

Congregations in Transition
Moving into the Future



Rocky Mountain Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Transitions are a part of life, filled with both challenge and opportunity. For communities of faith, transitions are fertile ground for God's transformational work.

As your congregation begins this journey of transformation, I want to assure you that the Rocky Mountain Synod Office of the Bishop is here to accompany you along the way. Congregational transitions are incredibly significant in the life of the whole church. They offer a rare opportunity for renewal and a time to reflect on the ministry and future of your congregation in unique ways. Entering the transition process intentionally and thoughtfully allows the Holy Spirit to move and breathe new life into the ministry of your congregation.

Your community of faith may have been through a pastoral leadership change before; perhaps you have served on a "call committee." Our current transition process represents a two-fold approach that includes intentional transition work guided by a trained interim pastor before moving into the call process. This intentional transition process, already used extensively in other parts of the ELCA, provides time and space for the whole congregation to come together to remember and celebrate the past, assess the needs and gifts of the congregation, and explore opportunities for the future. A successful interim process not only prepares the way for the next chapter of your congregation's history, but also allows individuals and the whole community to practice healthy leave-taking, heal old wounds, and imagine creative ministry that can bless the wider community for future generations.

This "Congregations in Transition" book will help you move into God's future for you and will provide you with the necessary steps and resources for both the intentional transition work as well as the call process. In the midst your transition, the Office of the Bishop and the congregation will work closely together toward the goal of finding the next right pastor or rostered minister who can participate with you in the mission to which the Spirit is calling you.

My God bless you and guide you—and the Holy Spirit surround you—during this journey of transformation.

Yours in Faith,

Bishop James Gonia
Rocky Mountain Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Transition and Call Process in the Rocky Mountain Synod

Congregations in transition are in a partnership with the Office of the Bishop, supporting one another and holding one another accountable to be who God is creating each to be: the Body of Christ. In the midst of a transition, the Office of the Bishop and the congregation work closely toward the goal of finding the right pastor for the next phase of the congregation's life.



Prayer: 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 responsibilities and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Office of the Bishop and the Synod Council recommend that every congregation take advantage of the critical opportunity for renewal that is presented during a time of pastoral transition. This "in-between time" offers congregations a rare opportunity to reflect on ministry and the future of the congregation in unique ways. Entering the transition process intentionally and thoughtfully allows the Holy Spirit to move and breathe new life into the ministry of a congregation. A successful interim process not only prepares the way for the next chapter in a congregation's history, it also allows individuals and the community to practice healthy leave-taking, heal old wounds, and imagine creative ministry that can bless the wider community for future generations.

Led by the intentional interim pastor and the congregational council, everyday ministry continues during the transition process: weekly worship, educational opportunities, outreach to the community, and care of members. During this in-between time, the leadership of the congregation will find engaging ways to guide the faith community through a self-study that will embrace the past, name the present, and prayerfully discern God's call into the future. To do this, the whole community will need to communicate well and often so that everyone stays committed to moving forward in this process.

Glossary of Terms

Call Committee

The committee is appointed or elected according to the congregation's constitution for the purpose of searching for the next pastor to be called by the congregation. This committee first completes the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) based on the self-study of the congregation and the work of the transition team. The committee is then charged with interviewing candidates for a pastor to lead the congregation into the future. Candidates are first vetted by the Office of the Bishop and then given to the congregation until a suitable candidate is called.

Call Packet

Once the call committee has selected and presented a candidate to the congregational council, they will notify the Office of the Bishop, which then sends a call packet to the president of the congregation. This packet will include information and forms on compensation and benefits as well as a sample Letter of Call.

Compensation Package

The Compensation Package reflects the actual financial impact on the congregation's budget of supporting the leader who has been called by the congregation. This includes salary, housing allowance, pension and health benefits, car allowance, continuing education and professional expenses, Social Security assistance, et al. It is helpful for candidates to have clarity as to what is actually available for them to cover living expenses, as well as the benefits that he or she would not receive directly, such as pension and health benefits.

Letter of Call

The Letter of Call is the official document, signed by the Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod and the congregational president, authorizing a pastor to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry at a particular congregation or specialized ministry setting.

Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

The Ministry Site Profile is a document compiled by the call committee which reflects congregational history, current structures and staffing patterns, hopes for the future, mission direction, demographic data about the community, and the gifts for leadership being sought by the congregation.

Office of the Bishop

The Office of the Bishop and its staff supports the work of the Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod. See page 3 for contact information.

Rostered Minister Profile (RMP)

The Rostered minister Profile is a form completed by rostered candidates. It includes questions about theology, gifts for ministry, personal information, employment and educational history and references.

Settled Pastor (also referred to as “Placed” or “Called” Pastor)

This is the pastor selected by the Call Committee, recommended by the Congregational Council, and voted on by the congregation to be the newly installed pastor of the congregation.

Synod Representative

Every call process is a partnership among the congregation, the Office of the Bishop, and the whole Rocky Mountain Synod. In order to live into this partnership, a representative from the Synod will be present at every congregational vote. The representative will read a statement on behalf of the Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod and will report back to the Office of the Bishop the results of the congregational vote.

Transitional Pastoral Leadership

- **Supply Pastor:** A pastor who is contracted on a short-term basis to provide Word and Sacrament ministry (i.e. preaching and worship leadership) and provide pastoral care prior to the arrival of an intentional interim pastor.
- **Intentional Interim Pastor:** A pastor who is called through the Rocky Mountain Synod and has specific training to guide congregations through the transition process due to a pastoral vacancy.
- **Renewal Pastor:** A pastor who is specifically trained to guide a specific congregation through a process of renewal that will bring new life, new growth, and a new mission focus to the congregation.
- **Redevelopment Pastor:** A pastor who is specially trained with a specific set of skills to work with a specific congregation whose direction in mission and focus have changed due to a changing neighborhood or declining membership.

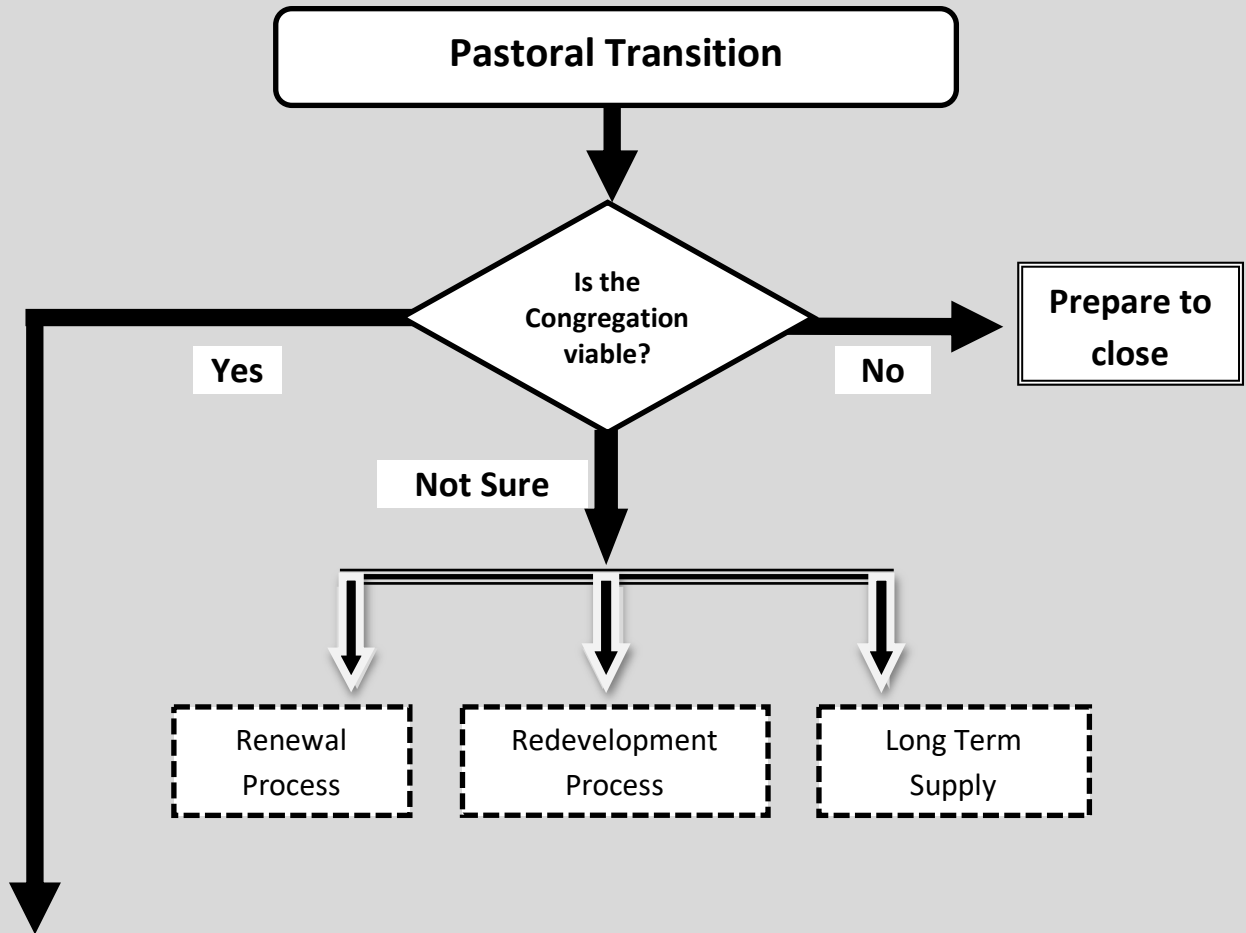


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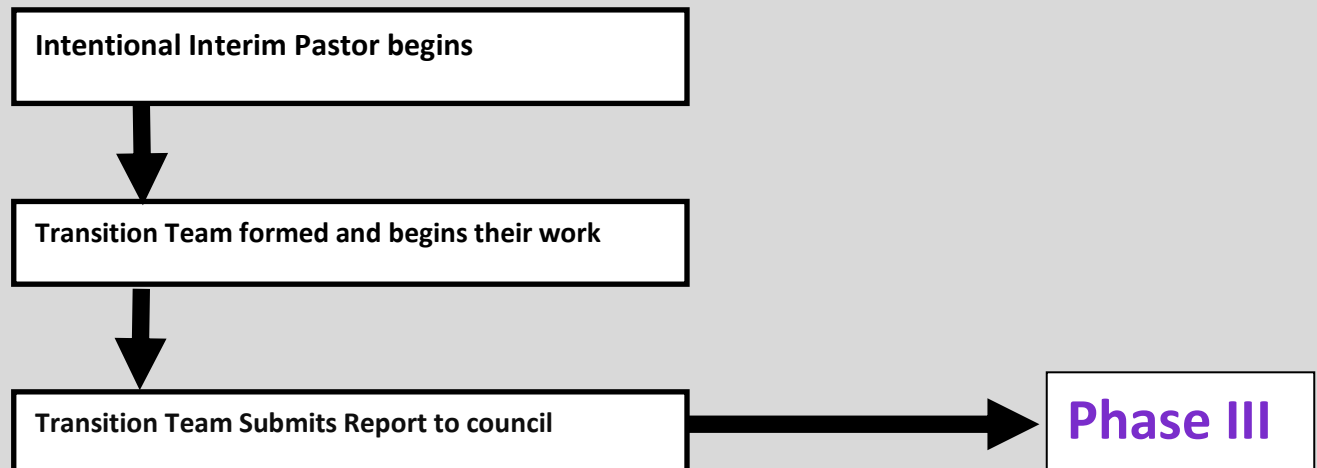
“Basically, we’re looking for an innovative pastor with a fresh vision who will inspire our church to remain exactly the same.”

Overview flow chart of the Transition and Call Process

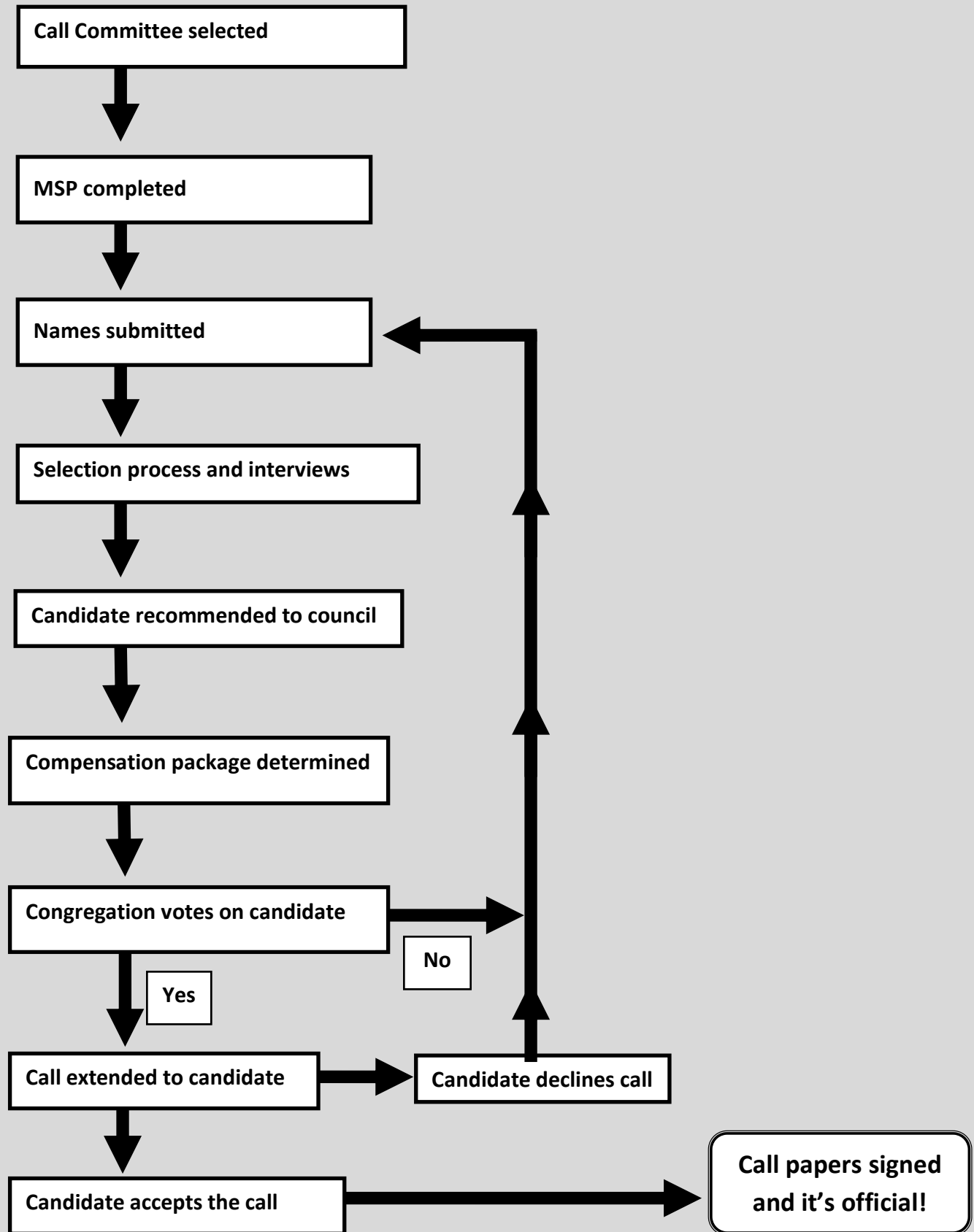
Phase I – Pastoral Transition



Phase II - Intentional Interim



Phase III - Call Committee



Overview of Steps in the Transition and Call Process

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

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

Phase II – Intentional Interim and Self-Study

- The Office of the Bishop will recommend an intentional interim pastor to the Congregational Council.
- The intentional interim pastor begins her or his ministry.
- A Transition Team is selected to lead the congregation through the transition and self-study process.
- The Transition Team completes Parts 1 and 2 of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and submits it to the Congregational Council before a call committee is appointed.

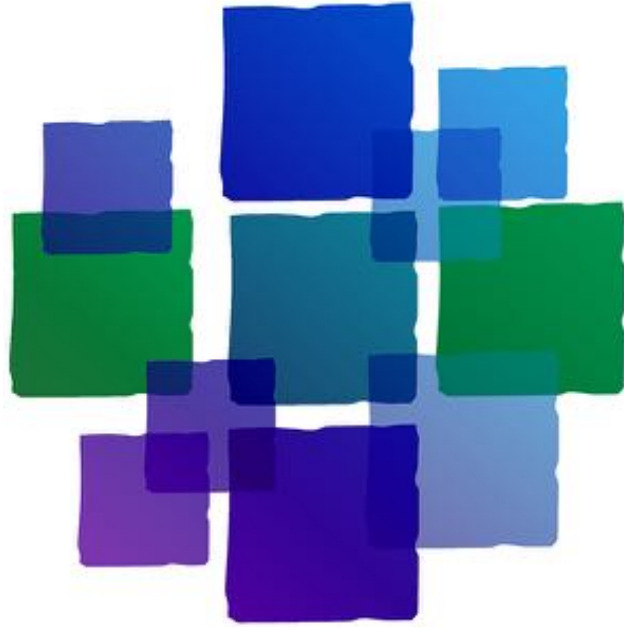
Phase III – The Call Process

- The Call Committee is established according to the congregation's constitution.
- A representative from the Office of Bishop meets with the Congregational Council and Call Committee.
- The Call Committee develops the completed Ministry Site Profile and compiles the data collected from the Transition Team, then sends it to the Office of the Bishop.
- The Office of the Bishop enters into a time of intentional prayer and discernment to identify potential candidates to offer the Call Committee for interviews.
- The Call Committee receives the names of candidates. The Call Committee selects and interviews candidates – remaining in contact with the Office of the Bishop – and ultimately recommends a candidate to the Council.
- The council votes on the recommended candidate (requiring a two-thirds majority for approval) and on a compensation package (requiring a simple majority for approval). They recommend the candidate to the congregation and set a congregational meeting date. The compensation package is sent to the Office of the Bishop for review. The Office of the Bishop will send a representative for the congregational vote.
- The congregation votes on whether to extend a call to the pastor (requiring a two-thirds majority). If approved, the congregation votes on a second ballot on the compensation package (requiring a simple majority).
- The candidate receives the call and, if he or she accepts, notifies the congregation and the Office of the Bishop of their desired start date.
- The new pastor is installed by a representative of the Office of Bishop at an agreed-upon time.
- A Healthy Congregations workshop is scheduled.

Congregational Council Checklist

- Accept pastor's letter of resignation and notify the congregation in writing
- Contact the Office of the Bishop to set up an exit interview
- Schedule a farewell event for the pastor
- Congregational Council and pastor fulfill all obligations
- Council facilitates an internal review of Parochial Records
- Certification of financial records and obligations between pastor and congregation
- Clarify new relationship with departing pastor, complete Letter of Agreement, notify congregation
- Conduct an exit interview with pastor and the Office of the Bishop
- Meet with the Office of the Bishop to talk about transition
- Office of the Bishop will recommend an intentional interim pastor
- Agree on recommended interim pastor and compensation package
- Welcome interim pastor
- Select a Transition Team
- Support the work of the Transition Team during the self-study process
- Elect/Appoint Call Committee
- Install Call Committee
- Receive name of primary candidate from Call Committee
- Call Committee Chair, Council President and candidate discuss and agree on compensation package
- Council votes to accept candidate (2/3 majority)
- Set date for congregational vote with at least two weeks' written notice to members
- Office of the Bishop mails official call documents to Council President
- Contact Office of the Bishop for a synod representative to be present at the congregation vote
- Immediately contact candidate with results of the congregational vote
- Mail signed call papers to the Office of the Bishop
- Receive acceptance/rejection of call from candidate (up to 30 days)
- Upon acceptance of a call, contact Office of the Bishop to set up a date/time for installation
- Schedule Healthy Congregations workshop





PHASE I

**Our pastor is leaving.
What do we do?**

Phase I: Our pastor is leaving. What do we do?

1: Concluding the Partnership with your Pastor

There are many reasons for a pastor to leave a congregation: retirement, another call, or personal reasons. No matter the reason, there will be a period of adjustment for the congregation. Some members of the congregation might feel sad, abandoned, or betrayed, while others might feel relief or even joy at a pastor's departure. From both ends of the emotional spectrum, there will be some who want to move ahead quickly, often ignoring the emotional work that is critical in transition time. Congregation members must be allowed to process their feelings in order to prepare for the next pastor. Processing emotions takes time and should not be minimized. Transitions are an opportunity to develop new ways of being that offer revitalization. Saying good-bye well can pave the way for a healthy new relationship later on.

Congregations are not alone during these times of transition. The Office of the Bishop is always in partnership with congregations and pastors, and will walk even more closely with congregations during pastoral transitions. As one pastor is leaving and the congregation prepares to welcome a new pastor into the future ministry, the Office of the Bishop offers specific and constitutionally-mandated recommendations for congregations. The relationship among the Office of the Bishop, the congregation and the pastor is a partnership where each one holds the other accountable to be who God is creating us to be: the body of Christ.

2: Consultation with the Office of the Bishop

- A. The current outgoing pastor indicates to the Bishop and to the congregational council that s/he will be leaving. (If the pastor is going to "On Leave from Call" status, they must send a formal written letter to the Synod Council.)
- B. The council president contacts the Office of the Bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod to begin the transition process and sets up a meeting with the Congregational Council. A representative of the Office of the Bishop visits with the Council to answer questions, to get to know the particular needs of the congregation, and to begin to build a stronger partnership with the congregation.
- C. The council president schedules an exit Interview with the Office of the Bishop, Church Council, and exiting pastor.

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

- A. When a pastor resigns, the congregational council shall receive the letter of resignation at a called meeting of the council. The date of departure should also be reflected in the minutes of the congregational council.
- B. The congregational council shall promptly inform all members of the congregation of the pastor's resignation. The announcement should be made orally and in writing. An

appropriate action would be a letter to all the members of the congregation, which includes:

1. Notice that the congregational council has accepted the pastor's letter of resignation;
2. The last date the pastor will serve the congregation and any plans for a farewell event;
3. Expressions of gratitude to the pastor and his or her family;
4. A copy of the pastor's letter of resignation.

C. The council president schedules an exit interview with the Office of the Bishop. The exit interview will be with the exiting pastor, church council, and a representative of the Office of the Bishop. The Bishop or a representative of the Office of the Bishop will conduct the exit interview. An exit interview (Appendix 2) is an intentional three-way whose purposes are:

- To evaluate the ministry;
- To identify areas of potential growth for the pastor and the congregation;
- To celebrate the ministry;
- To articulate appropriate boundaries and establish a covenant of behavior between the pastor and the congregation for the future health and well-being of the congregation (Appendix 3, Appendix 4).

4: Complete All Obligations

- **Portico Benefits:** The president and treasurer ensure that an End of Call form is completed in order to cease billing from Portico. The document can be found at www.porticobenefits.org. The congregation is responsible for the pension and benefits until this document is completed. The exiting pastor must complete a Change of Call form to inform Portico where to mail upcoming invoices.
- **Parsonage:** If there is a parsonage, consider scheduling a walk-through with the current pastor to plan for the resolution of any issues identified in the walk-through.
- **Future correspondence:** Obtain a forwarding address, phone number, and e-mail address to forward any mail that the pastor may receive and to mail anything that is not completed by the time of departure. It is helpful if this information is communicated to the Office of the Bishop as well.
- **Receive the Parochial Reports and financial record:** Upon the pastor's departure, the secretary of the congregation council will meet with the departing pastor to review and receive parochial reports and financial records. The parochial reports of each congregation should be kept in a separate book and will remain the property of the congregation. The secretary addresses and completes the Certificate of Church Records and Certification and Completion of Financial Records (Appendix 5, Appendix 6).
- **Settle financial accounts with the resigning Pastor:** A congregation under financial obligation to its former pastor must make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling another pastor. Such financial obligations may include loans on housing, grants, vacation pay, etc.

In the same manner, any financial obligations of the pastor to the congregation must also be satisfied.

5: Saying Farewell to Your Pastor

Because a resignation signals the end of an important covenantal relationship, it is common for congregation members to experience feelings of grief, sadness, anger, anxiety, etc. In order to help the congregation move through this experience, the council should arrange a farewell event (or events) for the exiting pastor and his or her family. You may consider using a Service of Thanksgiving and Farewell in the final worship service (Appendix 7).

The congregation council should plan appropriate expressions of appreciation for the resigning pastor and his or her family. This may take several forms, such as:

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

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

6: Planning for Transition

While the congregation is preparing for the final weeks of the current pastor's call, the congregational council works with the Office of the Bishop to plan for the transition process. The first question to consider is the viability of the congregation. All leadership should ask themselves whether this congregation has the financial and human resources to continue in full time ministry. If a congregation's viability is in doubt, significant conversation should take place between the Office of the Bishop and the congregational leadership.

If there are major outstanding debts or financial obligations, the holder of that debt may also need to be included in deciding an appropriate plan to move forward. Possible options may include:

- **Supply Pastor** – Consult the list of pastors found on the Rocky Mountain Synod website (www.rmselfca.org), found under Leaders→Pulpit Supply.
- **Long-Term Supply Pastor** – Under special circumstances, the Office of the Bishop can appoint a pastor for long-term supply for Word and Sacrament ministry. This is a contracted position, not a called position.
- **Renewal Pastor** – In consultation with the Office of the Bishop, a Renewal Pastor may be appointed to vulnerable congregations who require a special category of pastoral care and leadership. The Renewal Pastor will provide stability and develop an assessment of the congregation. This is often a term call (1-3 years).
- **Redevelopment Pastor** – In consultation with the Office of the Bishop, a specially-trained Redevelopment Pastor may be appointed to work with a congregation whose focus and direction in mission have changed due to a changing neighborhood or membership. This is a term call (1-7 years).
- **Intentional Interim Pastor** – In consultation with the Office of the Bishop, an Intentional Interim Pastor is selected by the congregation council. An Intentional Interim Pastor is contracted by the congregation and called by the Rocky Mountain Synod Council.

Things to remember

Every context is different

If the intentional interim process is appropriate for the congregation, the Office of the Bishop will provide at least two potential names to the congregational council. The council then interviews both candidates and determines which is the best match. (Please note: the Council can release both names if they choose, in which case the Office of the Bishop will continue to look for an appropriate candidate.) The council negotiates a time frame and compensation package with the interim pastor. In most intentional interim situations, the congregation contracts with the pastor while the official call comes from the Synod Council.

While waiting for an interim pastor, the council can invite a **supply pastor** to conduct worship and provide pastoral care. (A list of supply pastors is available on the synod website www.rmselca.org)

Because this time is so crucial in the life of the congregation, a long-term supply pastor is only a viable option when the future of the congregation is uncertain, or under other special circumstances.

Compensation package for an Intentional Interim Pastor (see Compensation Forms at www.rmselca.org)

Recommendations by the Office of the Bishop:

- **Non-negotiable:** Benefits, vacation, and involvement in the life of the Synod (Theological Conference, Synod Assembly and conference gatherings). First Call Theological Education is required for all newly-ordained pastors.
- **Negotiable:** Salary. This is negotiated by factoring in the exiting pastor's salary, the potential range of the new pastor's salary, continuing education, mileage, and Social Security offset.

Everyone needs to know his or her role

- **Remember, God is in charge!**
- **Office of the Bishop:** Responsible for holding you in prayer throughout the whole transition process, articulating the purpose of the intentional interim process, providing resources as needed to assist you, and providing appropriate and qualified candidates to the call committee.
- **Transitional Pastor:** Responsible for leading the ongoing ministry of the congregation, providing pastoral care, leading worship and administering the sacraments, and leading the transition team through the transition process.
- **Congregational Leadership:** Responsible for supporting and leading the congregation in its ongoing ministry and providing prayerful support and encouragement to the transition team and the call committee.
- **Congregation:** Responsible for supporting its ongoing ministries: baptisms, worship, faith formation, service, sacraments, stewardship, and relationship with the wider church. Also responsible for holding the transition team and the call committee in prayer.
- **Outgoing Pastor:** Responsible for maintaining professional distance from the congregation once they have departed by not contacting the congregation or its members and not getting involved in their work and ministry.
- **Future Pastor:** Responsible for prayerfully discerning God's call.

Theological Context for Transitional Ministry

A congregation in transition is shaped by the uniqueness of its individual context. Yet the Word of God transcends every context, moving and bringing forth what the congregation may need.

Transitional ministry - whether through a supply pastor, an intentional interim, or a long-term supply - finds its theological grounding within the Holy Scriptures. Consider the transitional ministries of some of the Bible's greatest leaders who encountered change in their context: Moses, Abraham and Sarah, and Deborah in the book of Judges. And that's just in the Hebrew Scriptures. We can turn to the New Testament and find even more biblical and theological grounding for transitional ministry. After all, isn't transitional ministry all about transformation? The Apostle Paul was transformed and became a transformational leader. There was John the Baptist, and, of course, Christ himself. From death to resurrection, Scripture points us to change and transformation.

History tells us that every congregation and every ministry is limited by time and scope.

For Moses, part of his life and ministry were spent wandering in the wilderness. Congregations in transition enter this wilderness experience immediately upon learning that there is going to be a pastoral shift in their leadership.

Margaret Morris and Joan Mabon, pioneering intentional interim pastors and trainers, have written in the Interim Ministry Network newsletter, The In-Between Times:

"Perhaps more than any other, the biblical motif 'wilderness' emerges most strongly as the metaphor for a congregation between installed pastors. 'Wilderness' is that place of sudden freedom, uncertain leadership, changed relationships, possible deprivation—temptations, hopes and disappointments. That place where all old fears reappear most threateningly... but where all the hopeful futures take on new promise. 'Wilderness' becomes a paradigm for the interim [transition] time."

As far as biblical precedent goes, John the Baptist just might be considered the first ever transitional pastor. He is definitely the model for intentional interim pastors. All transitional pastors strive to be the voice in the midst of the wilderness for any congregation in transition.

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. The transitional pastor prepares the way (i.e., the congregation) for the coming of the new called pastor, or another new direction the congregation will decide to take. John prepared the way for the new day, and transitional pastors do the same thing.

Intentional interim pastors work specifically within the congregational context, lifting a mirror to reflect to the congregation the culture within its own walls. The transition time led by the transitional pastor is one where the congregation does the work, preparing themselves to receive the newly-called pastor.

A transitional pastor, no matter what kind, works to work himself or herself out of a job. In John 3:30, John the Baptist points to the one who was called by God to take up ministry among the people: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

John the Baptist passed his ministry on to Jesus. Jesus, in turn, traveled throughout the countryside and into the villages and cities, constantly preparing his disciples to succeed him. The work of any congregation flows from the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, in, with, and through the will of God. Hence, transitional ministry in a congregation centers, first and foremost, on God.



PHASE II

Intentional Interim
and Self Study

Phase II: Intentional Interim and Self-Study

1: Intentional Interim Begins

- Litany for Beginning of Interim Ministry (Appendix 8)

2: Self-Study: Encountering God in our Midst

A. The Purpose of the Transition Team

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

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

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

B. Forming a Transition Team

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

In his book Dry Bones Breathe (1978), Robert Worley writes: “Members activate themselves. Leaders cannot activate others. They can model behaviors appropriate for church members to lead charismatically.” How does this apply to the transition team? A transition team must:

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

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

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

1. *Coming to terms with history*

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

2. *Discovering a new identity*

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

3. *Managing shifts in leadership*

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

Strengthening our sense of being the church together

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

4. *Committing to our new future and a new leadership*

As the work of the preceding four developmental tasks (coming to terms with our history, discovering a new identity, managing shifts in leadership, and strengthening our sense of being the church together) comes to maturity, the congregation becomes clear about their future so they can invite an appropriate new pastoral leader to lead them into that

new future. Other new staffing should be considered on conditional basis, so that the called pastor has the opportunity to determine future staffing.

D. The Work of the Transition Team: Other Tasks

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

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

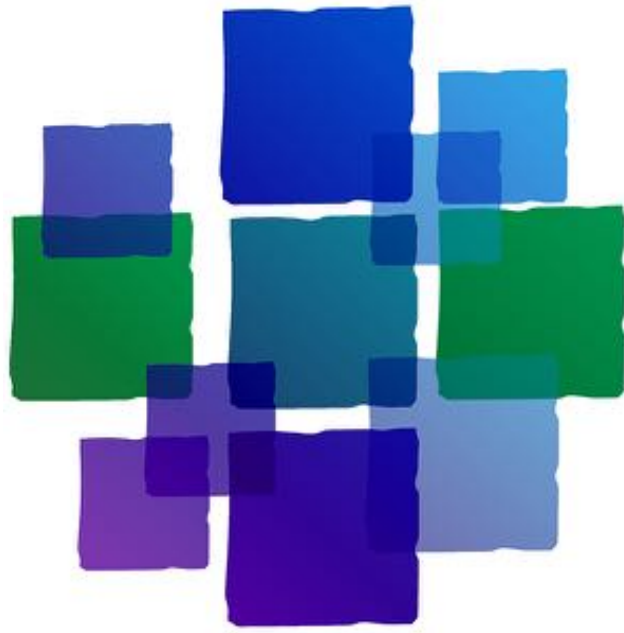
E. Helpful Documents for the Transition Team

- Review of the Congregation's History (Appendix 9)
- Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies (Appendix 10)
- Development/Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement (Appendix 11)
- A Review of Staffing Needs and Resources (Appendix 12)
- Intentional Stewardship (Appendix 13)
- Stewardship of Property Inventory (Appendix 14)

3: Report from the Transition Team

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





PHASE III

The Call Process

Phase III: The Call Process

1: Time of Intentional Prayer and Discernment

During the entire transition time, the Office of the Bishop holds the congregation and its leadership in prayer. Because transitions are such critical opportunities for healthy and vital growth, everyone needs to be open to where the Holy Spirit might be leading the community of faith. As soon as a transition is identified, prayer and discernment begin around possible future leadership.

2: Establishing a Call Committee

A. Purpose of a Call Committee

The purpose of the call committee is to identify the candidate who is best suited to lead the congregation into God's future. The call committee builds on the work of the Transition Team. The work of the committee must be done prayerfully, and the people on the committee must be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The call committee is not looking for the "best and brightest" candidate; rather, they are looking for the "right" candidate for this particular congregation.

B. Make-up of the Call Committee

The council should begin by reviewing the congregation's constitution to determine the structure and make-up of the call committee and the process by which its members will be selected.

Sometimes, members of a call committee come with a predetermined mindset about the next pastor. It is important for the committee as a whole to understand that each individual has his or her own bias, and to challenge each member to see beyond his or her own wants toward the greater good. Encourage people to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit moving within the call committee for the sake of the congregation's mission and vision.

The number of people on the committee can vary, but 6 to 12 people is generally a good size, depending on the size of the congregation. The committee should reflect the diversity of the congregation. Pay attention to age, gender, length of time as a member, levels of involvement, and attendance at worship. The number of council members on the committee should be limited. If not indicated by the constitution, the committee selects its own chairperson. The Congregational Council should share the name of the committee chair and its members with the representative of the Office of the Bishop (see Call Committee Member Form, Appendix 15).

C. Contact the Office of the Bishop

Once your call committee is formed, contact the Office of the Bishop in order for a representative of the Office of the Bishop to meet with your committee and the congregational council to discuss the call process.

D. Announcement of Call Committee Members

The names of the call committee members should be made public via your newsletter and bulletin. It is also appropriate to post pictures of the committee with the contact information in visible locations, and to request prayers and support for the call committee.

E. Installation of Call Committee

The work of the call committee is critical to the health and future well-being of the congregation. Installing the members to the call committee in a worship service and publically blessing their work is encouraged. Ask the congregation to pray for the people who will serve in this ministry (see Installation of Call Committee, [Appendix 16](#)).

F. Expenses of the Call Committee

Authorized expenses of the call committee should be paid for by the congregation. These may include:

- Opportunities for community building
- Administrative costs
- Hospitality during the interviewing of candidates
- Travel expenses as needed

G. Getting Started with the Call Committee

One of the benefits and responsibilities of the committee is to build relationships with each other. Take time to learn what gifts and skills each member brings to the work of calling a pastor. Because of the cross-section of people on the committee, it is likely that each will learn something about the other and his or her ministry. If the transition team has provided a report to the call committee, it is imperative that the call committee digest and take seriously the recommendations and observations of the transition team.

H. Meetings

Frequency of meeting depends on how the committee plans to complete the Ministry Site Profile and the variables of the process. Meeting once every two weeks is a good baseline to consider, though some committees meet every week. Set an appropriate time frame to prevent frustration and unnecessary delays.

Each meeting should begin with devotions and prayer (see some options for these under Prayers and Devotions for Call Committee, [Appendix 17](#)). Devotions should be intentional, not rushed. Inviting God into the conversation and opening one's ears to hear God's invitation are vital components to this process.

3: Ministry Site Profile

When considering the calling of a new pastor, the congregation should know its challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry so that the gifts of the pastor meet the needs of the congregation. The work of the transition team during the interim time is critical to this process (cf. Phase II, Part 3). The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) provides the opportunity for the call committee to articulate an accurate picture of the congregation. It is important that the profile be a thorough and honest reflection of the community, the congregation, and the congregation's mission.

The transition team will have completed Sections I and II of the MSP (which can be accessed online at www.elca.org/call). The call committee will complete Sections III, IV and V. Gathering information to include in the MSP must be the work of the whole congregation, but the call committee is advised to choose one person to input data into the document to maintain consistency of voice. Be sure to refer to the email and password information used by the transition team to complete Sections I and II of the MSP (see page 25). As the call committee completes this document, it is important for committee members to be in consultation with the transition team, congregation council, strategic planning team, and/or other lay leaders. Be sure to save your work frequently! It is recommended that the person who completes this document use the "Save As" button on the last page of the document to keep a remote copy on his or her personal computer for updating as needed.

After all sections are complete, the MSP should be reviewed by the Congregation Council to make certain there is agreement on the congregation's mission and the gifts needed in a new rostered minister. The congregation secretary should download and print a final copy of the profile for congregational record-keeping. Once the MSP is officially submitted electronically, the ELCA Churchwide Office will inform the synodical Office of the Bishop that the MSP is ready to be shared with potential candidates to interview.

After you have submitted the MSP document, be sure you have downloaded the Reference Recommendation form. You must click "Access your Account" to download your Reference Recommendations. If at any time you have questions or problems with the MSP document, please contact the Office of the Bishop and ask for the Office Administrator.

Please record the email and password used for your Ministry Site Profile!

Email: _____

Password: _____

4: Overview of the Interview Process

A. Basic Process Outline

All candidates being invited into the Rocky Mountain Synod will be vetted and cleared by the Synod Bishop, including any name raised from within the congregation from personal contacts. Once the Ministry Site Profile has been officially submitted, the Office of the Bishop will take 4-6 weeks to gather and find the best candidates for your congregation. Below is an outline of appropriate protocol to follow once these names have been officially offered to the call committee:

1. The chairperson will call each candidate within a week of receiving the names to let them know that their Rostered minister Profile has been received. This call is the first step in getting to know the candidate.
2. The committee will have an initial interview (usually by Skype) with each candidate. This initial interview usually lasts a half-hour or more.
3. After the initial interview, the committee can release any candidate who does not seem like an appropriate fit for the congregation.
4. If the committee would like to consider more candidates than the initial pool, additional names will be provided. The call committee can continue to receive names as needed.
5. The committee can invite any appropriate candidate(s) for an additional Skype interview or a face-to-face meeting to engage in further conversation and discernment.

Some ideas for this time together might include:

- Tour of the broader community
 - Sharing a meal
 - Tour of ministry site
 - Speaking with a realtor about potential housing opportunities
6. The committee must run a background check on the finalist candidate(s). The ELCA Churchwide Office recommends Oxford Document Management Company, Inc. (www.oxforddoc.com, info@oxforddoc.com, 800-801-9114).

See Section 5 for more detail about each step in this process.

B. Confidentiality

For the integrity of the process and out of respect for the candidate, it is critical that everyone involved must agree to maintain and respect confidentiality during the interview process. Prematurely divulging information about the consideration of a candidate may jeopardize the ministry of a pastor or sow division within a congregation. Conversations during the call process should remain confidential to the official meetings of the call committee. Committee meetings (and interviews) are not open to those who are not on the call committee.

C. Communication by the Call Committee to the Congregation

Names of candidates must remain confidential, but the call committee should otherwise regularly communicate to the congregation in general terms about its progress in the call process. The congregation should be made aware of the committee's hard work, and the committee should likewise ask for the prayers of the entire congregation during the call process.

D. Preparing to Interview Candidates

Before the interviewing begins, the call committee needs to meet, perhaps several times, to study carefully the oral and written information about each potential candidate given by the Office of the Bishop. The call committee is encouraged to review its commitment to trust each other, share openly and maintain confidentiality at this time. Whenever the call committee chooses to no longer consider a candidate, all materials related to that candidate should be shredded or returned securely to the Office of the Bishop.

Information packets should be prepared and sent to each candidate prior to his or her interview. Suggested items to include in the packet are: a recent annual report, worship bulletins, newsletters, a listing of staff, a list of congregation council members and call committee members, a picture of the call committee, and the congregation's constitution and mission statement. If you have a local Chamber of Commerce, you may ask it to provide an introductory packet of information about the community to include in this mailing.

Written communication verifying the agenda and length of the interviewing process should be sent prior to the meeting. If the candidate has a spouse, the call committee needs to be clear about whether the spouse is invited to accompany the pastor to visit the congregation and community. It is generally highly recommended that the spouse be invited to come along. However, the spouse should not participate in the interview. Because the decision to accept a call impacts the entire family, it is important that the spouse be able to see the church and parsonage (if there is one) and have a chance to ask any questions s/he might have. The advance communication should contain travel instructions to reach the interview site and indicate the commitment of the congregation to provide reimbursement for all expenses. If a spouse is invited to accompany the candidate, the committee should indicate whether or not they will also cover all expenses for the spouse. A prompt reimbursement of the candidate for expenses incurred should follow the interview.

Hearing Candidates Preach

If desired, call committee members may travel to a candidate's current congregation to hear him or her preach. They should, however, request permission from the pastor ahead of time. Please ensure that this visit is kept confidential so that people in the pastor's congregation do not recognize you as a call committee! If such a visit is not possible, the call committee may ask for audio and/or video recordings of the pastor's preaching. They may also arrange for the pastor to preach at another congregation in the vicinity (not at their own) so that committee members may hear him or her preach there. Please contact the Office of the Bishop to help make these arrangements.

5: The Interview Process

A. Initial Phone/Skype Interview

The initial phone or Skype interview is a brief opportunity for candidates and committee members to get to know one another. The committee should pick 4 to 5 questions to ask each candidate. Remember, consistency in questions between multiple candidates will be helpful. The main goal of this conversation is to make introductions and get a general feeling for each candidate. The interview should occur with equipment that allows all members of the call committee to be visible and to interact with the candidate. Examples of questions for this initial interview include:

- Tell us about yourself and your life of faith.
- Why are you an ELCA pastor?
- Tell us about what gives you life in parish ministry.
- Who have been the most influential people in your life?
- What excites you about our congregation?
- What would you like to know about us?

Try to come up with questions which will help you determine which candidates you want to invite for face-to-face interviews and which you want to release. It is good to invite as many strong, viable candidates as you can for a face-to-face interview, although cost may prohibit the committee from inviting more than one or two.

B. Preparing for the Face-to-Face Interview

The Ministry Site Profile, together with the other items you have previously mailed to the candidate, will give the candidate an initial impression of the congregation.

When the plan is to interview more than one candidate, an attempt is made to conduct each interview in the same setting and manner. For example, if the call committee meets with one candidate in a restaurant, the same pattern should be followed with any subsequent candidates. The call committee should be consistent in having the same person lead the interview each time and plan for committee members to ask the same basic questions of each candidate. This will ensure that all the bases are covered in each instance once the interview process begins.

The leadership needs which have been identified on the Ministry Site Profile should be used to form an outline for the interview. The committee will create approximately eight to ten detailed questions based on this outline. The committee should also be flexible and understand that a give - and - take conversation will not necessarily allow you to ask the questions in predictable order. (See [Appendices 18 & 19](#) for sample questions for an interview.)

**A crucial aspect of interviewing is the art of listening.
To be a good listener, several elements are important:**

- **INTEREST:** The person being interviewed has invested time and effort to be with you, and is worthy of the committee's undivided attention and respect.
- **BODY LANGUAGE:** Committee members can learn to set the candidate at ease by their own relaxed body language, which conveys openness, and a welcoming and non-defensive atmosphere.
- **PATIENCE:** The interviewer gives the person time to formulate thoughtful answers.
- **LINKING:** Building on what the person has said, the interviewer asks questions that pick up on information already shared in the interview. This indicates that you are thoughtfully listening.
- **ALERTNESS:** The interviewer remains alert for key words and phrases, making certain that they are understood by all committee members.
- **CONCENTRATION:** The interviewer listens for main ideas, not just facts and figures. They should ask themselves, "What is this person telling us?"
- **CLARIFYING QUESTIONS:** Interviewers ask clarifying questions to make certain they really understand what the person is saying. If a response is not clear, the committee should ask for it to be clarified. Doing so does not reflect ignorance but demonstrates that the committee is truly interested and trying to understand what the person is attempting to communicate.
- **DELIBERATION:** Committee members guard against coming to a hasty decision about a candidate. Thorough dialogue with other committee members and listening to all candidates are essential when making a final decision.

C. Preparing for the In-Person Visit

1. Set up dates and times for interviews, tours, and other activities.
2. Arrange for travel, lodging (hotel/motel), and meals.
3. If the candidate is flying, provide a car so s/he can look around on their own.
4. Determine which call committee members will initially meet and welcome the candidate.
5. Show the candidate (and his/her spouse, if applicable) around the area and provide periods of unstructured time for them to decompress away from the call committee.
6. Provide and accompany the candidate to meals.
7. Escort the candidate to the interview with the call committee.
8. Ensure that many different call committee members have a chance to interact informally with the candidate. For example, the person who provides transportation should be different from the people with which the candidate shares meals.

Remember

- All expenses are covered by the congregation.
- The spouse, if present for the visit, should not participate in the actual interview. All other activities should be planned with the spouse included.
- Give the candidates an anticipated timeline so they know who to expect to contact them and where.
- Give written materials to each candidate about the congregation.

D. Conducting the Formal Interview

The call committee should designate one member to host the candidate at the interview site. If the member is not accompanying the candidate to the interview, be certain that he or she is on-hand well before the candidate's anticipated arrival at the interview location.

The committee member chosen to direct the interview should outline the anticipated interview procedure for the candidate and indicate the time allotted for the interview. The candidate should be briefed on the "question and answer" format and alerted that he or she will have a chance to ask questions of the call committee. The lead interviewer is responsible for keeping the interview within the time allotted. Have all members of the call committee briefly introduce themselves to the candidate again, identifying his or her vocation and role played in the congregation. It may be helpful to have the candidate begin the interview with a brief devotional or Bible study and prayer, but if you choose to do this, be sure they are aware of this long before they arrive!

Before the committee's begins asking the interview questions, it is appropriate for the committee chairperson to ask the candidate to briefly tell the committee something about herself or himself (this should take no more than five to seven minutes). After this, the formal questioning may begin. Questions may be assigned to various members of the call committee, assuring that all members are actively participating. Don't hesitate to ask follow-up or clarifying questions if an answer is unclear to all members. Remember, the interview is intended to be a dialogue, not an inquisition! Just as the committee members are discerning the candidate's viability for the congregation, so is the candidate discerning whether the congregation is a good fit.

One committee member may be designated to take notes on the candidate's responses during the interview for later review by the committee. Note-taking should be done as unobtrusively as possible and the lead interviewer should alert the candidate beforehand that notes will be taken. Some committees might consider recording the interview, but recording should only take place with the candidate's consent and with the assurance of strict confidentiality.

Avoid asking questions which can be answered with a simple yes or no. For example, the questioner should not ask, "Do you think you are effective in your ministry to youth?" The candidate will almost surely answer, "Yes." Ask instead, "Tell us about your approach to ministry with youth," or "Give us some examples of how you have worked effectively with youth in your present or former parish." (Refer again to sample interview questions, [Appendices 18 & 19.](#))

In concluding the interview, the candidate may be invited to answer any questions not asked or make any other comments. The candidate should be thanked for coming and encouraged to be

in phone contact with a designated member of the call committee if any additional questions arise. The call committee should indicate the approximate time table involved in the completion of the congregation's call process. If possible, at the conclusion of the interview, the committee should reimburse the candidate for any expenses incurred, such as travel costs, overnight accommodations, and meals. If the reimbursement cannot occur at the time of the interview, it should be completed within the following week and an appropriate explanation given to the candidate.

E. After the Interview

Within one or two weeks of the interview, it may be helpful to reconvene the call committee to share initial impressions. It is important that these shared impressions are recorded for later reference.

As the committee engages in the process of selecting one candidate to recommend to the congregation council, it will be important to do several things:

- Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Review and clarify earlier understandings of what it means for the committee to reach a consensus.
- Allow ample time for each committee member to speak and be heard.
- Come to a decision that takes into account the five top leadership needs of the congregation.
- Choose the most suitable candidate, not necessarily the one you think is most likely to accept the call.
- While listening to your own heart and impressions, go beyond asking "Which candidate do I favor?" Instead, ask "Which pastor can best serve our congregation?"

6: Following Up with Candidates

A. Follow Up

The call committee should send a letter or note of appreciation to each candidate for his or her willingness to be interviewed. This letter may encourage the candidate to address any additional questions or concerns to the call committee. Any expense reimbursement not made at the time of the interview should be made now. Again, a promise of keeping the candidate current regarding the call process is essential.

It is crucial that the call committee immediately notify the candidate when s/he is no longer being considered. The decision should also be submitted immediately to the contact person from the Office of the Bishop who is assisting you with the call process.

Upon releasing a candidates from further consideration – whether after an initial phone or a face-to-face interview – it is helpful for the candidate to hear the reasons why you do not think she or he would be a good match for your congregation at this time. This information is helpful to both the call committee and the candidate because it fosters clarity in the selection process and gives the candidate an opportunity for growth. (See sample Release of Candidate letter, Appendix 20.)

B. Communication

Courtesy and professionalism are essential during this process. The call committee will communicate openly and honestly with the candidate and will continually inform the candidate about the status of their process. The call committee is also asked to stay in regular contact with the Office of the Bishop.

C. Finalizing a Candidate Recommendation

Discussion with the selected candidate should be continued to its conclusion, which might result in one of two possibilities:

1. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person is not the one the Holy Spirit is leading the congregation to call, the chair of the call committee should inform the candidate and the Office of Bishop. At this point, the Office of Bishop will provide names of additional candidates to the call committee. All other candidates should be released.
2. If the discussion leads to the conclusion that this person is the one whom the Holy Spirit is leading the congregation to call, the call committee should make a formal recommendation to the congregation council.

D. Making a Recommendation to the Congregation Council

As the Holy Spirit has guided the call committee to a candidate, the decision to recommend this pastor to the congregation council is typically reached by common consent. If through prayer and consideration, the Holy Spirit has led the call committee to a unanimous decision on a candidate, this is certainly a time for celebration. Unanimous consent is definitely the best option.

If this is not the case, the call committee shall vote by secret ballot. The candidate ought to receive at least two-thirds (2/3) vote of the call committee for approval. The call committee should have considerable conversation before moving forward with a less than unanimous candidate. The call committee should be able to articulate why it is moving forward with the recommending the candidate without unanimous consent.

7: The Vote of the Congregation Council on the Candidate and the Compensation Package

A. Preliminary Compensation Discussions

When the call committee has identified their primary candidate, the committee chair should contact the president of the congregation council and executive committee to have preliminary discussions about the compensation package. It is prudent to check with the candidate prior to his or her name being brought forth to council to ensure that the committee understands the candidate's compensation requirements and that they are in alignment with realistic compensation recommendations. The council president and/or the call committee chair should have that discussion with the candidate.

B. Special Congregation Council Meeting

The council president calls a special meeting of the council to hear the recommendation of the call committee. The committee chair presents the name of the pastor. A full report supporting the motion to recommend will accompany the recommendation. The council may also have the opportunity to meet and interview the candidate.

The following actions must be taken at this special congregation council meeting:

1. Candidate recommendation vote

A motion to recommend the call of the pastor to the congregation will be made, seconded, discussed, and voted on by the members of the congregation council. A 2/3 voting majority is required for the name to be presented to the congregation.

2. Compensation vote

The congregation council will also determine the compensation package to be recommended to the congregation for its approval. This package will carry the consent of the candidate. Approval of forwarding the compensation package to the congregation requires a simple majority vote of the council. Please refer to the current compensation guidelines for helpful information regarding appropriate compensation figures.

3. Special meeting of the congregation

Should the congregation council approve the call committee's recommendation, the council shall organize a special meeting of the congregation. The council will establish a date, time, and place for the special meeting of the congregation to vote on the call of the pastor and the compensation package. Proper arrangements will be made to notify the congregation of this meeting according to the congregation's constitution. Included in this notice will be the name and brief resume of the pastor and the compensation package. Prior to sending out this notice, the candidate should notify their current congregation council that they are now a primary candidate for this congregation.

4. Notification to the Synod Bishop

When the congregation council is ready to recommend a pastor to the congregation, it will notify the Office of the Bishop. The Bishop's office will supply a draft of the ELCA Letter of Call with a working copy in the call packet sent to the president of the congregation. The president or vice-president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and sending it to the Office of the Bishop for the Bishop's signature (S.14.11). The Bishop will normally appoint a member of Synod Council to be present at the meeting of the congregation when the vote is taken.

8: The Vote of the Congregation on the Candidate and the Compensation Package

A. Special Congregational Meeting

1. Quorum required

The person presiding at the meeting will determine that a quorum is present according to the congregation's constitution and bylaws.

2. First motion: vote to call the pastor

At the congregation meeting, the first motion presented by the congregation council is that the congregation vote to call the pastor. It will be seconded and discussed. The congregation council and/or call committee will present information about the pastor, why they were led to recommend this candidate to the congregation, and the strengths and gifts that the candidate offers to the ministry of the congregation.

Only the one name recommended by council can be voted on at this meeting. The vote shall be by secret written ballot. No absentee or proxy votes shall be accepted. The vote to elect is a least 2/3 affirmative vote of those present, as stated in the model constitution for congregations C9.01.

3. Second motion: compensation package

The second motion presented by the congregation council will be to approve the compensation package (salary, allowances, and other benefits) to be offered to the pastor. It will be seconded, discussed and voted on by the congregation. Amendments to the package recommended by the council can be made by majority vote of the congregation. The vote needed to approve the compensation package is a simple majority. It may be taken by voice vote, show of hands, or written ballot. It will be noted that if the amounts in the package differ from the approved budget, then a favorable vote, in effect, changes the budget for the year. Beyond constitutional limit, a separate motion must be brought to approve the new budget.

B. If the Call Is Approved by the Congregation

After the call and compensation package has been approved, a personal contact by the president or vice-president of the congregation will be immediately made with the pastor being called. The following procedure is used to send the official ELCA Letter of Call.

The president or vice-president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and sending it to the Office of the Bishop for the Bishop's signature (S.14.11). The pastor will send a letter of acceptance or decline of the call to both the congregation and the Bishop's office. The pastor will accept or decline the call within thirty (30) days, unless otherwise agreed upon.

C. If the Pastor Accepts the Call

The newly-called pastor, along with the congregational council, will set the date when ministry will begin in the new parish. The president or vice-president of the congregation council will consult with the newly-called pastor to determine when the acceptance may be publicly announced.

Arrangements for moving will be made between the pastor and the officers of the calling congregation. The calling congregation is responsible for moving expenses. In some circumstances, the pastor and the congregation may negotiate other arrangements.

D. If the Call Is Not Approved by the Congregation

In the event that the call is not approved, the secretary of the congregation council will draft a letter to the candidate to report officially the results of the congregational meeting and to conclude the call process. Personal contact with the pastor will be made before the letter is sent. The Office of the Bishop will also be immediately notified.

E. The Call Is Declined by the Pastor

In the event that the pastor does not accept the call, the process will begin again with more names being offered to the call committee. Refer back to the flow chart on pages 9 & 10.

9: Special Situations

1. First Call Candidates and Ordination

In the case where this is the candidate's first call, he or she must be ordained before being installed as the pastor. The ordination may take place at the candidate's home congregation or another congregation before being installed. They may choose to be ordained at their first call congregation. If this is the case, the officers of the congregation should contact the Office of the Bishop to prepare for a combined ordination and installation service.

2. Multiple-Congregation Parish

In the case of a parish with two or more congregations, each congregation votes separately on whether or not to call the pastor unless their constitution specifies another procedure. If there are not constitutional provisions for number of votes necessary for election, a 2/3 majority in each parish of all votes cast is necessary for approval. If the call is approved, the congregations authorize the joint council to issue the call and to agree on the salary and other items of support.

If one congregation approves the call and another does not, the call is not issued. No part of a joint parish may call a pastor without the participation of the other.

3. Associate/Assistant Pastors

When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor will be specified in documents that accompany the call. These documents must be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the congregation council, and the Office of the Bishop.

4. Term Calls

A congregation may call a pastor for a specific term of years. This departure from the normal rule of permanency must be described in a statement of purpose, which the Bishop must approve.

5. Part-time Ministries

Part-time ministries are normally defined as a minimum of 20 hours of work each week to qualify as a call. Anyone in part-time ministry must be given permission and opportunity to seek additional employment to supplement his or her income. Please refer to the compensation guidelines for more details. All arrangement for part-time calls should be discussed with the Office of the Bishop beforehand and details need to be in writing.

10: Installation of the new Pastor

The start of this new joint ministry between the pastor and the congregation is marked by the ritual of installing the pastor. The date is set in partnership with the pastor, the congregation, and the Office of the Bishop. The date and time should be set so that neighboring faith communities can celebrate with the congregation. Either the Bishop or a representative from the Office of the Bishop will preside at this service. The Order of Installation of the Pastor may be found in the Occasional Services Book.

During the First Year

The Office of the Bishop strongly recommends the first year of ministry be supported by an intentional program of relationship-building and leadership development. We recommend either **Healthy Starts** (www.healthystartup.org) or the **Church Development Institute** (www.churchdevelopmentinstitute.org). The Office of the Bishop can offer more details about the benefits of these two programs.

The Call Process for Second Pastors, Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, Diaconal Ministers, and Other Lay Leaders

Congregation councils and call committees are encouraged to follow the same process as previously listed for ordained rostered ministers when calling a second pastor or a lay rostered minister. All steps may not be required and should be adapted to the local situation (e.g. a person already employed by the congregation as a lay staff person and who becomes rostered). Assistance is available from the Office of the Bishop to help determine the appropriate process to follow in calling a lay rostered minister.



APPENDICES

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Covenantal Relationships

“A complete relationship needs a covenant . . . A covenantal relationship rests on a shared commitment to ideas, to issues , to values to goals, and to management processes . . . Covenantal relationships reflect unity and grace and poise. They are expressions of the sacred nature of relationships.”

from the 5th Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization written by Peter M. Senge. Senge is quoting from a book called The Art of Leadership written by M. dePree in 1989.

Appendix 1

Frequently asked questions about the transition process

How long will it take to find a pastor?

Every congregation is different and the length of the transition varies in length. Once the Transition Team completes their work and the Call Committee begins its work, it will normally take between 8-18 months, but some last longer. The length of the process depends on the number of candidates interviewed, the time call committee and candidates have available for conversation, and the needs of the congregation for grieving and preparation for the next pastor.

What will the congregation do during this time of transition regarding pastoral leadership?

In a pastoral vacancy, the Office of Bishop, in consultation with the Congregation Council, will appoint an Interim Pastor who will, at a *minimum*, lead worship/preach (or arrange for this leadership) weekly, meet with the Council each month, and provide emergency pastoral care. The responsibilities of the Interim Pastor will vary and may range from a few hours a week to full-time, depending on the availability of the Interim Pastor and the needs of the Congregation. A letter of agreement is signed between the Council and the Pastor that explains exactly what the Interim Pastor will be doing during this time and will be signed off by the Bishop

What are the sources of names provided by the Office of the Bishop to the Call Committee?

The names of the candidates come from a variety of places, including:

- Pastors from Rocky Mountain Synod asking to be available for conversation with Call Committees and having submitted their Rostered minister Profile.
- Pastors from other synods who have asked that their Rostered minister Profile be shared with congregations in the Rocky Mountain Synod. Please note that Candidates from outside the Rocky Mountain Synod must be given clearance by their Synodical Bishop and approved by the Bishop before they can be considered for an interview.
- Pastors identified by the Office of the Bishop as particularly suited for a congregation.
- Recent seminary graduates awaiting their first Call.
- Names of Pastors suggested by members of the Congregation must be shared with the Office of the Bishop and approved by the Bishop to be considered potential candidates.

How do we determine appropriate compensation?

While not every congregation is able to reach or exceed the recommended figures, the synod compensation guidelines serve as benchmarks to guide congregations and candidates in helpful conversation regarding what is fair and adequate. If compensation is far below guidelines, fewer candidates may be able to consider the call to a particular congregation. A representative from the Office of the Bishop will accompany you through this process.

Can we invite the candidates to preach in our congregation on a Sunday morning?

Although it has been a common practice in the past, it is not our recommendation that candidates be invited to preach in a congregation where they are being considered. If a candidate preaches in the congregation, the entire congregation becomes involved in the overall process and members are put in the position of deciding on that person's merit on the basis of worship leadership and one sermon alone, which is only one of many elements of pastoral ministry. The effect is to displace the careful, prayerful discernment of the Call Committee. The Call Committees should travel to the Pastor's congregation or to a neutral site to hear him or her preach. When a Pastor is being considered and is not presently serving a site the Synod staff can assist in setting up a supply location for him or her to preach and lead worship where the call committee could go to participate in worship. It is appropriate for the congregation to meet the final candidate at an informal meet and greet.

Should the congregation expect there to be expenses related to the work of the Call Committee?

Yes. Mileage reimbursement to committee members and to any candidates who interview with your committee can be expected. The committee may also have receipts for expenses related to meals or refreshments provided. We recommend that you use the standard IRS mileage rate for reimbursement. Often councils will designate the expenses of the Call Committee and the process out of any remainder left in your pastoral compensation package.

Should there be alternate members of the Call Committee?

We do not recommend alternate members; however, if alternates are elected or appointed, they should attend all meetings of the Call Committee and have voice, but should not vote unless a regular member of the Committee finds it necessary to relinquish his or her position.

Appendix 2

Exit Interview – Sample Questions

Questions the committee might ask:

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

Questions the pastor might ask:

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

Appendix 3

Letter of agreement between a former pastor & congregation

This is a letter of agreement at the time of resignation/retirement between Pastor _____ and the congregation council of _____ in _____ city, _____ state. It is a clarification of the former pastor's role in relationship to this congregation. It is to be shared throughout the congregation so that others may understand changes in responsibilities and can cooperate together as the congregation and former pastor move into another phase of their respective lives.

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

Former Pastor: _____ Congregational President: _____

Appendix 4

Sample newsletter article for congregation

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONGREGATION AND DEPARTING PASTOR

Because we want everyone to be aware of some important issues related to the transition between pastors, we ask you to read this carefully.

The Church Council and former Pastor have agreed to the following, and seek your cooperation, regarding the positive future relationships among us:

We will do everything possible to uphold the mission of the Church and the positive quality of life in this congregation.

We will recognize the need for time to adjust to the new relationships, and will reach out in care and compassion to one another.

We will honor the departure of the former pastor so duties may be relinquished; and will honor the arrival of the new pastor by seeking her/his counsel and ministry. We are aware that conducting pastoral acts (such as baptism, weddings, funerals, confirmations, communions) and defining ministry programs and leadership styles are no longer the prerogative of the departing pastor, but belong to the arriving pastor with the Council and congregation.

While we recognize that the departing pastor (and family) will continue to be our friends, **we will not seek**, nor will the pastor accept, official roles in the congregation for “pastoral acts.” They may be included in the invitation list to attend as friends, if schedules and logistics permit.

Experience across the Church has shown that continuing relationships with former pastors is very positive when the above things are kept in mind.

Appendix 5
**Certification of congregation records
at the time of a pastoral transition**

*(To be completed by the secretary of the congregation and submitted to
the Office of the Bishop in the Rocky Mountain Synod)*

In anticipation of a pastoral vacancy, I have examined the Parish Register of

Name of Congregation

Address of Congregation

Name of Pastor

and testify that the records have been maintained in good order during the tenure of this pastor, in accordance with the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations which stipulates, "The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod"

Signature of Congregation Secretary

Date

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 or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

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

Appendix 6

Certification of completion of all financial obligations

All financial obligations, salary, pension, health, death benefits and allowances, together with Continuing Education funds have been met and paid to:

Rev. _____
up to the effective date of termination of services. Also, satisfactory settlement of financial obligations has been made by Rev. _____
to the _____ Lutheran Church.

Date

Pastor

Treasurer

Please return this form to:

Office of the Bishop
Rocky Mountain Synod
7375 Samuel Dr.
Denver, Colorado 80221

Appendix 7

Thanksgiving and farewell at the conclusion of a call for Pastor _____ at _____ Lutheran Church City _____, State _____

Pastor _____, in _____ of _____ the people of _____ Lutheran Church called you to be their pastor. As pastor, you were called here to proclaim God's word, to baptize and teach, to announce God's forgiveness, and to preside at the Lord's Table. With the gospel you have comforted the people of _____ in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of loved ones. Sharing joys and sorrows, you have been important to the life of this community within the church of Jesus Christ, in their service to this community, and in God's mission to the whole world.

On Sunday _____ the congregation's call to you comes to an end. As you leave this community of faith and say farewell to one another, we give thanks for your ministry and pray for God's blessing.

PULPIT: You were invited into this pulpit. From this place you have proclaimed the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ countless times throughout these past years. This pulpit has not belonged to you; the saving message of Christ is not something one can possess, but only bear witness to. You have been a faithful occupant of this church's pulpit and messenger of the good news of God's love in Christ. As you leave this pulpit we thank God for your preaching ministry.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

FONT: At this font you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Through the cleansing waters of baptism we welcome new members into the family of Christ. The gift of new life in Christ belongs to God. The church is the custodian of this rite of welcome, and you have introduced this congregation to many new brothers and sisters in the faith. You have presided as confirmands affirmed their baptismal promises. As you leave this font, we thank you for your ministry surrounding baptismal promises.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

ALTAR: At this altar you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Communion. You have reminded the members here of the story of Jesus' beginning of this meal. You have provided instruction to those who would receive it for the first time. The meal is the Lord's, and this congregation has been provider of this meal to all who seek to be fed with the living presence of Christ. You have presided over this meal so that it could be served in an orderly fashion. As you leave this table, we thank you for presiding at the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

CHANCEL STEP: Standing in front of this congregation you have led services of thankfulness to God for people who had died. You led this community in the midst of grief while expressing gratitude for God's gift of life. You proclaimed the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and encouraged the community with the comfort of the gospel. As you leave this sanctuary, we thank you for your presence in times of loss.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

CHANCEL: It is here that you presided at services where couples were married. You were present to rejoice with those who rejoice. Thank you for sharing those and other great times of joy.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

People of God, as representatives of the members of _____ Lutheran, and with thanks to God for the ministry of Pastor _____ among you, do you now release her/him from service as your pastor?

We do, and we give thanks to God.

Pastor _____, with thanks to God for the members of this community and for their ministry with you, do you recognize and accept the completion of your ministry with _____ Lutheran Church?

I do, and I give thanks to God.

Let us pray. (presider and council members lay hands on pastor) Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock. We give you thanks for the ministry of Pastor _____ among the people of God in this place.

You watch over our going out and our coming in: bless this time of ending and beginning. You surround your people in every time and place: keep us close in your love. You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial: prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together; heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us. Help Pastor _____, as well as the people of this congregation to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us.

As she/he has been a blessing to this congregation, so now send her/him forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Pastor _____ and representatives of _____ Church : your sisters and brothers in the Rocky Mountain Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared. We promise you both our continued support and prayer.

Rejoicing in the blessings of God in this congregation and in the ministry of Pastor _____, with hope in God's abundant grace in years to come, I announce that this pastoral relationship is ended effective _____.

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. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Appendix 8

Liturgy of beginning for interim ministry

It would be appropriate to insert this ritual into the Sunday morning liturgy on the first or second Sunday that the Interim Pastor begins ministry among you. As a symbol of beginning, it makes more sense to place it at the beginning of the service after the greeting and the Kyrie.

Congregation President: Pastor _____ has been recommended by the Office of the Bishop and affirmed by the Congregation Council at _____. The Council met on _____ to interview this pastor and we believe that s/he has the gifts necessary to guide this congregation through the transition process. I will now read the interim agreement between Pastor _____ and this congregation.

Congregation President (*reads the agreement*):

Congregation President (*to the pastor*): Is it also your understanding of this agreement?

Pastor: It is, and I commit myself to this new trust and responsibility. I promise to fulfill my responsibilities here to the best of my ability in accordance with the scripture, with the Lutheran Confessions, and the Constitution of the ELCA. Will you as a congregation receive me as your pastor and partner in ministry as we seek God's call for us in this interim period?

Congregation: We will.

Congregation President: Welcome Pastor _____. We now officially begin our partnership in this interim ministry in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor: Let us pray:

Almighty God, you call your people in baptism into death and resurrection of your son, Jesus Christ. You turn us from the old life of sin and gave us rebirth and everlasting life. May we be renewed daily by the gift of your Holy Spirit and may we be especially aware of your leading in this interim period. Grant us faithfulness and peace in all that we do that you might be gloried among us. We pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

Appendix 9

Review of the congregation's history

Congregations need to come to terms with their history in order to move on. There is in every congregation that which has been creative and worth celebrating and that which has been debilitating. And just as human beings are shaped by their histories and experiences, so too, is a congregation.

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

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

- Have a **History Day** and invite people to bring old snapshots of past church events. Plan an album by decade or by year where these pictures can be put and invite people to tell and write stories about them in the album. Make it a day of celebration.
- Make a **timeline of the church** putting years of pastors' service, building projects, significant events of the congregation on the line. And then ask members to write on the timeline when they joined or were married or were baptized. Ask them to write memories on the timeline of things that were significant for them. Talk about the events and what they mean to people. Don't be afraid to talk about why a pastor left or why a pastor served for only a short time. Name the emotions that people experience in the memory.
- Put a **church trivia quiz** in each newsletter. Be sure to publish the answers since knowledge of the history is what this is about.
- Do an **APA (Achieve, Preserve, & Avoid) Analysis** with various forces groups.

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

With the pastor, pay special attention to individuals who are having difficulty with this process. Not everyone will be able to move ahead at the same rate and pastoral care is important to everyone. Since your interim pastor does not know members as well as you do, be helpful in identifying for him/her, people who may need special pastoral attention.

Appendix 10

Review of the congregation constitution and policies

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

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

When you have updated your constitution, you may send it to the Synod Constitution Committee for review Office of the Bishop 7375 Samuel Dr. Denver, Colorado 80221. The committee will make sure that you don't have conflicting statements in sections and that it is consistent with the ELCA model constitution. The committee will return your constitution within 120 days and keep a copy of file in the synod office. If the 120 days expire before it is returned, the constitution becomes effective as it was sent in. Remember that a change in the constitution, even an update, takes a congregational vote, so be sure to do this early in the transition process.

While this task is assigned to the oversight of the transition team, it is likely there are one or two people in the congregation who are gifted and interested in this particular task. Let those people work out the draft and bring it to the church council for review and revision.

At the same time that you are reviewing your constitution, be sure that your congregation policies are in place and up to date. At a minimum every congregation should have a current personnel policy and financial policy including endowments and investments. You should also look at creating a mutual ministry policy, wedding and funeral policy, memorials policy, safe children policies, publications policy, policies regarding use of building and special equipment, etc.

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

Appendix 11

Review of core values, mission statement and vision statement

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

Every church also has a vision, what it shall be some day. A vision is necessary for survival. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (*Proverbs 29:18*) Maybe you have not given much thought to your congregational vision lately. The interim period is a good time to re-vision your congregation. Prepare your hearts for the vision that God has for you. Spend intentional time in the interim period with spiritual disciplines. Establish a Bible Study and encourage everyone’s participation. The Book of Acts has a lot to offer a congregation doing a self-reflection and self-study as do Paul’s letters to the Corinthians. The Book of Nehemiah, probably less familiar to many, is the story of great visionary who sets about rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. He encounters many of the same things that congregations today encounter.

As you prepare your hearts and minds for God’s vision for your congregation, you will be asking yourself: “What is our purpose? What is God calling us to be?” And then as you discover your vision for your future, you will identify the activities you will engage to get there. This becomes your mission statement.

A vision statement is more about becoming:

- It pictures the future of your church as God has planned it to be
 - It describes the results you hope you will realize in the “real world”
 - It captures the uniqueness that God has given your church
 - It is short, motivational, and easy to memorize
- Example: to be a church that is known as a safe haven for all people.

A mission statement is more about doing:

- It tells something about your purpose as a part of the larger body of Christ
 - It hints at how you will make your vision a reality
 - It is short, motivational, and easy to memorize
- Example: We welcome our neighbor with enthusiasm and love, knowing that God will show us the ministry we might do.

Core values are more about being:

- Each one will describe what people experience in your congregation
- Together they capture the uniqueness which is your congregation
- They are fundamental to the beliefs and lived out

Example: Empowerment; Hospitality; Challenge; Journey; Community

So let's think about the process you might engage in order to develop or redefine your core values, vision, and mission. Let's begin with, *Core Values are intended to communicate what the congregation stands for and on what principles it operates. They guide the everyday actions of members and staff as well as congregational planning.* We assume that a congregation which demonstrates its core values at a high level, it will be more effective in its ministry as will be easier to be identified by others.

1. One way to help people discover and identify their core values would be to invite all, congregation members to gather in focus groups after church on a Sunday. It will actually take two Sundays, two weeks apart and they should both be scheduled before you have the first one. Make it celebratory and not a drudging "duty." What could be more exciting than discovering what God is calling you to do? As they are seated at tables, tell them that you are going to articulate your core values in order to be focused in your ministry. Define core values in a way that is clear to all, maybe as simply as using the definition above.
 - At the second meeting, two weeks later, give each person 10 sticky notes and ask them to put the dots by the ten values that they feel the congregation should claim as its core values. In other words, what are the top ten things to live by as a congregation? Have some more discussion about those ten values: How have Ask them to write on sticky notes (one comment per note), the main things that they personally live by. For example, some may write kindness, honesty, hospitality, friendliness, privacy, or integrity. Others may include things like family, friends, relationships, achievement, jokes and humor. All of these things reflect values of individuals. Ask them to go put all those sticky notes on the wall someplace where all may see them.
 - On different color sticky notes, ask them to write things that reflect the values of the congregation. What are some words that reflect how the congregation makes decisions, treats people, and does ministry? Some of the words might be the same, but new words may be added as well. Ask them to put those sticky notes on the wall as well.
 - Then there will be a time of "storytelling." Ask people about a time when one of those "congregational values" was demonstrated. Keep that conversation going until everyone who is willing has had a chance to share. Ask if there have been times when the congregation has acted in ways that reflect values other than those listed? Add those values to the list. Ask if there are things on the personal values list that should be added to the congregation's value list? Add those values to the list.
 - Let people think about the values as they leave this section and let them know that they will gather again to refine the list. Take the information from the sticky notes and put it on a single page and leave the values posted somewhere in the church where people have access to them. Ask people to add to the list if they think of something during the next two weeks they seen them reflected? How might they be guides in decision making? How have those values formed their thinking? How have those values shaped their faith journey? Then ask the members to select the top five core values. They may decide they want to name

them something different in order to incorporate one or more values. For example, they may have kindness and helpfulness as core values but may decide to change the word to compassion in order to incorporate both words.

- Post the core values in a place where people can see them and begin to ask about them in terms of stories that reflect those values. Bring up the values at council meetings as decisions are being made and ask what decision would best reflect our values. Live with them for a while and get feedback through the council. Note differences between the preferred values (what is listed) and true values (what is demonstrated) of the congregation. Set a time to talk about those at a later date.
2. Your congregation probably has a **mission statement** already. Does it reflect your core values? Does it describe the overall purpose of the congregation? Is it clear to those who are not members or part of the congregation? Does it guide the members of the congregation as they make decisions, make policies, and develop ministries? Do the members of the congregation know and embrace the mission statement? Where is the mission statement displayed? Where is it discussed? How does the mission statement shape the mission of the congregation and how is the mission of the congregation reflected in the mission statement?

It's usually easier to write a mission statement in a small group than in the congregation as a whole. It is important, however, to have a feedback loop that includes everyone, so that the statement is not something imposed on them and the congregation can "own" it.

3. A **vision statement** reflects where the congregation sees itself in the future if it is effectively carrying out its mission. Putting together a vision statement can be an enjoyable process allowing people to "dream big" and "imagine success." The statement can be used as a motivational tool or as a reminder of why we do what we do as a congregation. A helpful vision statement is one that has an idealism mixed with realism. What will your congregation look like in ten years if you are actively engaged in your mission? What does God have in mind for you given the gifts he has placed in this congregation?

Appendix 12

A review of staffing needs and resources

It is often the case that when a pastor resigns, staff members submit undated letters of resignation as well. The smaller the congregation, the more appropriate this is. A pastor should be allowed then to work with the people who are in place for a few months to decide if the working relationship is such that he/she can accept the resignation(s) or simply tear up and rewrite new contracts for staff members.

This process of requesting staff resignation is sometimes difficult because our tendency is to want to “take care of” the people we have come to know on the church staff. Certainly compassion for staff members is important and that will be reflected in their compensation, bonuses, and severance packages if their resignations are accepted. Always keep in mind that our congregation has a purpose: a vision and a mission to make disciples of God’s kingdom.

As you begin to look for a new pastor, it is time to look at the total staffing picture as well. Staffing is a function of the vision of the congregation. And as a function of vision, staffing should always be focused on the future. A rule of thumb is to staff for the next step of your future. What is your next step? What functions will need to be carried out to reach your vision? Who is gifted in those areas? Are there volunteers in the congregation who see this as their ministry? Is paid staff the best alternative? Should the staff position be full or part time? Are there people available for full time or part time?

Congregations sometimes seem hesitant to evaluate staff members, however careful and regular evaluation is a benefit both to the employee and to the mission of the congregation. Volunteers might also be given opportunity for evaluation as well. Keep in mind that evaluations are not a measure of the person so much as they are a measure of whether that person is right for that particular task or job. Every existing job should have a job description. Checking the written job description against what that employee may be now expected to do is a task for this interim period. Your interim pastor will help you find resources for staff evaluations, for writing job descriptions and for developing a policy for regular evaluations in the congregation.

As you look at the tasks ahead to carry out your mission, you will need to discern whether volunteers will be as effective as paid staff and whether the task requires full time or part time work. If the task requires part time staffing now, how will it increase as the ministry grows? Continually evaluate your ministry and the increases in work that employees and volunteers take on. Look at the market to establish fair wages and benefits. Annually review employee compensation and compare to cost of living increases, market parity, and value to the congregations. **Treat employees fairly.**

You are in the process right now of evaluating your pastoral needs. How should those be balanced with other staff positions in your congregation? Remember that Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses are trained in a variety of specialties such as: Youth and Family Ministry, Educational Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Music Ministry, Administration, Spiritual Care and Counseling. It’s possible that a trained lay person might fill some of your ministry needs as you grow into your future.

Some congregations have staff positions in these areas:

- Director of Music
- Office Administrator
- Director of Christian Education
- Director of Adult Ministry
- Director of Small Group Ministry
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Hospitality Coordinator
- Visitation Coordinator
- Director of Family Ministry
- Youth and Family Minister
- Director of Outreach and Social Ministry

Clearly each one of these comes with a job description that helps the specific congregation carry out its mission. And each of the congregations has developed its mission based on how it understands the vision that God has for them. Once you are clear about your values, vision and mission, and appropriate staff, and then look at the possibilities for staffing.

Appendix 13

Intentional stewardship

Supporting the mission of your congregation is more than just hiring staff as was discussed in the last section. But often the process is the impetus to look as stewardship in the congregation. Talk over a stewardship strategy with your interim pastor and feel free to contact the synod for resources in this area.

Stewardship is a key to accomplishing the mission of the congregation and is a reflection of its health as well. There is no “perfect” stewardship plan for a congregation and the same plan may or may not be effective in any two years. However, every stewardship plan is integral to your core values, your vision, and your mission.

We are sometimes hesitant to talk about stewardship in churches, forgetting that we exercise stewardship every time we make a decision about what we will or will not do. Christians are called to be intentional about their stewardship, not just of money, but of their time and other resources as well. Intentional stewardship is bringing to consciousness and witness those things that we are already doing and those things that we intend, with God’s help, to do in the future.

As you develop your stewardship plan in the congregation remember these things:

- People give to purposes they believe in.
- People give to things that make a difference.
- People give to things where they feel they have “ownership.”
- People tend to be generous, decent, and fair.

Think about how you present an overall stewardship plan that includes regular offerings to the congregation, special gifts and capital campaigns, and end of life of legacy gifting. The congregational council has the opportunity to take leadership on stewardship during the transition time. Work with your interim pastor as you develop your intentional stewardship plan.

Related to your overall stewardship plan is an inventory of your corporate physical plant? As you get ready to call a new pastor and re-evaluate your ministry as a congregation, the following inventory will give you some questions to ask yourselves about property and the message the property gives as a witness to who you are. It isn’t meant to be a check list, to simply answer the questions, but as a guide for making improvements and upgrades to make the building more inviting and hospitable to guests. It will lead to discussions within the council, then as to non-material ways to be hospitable as well.

Appendix 14

Stewardship of property inventory

1. Are you proud to bring friends, guests and visitors to your church?
2. When was the facility built?
3. Is the building well located for present and future community needs?
4. When was the last renovation? What kind of renovation was it? How much did it cost?
5. How were the funds raised for the last remodel/renovation?
6. Are outdoor signs well placed for traffic visibility? Are they lighted?
7. Is information current on outdoor signs?
8. Do outdoor signs have phone numbers, email and WEB addresses?
9. Does the property look well kept? Is it landscaped?
10. Is access to the main entrance to the building easily identified?
11. Do the main doors have glass for easy visibility?
12. Is the facility handicapped accessible? Do the outdoor signs have accessibility symbol?
13. Is there adequate parking? Is the parking lot lighted?
14. Is there well marked visitor and handicapped parking?
15. Are there good directional signs inside the building (to bathrooms, office, sanctuary, fellowship hall etc.)?
16. Are hallways and rooms well light?
17. Are the windows clean?
18. Are closets and storage areas assigned and tidy?
19. Are Sunday School rooms free of excess paper and clutter and do they invite?
20. Are the bathrooms clean?
21. Is there a baby changing table in the bathrooms (both men's and women's)?
22. Are faucets and drinking fountains free of leaks?
23. Have the halls and rooms been recently painted?
24. Are bulletin boards updated and kept tidy?
25. Is the nursery clean and in good repair? Are toys checked and cleaned on a regular basis?
26. Is the floor in good repair? Is the carpeting up to date?
27. Is the roof in good repair? Has water damage been repaired?
28. Are fellowship areas welcoming to stranger?
29. Are chairs and tables in fellowship areas clean and orderly?
30. Is the sanctuary inviting and inspiring?
31. Are the pews comfortable and convenient for families and elderly?
32. Is there non-obtrusive but convenient space for wheelchairs in worship?
33. Is the furnace and heating system in good repair?
34. Is there a need for air conditioning in offices or sanctuary? Is it in good repair?
35. Is there ongoing capital fund for building emergencies and planning remodels?

Appendix 15

Call Committee member form

Please fill out this form and mail to the Office of the Bishop

Congregation: _____

Address: _____

President: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: Home: _____ Office: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Chair of the Call Committee: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: Home: _____ Office: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Secretary of the Call Committee: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: Home: _____ Office: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Other Committee members: (Names, Phone numbers, E-mail addresses):

*Mail or FAX to:
Office of the Bishop, Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA
7375 Samuel Dr.
Denver, Colorado 80221
FAX: 303-339-4744*

Appendix 16

Installation of Call Committee

To be included in the worship service before the prayers of the people.

Interim Pastor: *The following persons, having been chosen/elected to be the Call Committee, are asked to come forward as their names are called:*

Interim Pastor: Saint Paul writes: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability for some particular service to everyone. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

You have been appointed to a position of leadership and trust in this congregation. You are to seek the will of God and the mind and spirit of the congregation with regards to our pastoral needs.

You will examine the qualifications of prospective pastors, interview those who appear to be suitable candidates, recommendation regarding the issuance of a call by the congregation. In all your deliberations, you are to be examples of faith active in love, seeking to maintain the life, harmony and ministry of this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I now ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the Call Committee?

All: We will and ask God to help and guide us.

The committee faces the congregation, which stands.

Interim Pastor: People of God, I ask you, will you support these, your brothers and sisters in Christ, in their task, and will you undergird their efforts with your prayers?

Congregation: We will.

Interim Pastor: I now declare you installed as the Call Committee of this congregation. God bless you and your work together.

Appendix 17

Prayers and devotions for the Call Committee

FOR THE WORK OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts: Look on your Church with grace and guide the minds of those who shall choose a pastor for this congregation, that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOR THE DEPARTING PASTOR:

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

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.

DURING INTERVIEWS:

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.

DURING INTERVIEWS:

God, keep us mindful of your presence among us as we seek to discern your will for us. We pray that you will help us see beyond our own needs to the needs of your Church. We pray that you will open our eyes to new possibilities, and opportunities of being your people. Guide us and lead us O Lord. Amen.

AT MEETINGS

Life-giving God, create among us a desire to do your will. Open our hearts to your Word. Lead us as we seek to lead. Guide us as we seek to guide. God, we seek a new pastor to be among us to lead us and walk with us into future ministry. Direct and sustain us as we wait. Bless all who serve in the congregation, especially those who have the responsibility to lead us during the Call Process. Bless us Lord Jesus. Amen.

Appendix 17

Suggested Biblical texts

The following are just a few texts that may be used for devotions or bible study during the Call Process. The lessons for each Sunday may also be used for your study.

- Matthew 28: 16-20
- The Call of Matthew: Matthew 9:9-13
- Call of the first Disciples: Luke 5: 1-11
- Romans 12: 1-8 (9-21)
- I Corinthians 3:1-9
- Ephesians 6: 10-18
- Philippians 2: 1-11
- I Timothy 2: Instructions concerning Prayer
 - 3: 1-7 Qualifications of Bishops
 - 3: 8-13 Qualifications of Deacons
 - 4: 6-16 a Good Minister of Jesus Christ

- Reflections on God's Call:
 - Call of young people:
 - Samuel : I Samuel 2:1- 3:18
 - Mary: Luke 1: 26-38
 - Call of Elderly:
 - Elizabeth and Zechariah : Luke 1
 - Abraham and Samuel: Genesis 18: 9:15
 - Simeon and Anna: Luke 2: 22-38
 - Call of the Disciples:
 - Follow Me: Matthew 4:18-22; Mk:1-16-20; Luke 5: 1-11

- Reflections on being the Church:
 - Read The Book of Acts together. Read one chapter a week and begin meetings by reflecting on recent readings and the ministry of your congregation.
- Reflections on "Wilderness Wandering"
 - God's People waiting for clarity: Numbers 9:15-23
 - God's people grumbling in the wilderness – and God providing: Exodus 16:1-7

Bible Study

LEADER: Open with Prayer:

(Suggestion: Almighty God, we look to your Word for guidance and hope. Open our hearts and our minds that we may hear your word for us. Guide us through your Word to hear the good news for our lives together through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.)

A. One person reads the lesson:

- In silence write one word or phrase from the lesson that seems significant:
- Each person shares the word or phrase without additional comment.

B. A second person reads the lesson:

- In silence reflect on what this passage is saying to you.
- Each person may share her/his reflection without additional comment.

C. A third person reads the lesson:

- Each person reflects in one sentence or less what this passage is saying to the Congregation at this time while you are in the Call Process.
- If time allows, a 10-20 minute open discussion may be included at this time.

Closing Prayer:

LEADER: *Lord God, we are your servants in need of your love.*

The leader then offers a prayer for the person on her/his right. That person prays for the person on her/his right, continuing around the room until each person has been included.

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Appendix 18

Sample questions for candidate interviews

The following questions are merely suggestive; however, in forming any particular question the key issue is, "What answer are you looking for? How will you know when it's answered well?" Each question may be evaluated in three ways: (a) What does it have to do with the position? (b) What do we need to know? (c) Would we be willing to answer the same questions about ourselves?

1. Tell us about your faith journey.
2. Share with us your calling that led you to become a pastor.
3. Describe the areas of ministry which you value as high priorities.
4. Talk about the ministry areas you like to do. Why?
5. What pastoral roles give you the most trouble? Why?
6. Discuss your strengths as well as those areas on which you need work.
7. Share your thoughts regarding the worship life of the congregation.
8. What are your expectations for yourself and lay persons in liturgical practices?
9. Describe your preaching philosophy and style. What things do you emphasize in your preaching. What are your ideas regarding children's sermons?
10. Discuss your thoughts, expectations and requirements concerning catechetical instruction.
11. Discuss in detail your expectations/philosophy of, and pastoral involvement in: Educational Ministry, Evangelism, Stewardship, Benevolence, Youth Ministry and Social Ministry.
12. From your perspective, what were the areas in the last parish which gave you personal satisfaction?
13. What role do you see the pastor fulfilling in relating to committees?
14. How do you see your role in relation to congregation council?
15. Describe your philosophy of visitation and pastoral calling.
16. We'd like to hear about your family.
17. Why are you considering accepting this call?
18. How do you see yourself involved in our community and the synod?
19. Tell us about your hobbies.

The Committee may want to ask specific questions based on the areas that they have identified as high priority on their Ministry Site Profile. Following are some sample questions in each of the areas.

WORSHIP/PREACHING

1. Describe how you go about preparing for the worship service on Sunday morning.
2. Think back in your ministry and tell me about the most difficult sermon you ever preached.
3. Share some of your thoughts about the worship life of a congregation.

SOCIAL MINISTRY/OUTREACH

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

ADMINISTRATOR/LEADER

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

TEACHING THE FAITH

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

EVANGELISM

1. Describe ways in which you typically become acquainted and associate with unchurched people in your community.
2. What kind of guidance and training do you provide members of your congregation for reaching unchurched persons in the community?
3. Describe how you have achieved a multicultural approach to your ministry.

INTERPERSONAL CLIMATE

1. What steps do you take in helping others feel secure, trusted, and open with you?
2. When pressure mounts how do you maintain your cool in ministry?
3. Describe an experience where conflict arose between yourself and another person and how resolution was finally achieved.

MINISTRY IN CRISIS/COUNSELING

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

INTERPRETER OF THEOLOGY

1. Describe ways in which you communicate the faith.
2. Describe your skills as teacher and preacher.
3. What resources keep you theologically and Biblically fresh and current?

INNOVATOR

1. Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
2. Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to capture that vision.
3. Think back in your ministry and describe a situation that was stagnate or failing and describe how you stepped in to revitalize it.

DENOMINATIONAL LEADERSHIP

1. Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding their relationship to the greater church.
2. Describe your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation, including ecumenical relationships, church agencies and institutions.
3. Describe what your congregation believes to be their role as a congregation of the ELCA.

STEWARDSHIP

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

PERSONAL GROWTH

1. Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.
2. How do you work at making yourself more effective in your work?
3. Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

YOUR CALL TO MINISTRY

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

The Call Committee may find it useful to conclude the interview by asking the candidate:

- What are two or three things that we should know about you that we didn't ask?
- Do you have any further questions that you want us to answer?

Appendix 19

Possible questions candidates might ask

TYPES OF QUESTIONS ASKED BY CANDIDATES

1. What do you think individuals like about this congregation?
2. What are some of the things you hope this congregation will do in the future that would benefit you? others?
3. What are some of the reasons why you are members of this congregation and not some other one?
4. What kind of organizations do you have?
5. What kinds of activities take place on a weekly/monthly basis?
6. How do you welcome and assimilate new members?
7. What plans has the council made for doing additional self-study and goal setting?
8. What structure of government does this congregation have?
9. What kind of benevolence do you support?
10. In what area(s) of social concern has the congregation been active?
11. What kind of priority do you give to the functions of a pastor, both in terms of importance and number of hours? What gets deferred if time runs out?
12. What view does the congregation have about continuing education? What about time off? financial support? Will the pastor be encouraged to attend the annual pastors' conference? Who will pay the expenses?
13. How does the pastor's family receive support? Are there expectations of the pastor's family?
14. Administratively, who prepares the council and congregational meeting agendas?
15. Who chairs meetings?
16. What are the housing opportunities in the neighborhood? What present financial arrangements have been made for the pastor's housing? Has the council and/or congregation envisioned any future ideas for the pastor's housing (shared equity, mortgage loan from the congregation, etc.)?
17. What is the school situation in this area?
18. (In the case of multiple-staff ministries) How do you describe the task divisions, lines of authority, conflict management and reporting methods for the pastoral staff, council, congregation and committees?
19. Describe what the community's image of the congregations is (if you can tell).
20. What hardships has the congregation experienced in the past? Have there been any major conflicts?
21. What is the attitude of the congregation toward the church at large? Synod? ELCA?
22. What are the possibilities for growth in size and involvement?
23. How many pastors has this parish had in the past twenty years?
24. How is the pastor's leadership accepted by the congregation?
25. What kind of secretarial service will the congregation provide?

Appendix 20

Release of candidate:

Sample letter to candidates not recommended for call

Dear Pastor Smith,

On behalf of the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church, I would like to thank you for your willingness to be considered as a candidate for the position of (Senior) (Associate) Pastor. We were impressed by your fine record and sample sermon.

(You may wish to go into more detail of strengths and areas of concern)

At this time, we have chosen another candidate to recommend to our congregation. The choice was difficult because of the quality of the candidates recommended to us. We wish you blessings upon your continued ministry.

Sincerely,
Jane Doe, Chair
Call Committee

NOTES

