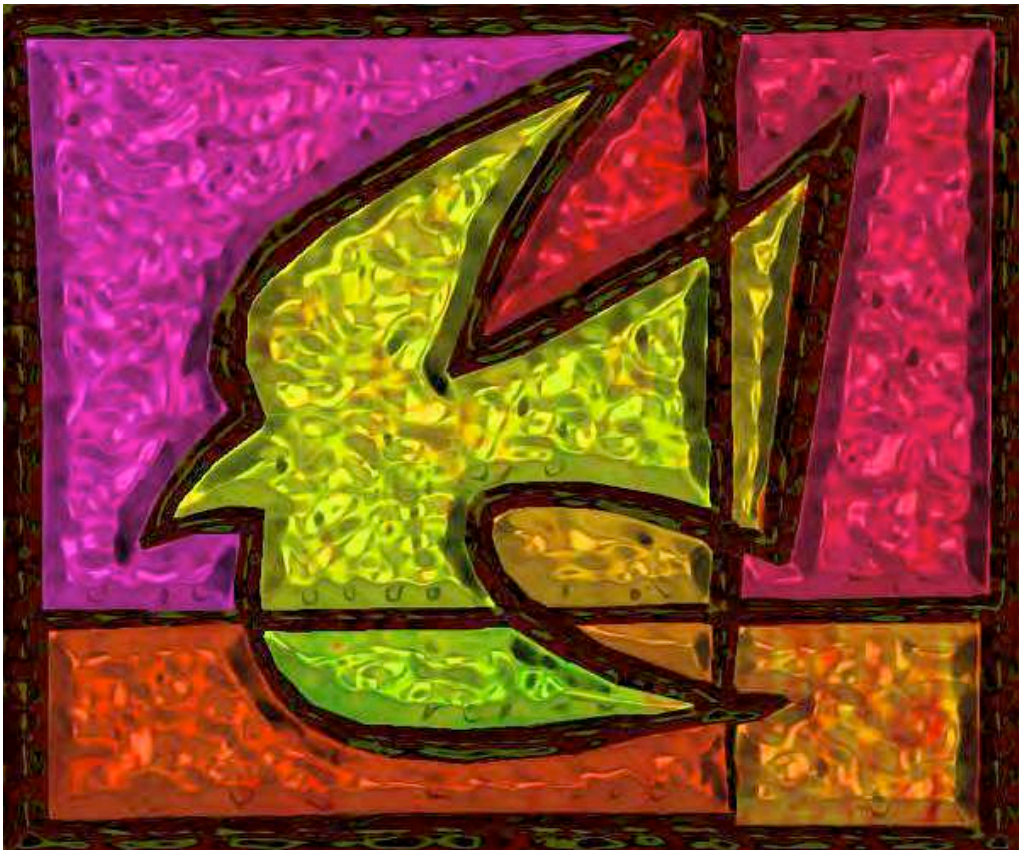




Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Call Process Booklet



The journey—
from saying
goodbye,
through the
interim task
and extending
a call, to
beginning
strong—
can be an
anxious time,
yet it is also
an opportunity
to look
forward to the
future that
God is calling
you into.

Dear Friends in Christ,

These pages were created to assist congregations in the transition period between called pastors. This interim period can be an anxious time, but I pray that congregations use this time as an opportunity to look forward to the future into which God has called you.

In these pages you will find information about three phases in this transition:

1. Saying goodbye and ending well
2. Entering into the interim task through extending a call
3. Beginning strong

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we believe that it is our Lord Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who guides the call process. We trust that the Spirit works with and through pastoral candidates, congregations, and synods—and when these three agree, we are bold to say that we have discerned the will of God.

Know that pastoral transitions are a regular and natural occurrence in the life of a congregation. During the interim period, congregations have a pastor dedicated to the specialized ministry of leading communities of faith through a process of prayer, reflection, and self-discovery to discern what God is calling them to be and to do.

The synod staff is also specifically trained in this work and will partner with Call Committees and Congregation Councils to find appropriate pastoral leadership. Healthy pastors and healthy congregations looking forward in mission is our goal.

We hold congregations in prayer during this time of transition in weekly staff devotions, and we covet your daily prayers that God will guide the process and strengthen our partnership in the gospel for the sake of the world.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Duane C. Pederson, Bishop +

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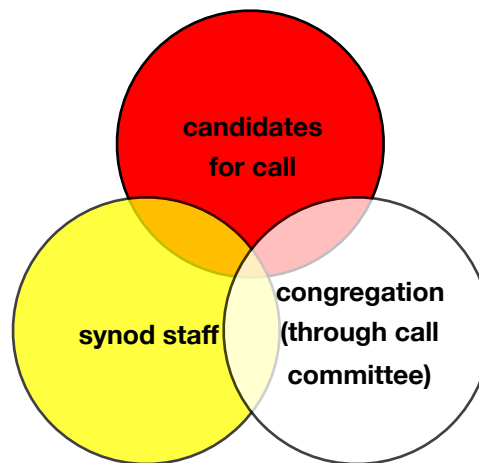
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Calling a pastor is discerning the will of God



When these three agree, we are bold to state that we have discerned who God is calling to this parish.

Overview

God's
work.
Our
hands.

The Call Process

When a pastor retires or accepts a new call, the congregation has the opportunity to reflect—on the pastor's leadership, on who they are, on how they are living in our Lord's grace and love, and how they are sharing that grace and love in their community and in God's world. In the care of the Holy Spirit, we trust that this process can bring encouragement, spiritual growth, thanks and joy.



The Spiritual Work

This booklet is intended to be a practical guide to congregations through the whole call process, but it assumes that this process is a deeply spiritual journey for a congregation. The congregation is not “hiring” a new leader; you are “calling” a new pastor. So you need to be about the work of prayer, Bible study, devotions, and careful reflection on what God needs you to do for the sake of the world. Staying spiritually centered will allow the lay leadership of the congregation, in concert with the interim pastor, to reduce anxiety, to guide the congregation through change and possibly grief, to accurately assess the congregation's strength and growth areas, to discover a new or renewed vision for mission and ministry, and, eventually, to call a new pastor.

Pastors are called to lead the congregation in Word and Sacrament ministry, but the better you understand the character of your congregation and the mission that God has in mind for you, the better you will be able to communicate that character and mission with potential candidates. The ultimate goal is to discover who God is calling to be your next pastor, but the process can and should be a time of spiritual reflection and reawakening.

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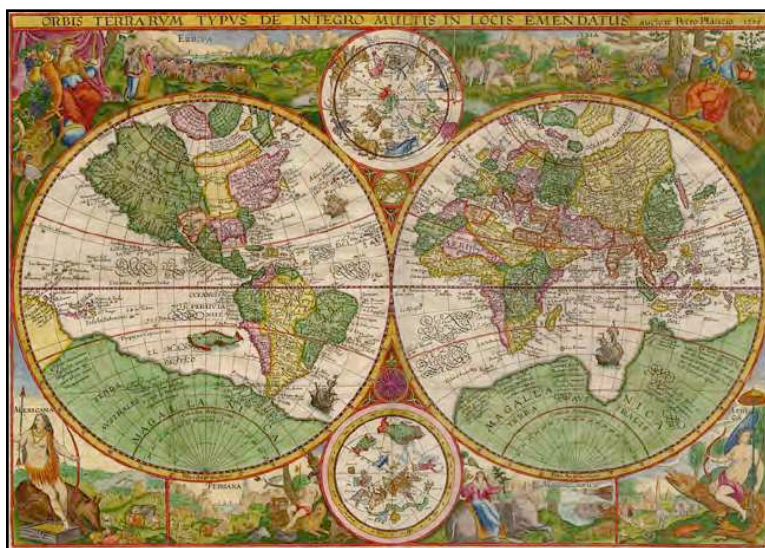
Some resources for this spiritual work are found at the end of this section. Your interim pastor will also bring many gifts and assets for this work. You, too, may be inspired to share your spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. Encourage your congregation to practice these exercises both communally and personally. Enter into the process and don't try to cut this corner; you will find that you have cut out an opportunity to explore the heart of what it means to be God's church together.

A Typical Timeline

There are three parts to the call process: "ending well," "discovering God's future together" (or the "interim"), and "beginning strong."

Ending well	Discovering God's future together	Beginning strong
Pastor announces new call or retirement	Pastor leaves, interim pastor begins, a team writes the Mission Site Profile, Call Committee is formed, candidates are interviewed and a call is extended	Call accepted, pastor welcomed and integrated into congregation
4–6 weeks	9–22 months	4–6 weeks

These time markers are estimates. The wide range of months for the second phase is due to different congregational needs. Congregations experiencing conflict or who have had a long-tenured pastor need to take more time. Congregations hoping to have a first call pastor will probably take longer to fill due to the clergy shortage. Be sure to take your time. A rushed process will not produce better results! You are in an interim period, but you do have a pastor. Allow the process to unfold in God's time.



A good map is a good thing.

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Theological Background

Adapted from the St. Paul Area Synod

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At the heart of our Lutheran theology is something Martin Luther termed “the priesthood of all believers.” In our baptism God has called us all to be part of the body of Christ. Luther reminded us of the Latin origin of the word “vocation”—*vocare*—which means “to call.” All of us take up our vocations—our callings—as God’s people. We are all ministers in whatever daily activity is ours. Within this priesthood of all believers there exists the ordained office of ministry, the “office of Word and Sacrament” (see *Augsburg Confession* below).

On the basis of our Lutheran theology, a pastor is called, not hired, to serve a congregation. The call process is not the same as the hiring process in other parts of society. Any process that seems to focus on “head hunting,” resume shuffling, or high anxiety interviews is missing the point in the calling of a pastor. A call is one element in the church’s seeking and following God’s movement into the future.

The call process is not a pageant, in which contestants present themselves to their best advantage so they will be the winners. The Lutheran call process is unique because it is an effort to discern what God wants for the local congregation and for the whole church in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

In order for a call to be issued there must be first a congregational vote for the candidate. Second the president and secretary of the congregation, representing the congregation’s decision, must sign the Letter of Call. And finally, the Bishop, representing the whole church, must sign the Letter of Call.

What the Augsburg Confession Says

The Lutheran Church looks to the documents called “The Lutheran Confessions” for its understanding of scripture, the faith and the church. Chief among these documents is the *Augsburg Confession*, adopted by the reformers in the city of Augsburg (Germany) in 1530. These short, concise statements help us understand the nature of the office of ministry in the Lutheran Church:

“We cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions. We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us.”

Article IV, *The Augsburg Confession* (AC)



“To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and sacraments. Through these he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel.” Article V, AC

“Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call.” All Christians are called to the ministry of serving God and neighbor, but for the sake of good order in the church certain Christians are specially called to the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament.” Article XIV, AC

The Call to Ministry

It is through the church that God calls some Christians to ordained ministry. Once that call is discerned, the candidate normally devotes years to study, training, and preparation under the guidance of the whole church through the Bishop and the Candidacy Committee.

In a similar way, it is through the church that God calls ordained ministers to a specific pastorate. Not only does the local congregation participate in the call process, but so does the whole church through the office of the Bishop. Just as the whole church took an active role in the call to ordination, so now the whole church takes an active role in the call to a specific ministry.

This is shown by the fact that once a person is approved for ordination, the candidate must receive and accept a call to a specific ministry in order to be ordained. Ordination may occur in a local congregation, but it is always an ordination by the whole church as shown in the presence of the Bishop at the ordination service.

The Church and Call

The local congregation is fully the church, but the local congregation is not all the church there is. The local congregation calls a person to be its pastor, but the whole church has a stake in who is called and how the call process is handled.

The Call Committee, the Congregation Council and, eventually, the entire congregation participate fully in the process. And so does the Bishop, who represents both the interest and the commitment of the whole church in seeing that the pastor called is suited to ministry under the call that is extended.

The Bishop's office has a deep concern for the well being of the congregation's life and ministry. The Bishop and synod staff also have a deep concern for the person and gifts of the prospective pastor. In the call process, the Bishop and staff, the congregation, and the prospective 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.

Overview—Things To Do

Congregation Council

- Pray. Pray prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for comfort and guidance, prayers of patience, prayers for steady leadership through this time of transition, and prayers pertaining to your own congregation's unique circumstances. Pray.
- The president of the congregation notifies the Bishop of a pastoral vacancy. As soon as possible, call the synod office: 715.859.6810.
- Study the process for calling a new pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin:

www.elca.org/call
www.nwswi.org/call

- Be ready for a busy month!

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work.
Our
hands.**

Words of Encouragement

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. Jeremiah 29.11

"Don't Panic!" Douglas Adams

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything,

but in everything by prayer and supplication

with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4.4–7

"Only connect." E.M. Forster

"I believe that by my own understanding or strength

I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him,

but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel,

enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith,

just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth

and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith."

From Martin Luther's explanation of the third article of the creed

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." John 20:21

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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Timing

Ending well	Discovering God's future together	Beginning strong
Who is in the pulpit?		
Pastor's final weeks	Interim pastor (may need a supply pastor for a limited time at the beginning and/or the end of the interim period)	New pastor
What does the Council do and when?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans farewell for current pastor Meets with synod staff for call process orientation and interim pastor concurrence Arranges for pastoral coverage before interim begins Develops a communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces interim ministry to the congregation Sees that the ministry and work of the congregation continues Maintains communication with the synod staff contact Selects the group responsible for the development of the mission profile Develops the salary range for the next pastor Sets the open meeting for reviewing the mission profile with the synod staff contact 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans farewell for interim pastor Prepares for welcoming the new pastor Introduces pastor to the mutual ministry committee Coordinates with synod staff and pastor for installation date
How does the congregation participate in the process?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in the farewell for the current pastor Learns about the call process from the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continues doing the mission and ministry of the congregation Participates as invited in the development of the congregation's Mission Site Profile Is welcome to attend the Mission Site Profile review. At the end of the process, votes on the recommended candidate for pastor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in the farewell for the interim pastor Welcomes the new pastor

Ending well	Discovering God's future together	Beginning strong
When can we form the Call Committee?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a month or two, the Council appoints the Mission Site Profile team (may or may not be the same as the Call Committee) • When the Mission Site Profile is complete, the Council selects the Call Committee (may or may not be the same as the Mission Site Profile team, although at least one or two people on both teams is helpful) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Call Committee can help the pastor adjust to the new community
Why is a Mission Site Profile so important?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't worry about this yet! Focus on appropriate farewells. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mission 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! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the profile to set goals for the initial phase of the next pastorate
What does the synod staff do?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A synod staff person is assigned to each congregation who (1) orients the Council to the call process and (2) introduces a potential interim pastor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The synod office works with the interim pastor and Congregation Council throughout the process as needed • When the Mission Site Profile is complete, the synod staff contact meets with the profile team, the newly formed Call Committee, the Council and anyone else from the congregation who is interested • Reviews the interview and call portion of the process with the Call Committee • Shares names of candidates for pastor • Is available to the Council to answer salary package questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The synod staff contact installs the new pastor

Overview Resources

The following resources can be photocopied or copied from the digital version of this document available at www.nwswi.org/call.

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<i>Saying Goodbye</i>	Page 10
<i>Model Covenant for Congregations</i>	Page 11
<i>Model Covenant for Departing Pastor</i>	Page 12
<i>Model Covenant for Departing Family</i>	Page 13
<i>Model Covenant for Arriving Pastor</i>	Page 14
<i>Bibliography</i>	Page 15
<i>Passages Bible Study</i>	Page 16

Suggested Prayers

From ELW Evening Prayer: Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

10th Century Russian Orthodox Prayer:

O Lord, grant me to meet the coming days in peace.

Help me in all things to rely upon your holy will.

In every hour of the day reveal your will to me.

Bless my dealings with all who surround me.

Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day
with peace of soul, and the firm conviction your will governs all.

In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings.

In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by you.

Teach me to act firmly and wisely,
without embittering or embarrassing others.

Give me the strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day
and all it shall bring.

Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray thou thyself in me. Amen

Healthy Transitions

The Upstate New York Synod developed a set of resources and covenants to aid in pastoral transitions. Consider using these to help facilitate a smooth transition in your context.

Saying Goodbye

By The Rev. Cynthia K. Hileman
Metropolitan Chicago Synod

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 Pastors: 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 Pastors: 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

[Congregation letterhead]

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 _____ (name) as pastor of _____ (congregation) at _____ (place).

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
2. for our pastoral leadership past, present and future; and
3. to respect the terms of the attached covenant of Rev. _____ (name); and
4. to interpret the terms of the Covenant to the congregation; and
5. to incorporate the Covenant in the minutes of a called Congregation Council meeting; and
6. to communicate in writing and conversation the terms of the Covenant which terminates the pastoral relationship with named pastor; and
7. to refrain from asking the former pastor to perform pastoral functions and to remind members likewise to refrain from making requests; and
8. to show respect and regard for our new pastoral leader (interim and successor) by allowing them to perform their pastoral duties; and
9. to encourage members to come to the new pastoral leader; and
10. to celebrate what will be as we honor what was; and further
11. to _____

It is understood that this covenant does not affect or require termination of friendships with individuals in this congregation.

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

[Congregation letterhead]

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 _____ (congregation) at _____ (place) as pastor.

I, Pastor _____ (name), 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; and
2. to abide by the guidelines established by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
3. to not be involved in any leadership or advisory role (public or private); and
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; and
5. to refuse requests for pastoral services made by members of the congregation, including visiting the sick and homebound; and
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; and
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; and further
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 _____

It is understood that this covenant does not affect or require termination of friendships with individuals in this congregation.

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)

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Model Covenant for Departing Family

[Congregation letterhead]

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

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 _____ (congregation) 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 _____

It is understood that this covenant does not affect or require termination of friendships with individuals in this congregation.

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 Arriving Pastor

[Congregation letterhead]

(This covenant is an optional model, which an arriving pastoral leader might choose to make with the congregation and predecessor pastoral leader.)

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 is my/our privilege to recognize and support the mission and ministry of _____ (congregation) at _____ (place) as pastor.

I, Pastor _____ (name), 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 promise:

1. to pray for my predecessor in their ministry for the sake of the mission of the church; and
2. to speak to the good and positive word about my predecessor(s) and the relationship(s) they had with the congregation, but not to yield my pastoral role, and
3. if my predecessor chooses to live in this community, to treat them as a valued pastoral colleague, neighbor, and/or member of this parish; and further
4. to _____

It is understood that this covenant does not affect or require termination of friendships my predecessor and his/her family may have with individuals in this congregation.

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)

Optional: Date shared with predecessor pastoral leader: _____

Bibliography

Guiding Your Church Staff Through Staff Transition: for Congregational and Agency Leaders
(Leadership Support, Division for Ministry, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

Reflections on Leaving and Entering a Ministry Setting: for Pastor and Associate in Ministry
(Leadership Support, Division for Ministry, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

Running Through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship with a Parish Roy M. Oswald,
Alban Institute

Ending Well, Starting Strong: Your Personal Pastorate Start-up Workshop Roy M. Oswald, Alban
Institute

Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors Edward A. White; Alban
Institute

Critical Moment of Ministry: A Change of Pastors Loren B. Mead; Alban Institute

Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Institute Handbook for Clergy Transitions Roy M. Oswald,
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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 vss. 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, etc. 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? Other?

Where is God leading us as a congregation now?

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

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.

Ted Loder
from *Guerrillas of Grace*
Innisfree Press, Inc.

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.

Written by Update New York Synod. May 2004



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

Ending Well

God's
work.
Our
hands.

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!

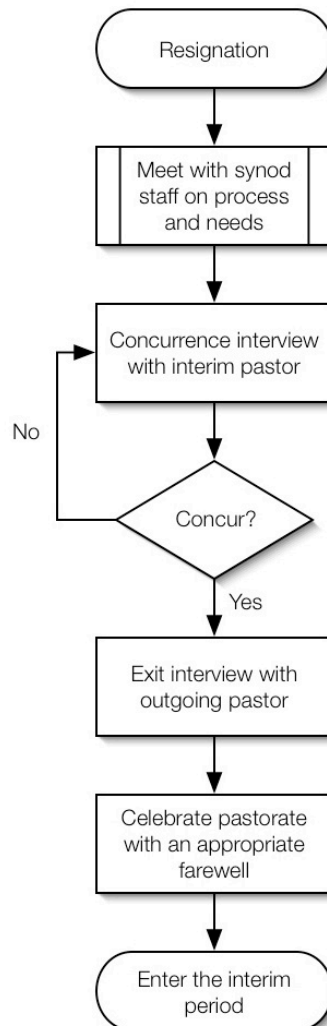
Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world



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

ENDING WELL



Ending Well—Things To Do

God's
work.
Our
hands.

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 in the resource section of this chapter and send it by mail or email to your synod staff contact person.
- The secretary of the congregation must sign and send the Certification of Completion of Congregational Records to the Bishop. See resources.
- 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. See resources.

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. Affirm and maintain friendships with previous pastors, but 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.

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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 the Board of Pensions of effective dates of change of billing or retirement.
- Consider using the Healthy Transitions materials found in chapter 1 resources.
- 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 person 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.)

Words of Encouragement

“Ending well” is an opportunity to wrap up a pastorate in a holy way.

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.

Being 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 person.

Keep in Regular Contact with Your Synod Staff

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

**God’s
work.
Our
hands.**



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 awhile. 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.

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world



Ending Well Resources

The following resources can be photocopied or copied from the digital version of this document available at www.nswsi.org/call.

<i>Suggested Prayers</i>	Page 29
<i>Sample Service of Farewell and Godspeed</i>	Page 30
<i>Exit Interview of Pastor by Congregation Council</i>	Page 32
<i>Exit interview of Pastor by Synod Staff</i>	Page 34
<i>Certification of Completion of Parochial Records</i>	Page 36
<i>Certification of Completion of Financial Obligations</i>	Page 37
<i>Compensation Worksheet for Interim Pastor Salary</i>	Page 38
<i>Pension and Other Benefits Worksheet for Interim Pastors</i>	Page 39
<i>Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry</i>	Page 40
<i>Letter of Agreement for Interim Pastoral Ministry</i>	Page 42
<i>Addendum to Letter of Agreement</i>	Page 46
<i>Pastoral Acts and Former Pastors</i>	Page 47

Suggested Prayers

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.

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.

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

Sample Service of Farewell and Godspeed

A local leader or a member of synod staff presides over this portion of the service. It is placed within the liturgy for Holy Communion after the Post Communion Prayer and before the closing hymn. The congregation may be seated.

R Hear the words addressed to the Philippians:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

“I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it.” *Philippians 4.4–10*

Our Lord Jesus Christ says, “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.” *Luke 12.35–38*

P On the __ day of _____, _____, I began ministry in this congregation. We have been partners in the mission of _____ Lutheran Church. I have, with God’s help and to the best of my abilities, exercised this trust. After prayer and careful consideration, I have resigned this pastorate, and I publicly state that my time as pastor of this parish ends _____.

R People of God, do you accept the conclusion of this pastoral relationship?

All **We do.**

The departing pastor may express thanksgiving for the shared ministry that has occurred during their tenure, with all its joys and sorrows, and may state hopes for the future of the congregation. Conclude with:

P “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.” *Romans 1.8*

All **“The Lord is loving to everyone; God’s compassion is over all God’s works. All your works praise you, O Lord, and your faithful servants bless you.”** *Psalms 145:9-10*

P Let us thank God for these years of partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

All **We give you thanks for your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all people. For our partnership in the Gospel, for the Spirit that has empowered us to witness, we give you praise. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit we pray. Amen**

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God’s world

A local leader or a member of synod staff may then indicate what provisions have been made for continuation of ministries in the parish. The departing pastor joins the presiding minister at the front.

P Dear friends, you have allowed me to share the responsibilities of the ordained ministry in your midst. At the beginning of our ministry, you presented me with symbols expressing my special role among you. It is time for me to return to you what you have lent me.

The presiding minister and departing pastor move to the font.

P I was called among you to baptize and to forgive sins. Here is water which symbolizes God's gift of belonging in Christ.

A vessel of water is given to a lay leader.

All There is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Ephesians 4.4–6

The presiding minister and departing pastor move to the pulpit.

P I was called among you to proclaim the Good News. Here is the Bible that expresses this call.

A Bible is presented to a lay leader.

All For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. Psalm 33.4

The presiding minister and departing pastor move to the altar.

P I was called among you to lead worship and preside at Holy Communion. Receive now this chalice as a symbol of our worship life.

A chalice is presented to a lay leader.

**All O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.
Psalm 34.8**

The presiding minister and departing pastor return to the front.

P I was called among you to teach. Here is Luther's *Small Catechism* which represents this call.

The Small Catechism is presented to a confirmation student.

All It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Philippians 2.16

P And now, it is time for me to say farewell. I ask that you send me forth in your love with a blessing.

**All We send you forth with our blessing.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.**

The presiding minister addresses the whole congregation.

R The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

Exit Interview of the Pastor by the Congregation Council

Plan a special meeting with your pastor who has resigned, including appropriate leaders of the congregation and the church staff. Make it informal and open with the understanding that it is a learning and growing experience for everyone. This is an opportunity to celebrate strengths and identify where the kingdom is growing and mission done. Where there has been conflict or struggle, analyze and explore it, but avoid blaming or other destructive behavior. In all cases, this is another way for pastor and congregation to "end well."

Pastor's Name: _____

Congregation: _____

Interview Date: _____

1. What is your assessment of congregation when you arrived?

How has your assessment changed, if at all?

2. How has the congregation changed during your tenure?

3. Your greatest accomplishments:

Your greatest satisfactions:

4. How has mission in witness and service, in love of neighbor, been furthered in Christ's name?

5. What frustrations did you experience?

What blocked your effectiveness?

6. List the congregation's greatest weaknesses:

List the congregation's greatest strengths:

7. What elements are present in your new call that have influenced you to make a change at this time?

8. What ministry goals for this setting seem most important for the next five years?

a.

b.

c.

9. What changes would you suggest be made in the current position description?

10. What can we do to help you and your family in the transition soon to take place?

11. How was the relationship between our congregation and the wider church strengthened and enhanced during your pastorate?

12. Other information:

Mail a copy to:

Bishop Duane Pederson
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
944 24 ¼ Street
PO Box 107
Chetek, WI 54728

Exit Interview of the Pastor by Synod Staff

Synod staff also meets with the pastor for a general check-in.

Pastor's Name: _____

Congregation: _____

Interview Date: _____

1. Are parochial records up-to-date?
2. When was the last time the Constitution of the congregation was updated? Does it conform to the model constitution of the ELCA?
3. Are the membership rolls of the congregation up to day?
4. Is there a current list of prospective members available?
5. What is the congregation's tax status?
6. Are there any contracts pending?

7. Have you made sure that all congregational files and records have been separated from your own personal records?
8. How have you taught the congregation about healthy boundaries when you leave, i.e. you will no longer be able to do word and sacrament ministry with them, weddings, funerals, etc.?
9. Are there any specific pastoral needs for special people?
10. Does the congregation have insurance? Through whom?
11. What is the current staffing situation? (full time/part-time/volunteer)
12. In the transition soon to take place, how can synod staff best support you and your family?
13. Is there anything else you wish to express to the synod staff?

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, they 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

Mail to:

Bishop Duane Pederson
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
944 24 ¼ Street
PO Box 107
Chetek, WI 54728

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

Mail to:

Bishop Duane Pederson
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
944 24 ¼ Street
PO Box 107
Chetek, WI 54728

Compensation Worksheet for Interim Pastor Salary

This worksheet is designed to help congregations determine a compensation package for an interim pastor using the previous pastor's total compensation package. The total bottom line will remain the same while individual lines are flexible, based on the needs and life circumstances of the interim pastor.

	Previous Pastor	Interim Pastor
TAXABLE INCOME		
Base Salary	\$ _____	\$ _____
Social Security Reimbursement	\$ _____	\$ _____
NONTAXABLE INCOME		
Housing Allowance <i>(Allowable expenses include housing, furnishings and utilities)</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____
Housing Equity <i>(When parsonage is provided)</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____
Furnishing Allowance <i>(When parsonage is provided)</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____
Utility Allowance for Parsonage <i>(If utilities are not paid by congregation)</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total Salary	\$ _____	\$ _____
BENEFITS		
ELCA Pension and Medical/Dental Plan <i>(Board of Pensions: 612.333.7651)</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____
Other <i>(Such as Medical Expense Reimbursement, additional retirement contribution, etc)</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total Benefits	\$ _____	\$ _____
REIMBURSED PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES		
Automobile	\$ _____	\$ _____
Continuing Education + Official Meetings	\$ _____	\$ _____
Sabbatical	\$ _____	\$ _____
Professional Ministry Expenses	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total Reimbursed Professional Expenses	\$ _____	\$ _____
GRAND TOTAL (Should be equivalent)	\$ _____	\$ _____
NON-FINANCIAL COMPENSATION		
Sabbath Day	_____	_____
Vacation Time	_____	_____
Continuing Education Time	_____	_____

Pension and Other Benefits Worksheet for Interim Pastors

1. If **providing a housing allowance**, add the following to determine cost of benefits:

Base Salary	(1) \$ _____
Housing Allowance	(2) \$ _____
Social Security Allowance ((lines 1 + 2) x 7.65%)	(3) \$ _____
Total defined compensation (add lines 1 – 3)	(4) \$ _____
Total pension & benefits cost	(5) \$ _____
<i>(Multiply total defined compensation by total of Medical and Dental, Disability, Administration & Retiree Support and Regular Pension percentages from table below)</i>	

2. If **providing a parsonage**, add the following to determine cost of benefits:

Base Salary	(1) \$ _____
Social Security Allowance ((line 1 x 1.3) x 7.65%)	(2) \$ _____
Parsonage value ((lines 1 + 2) x 30%)	(3) \$ _____
Furnishings Allowance (if paid directly to pastor)	(4) \$ _____
Total defined compensation (add lines 1 – 4)	(5) \$ _____
Total pension & benefits cost	(6) \$ _____
<i>(Multiply total defined compensation by total of Medical and Dental, Disability, Administration & Retiree Support and Regular Pension percentages from table below)</i>	
Housing Equity ((line 1 x 1.3) x 4.5%)	(7) \$ _____

ELCA BOARD OF PENSIONS—PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR 2009 (as a % of defined compensation)

Health benefits	Rates ¹	Monthly Minimum	Monthly Maximum
Member only	13.0%	\$504.00	\$681.00
Member and spouse	22.7%	\$882.00	\$1,192.00
Member and children	22.7%	\$882.00	\$1,192.00
Member, spouse and children	32.4%	\$1,259.00	\$1,703.00
Retirement	10.0 to 12.0% ^{2,3,4}		
Disability	2.0%		
Survivor	0.0% ⁵		
Administration and retiree support	0.7%		

1. Rates are a percentage of defined compensation.
2. Contribution for employees of ELCA church institutions is 6 to 12 percent as determined by the institution.
3. Contribution for lay employees of ELCA congregations is 6 to 12 percent as determined by the congregation.
4. If a member participated in a predecessor plan on Dec. 31, 1987, was at least age 45 on that date, and has continuously been a sponsored member of an ELCA retirement plan since Jan. 1, 1988, the total employer retirement contribution must be at least 11 percent.
5. Survivor Benefits Plan contribution is suspended.

Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Congregations 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 multiple staff when a congregation's senior pastor leaves, or when an associate pastor or other pastoral staff leaves. The interim period is thus a time in which pastoral care is provided a congregation by the synod as the congregation moves through a process of self-study and change toward new pastoral leadership. A congregation facing the normal range of congregational concerns related to a 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 of Called Interim 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 (7y.43). 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.

Adopted by the church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as policy of this church, November, 1996.

This model interim ministry contract may be altered or revised to fit the particular practices of the congregation or the circumstances of the pastor. The synod office should always be contacted for advice and counsel.

[Congregation letterhead]

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's Name)

will serve as Interim Pastor

on a ☐ part-time ☐ full-time basis

from _____ to _____

in accord with the following conditions and mutual promises:

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Together the congregation and Interim Pastor will:

- A. Examine the history of the congregation and work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor.
- B. Seek to confirm and identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.
- C. Develop a vision for the congregation's mission.
- D. Examine the congregation's connection with synod, conference, churchwide units, and the resources that may be available for ministry.
- E. Prepare for the arrival of the new pastor.
- F. Align the congregation in accordance with the constitutions and bylaws of the ELCA, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and update the congregation's constitution as needed.
- G. During this transition period, agree to address the following specific concerns:

- H. 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 regular call to this congregation.
- H. Agree not to be involved in the congregation's call process except when the synod bishop requests such participation.
- I. Agree not to become a member of this congregation after this agreement terminates.
- J. Participate with key leadership of the congregation and the appointed synodical staff person in evaluation of the interim ministry on a quarterly basis and at the conclusion of the transition period.
- K. 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 them in prayer, and accord them 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 regular call to this congregation.
- F. Provide for a review and evaluation of the interim ministry on a quarterly basis and at the conclusion of the transition period by key leadership of the congregation with the interim pastor and the appointed synodical staff person.
- G. Compensate the interim pastor in the following ways:

1. Pay an annual salary of \$_____, the payments to be made in ____ equal installments on the ____ and ____ of the month.

2. ☐ Pay a housing allowance in the amount of \$_____ per year, the payments to be made in ____ equal installments on the ____ and ____ of the month.

OR

☐ Provide the use of a parsonage in lieu of a housing allowance.

OR

☐ Provide a housing allowance resolution excluding a portion of the salary set forth above.

3. Provide a Social Security allowance of \$_____ per year.

4. ☐ Contribute to the ELCA Pension and Benefits Plan ____% of salary, housing allowance, and Social Security allowance.

OR

☐ Does not apply.

OR

☐ Provide Pension, Medical, Dental, Disability, and/or Death benefits (circle any that apply) as follows:

5. Grant one (1) week of vacation for every ____ weeks of service, not to exceed ____ weeks per year.

6. Grant continuing education leave at the rate of ____ weeks per year (day[s] per month) and \$_____ per year (per day) toward study expenses.

7. Grant ____ day(s) off per week.

8. Other _____

H. Reimburse expenses related to our common ministry as follows:

1. ☐ Pay a travel allowance in the amount of \$_____ per year

OR

☐ Reimburse automobile travel at the rate of _____¢ per mile upon substantiation of business miles traveled.

2. Pay expenses, not otherwise provided for, incurred in attending synod assemblies and other official meetings at which attendance is required.

3. Pay moving expenses as follows:

I. Provide for up to one month of transitional time for the interim pastor with full salary and benefits at the conclusion of the contracted period of service for the purpose of reviewing the concluding assignment and preparing for a new opportunity to serve.

Additional Agreements:

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 will 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:

Congregation (Council President or Secretary) Date

Interim Pastor Date

Reviewed by

Bishop, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin 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 Bishop's Office

[Congregation letterhead]

ADDENDUM TO LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY

(Congregation)

(Location)

and

(Pastor's Name)

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, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin 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 Bishop's Office

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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,



The Time Being is
the most trying time of all.

W.H. Auden

The Interim

God's
work.
Our
hands.

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.”

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The Interim—Step by Step

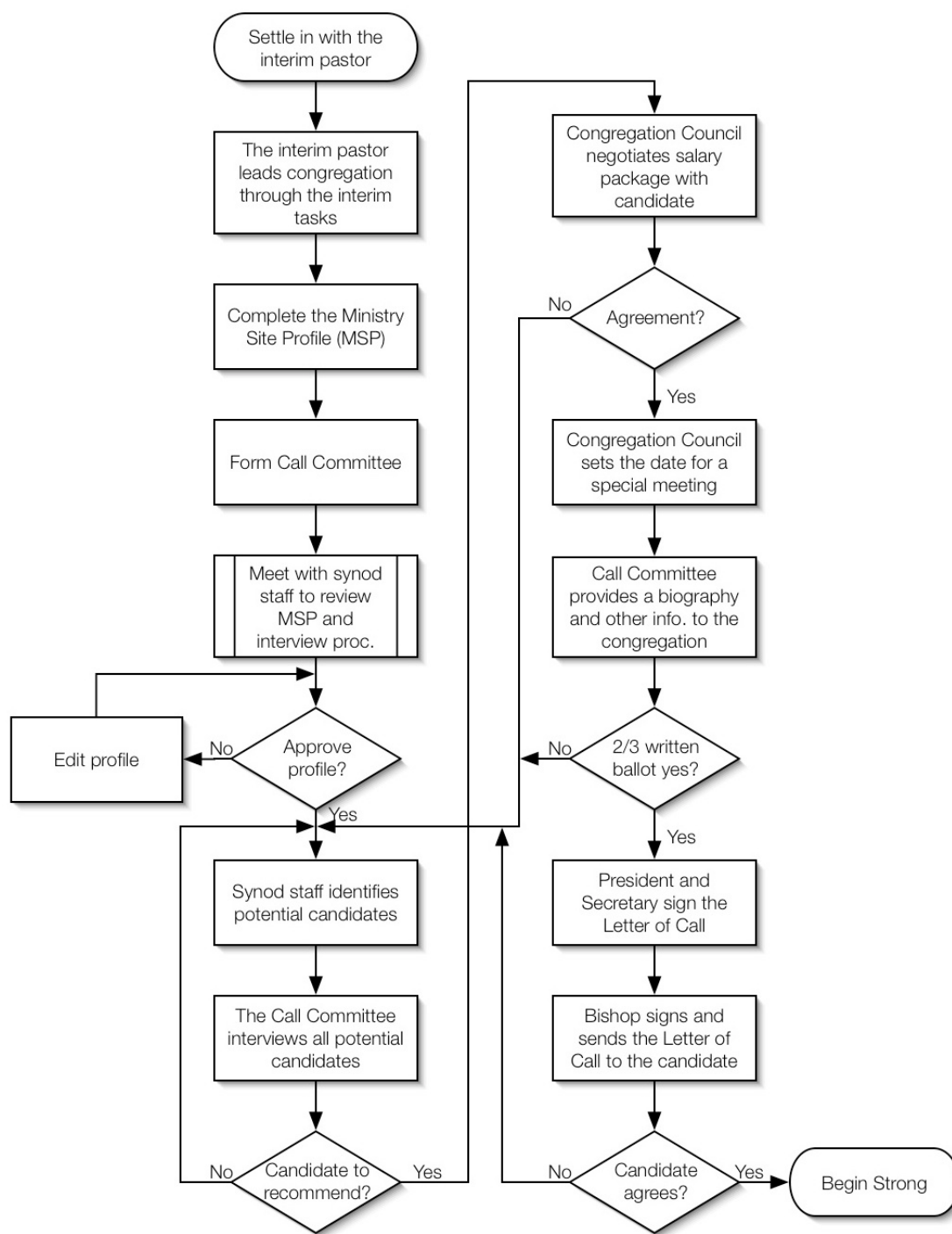
- The interim pastor settles into the life of the congregation
- After a month or two, the interim minister begins the interim tasks
- The interim minister helps to update the constitution if necessary, and address any other issues the Congregation Council deems important
- The Congregation Council selects the team to complete the Mission Site Profile (MSP)
- The interim pastor coordinates work on the interim task with the the work of the MSP team
- The Congregation Council prepares the compensation package range
- The Congregation Council selects the Call Committee according to the constitution
- The Congregation Council, MSP team, Call Committee and other interested members meet with synod staff to review the MSP, and consider clarification and refinements to the document
- Synod staff stays to meet with the Call Committee for their orientation to preparing for and carrying out interviews
- The Congregation Council or the congregation at a special meeting votes to approve the MSP
- The Call Committee sends names of any candidates suggested by the congregation to synod staff
- Synod staff prayerfully discerns the needs of the congregation and the gifts potential candidates, sending a packet of 1 to 5 candidates to the Call Committee
- The Call Committee interviews all the potential candidates
- If the Call Committee discerns that God is calling a particular candidate to them they notify synod staff and recommend the candidate to the Congregation Council — at this point the circle of confidentiality grows to include the Council
- If none of the candidates are a good match, the Call Committee notifies synod staff and a new slate of candidates is gathered
- The Call Committee communicates their decisions to the candidates in a timely manner
- The Congregation Council receives the Call Committee's recommendation and contacts the candidate to negotiate the compensation package
- If there is agreement on the terms of the Letter of Call, the Congregation Council notifies the synod staff and calls a special meeting of the congregation
- The Call Committee works with the candidate to provide a biography and other information about the candidate to the congregation
- The congregation votes by written ballot to call the candidate; the measure must pass by at least a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote

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- The congregation president and secretary sign the Letter of Call and the definition of compensation worksheet and mail them to the synod office as soon as possible to be typed and signed by the bishop
- The congregation president notifies the candidate of the voting results
- The candidate has three weeks to respond to the Letter of Call once they it in hand

**God's
work.
Our
hands.**

THE INTERIM





Intentional Interim Ministry

Intentional interim ministry is a specialized ministry in the Church. In addition to acting as a bridge between called pastors, covering the typical tasks of ministry, interim pastors also lead the congregation through an extensive process of reflection and planning for the future mission of the congregation. Interim pastors don't bring a preset mission for the congregation to adopt. They work to draw out the gifts and strengths of the congregation in order for the people to see what God is calling them to be about.

This is difficult work. Most of our interim pastors have received extensive training from the National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors (NALIP). They also bring unique and personal gifts to their ministry. The process of reflection and planning is as different as the pastors are. What is common to all intentional interim pastorates is the goal: to energize congregations for mission in God's world.

The Interim Task

To achieve this goal intentional interim ministers engage in these five specialized tasks:

1. **Examine the history of the congregation** and work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor. (Past)
2. **Seek to confirm and identify current issues** facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them. (Present)
3. **Develop a vision for the congregation's mission.** (Future)
4. **Explore the congregation's connections** with synod, conference, churchwide units, and the resources that may be available for ministry.
5. **Prepare for the arrival of the new pastor.**

All this may seem like so much busy work, but this process is intended to build on the strengths of the congregation, celebrating the work that has been done, and preparing for the work that will be done for the sake of the world. Additionally, the first four tasks will help the transition team immensely as they fill out the forms necessary for the call process.

The interim period is also a good time to address special issues unique to a given congregation. One detail task that many congregations often address is updating their constitution.

It is important to be clear from the start that interim pastors are not available to be called as your next pastor. This is a strong encouragement from NALIP, adopted by the Synod Council in September of 2007, and affirmed at Synod Assembly in 2009.

Why Can't We Call Our Interim Pastor?

These are some reasons behind the synod policy for NOT considering the interim pastor as a candidate for a regular call in the congregation they are serving.

**God's
work.
Our
hands.**

1. During the time of transition, the congregation often is uniquely vulnerable and therefore develops a relationship based on their need and insecurity. While this can be useful in leading a congregation to prepare for the incoming pastor, it could make for a very inappropriately skewed decision for a permanent call.
2. Interim ministry is unique and an interim pastor may often lead in ways that would be acceptable as an interim pastor but would not be acceptable to some in the congregation where they remain as the pastor.
3. The congregation itself may pass up better leadership than it is getting, even with a good interim pastor, if it fails to consider pastors who are open to call.
4. An interim pastor will always have a following but also almost always will have those who are not favorably committed to them. If they were to be called to be the pastor, there would be built in opposition from the very beginning.
5. If the decision is made to consider the interim pastor along with the others being considered and the interim pastor does not get the position, there could be hurt feelings that would jeopardize the remainder of their interim work until the pastor is called.
6. An interim pastor has an advantage over other possible candidates who may be considered for the position because they have more visibility to the congregation. This makes it unfair to others who may be interested in the position but who will not have the same visibility.
7. Other pastors will know of the ministerial ethics involved and will know that those have been broken if an interim pastor is called. The result could be a lack of fellowship and broken relationships with other pastors.
8. A precedent could be set which would result in pastors seeking interim positions with the specific idea in their minds of putting themselves in a better position to be considered and called as the pastor, thus greatly damaging the whole call process.



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 Council functions.
- What are strengths and weaknesses of the Council?
- Describe how committees function in relation to the 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 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?



Calling a Seminary Graduate

Of course, all pastors are seminary graduates. However, all pastors also need to start somewhere. Often times they are called “first call pastors.” There are some unique aspects to interviewing and calling a seminary graduate or first call pastor.

Seminary graduates are fully trained and prepared to lead. Even though pastors develop and grow throughout their ministerial career, new pastors mature significantly during their first three years of ministry. Yet, because seminary graduates do not have years of pastoral experience, they are at a disadvantage in an interview process when compared to experienced pastors. Thus, if your congregation is an appropriate first call ministry site and receive the name of a seminary graduate, that person will be the only name received to interview. The final result of the interview may be “No” but the question is never whether any one pastor is “better” than another. The question is *always*, “Is this who God has in mind for our congregation?”

Keep in mind, that a seminary graduate will not be able to reflect upon years of pastoral experience, but should be able to answer interview questions based upon their involvement in congregational life as a lay person and seminary training that involved clinical settings, contextual education experiences, and the internship year.

Some seminary graduates are second or third career persons; if prior experience enhances a person’s skills for ministry, such experience may be considered in calculating compensation. According to the Salary Standards of our synod (page 3), Experience prior to ordination is calculated at the rate of $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ year for each year up to ten years of prior experience (up to 5 years credit).

Seminary graduates are expected to participate in First Call Theological education during their first three years as a pastor. Congregations who receive a seminary graduate as their pastor are expected to encourage participation and fully support First Call Theological Education. New pastors connect with other new pastors and are guided by bishops, seminary faculty, experienced pastors, and churchwide staff as they reflect upon and process their developing identity and leadership as a pastor. To fund this expectation, the congregation needs to ensure the full amount of Continuing Education and Official Meeting dollars outlined in our synod’s Salary Standards is provided and that the full two weeks of time for continuing education is granted.

Seminary graduates have just completed four years of extensive graduate school, one of which is an internship year, and are eager and ready to serve the church. That enthusiasm will be an asset to the mission of your congregation should you extend a call to a seminary graduate.

Calling an Associate/Assistant to Senior Pastor

Several years ago, a sister synod tackled the difficult issue of congregations with multiple pastoral staff wanting to call their associate pastor to fill a senior pastor vacancy. These notes are to help other congregations in similar situations to think carefully about this desire.

The bishop's office does not make this decision for any congregation and these notes are not a judgment of the gifts or leadership of an associate pastor. This reflection grew out of a deep concern for congregations. Nationally, there is a 70% failure rate when an associate pastor moves into the senior pastor's office. In our sister synod, five congregations thought they were the exception to the rule. One pastorate was too recent to evaluate, one was a positive experience for pastor and congregation, and three had a major crisis. In each of these three cases, (1) the senior pastor left under duress (and in two the new associate left as well), (2) there was need for major conflict management by the synod, and (3) each congregation required an extended period of intentional interim ministry. The failure rate for this synod was 75%.

Why is there such a high failure rate? Generally, there are five issues: personalization, unspoken assumptions, unexpected change, desire to avoid risk, and sin.

Personalization

"We have this person whom we love. The pastor buried our loved ones, has been at bedsides, said something that gave me new insight, baptized or married a loved one, and so on." Everybody wants to have a pastor they like and many have experienced pastors they have not liked. So when you have a good one why not keep them? The problem is these memories may overshadow any questions regarding the pastor's gifts and abilities for the unique position of the senior pastor. The congregation is responding to someone they like or even love and are not responding directly to a vision for the future needs and mission of the congregation. Choosing a pastor for personal reasons hinders a serious look at the ministry needs of the congregation in an open and dispassionate way.

Unspoken Assumptions

The pastor may think, "They know me. They know what they are getting. I must be what they want and need." Wrong. (1) They know the pastor as an associate not a senior pastor and these are very different roles. A senior pastor can be described as a leader, a buck-stopper, a caretaker of the focus of the congregation's spiritual vision, and an administrator of staff. (2) It is not unusual for the congregation to like the associate because the senior, as part of their call, has made decisions they do not like, thus making the associate seem like a more reasonable pastor. (3) The associate who



becomes senior pastor is the same person but in a different role. Established patterns for relating to this pastor will have to change with the change in roles. This can be confusing for both the pastor and the congregation.

The congregation may say, “We know this pastor.” This is, in most cases, not true. It is more likely the congregation is familiar with the team. They know the pastor functioned along side another pastor and it might be quite different along side a different pastor when he/she has primary oversight responsibility. When assumptions are not met, there is usually reaction, usually disappointment and anger.

Change is Not Expected but Will Occur

For the congregation, change comes as a surprise. The congregation expects continuity. This is often true personally as well. Such a simple thing as the pastor relating to different people in the congregation (i.e. the finance committee instead of the youth group). For the pastor, change also comes as a surprise, being suddenly thrust into unfamiliar territory in a familiar place and often left unguarded when challenged. The pastor suddenly has different expectations, relationships with people, and responsibilities. Part of that is letting go of what was central in that person’s ministry as pastor before. Changing relationships in the same place is one of the most difficult things to do.

Desire to Avoid Risk

For the pastor this might be, “I know this place-I don’t want to move” or “I can handle it” without doing an honest assessment, and so a manipulation of the call process ensues. For the congregation this might involve them not having to relate to someone new, but at a 70% failure rate, calling your associate pastor is far more risky than the normal call process.

Sin

The pastor may succumb to pride in striving for the senior pastor position. The congregation may be seeking to avoid the hard work of calling someone new. This may be expressed in various ways that reveal our sinful weaknesses: (1) the congregation knew the pastor wasn’t ready, but they liked them and thought they could grow, (2) the congregation wanted a pastor right away and didn’t want to go through the hassle of the call process, (3) the Bishop said, “No” but “Who is he to tell us?”, (4) the congregation knew the associate was weaker than the former senior and that was what they wanted so they could control the pastor, etc.

It is hard not to think of yourself as the exception to the rule, and any given congregation could be. God bless you if you are, but the odds are not in favor of success. The greatest risk is to your associate pastor—his/her career is at stake. The

risk to the congregation is possible division and difficulty. The risk to the synod is a congregation in distress and a crisis to mediate. The risk to the mission of the Church is that you will be so caught up in interpersonal division that your congregation will not be what it should be to your community.

Again, it is not a decision for the bishop to make, but it is the synod's responsibility to share with you the dangers.

Rostered Leadership in the ELCA

For congregations seeking to call additional pastoral staff it will be important to make a careful assessment of your ministry needs. It may be helpful to think about the different kinds of leaders which are trained and called/commissioned/consecrated for work in the church. While some congregations in this position may be committed to calling a second pastor, others may be open to one of the other three rosters of the ELCA.

From the ELCA Website

Leaders who have been called to serve in the ELCA serve on one of four “rosters” (lists) to carry out the ministry and mission of the church, sharing God's boundless love with the world. Ordained leaders are called “pastors,” and there are also three additional types of lay rostered leaders.

Ordained Ministry: Ordained ministers, or pastors, serve with hearts filled with love and courage, to offer the hope of the sacraments and to lead the proclamation of the Gospel.

Associates in Ministry: Partners in ministry, these leaders are commissioned for ministry to equip and enable others in their Christian lives. They serve in congregations and other ministries of the ELCA.

Diaconal Ministers: These consecrated leaders seek to equip and motivate others to lead a model Christian life. Their vocation is lived-out in both church and world.

Deaconesses: The ELCA Deaconess Community supports women who are consecrated for service to the church.

To learn more about a type of rostered leader in the ELCA, go to:

<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Rostered-Leadership.aspx>



Updating Your Constitution

One of the basic congregational tasks that easily slips through the cracks is keeping your constitution up to date. Typically, small 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 not 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. These provisions are found in Chapter 17 of the model constitution.

Using the Mobility Database System

A Guide to the MSP for Lay Leaders in the ELCA

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Our
hands.

A Guide to assist Congregational leaders (Call Committee and Council leaders) and Leaders in Church-Related Organizations (Search Committees)

Call process is a “partnership of common purpose” as ministry sites, rostered leaders and synod bishops find ways to mutually cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the call process. This guide is intended to help ministry sites better understand and use the resource that now exists in the “Mobility Database System.”

Your access to the Mobility Database System is through the website “Call Process in the ELCA” at www.elca.org/call. It is a kind of cyber-clearinghouse of tools, resources and information that will prove to be indispensable to you. The site provides:

- **A Library of Resources:** helpful articles and information about call process work.
- **Ministry Opportunities:** a searchable listing of position openings within the ELCA.
- **New Call Process forms:** especially:
 - The *Rostered Leader Profile* (RLP) for use by pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, deaconesses and candidates for these four rosters.
 - The *Ministry Site Profile* (MSP) for use by congregations and church-related organizations seeking to call an ELCA rostered leader.
- **Account Management:** a means to monitor the status of your MSP or RLP.

Be Sure to Bookmark

www.elca.org/call

found on the ELCA
website as

elca.org
Growing in Faith
Vocation
Rostered Leadership
Call Process

Ministry Sites

The Ministry Site Profile provides congregations (single and multiple point parishes) and church-related organizations (schools, social ministry organizations, healthcare institutions, and agencies) a single, common form to use to describe their mission and their search for a rostered leader. The MSP replaces the Congregation Mission Profile.

The MSP is filled out by leaders within the congregation or organization, using the guidance of the synod bishop or staff. Once completed and submitted, the MSP will be stored within the ELCA's new mobility database. Ministry Opportunities (a sub-page on the ELCA call process website) will make it possible for rostered leaders and others to search the database of MSPs to learn of ministry openings, to read a basic snapshot of information about each opening, and to learn about the appropriate contact person for each call process.

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world



The MSP and Mobility Database System are designed only for searches for those rostered within the ELCA. It is not intended for searches for other church workers, including lay professionals, non-rostered musicians or program directors.

Steps for Use of the Ministry Site Profile

- Click on “Call Process Forms” at (www.elca.org/call).
- You will be required to open an account (create an ID and password) and to give other identifying information in order to download a MSP.
- The MSP is a Formatta form. The option to download Formatta is on the forms page.
- The MSP will reside on your computer while it is being completed. You should take care to save your work as you proceed.
- When the MSP is completely done, follow the directions to
 - Save your work,
 - Print a copy for your records,
 - Date your MSP,
 - Lock the form,
 - And, with the computer connected to the internet, submit your form to the Mobility Database.
- You will receive an email confirming that the MSP has been received.
- The MSP does not become active in the system, however, until the Synodical Bishop approves it and allows it to post to the system.
- You can, as needed, go to “Access Account” on the web site in order to
 - monitor the status of your MSP,
 - request a copy of your current MSP in order to edit it for re-submission,
 - request a copy of the supporting forms for the MSP (the Reflections and Reference forms), or to
 - request that your MSP be archived within the system.
- If you are editing an existing MSP and re-submitting it, you should also go to “Access Account” to request that the previous MSP be archived so as not to have two MSPs active in the system at the same time.
- If your ministry site has more than one opening to be filled by a rostered leader, you may edit your existing MSP to reflect this second position and then resubmit it. If you need a blank MSP in order to describe this second position, go back into the system (using the same ID/password as before) and download a fresh MSP.

Discernment and Reflection within the MSP and RLP

Congregations and organizations are asked to reflect on their *mission*—which is identified by prayerful reflection on the places where they experience a convergence of their:

Identity & Purpose

Gifts & Resources

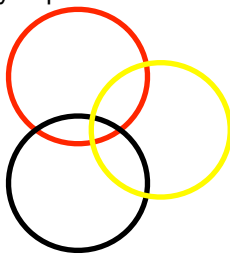
Context & Needs

Similarly, rostered leaders are asked to reflect on their *calling*—which is understood as the faithful stewardship of their

Passions & Commitments

Gifts & Talents

Context & Preferences



Some Tips on Filling Out the MSP

- All the information that will appear within your listing on *Ministry Opportunities* is drawn from your entries on the MSP. Write the MSP carefully, as if the whole world will read it.
- Congregations are expected to fill out the entire MSP. Church-related organizations may, with the concurrence of the bishop, complete only Parts 1–4 and 8–19.
- Involve as many people as possible at your ministry site in thinking and writing about the questions of Identity/Purpose, Gifts/Resources, and Context/Needs. Begin every conversation with Bible study and prayer.
- The most important questions are the narrative questions. Give them a lot of thought, especially question 8 which will be publicized within Ministry Opportunities.
- Be clear and specific. Use the multiple choice options to focus the description of your site rather than to speak broadly or generally.
- Be certain to learn from your synod staff the name and contact information that you should use to answer question 20. The box at question 20 allows the synod staff to update the contact information.
- If you are a part of a multiple-point parish, the MSP can be used to describe individual congregations within the parish (choose “congregation” on p.1 of the MSP) or used to describe the entire parish (choose “multiple point parish” on p. 1). Be sure to clarify your cooperative arrangement on p. 13.

Staying Active in the Database

MSPs remain active in the database system until one of the following happens:

1. The user requests that their forms be archived (using “Access Account”).
2. The bishop determines that the account needs to be archived.
3. One year has elapsed (at which time automatically generated emails will request that the MSP be updated and submitted for re-approval).

The MSP and RLP are designed to go beyond previous mobility forms by

- Adding an outside recommendation
- Encouraging greater creativity, initiative and reflection
- Allowing for flexibility by creating optional components.

The form is not meant to be so comprehensive as to substitute for conversation, but rather to stimulate conversation.



Potential Benefits of the Mobility Database System

- Forms invite creativity and initiative.
- Greater transparency to the call process.
- Energy focused on mission, calling, giftedness and context.
- Partnership of common purpose among sites, leaders and synod.
- Leadership can be identified, rewarded and encouraged.
- Speed, accuracy and efficiency.

Two Supporting Forms

- **Seven Reflections:** You may choose to enhance your MSP by providing additional information on the *Seven Reflections* form. The form can be downloaded at “Access Account” on the web site after the MSP has been submitted. While the form is optional, some synods may elect to require that one or more of the questions be completed. *Seven Reflections* is a Formatta form.
- **Reference Recommendation:** Each ministry site is required to provide an outside reference who will complete a recommendation form. The form contains within it the “Ministry Site Characteristics” survey just as the MSP also contains, creating an opportunity for the rostered leader to pursue some comparison and conversation. You can download the form by going to “Access Account” after the MSP has been submitted. The form is then emailed to the reference as an attachment. The *Reference Recommendation* form is a PDF form, requiring the use of Adobe Acrobat. The reference submits the form by clicking the “Submit” button at the end of the form. Use “Access Account” to monitor the arrival of this reference form.

Library of Resources

The call process web site contains a number of documents that you may find helpful as you seek to understand and prepare for your search for call. Take the initiative to read and learn from these resources in order to improve your experience of call process.

www.elca.org/call

Continuing to Improve

The Mobility Database System is a complex array of programming and protocols. As we constantly seek to improve how it looks and functions, you are encouraged to offer your comments and concerns.

VOCATION & EDUCATION UNIT
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Moving from Reflection to Engagement

When the Mission Site Profile (MSP) is nearly complete it is time to prepare for the next steps. First, connect with your synod staff contact to arrange a meeting, and, second, prepare to adopt the MSP.

There will be two major goals for the meeting with a synod staff. The first is to review the MSP and the second is to train the Call Committee for their important work.

At the very least, the MSP team and the Call Committee (sometimes these are the same group) should be present. It would be very appropriate to invite the Congregation Council to attend. You may also wish to invite any other interested members. The more people who see the document and have a stake in making it better, the better it will be.

In preparation for this meeting, your synod staff contact will read your profile with three lenses:

1. We get out our blue editor's pen. We are not proficient at proofing, but if we find stray typos or grammatical errors we'll point them out.
2. We strive to be sure that you are clearly communicating what is important to you. If we are unsure of what you mean, potential candidates may have the same questions. If something is phrased strangely we'll try to draw out what you mean. If we are aware of an important issue that doesn't seem to be adequately addressed, we'll point that out.
3. We imagine reading the MSP as a potential candidate. What are the things that are appealing? What areas pose potential red flags?

These last two lenses are very subjective, but our goal is a clear, forthright, compelling profile that communicates your identity and mission clearly. Any suggestions we make are purely that: suggestions. The team that worked on the draft MSP should consider how to address these comments and when a final draft is ready they should notify the Congregation Council and ask for adoption of the MSP.

The Congregation Council may choose to adopt the MSP by Council action or at a specially called meeting of the congregation. If it is by Council action only, be sure that all Council members have read the document and participated in the formation of the salary package, enter the MSP into the minutes of a Council meeting, and share it widely within the congregation. If it is to be adopted at a specially called congregational meeting, the Council should do all of the above work in addition to calling the meeting. The advantage of this way is that there is a better chance of widespread ownership of the vision and mission expressed in the MSP. When it is adopted submit the final draft to the MSP database.



Beginning the Work of the Call Committee

If the Call Committee is the group that prepared the Mission Site Profile (MSP), their work will continue but take new shape. This is an important turn in the interim period when all the reflection of the past few months is used to prepare for and interview potential candidates.

It is the responsibility of synod staff to identify those potential candidates for congregations. It is not the responsibility or the desire of the bishop to assign rostered leaders to congregations. There will be occasions in the midst of our clergy shortage when there will be very few or even only one candidate to interview. In spite of this, think of synod staff as “pastor yentas.” We look for good potential matches; it is the Call Committee that determines whether any given candidate is the one that God has in mind for your congregation.

Once the congregation has submitted their MSP, synod staff use it to identify potential candidates. Candidates for call come from three sources:

1. The Rostered Leader Profiles (RLPs) of candidates who are interested in serving in northwest Wisconsin.
2. Self-referrals by pastors or other rostered leaders to the synod office.
3. Requests from the congregation through the Call Committee.

The process for requesting a candidate is this:

- Any member of the congregation can submit a name for consideration to the Call Committee.
- Potential candidates should not be directly contacted unless synod staff have vetted the names.
- The Call Committee may or may not forward individual names to their synod office. This is a matter for the committee to decide. Either way, let the person who recommended the candidate know what your decision is.
- If the Call Committee would like to recommend one or more candidates, use the Candidate Recommendation Form found in the resource section of this chapter. Synod staff will follow every lead given to us.

Some rostered leaders will not be available for interview. Most decline because they do not feel called to move. Some have not served in their current ministry context for a sufficient period of time. Some are restricted by their spouse’s work or their life circumstances. Some do not have leadership gifts which match well the missional needs of the congregation. Requests for candidates who seem to be “in the ballpark” of your MSP and are open to call will be forwarded to the Call Committee.

Preparing for the Interview

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Advanced Preparation for the Call Committee

- Using your Mission Site Profile and the list of potential interview questions, determine which questions you will ask the candidates.
- Decide who will ask each question.
- Ask your interim minister or a neighboring pastor to do a mock interview with you.
- Refine your questions and process with the feedback you receive from the interim pastor.

Expectations

- Arrange interview(s) directly with candidates. Try to do all interviews within a period of 10–14 days.
- Set up interviews as early as possible because candidates may be interviewing in other congregations.
- Reimburse all candidates for travel, meals, and lodging costs incurred while traveling to or returning from interviews; this is the congregation's responsibility.
- Inform candidates in writing the decision to recommend for call or release from consideration.

Suggested Format for an Extended Interview

- **Afternoon:** Greet the candidate (and family) with a member of the Call Committee. Tour the community. Keep in mind these potential stops: schools, medical facilities, recreational areas, shopping centers and other services, job possibilities for spouse, etc.
- **Evening:** Gather for a fellowship dinner with the candidate (and family) and all members of the Call Committee. After dinner, the Call Committee and candidate meet together for the interview. It is appropriate to invite the spouse to all or part of the interview. Make arrangements for children during the interview.
- **Night:** Provide lodging in a motel or with members of the Call Committee.
- **Morning:** Gather for breakfast with the candidate (and family) and the Call Committee. Ask questions that arose after the evening interview. Plan other outings or touring as necessary. Discuss how the process will continue to unfold. Bid the candidate farewell.



Potential Interview Questions

This list of possible questions is not comprehensive but suggestive for the Call Committee. On the other hand, some questions may seem repetitive. Choose what seems best and add others to get at issues you feel important.

Life and Faith

- Briefly, tell us your life story.
- Describe your faith journey and your sense of call to be a pastor.
- Describe your theology. How will it apply to our congregation?
- What personal traits and gifts do you have that make it possible for you to be effective as a pastor?

The Image of Ordained Ministry

- Describe your style of ministry.
- What are the primary responsibilities of the pastor?
- What is the role of the laity in the life of the congregation?
- What is the purpose of a congregation? of the wider church?
- Describe the areas of pastoral ministry you enjoy the most. The least.
- What areas of involvement in your last/current parish give you personal satisfaction?

The Place of Worship in the Church

- What is the place of worship in private life, family life, and the corporate life of the congregation?
- What is the chief function of the pastor in worship? of the laity?
- Describe your practices in leading and shaping liturgy.
- Do you have a preference for worship style?
- Walk through the process of sermon creation from initial preparation through presentation.
- What have been your practices for preparing for Baptism and First Communion?
- How do you receive feedback and constructive evaluation?

The Place of Pastoral Responsibilities

- Tell us about your philosophy and style of pastoral visitation and counseling. Describe your practice.
- How much of the responsibility for visitation should be shared with trained groups of laity? How would you conduct such training?
- What areas of pastoral care are the sole responsibility of the pastor?

Discipleship

- What type of plan do you envision for training children, youth, and adults for discipleship?
- What is your evangelism strategy?
- How should we care for inactive members?
- How can congregations effectively assimilate new members into the life of the congregation?
- What strategies do you have for engaging youth and young adults in the life of the congregation?
- What is your understanding of stewardship?
- What is the pastor's role in lifting up stewardship in the congregation?
- How do you talk about money and mission plans (budgets)?
- How do you model good stewardship in all its aspects?

Christian Education

- How do you view Christian education and its role in the life of the congregation?
- How would you encourage our congregation to enter into adult Christian education?
- What is your attitude toward training, assisting, and supervising the teaching staff of the church?
- Are there qualifications necessary for teaching?
- How do you recruit teachers?

Leadership and Management

- What role do you see yourself fulfilling in relating to committees?
- How do you encourage goal setting by committees?
- What are your administrative strengths? growth areas?
- What kind of accountability structures are most helpful for improving ministry and mission?
- Would you be willing to meet periodically with a Mutual Ministry (Staff Support) Committee?
- How do you determine what you will pursue for continuing education?
- What is it about our congregation that interests and challenges you?

Community and Social Action

- In what ways do you participate in the community?
- How do you view the pastor speaking on social issues?
- What is the place of the pastor in social action?



The Church at Large

- In what ways do you participate in the synod?
- What is your commitment level to the general mission support to the ELCA and other agencies of the church?
- What are your views on ecumenical involvement locally? globally?

Personal Life and the Pastor's Family

- How is your spiritual life nurtured?
- What spiritual disciplines do you practice?
- Tell us about your devotional life.
- How do you care for yourself physically, emotionally, and socially.
- What are your views on involvement of your family in the congregation? in the community? in employment?
- Tell us about your priorities regarding family and personal friends?
- What are your specific hobbies and special interests?
- What books have you read recently that have made an impression on you?

Practical Arrangements

- *(Introduce your salary range and benefits proposal.)* Do you feel it will meet your needs?
- Are our expectations for living arrangements (parsonage or housing allowance) satisfactory?

Questions That May Be Asked of You as a Committee

- What is the focus of your congregation? Describe your mission.
- What is the role of staff and what is the role of the laity in your congregation?
- How many people are involved in leadership roles? How are lay people involved in worship?
- In your opinion, how are decisions made in your congregation?
- What long and short-term goals has the congregation adopted?
- When was the last time an in-depth self study was conducted?
- What is the congregation's commitment to the support of and partnership with the synod and the wider church?
- How does the congregation respond to change and how are changes made?
- What part should family members of staff play in the congregation?
- What would you display on a highway billboard regarding your congregation?
- Why did the previous pastor leave?
- Are there skeletons in the closet that I should know about in considering the call here?

The Interim—Things To Do

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Congregation Council

- Pray for a fruitful interim period, patience through the call process, and openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit as you discern who God has in mind for you.
- Keep in regular communication with synod staff.
- Keep in mind that the interim ministry is a specialized ministry of the church and that the interim pastor is not available for call. This may feel like a blessing because the interim pastor is doing uncomfortable but necessary work or it may feel like a burden because it is going so well.
- Remember the appropriate role of former pastors in the parish. The interim period may be a challenge on this topic because healthy boundaries will be tested by some.
- After the interim pastor has settled into the congregation (one to two months), appoint a transition team or the Call Committee to begin the work of self-study and compiling the information necessary to complete the Mission Site Profile (MSP).
- While the MSP is being developed, the Council utilizes the synod's Salary Standards to formulate a salary range for the position.
- Create a savings plan to cover the cost of moving a new pastor.
- Participate in the MSP review with synod staff.
- Receive the name of the candidate which the Call Committee has discerned is the one whom God is calling to the congregation; negotiate the salary and the special areas of emphasis to be addressed in the coming year with the candidate.
- If the negotiations are successful, schedule a special meeting of the congregation to vote on the candidate.
- If the vote is successful, the President and Secretary sign the Letter of Call and forward the appropriate documents to the synod office.

Congregation

- Pray for a fruitful interim period, patience through the call process, and openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit.
- Participate in the self-study as the transition team or Call Committee requests.
- Participate in the MSP review with synod staff.
- At the request of the Call Committee, submit to them names of potential candidates.
- Attend the special congregational meeting to vote on the recommended candidate.



Interim Pastor

- Pray always.
- Lead the congregation through the interim tasks.
- Communicate with synod staff, especially submitting the quarterly reports.
- Regularly remind the congregation that interims are not available for the regular call.
- Refrain from influencing the interview process.
- Participate in quarterly interim pastor meetings.

Transition Team or Call Committee

- Pray for wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit through your work.
- Work closely with the interim pastor on the interim tasks, especially as they relate to the developing the MSP.
- Seek to engage a wide cross section of the congregation and community for the purpose of creating an accurate picture of the congregation.
- Inform the Congregation President and your synod staff contact when the MSP is complete for review.
- Participate in the MSP review meeting with synod staff, the Call Committee, the Congregation Council and other interested members.

Call Committee

- Pray for wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit through your work.
- Participate in the MSP review meeting with synod staff, the transition team, the Congregation Council and other interested members.
- Participate in the Call Committee orientation with synod staff.
- Commit to the Call Committee Covenant.
- Utilize the spiritual resources provided in this document to help you to remember that you are not hiring an employee, but calling a pastor.
- When in doubt call your synod staff contact person.
- Recommend a candidate to the Congregation Council.
- Explain to the congregation why you sense that this is the one that God has in mind for you at the congregational meeting to vote on the candidate.

Meetings

- The synod staff contact person meets with the transition team, Call Committee, Congregation Council, and other interested members to review the MSP and offer suggestions for improving the document.
- At the same meeting the Call Committee stays longer to receive their orientation to preparing for interviewing potential candidates.
- Congregation Council meeting or congregational meeting to adopt the MSP.
- Congregational meeting to vote on the recommended candidate.

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world

Words of Encouragement

The interim period is an opportunity for the congregation to do a serious self-assessment so that you may discover what mission God has in mind for your congregation and which pastor God has in mind for your next leader.

**God's
work.
Our
hands.**

Pray

Continue to pray. Look for ways to join your interim pastor in maintaining or deepening a posture of prayer as a congregation.

Have Patience

Many will want to rush the process. Allow it to unfold in God's time. Remember that you have a pastor who is serving you in all the regular tasks of ministry as well as the unique tasks of interim ministry.

Being Aware of Anxiety

Maintain and improve communication within your congregation and remain committed to the work of the interim period. Through these months strive to "stay the course," especially when some try to short-circuit the process. That is a natural response to anxiety but one that does not bear good fruit. Work with your interim pastor and your synod staff person in the most difficult times. And when in doubt, refer back to encouragement #1: pray!

Keep in Regular Contact with Your Synod Staff

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

Interim Resources

The following resources can be photocopied or copied from the digital version of this document available at www.nwswi.org/call.

<i>Suggested Prayers</i>	Page 75
<i>Liturgy for Receiving an Interim Pastor</i>	Page 76
<i>Interim Pastor Quarterly Report of the Interim Period</i>	Page 80
<i>Congregation Quarterly Report of the Interim Period</i>	Page 83
<i>Call Committee Covenant</i>	Page 86
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Suggested Prayers

Enlightenment of the Holy Spirit: God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant us, we pray, to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, reveal; that which is wanting in us, fill up; that which we know, confirm; and keep us blameless in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Commitment: Into your hands, Almighty God, we place ourselves: our minds to know you, our hearts to love you, our wills to serve you, for we are yours. Into your hands, incarnate Savior, we place ourselves: receive us and draw us after you, that we may follow your steps; abide in us and enliven us by the power of your indwelling. Into your hands, O hovering Spirit, we place ourselves: take us and fashion us after your image; let your comfort strengthen, your grace renew, and your fire cleanse us, soul and body, in life and in death, in this world of shadows and in your changeless world of light eternal, now and forever.

Those seeking deeper knowledge of God: Gracious and holy God, give us diligence to seek you, wisdom to perceive you, and patience to wait for you. Grant us, O God, a mind to meditate on you; eyes to behold you; ears to listen for your word; a heart to love you; and a life to proclaim you; through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Church unity: Most high and holy God, pour out upon us your one and unifying Spirit, and awaken in every confession of the whole church a holy hunger and thirst for unity in you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

During the interim time: Loving God, be with us and guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us O Lord to be about the work of your kingdom even as the search for a new pastor continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Liturgy for Receiving an 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, a member of the executive committee, a deacon, an assisting minister or other designated lay leader may take the role of the presiding minister for this portion of the service.

This liturgy takes place following the hymn of the day.

P Having been authorized by the Church to assign [full name], our co-worker in the Gospel, as interim pastor, I now ask for certification of this appointment.

A representative of the Congregation Council comes forward and addresses the minister:

L We, of _____, after prayerful deliberation, have concurred with the appointment of [name] to be interim pastor. I present him/her for appointment under the terms of our agreement.

P Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20:21-23

And again: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:18-20*

Hear the words addressed to Timothy: Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Timothy 4:12-16

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world

The minister questions the interim pastor being installed:

P Pastor [Name], in the presence of this congregation will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility, and promise to discharge your duties in harmony with the constitutions of the church?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people? Will you nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, leading them by your own example in the use of the means of grace, in faithful service and holy living?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

When the interim pastor is being installed into a multiple staff position, include the following question.

P Will you share responsibility for the ministry with the Reverend [Name]?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

All Amen

P Will you covenant to so minister with us during this interim that we are able to value the past, plan for the future and minister in the present?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you agree not to become a candidate for the position of permanent pastor?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

The minister addresses the congregation:

P And you, people of God, will you receive this messenger of Jesus Christ, sent by God to serve God's people with the Gospel of hope and salvation? Will you regard him/her as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God?

All We will.

P Will you pray for him/her, help and honor him/her for his/her work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

All We will.

The minister addresses the pastor being installed:

- P** The office of interim pastor is now committed to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The newly installed pastor may kneel for the blessing:

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

All Amen

The pastor stands.

Prayers of the People

- A** Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Silence.

For the holy catholic Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the Day of your coming; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

- A** For all members of your Church in their vocations and ministries, that they may serve you with true and godly lives; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

- A** For all bishops and pastors, especially for Mark, our Presiding Bishop, for Duane, our Bishop, and for pastors of our sister congregations, that they may be filled with your love, may hunger for the truth, and may thirst after righteousness; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

- A** For Pastor [Name], appointed to be interim pastor in this Church, that he may faithfully fulfill the duties of this ministry, build up your Church, and glorify your name; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

- A** For the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in him, that he may be sustained and encouraged to persevere to the end; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

- A** For his family and loved ones who give support, that they may be adorned with all Christian virtues; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

Ⓐ For all who fear God and believe in Christ, that our divisions may cease and that all may be one as you are one Lord and Father of us all; Lord, in your mercy,

Alt **Hear our prayer.**

Ⓐ For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth; Lord, in your mercy,

Alt **Hear our prayer.**

Ⓐ For those who do not yet believe, and for those who have lost their faith, that they may receive the light of the Gospel; Lord, in your mercy,

Alt **Hear our prayer.**

Ⓐ For all who have died in the communion of your Church, that they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal; Lord, in your mercy,

Alt **Hear our prayer.**

ℙ Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Alt **Amen**

Peace

ℙ The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Alt **And also with you.**

Offering

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Interim Pastor Quarterly Report of the Interim Period

Interim Pastor, please fill out this form in as much detail as you like and e-mail it quarterly to:

Rev. Todd J. Iverson
iverson@nwsynod-wisconsin.org

Interim Pastor: _____

Congregation: _____

Served From _____ To _____

Please rank how each of the following goals as stated in the Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministers are being addressed with “1” indicating little or no progress and “5” indicating much progress. Select the number by making it **bold**. It is helpful to include examples and/or comments.

1. Together we will examine the history of the congregation and work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

2. Together we will seek to confirm and identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

3. Together we will develop a vision for the congregation's mission.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

4. Explore the congregation's connections with synod, conference, churchwide units, and the resources that may be available for ministry.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

5. Prepare for the arrival of the new pastor.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

6. Together we will be involved in subscribing to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to the constitution and bylaws of the congregation(s).

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

7. Together we will be involved in addressing the unique issues outline in the Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministers.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

8. What changes have occurred in the congregation since your last report?

9. Describe your ministry goals for the next quarter.

10. Outline your ministry timeline. Where are you in the interim: beginning stage, profile stage, interview stage?

11. What ministry resources have you found helpful? What additional resources or support are needed?

Please delete one of the following sentences:

Please share this with the Congregation Council.

Please do NOT share this with the Congregation Council.

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world

Congregation Quarterly Report of the Interim Period

Congregation President, please fill out this form in as much detail as you like, enter it into the minutes of a Congregation Council meeting and e-mail it quarterly to:

Rev. Todd J. Iverson
iverson@nwsynod-wisconsin.org

Interim Pastor: _____

President: _____

Congregation: _____

Served From _____ To _____

Congregation President: Please lead your Council in ranking how each of the following goals as stated in the Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministers are being addressed with “1” indicating little or no progress and “5” indicating much progress. Select the number by making it **bold**. It is helpful to include examples and/or comments.

1. Together we will examine the history of the congregation and work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

2. Together we will seek to confirm and identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

3. Together we will develop a vision for the congregation's mission.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1 2 3 4 5

Examples and comments:

4. Explore the congregation's connections with synod, conference, churchwide units, and the resources that may be available for ministry.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1 2 3 4 5

Examples and comments:

5. Prepare for the arrival of the new pastor.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1 2 3 4 5

Examples and comments:

6. Together we will be involved in subscribing to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to the constitution and bylaws of the congregation(s).

Little or no progress

Much progress

1 2 3 4 5

Examples and comments:

7. Together we will be involved in addressing the unique issues outline in the Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministers.

Little or no progress

Much progress

1

2

3

4

5

Examples and comments:

8. What changes have occurred in the congregation since your last report?

9. Describe your ministry goals for the next quarter.

10. Outline your ministry timeline. Where are you in the interim: beginning stage, profile stage, interview stage?

11. What ministry resources have you found helpful? What additional resources or support are needed?

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 Mission 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 phone)
- 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 Mission 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 churches
- 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 (⅔ 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, and trust that God has already selected your next pastor—you are engaging in a process wherein the Spirit helps you discover who that pastor is!

Call Committee Devotions

These devotions were written by the Rev. Ronald Olson, Director of Admissions at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. They are shared here for Call Committees to use as they meet in preparation, interview and discernment.

A suggested order for use:

- 1. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 1**
Use this devotion when synod staff meets with the Call Committee to review the Mission Site Profile.
- 2. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 2**
Use this devotion when the Call Committee meets to develop their interview questions.
- 3. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Congregation and Community Needs**
Use this devotion when the Call Committee receives the Rostered Leader Profile packet.
- 4. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Ministry Gifts**
Use this devotion when the Call Committee has completed interviews.
- 5. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider the Changing Context/New Opportunities and Challenges**
Use this devotion when the Call Committee is preparing to introduce the candidate to the congregation.

The calling of a pastor is a prayerful discernment process. Enter deeply into prayer as you do your best to discover the will of God.

I. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 1

Writing to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul encouraged believers there to consider their own call. As we begin our work as a Call Committee, we may consider the call we all have from God by exploring a few of the following scriptures:

Acts 2:39, Ephesians 4:4–6, Colossians 3:15, 1 Timothy 6:12, 1 Peter 3:9 and 1 John 3:1

What a calling—to hope, peace, eternal life! In these verses, all of us are called children of God. Clearly, this is on account of God's power and wisdom, not our own.

This powerful call is the one that comes to all believers through God's Word in Holy Baptism. That is why Martin Luther was bold to insist that "the ministry of the Word belongs to all." And again, "There is no other Word of God than that which is given all Christians to proclaim" (from Luther's *Concerning the Ministry*, 1523). Just as all Christians share the promise, so too do we share the task of proclamation. Most of us take up the task in the ministry of daily life. Others we ask to do so publicly for the community so faith can be created and sustained in us. So we see that in the economy of God's grace the ministry of those called and ordained follows from the call which has come to all who believe.

How do we sense God's call most clearly? In which aspect of life do we find God's Word (the promise, the hope, the peace) being "proclaimed" in the strongest way? The Bible even speaks of us as "holy partners in a heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1). What do you think that might mean for daily living?

Gracious calling God, call on us with your grace again and again. Renew us daily in the peace, hope, and eternal life we have been promised and which we have been called to proclaim. As we work to call a pastor to our congregation may we count on the prayers of all members of this community of faith to uphold us, just as we trust your spirit to guide us. We remember God, you are the One who called us first. Amen

II. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Our Own Calling, Part 2

God's gracious giving extends to the church too. God has not been content to let the church fend for itself since Pentecost. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit still enlivens the community of faith. As Bishop, April Ulring Larson has said, "What God is interested in is empowering the body of Christ." God has raised up leaders, gifted ministers and pastors for the church in all times and places. When the church has prayed, "Save and defend your whole Church, purchased with the precious blood of Christ. Give it pastors and ministers filled with your Spirit, and strengthen it through the Word and the holy sacraments," God has answered.

Listen to this wonderful scripture: II Peter 1:3–11. Would any of us, either as individual believers or as members together of a congregation, have any reason to question the truth of those verses? In fact, how have the promises offered there been answered and proved true in your experiences of the life of faith? In the life of our congregation?

We overhear the prayer that scripture offers up for us in Ephesians 3:14–21. The One who has called us is also at work in us doing far more than we can ask or imagine. That's an amazing thought!

As we join in singing or saying ELW 858 (LWB 543), *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*, focus on verse two and ask, What does that verse mean, promise, and say to us about God's watch over us? Can we claim this hymn's great promise even in calling a new pastor?

Luther's Small Catechism offers his explanation of the third and fourth petitions of the Lord's Prayer saying: "God's will is done when he strengthens our faith and keeps us firm in his Word as long as we live." And, "Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, and orderly community, good government, favorable weather, peace and health, a good name, and true friends and neighbors."

We daily trust God's good gifts for our faith and life. Such confidence also belongs to the faith and life of the whole church.

Gracious giving God, give us your help again, just as you have always done. Remind us of your care. Let there be gratitude in our congregation, for all that is needful has been sent and ordained for us already. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation may we be strengthened for this task with the thought that your providing reaches to every need of your church. This Call Committee and community of believers are your church too. Amen

III. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Congregation and Community Needs

The Apostle Paul provides a wonderful snapshot of life in Christian community in his first letter to the Thessalonian church: I Thessalonians 5:12–24.

This letter of Paul, one of the earliest Christian writings, already shows Paul's love of lists. Here he checks off some of the characteristics of faithful community life:

- respect for those who labor among us
- peace among ourselves
- help for the weak
- patience with all
- always seeking to do good to one another and to all
- prayer without ceasing
- no quenching of the Spirit
- holding fast to what is good

That is a lot to be and do in the freedom of the gospel. That is a tall order for a mission congregation. Could this be the first Mission Site Profile? Our congregation today is also the location of worship, care and mission—and full of needs in order to give ourselves faithfully to this gospel work. Let's name some of these community needs.

Is calling a new pastor more a matter of finding someone to meeting those needs (do all those things), or of calling one to lead for congregation to do what needs to be done? Are we, as members of our congregation, only objects of ministry, or are we also subjects or agents of ministry?

When we consider congregational “needs,” scripture points us right away to the Christian mission that needs doing in God's world and the gospel work in which we share responsibility. Fortunately, in our need, there are leaders to help us. And we are in the process of calling one of them into our midst.

Gracious sanctifying God, thank you for drawing us ever anew into the ministry of the Word. In the community of faith we are empowered for witness and service even as we are ministered to with forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation, show us our neediness—what we need and what needs doing for our life together in Christ. Amen

IV. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider Ministry Gifts

If the Bible is to be believed, then God has only “gifted” children. We have this declaration from Ephesians 4:7, 11–16 Gifts galore!

God has given ministry gifts to the people of God, to the church, for the benefit of all. We know, of course, that we do not all have all the gifts. And, some having just the gifts they have been given are also called into the church’s public ministry, into the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Apostle Paul liked the image of the body, one body with many parts all working together (I Corinthians 12:27–30).

We may all sense that we possess certain “gifts for ministry.” It is no accident that some members end up teaching Sunday School year after year—we are not all up to that important work. Some are very comfortable in front of others, leading worship, teaching Bible studies and the like—others are not. We may also sense that our whole congregation, the community taken as one, is gifted too, in a special position or especially equipped for a particular ministry or mission.

Think of some of the special gifts our former pastors had. Which ones did they have in common? What were their unique gifts for ministry, for leadership in the church? What gifts are going to be most important to our congregation in the years ahead?

Most likely, there is no single gift that will identify our new pastor to us. Nor is there only one who possesses the gifts we seek. There are many gifted leaders in the church, thank God. So the difficulty of the task at hand is not so much that there are no good candidates, or that there is only one pastor who could lead us in mission. Oftentimes, part of the hard work of a Call Committee is leaving room for the Holy Spirit in the discernment of the many gifts in the candidates God may send. Our task is never simply a matter of hiring someone, even the best someone we can find, but of allowing God’s Spirit to work in and through us to build up the church in calling a new pastor. And that can happen, indeed, because God is at work with us in all of this.

Gracious gifting God, we are reminded of your gifts in and for all the children of the church. Call on our gifts now, use us in service of your whole church. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation may your Holy Spirit lead us to discern the gifts we seek and see those gifts clearly in the candidates you are sending to us. In our communications, interviews and meetings with them, may we find ourselves once again who we surely are in Christ Jesus, stewards of your many gifts. Amen

V. In Calling a Pastor, We Consider the Changing Context/New Opportunities and Challenges

Listen to Colossians 3:12–17. We are being changed. That is what the Spirit of Christ is doing with us. There is a marvelous new-life prayer in the *Evening Prayer/Vespers* of the ELW:

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

We are not the same congregation we were last year, or ten years ago. Times have changed, things have changed, we have changed since last calling a pastor. What do those changes mean for the calling of a new one? What is different now? How has our community felt the changes? Changing demographics, aging populations, new immigrants, all these factors make for renewal in mission and ministry too, in service and witness for the community of faith. Let's take some time to reflect yet again on these new opportunities and challenges as a committee.

Are we more open as a congregation to see the gifts of a candidate we may not have considered so seriously before? Many congregations have found that to be true, for example, in looking at single candidates, female and older candidates. Pastor Eleanor Hunsberger states the matter boldly, "When God calls you to ministry as a person of color, a person who is physically challenged, a person who is different, who does not fit the Lutheran mold of this is what a pastor looks like, somehow the Holy Spirit removes the barriers and people are able to open up to receive such people." She goes on to say, "We're helping God, we're working with the Holy Spirit in this process."

We refresh ourselves in these words from scripture about our life in the Spirit: Romans 8:26–30.

We are so called according to God's purpose. The times may be changing, but we are standing on that solid promise.

Gracious accompanying God, The One in whom we live and move and have our being. Give us a vision of the times of our lives, the new situations in which we live out our faith in Jesus. May we ask anew what it means to be the Church in our time, our place. And as we work to call a new pastor to our congregation may we welcome according to your Spirit the one you are sending to us to lead us into the new days ahead. Amen.

Candidate Nomination Form

The task of calling a pastor belongs to the congregation. The pastoral call is God's activity, but God works through the congregation, committees, pastors, and synod staff to call pastors to serve the church.

As members of the Call Committee, we want to invite all members to participate to some degree in the process of calling our next pastor. If, as you visit other congregations or talk with your friends and relatives, you become aware of a pastor whom you think may fit the ministry of our congregation let us know by completing the brief form below. Please do NOT make contact with or inquiries to potential candidates. This nomination may be shared with synod staff. Thank you for participating in this important task.

Candidate Name:

Address:

City/State /Zip code:

Present position of proposed candidate:

In what ways might this pastor fit the ministry of our congregation?

Other comments:

Submitted by:

Phone number:

Date:

Sample Letter of Invitation for Personal Interview Following Initial Contact

Date

Name

Address

City, State Zip

Dear *(Title) (Name)*:

This is a follow up to our phone conversation on _____.

We wish to invite you to meet personally with the ____ (number) members of our Call Committee in order for us to become better acquainted and to discuss in greater depth the current leadership needs of this congregation. In preparation for our time together, an exchange of information would be helpful. Enclosed for your review is _____. We would like to ask you to share with us at your earliest convenience the following _____. (*Sermon tape/video, references, etc.*)

We would like to arrange a time when this visit would be convenient for you. Once we have arrived at a suitable time, we will arrange accommodations for you (*and your spouse*) while you are here. Please plan to spend (*indicate the length of time*) with us so that we might more fully explore our mutual vision for ministry.

Expenses which you incur, including your transportation, will be reimbursed by the congregation. Please retain and submit expense receipts. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. If you have special needs, please make them known and we will try to accommodate them. I can be reached by phone at _____ or by email at _____.

I wish God's richest blessings on your continued ministry.

Sincerely yours

(Your Name)

Cc: Bishop Duane Pederson, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

Call Committee Report of Interview

Your response to this questionnaire will be most helpful to us, particularly as we share experiences and suggestions with other Call Committees and with pastors seeking call.

Person Interviewed _____ Date of Interview _____

Your Congregation _____ City _____

1. Have you reimbursed the candidate for travel, food, and housing expenses?
2. List some of the positive qualities you discovered in this person:
3. What significant weaknesses did you become aware of?
4. Was your experience of this person in the interview similar to what you expected from the mobility papers? If no, what differences did you note?
5. Do this person's gifts and ministry strengths match the needs and priorities identified on your congregation's Mission Site Profile? ____ Yes ____ No (Please comment briefly on your answer.)
6. Suggestions and/or comments for the Synod Office:

Please send this report to the office of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin or give it directly to your synod contact person.

Sample Letter Following Candidate Interview — Decline

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____,

Thank you for interviewing with the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church as we seek a new pastor. We hope that our time together was as enriching and insightful for you as it was for us.

While we will not be recommending your name to our church leadership and congregation for call, we want to thank you for your conversation, thoughtful consideration, and openness to the call process.

We trust that God will guide and direct you as you discern what God has in store for you next. May God bless the ministry that you carry out in the name of Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Name, Call Committee Chair

Phone number(s)

Cc: Bishop Duane Pederson, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

Sample Letter Following Candidate Interview — Recommend to Council

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____,

Thank you for interviewing with the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church as we seek a new pastor. We hope that our time together was as enriching and insightful for you as it was for us.

We are delighted to inform you that the Call Committee, with your permission, will be recommending your name to our Congregation Council for call. Following the successful resolution of salary package and ministry goals, the Council will set a meeting for the congregation to vote to extend you a Letter of Call to be our pastor.

This is an exciting time for the people of _____ Lutheran Church! Please know that you are in our prayers during this time of discernment, and we trust that we are in your prayers as well. If you have any questions or concerns about your recommendation to the congregation or about the process that will unfold, please do not hesitate to call.

May God guide and direct us in the days to come.

Yours in Christ,

Name, Call Committee Chair

Phone number(s)

Cc: Bishop Duane Pederson, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

Sample Letter Calling the Special Meeting of the Congregation

Date

Dear Members of _____ Lutheran Church,

The Congregation Council of _____ Lutheran Church has called a special meeting of the congregation for ____ day, _____, 200_, at _____, to be held in the sanctuary of the church.

The sole item on the agenda for the special meeting of the congregation is to act upon a recommendation from the Congregation Council to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

In addition to the enclosed biographical information for Pastor _____, the Call Committee will share about their work as a committee and provide further material about the recommended pastor. The Letter of Call and compensation details will be shared at the congregational meeting.

Hold our congregation in prayer, so that what we discern in selecting a pastor might be guided by the Holy Spirit. Pray, too, for Pastor _____ as he/she discerns whether or not God is calling him/her to lead us.

Yours in Christ,

Name

President of the Congregation

Encl: Biographical Information

Cc: Bishop Duane Pederson, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

Sample Congregational Meeting Agenda

for the Calling of a Pastor

The following is an agenda draft for a special meeting of the congregation for the purpose of voting to extend a Letter of Call to a recommended pastoral candidate. The lines in bold are the agenda headings. The text suggests wording for the congregational president; revise as needed.

Have the following arranged prior to the meeting:

- Someone who will lead an opening prayer
- A prepared Call Committee chair who will share information about the recommended candidate
- Someone who will read the Letter of Call and compensation information
- Ballots for distribution
- Ushers who are prepared to hand out and retrieve ballots at the appropriate times
- A small group entrusted with counting the written ballots

Call the Meeting to Order

This duly called special meeting of _____ Lutheran Church shall come to order.

Declaration of a Quorum

According to our constitution and bylaws, ____ active members of _____ Lutheran Church constitute a quorum for a meeting of the congregation. Let the minutes reflect that a quorum is present.

Opening Prayer

I call upon _____ to lead us in an opening prayer.

Stated Purpose of the Special Meeting of the Congregation

The purpose of this specially called congregational meeting is to act upon a recommendation from the Congregation Council to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be our pastor. This is the sole item on the agenda for this meeting.

At this time I call upon _____, chair of the Call Committee, to provide information about Pastor _____.

Report of the Call Committee

The Call Committee chair provides a brief overview of the work of the committee, shares biographical and ministry history information, and enthusiastically expresses support for the

recommended pastoral candidate. Sometimes the pastoral candidate provides a video greeting that can be shared with the membership at this time.

The Letter of Call and recommended compensation are read aloud by either the Call Committee chair or another designated person from the Call Committee or Congregation Council.

Recommendation of the Congregation Council (motion)

Because the Congregation Council recommends that Pastor _____ be extended a Letter of Call to become our pastor, the recommendation comes as the motion on the floor for action. Is there a second to the motion to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to become the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church?

The motion is seconded. Is there any discussion for or against the motion?

Vote on the Recommended Pastoral Candidate

We are now ready to vote upon the motion to extend Pastor _____ a Letter of Call. Our governing documents direct that the vote be by written ballot and that a two-thirds majority vote is required in the affirmative for the motion to pass. I ask that the ushers pass out the ballots at this time.

A reminder that only those who are active members of the congregation are to receive ballots. Please do not cast your vote until instructed to do so.

When I instruct you to cast your vote, know that you may vote in one of three ways: "Yes," if you are in favor of the motion; "No," if you are against the motion; and "Abstain," if you wish to abstain from this vote.

Check to ensure every active voting member of the congregation has a ballot.

Seeing that everyone entitled to vote has a ballot, you may now mark your ballot "Yes," "No," or "Abstain." The motion again is to extend a Letter of call to Pastor _____ to be pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

After you have voted, fold your ballot in half and hold on to it until I ask you to turn it in. Please vote and hold on to your ballot.

Ask if anyone needs more time to vote. When all have voted say the following.

Voting is now closed. Please pass your ballot to the center aisle for the ushers to retrieve.

Hymn Sing

Because it will take a while to count the votes, perhaps a "hymn sing" can help pass the time. Remember, the meeting is still "in order."

Report of the Vote to Extend a Letter of Call

The vote on the motion to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church is as follows:

A total of _____ votes were cast.

_____ voted "Yes" _____ voted "No" _____ voted to "Abstain"

_____ % of the votes cast are in favor of the motion, thus, the two-thirds requirement for passage has been met. The motion carries. OR

_____ % of the votes cast are in favor of the motion, thus, the two-thirds requirement for passage has not been met. The motion fails.

Immediately following adjournment of this meeting, I will be phoning Pastor _____ to let him/her know the results of our action. Then, the Secretary and I sign the Letter of Call and compensation and attest to the vote of this congregational meeting. This material will be in tomorrow's mail to the bishop, who will ensure that everything is in order, sign the Letter of Call, and forward it to Pastor _____. Once Pastor _____ has the Letter of Call in hand, he/she has three weeks to respond.

Thank you

This is an opportunity to thank the Transition Team who assembled the Mission Site Profile, the Call Committee for their interview and discernment work, the Congregation Council who made the recommendation to the congregation, and all who held the church, leaders, and candidates in prayer. It is appropriate to name all individuals involved and encourage a round of applause for their diligent work on behalf of the congregation.

Adjournment

Given that we have completed the purpose for which this special meeting was called, we are now adjourned.

Closing Prayer

Let us stand and together pray the Lord's Prayer.

Congregation President:

- Immediately phone the pastoral candidate and report the results of the vote.
- Sign the Letter of Call and compensation sheet—please follow the instructions exactly.
- Place the call material in tomorrow's mail to the bishop at the synod office.

Report of the Special Congregational Meeting to Call a Pastor

Congregation(s) _____

Location of congregation(s) _____

Date of Call Meeting _____

Chairperson _____

Secretary _____

Number of voting members in attendance

Name of pastor under consideration _____

Title (e.g. Pastor, Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor, etc.) _____

Total votes cast

Number of "Yes" votes cast

Percentage of "Yes" votes (66.7% needed to call)

Number of "No" votes cast

Percentage of "No" votes

Number of "Abstaining" votes cast

Percentage of "Abstaining" votes

Sample Letter Following a Successful Vote of the Congregation

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Dear _____,

I wish to confirm, following our telephone conversation of (*indicate when*), that the members of the congregation, at a specially called congregational meeting on (*indicate date*), have voted to extend to you a Letter of Call to become Pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

The Letter of Call, along with the “Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor” has been mailed to our Bishop’s office for signature. Once you have received these documents you have thirty days to consider your decision. When you respond, please send a copy of your response letter to our synod office. We will pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit through your deliberation and place our hope in God’s hands that you will be led to consider a favorable response to our invitation to become our pastor.

We await your answer with excitement and enthusiasm at the prospects of engaging with you as our spiritual leader in service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the ministry of _____ Lutheran Church.

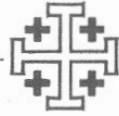
Sincerely yours,

Name, Council President _____

Phone number(s) _____

Cc: Bishop Duane Pederson, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

Sample Letter of Call



LETTER OF CALL

TO AN ORDAINED MINISTER OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,
AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

With prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to do God's will,

a congregation of the

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
meeting on

extends to you this call to serve as

We call you to exercise among us the ministry of Word and Sacrament which God has established and which the Holy Spirit empowers: To preach and teach the Word of God in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; to administer Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead us in worship; to proclaim the forgiveness of sins; to provide pastoral care; to speak for justice in behalf of the poor and oppressed; to encourage persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel; to impart knowledge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its wider ministry; to endeavor to increase support given by our congregation to the work of our whole church; to equip us for witness and service; and guide us in proclaiming God's love through word and deed.

In accepting this call, you hereby promise to fulfill this pastoral ministry in accord with the standards and policies for ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Therefore, be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture, in use of the means of grace, in prayer, in faithful service, and in holy living.

With this call, we pledge our prayers, love, esteem, and personal support for the sake of the ministry entrusted to you by God and for our ministry together in Christ's name. Specific responsibilities, compensation, benefits, and conditions of this call are contained in a document related to this call.

In testimony of this call, we have subscribed our names on behalf of the congregation on this _____ day
of _____, A.D.

President

Secretary

Attested by _____

Bishop of the _____

Date of bishop's signing _____

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world





Jesus says in his society there is a new way
for [people] to live:

you show wisdom, by trusting people;
you handle leadership, by serving;
you handle offenders, by forgiving;
you handle money, by sharing;
you handle enemies, by loving;
and you handle violence, by suffering.

In fact you have a new attitude toward
everything, toward everybody. Toward
nature, toward the state in which you happen
to live, toward women, toward slaves, toward
all and every single thing. Because this is a
Jesus society and you repent, not by feeling
bad, but by thinking different.

Rudy Wiebe
The Blue Mountains of China

Beginning Strong

God's
work.
Our
hands.

The Lord said to Ananias, "Go, for Saul is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Acts 9.15–19



A New Call and a New Day

The mission and ministry of a congregation never stop, but we do recognize that a pastor has a unique role of spiritual leadership within congregations. It is significant in the life of the church when a new call is extended and a new day of making Christ known in your community begins.

Throughout the interim period, your congregation is asked to be intentional about each step moving forward. This is not a hiring process or a head-hunting venture. It is a call process in which the Call Committee, Congregation Council and congregation discern the will of God. So as you begin a new pastorate, it is important to take time to begin strong.

This will mean saying goodbye to your interim pastor, laying the groundwork for your new pastor to move in, celebrating the installation, making sure that your new leader will be well supported in their work, and engaging in the mission, which you identified in the interim, with your new pastor.

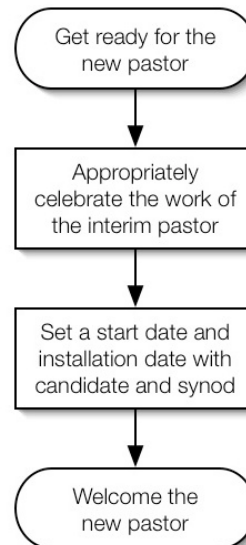
Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world



Beginning Strong—Step by Step

- The Congregation Council notifies the congregation and synod staff of the candidate's decision
- The Congregation Council arranges the starting date, installation date (coordinate with synod staff), and moving arrangements with the candidate
- The Congregation Council appropriately celebrates the work of the interim pastor
- The Congregation Council and the Call Committee address the details necessary to welcome new pastor

BEGINNING STRONG



Disengagement from the Interim Period

**God's
work.
Our
hands.**

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, etc.), 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 they will accept the call and have 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 call process and to see how far the congregation has come during the interim period. The Congregation Council should also evaluate the interim period and share insights with their synod staff contact person.

Once the Congregation Council has negotiated the starting date with the new pastor, they should coordinate the schedule of the next few weeks with their 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 appropriately 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 or ministry work with members of the congregation following their last official day.



Guidelines for the Installation of a New Pastor or Other Rostered Leader

The installation of a new pastor or other rostered lay leader is a time of great celebration for a congregation. Installations are performed on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by the authorization of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Please call the bishop's office as soon as possible to discuss the date and time for the service of installation. It is important to plan well for this important event.

These are guidelines for the service of installation.

- When the Letter of Call has been accepted, schedule the installation service with the synod office in coordination with your new leader.
- A special worship service at a time other than Sunday morning should be considered so that other clergy and congregations may attend. (See the next section.)
- The service follows the order for Holy Communion, with the order for installation on pages 224–231 of the Occasional Services book and can be found in the resource section of this chapter. Please print a this service order in your worship bulletin as an insert.
- Normally, the colors and lessons of the day will be followed.
- The pastor and congregation pick the hymns for the service.
- In the event of a call to a “solo” or “senior” position, the synod staff contact person typically preaches and presides from the beginning of the service through the installation rite. Following the installation rite the newly installed pastor presides through the rest of the service. At the beginning of the service, the congregational president welcomes and introduces the synod staff member, and gives other announcements related to the day. Please have typed Prayers of the People (including local prayer concerns) ready for the bishop or synod staff person to incorporate into the rite for installation.
- In the event of a call to an “associate” position, the senior pastor welcomes and introduces the synod staff person at the beginning of the service and gives other announcements related to the day, presides through the second lesson, after which the Bishop or synod staff person preaches and presides through the installation rite. At this point the newly installed pastor presides through the rest of the service. The senior pastor leads the Prayers of the People during the installation rite.
- If the installation is held during a regularly scheduled Sunday service:
 - the installation service will be done at each congregation when the parish has several congregations yoked together;

- the installation will be done at each worship service when a congregation has several services.
- The lectionary texts for the day are assumed to be the texts used in the worship. If different texts are chosen please advise the synod office. (Note the suggestions on page 231 of the Occasional Services book.)
- For the installation rite, three laypersons may be asked to take part and read the words prescribed for the font, pulpit, and altar. These could be members of the Call Committee, officers of the congregation, or persons representing the diversity of the congregation. It is a thoughtful gesture, but not required, to involve members of the Call Committee as service participants.
- Because the worship service may last longer than usual, in the interests of time please consider:
 - including only the required rubrics in the worship service, and skipping some of the optional “may” rubrics, such as the Kyrie, Gloria, and Creed;
 - singing fewer verses of a hymn;
 - scheduling special music during the offering or distribution of the elements, rather than at a time in the service when nothing else is happening;
- A special offering is given at all installations in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and is designated for the “Fund for Leaders.” Special arrangements should be made to announce this in advance and to receive the offering at the service of installation. If the installation is held on Sunday morning, this designated offering is in addition to the regular offering of the congregation.
- The synod staff person normally distributes bread and blesses children during communion.
- At the beginning of the service, the pastor being installed is seated in a pew with any family members.
- Let the synod staff contact know what the schedule for the day is. If there is a celebration meal and their presence is desired let the synod office know as soon as possible.

Your synod staff look forward to being a part of this ministry milestone in the life of the congregation.



Making the Installation a Community Celebration

The apostle Paul reminds us that none of us lives to ourselves (Romans 14:7) and that through baptism every Christian is made part of the whole body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). God's people are not islands unto themselves, but partners and co-workers—with each other, with neighboring congregations, with the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with all other Christian denominations in our nation and across the globe!

An important part of that partnership is the collegial support given by pastors to each other. This strengthens pastors in their own personal faith and develops networks among pastors that enhance their ministries as well. A pastor is called both to your congregation and to the whole church.

To foster this kind of collegial support consider holding the installation service for your new pastor at a time when pastors of neighboring congregations can be present as well. By doing so, your new pastor will begin to develop supportive relationships with many future colleagues at the very beginning of a new ministry. Your pastor will benefit, and so ultimately will you. To do this, you might consider planning the installation service at a time other than Sunday morning, when most pastors are occupied at their own congregations.

At such an installation service, neighboring clergy of all denominations are customarily extended a personal invitation by the congregation to vest and join in the procession at the beginning of the service. (It is helpful to indicate this in your invitation, as well as noting the liturgical color of the day. Feel free to request an RSVP to aid you in your planning.) For many people, this procession is a highlight of the whole service, a colorful beginning to a festive celebration and a visible reminder of our unity in Christ.

You may also wish to invite the lay leaders and members of neighboring congregations to attend. To aid you with the invitations, a sample invitation is included in the resource section of this chapter and address labels for ELCA pastors in your conference are available from the synod office.

If you are not able to schedule the installation service at a time when pastors and members of other congregations can be present, you may wish to consider these alternatives:

- Request neighboring pastors to include your congregation and new pastor in their congregational prayers that morning.
- Invite neighboring pastors to attend a meal if one is held after the Sunday morning installation service.
- Host a meal for neighboring pastors at another time during the installation weekend.

A Sample Guest List

- ELCA pastors in your conference, both active and retired
- Ecumenical pastors in your community and neighboring communities
- Lay leaders and members of neighboring congregations

**God's
work.
Our
hands.**



Beginning Strong—Things to Do

Congregation Council

- Pray for a joyful transition and a fruitful future.
- Plan an appropriate farewell for the interim minister.
- Join the interim minister in reflecting on the interim experience.
- Plan an installation celebration.
- Welcome the new rostered leader.
- Commit to helping your new leader hit the ground running.

Congregation

- Pray for a joyful transition and a fruitful future.
- Participate in the installation service.
- Support your new leader.

Interim Pastor

- Pray for the people you have served and the new pastor, and say goodbye well.

Call Committee

- Pray for your new pastor.
- Support your new pastor—you were the first to see God's hand at work bringing this person into your congregation.
- Help your new pastor to understand the culture of your congregation and community.

Meetings

- The service of installation and fellowship.

Words of Encouragement

The beginning of a pastorate is an exciting time in the life of the church. Take great joy as you engage the world in mission with your new pastor and with what you have learned about yourself as a congregation through the interim period.

Pray

Keep up this spiritual discipline. Continue to look for ways to maintain or deepen the prayer life of your congregation.

Know Joy

God indeed wants the best for all of creation. As you get to know your new pastor, celebrate with Joy the work that you do together for the sake of mission in God's world.

Remain Partners in Ministry with the Synod

Contact with synod staff is fairly intense through the call process. Maintain and foster the growth of a healthy relationship with the wider church. We are better and stronger together than we are apart.

**God's
work.
Our
hands.**

Beginning Strong Resources

The following resources can be photocopied or copied from the digital version of this document available at www.nswswi.org/call.

Suggested Prayers

Page 117

Exit Interview of Interim Pastor Page 118

Litany of Farewell for the Interim Pastor Page 119

Sample *Installation Invitation* Page 121

Service of Installation Page 122

Suggested Prayers

The church: Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Spread of the gospel: By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly proclaim this good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Pastors and bishops: Ever-living God, strengthen and sustain pastors and bishops [especially Mark and Duane], that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your people. Grant that together they may follow in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Seminaries: We give you thanks, O God, for all of life and for our common calling as your servants, for the work of your church and for the ministries of word, sacrament, and service. We give you thanks for women and men whom you call to be leaders in your church and for teachers who form them for service. Through the witness and mission of our seminaries may the church join courageously in your work of compassion, mercy, justice, and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

General thanksgiving: Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we humbly thank you for your goodness to us and to all that you have made. We praise you for your creation, for keeping us and all things in your care, and for all the blessings of life. Above all we bless you for your immeasurable love in redeeming the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies that with thankful hearts we praise you, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving ourselves to your service and by living in your gifts of holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all worship and praise, now and forever.

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 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?

A Litany of Farewell for the Interim Pastor

- L** 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 _____ who has served us as Pastor for the Interim for the past _____ months, whose time with us has now drawn to a close.
- P** 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.
- All** **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.**
- P** 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.
- L** Do you, the members and friends of _____ Church, now release Pastor _____ from the duties of Pastor for the Interim?
- All** **We do, with the help of God.**
- L** Do you, Pastor _____, release _____ Church from turning to you and relying on you to serve them as Pastor?
- P** I do, with the help of God.
- L** Do you, Pastor _____, offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here at _____ Church?
- P** I do, with the help of God.
- L** Let us pray.
- All** **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**

**completely one with you and with one another. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen.**

L 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.

AI **Amen**

“Litany of Farewell” adapted from that prepared by the Interim Ministry Network, Baltimore, Maryland, as printed on pages 183-184 in *Temporary Shepherds* (an Alban Institute publication).

Sample Installation Invitation to Clergy and Congregations

You are invited to the installation of the Rev. _____
as Pastor/Senior Pastor/Associate Pastor/Chaplain
of _____ (congregation or ministry)
at _____ (time) on _____ (day and date).

A reception (or meal) will follow the service.

Clergy are invited to vest and process.

The liturgical color of the day is blue/white/green/purple/red.

Please RSVP

Service Of Installation

P Having been authorized by the Church to install [full name], our co-worker in the Gospel, as [position], I now ask for certification of this call/appointment.

A representative of the Congregation Council/board/agency comes forward and addresses the minister:

R We, of _____, after prayerful deliberation, have elected/appointed [name] to be [position]. I present him/her and this letter certifying the call.

The congregation is seated. The synod staff member addresses the pastor being installed:

P Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20:21–23

And again: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:18–20*

Hear the words addressed to Timothy: Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Timothy 4:12–16

The minister questions the pastor being installed:

P Pastor [Name], in the presence of this congregation will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility, and promise to discharge your duties in harmony with the constitutions of the church?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people? Will you nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, leading them by your own example in the use of the means of grace, in faithful service and holy living?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

Walking together † for the sake of mission † in God's world

P Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

All **Amen**

The Congregation stands. The minister addresses the congregation:

P And you, people of God, will you receive this messenger of Jesus Christ, sent by God to serve God's people with the Gospel of hope and salvation? Will you regard him/her as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God?

All **We will.**

P Will you pray for him/her, help and honor him/her for his work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

All **We will.**

The minister addresses the pastor being installed:

P The office of pastor is now committed to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The newly installed pastor may kneel for the blessing:

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

All **Amen**

The pastor stands.

Prayers of the People

A Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Silence.

For the holy catholic Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the day of your coming; Lord, in your mercy,

All **Hear our prayer.**

A For all members of your Church in their vocations and ministries, that they may serve you with true and godly lives; Lord, in your mercy,

All **Hear our prayer.**

A For all bishops and pastors, especially for Mark, our Presiding Bishop, for Duane, our Bishop, and for pastors of our sister congregations, that they may be filled with your love, may hunger for the truth, and may thirst after righteousness; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

A For Pastor [Name], chosen to be pastor in this Church, that he/she may faithfully fulfill the duties of this ministry, build up your Church, and glorify your name; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

A For the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in him/her, that he/she may be sustained and encouraged to persevere to the end; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

A For his/her family and loved ones who give support, that they may be adorned with all Christian virtues; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

A For all who fear God and believe in Christ, that our divisions may cease and that all may be one as you are one Lord and Father of us all; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

A For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

A For those who do not yet believe, and for those who have lost their faith, that they may receive the light of the Gospel; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

A For all who have died in the communion of your Church, that they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal; Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

Presentation of the Symbols

As a hymn is sung, ministers go to the baptismal font. A crucifer may lead them. A representative of the congregation presents the baptismal symbols to the new pastor.

R You have been called to be among us to baptize, to teach, and to declare the forgiveness of sins. Use the waters of baptism to bring new life to all in Christ's name.

P May the Lord bring forgiveness and new life in Christ to those baptized in this place.

All Amen

Ministers go to the pulpit. A crucifer may lead them. A representative presents the Holy Bible.

R You have been called among us to proclaim the Good News. Receive the Holy Scriptures and empower us with God's saving Word.

P May the Lord be always on my lips and in my heart that I may speak God's Word of grace and favor to you.

All Amen

Ministers go to the altar. A crucifer may lead them. A representative presents the communion vessels.

R You have been called among us to lead worship and preside at Holy Communion. Receive these vessels of the heavenly food of life and gather us as one family around the table of the Lord.

P May the Lord make us one and give us strength in the bread which we break together.

All Amen

The people stand. Ministers return to the center. A crucifer may lead them. The Dean of the Conference, or another representative, may address the new pastor.

P Receive these signs of your calling to serve the Lord and his people in the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The people offer acclamation with applause to welcome the new pastor. Afterward, the newly installed pastor, who now presides, extends the peace of the Lord to all.

Peace

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All And also with you.

Offering

The offering or, if the service of installation occurs during regular morning worship, a special offering is received for the Fund for Leaders which benefits seminarians with their tuition expenses.

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IN ESSENTIALS UNITY

IN NON-ESSENTIALS LIBERTY

IN ALL THINGS CHARITY.

Appendix A

God's
work.
Our
hands.

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the



vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. Acts 16.6–10

The Call Process in the ELCA

The call process is undergoing a major transformation in our Church. This article by one of the architects of the redesigned process is available on the ELCA website and is reprinted here for ease of access.

The Story of the ELCA's New Mobility Database Project

Part 1 — The Search for a Better Way

I have been in hundreds of call processes. Literally. I usually have 25 call processes going on at any one time. Over a period of 14 years as assistant to the bishop in two synods, it has been my calling to guide congregations and rostered leaders through the call process. I have found it to be complicated work that is nuanced in every setting where it is attempted. It creates its own stresses for Call Committee members, rostered leaders, and the call process administrators. When I had the opportunity to use my D.Min. program to focus energy on understanding and improving the call process, I took it. I needed to go into "ponder mode" about the call process. And I wanted to

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Joy may come
in the morning,
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linger too long
in the night.

develop a rationale for this activity that was clearly communicated in the materials and procedures that the synod would use.

Most people are quick to name the negatives that accompanied their experience of the call process. And I will too. But let it be said, first, that there are clear positives — congregations successfully undertake the difficult journey that begins in grief and ends in anticipation, rostered leaders are renewed as they discover new possibilities for their vision and energy, opportunities to help a ministry setting refocus its mission and redesign its ministry to find room to grow, and so, despite our frustrations with the process, God is honored, and the march of the church into the hurts and hearts of this world picks up its pace.

This joy may come in the morning, but many feel that the call process causes us to linger too long in the night. In 2002, *The Lutheran* published the results of a very unscientific survey they had conducted, asking about the experience people had with the call process. Fully half of the 280 respondents found it to be frustrating; only 15 percent found it to be wonderful. The negatives included the lack of consistency across the 65 call processes in use in the ELCA, the extended duration of many processes, the poor communication among the parties to the call process, the mandates for confidentiality, and the inability to locate an adequate pool of qualified candidates for consideration. Committees and rostered leaders alike had their horror stories to tell, and “the synod” was often the perpetrator.

Growing Momentum

The 2003 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee considered a memorial that originated in the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod. The memorial cited the confusion and negative reactions associated with the call process and asked that a study be conducted resulting in recommendations that might improve the situation. The memorial specifically expressed a desire for a call process handbook, for information on best practices, and for information about legal implications. I attended that assembly but I don’t recall any discussion around this issue, perhaps because it was so obviously a no-brainer. The call process needed attention.

In 2004, the ELCA Church Council called for a task force to work on this issue. Twenty leaders representing all segments of the ELCA gathered; Roy Oswald of the Alban Institute was the resource person. We were divided into work groups to concentrate on various parts of the problem. We listened, surveyed, mapped out ideas, and presented some recommendations to a 2006 meeting of the Conference of Bishops. The ideas that emerged in the task force meeting are now shaping the Mobility Database Project, begun in 2007, and scheduled for completion by December 2008.

Identifying Broken Things

Ministry Sites

Congregations find the call process to be perplexing. The call process resembles the employment practices that people know in their workplaces, but is different in subtle and powerful ways. It is governed by unseen gatekeepers and restricted by unspoken protocols. There are three actors in the process rather than the usual two. It is as much about relationships as it is about job descriptions. And the consequences of the process seem, well, so consequential.

There are at least three concerns that congregations often bring to me as their “coach” in the work of the call process. The first is a level of anxiety about doing a thorough and respectable job in the face of so many people who have so many opinions about the needs and outcomes. How can the process be done so that everyone is on board, conflict is averted, and the results are celebrated? Second, how can we be sure that we were able to see all the possibilities, get the word out about our vacancy to the widest audience, and feel confident that we had the best pool of candidates to interview? And third, what are the synod’s procedures and what are the candidates’ expectations? A whole host of questions spring from these, including: how long will this take, what will it cost, do we have to have an interim pastor, why must we write a profile, how long will it take for the synod to provide recommendations, and how much are you going to be involved in our process? Among the unspoken but present concerns are issues related to gender, ethnicity, age, and salary expectations.

Rostered Leaders

Rostered leaders find the call process to be more frustrating than perplexing. We stake our futures on this process; it controls our chance at fulfillment, happiness, and security. We need the call process to work in a way that is fair, accessible, clear, and unbiased. In the face of protocols and tasks (like completing lengthy forms and engaging the synod staff) many rostered leaders get passive while a few others get active, looking for inventive ways to assert themselves. Some work hard at planning and practicing for interviews and learning about the site ahead of time, while others do little of this, waiting instead for the enlivening presence of the Spirit to release their imaginations and spark a new and affirming relationship.

Rostered leaders have their own list of concerns about the call process. They often begin with an anxiety that being interested in mobility will be seen as a sign of unhappiness or conflict, rather than just an openness to God’s renewing activity in their lives. They express serious concerns about confidentiality, fearing that their openness to call might be misconstrued, if word makes it back to their current ministry setting, as disloyalty or disgust. They dread the thought that a search for a new call can take a full



The goals of the ELCA's Mobility Database Project hold the promise of ushering in a new day in the call process work.

year with no guarantees that it might not result in a bad match after all. They don't like filling out forms and trying to represent themselves well, and they also don't like the intensive scrutiny of Call Committee interviews. They enter the process anticipating a more fulfilling ministry, a greater degree of family and financial security, but find that the seeds of struggle over these issues are already present in the interview itself.

Synod Staff

My experience as a call process administrator leads to a list of my own frustrations. I struggle with the suspiciousness that tends to greet me when I first visit a congregation to introduce the call process. I am forever amazed by the manifold, inventive ways people have of subverting and derailing the process. I am concerned about the entitlement mentality among some rostered leaders that fails to realize that in this day and time they do have to show results and exhibit leadership that is creative and missional. I am awestruck by the destructive power of poor communication. And I am often frustrated by the difficulty of knowing who are "out there" seeking call, what kind of a ministry setting they might be seeking, and the kind of gifts and passions that they could bring to their next calls.

Fixing What is Broken

Fixing this situation cannot be accomplished with ease or speed. The recommendations of the task force in 2006 certainly did not foresee an obvious "fix." But the recommendations noted that steps could be taken to make improvements. While synods pursue the form of the call process that fits their context, we can, on the churchwide level, provide some tools and supports that can help each of the parties to the call process faithfully do their work. New churchwide resources can help us identify the common language and understandings about call and the call process that unite us. Printed resources can be gathered together that speak to best practices and great ideas that would benefit rostered leaders, congregations, and synods alike. Technology can be mustered to give a degree of transparency, mutuality, and timeliness to this work. Using the Web, congregations can be given a way to publicize their vacancy, and the call process administrators can be given a way to learn about the availability of rostered leaders. Creativity and initiative can be encouraged and rewarded. Cooperation among those engaged in the call process can be strengthened and enhanced.

These are the goals of the ELCA's Mobility Database Project, undertaken last summer to create

1. new forms that encourage reflection, creativity, and a missional mindset;

2. a new database to house information about ministry sites and rostered leaders for publication and dissemination; and
3. a new website at www.elca.org/call to offer resources and support. The project holds the promise of ushering in a new day in call process work.

**God's
work.
Our
hands.**

Part 2 — New Tools for a New Day

A rostered leader has to be persistent and rather clever in the current the call process environment if he or she wants to make progress on a search for a new call. Many lurk on synod Web sites, book-marking pages that list vacancies or talk about transitions. Many actively work to connect with the call process administrators in synod offices. Many write and rewrite the Availability for Call forms to try to make a good first impression. Others talk to friends who are in a position to know what vacancies might be looming or who can put in a good word of recommendation. Clergy have to muster a lot of energy and skill for this task, but that is but a fraction of what associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses have to muster to make the same progress.

Congregations are at a similar disadvantage in the current call process environment since they know even less about how the call process works. It should be no surprise that they tend to employ search tactics borrowed from the workplace. They quickly discover that they do not fully appreciate how rostered leaders think of call, how synod personnel are involved in the process, and how to use the church's system to do a fair and effective search. That is especially true for congregations looking to do a national search for a person with a unique skill set or temperament. And if congregations struggle with all this, imagine how exponentially more difficult it is for schools, hospitals, camps, or social ministry organizations to search nationally for an ELCA rostered leader.

What the ELCA needs is a churchwide clearinghouse for mobility concerns. In such a place, rostered leaders from all the rosters should be able to easily and clearly speak of their skills and passions for ministry and have their availability for call be managed with confidentiality and professionalism. In such a place, congregations and organizations of this church should be able to describe their mission and their need for rostered leadership for all to see. And in such a place, both rostered leaders and Call Committee members should be able to find helpful ideas, resources, and suggestions for doing the call process. This clearinghouse could be a "cyberhouse," using the blessings of technology and the Web to bring all together in this endeavor.

New Tools

The ELCA is introducing a new generation of tools designed to assist all those involved

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in the call process work. These new tools continue to rely on synodical bishops to design and manage the call process in a way that fits their synodical context. But the new tools encourage a higher degree of creativity, transparency, and initiative than may have been true before. These new tools seek to maintain appropriate safeguards, to level the playing field among rostered leaders and ministry sites as a matter of fairness, and to encourage rostered leaders and ministry sites alike to engage in a process of serious spiritual discernment about their mission and ministry. The very existence of call process resources available at the churchwide level will, it is hoped, gather us around common understandings and a common language for this important work.

New Mobility Forms

The new tools begin with, but are much more than, the creation of new mobility forms. What we once knew as Personnel Forms, then Mobility (M1) Forms, and then Availability for Call Forms will soon be transformed into the Rostered Leader Profile. The new forms are intentional in design and crafted to work together with a churchwide mobility database that will store the forms. They are downloadable in Formatta, the form tool that has been in use in the ELCA for a number of years now.

The Rostered Leader Profile (RLP) is designed for use by all pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, and first call candidates for these rosters. The form encourages rostered leaders to reflect on their calling and gifts, be creative about sharing their passions and interests in ministry, and be discerning about their readiness for call. Parts of the RLP are optional; hence, it can be tailored to fit the rostered leader's preferences and needs. The RLP asks that an outside reference be identified who is willing to complete and append a Reference's Recommendation Form.

The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is designed for use by church-related organizations as well as congregations. It focuses attention on the mission opportunities of that ministry site and allows for reflection on the way the ministry site perceives itself in relation to its calling and its context. The ministry site will have space to be creative in its presentation and the opportunity to write a summary description of its setting and needs. Information from the MSP will be used to create a narrative snapshot of the ministry opportunity, suitable for posting on the Web. The MSP also asks that an outside reference be identified who is willing to complete and append a Reference's Recommendation Form.

New Web Site

The new forms are linked to the second new tool for the call process work—a new website at www.elca.org/call. This is the “cyberhouse” for the call process. One page of the site, in particular, is destined to become indispensable to rostered leaders and ministry sites alike. Ministry Opportunities is a page that publishes the key information

from the Ministry Site Profiles that have been approved for posting by the synodical bishop. Far from being just a listing of openings, this page will allow rostered leaders and others to input search criteria in order to actively seek opportunities for call, to read a snapshot of information about the opportunities they select, to learn whom to contact in order to learn more, and to express an interest in the identified position.

Ministry Opportunities is, in a technological sort of way, a powerful example of the way this church lives out its sense of interdependence and partnership. Created, maintained, and hosted by the churchwide expression of this church, Ministry Opportunities will be the meeting place where ministry sites can speak of their mission and ministry and rostered leaders can seek to live out their calling to service. Ministry sites will be grateful for the opportunity to get the word out about their work and their needs. Rostered leaders will be grateful for a way to be active in searching for ministry opportunities and thereby taking more initiative and ownership of their vocational life.

Synodical bishops and call process administrators will also benefit from this technology and the presence of a churchwide mobility database. Key information from the Rostered Leader Profiles will feed to a separate searchable database, allowing bishops and their designated staff members to search for rostered leaders based on criteria they have selected. Access to the Rostered Leader Database will be restricted to synod personnel in order to respect the confidentiality of the information and the shepherding role of the bishop.

New Library of Resources

The Web site will host a third new tool for the call process work. An online Library of Resources will provide links and documents that rostered leaders, Call Committee members, call process administrators, and others can utilize. Want to learn how to improve your interviewing skills, how to conduct an interview, how to understand this church's teaching on call and vocation, what the various rosters represent, or how to create a staff team, and the like? Over time the library will develop into its own meeting place of ideas and resources.

Called to the Whole Church

Candidacy committees remind their candidates repeatedly that their call is to the "whole church," not just to one favored region, state, or hometown, not just to a particular set of friends and tasks. God's call is to serve wherever God calls us to serve. Nowhere will this be more clear than in the emerging world of the ELCA call process. There will be signs of mutuality, transparency, and commonality of purpose as all gather to match people of ministry with places of mission. Candidates from seminary will use the RLP as they enter the assignment process; lay rostered ministers will have their

Candidates from seminary will use the Rostered Leader Profile as they enter the assignment process; lay rostered ministers will have their ministry interests listed alongside those from the ordained roster; ministry sites will tell of their mission and ministry to a churchwide audience; specialized ministry, global ministry, and congregational opportunities will be presented together.



ministry interests listed alongside those from the ordained roster; ministry sites will tell of their mission and ministry to a churchwide audience; specialized ministry, global ministry, and congregational opportunities will be presented together.

The new forms, Web site, and library of resources, which will give us yet one more experience of being one church, debuted in the fall of 2008. All the work of designing and developing the technological infrastructure, the Web-based search capacity, and the supporting forms and resources have been accomplished because of the expertise of our own churchwide personnel. Grants from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans made it possible to launch the Task Force on The Call Process in 2004 and the Mobility Database Project in 2007. To all these, we owe a debt of thanks.



Shalom • Peace



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