

Congregations in Transition
Discerning our Future Together

March 10, 2021

Table of Contents	Page
Important Contacts	2
Letter from the Bishop of the Oregon Synod	3
Transition and Call Process Summary	4
Overview of Phases in the Transition and Call Process	6
Congregational Council Checklist	9
Phase I: Our Pastor or Deacon is leaving. What do we do?	11
1. Concluding the partnership with your pastor or deacon	12
2. Consultation with the Office of the Bishop	12
3. Congregational Council accepts Minister's Letter of Resignation	13
4. Complete all obligations	13
5. Saying Farewell to Your Minister	14
6. Planning for Transition	14
7. Things to Remember	15
A. Every Context Is Different	15
B. Everyone needs to know his or her role	16
C. Theological Context for Transitional Ministry	17
Phase II: Intentional Interim and Self-Study	19
1. Intentional Interim Begins	20
2. Self-study: Encountering God in Our Midst	20
A. Purpose of the Transition Team	20
B. Forming a Transition Team	20
C. The Work of the Transition Team: Five Developmental Tasks	22
D. The Work of the Transition Team: Other Tasks	23
E. Helpful Documents for the Transition Team	23
3. Writing the Ministry Site Profile (MSP)	23
Phase III: The Call Process	25
1. Time of Intentional Prayer	26
2. Establishing a Call Committee	26
3. Ministry Site Profile (MSP)	27
4. Overview of the Interview Process	29
5. Interview Process	30
6. Following up with Candidates	33
7. Vote of Congregational Council on Candidate and Compensation	35
8. Vote of the Congregation on Candidate and Compensation Package	36
9. Special Situations	37
10. Installation of the new Pastor, Deacon, or SALM	38
Appendices	42

Important Contact Information

Office of the Bishop, Oregon Synod

2800 North Vancouver, Suite 101

Portland, Oregon 97227

503-413-4191

www.oregonsynod.org

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

8765 West Higgins Rd

Chicago, Illinois 60631-4101

773-380-2700

800-638-3522

www.elca.org

Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar

503-413-4191

BishopLaurie@OregonSynod.org

Rev. Melissa Reed, Bishop's Associate

503-413-4191

pastormelissa@oregonsynod.org

Juan Carlos La Puente, Bishop's Associate

503-413-4191

juancarlos@oregonsynod.org



Oregon Synod

Walking Together Toward Courageous Love

*Moved by the Mystery of Love,
we are and are becoming a wild web of relationship,
a communion of communities and cultures
walking together into life
as we seek the life of the world together,
trusting in the liberating Spirit Jesus brings.*

- Oregon Synod Horizon statement, 2020

Dear Siblings in the Light of Christ,

Transitions are a part of life, filled with both challenges and opportunities. For communities of faith, transitions are times when our vulnerabilities, learnings, and hopes join together in prayer for the Spirit to agitate our soil, so we keep becoming a fertile ground for the seeds of Life that Jesus promises. (Matthew 13:1-9)

As your congregation begins this journey of transformation, I want to assure you that the Oregon 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 each person and the whole community to practice healthy leave-taking, healing of old wounds, and imagining creative ministry that can invite the wider community into the communal path of courageous love. (John 15: 9-17)

This “Discerning our Future Together” manual will help you move into God’s future for you and will provide you with the necessary steps and resources for the intentional transition work as well as the call process. In the midst of your transition, the Office of the Bishop and your congregation will work closely together toward the goal of clarifying the missional direction and finding the right pastor or deacon or synod authorized lay minister who can participate with you in the mission to which the Spirit is calling you.

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

Yours in Faith,

Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar
Oregon Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Transition and Call Process in the Oregon 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 clarifying the congregation's missional direction and finding the right pastor or deacon or synod authorized lay minister for the next phase of the congregation's life.



Prayer: Loving God, lead us and guide us during this time of discernment, and ground us in the waters of your grace.

Fill our people with your wisdom.

Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do.

Hold us, open us and so fill us with the fruits of the Spirit that we find the insight and the courage to be about the work of your Kingdom, even as the search for a new pastor, deacon or synod authorized lay minister 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 Liberator and our Light.

Amen.

The Office of the Bishop and the Oregon 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 life-giving 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 invite the wider community into the communal path of courageous love.

Usually led by the intentional interim or transition 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, a transition team 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.



© 2014 Dennis Fletcher.

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

Overview of Phases in the Transition and Call Process

Phase I – Our Minister (Pastor or Deacon or Synod Authorized Lay Minister) is leaving. What do we do?

When a rostered minister or a SALM resigns, a letter of resignation is submitted 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 rostered or lay minister and council complete any obligations to one another (i.e. updating parochial records, completing any financial obligations between the minister and the congregation, etc.).

The Council clarifies the new relationship and expectations of the departing pastoral leader, completes the Letter of Agreement, and notifies the congregation.

The Congregational Council contacts the Office of the Bishop to begin a closer relationship during the transition process. (Please see contact information on the inside of the cover page.)

The Office of the Bishop selects a liaison from the staff to work closely with the congregation.

The Congregational Council reviews the list of pulpit supply pastors from the Synod Office and prepares a plan for one to two months after the farewell event for the pastor or deacon or Synod Authorized Lay Minister.

The leader from the Office of the Bishop appointed liaison may come to lead a spiritual retreat for the congregation and may also offer a visit on a Sunday to preach early in the process.

An exit interview is scheduled between the pastor and the Office of the Bishop.

The congregation holds a farewell event for the pastor or deacon or Synod Authorized Lay Minister.

If congregational leadership decides that it would be beneficial to assess congregational vitality, sustainability, and viability before deciding to look for a new pastor or deacon or Synod authorized lay minister, the leader from the Office of the Bishop appointed as liaison would work with the congregational council and could recommend a pastor consultant or a pastoral transition team before recommending an intentional interim pastor.

If congregational leadership decides that there is no need to assess the congregational vitality, sustainability and viability before calling a new pastor or deacon or Synod authorized lay minister, the leader from the Office of the Bishop would recommend a bridge pastor or an intentional Interim Pastor directly.

Phase II – Intentional Interim and Self-Study

The Office of the Bishop will recommend an intentional interim/transition pastor to the Congregational Council. If there is a particular need that requires immediate attention before the arrival of an interim pastor, the Office of the Bishop could recommend a bridge pastor.

The Council and the possible interim pastor will interview one another.

If the two are a fit, the intentional interim pastor begins ministry with the congregation on the quickest timeline possible. A Letter of Agreement is drawn up between the leader and the congregation to clarify goals, compensation, benefits, continuing education, etc. This letter is submitted to the Bishop's Office for the final approval.

After some weeks of relationship building, a Transition Team is selected to lead the congregation through the transition and self-study process.

A season of prayer, listening, conversation and self-study engages the entire congregation. This will likely involve adult forums, Sunday school children, day-long retreats for all members, 1:1 conversations within and beyond the membership, sermons, and many other ventures of engagement with key questions of identity, context, and purpose.

The Transition Team drafts the Ministry Site Profile, gives it to the council for review and approval, shares it with the whole congregation, and sends it to the Office of the Bishop where it is uploaded onto the ELCA Call Process portal. (Churches should make sure that the MSP and other documents uploaded are saved to a computer first, for safety's sake). This enables leaders who are open to a new ministry site to see and prayerfully discern the possibility of a fit.

Phase III – The Call Process

The Call Committee is established according to the congregation's constitution, seeking a broad reflection of the faith community's voices.

The Call Committee meets to establish community, discuss the process, familiarize themselves with careful reading of Rostered Minister Profiles, and refine interviewing styles and strategies. The committee may choose to engage in a practice interview with a local pastor or deacon.

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 from the Bishop's Office Liaison. It is essential that the Call Committee maintain the confidentiality of the candidates until it is time to recommend a candidate to the entire congregation. The Call Committee selects and interviews candidates – remaining in contact with the candidates throughout the process and 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). If the vote is to go forward, 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 or deacon or SALM (requiring a two-thirds majority). If approved, the congregation votes on a second ballot on the compensation package (requiring a simple majority). A Bishop's Representative attends the meeting and prays, brings greetings from the Bishop, or quietly and prayerfully supports the process.

The candidate receives the call and, if the call is accepted, notifies the congregation and the Office of the Bishop of their desired start date.

The new pastor or deacon is installed by a representative of the Office of Bishop at an agreed-upon time.

Often a Healthy Congregations workshop, facilitated by a leader from the Bishop's Office, is scheduled.

Congregational Council Checklist

- Accept minister'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 or deacon or SALM
- Congregational Council and departing leader fulfill all obligations
- Council facilitates an internal review of Parochial Records
- Certification of financial records and obligations between minister and congregation
- Clarify new relationship with departing minister, complete Letter of agreement, and notify congregation (see appendix 3)
- Conduct an exit interview with minister 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 congregational 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

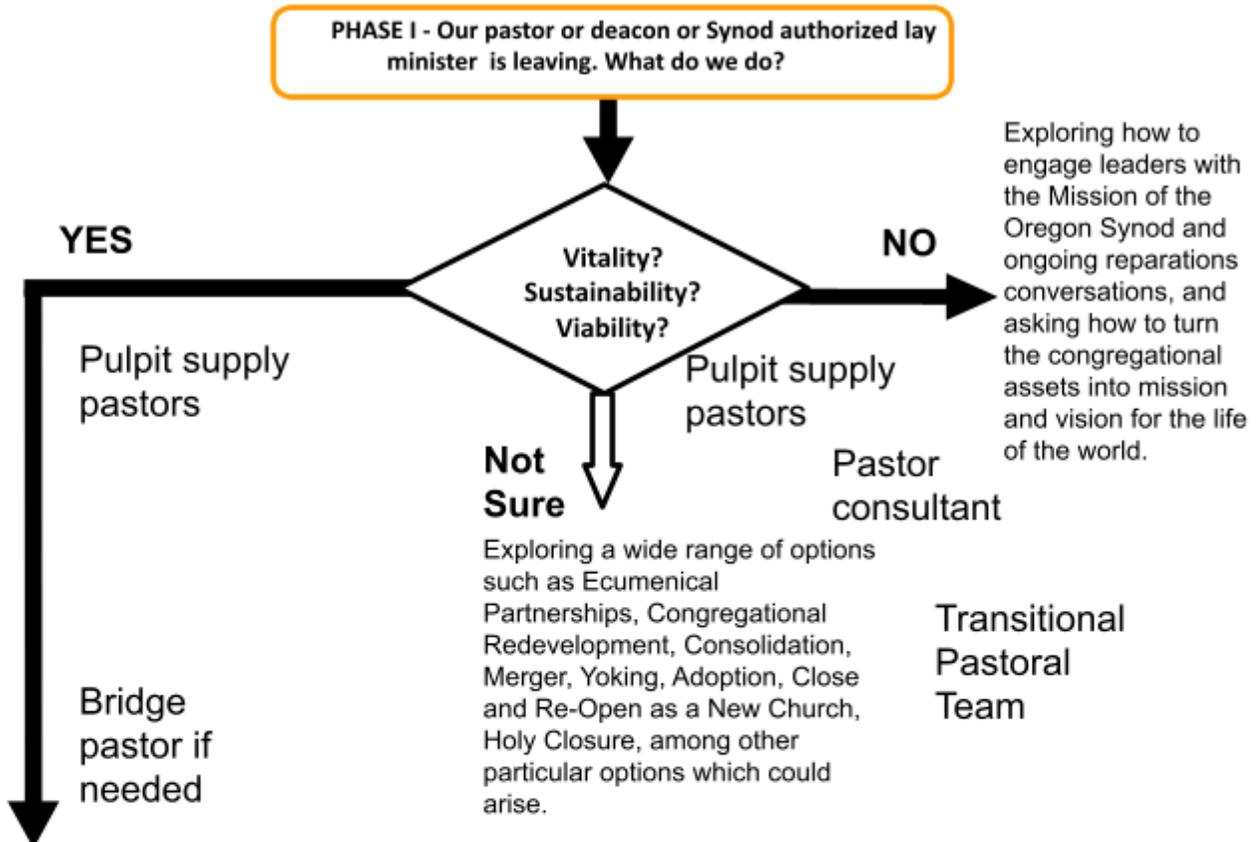


PHASE I

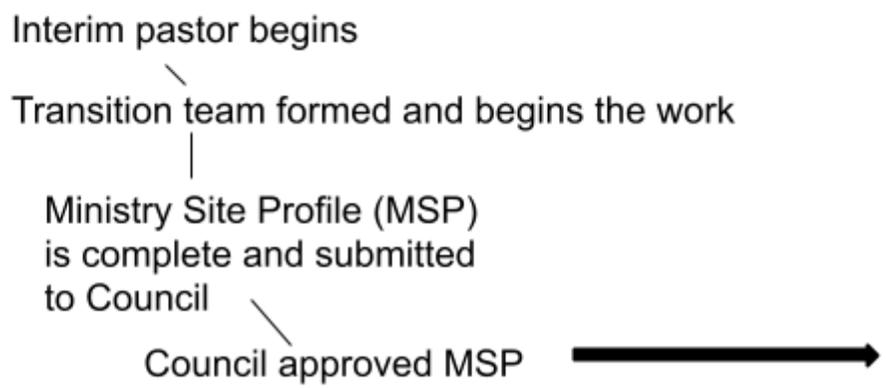
**Our minister is leaving.
What do we do?**

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

1: Concluding the Partnership with your Pastor or Deacon or Synod Authorized Lay Minister



PHASE II - Intentional Interim



PHASE III Call Committee

There are many reasons for a minister 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 minister'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 minister. Processing emotions takes time and should not be minimized. Transitions are an opportunity to develop new ways of being. 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 ministers, and will walk even more closely with congregations during pastoral transitions. As one minister is leaving and the congregation prepares to welcome a new minister 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 minister 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 minister indicates to the Bishop and to the congregational council that they will be leaving. (If the minister 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 Oregon 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 minister.

3: Congregation Council Accepts the Letter of Resignation.

- A.** When a minister 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 minister'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 minister's letter of resignation;
 2. The last date the minister will serve the congregation and any plans for a farewell event;
 3. Expressions of gratitude to the minister and his or her family;
 4. A copy of the minister'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 minister, a member of the 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. The purposes of an exit interview (Appendix 2) are:
- To evaluate the ministry;
 - To identify areas of potential growth for the minister and the congregation;
 - To celebrate the ministry;
 - To articulate appropriate boundaries and establish a covenant of behavior between the minister 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 minister 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 minister 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 pastoral leader:** A congregation under financial obligation to its former minister must make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling another minister. Such financial obligations may

include loans on housing, grants, vacation pay, etc.

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

5: Saying Farewell to Your Pastoral Leader

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 minister and his or her family. You may consider using a Service of Thanksgiving and Farewell in the minister's final worship service (Appendix 7).

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

- A service and/or reception which may include invitations to fellow ministers 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 minister's call, the congregational council works with the Office of the Bishop to plan for the transition process. The first question to consider is about congregational vitality and sustainability. If congregational leadership decides that congregational vitality, sustainability, and viability should be assessed carefully before deciding to look for a new pastor or deacon or synod authorized lay minister, the leader from the Office of the Bishop appointed liaison would work with the congregational council and could recommend a pastor consultant or a transitional pastoral team before recommending an Intentional Interim pastor. Congregational leaders might reach out to pulpit supply pastors as well. In some cases, a long-term supply pastor might be needed during the important discernment work.

If congregational leadership decides that there is no need to assess deeply the congregational vitality, sustainability and viability before calling a new pastor or deacon or synod authorized lay minister, the leader from the Office of the Bishop would recommend a bridge pastor or an intentional interim pastor directly. Depending upon the availability of intentional interim pastors, congregational leaders might need to count on one or more pulpit supply pastors for some weeks.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Every context is different

If an intentional interim pastor is found who is appropriate for the congregation, the Office of the Bishop will provide the possible interim candidate to the congregational council. The council then interviews the candidate and the candidate interviews the council. Both discern whether the fit is a match. If so, the church council negotiates a time frame and compensation package with the interim pastor. In most intentional interim situations, the congregation contracts with the pastor directly, sharing the Letter of Agreement with the Bishop for a final signature and to present the name before the Synod Council, from whom an official call comes.

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 here: www.oregonsynod.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.

An interim/transition pastor will best help the congregation maintain its most vital ministries and engage the self-study and discernment processes.

Compensation package for an Intentional Interim Pastor (see Compensation Forms at www.oregonsynod.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).
- **Negotiable:** Salary. This is negotiated by factoring in the experience of the interim pastor, the exiting pastor's salary, the potential range of the new pastor's salary, continuing education, mileage, and Social Security offset.

Everyone has a 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. The Letter of Agreement for Former Ministers should be signed by both congregational president and outgoing leader.
- **Future Pastor:** Responsible for prayerfully discerning God's call.

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

Lutheran Book of Worship

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 themselves 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 ministerial leader who will walk with the congregation toward a 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 minister 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 minister.
- 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 minister.

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 minister, 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 from the Call Committee) will be formed with the guidance of the interim minister and is responsible for getting the congregation ready before the Call Committee begins the work of interviewing and calling a new minister. 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 Transition Team works 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 minister.

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.
- Pray for the congregation and the discernment process.
- 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.

*Above all, truth the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
To reach the end without delay.*

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

*We are impatient of being on the way of something
unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress
That it is made by passing through
some stages of instability -
and that it may take a very long time.*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

C. The Work of the Transition Team: The Five Focus Points

In order to successfully navigate the transition period, a congregation pays attention to these Five Focus Points: Heritage, Leadership, Connections, Mission, Future.

Heritage: telling stories, remembering history and reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed. The congregation's heritage, both corporate and individual, is the foundation upon which the present rests. Paying attention to heritage means encouraging and hearing all of the stories about the congregation's past, and embracing the rich variety that makes up this particular congregation. Together the people 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 resurface 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 minister.

Leadership: reviewing the membership needs, its ways of organizing and its style of developing new and effective leadership. Transition time provides opportunity for individuals and the congregational organizations to examine the types of leadership needed. 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. New leaders will emerge, while some seasoned leaders may re-commit or may decide to refocus their gifts.

Connections: discovering all the relationships a faith community builds outside of itself. Sometimes congregational life is so busy that congregations and their leadership forget to attend to their connections both to their larger denomination and to the network of communities around them. Transition is an appropriate time to reassess old links and to consider new ones. What do we value most in our Lutheran or ecumenical heritage? What has been our connection with our (other) ecumenical neighbors? Our interfaith siblings or those of no distinct faith tradition? What can we ask of them and offer to them?

Mission: defining and redefining sense of purpose and direction. The congregation is asked a variety of questions: What gifts (assets) define us; not simply our building or staff, but our changing participants and neighbors? Which possibilities most captivate us? Where are we being invited to transform? 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. The primary work in this area involves clarifying the faith community's identity and core values, working to develop mission and vision statements, and perhaps even working out short-term tactical plans.

Future: developing congregational and pastoral profiles. Focusing on the future requires a healthy and honest assessment of the other focus points so that the congregation can turn its energy toward proactive decision-making for the future.

The Intentional Interim Pastor offers the congregation a variety of possibilities to engage the Five Focus Points. Knowing that each situation is unique, the Interim strives to discern the tools that are most appropriate for the specific situation.

Reflecting upon these five Focus Points helps a congregation to answer the three key questions:

Who are we? (identity)
Who are our neighbors? (context)
What is God calling us to do? (purpose)

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 Minister:

- Study the congregation and the surrounding community
- Establish and/or affirm core values
- Develop and/or affirm mission statement
- Affirm vision statement
- Engage an open conversation around the question of calling leaders who defy stereotypes.
- 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 and Congregation

- 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: Writing the Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

After the congregation has spent time in self-study, collecting data, and tightening up the infrastructure of the congregation, the Transition Team will prepare the Ministry Site Profile, or MSP. When considering the calling of a new minister, the congregation should know its

challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry so that the gifts of the minister meet the needs of the congregation. The work of the Transition Team during the interim time is critical to this process. 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 use resources provided by the ELCA and the interim pastor. (The forms for the MSP can be accessed online at www.elca.org/call). Gathering information to include in the MSP must be the work of the whole congregation, but the Transition Team works together on the document to maintain consistency of voice.

As they complete this document, it is important for Team members to be in consultation with the congregation council, strategic planning team, and/or other lay leaders. Be sure to save the 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 Office of the Bishop that the MSP is ready to be shared with potential candidates to interview.

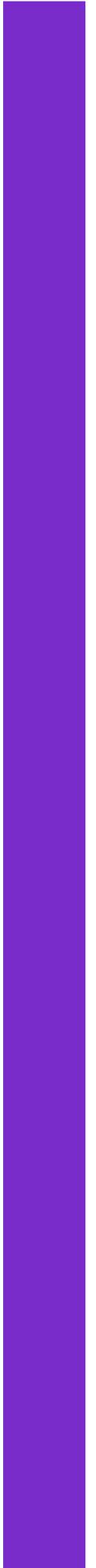
After you have submitted the MSP document, be sure you have downloaded the Reference Recommendation form. You must click "Access your Account" to download your Reference Recommendations. If at any time you have questions or problems with the MSP document, please contact the Office of the Bishop and ask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

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

Email: Password:

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 transformation 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 accompany 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 minister. It is important for the committee as a whole to understand that each individual has a bias, and to challenge each member to see beyond their own unique wants toward the greater good of the whole. Encourage one another to open hearts and minds 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 and the president of the council is not an automatic member. Be discerning about the diversity of the whole. If not otherwise indicated by the constitution, the committee selects its own chairperson. The Congregational Council then shares the name of the committee chair and its members with the liaison to 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. A reminder about the confidentiality of their work is recommended. 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 minister. 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 process the Ministry Site Profile and the variables of the preparing for interviewing. 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: Overview of the Interview Process

A. Basic Process Outline

All candidates being invited into the Oregon 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 4-8 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 or email each candidate within a week of receiving the names to let them know that their Rostered Minister Profile has been received. This contact is the first step in getting to know the candidate.
2. The committee will usually have an initial interview (usually by Skype or Zoom) 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. The committee can invite any appropriate candidate(s) for an additional online 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

5. 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).

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 minister 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. Transparency is crucial to keeping trust in the 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. A practice interview with a neighboring pastor is recommended. 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 minister 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 minister ahead of time. Please ensure that this visit is kept confidential so that people in the minister'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 minister's preaching. They may also arrange for the minister 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/Zoom Interview

The initial phone or Zoom 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 minister?
- 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?" 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 the candidate can look around on their own.
4. Determine which call committee members will initially meet and welcome the candidate.
5. Show the candidate (and 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 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 for their heart, soul and vocation.

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 minister 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 or email 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 candidate 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 that pastoral leader 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 final selected “candidate of choice” 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, after some time, will provide a new slate of 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 minister 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. If there is not immediate unanimity, work towards consensus. Consensus does not mean that everyone agrees about everything. It means that everyone can accept and support the decision. Talk through the different perspectives. Determine if someone’s position includes something on which they cannot compromise. Then discern if others can accept that position. If they cannot, then consensus has not been achieved. Further prayer and conversation, including listening as well as speaking, is needed. Seek to discern what is best for the whole congregation. Unanimous consent is definitely the best option.

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, and contact the Bishop's office for the forms highlighted in Appendix 22. 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 minister. 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 minister 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 (see section 8 below). The council will establish a date, time, and place for the special meeting of the congregation to vote on the call of the minister 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 minister 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 minister to the congregation, it will notify the Office of the Bishop. The Bishop will appoint a representative 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. Hold a Special Congregational Meeting

Steps for Conducting a Congregational Call Meeting

1. Call to order.
2. Acknowledge if a quorum is present (see Constitution, Chapter 10).
3. Lead the saints in prayer.
4. Indicate a letter designating the individual that has been appointed by the Synod Bishop to represent him/her at this meeting.
5. State the purpose of the meeting: "To act on the recommendation of the Call Committee (and/or the Council) to extend a Call to Pastor X, to become the Pastor of St Swithun's Lutheran Church."
6. Mention that no other business is to take place during this meeting.
7. Allow synod representative or congregation president to acknowledge the work of the Call Committee. Encourage them to stand and be recognized. You may choose to ask each member of the call committee to say a word about the candidate and how the gifts they bring are a good fit for the congregation at this time.
8. Introduce the Tellers (selected in advance). They will distribute, collect, count, and report ballot results.
9. Ask Call Committee Chair to read Resolution I (motion to vote on calling the minister).
10. Call for a second to the motion.
11. Distribute Motion I ballots (to voting members only!). See Constitution, Chapter 8. Have current roster of members available for verification if necessary.
12. Call for discussion on the motion.
13. Mark ballots "Yes," "No," or "Abstain." 2/3 majority is needed, see Constitution, Chapter 9.
14. Sing, pray, etc. while Tellers count.
15. Tellers report to Council President, and Council President reports the results to the congregation: Number of ballots cast, resulting in X for, X against, X abstaining=% in favor of motion.
16. Declare if motion passes or fails.
17. If Motion I passes, distribute compensation package sheet and related parish expenses.
18. Ask Call Committee Chair to move that the compensation package and related parish expenses for successful candidate be approved.
19. Call for a second to the compensation package motion.
20. Call for discussion on the compensation package motion.
21. Call for a voice vote (simple majority will carry motion).
22. Declare if motion passes or fails.
23. If motion passes, indicate what will happen next: Letter of Call prepared and extended, bishop signs, candidate will have 30 days to respond.
24. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving (Interim Pastor, Bishop's Representative, Council President, etc.). Thank the congregation for their prayers and support through this process.
25. Adjourn for coffee and refreshments.

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 to the minister being called. The following procedure is used to send the official ELCA Letter of Call.

- The Bishop's representative will submit the Certification of Call form to the Bishop's office.
- The president or vice-president of the congregation will send the completed compensation package form to the Office of the Bishop for the Pastor's and Bishop's signature.
- The minister will send a letter of acceptance or decline of the call to both the congregation and the Bishop's office within thirty (30) days, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Upon receipt of the above, the Bishop's office will organize completion of the Letter of Call

C. If the Minister Accepts the Call

The newly-called minister, 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 minister to determine when the acceptance may be publicly announced. The pastor or deacon or SALM will likely have goodbyes to say and logistics to consider. It is not unusual for the minister to need weeks if not months. Contacting Portico to update information is a good idea at this point in the process.

Arrangements for moving will be made between the minister and the officers of the calling congregation. The calling congregation is responsible for moving expenses. In some circumstances, the minister 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 minister 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 Minister

In the event that the minister 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 minister. 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. (First Call Theological Education is a requirement for new rostered leaders during their first three years in ministry, and the congregation would do well to set aside some monies for those educational events.

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 minister unless their constitution specifies another procedure. If there are not constitutional provisions for the 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 minister 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 minister 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 one-third time 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.. All arrangements for part-time calls should be discussed with the Office of the Bishop beforehand and details need to be in writing.

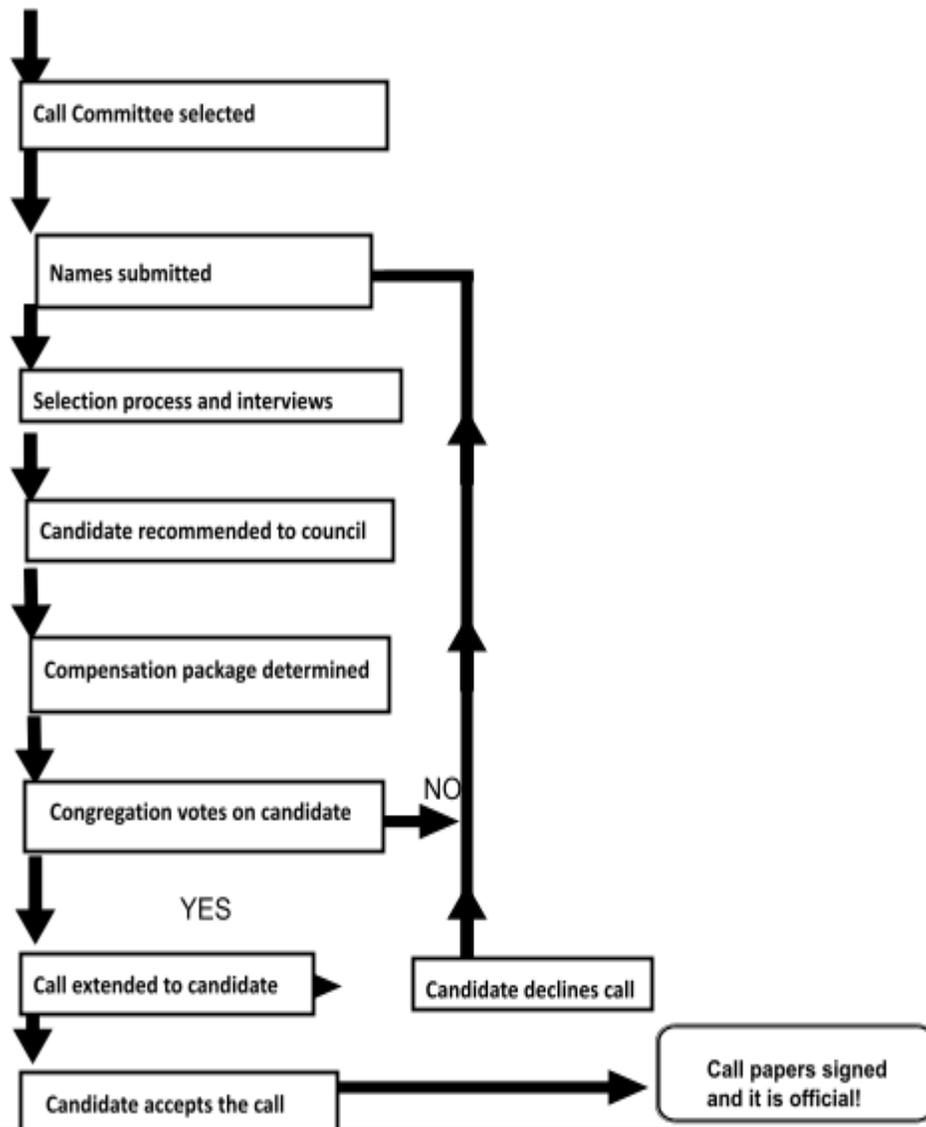
10: Installation of the new Pastor or Deacon or SALM

The start of this new joint ministry between the minister and the congregation is marked by the ritual of installing the minister. The date is set in partnership with the minister, 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 Minister may be found in the Occasional Services Book.

The Call Process for Second Pastors, Deacons, 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 deacon. 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 processes.

Phase III - Call Committee





APPENDICES

Appendices

	Page
Glossary of Terms	
1. Frequently asked questions about the transition process	49
2. Sample Letter of Agreement	51
3. Exit Interview	56
4. Letter of Agreement	57
5. Sample Newsletter article for Congregation	58
6. Certificate of Church Records	59
7. Certification and Completion of Financial Records	60
8. Thanksgiving and Farewell	61
9. Litany of Beginning for Interim Ministry	62
10. Review of the Congregation's History	63
11. Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies	64
12. Development & Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement	65
13. A Review of Staffing Needs and Resources	68
14. Intentional Stewardship	71
15. Stewardship of Property Inventory	72
16. Call Committee Member Form	73
17. Installation of Call Committee	74
18. Prayers and Devotions for the Call Committee	75
19. Sample Questions for Candidate Interviews	78
20. Possible Questions Candidates might ask	82
21. Sample Release of Candidate letter	84
22. Calling a Rostered Leader- Documents Overview	85
23. Inviting an Intentional Interim, Long-Term Pulpit Supply, Bridge, Consultant, or Transition Team Pastor(s)- Documents Overview	86
24. ELCA Model Constitution 2019 description of Pastor	87

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

Glossary of Terms

Call Committee

The committee is appointed or elected at the appropriate time according to the congregation's constitution for the purpose of interviewing candidates for a pastor or deacon or synod authorized lay minister to lead the congregation into the future. They are tasked with the opportunity to listen deeply to the Spirit, the candidate and the Ministry Site Profile, looking not for the "best" candidate but for the best fit with the vision and direction of the congregation. Candidates are first vetted by the Office of the Bishop and then given to the congregation. The Call Committee can ask for more candidates until they feel the right candidate has been identified.

Call Packet

Once the Call Committee has selected and presented a candidate to the congregational council, the Call Committee will notify the Office of the Bishop. The Office of the Bishop will then send a call packet to the president of the congregation. This packet will include information and forms on compensation and benefits as well as the 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 the called leader does not receive directly, such as pension and health benefits. Each year, the Oregon Synod updates the Care and Compensation Guidelines that all congregations should follow when deciding about the Compensation Package and makes it available on the synod website.

Letter of Call

The Letter of Call is the official document, signed by the Bishop of the Oregon Synod and the Congregational President, authorizing a pastor or deacon or synod authorized lay minister in ministry at a particular congregation or specialized ministry setting.

Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

The Ministry Site Profile is a document drafted by the transition team and approved and adopted by the council 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. This document is then used by the Office of the Bishop in finding a good match between a rostered minister or synod authorized lay minister and a congregation.

Office of the Bishop

The Office of the Bishop and its staff supports the work of the Bishop of the Oregon Synod. See the inside cover of this document for contact information.

Rostered Minister

The ELCA maintains two rosters, or lists, of credentialed and approved pastors and deacons. In this denomination, we refer to these pastors and deacons as Rostered Ministers. Alongside the Rostered Ministers the Oregon Synod works on leadership development for opening new lists of authorized lay ministers.

The ELCA recognizes two categories of credentialed and approved ministry professionals -- pastors and deacons -- and maintains a roster (or list) of each. We refer to these pastors and deacons collectively as "Rostered Ministers." The Oregon Synod also works on leadership development for opening new lists of authorized lay ministers.

Rostered Minister Profile (RMP)

The Rostered Minister Profile is a form completed by rostered candidates. It parallels the Ministry Site Profile. It includes questions about theology, gifts for ministry, personal information, employment and educational history and references. This document is used by the Office of the Bishop in finding good matches between rostered ministers and congregations, and by call committees in their discernment process.

Settled Pastor (sometimes 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 Authorized Lay Minister

When a need exists to render word and sacrament ministry for a congregation or other ministry within the Oregon Synod where it is not possible to call a pastor or deacon, the Bishop - acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry - in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with qualifications defined by the Synod Program for Authorized Lay Minister may authorize a lay person to offer this ministry. The guiding principle of this discernment process is "No Synod Authorized Lay Minister without a site." "Site" may be a congregation, a cluster or other collection of ministry locations, but should be defined. Synod Authorized Lay Ministers emerge from sites rather than self-identifying without a site's support.

Synod Representative

Every call process is a partnership among the congregation, the Office of the Bishop, and the whole Oregon Synod. In order to live into this partnership, a representative from the Synod will be present at every congregational vote to call a pastor or deacon. The representative will read a statement on behalf of the Bishop of the Oregon Synod or offer a prayer or simply offer a quiet supportive presence. The synod representative will share the results of the congregational vote with the Office of the Bishop.

Synod Horizon, Values, and Stepping Stones

We are the synod together. Examine and share these slides to understand what the vision and journey we are on as we travel the path to courageous love together.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LTbUIsEeFY7O7ccWN2E9TisWa5YcFI5Ext2PZh2syeo/edit?usp=sharing>

Transition Team

This team is formed with the guidance of the intentional interim pastor who has been presented by the Office of the Bishop and approved by the council. The Transition Team's primary charge is

to facilitate the engagement of the entire congregation in a self-study process, asking key questions such as Who are we? What is our unique history and how can we learn from it? How are we uniquely gifted with strengths and resources? Who are our neighbors? What is God calling us to do and to be? How might we better prepare ourselves to receive a new pastor or deacon or Synod authorized lay minister? This process helps the congregation, led by the Transition Team, in the drafting of a Ministry Site Profile (MSP), which is used by Synod staff to select candidates and will then be available to possible rostered candidates in the ELCA or to guide the Synod Authorized Lay Minister.

Transitional Pastoral Leadership

Pulpit Supply Pastor: A pastor who is contracted by a congregation 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 a bridge pastor or an intentional interim pastor. The Oregon Synod maintains a list of pulpit supply pastors.

Bridge Pastor: Sometimes an intentional interim cannot be placed immediately or must leave before the next settled pastor is in place. During these times a bridge pastor may be recommended by the Office of the Bishop to a congregation so that ministry and vitality may be maintained.

Intentional Interim Pastor: A pastor who is called through the Oregon Synod and has specific training to guide congregations through the transition process due to a pastoral vacancy.

Pastor Consultant: A pastor who is specifically trained to guide a congregation in collective discernment. The Office of the Bishop may recommend a pastor consultant when leaders of the congregation are looking to explore a wide range of options such as Ecumenical Partnership, Congregational Redevelopment, Consolidation, Merger, Yoking, Adoption, Close and Re-Open as a New Church, Holy Closure, or other options which could arise.

Transitional Pastoral Team: Based on the complexity of a particular setting, the Office of the Bishop may recommend a Transitional Pastoral Team.

Appendix 1

Frequently asked questions about the transition process

How long will it take to find a minister?

Every congregation is different and the length of the transition varies in length. The work of the Transition Team and the Call Committee will normally take between 8-18 months, but some last longer. The length of the process depends on the length of service of the departing pastor, deacon or SALM (a long-serving leader often means more time spent in processing the change), the time needed for mission discernment, the number of candidates interviewed, the time Call Committee and candidates have available for conversation, and more.

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:

- Ministers from Oregon Synod asking to be available for conversation with Call Committees and having submitted their Rostered Minister Profile.
- Rostered Leaders from other synods who have asked that their Rostered Minister Profile be shared with congregations in the Oregon Synod. (Please note that Candidates from outside the Oregon Synod must be given clearance by their Synodical Bishop and approved by the Bishop before they can be considered for an interview.)
- Ministers identified by the Office of the Bishop as particularly suited for a congregation.
- Recent seminary graduates awaiting their first Call.
- Names of Ministers suggested by members of the congregation must be shared with the Office of the Bishop and approved by the Bishop to be considered as 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 important 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 might choose to travel to the minister's congregation or to a neutral site to hear

him or her preach. When a minister 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 participate in worship. It is appropriate for the congregation to meet the final candidate at an informal “meet and greet.”

Appendix 2



Letter of Agreement for Transition/Interim Ministry

The Oregon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes the office of pastor. It also recognizes that there are occasions when parishes will need to be served by transition or interim pastors while they seek permanent pastoral leadership. The Oregon Synod Constitution (S14.17) provides the following: "During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any ordained ministers who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order." Keeping in mind the apostolic advice that all things be done decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40) the church provides for the service of interim pastors.

_____ (Name of Congregation/City) agrees that _____ will serve as interim pastor on a ___ part-time or ___ full-time basis with the following conditions and mutual covenants:

Time period beginning _____ and ending _____.
(Extensions of time of service shall be with consultation and approval of the bishop.)

Although interim appointments normally are concluded at the acceptance of the call by the pastoral candidate, circumstances of need within the Synod may result in the re-assignment of the interim pastor prior to the arrival of the new pastor in residence. Should such a re-assignment be necessary, concurrence will be sought from the congregation's leadership in such a manner as to provide continuing pastoral care to the congregation until the call process is completed.

Together we will:

- Examine the history of the congregation and work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor.
- Seek to confirm and identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.
- Review and redefine the vision for the congregation's mission.
- Strengthen the congregation's connections with cluster, synod, neighbors and community and churchwide units, and the resources that may be available for ministry.
- Prepare for the arrival of the new pastor.
- Guide the congregation to align its policies and practices with the constitution and bylaws of Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America and the Oregon Synod, updating the congregation's constitution and bylaws as needed.

- During this transition period, agree to address the following specific concerns:
- _____
- _____
- _____
- In the case of part-time ministry, agree to the following schedule of service:

The interim pastor will:

- Preach and teach the word of God.
- Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according to the practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to our needs and uphold us in prayer.
- Give pastoral leadership for the meetings, activities and organizations of the congregation.
- Encourage us to support the total ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Be responsible for the recording of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals, participation in Holy Communion and the maintenance of the membership rosters; and report the statistics of the parish promptly and fully as requested by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Agree under no circumstances to be available for a regular call to this congregation.
- Agree to shepherd and support the congregation's call process.
- Agree not to sway, direct or impact the interview process.
- Agree not to become a member of this congregation after this agreement terminates.
- Participate with key leadership of the congregation in evaluation of the interim ministry at least every six-months and at the conclusion of the transition period. Submit regular reports to the synod office by email.
- During this interim, give special attention to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The congregation will:

- Commit ourselves to the gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning and fellowship activities.
- Receive you as our interim pastor, uphold you in prayer and accord you our love, respect and good will.
- Look to you to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion and rites of the church.
- Agree that the interim pastor will not be considered for regular call to this congregation.
- Provide for a review and evaluation of the interim ministry on a quarterly basis and at the conclusion of the transition period by key leadership of the congregation with the interim pastor and synodical staff.
- Compensate you in the following ways:

1. Pay you an annual salary as follows:

___ a. The amount of \$ _____ based upon your years of service and the Oregon synod guidelines, the payments to be made in equal installments on the ___ and ___ of the month during the term of the contract.

or

___ b. The amount of \$ _____ which is the same salary paid to our previous pastor, the payments to be made in equal installments on the ___ and ___ of the month during the term of the contract. (Current synod policy selects the lower of the salaries between option a and option b above.)

2. Provide for your housing as follows:

___ a. A residence free of charge, utilities paid and an additional housing benefit of \$ _____ in lieu of housing equity.

or

___ b. A housing allowance of \$ _____ per year, the payments to be made in ___ equal installments on the ___ and ___ of the month.

3. Pay a social security offset of ___ of salary and housing. (The recommended Oregon Synod guideline is 7.65%.)

4. ___ a) Contribute to the Pension and Benefits Plan according to the regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and consistent with Oregon Synod guidelines at the rate of ___% of salary, housing allowance and social security allowance. (The recommended Oregon Synod guideline is 12%.)

or

___ b) Does not apply.

or

___ c) Provide ___ Pension, ___ Medical, ___ Dental, ___ Disability, and/or

___ Death benefits as follows (if the interim pastor already has some of these

provided by another source) :

5. Provide continuing education funds at a rate of \$ _____ and _____ weeks of study time per _____ months of interim service. (The minimum recommended synod guideline is \$350 and one week of continuing education per six months of service.)

6. Grant _____ week(s) of vacation per each _____ month(s) of interim service, not to exceed four weeks per year. (The minimum recommended synod guideline is one week of vacation per each three months of service.)

1. Other _____

7. Reimburse you for expenses related to our common ministry:

1. Pay you a travel allowance of \$ _____ per year.

or Reimburse automobile travel at the rate of _____ cents per mile upon substantiation of business miles traveled. (Oregon Synod guidelines recommend using the IRS recommended reimbursement rate.)

2. Pay expenses incurred in attending synod assemblies and other official meetings at which your attendance is required if not already provided.

3. Pay your moving expenses as follows: _____

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

The synod will:

- A. Provide mutual support for the interim pastor.
- B. Provide mutual support for the congregation through periodic consultation and assistance during the call process.
- C. Respond to reports of the interim pastor and congregation.
- D. Provide interim ministry training opportunities for interim pastors and congregations.

Additional Agreements

Appendix 3

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 minister?
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? Do 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 minister 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 4

Separation Letter of Agreement between a Former Minister & Congregation

**This is a letter of agreement
at the time of resignation/retirement between
Pastor _____
and the congregational 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 an 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. Communications regarding life, illness, or changed circumstances will go through the interim or called pastor. Personal relationships with members of the congregation for any reason will be limited. Circumstances make it necessary for exception for limited involvement in the following instances:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
5. The former rostered leader agrees further that if attending this congregation in the future, it will only be as worshipper and participant. The departing Minister will neither say or listen to any uncomplimentary or critical remarks in social or other gatherings concerning the interim, past or future pastors.
6. 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 the church.
7. The former pastor will remove all vestments, equipment, books, and possessions by _____. All items belonging to the congregation will remain in the congregation. Keys to the building and online passwords will be returned to the church office or deleted, no later than _____.

Former Pastor: _____ Congregational President: _____

Appendix 5

Sample newsletter article for congregation

God's Present, God's Future

As you no doubt know, Pr. has felt the call to _____. (retire, take a call in Indiana, etc.) Our prayers and gratitude go with (her/him/them).

Because we want everyone to be aware of some important issues related to the transition between pastors, what experts call "separation ethics," we ask you to read this carefully.

The Church Council and departing 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.

We will honor the arrival of the interim/transition pastor by acknowledging their role as Minister of Word and Sacrament, and by seeking their counsel and leadership. 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 transition pastor and newly called pastor with the Council and congregation.

We will, after our interim journey, honor the arrival of the newly called pastor by acknowledging their role as Minister of Word and Sacrament, and by seeking their counsel and leadership. 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 transition pastor and newly called pastor with the Council and congregation.

We will, after our interim journey, honor the arrival of the newly called pastor by acknowledging their role as Minister of Word and Sacrament, and by seeking their counsel and leadership. 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 transition pastor and newly called pastor with the Council and congregation.

Appendix 6

**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 Oregon 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 7

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 _____ Lutheran Church.

Date

Minister

Treasurer

Please return this form to:

Office of the Bishop
2800 N. Vancouver Ave., Suite 101
Portland, OR 97227

Appendix 8

Template for a Thanksgiving and Farewell at the Conclusion of a call

(many others are available online through a good search)

Pastor (or Deacon or SALM) _____, the people of _____ Lutheran Church called you to be their _____. As pastor (etc), 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, 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!

Appendix 9

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 this leader 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 glorified among us. We pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

Appendix 10

Review of the congregation's history

The present and future are built on the past. Thus, it is important to review history. . 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 focus groups.

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

With the pastor, pay special attention to individuals who might have difficulty with this process. Not everyone will be able to move at the same rate. Pastoral care is important to everyone. Since your interim pastor cannot know members as well as you do, be helpful in identifying for them the people who may need special pastoral attention.

Appendix 11

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 extant and compare it to the model constitution of the ELCA. You can download the model constitution from the ELCA web site www.ELCA.org . The model constitution has various changes, usually minor, every three years after the ELCA church wide assembly in August.

As you are reviewing your constitution in the 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, send it for review to the Synod Constitution Committee, Office of the Bishop, 2800 N. Vancouver Ave, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97227. The committee will make sure that you don't have conflicting statements in sections and will get back to you as quickly as possible. 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, safe protocols in a pandemic policy, 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 12

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 will be more effective in its ministry.

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 the group 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: 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 the 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've seen 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 invigorating and 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 13

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 they 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.**

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 14

Intentional stewardship

Supporting the mission of your congregation is more than just hiring staff as was discussed in the last section. But often the transition 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 witnessing 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 checklist, 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 may lead to discussions within the council as to non-material ways to be hospitable as well.

Appendix 15

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 symbols?
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 lit?
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. Are there a baby changing table in the bathrooms?
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 a 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 a 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 an ongoing capital fund for building emergencies and planning remodels?

Appendix 16

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 Email to:
Office of the Bishop, Oregon Synod, ELCA
2800 N. Vancouver Ave., Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97228
office@oregonsynod.org
503-413-4191

Appendix 17

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, make recommendations 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 we 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.

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 Rostered Minister 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 LEADER:

Gracious God, you have united us all in one body. We give you thanks for the work of _____ 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 _____ and us as we continue to seek to share the Good News of salvation and grace 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 minister continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior. 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 _____ 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 gospel, your Church and your world. 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 _____ 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 18

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.
- **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.
- **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: *Healing and Guiding God, we are your servants in need of your love.*

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

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

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

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 stagnant 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?

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?
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 pastor? Have there been any major conflicts?
21. What is the attitude of the congregation toward the church at large? Oregon 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 administrative service will the congregation provide?
26. How did this congregation respond to the COVID crisis? Safety protocols maintained?

Appendix 21

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 _____. 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

Appendix 22

Calling a Rostered Leader- Documents Overview

Preparing to Call a Rostered Leader

When you are ready to create an offer for the leader you plan to call, you will need:

- Compensation and Benefits Form
- Guide to Compensation and Benefits Form
- Current year of Oregon Synod Compensation Guidelines

A month in advance of your congregation meeting to vote on the call, please contact the Oregon Synod Bishop's Office to notify them of your meeting so they can identify a Bishop's Representative to attend the meeting as an observer of the vote. Plan to share the name and email address of the Council President and Secretary whose signatures will be needed on forms in case forms are signed electronically.

One to two weeks in advance of your meeting the Synod Bishop's Office will send to the Bishop's Representative (and cc' the Council President), the:

- Bishop's Representative Letter
- Certification of Call Form (to be filled out by the Bishop's Representative)

Following the congregation meeting, if the vote was to call the leader, the Bishop's Representative or Council President sends these completed documents to the synod office for review by the Bishop:

- Certification of Call Form
- Compensation and Benefits Form

The synod office will send a Confirmation of Call form (for office use) to the leader for completion. When this is complete, the office will facilitate the signing of the:

- Letter of Call

The synod office will notify the ELCA of the call.

In some cases, the synod Bishop's office may facilitate the electronic signing of documents. Copies of all paper or electronic documents (except the Confirmation of Call) will be sent to the Council President and/or Administrator, and saved in the congregation file and the rostered leaders file in the synod office. The rostered leader will receive a paper certificate of their Letter of Call.

Appendix 23

Inviting an Intentional Interim, Long-Term Pulpit Supply, Bridge, Consultant, or Transition Team Pastor(s)- Documents Overview

Preparing to on board an Intentional Interim, Long-Term Pulpit Supply, Bridge, Consultant, or Transition Team Pastor(s).

When you and the synod office have identified an interim for your ministry and are ready to create an offer for the leader, please fill out and send to the synod Bishops Office:

- Compensation and Benefits Form
- Guide to Compensation and Benefits Form
- Current year of Oregon Synod Compensation Guidelines
- Interim Agreement Template

If needed, the synod office will arrange for a Synod Council vote to issue a Letter of Call to the pastor(s) from the Synod and if needed, send the pastor a:

- Letter of Call

In some cases, the synod Bishop's office may facilitate the electronic signing of documents. Copies of all paper or electronic documents (except the Letter of Call) will be sent to the Council President and/or Administrator.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

MODEL CONSTITUTION

FOR

CONGREGATIONS

OF THE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

CHURCH IN AMERICA[®]

2019

Chapter 9.
ROSTERED MINISTER

- *C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.02. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- *C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
 - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the (insert name of synod) ; and
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- *C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.05. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;

- 8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- *C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
 - *C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.
 - *C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.
 - *C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.
 - *C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall

meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.

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

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

NOTES