III-6

Every church has a purpose. We know that we have been sent "to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) And we know that churches function in the areas of faith, fellowship, and service. A mission statement that reflects those three things could be applied to almost any Christian church. But no two churches are exactly the same. Each one has a different personality, a different ambience, a different realm in which it functions best. Each one has its own set of core values, some of which may be similar to other churches, but there are some core values that make your church unique. These are the lenses through which you see the world, the priorities you have established for yourselves. As you begin to evaluate and update your mission statement, try to list 4 or 5 core values for your congregation.

Every church also has a **vision**, what it shall be some day.

It pictures the future of your church as God has planned it to be.

It describes the results you hope you will realize in the "real world."

It captures the uniqueness that God has given your church.

It is short, motivational, and easy to memorize.

Example: We welcome our neighbors with enthusiasm and love knowing that God will show us the ministry we might do.

A **vision** statement reflects where the congregation sees itself in the future if it is effectively carrying out its mission. Putting together a vision statement can be an enjoyable process allowing people to "dream big" and "imagine success." The statement can be used as a motivational tool or as a reminder of why we do what we do as a congregation. A helpful vision statement is one that has an idealism mixed with realism. What will your congregation look like in ten years if you are actively engaged in your mission? What does God have in mind for you given the gifts he has placed in this congregation?

There are many resources to help you develop your mission, vision, and values statements. One site online would be

http://www.managementhelp.org/plan_plan/stmnets.htm#anchor519441. But there are many others as well. Your interim pastor will help you put together your discovery process.

congregational handbook for pastoral transitions - Northwest Washington Synod

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf>

[Images for A vision statement reflects where the congregation sees itself in the future if it is effectively carrying out its mission.](#)

Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach [Roy M. Oswald, Robert E. Friedrich Jr.]

Drawing on extensive consulting experience with congregations, the authors provide a step-by-step guide to congregational planning that grounds strategic planning techniques in a process of spiritual discernment. The result: members will own the **vision** and be eager to

participate in the congregation's calling, life, and ministry. You and your planning committee learn the theory behind the techniques, along with receiving help for addressing specific situations.

<http://www.amazon.com/Discerning-Your-Congregations-Future-Strategic/dp/1566991749>

<http://www.lifeandleadership.com/book-summaries/oswald-and-friedrich-discerning-your-congregations-future.html>

<https://twitter.com/bobfriedrich>

[Images for Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach \[Roy M. Oswald, Robert E. Friedrich Jr.\]](#)

Resources - Mission

A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope by Peter L. Steinke (Author)

We resist change less when we associate it with mission and fortify it with hope. So argues longtime congregational consultant Peter Steinke in his fourth book, *A Door Set Open*, as he explores the relationship between the challenges of change and our own responses to new ideas and experiences. Steinke builds on a seldom-explored principle posited by the late Rabbi Edwin Friedman: the 'hostility of the environment' is proportionate to the 'response of the organism.' The key, Steinke says, is not the number or strength of the stressors in the system-anxiety, poor conditions, deteriorating values-but the response of the individual or organization to 'what is there.' Drawing on Bowen system theory and a theology of hope, as well as his experience working with more than two hundred congregations, Steinke makes the case that the church has entered an era of great opportunity. Theologian and sociologist Ernst Troeltsch said the church had closed down the office of eschatology. Steinke reopens it and draws our attention to God's future, to a vision of hope for the people of God. The door is set open for exploration and new creation.

<http://www.amazon.com/Door-Set-Open-Grounding-Mission/dp/1566994039>

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/9434235-a-door-set-open>

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/a-door-set-open-peter-l-steinke/1112021418>

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781566994033/A-Door-Set-Open-Grounding-Change-in-Mission-and-Hope>

<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=1566994551>

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/9434235-a-door-set-open>

http://www.ucobserver.org/arts/books/2011/02/door_open/

<http://www.resolveconflictnow.net/review-peter-steinke-s-a-door-set-open-and-new-visions-training-program/>

<http://www.brianvirtue.org/2011/08/review-a-door-set-open-grounding-change-in-mission-hope/>

[Images for A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope by Peter L. Steinke \(Author\)](#)

Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation by Craig L. Nesson (Author)

Visionary yet practical, Nesson's influential book makes a persuasive case for the centrality of mission in the life of the church.

Nesson's model of mission-driven leadership is strongly centered on the community of faith's worship and draws unique connections between the worship life of a congregation and every aspect of the church's ministry. Around the twin foci of congregational identity and **mission**, the chapters in this dynamic book provide solid theological and radical direction on the themes of worship, education, fellowship, stewardship, evangelism, global connections, and social ministry.

<http://store.fortresspress.com/store/productgroup/463/Beyond-Maintenance-to-Mission-A-Theology-of-the-Congregation>

[Images for Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation by Craig L. Nesson \(Author\)](#)

Development/Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement III-6

Every church has a purpose. We know that we have been sent "to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) **And we know that churches function in the areas of faith, fellowship, and service. A mission statement that reflects those three things could be applied to almost any Christian church.** But no two churches are exactly the same. Each one has a different personality, a different ambience, a different realm in which it functions best. Each one has its own set of core values, some of which may be similar to other churches, but there are some core values that make your church unique. These are the lenses through which you see the world, the priorities you have established for yourselves. As you begin to evaluate and update your mission statement, try to list 4 or 5 core values for your congregation.

A mission statement is more about doing:

It tells something about your purpose as a part of the larger body of Christ.

It hints at how you will make your vision a reality.

It is short, motivational, and easy to memorize.

Example: We welcome our neighbors with enthusiasm and love knowing that God will show us the ministry we might do.

Your congregation probably has a mission statement already. Does it reflect your core values? Does it describe the overall purpose of the congregation? Is it clear to those who are not members or part of the congregation? Does it guide the members as they make decisions, make policies, and develop ministries? Do the members of the congregation know and embrace the mission statement? Where is the mission statement displayed? Where is it discussed? How does the mission statement shape the mission of the congregation and how is the mission reflected in the mission statement? It is usually easier to write a mission statement in a small group than in the congregation as a whole. It is important, however, to have a feedback loop that includes everyone, so that the statement is not something imposed on them and the congregation can "own" it.

There are many resources to help you develop your mission, vision, and values statements. One site online would be

http://www.managementhelp.org/plan_plan/stmnets.htm#anchor519441. But there are many others as well. Your interim pastor will help you put together your discovery process.

[congregational handbook for pastoral transitions - Northwest Washington Synod](#)

<http://www.lutheransnw.org/files/leadership/TransitionHandbook.pdf>

[Images for mission statement faith, fellowship, service](#)

Global Mission - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Global-Mission>

[Images for Global Mission - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

Mission Planning - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

As people of faith, we trust that God is doing a new thing in the world and we long to be part of this work. Mission planning is the process of discovering how your congregation is called to live as the body of Christ. Equipping congregations to create mission plans is one of the highest priorities of our church. On this page, you'll find resources that have been created across the ELCA as well as by other sources to help your ministry create a mission plan that fits your gifts and context.

See more at: <http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Mission-Planning#sthash.NZJ4N2dV.dpuf>

Do-it-yourself tools help your ministry dig into the work of mission planning. These resources include study guides, tools for exploring Scripture in conjunction with congregational mission and processes for developing your own mission plan.

<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Mission-Planning>

[Images for Mission Planning - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Plan-for-Mission>

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Renewing-Congregations>

Mission Support - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Mission Support is the portion of offerings that ELCA congregations share with synods and the churchwide organization.

<http://www.elca.org/missionsupport>

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Where_does_my_offering_go_2015_FinalWeb.pdf?_ga=1.145971056.537152160.1467910353

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Stewardship>

[Images for Mission Support - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Mission Support

Mission support is the portion of financial offerings from members of the ELCA that is shared for synodical and churchwide mission and ministries beyond the local congregation. Mission support helps to fund ministry partners both domestically and around the world including campus ministry, several social organizations, missionaries around the globe, colleges, universities and seminaries of our church, and outdoor camping ministries, just to name a few. These offerings provide over 80 percent of the resources that are used to fund ministries that we do together within the ELCA.

Your Offering and Mission Support

Your Offering at Work

Why Give ELCA Mission Support

Mission Support Statement of Intent Form

Mission Support Remittance Form

<http://nswwi.org/generosity/mission-support>

[Images for Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Mission Support](#)

Resources – Leadership

Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation by Craig L. Nesson (Author)

Visionary yet practical, Nesson's influential book makes a persuasive case for the centrality of mission in the life of the church.

Nesson's model of mission-driven leadership is strongly centered on the community of faith's worship and draws unique connections between the worship life of a congregation and every aspect of the church's ministry. Around the twin foci of congregational identity and mission, the chapters in this dynamic book provide solid theological and radical direction on the themes of worship, education, fellowship, stewardship, evangelism, global connections, and social ministry.

<http://store.fortresspress.com/store/productgroup/463/Beyond-Maintenance-to-Mission-A-Theology-of-the-Congregation>

[Images for Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation by Craig L. Nesson \(Author\) - leadership](#)

Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod

Issues

- power and control of decisions and directions of congregation
- healthy, realistic, open decision-making
- managing conflicts
- honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved
- bum-out and drop-out of leaders

Toolbox

- affirm leaders' different styles and talents, use MBTI
- teach conflict management and resolution skills
- rethink process of developing leadership and lengths of terms of office
- recognize and celebrate the leaders going out of office
- hold closure ceremonies for those who have been leaders
- assess leadership needed to reach interim goals and recruit leaders to meet those needs
- use old leaders as mentors

- determine whether decision-making processes are congruent with those stated in governing documents
- open the decision-making process
- begin new member orientation process
- develop a new covenant with broad member participation
- clarify personnel policies, procedures

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- divisions, destructive sub-grouping
- competition and avoidance
- counter-dependency
- power plays and win-lose decisions
- decisions aren't clear, aren't carried out, or fall apart
- the search committee becomes a power center
- secret meetings, self-authorized decisions, gossip and rumors
- exclusiveness, blaming, avoidance of conflict

Signs of Resolution

- open leadership and decision-making structures
- interdependency and win-win decisions
- clear decisions with follow-through
- shared leadership in maintenance and developmental tasks
- election, acceptance, and support of new leadership
- both old and new leaders involved
- inclusiveness: conflicts and differences are dealt with openly

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

Interim Ministry Handbook for Pastors

Page 18

Catching the Next Wave Workbook: Leadership Strategies for Turnaround Congregations by Steven J. Goodwin

Contains the material your congregation's planning team needs to lead a congregational turn-around. The workbook includes inventories for evaluating congregational health, assessing conflict levels, casting a vision, moving from maintenance to mission, making disciples. The practical, reproducible worksheets and Bible studies for group reflection in this workbook will support your team every step of the way.

<http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/6145/Catching-the-Next-Wave-Workbook-Leadership-Strategies-for-Turn-around-Congregations>

<http://www.lifeandleadership.com/book-summaries/vogel-catching-the-next-wave-workbook.html>

<http://www.amazon.com/Catching-Next-Workboo-Steven-Goodwin/dp/0806638826>

[Images for Catching the Next Wave Workbook: Leadership Strategies for Turnaround Congregations by Steven J. Goodwin](#)

Leadership: Adaptive vs. Technical Challenges

One of the keys to understanding leadership is understanding the difference between leading through adaptive challenges versus leading through technical challenges. Here is how the authors distinguish the two:

Technical Challenges: "Every day, people have problems for which they do, in fact, have the necessary know-how and procedures. We call these technical problems." (13)

Adaptive Challenges: "But there is a whole host of problems that are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. We call these adaptive challenges because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways – changing attitudes, values, and behaviors – people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment." (13)

For those of us who are interested in the missional church (including my [current series](#) on *The Present Future*) will quickly recognize that the Post-Christian environment in North America represents an adaptive challenge that too many church leaders are addressing as a technical challenge.

<http://triangularchristianity.wordpress.com/2008/06/11/leadership-adaptive-vs-technical-challenges/>

[Images for Leadership: Adaptive vs. Technical Challenges](#)

Leadership and the Missional Church: Keynote by Bishop Duane Pederson - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

To give some order to what I say today, I defer to an article by Rick Rouse entitled, *Missional Leaders Needed for Today's Church*. He wrote it for an online magazine for pastors in 2009, and Rick graciously gave me permission to use it in whatever way I find helpful. Rick points to five hallmarks of leadership that he finds essential for the church of today and tomorrow.

1. Leaders are focused on God's mission – nothing else!
2. Leaders are outward focused.
3. Leaders understand adaptive challenges.
4. Leaders are collaborative.
5. Leaders are transformative agents.

I will touch upon each of these five hallmarks of leadership during our time together. Rick writes a brief paragraph about each. I'm going to run with each considerably further.

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/keynote_d_pederson.pdf

Images for Leadership and the Missional Church: Keynote by Bishop Duane Pederson - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin 1. Leaders are focused on God's mission – nothing else! 2. Leaders are outward focused. 3. Leaders understand adaptive challenges. 4. Leaders are collaborative. 5. Leaders are transformative agents.

Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading by Ronald A. Heifetz (Author), Marty Linsky (Author)

To lead is to live dangerously. It's romantic and exciting to think of leadership as all inspiration, decisive action, and rich rewards, but leading requires taking risks that can jeopardize your career and your personal life. It requires putting yourself on the line, disturbing the status quo, and surfacing hidden conflict. And when people resist and push back, there's a strong temptation to play it safe. Those who choose to lead plunge in, take the risks, and sometimes get burned. But it doesn't have to be that way say renowned leadership authorities Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky. In *Leadership on the Line*, they show how it's possible to make a difference without getting "taken out" or pushed aside. They present everyday tools that give equal weight to the dangerous work of leading change and the critical importance of personal survival. Through vivid stories from all walks of life, the authors present straightforward strategies for navigating the perilous straits of leadership. Whether parent or politician, CEO or community activist, this practical book shows how you can exercise leadership and survive and thrive to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

<http://www.amazon.com/Leadership-Line-Staying-through-Dangers/dp/1578514371>

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/203268-leadership-on-the-line-staying-alive-through-the-dangers-of-leading>

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/leadership-on-the-line-ronald-a-heifetz/1101231872>

http://books.google.com/books/about/Leadership_on_the_Line.html?id=c3mYE7jNvn0C

http://www.summary.com/book-reviews/_/Leadership-on-the-Line/

<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2952.html>

<https://www.leadershipnow.com/leadership/1437-1.html>

Images for Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading by Ronald A. Heifetz (Author), Marty Linsky (Author)

Reclaiming the "C" Word: Daring to Be Church Again by Kelly A. Fryer (Author) | Augsburg Fortress

God is up to something! God is on a mission to save and bless the world, and God calls the church to be part of this mission. That means getting focused, setting people free, taking action, expecting surprises, and being hopeful. A church on God's mission isn't a building or a building plus a pastor. It's people—people who carry out God's mission in the world.

Building on her bestselling book, *Reclaiming the "L" Word*, Kelly A. Fryer gives practical advice on how to transform our idea of church and what that means for our lives as Christians.

<http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/7410/Reclaiming-the-C-Word-Daring-to-Be-Church-Again>

<http://www.amazon.com/Reclaiming-22C-22-Word-Daring-Lutheran/dp/0806653191>

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1309175.Reclaiming_the_C_Word

<https://www.christianbook.com/reclaiming-the-word-daring-church-again/kelly-fryer/9780806653198/pd/53195>

https://books.google.com/books/about/Reclaiming_the_C_Word.html?id=inAdec_fmUC

<https://www.thriftbooks.com/a/kelly-a-fryer/221766/>

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/329462.Kelly_A_Fryer

Images for Reclaiming the "C" Word: Daring to Be Church Again by Kelly A. Fryer (Author) | Augsburg Fortress

Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry [Roger S. Nicholson]

Chapter 4	Understanding Conflict and Power	Page 39
Chapter 8	Leadership Changes during an Interim	Page 87
Tool 2	Bible Studies for the Journey	Page 163
Tool 3	Engaging the Developmental Tasks	Page 169

Effective interim ministry depends on strong partnership between the interim minister and congregation. Lay leaders of congregations preparing for such a transition will value the expert guidance provided by over a dozen experienced interim pastors. What is interim ministry all about? What needs to happen during the interim? What should leaders and members expect from the interim pastor and themselves during this transition? What other resources are available for congregations?

<http://www.amazon.com/Temporary-Shepherds-Congregational-Handbook-Ministry/dp/1566992087>

Images for Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry [Roger S. Nicholson] Leadership Changes during an Interim

Tough medicine for tough problems in tough times: Six Suggestions for Church Leadership | The Lutheran

Now begins the annual season of church leadership workshops, retreats and formation events. It's an important time because when leaders have their act together, the faith community can move forward.

Here are my six suggestions for church leadership. I know they represent course changes — and serious ones at that — but I'm concerned about congregational well-being and think these steps are critical.

http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article_id=9837

Images for Tough medicine for tough problems in tough times: Six Suggestions for Church Leadership | The Lutheran

Resources – Connections

Call Process Downloads - Northern Louisiana Synod

Issues

- healthy partnership with the denomination
- authority, dependency, interdependency, counter-dependency

- congregation's tendency to see judicatory or denomination through former pastor's eyes
- history of the relationship; dollars and trust

Toolbox

- encourage denomination to give
- clear information about its expectations, requirements, resources, and programs
- advocate use of denominational resources
- give feedback: remind denomination of its duties, promises, and programs
- identify and affirm church members who have' denomination jobs and ties
- identify common interests of church and denomination
- make use of denominational resources: staff, programs, facilities, literature, training, retreats
- allow for ventilation of feelings about denomination

Symptoms of Non-Resolution

- resistance to denominational requests or suggestions
- criticism of denominational personnel and programs
- failure to meet pledges and budgets
- 'We-they' outlook

Signs of Resolution

- willingness to accept help and resources
- appreciation for the denomination's traditions and missions
- denomination's resources and facilities are used
- stable or increased giving to denomination: dollars and people
- shared "us"

<http://www.ntnl.org/index.php/downloads/call-process>

Interim Ministry Handbook for Pastors

Page 18

Companion Ministry

malawi	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/malawi
ne synod of pennsylvania	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/ne-synod-of-pennsylvania
outdoor ministry	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/outdoor-ministry
seminaries	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/seminaries
lutheran colleges	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/lutheran-colleges
campus ministry	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/campus-ministry
full communion partners	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/full-communion-partners
health and human services	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/health-and-human-services
education	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/education
ecumenical organizations	http://nswi.org/companion-ministry/ecumenical-organizations

<http://nswi.org/>

[Images for Companion Ministry Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#)

Congregational Ministry Assessment

The following is a list of important areas of congregational life that can be productively explored by the congregation and pastoral leadership of the congregation during the interim between called pastors. Addressing these areas will assure that things are in good order in the congregation in anticipation of calling a new pastor.

Connections

- Describe briefly the congregation's significant relationships with the broader faith community.
- How are these relationships maintained?
- What is the vision for renewing relationships with the synod during the interim?

Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

http://www.nswi.org/webfiles/fnitools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf Page 61

Call Process Booklet - Yumpu

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Congregational Ministry Assessment- connections](#)

Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations>

[Images for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

Ethnic Specific & Multicultural Ministries - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

<http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Ethnic-and-Multicultural-Ministries>

[Images for Ethnic Specific & Multicultural Ministries - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)