

Called to Serve

Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod Call Process

A Guide for Congregational Leaders

ADOPTED: May 15, 2021

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Summary of Revisions

This page will contain a summary of future revisions to the manual.

- Adopted by Synod Council on May 15, 2021

Introduction

Dear people of God,

We have come to a point of transition. A transition as both a series of events and a process. A time of change and a space to ask questions concerning mission and ministry as a community of believers. And to remember continually, even in the midst of change, our triune God remains constant.

Our scriptures are filled with a variety of images of the constancy of God. The one who walks with Adam and Eve, the one who eats a meal with Abraham and makes Sarah laugh, who wrestles with Jacob at the river Jabbok or imaged as a mother hen protecting her chicks, a clap of thunder or as a dove descending upon Jesus at the river Jordon come quickly to mind. I am sure you can name for yourselves other images of our God of promise in the midst of change.

In the sacrament of baptism, we are washed into the fullness of God's promise through Jesus our Christ. We are bathed and birthed by the Holy Spirit as Luther reminds us in his explanation of baptism in the Catechism. And we are reminded of this washing into the promise throughout our lives of faithful witness and service in the world. For each of us has a vocational calling to live out our baptismal lives in our families, and our communities of study, work, and play and beyond.

The time of transition between calls of rostered leaders opens a particular moment to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in your individual and communal lives. This interim time allows for evaluating the ministry of the community of believers. The interim time allows individuals to reflect on their vocational call within the community of believers, to tried and true or to new adventures, new ministries in your faith community and beyond. And as a community of believers in this time of discernment there is opportunity to reflect on who might be the next rostered leader – pastor or deacon – called by the Holy Spirit to be your pastor or diaconal leader.

This call process manual, based upon several call process manuals of ELCA synods, is intended to help aid you in this work. For your convenience, this entire manual, including the forms, are available for download online on our synod's website, under resources / congregations and call process.

As you walk through this process, I encourage you as call committee, council, and the whole community of believers to pray, worship, and discern the call of the Holy Spirit. And know I as well as our synod staff are here to guide you through this process and walk with you along the way.

Called to Serve,

Rev. Michael L. Lozano, Bishop

Terminology for the Call Process

Office of the bishop: This term refers to our synod bishop, our assistants to the bishop, or other synod staff who are responsible for guiding a congregation through the call process.

Cluster: Clusters are groupings of ministry sites within our synod. They are organized as a way for ministry sites to cooperate in mission and ministry with each other for the sake of the gospel.

Conference: Conferences are geographic divisions of our synod. They are organized primarily along country lines and are established for communication and governance purposes within our synod.

Constitutional References: Congregational constitutional references (C.) are from the 2019 Model Constitutions for Congregations. Synod constitutional references (S.) are from the 2017 Northwestern Pennsylvania Constitution.

President: Refers to the elected lay person of a congregation council. Some congregations and shared ministry/parish arrangements have vice-presidents as their senior elected lay leaders with the pastor being the president of the congregation or shared ministry/parish. When the pastor resigns their call, the duties of the office of the president are assumed by the vice-president.

Rostered Minister: A pastor or deacon on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The term Rostered Leader may, from time to time, be used interchangeably with Rostered Minister.

Types of Rostered Ministers

Minister of Word and Sacrament: A pastor who offers the hope of Christ through the sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism and proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ in congregations and other ministry settings. Some pastors are called to specialized ministries such as chaplaincy and campus ministry.

Minister of Word and Service: A deacon who serves in congregations and other ministries of the ELCA, including family ministries, youth, administration, volunteer ministry, social services, music, chaplaincy, campus ministry, or parish nursing. Deacons connect the church with the needs of the world and work to equip others to lead a living, active and caring Christian life.

Roles of the Rostered Minister in the Congregation

Pastor: A pastor serving as a rostered minister of word and sacrament in a congregation. The pastor may be responsible for other staff, such as deacons, worship and music directors, preschool directors, sextons.

Lead / Senior Pastor: A rostered pastor with responsibility for additional rostered staff. **Staff Pastor:** A rostered pastor who is responsible to another pastor. May be full or flexible time. **Co-Pastor:** More than one pastor in the same congregation, each with a different emphasis. One pastor does not have responsibility for the other.

Flexible Ministry: Not serving in a full-time call. See Compensation Guidelines Manual for more details.

Bi-Vocational Pastor / Deacon: A rostered minister called to a congregation part time who also works an additional part time secular job.

Second Career: An individual called into ministry after a career in the secular world.

First Call Pastor or Deacon: A pastor or deacon serving in their initial call after completing the education, preparation, and candidacy process. A rostered minister must receive an initial call to be ordained by the ELCA.

In Times of Transition

Supply Pastor: A pastor who preaches and presides during worship. Supply pastors may vary from week to week. A **stated supply** will typically serve for a longer period and may be under a short-term contract with the congregation.

Interim: Rostered ministers appointed by the bishop to serve congregations expecting to participate in a call-process.

Intentional Interims have particular gifts for helping a congregation through conflict, visioning, and transitional periods prior to the call of a new pastor. Intentional interims are longer interims and have a particular focus/purpose. Intentional interims must participate in a training/certification program.

The bishop appoints all interim pastors with the approval of the congregation council and serves under contract with the bishop's office.

Term Call: This term applies to an array of situations for pastors and deacons called for a specific length of time to a specific ministry setting. All term calls are time bound and are established in conjunction with the bishop's office and must be approved by Synod Council. This is a contract position between the pastor and the congregation, approved by the bishop's office.

Call Process Documentation

Rostered Minister Profile (RMP): The document completed by candidates who are seeking a call. The RMP is designed to stimulate reflection, to summarize a rostered minister's interests and ministry, and to be used as a professional résumé. The RMP is meant to be a conversation starter or introduction to the rostered minister's faith and ministry. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of a rostered minister's journey in life and service.

Ministry Site Profile (MSP): This is a many page document completed by the congregation which describes the ministry setting, mission, and the type of rostered minister they are seeking. Completing the MSP is an opportunity for the congregation to be renewed in its sense of mission and to learn how to identify the gifts and skills needed in a rostered minister to lead them in their mission.

A word on rostered leader transitions:

Rostered leaders are called to serve in a variety of communities of believers. Transitions occur as both rostered leaders and ministry needs change. Some transitions result from a rostered leader or a congregation realizing ministry in the particular setting has changed and the abilities and needs no longer match. Some transitions occur due to the working of Spirit and the call God places upon the rostered leader or the congregation. Rostered leaders also transition to other rosters in the ELCA due to retirement or disability.

Rostered leader, at times, will resign and transition to a on leave from call roster status. This roster transition may be the result of changing life circumstances of the rostered leader or family member, deepening their education by returning full or part time study, following a spouse to a new location and awaiting an opportunity to enter a call process, etc.

A rostered leader's determination to retire, placed on the disability or on leave from call rosters affects themselves and their place of ministry. Depending on the reason for the change in status the leave taking between rostered leader and congregation may be a bittersweet occasion.

There are occasions when a rostered leader will resign under unusual circumstances. These resignations are normally a result of an egregious breach of pastoral/diaconal ethics or morality. The resignation is effective immediately upon submission to the bishop. The office of the bishop will provide direct support and guidance to the congregation impacted in this circumstance.

Steps in calling a rostered leader:

These steps in the call process are shared by different leaders of the congregation and are to be completed in a specific order.

Congregation Council Steps

1. Council receives a letter of resignation from rostered leader.
2. The rostered leader and the congregation council complete all financial and administrative obligations to one another.
3. An exit interview may be conducted. Or individual / corporate confession offered.
4. A farewell event for the departing rostered leader and family is held.
5. The office of the bishop meets with the congregation council to introduce the transition to the call process.
6. The bishop appoints an interim pastor or deacon in consultation with the congregation council.
7. The interim pastor or deacon is installed by a member of the office of the bishop.
8. A transition team may be appointed to advise the interim pastor or deacon.

Call Committee Steps

9. The call committee is elected by the congregation or appointed by the congregation council.
10. The call committee develops the Ministry Site Profile (MSP).
11. Upon receipt of the completed MSP, the office of the bishop reviews the MSP, returns or approves MSP and activates MSP.
12. The office of the bishop considers candidates and meets with the call committee to recommend a candidate and to discuss procedures for interviewing and evaluating the candidate.
13. The call committee interviews candidates and recommends one candidate to the congregation council.

Congregation Council and Congregation Steps

14. The congregation council interviews the candidate and recommends the candidate to the congregation.
15. The congregation votes to extend a call to the candidate. The candidate accepts the call.
16. The congregation bids farewell to the interim pastor or deacon.
17. The new rostered leader begins service in the congregation and is installed by the office of the bishop.

The Congregation Council Responsibilities

1. Congregation Council receives a letter of resignation from the rostered leader.

A rostered leader must consult with the bishop or bishop's staff prior to becoming a candidate for call to another congregation, before retiring, and before resigning a call, be placed on disability, on leave from call or resign from the roster (*C9.05) before the congregation learns of this action. The office of the bishop will be prepared to meet the congregation's needs for pastoral or diaconal leadership.

The rostered leader will meet with the executive committee of the congregation council or the congregation president (or vice-president if the rostered leader is the president of council) prior to submitting a letter of resignation to agree on such matters as final date of service, final date on the payroll, days of vacation taken before departure, payment for unexpended accrued vacation (if applicable), and disposition of any financial or other obligations between the rostered leader and the congregation.

The president/vice-president of the congregation will call a meeting of the congregation council at which the rostered leader reads the letter of resignation and the president/vice-president presents the terms agreed upon between the rostered leader and the executive committee. *The resignation of a pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed upon, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted (†S14.18.a.2.). And, the resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted (†S14.43.a.2.).* The rostered leader sends a copy of the letter of resignation to the synod office.

The congregation council accepts the pastor's letter of resignation and sets a date for a farewell event for the rostered leader and family. The terms of the resignation including the date of departure are included in the minutes of the congregation council.

The president will promptly inform all members of the congregation by all methods authorized by the congregation constitution and will make an announcement to the congregation at the next worship service. The president's letter to the congregation will state the congregation council accepted the rostered leader's resignation, the last date the rostered leader will serve the congregation, under normal circumstances expressions of gratitude to the rostered leader and family, and a copy of the rostered leader's letter of resignation.

Rostered leaders – pastors and deacons will respect the integrity of the ministry of the congregation which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so. Former pastors will be invited by the pastor, or interim pastor in consultation with the congregation council. Former deacons will be invited by the congregation council. (†S14.19., †S14.44.). See [Appendices 1 and 2](#) for a discussion of the proper boundaries for former rostered leaders.

2. The rostered leader and congregation council complete all financial and administrative obligations to one another.

The congregation treasurer submits an end of call notification to Portico Benefits.

Parochial Records – The pastor of the congregation *shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation; and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod* (*C9.12.a. and *C9.12.b.). Upon the pastor’s resignation, the congregation council secretary shall meet with the departing pastor to review and receive the parochial record. Parochial records must be kept in a permanent record, handwritten in ink. A computer database file is not a substitute for a permanent record. Computer-generated reports are not considered permanent records, unless printed on archival paper. The congregation council secretary will attest to the synod bishop the parochial records are complete and up to date ([Appendix 3](#)). This will be completed before the pastor begins service in another field of labor or is issued a transfer to another synod (†14.21.)

Financial Obligations – *This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former rostered leader before calling a successor. A rostered leader 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.* (*C9.08., *C9.26.). Such financial obligations may include compensation payable to the rostered leader, benefits payable to Portico Benefits or another provider, approved reimbursable expenses, payment for accrued vacation (if applicable), FICA or taxes payable (if applicable), etc.

Financial obligations on the part of the rostered leader may include repayment of any salary advances, any personal or housing loans, return of vehicle or other equipment belonging to the congregation, settlement for any damage to the congregation’s property. If applicable, the president/vice-president and the chair of the property committee should conduct a walk-through of a church-owned parsonage.

In the event a satisfactory settlement of any financial or administrative obligation cannot be agreed upon between the rostered leader and the congregation council, the office of the bishop shall be called to mediate an agreement.

3. An exit interview may be conducted. Or individual/corporate confession offered.

An exit interview is an intentional conversation between the resigning rostered leader and the congregation council or mutual ministry committee. See [Appendix 5](#). This interview may be conducted by the office of the bishop. The purpose of the interview is to:

- evaluate the ministry of rostered leader and congregation,
- identify areas of potential growth for rostered leader and congregation,
- celebrate the ministry of rostered leader and congregation, and
- clarify the relationship the departing rostered leader will have with the congregation.
-

Another option for transition is to offer individual/corporate confession as a framework for reflecting on the past, seek absolution for the faults found in ministry, and take corrective steps for a new opportunity for ministry.

4. A farewell event for the departing rostered leader and family is held

The congregation council shall plan appropriate expressions of appreciation for the resigning rostered leader and family. Suggestions for a farewell include:

- a service to which the office of the bishop, the pastor's colleagues (Lutheran and ecumenical), and community leaders are invited
- "Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call" (See [Appendix 4](#)) in the pastor's last service
- a reception or dinner, informal or formal
- a farewell gift to the rostered leader and/or gift to an institution or a cause in the pastor's honor.

A special committee may be appointed by the congregation council to recommend the type of event and to coordinate congregational expressions of appreciation.

After the farewell event, the relationship between the departing rostered leader and the congregation changes. Rostered leaders – pastors and deacons will respect the integrity of the ministry of the congregation which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so. Former pastors will be invited by the pastor, or interim pastor in consultation with the congregation council. Former deacons will be invited by the congregation council. (†S14.19., †S14.44.). See [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#) for a discussion of the ethics of a pastoral transition and sample communication tools for the covenant of separation.

5. The office of the bishop meets with the congregation council to introduce the transition to the call process.

This meeting will take place after the rostered leader has departed. The office of the bishop presents a summary of the call process and invites the congregation council's questions. Often, at this meeting, the office of the bishop will recommend an interim pastor (or deacon depending on call in transition)

After the interim pastor or deacon begins their work, the congregation council will meet with the office of the bishop before appointing or electing a call committee.

6. The bishop appoints an interim pastor (a similar process is followed for diaconal ministry).

*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. (*C9.06.).* The bishop is responsible, along with the congregation council, for maintaining pastoral oversight of the congregation during the interim. The office of the bishop will recommend an interim pastor to provide for the pastoral and leadership needs of the congregation and to support the process of calling a new pastor. See [Appendix 6](#) for a discussion of the role of an interim.

The congregation council meets with the interim pastor and makes an agreement including hours per week of service, compensation, benefits, and specific responsibilities. See [Appendix 7](#). Compensation guidelines are approved annually by the synod assembly and are

found under the “Resources” tab on the synod web page www.northwesternpasynodelca.org. The council will provide support for the interim pastor to attend synod sponsored meetings providing continuing education and peer support for pastors. After forwarding the letter of agreement to the synod office, the bishop then appoints the interim pastor to serve the congregation.

*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. (*C9.07.).*

A time of transition between rostered leaders can be a fertile opportunity for a congregation to focus on its heritage, leadership, connections, mission, and future. Interim pastors can help congregations to address troubling events in their history and to focus on their resources, strengths, and opportunities for mission and ministry.

Congregations can work on communications skills and healthy boundaries. This transition period is an appropriate time to review organizational structure, governance, the constitution, by-laws and continuing resolutions, policies and procedures, mission statement and strategies for ministry. And to conduct financial audits and reviews as well as financial planning for the future. Transitions provide opportunities for emerging leaders to be identified and encouraged in the work of the life of the congregation.

An interim pastor can help a congregation to become reconnected with local congregations, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the ELCA. Interim pastors are expected to assist congregations in identifying the trends, needs, and resources of their surrounding community and the trends, needs, resources, and mission of the congregation.

Interim pastors help congregations prepare to embrace their future by serving as a resource for the process of calling a new rostered leader, therefore they are not to be considered as a candidate for call. There are rare exceptions to this policy.

7. The office of the bishop may install the interim pastor.

Usually, this will occur at a Sunday morning worship service. The office of the bishop is available at this time or at another suitable time to make a presentation to the congregation about the call process and to answer questions from the congregation.

8. A transition team may be appointed.

The interim pastor may ask the congregation council to appoint a transition team, the team is not the call committee, to help facilitate the interim process. The interim pastor may utilize the transition team to advise which means of addressing the interim tasks of focusing on heritage, leadership, connections, mission, and the future will be most effective in this particular congregation at this particular time ([Appendix 6](#)). The transition team may help the

interim pastor to better understand the culture of the congregation and to identify persons with particular gifts helpful in the interim process. The transition team is not a decision-making body, but an advisory body similar to a mutual ministry committee and may be appointed by the congregation council with the consent of the interim pastor to serve as the mutual ministry committee for the interim pastor.

The Call Committee Responsibilities

9. The call committee is elected by the congregation or appointed by the congregation council.

The president consults the congregation's constitution (C13.05.) to determine the election/appointment of the call committee. The office of the bishop will meet with the congregation council prior to the call committee's election/appointment.

Purpose of the call committee – The call committee studies the community and the congregation and identify the current demographics, trends, resources, and needs of each. The committee reviews and clarifies the congregation's purpose, mission, and needs for pastoral/diaconal leadership in view of this information and completes the Ministry Site Profile. The call committee interviews candidates and recommends one candidate to the congregation council for consideration.

Make-up of the call committee – The call committee is representative of the membership of the congregation in its diversity of age, culture, gender, longevity in the congregation, etc. Persons appointed/elected to the committee should be active members of the congregation who commune and contribute regularly and trusted by the congregation to make sound decisions. No officers of the congregation council will serve on the call committee. No more than two congregation council members may serve on the call committee. Call committee members are to be faithful in their tasks, to be present at all meetings, and able to maintain confidentiality, discernment, and maturity. The committee elects a chair to lead meetings and a secretary to record the actions of the committee or these may be appointed by the congregation council. It is also helpful to appoint a chaplain to lead the call committee in devotions and prayer. The congregation council will report the call committee's membership to the office of the bishop, providing names and contact information of committee members, the chair, and the secretary.

Announcement of members – The call committee names are published in the bulletin, newsletter and on other digital media platforms. It is appropriate to regularly request and offer prayer on the call committee's behalf.

Installation of call committee – The interim pastor or the president of the congregation installs the call committee. See [Appendix 9](#).

Expenses – The congregation pays all authorized expenses of the call committee.

Orientation of the call committee – A representative of the office of the bishop will meet with the call committee to review the committee's tasks.

Reporting progress – The call committee will report their progress to the congregation regularly. The work of the committee is open and transparent to the congregation up until the point at which the call committee receives the names of candidates to interview.

Importance of confidentiality - The call committee reports their activities regularly to the congregation council and congregation. It does not report the names of candidates once entering the interview phase of the call process, simply the call committee is interviewing candidates. Candidates for call often serve in a congregation or another ministry, it is important the candidate's name and identifying information is kept confidential until the call process has reached the point where the candidate is recommended to the congregation for call.

The call committee does not solicit suggestions for candidates from the congregation; however, congregation members will sometimes suggest candidates to the call committee. If the call committee wishes to consider a suggested candidate, the call committee chair will first contact the office of the bishop. The office of the bishop will determine whether the candidate is available for call. The call committee should not make initial contact with the prospective candidate but rely on the office of the bishop to make contact.

10. The call committee develops the Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

When calling a rostered leader, the congregation should identify the particular gifts and abilities needed in a pastor to support the congregation in fulfilling its mission. To determine these qualities, the congregation needs to be able to articulate its mission and how its mission is related to God's call to be Jesus' disciples in a particular community. Completing the MSP helps the congregation to describe its context, identity, activities, resources, mission priorities, and needs. The Rostered Minister's Profile (RMP) describe the gifts, skills, experience, and sense of calling of rostered leaders.

The call committee, working with the congregation council and the interim pastor, completes the MSP. The webpage elca.org/Call-Process/Ministry-Sites contains an outline and sample MSP. This is also the location for creating the congregation's account for the MSP.

Completing an MSP is more than filling in the blanks on a form. It requires careful study and research to know the congregation and surrounding community. It identifies the congregation's opportunities, challenges, resources, mission priorities, and needs. It clarifies the congregation's purpose and mission within its current context. The interim pastor serves as a resource person for the call committee as the committee conducts the studies and gathers information to write the MSP. The office of the bishop may assist the call committee in completing the MSP. See [Appendix 10](#) for detailed "Hints for Completing the Ministry Site Profile."

Once the call committee completes the MSP and before submission to the congregation council for approval, a draft is sent to the office of the bishop for review. After considering suggestions for improvement, the call committee meets with the congregation council and reviews the MSP in detail. Once the congregation council approves the MSP, it can be activated in the ELCA online call process system. Be sure to print a copy of your MSP to save in your congregation's archives.

In some circumstances, an interim pastor may request some of the tasks of researching and writing the MSP be assigned by the congregation council to a transition team. If a transition team is utilized to complete the MSP, a joint meeting of the transition team, the

congregation council, and the call committee may be held to help the call committee understand how the needs expressed in the MSP and the attributes of a rostered leader identified in the document were determined.

11. Upon receipt of the completed MSP, the office of the bishop prayerfully discerns candidates to recommend to the congregation.

The office of the bishop utilizes the MSP to identify skills, interests, and aptitudes in rostered leaders matching the needs of the congregation. The office of the bishop may approach pastors to consider serving your congregation. The office of the bishop will interview candidates who have indicated an openness to serving in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, speak with the office of bishop in other synods about candidates, and speak with references to discern who might have the particular gifts needed to serve your congregation.

The call committee and congregation are urged to be in prayer for the office of the bishop be led by the Holy Spirit to the best candidates to recommend to the congregation for consideration.

12. The office of the bishop meets with the call committee to recommend a candidate.

A meeting with the call committee is scheduled when the office of the bishop finds a suitable candidate. The agenda for this meeting will include:

- **Confidentiality** – While the work of the call committee should remain transparent, the names and other identifying information of candidates is kept confidential within the call committee. Spouses, families, congregation council members, and the interim pastor are not to be privy to this information. The ministry of a pastor may be placed in jeopardy or division may be created within a congregation if news of the consideration of a candidate is divulged prematurely. Conversations regarding the candidate is confined within the official meetings of the call committee.
- **Contacting and interviewing candidates** – Procedures for contacting, interviewing, and evaluating a candidate and for selecting a candidate to recommend to the congregation council and the congregation are discussed.
- **Recommendation of Candidate** – The office of the bishop will share with the call committee the name and rostered minister profile of a candidate who is specifically recommended by the office of the bishop to be considered by the congregation and available for call. It is the policy of the office of the bishop to offer one candidate to a call committee at a time.

The call committee is expected to give full consideration to the candidate recommended by the bishop including at minimum an initial interview.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be recommended, a congregation call a pastor for a specified term rather than extend a permanent call (†S14.24.).

In special circumstances, a congregation may call a flexible ministry pastor. Normally the minimum number of hours for flexible ministry is less than 30 hours per week with a minimum of fifteen hours per week. Travel time to and from the site of ministry is part of the calculation in determining total hours.

*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. (*C9.02.).*

In special circumstances, the office of the bishop may recommend an ordained minister of one of the ELCA's ecumenical partners (The Episcopal Church, USA, The Presbyterian Church USA, The Reformed Church in America, The United Church of Christ, The United Methodist Church, or The Moravian Church) be extended the invitation as pastor of the congregation. An ordained minister of one of our ecumenical partners is not "called" by the congregation but serves the congregation by invitation of the synod bishop under a letter of agreement, similar to a letter of call, among the congregation, the pastor, the synod bishop, and the judicatory leader of the partner denomination. The pastor is invited to "extended service," which means a period of time longer than a temporary appointment and shorter than a permanent appointment. Typically, agreements for extended service are for a term of one or more years and are renewable with the consent of all parties.

13. The call committee interviews candidates and recommends one candidate to the congregation council.

The call committee's consideration of a candidate remains completely confidential. Interviews and evaluations of the candidate are not open to persons who are not members of the call committee.

The call committee communicates to the congregation receipt of a candidate and beginning the interview process. The congregation prays for the call committee during this important part to the call process. The call committee will report their progress in general terms, being careful not to reveal identifying information about candidates, especially name and where the candidate is serving.

The chair of the call committee distributes the Rostered Minister Profiles (RMP) of the candidate among committee members and becomes familiar with the candidates' materials. The committee is expected to interview candidates recommended by the bishop's office.

The RMP is confidential material. It is to be kept secure at all times and be destroyed when the call committee or candidate ceases moving forward in the call process or the candidate is called to be the rostered leader of the congregation.

There is no guarantee the candidate will complete the whole call process, therefore the call committee develops a list of questions to be asked of all candidates in the initial interview phase and specific questions to be asked of the candidate as the interview process develops. The committees should allow itself sufficient time to prepare for the interview. See [Appendix 11](#) for a sample questions a call committee may ask a candidate, and [Appendix 12](#) for questions and candidate may ask the call committee.

The call committee decides the means of conducting the initial interview. Initial interviews may be in person, by video conference, or by conference call. In order to be fair to all candidates, it is recommended initial interviews for all candidates be conducted by the same means if possible. See [Appendix 13](#) for Helpful Hints for Video Conferencing.

The call committee may want to practice their interviewing skills by holding a mock interview. A neighboring pastor may be willing to serve as the interviewee. The office of the bishop may also have suggestions for who might serve in this role.

The call committee may decide to eliminate from further consideration the candidate following the initial interview. Please contact the office of the bishop, first, to indicate the candidate is no longer under consideration. An evaluation of each candidate is completed. See [Appendix 14](#). The call committee chair will contact the candidate by phone, with formal follow up via a letter. See [Appendix 15](#).

After the initial interview, the call committee gathers additional information from a candidate for consideration such as examples of written materials, audio or video of sermons and/or worship services, congregation annual reports, etc. The committee may decide at this time to contact references listed in the candidate's rostered minister profile. The call committee may decide, with the candidate's permission, to visit their congregations to experience a worship service and to hear the candidates preach. It is expected such visits be done discretely without drawing attention to the call committee. Discuss with the candidate the average number of visitors their congregation receives at a given liturgy and how the congregation approaches visitors. A sudden influx of visitors, all sitting in the back pew and taking notes, may call attention to themselves and the pastor.

The call committee decides how to proceed with a second interview. The candidate may be invited to visit the church for a tour of the facilities, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and an interview on site or at another location. Depending on the circumstances, the call committee may interview the candidate where they are currently serving and, with the candidate's permission, attend worship. The call committee may conduct a second or more interview by video conference rather than in person.

After a second interview, the call committee may continue with further interviews until they have perceived God is calling a candidate to serve as pastor. The call committee votes to bring the candidate to the congregation council for consideration. If one or more member of the committee votes against the candidate, the process stops, and the candidate is no longer considered. The call committee chair contacts the office of the bishop and then the candidate to inform them of the call committee's action.

When the call committee votes to recommend a candidate, the chair of the committee informs the office of the bishop, and then the candidate. When the candidate ascends to moving forward with the process, then the congregation council president/vice president are informed.

The call committee prepares a presentation to introduce the candidate to the congregation council focusing on how the candidate's knowledge, skills, experience, and interests can be useful in supporting the congregation's mission.

The Congregation Council and Congregation Responsibilities:

14. The congregation council interviews the candidate and recommends the candidate to the congregation.

The congregation council may invite the candidate to visit and to tour the church facilities and property (including the parsonage or other housing arrangements) and community. If the candidate stays overnight, private lodging where the candidate and spouse or family may relax on their own is arranged, at the congregation's expense. The call committee and congregation council may also arrange for activities for the spouse and family to familiarize them with the congregation and surrounding community.

The congregation council will interview the candidate. The call committee will introduce the candidate to the council and present reasons why this candidate is a good match for the congregation's needs. It is helpful if the congregation council is prepared with specific questions to ask the candidate and the council is prepared to answer the candidate's questions.

If the results of the interview are positive, the executive committee and/or the finance committee meets with the candidate to agree on the Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities. See [Appendix 19](#) and on the synod website and at the ELCA Office of the Secretary webpage. The site provides a guide to complete the form. The synod website provides the latest compensation guidelines used as the starting point in offering compensation and benefits. The agreement should include moving and other transition expenses.

*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. (*C9.01.)* A majority of "at least two-thirds" (*C9.01) is required for the congregation to extend a call, it is recommended a majority of at least two-thirds of the council be the minimum required to recommend the candidate to the congregation for call, unless otherwise stated in the congregation constitution and by-laws.

When the congregation council is ready to move forward in the process a motion is placed before the congregation council. The motion reads, "The congregation council recommends, with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit (*name of congregation*) extend to (*title and name of rostered leader*) a call to serve as (*specific title*) according to terms specified in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod Compensation and Benefits Guidelines for Rostered Leaders of the (rostered leader title)."

Any motion to amend the definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities requires a simple majority vote for adoption. The candidate is consulted about any changes to compensation, benefits, and responsibilities. If the motion to recommend the candidate passes by the required majority, the council calls a special congregational meeting in accordance with the congregation's constitution and bylaws (*C10.02-*C10.08). Notice of the meeting should include a brief introduction of the candidate (please consult the office of the bishop in crafting an introduction) and the definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities.

When the congregation council has voted to recommend the candidate to the congregation for call, the congregation council president contacts the synod office to review the process and receive instructions. An official Letter of Call (for a sample, see [Appendix 18](#)) will be hand delivered or mailed to the congregation.

Prior to the congregational meeting, the council will arrange for a background check of the candidate. Please consult the office of the bishop for guidance.

Prior to the congregational meeting, the candidate and family may be invited to a “meet and greet” with the congregation. This may take the form of a reception at which members of the congregation may have the opportunity to meet the candidate individually. The candidate should be introduced to the gathering by the president or the call committee chair. The candidate may be invited to give a brief devotion, to speak briefly about the candidate’s background, and/or to make brief remarks about the candidate’s vision for ministry in partnership with the congregation. It is recommended the candidate not be subjected to extensive questioning by the congregation. The call committee and congregation council have had ample opportunity ask the candidate questions. The intent of a “meet and greet” is to allow congregation members the opportunity to see whether they are comfortable with the candidate as their pastor.

If the candidate is being considered for Word and Sacrament ministry, the candidate will celebrate the full liturgy, preaching and presiding, on the day of the congregational meeting.

If the candidate is being considered for Word and Service ministry, the candidate will demonstrate their capabilities, perhaps including leading in worship and/or preaching, on the day of the congregational meeting.

15. The congregation votes to extend a call to the candidate. The candidate accepts the call.

A special meeting to call a pastor is presided over by the bishop or the bishop’s appointee. Detailed instructions for conducting the meeting are referenced in [Appendix 17](#). The meeting is opened with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The call committee chair and members of the call committee present a report describing the call process, how they were led to recommend the candidate to be called, and information about the candidate. A member of the congregation council places one motion before the congregation, to call the pastor/deacon at the agreed upon definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities. Amendments (if proposed) may be made to the definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities by a simple majority. Following discussion, the congregation votes on the one motion to call the pastor/deacon at the definition of salary, benefits, and responsibilities. No absentee or proxy votes shall be accepted (C10.05.). No other business will be conducted at this meeting.

If the motion to call the candidate is adopted by at least a two-thirds majority, the congregation council president informs the candidate and the office of the bishop and sends the Letter of Call and Definition of Compensation and Benefits forms to the synod office for the bishop’s signature. The candidate has up to 30 days to respond to the issuance of a call by the congregation.

If the candidate accepts the call, the rostered leaders, in conjunction with the congregation council, is responsible for setting the starting date. The date may depend on the rostered leader's obligation to abide by conditions for termination of the previous call. Once the starting date is set, the congregation council treasurer completes enrollment of the rostered leader in the congregation's pension and benefits programs. An installation date is negotiated with the office of the bishop. If this is a first call candidate, the ordination date is also set. Ordination and installation may occur at the same liturgy in the calling congregation, or the Ordination may occur prior to installation at a different site.

16. The congregation bids farewell to the interim pastor (or deacon)

The congregation says "goodbye" to the interim before the arrival of the newly called pastor/deacon. The interim's term ends the Sunday prior to the start of the first day of the new call.

17. The new rostered leader begins service in the congregation and is installed by the office of the bishop.

Within the first two months, the new rostered leader is installed by the bishop or the assistant to the bishop.

The installation of a rostered leader is normally held on a Sunday afternoon when colleagues of the new rostered leader from area Lutheran congregations and from other local churches and faith communities are available to attend. A reception welcoming the rostered leader, family, and guests is appropriate.

Once the rostered leader is installed, the work of the call committee is completed. Members of the call committee and/or transition team may be appointed per the constitution and by-laws to serve on the new pastor's mutual ministry committee.

Calls In/Under Specialized Ministry

Multi-Site Parish

In the case of a parish with two or more ministry sites, each congregation votes separately on whether or not to call the rostered leader.

- The votes are held by the synod representative, uncounted, until after all congregational meetings. The votes are counted by a representative of each congregation in the presence of the synod representative.
- Each congregation in the parish needs to approve the call by a 2/3 vote. If the call is approved, the congregations authorize the joint council to complete the call documents and the approved compensation and benefits documents.
- If one congregation approves the call and another does not, the call is not issued. No part of a joint parish calls a rostered leader without the participation of the other.

Term Ministries

A congregation may call a rostered leader for a specific term. The bishop will approve a statement of purpose before a departure from this norm is allowed.

Regularizing a Term Call

A congregation may issue a regular call to a rostered leader who is serving under a term call.

- The process may begin halfway through the length of the term, with the congregation council acting as the call committee.
- The council vote to recommend the rostered leader to the congregation for a regular call need not be unanimous. A vote of less than 3/4 of the congregation council may indicate postponement of the recommendation to regularize the call.
- A two-thirds positive vote by the congregation is necessary to issue the regular call to the rostered leader.

Clergy Couples

In the case of jointly called clergy couples, to a single or multi-site parish, if one pastor resigns, the pastorate is declared vacant, and both pastors' terms are completed.

- This provision will be part of the call document.
- In the event of a death of a spouse, at the appropriate time, the bishop will meet with the surviving pastor and Congregation Council to review the call.

Flexible Ministries

To qualify as a call, flexible ministries require a minimum of 15 hours of work each week and must be in line with the synod salary compensation, and benefits guidelines in proportion to the number of hours per week. See Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod Compensation and Benefits Guidelines for Rostered Leaders

Staff/Assistant Pastor/Deacon

Calling a rostered minister to serve in a staff position differs from calling a solo pastor. When a congregation calls a rostered leader, the congregation studies its community and the resources and needs of the congregation, clarifies its mission, and develops a picture of who the congregation needs as a rostered leader. In the case of calling a rostered minister to a staff position, there is already a senior or lead pastor serving the congregation. The staff position is usually focused on particular areas of ministry.

The lead pastor tends to have a good deal of influence in developing the position description for a staff position and in the selection process of a rostered minister to be called to the position.

A committee, personnel committee, or call committee, develops a rationale for the position, a position description, and a description of characteristics desired in candidates for the position. Completing the MSP helps in the same way a call committee would for calling a single pastor.

Studying the demographics and trends in the community and comparing these with the demographics and trends in the congregation provides a picture of the congregation's opportunities for ministry. Reflecting on the congregation's purpose, its programs, and its goals provides an opportunity to clarify how an additional staff person may strengthen the congregation's ministry.

If this is the congregation's first time to call a rostered minister to a staff position, the rationale and the mission goals of the position is presented to the congregation and approval for funding the position is gained before beginning to interview candidates for the position. A congregation accustomed to having staff may already have budget authority approved for the position.

The lead pastor typically takes an active part in the process when selecting, interviewing, and evaluating candidates and finally recommending a candidate to the congregation for call, as the lead pastor is responsible for forming the staff into a team working together in ministry.

Lead pastors should not expect the call committee to be a "rubber stamp" for the lead pastor's preferences but should value the call committee's insights and seek to make a mutual decision to present a candidate. Similarly, the call committee should value the lead pastor's input and preferences since the lead pastor will be working with, and potentially supervising, the staff person. The relationship between the rostered ministers is clearly defined in the definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities.

The congregation council should decide whether calls to rostered ministers to fill staff positions shall be co-terminus with the lead pastor or permanent calls. When a new lead pastor is called, the lead may want to build a new leadership team. Co-terminus calls provide a new lead pastor with more flexibility in restructuring the staff when needed. Permanent calls, on the other hand, are more clearly calls extended by the congregation.

Responsibilities of the Council President during the transition:

Serving as president of a congregation during a pastoral/diaconal transition can be challenging. The president's main task is to lead the congregation council in its work of overseeing the various ongoing ministries of the congregation. The president must develop a working relationship with the interim pastor/deacon to ensure the pastoral/diaconal needs of the congregation are met and the process of calling a rostered leader can be completed.

The congregation president becomes familiar with Chapters 9, 11 and 12 of the 2019 ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations. This model should be congregation's constitution. If not, the congregation council president works to update the congregation's constitution to the present standard model. The congregation council president also becomes familiar with this manual and the call process.

1. The rostered leader submits a letter of resignation.

The congregation council president may be aware the rostered leader is considering a call to another congregation. If this information is shared in confidence, it is important to keep the confidence so if the pastor should discern a call to continue serving the congregation, the rostered leader's effectiveness in the congregation is not diminished.

When the rostered leader meets with the executive committee to announce the resignation and to agree on financial matters and dates, it is helpful if the congregation president takes the lead to present to the congregation council a termination agreement which is fair to all parties. In situations in which there is conflict between the rostered leader and congregation leaders prior to the rostered leader's resignation, it is incumbent on the congregation president to arrange for a peaceful and gracious parting.

When a pastor resigns, the congregation president or an individual appointed by the president, assures supply pastors or synod authorized lay worship leaders are secured to lead worship until the appointment of an interim pastor. Synod authorized lay worship leaders may preach but not preside. Only ordained ministers on the roster of the ELCA or ordained ministers of ELCA ecumenical partners (Episcopal Church, USA, Presbyterian Church USA, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and Moravian Church) may preside at Holy Communion. Synod trained or authorized lay distributors of the sacrament may be appointed by the office of the bishop to provide sacramental care to the congregation.

When a deacon resigns, the congregation council president or an individual appointed by the president, assures diaconal coverage is provided. The office of the bishop is to be consulted as needed.

2. The rostered leader and the congregation council complete all financial or administrative obligations to one another.

If there are differences between the rostered leader and the congregation council concerning obligations one may have toward the other, the congregation president should keep the conversation going until a final agreement is reached or contact the office of the bishop to mediate an agreement.

If the congregation owns a parsonage or other housing arrangements, owns or leases a car, owns a computer or other equipment used by the rostered leader, the congregation council president insures the appropriate committees inspect the congregation's property prior to the pastor's departure to assure the congregation's property is left in reasonable condition.

3. A farewell event for the departing rostered leader and family is held.

The president delegates the planning and execution of a farewell event to an appropriate committee of the congregation. The president speaks for the congregation at the event in appreciation for the good work the rostered leader has done in partnership with the congregation even if the working relationship has not always been easy. The president sets the tone for a gracious parting.

Following the departure of the rostered leader, the congregation president works with the congregation council and the property committee to make the rostered leader's office, the parsonage or other church owned housing, ready for a next occupant. The time of transition between rostered leader and interim allows for the refurbishment of walls, floors, windows, etc. and the repair or replacement of furniture and equipment. The various spaces are left in a neutral state, with the appearance of a professional work or home environment ready for the next occupant.

4. The office of the bishop meets with the congregation council to introduce the call process.

Congregation councils are often anxious to begin the call process and to secure another rostered leader as soon as possible. It is helpful for the congregation president to reassure the congregation council the office of the bishop is in the process of helping all congregations to call pastors for a long term and following the process has a good chance of producing good results.

5. The bishop appoints an interim pastor/deacon with the consent of the congregation council.

In agreeing to compensation, benefits, and responsibilities with an interim pastor/deacon, remember the interim pastor/deacon has two responsibilities: to provide pastoral/diaconal leadership for the congregation and to help prepare for the call process. If the congregation is accustomed to having a full-time pastor/deacon, the congregation will likely need a full-time interim, especially considering the additional work. The bishop will not appoint an interim pastor/deacon whom the congregation will not accept. The interim is installed during a Sunday morning worship service by the office of the bishop.

6. The call committee is elected by the congregation or appointed by the congregation council.

The president must be familiar with the congregation's constitutional requirements regarding who selects the call committee and the number of members. The president should assure the persons nominated or appointed by the council represent the diversity of the congregation, have the best interests of congregation at heart, and are capable of doing the work required.

7. The call committee develops the Ministry Site Profile (MSP).

The congregation president will not serve on the call committee. The president is aware and informed of the necessary items to complete the MSP. If the congregation does not have a mission statement or a strategic plan, the president might consider placing these on the congregation council's agenda following a presentation of the call committee's research about the trends, opportunities, challenges, resources, and needs of the community and the trends, opportunities, challenges, resources, and needs of the congregation. Working with the interim pastor, the congregation council together with the call committee and other congregation leaders might plan a retreat or a workshop focused on the congregation's mission and goals. A congregation with a clear sense of its community, who they are, who they are called to be, and the mission to which they are called is more attractive to a candidate than one appearing to be directionless and rudderless.

When the call committee has completed the MSP, they present it to the congregation council, even reading it line by line, explaining how they arrived at the set of skills and gifts they identified as needed in the next pastor.

The congregation council will approve a compensation and benefits package as part of the MSP. This is a starting place for negotiating a final compensation package with the candidate. Once approved by the congregation council, it is submitted to the office of the bishop for review, approval and posting online and to serve as a guide for recommending candidates.

8. The congregation council interviews the candidate and recommends the candidate to the congregation.

When the call committee has decided on a primary candidate, they ask the congregation president to call a meeting of the congregation council at which they present information about the candidate they are recommending and how they think the candidate can help the congregation to fulfill its mission.

The congregation president or the call committee chair contacts the candidate and arranges an interview with the congregation council. The interview may be conducted by conference call, teleconference, or, preferably, in person.

If the results of the interview are positive, the executive committee and/or the finance committee meets with the candidate to agree on the Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the rostered leader. A blank form for both pastors and deacons is found on the synod website or at the web page of the ELCA Office of the Secretary. A guide for completing the form is provided on the same site. The latest compensation

guidelines adopted by the synod assembly is considered in offering compensation and benefits and is found on the synod website under resources. Moving and other expenses should be included in the agreement.

Prior to presenting a motion to recommend the candidate to the congregation for call, the congregation council reviews the congregation's constitution and bylaws. Since at least a two-thirds majority (*C9.01) of the congregation is required for the congregation to extend a call, a two-thirds majority of the congregation council to recommend the candidate to the congregation is reasonable.

A member of the congregation council places a motion before the congregation council to recommend the candidate to the congregation for call. The following motion should be used:

“The congregation council recommends with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit (*name of congregation*) extend to the (*title and name of pastor/deacon*) a call to serve as (*specific title*) according to terms specified in the Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor/Deacon.”

Discussion is held. Amendments to the Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities may be proposed, discussed, and made by majority vote. Any amendment to this document is discussed with the candidate. If the motion to recommend the candidate to the congregation passes by the determined majority, the president informs the candidate and the office of the bishop and calls a congregation meeting.

Prior to the congregational meeting, the council will arrange for a background check of the candidate. The office of the bishop has guidance on this topic.

Prior to the congregation meeting, the candidate and family may be invited to a “meet and greet” with the congregation if the council so desires. The candidate may be invited to give a brief devotional, to talk about himself or herself, and/or talk about his or her vision for ministry in partnership with the congregation. The candidate should not be subjected to extensive questioning by the congregation. The main purpose of the meet and greet is for congregation members to experience meeting the candidate personally and to gain a sense of whether the candidate could be their pastor.

9. The congregation votes to extend a call to the candidate. The candidate accepts the call.

The congregation meeting to call a rostered leader is chaired by the bishop or their appointee.

If the congregation elects the candidate as pastor/deacon, the congregation president calls the candidate and the office of the bishop to inform each. The president and the congregation council secretary sign the letter of call and forward it to the synod office for the bishop's signature together with the signed definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities.

When the candidate accepts the call, the congregation president announces the acceptance and informs the congregation of the start date of the new pastor.

10. The congregation bids farewell to the interim pastor.

The interim pastor places the parish register in the hands of the congregation council secretary and the congregation council secretary attests to the office of the bishop the records are up to date for the period of time served by the interim pastor ([Appendix 3](#)).

The president appoints a committee to provide an appropriate farewell for the departing interim pastor to be held prior to the arrival of the new pastor.

If there is a period of time between the departure of the interim pastor and the arrival of the new rostered leader, the president arranges pulpit supply.

11. The new rostered leader begins service in the congregation and is installed by the office of the bishop.

The president and the new rostered leader schedule a date with the office of the bishop for the rostered leader's installation. The president may invite local church and civic leaders to the event. The president appoints a committee to provide a reception welcoming the new pastor.

If the rostered leader is to live in a church owned parsonage or other congregation provided housing, the president and the chair of the parsonage committee should assure the housing is in ready-to-move-in condition prior to the new rostered leader's arrival.

The president and the property committee chair ensure the rostered leader's office or study is ready.

The president or the call committee chair helps to arrange housing and moving as needed.

The president introduces the new rostered leader to the staff sees the rostered leader is provided with keys, passwords, and other necessities to administratively and sacramentally function as a rostered leader.

After a given period of time, normally three to six months, the president, in consultation with the rostered leader, appoints a mutual ministry committee. The committee may be drawn from members of the transition team and/or the call committee.

Responsibilities of the departing Rostered Leader:

1. The rostered leader consults with the bishop before engaging in the call process or before announcing retirement.

When a rostered leader is contemplating becoming a candidate for call, the rostered leader is must consult with the synod bishop. In order for a rostered minister profile (RMP) to be activated, the RMP must be approved by the office of the bishop and include a confidential recommendation from the bishop.

Rostered leaders considering retirement must consult with the synod bishop at least 90 days prior to their last day in office. Rostered leaders should not announce retirements long in advance. Long retirement announcements often have a negative effect on mission and ministry. The retiring rostered leader consults with Portico Benefits at least 90 days ahead of time to plan for continuation of health coverage and for receiving retirement benefits.

2. The rostered leader submits a letter of resignation.

Upon deciding to accept a new call, the rostered leader immediately prepares a letter of resignation and meets with the executive committee of the congregation council to agree upon the time frame, settlement of any financial obligations between the rostered leader and congregation, intended use of vacation, compensation for accrued vacation (if this is provided in the rostered leader's call or in the congregation's personnel policy), and last date on the payroll. These matters should be agreed with the executive committee before being presented to the congregation council.

In accepting a resignation, the congregation council also agrees to the terms of the resignation including last day of work, last day on the payroll, vacation, compensation for accrued vacation, and settlement of any financial obligations between the rostered leader and the congregation. This process and agreement needs to be documented. If an agreement cannot be reached, the office of the bishop should be called to mediate.

Rostered ministers serving on the staff of a congregation often have calls co-terminus with the call of the senior or lead rostered leader. In this case, the rostered minister is expected to tender resignation at the time of the senior or lead rostered leader's resignation in accordance with the staff rostered leader's letter of call.

If a rostered leader resigns from a congregation without a call, the rostered leader must write to the synod bishop requesting the bishop recommend the synod council grant on leave from call status, which can be renewed upon the rostered leader's request up to three years. On leave from call status is not granted automatically, but must be requested in writing.

3. The rostered leader and the congregation council complete all financial or administrative obligations to one another.

Pastors have a constitutional obligation to maintain the parish register. A parish register is a permanent document, handwritten in ink, providing a contemporaneous record of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, deaths, admission to and removals from the membership. (See [Appendix 3](#)) A computer database is not a valid substitute for a permanent record. A computer printout is not a valid substitute for a permanent record unless it is printed on archival paper. The departing pastor is obligated to place in the hands of the congregation council secretary an up-to-date parochial record for the time the pastor has served the congregation.

If the rostered leader has incurred any financial obligation toward the congregation such as a personal loan, an advance on pay, or a loan for a down payment on a house, or if the congregation has a financial obligation to the rostered leader, the obligation should be settled or a payment plan should be agreed upon before leaving the congregation.

If the rostered leader is living in a church owned parsonage or other church provided housing the rostered leader is obliged to the terms of the parsonage agreement, if such an agreement exists. The rostered leader may be held liable for any damage to a parsonage even in the absence of an agreement. The rostered leader should leave the parsonage or other church provided housing in clean and orderly condition.

If there is disagreement between a rostered leader and a congregation council regarding obligations between them, the office of the bishop should be called to assist in mediating the dispute.

4. An exit interview may be conducted. Or individual/corporate confession offered.

The rostered leader or the congregation may request an exit interview. An exit interview should not be an opportunity to unload or inflict criticism, but an opportunity for rostered leader and congregation to affirm one another's ministry, to evaluate events in the ministry partnership, and to offer suggestions to one another for continued growth. The interview may be conducted by the office of the bishop.

Another option for transition is to offer individual/corporate confession as a framework for reflecting on the past, seek absolution for the faults found in ministry, and take corrective steps for a new opportunity for ministry.

5. A farewell event is held.

6. Leave gracefully.

It is incumbent on the rostered leader to exit gracefully by giving thanks for the partnership in ministry shared with the congregation and humbly accepting the congregation's expressions of thanks. Taking "parting shots" while leaving is destructive toward the congregation and harmful to the rostered leader's reputation.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council. (†S14.19.)

Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council. (†S14.44.)

The rostered leader will make it clear to the congregation upon leaving, the rostered leader will no longer perform pastoral/diaconal acts in the congregation or interfere in any way with the ministry of the new rostered leader. Should congregation members request pastoral/diaconal services, the departed rostered leader should politely decline the request and encourage members to seek those services from the new rostered leader. If congregation members express concerns about the congregation or the new rostered leader, the departed rostered leader should encourage these persons to speak directly to the new rostered leader.

Rostered leaders whose social lives have been centered in the congregation often find it difficult to turn loose of friendships with congregation members. Bidding farewell means disengaging from the congregation and getting on in life, building new relationships and cultivating relationships outside the parish.

Resigning from the office of rostered leader of a congregation means ceasing to influence the congregation as rostered leader. Departing rostered leaders should not offer opinions about or try to influence the appointment of an interim pastor. This is the responsibility of the office of the bishop and the congregation council. Departing rostered leaders should not offer opinions about or try to influence the call process for a new rostered leader. This is the responsibility of the office of the bishop and the congregation.

If a retiring rostered leader remains in the community and remains a member of the congregation, an extended absence from the congregation may allow the new rostered leader to be accepted in the role of rostered leader. Should the retired rostered leader be invited to return to participation in the congregation, the retired rostered leader should defer to the new rostered leader's wishes regarding any pastoral/diaconal role in the congregation.

Responsibilities of the Interim Pastor:

(Please consult the office of the bishop regarding the interim deacon guidelines, process and responsibilities)

The interim pastor should become thoroughly familiar with the steps described in this manual in service to the congregation, congregation council, and call committee.

1. The office of the bishop meets with the congregation council to provide an introduction to the call process.

When meeting with the congregation council, the office of the bishop describes the tasks and the role of interim ministers and refers the council to the synod's compensation guidelines. Usually, the office of the bishop will recommend only one interim to a congregation; however, in some circumstances more than one may be recommended and the council will decide. In some situations, a team of pastors may serve as co-interims. In some situations, an interim pastor may ask the congregation council to contract with another rostered minister or candidate to provide particular services.

Expect to be interviewed by the congregation council and to negotiate an agreement for compensation, benefits, and responsibilities. Interims are expected to speak for themselves regarding the value of their time and their availability in working with a congregation. Interims may agree to full-time or less than full-time salary and benefits. For flexible ministry, interims may agree to bill the congregation by the hour at a rate negotiated between the interim and congregation and approved by the office of the bishop. Interims should be completely transparent, above reproach, and beyond any question of impropriety in their financial agreements with congregations.

In initial conversations with the congregation council, the interim should communicate a clear understanding of the interim's role in helping the congregation move through this transition. Pastoral interims, besides providing word and sacrament ministry are responsible in shepherding the congregation through the process of adjusting to the leaving of their last rostered leader and preparing to call a new rostered leader.

2. The bishop appoints an interim pastor with the consent of the congregation council.

The interim is paid by the congregation but is appointed by the bishop and is responsible to the office of the bishop. The interim will report regularly both to the congregation council and to the office of the bishop. See [Appendix 8](#).

3. The interim pastor may be installed.

If possible, the office of the bishop will install the interim pastor. Usually this takes place at a morning liturgy so most of the congregation can be present. The congregation may invite the office of the bishop to make a presentation to the congregation about the call process and the work of interim ministry at this time or at another suitable time.

4. A transition team may be appointed to advise the interim pastor.

In relatively uncomplicated interim situations, particularly in small congregations, a transition team may not be necessary. Therefore, the use of a transition team is optional.

A transition team can be particularly helpful in situations where there was conflict, where the congregation is experiencing grief, or where the congregation needs to do considerable work to develop its sense of mission and to become organized to do the work of ministry.

A transition team is not a decision-making body for managing the ongoing ministries of the congregation. This is the responsibility of the congregation council. The transition team is an advisory body, gathered for the purpose of helping the interim pastor to understand the culture of the congregation and to discern the best methods and resources for accomplishing the tasks of interim ministry in the congregation.

The interim pastor should first help the transition team to understand the five focus points of interim ministry – heritage, leadership, connections, mission, and the future – and how addressing these points can be helpful in providing information for the MSP. ([Appendix 6.](#))

If the congregation has had a difficult history, a transition team can advise the interim how best to address the history so the energy surrounding traumatic events can begin to dissipate and the congregation's attention turn more toward the future.

If a congregation's governance is floundering or the congregation's constitution is out of date, the transition team can advise who might be able to put things in order.

If the congregation is focused inwardly and is disconnected from other congregations, agencies, and the synod, the transition team can help the interim understand how this happened and advise where to start in getting the congregation reconnected.

If a congregation has been drifting aimlessly or living in the past, the transition team can advise the interim how to approach the council to clarify the congregation's purpose and mission and begin planning for the future.

Some authorities on interim ministry recommend the transition team do the demographic research to understand the challenges, opportunities, needs, and resources of the community and to study the congregation to understand its challenges, opportunities, needs, and resources. Also, the transition team may help the congregation council in clarifying the congregation's purpose and mission. Whether the interim pastor utilizes the transition team as an advisory group or a work group should depend on the interim pastor's training, experience, and understanding of various models for using a transition team.

5. The call committee is elected by the congregation or the congregation council

Congregations are often anxious to get to work calling a new rostered leader. Sometimes it is more fruitful to address conditions in the congregation following a difficult leaving or to allow the congregation time to grieve the loss of a well-loved rostered leader before beginning the call process. Part of the interim's role is to be a stable, reliable presence to help

the congregation reduce its anxiety so it can do the work of calling a rostered leader thoughtfully and carefully.

The interim pastor helps the congregation council to recognize when the congregation is ready to turn its attention from saying goodbye to the departing rostered leader and move toward calling a new rostered leader. The interim pastor should remind the congregation council to appoint or nominate persons who are representative of the diversity of the congregation, those who have the congregation's best interests at heart, and to avoid appointing or nominating those with a personal agenda.

6. The call committee develops the MSP

The interim should be prepared to serve as a resource for the call committee as they prepare the MSP. Detailed instructions for completing the profile are found in [Appendix 10](#). A good deal of study and planning is necessary before writing the profile.

The call committee (or transition team) studies the demographics and trends of the congregation's area of mission and ministry. Much of this information is available online. Additional sources are the chamber of commerce, school district, city or county planning offices, and real estate agencies. Study of the congregation's context often reveals opportunities for growth in the congregation's ministry. The call committee studies the demographics and trends of the congregation and identifies the congregation's ministries and where the congregation focuses its energies.

It is helpful after the call committee has completed its initial studies describing the community and the congregation, to engage the congregation council in exploring the congregation's mission in light of the church's call to mission in the scriptures and its governing documents, new information learned about the congregation's context, and the needs and resources of the congregation and community. The interim may lead the congregation council and the congregation in more clearly identifying the congregation's purpose and mission or the interim may recommend a consultant to help with the task.

The interim may, in consultation with the office of the bishop, recommend the congregation engage in a formal ministry review conducted with the synod to help the congregation clarify its mission in its community. This process requires the consent of the congregation council and would assist the congregation in completing the MSP.

In the MSP, there are many choices regarding characteristics of the congregation and qualities sought in a new rostered leader. It is helpful if the call committee identifies the congregation's context and mission prior to soliciting responses to these characteristics. Presenting the findings about the community, the congregation, and the congregation's mission, allows the congregation to make informed choices in qualities needed in a rostered leader rather than stating personal preferences.

The interim will not write the MSP. The interim pastor may provide the call committee with resources, feedback and suggestions for improvement on their MSP.

7. The office of the bishop meets with the call committee to recommend candidates and to discuss procedures for interviewing and evaluating candidates.

The interim is not privy to the names or any identifying information of any candidates recommended to the congregation, nor will the interim exert any influence in calling a particular candidate.

8. The interim pastor works with the congregation to address issues.

The interim period between pastoral /diaconal calls can provide the congregation with opportunities for formation, education and leadership growth. A well-grounded and informed congregation can set the stage for healthy growth prior to and after the call of pastor /deacon. Provided below is an alphabetical list of items for consideration and action by the congregation council and congregational leadership during the interim period. The interim pastor and the office of the bishop can provide guidance and support. Please note completing all or none of the following does not guarantee a quicker call process or higher consideration by the office of the bishop. The Spirit is at work.

- a. **Audit:** The Model Constitution for Congregations C13.03. establishes an Audit Committee for the congregation. During an interim period, if it is not already the practice of the congregation, an outside agency may conduct an in-depth audit of the financial records and practices of the congregation. At a minimum the congregation should annually consider the best practices to maintain good fiduciary responsibilities of the congregational assets and liabilities.
- b. **Boundary Training:** Rostered Leaders of the ELCA undergo periodic training in healthy boundary training. The training helps to maintain positive relationships between the rostered leader and the congregation members. Often, the rostered leader receives training, but the congregation does not. It is more than appropriate during the interim period for congregation members to receive healthy boundary training. Understanding boundaries helps to facilitate good relationships and communication.
- c. **Communication:** During an interim period, communication is key. Congregations may consider the variety of ways and means of communicating internally among the membership and externally into the community and beyond. For example: Has the congregation considered a voice, email and texting service to send out updates to the congregation? Has the congregation considered how effective a printed or digital newsletter might be? Or the cost savings? Has the congregation updated its (e)mailing or phone directory? Does the congregation have internet? Is a survey of how members of the congregation prefer receiving communications a good idea? Is the congregation receiving communications from the synod office or the wider church? Has the congregation considered offering training opportunities for members to learn to text or use other digital applications for communications?
- d. **Constitution:** The congregation council should review the current constitution of the congregation and determine if it is up to date with the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations. Of note, while the model constitution allows for the pastor to be the president of the congregation council, the dominant model for congregational governance is president as lay leader and not the pastor.
- e. **Healthy Congregation Training:** From time to time a call between a congregation and rostered leader is ended on a note of conflict or disagreement. The interim period is a time

to reflect on the past and prepare for the future. The office of the bishop has resources for congregations to develop healthy congregations.

- f. **Leader Development:** In some congregations rostered leaders take on activities which rob others of opportunities for ministry or to develop themselves as leaders within the congregation. A review of the Model Constitution for Congregations will help in listing out the role and function of the rostered leader and congregation leadership. A review of what the previous rostered leader took on in their role, now they are no longer with the congregation, may highlight areas where ministry and leadership opportunities are to be found.
- g. **Models of Ministry:** The interim period between rostered leaders allows for exploring new or different models of ministry. “We’ve always done it this way.” does not mean a congregation is locked into a particular model for ministry either internally to themselves or externally with other congregations. The interim period may be a time to consider new forms organizing for ministry.
- h. **Mutual Ministry Committee:** Mutual ministry committees are a constitutional requirement. The congregation council, at the end of a call, dissolves the mutual ministry committee, unless there are more than one rostered leader serving a congregation. The office of the bishop can provide training on establishing a new committee.
- i. **Parochial Records:** The interim period provides time and space to do an in-depth review of the parochial records to include updating missing information, determining the status of individuals on the roles, to include removal as needed. And to develop a list of member who meet the constitutional requirements for voting on the call of a rostered leader. A complete review of the register will also assist the new rostered leader with an accurate list of congregational members for visitation purposes. And a review of the records may allow the congregation to discover special or valuable information about its members and the congregation’s history in the community.
- j. **Policies:** Congregations should review, and update policies on child protection and background checks. Review of personnel policies and other policies such as weddings and funerals, building use, etc.

9. The congregation bids farewell to the interim pastor.

Psychologically speaking, it is difficult for persons to hold two contradictory feelings together at the same time. It is difficult to be appropriately sad at the interim’s leaving while being excited at the arrival of a new rostered leader. It is difficult to be grateful for the work of the interim over the past months or years when looking forward to investing in a new ministry partnership. The thanks and appreciation you deserve may be overshadowed by excitement and anticipation at calling a new rostered leader. Be satisfied, you have completed your task. Hopefully, the congregation has gained a clearer sense of its call to mission and a new rostered leader has been called who will lead them in responding to God’s call to mission.

10. The new rostered leader begins service in the congregation and is installed by a representative of the office of the bishop.

The interim may attend the installation of the new rostered leader to show support but remember the congregation will be more focused on the new rostered leader and the new partnership in ministry than on your work getting them to this point.

Responsibilities of the Candidate:

1. The rostered leader consults with the bishop before engaging in the call process.

When a rostered leader is contemplating becoming a candidate for call, the rostered leader must consult with the bishop. In order for a rostered minister profile to be activated, the RMP must be approved by the office of the bishop and include a confidential recommendation from the bishop. Before an RMP is approved, the office of bishop may offer suggestions for improvement.

A rostered leader of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod who is interested in being considered for call to a congregation in transition may make their interest known to the office of the bishop. If the needs of the congregation and the gifts and abilities of the rostered leader are a good match, the office of the bishop may recommend the rostered leader to the congregation.

A rostered leader who is interested in serving a congregation as rostered leader or interim will inform the office of the bishop and not the congregation. Any attempt to circumvent the office of the bishop can damage the relationship between the congregation and the synod and between the rostered leader and the office of the bishop.

2. The office of the bishop prayerfully discerns candidates to recommend to the congregation.

The office of bishop may ask a rostered leader who is serving well in a congregation and who has not expressed interest in a new call to consider becoming a candidate for call in a particular congregation based on the rostered leader's gifts and the congregation's needs. Consider an inquiry from the bishop's office an invitation to discern whether God may be calling you to a new ministry.

The office of the bishop will be candid with any information known about the congregation and in answering any questions. Before making a decision to be a candidate or not, look over the congregation's MSP and other documents available on the ELCA call process website.

The office of the bishop will not recommend a rostered leader to a congregation as a candidate without the rostered leader's consent.

3. The call committee interview the candidates and recommend the candidate to the congregation council.

Expect a telephone contact to set up an initial interview in person, by video conference, or by conference call. If you consent to a video conference, use a location having a fast, reliable internet connection.

Decide ahead of time whether you want a call committee to visit your congregation to experience you preaching and leading worship. Inviting part of the committee to visit at one worship time and part at another time or on another day might make their presence less obvious. Consideration to the number of and frequency of visitors and the congregations' reaction to visitors needs to be taken into account when arranging a call committee visit to the congregation.

A separate neutral site may also be arranged for the call committee to engage with you as you preach and preside at worship.

Review the questions suggested to call committees in [Appendix 11](#). Be prepared with how you might answer these questions. Be prepared with questions you might ask the call committee from your study of the congregation's MSP, the community, congregational history, references, and other materials. See [Appendix 12](#). An initial interview is the beginning of a conversation. The conversation might continue, and it might not.

Having materials such as video or audio recording of a worship service and sermon, written materials, and annual reports ready to share will be helpful for the call committee's evaluation.

If you decide you are not being called to the congregation, inform the call committee chair and the office of the bishop, and withdraw from the process. A responsible "no" early in the process will do more for your reputation than leaving the impression you were more interested in being invited to interviews than in being called.

If the call committee invites you to a second interview, be prepared to explore God's call to ministry in partnership with the congregation. Do not expect the congregation to be perfect. Expect to see areas in need of growth. Expect to see the need for challenging work. A question to consider prayerfully is whether you feel called to engage in partnership with the congregation in this work.

4. The congregation council interviews the candidate and recommends the candidate to the congregation.

An invitation to interview with the congregation council means you are the congregation's candidate.

Your time with the congregation council will touch on many areas of ministry and how you might offer your gifts and abilities in partnership with the congregation. Most important in this part of the process is prayerfully discerning whether you feel called to work in partnership with this congregation.

Be familiar with the synod compensation guidelines and be prepared to discuss and come to an agreement on your compensation, benefits, and responsibilities.

Be prepared to give permission for the congregation to conduct a background check, even if you have a recent background check. This is an opportunity to provide a good example to congregation members who should have background checks before working with children and youth. It is often best to inform the congregation council before they receive the background check, if there is anything such as traffic violations, misdemeanors, or credit difficulties, rather than explain it afterward.

Should the congregation council invite you to a meet and greet, be prepared to be asked to pray, to offer a brief devotional, to talk about yourself, and/or to describe how you see yourself working in partnership with the congregation toward its mission goals. Many congregation members want to know, “Can this person be my pastor?” Pastors will preach and preside at worship and deacons will provide examples of their call and be prepared to preach and lead in worship.

5. The congregation votes to extend a call to the candidate. The candidate accepts the call.

The congregation meets to vote on extending you the call to a new ministry. There is a high level of expectation within the congregation for you to accept the call. Pray. Consult with a mentor. You have 30 days to respond to the call vote. You can verbally accept or reject the call, but your response should take the form of a letter addressed to the congregation president and the congregation with a copy sent to the office of the bishop.

6. The new rostered leader begins service in the congregation and is installed by the office of the bishop.

After you have started your new call, the office of the bishop will arrange a date and time to install you into your new role. This normally is within one to two months after your call begins. An installation normally occurs at an afternoon liturgy, allowing colleagues from area congregations and other guests to attend. The presence of colleagues and guests indicate the celebration of this new ministry partnership includes more than just the rostered leader and the congregation.

The bishop or assistant to the bishop preaches and conducts the installation, and the newly installed rostered leader celebrates Holy Communion. The office of the bishop will provide guidelines for the installation. The rostered leader should choose Scripture readings and hymns for the service, informing the office of the bishop of the choices well in advance of the service.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will it take to call a rostered minister?

The length of the process depends on a number of factors:

- time to address grief or sometimes conflict related to the last rostered leader's leaving,
- time to respond to any critical challenges facing the congregation,
- time to study demographic changes, trends, and challenges in the congregation's community,
- time to identify changes, trends, challenges, opportunities, resources, in the congregation,
- time to clarify the congregation's purpose, mission, goals, and needs for pastoral /diaconal leadership,
- time to write the congregation's MSP, receive feedback from the office of the bishop, and have the profile approved by the congregation council,
- time for the office of the bishop to identify candidates suitable to the congregation's needs, contact the candidates and references, and decide on a list of candidates to recommend,
- time for the call committee to interview candidates and to select one candidate to recommend to the congregation council,
- time for the congregation council to interview the candidate and to call a congregation meeting, and
- time for the rostered leader to accept the call and arrive on site.

What will the congregation do regarding pastoral leadership during the transition?

The office of the bishop, in consultation with the congregation council, will appoint an interim pastor who will be responsible for pastoral leadership and for supporting the process of calling a new pastor. Responsibilities vary according to the needs of the congregation and the availability of the interim. The interim pastor may serve full-time or flexible time. Some of the responsibilities of the interim may be delegated to another rostered minister or a candidate with the consent of the congregation council. See [Appendix 6](#).

What are the sources of candidates recommended by the office of bishop?

Sources for candidates include:

- rostered leaders identified by the office of the bishop as well suited for a congregation's needs who are approached by the office of the bishop and asked to consider a call to the congregation,
- rostered leaders of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod who have made themselves available for call consulting the office of the bishop and completing their rostered minister profile,
- rostered leaders of other ELCA synods who have asked their rostered minister profile be shared with congregations in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod,
- recent seminary or TEEM graduates awaiting their first call,
- rostered leaders suggested by members of the congregation (The office of the bishop must assure the availability and suitability of these rostered leaders through conversation with the bishop of the synod where the rostered leader is currently rostered before the candidate can be considered for call by the congregation), and
- in some circumstances, ordained ministers of ecumenical partner churches (Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, Reformed Church in America, and Moravian Church) who have received the approval of their church body for appointment to extended service.

Will there be candidates willing to talk with our call committee?

The answer is almost always, “Yes, indeed.” In situations needing a pastor or deacon with particular training or experience, situations where compensation is below synod guidelines, or in flexible time situations there may be fewer candidates to consider; however, the Holy Spirit is often surprisingly able to bring gifts and needs together.

How much do we pay a rostered minister?

Each year, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly approves compensation guidelines. The guidelines provide benchmarks for what congregations consider fair and adequate compensation and benefits in light of a rostered leader’s experience, education, complexity of call, and context. They are a guide to conversation between rostered ministers and congregations. If compensation is below guidelines, the number of candidates willing to consider being called to the congregation may be limited. If a congregation’s salary and benefits are far below guidelines, a flexible time call or a partnership with another congregation should be considered.

Should spouses of call committee members accompany the call committee when visiting a candidate?

No. The members of the call committee were elected by the congregation or appointed by the council and they should be responsible for their work. It is important for the call committee to maintain confidentiality in regard to candidates.

Should the congregation plan for expenses related to the work of the call committee?

Yes. Expect to reimburse call committee members for mileage and expenses for any out of town travel. Expect to provide for travel, meals, and lodging for candidates invited to come to the congregation for interviews. The congregation council may designate a portion of the remainder of the previous rostered leader’s compensation package be used for call committee expenses.

Should the congregation continue to budget for a rostered leader even if the calling of a rostered leader is year away?

Yes. Congregation councils have a fiduciary responsibility to the congregation. Additionally, it is a sign of good stewardship and hope for the future, for the congregation council to recommend a budget containing a salary and benefits line item for rostered leaders, even in the time of transition. Good stewardship practices on the part of the congregation to support the budget fully during the transition time expresses a concrete hope for a future call of a rostered leader. Funds normally paid to support a rostered leader may be used to support the interim or set aside during the interim period. This practice helps in maintaining a continuity of fiscal responsibility and creates a “cushion” to draw from at the start of a new rostered leader’s time, such as covering moving expenses or adjustment to the compensation package due to calling a rostered leader outside of the previous budgets, or general costs increases due to living expenses adjustments.

What if things don’t go as planned?

What if the congregation council does not adopt the call committee’s nomination?

The call committee and the congregation council should see whether they have a

common understanding of the congregation's mission priorities and the gifts and abilities they are seeking in a rostered leader. The call committee returns to its work of interviewing candidates by requesting a new recommendation from the office of the bishop.

What if the call is not approved by the congregation?

If the congregation does not elect the candidate recommended by the congregation council, it may be advisable to put the call process on hold and to learn why the congregation is reluctant to accept the council's recommendation. The office of the bishop will consult with the congregation to see what steps might be helpful to the congregation.

What if the call is declined by the rostered leader?

The office of the bishop will obtain a candid explanation from the candidate for declining the call. The congregation council will evaluate whether the congregation's portrayal of itself and the call opportunity as described in the MSP are accurate.

The congregation council may appoint a new call committee or nominate a new call committee to be elected by the congregation. After consultation with the call committee, the office of the bishop will recommend new candidates for call.

What if this is a multiple-congregation parish?

In a parish with two or more congregations, each congregation selects a call committee according to their congregation constitution. The call committees meet jointly to complete the MSP and to interview candidates.

All congregations meet on the same day to vote on the recommendation to call a rostered leader. One congregation extends the call for the rostered leader to serve the multiple-congregation parish and the other congregations of the parish agree to support the definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities according to a formula agreed upon between the congregations. If one congregation in the parish does not call by at least a two-thirds majority, the call is not issued.

What if there are more than one congregation wanting to call a rostered leader, but only one has the means to compensate the rostered leader fully?

Congregations not in a share ministry or parish arrangements will consult the office of the bishop at the beginning of the congregational profile development process to discuss shared ministry or parish arrangements options. If a congregation does not desire to enter into any arrangement other than contract-for-service, an agreement will be entered into, to include initial funding, prior to a MSP being developed by the primary congregation. The contract-for-service agreement will become part of the MSP.

What happens when the senior pastor or lead pastor has resigned and there is a staff rostered minister (pastor or deacon) still serving the congregation?

If the call of the staff rostered minister (pastor or deacon) is co-terminus with the senior or lead pastor, the rostered minister is expected to tender a resignation. The congregation council may choose to table the resignation and ask the rostered minister to remain on staff temporarily until the next pastor is called.

If the call of the staff rostered minister is not co-terminus, the pastor remains under call by the congregation as staff pastor.

If the congregation then wishes to consider the current staff rostered minister for call as lead pastor, the congregation must consult with the office of the bishop to begin a call process. A call committee must be appointed or nominated per the constitution and an MSP completed to identify the congregation's mission priorities. Prayer and discernment is then required to determine whether the current staff pastor is the best candidate to recommend to the congregation for call.

Appendix 1: The Ethics of Pastoral Transition

(similar ethics apply to diaconal transition)

Congregations and pastors need to understand the professional ethics of ministry relating to former pastors, interim pastors, current and retired pastors. A pastor who resigns or retires from a congregational ministry setting no longer serves as pastor to members of this congregation. Former pastors will not agree to pastoral responsibilities rightfully belong to the current pastor of the congregation.

Former Pastors

It is very natural for members to turn again to a former pastor who perhaps baptized their other children or performed other weddings and funerals for family members while serving as the family's pastor. Again, with great sensitivity and love, the former pastor should graciously decline and direct the family to their current pastor. As with other family friends, the former pastor might attend the service as a guest.

If a former pastor is asked to officiate at a special service by members, he/she should respond immediately by saying: "Thank you very much for asking me, but it is simply not appropriate for me to do this since I am no longer your pastor." The former pastor then encourages them to call their present pastor. Additionally, the former pastor will reach out to the current pastor to appraise the pastor of the situation.

Former pastors should avoid the comment to members, "You'll need to speak first to your present pastor about me doing this." Such a comment places the current pastor in the very awkward situation of having to relinquish the pastoral role to the former pastor or saying no to the members' request and thus appearing insensitive, uncaring or insecure.

Former pastors who retire need to transfer their membership to another Lutheran congregation where they can become involved as a retired pastor. This is also a great gift to the congregation formerly served.

In this age of extensive on-line social networking in its many forms, former pastors need to be aware and sensitive about their on-line communications. Continuing to "copy" members of their former congregation in emails or Facebook interactions is a form of continuing pastoral interactions/relationships. On-line interactions are to be discontinued. Be sure to remove past parishioners from your batch email lists and Facebook access.

Interim Pastors

The interim pastor is the current pastor of the congregation until the time comes when the next pastor assumes the role of pastor and shepherd of the congregation. Whether part time or full time, the interim pastor should be contacted for all pastoral acts during the transition time. The former pastor should not be contacted by members to return to perform a pastoral responsibility during the transition.

Current Pastors

Current pastors should speak as positively as possible of the ministry of former pastors even though their style and vision might be very different. The current pastor should never feel pressured to relinquish his/her pastoral role to a former pastor. When a current pastor feels it is appropriate and healthy to invite a former pastor to return to participate in a special occasion,

worship or activity, he/she can certainly extend such an invitation.

Retired Pastors Who Join a Congregation

Retired pastors who join congregations can be a blessing to their new congregation. Retired pastors need to remember they come with experience and gifts for ministry and may be asked to share such gifts at the invitation of the current pastor. Retired pastors need to be supportive of the current pastor. Should retired pastors have concerns about the current pastor, or feel they are unable to be supportive of the current pastor, they are to call the bishop rather than to share their unsupportive viewpoints with the leadership or congregation. It is strongly suggested retired pastors and their spouses do not serve on council.

Members & Friends of the Congregation

Members should avoid placing both the current and former pastors in awkward positions by seeking the pastoral services of a former pastor. Members should simply not ask for such favors from former pastors. By showing high regard to the current pastor, members affirm the significance of the pastoral office which was once held by the former pastor.

If the congregation, council or current pastor experience difficulties with proper boundaries, the bishop should be contacted.

Appendix 2: Sample of the Covenant of Separation

Sample 1: Guidelines for the Relationship of a Congregation and Former Pastors

We believe the Holy Spirit is acting when a rostered leader is called to serve God's people and the Holy Spirit is acting when it is time for the rostered leader to accept another call, including the call into retirement.

A healthy relationship between a rostered leader and God's people is often mutually enriching and joyous. While serving a congregation, a rostered leader is deeply involved in the lives of God's people, and it is appropriate for strong bonds of trust, friendship, commitment, and interdependence develop.

However, when the Holy Spirit leads the rostered leader to a new call or into retirement, those relationships, however strong, must change for the future health of both the congregation and the rostered leader. For the congregation to move forward, its members need to accept fully the authority and guidance of succeeding rostered leaders, both interim and called, even as they cherish the memory and leadership of the former rostered leader. For former rostered leaders to live into their new lives of service or retirement, and for the good of the congregation they once served, they need to surrender their pastoral/diaconal authority and sever pastoral/diaconal ties with their former congregations and their people.

The following expectations will help clarify the new relationship between former rostered leaders and congregations:

Congregations and Members:

- Will not reach out to former rostered leaders for pastoral/diaconal care in times of emotional, spiritual, or physical need, but rather exclusively to their current rostered leader.
- Will not invite or approach former rostered leaders to perform or participate in pastoral/diaconal acts, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, home communions, etc., but exclusively the current rostered leader.
- Will not seek the counsel of former rostered leaders (or their family members) on matters relating to the congregation, including its worship life, finance, administration, leadership, or issues. Members should avoid talking with former rostered leaders (and family members) about congregational matters.
- Will not expect former rostered leaders (or their family members) to retain membership in the church, to attend worship, or to participate in activities or events in the life of the congregation.
- Will speak positively of, or say nothing about, former rostered leaders (and their family members). As Martin Luther explains in the Small Catechism, the Eighth Commandment compels us to do so: "We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray, or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them and interpret everything they do in the best possible light."
- Will, in continuing personal relationships, regard former rostered leaders as friends only. Although it is proper to address any ordained minister as pastor/deacon, considering the new relationship, members will remember the former rostered leader is no longer serving as their pastor/deacon.

Former Rostered Leaders

- Will politely but firmly refuse requests to provide ministerial care to former congregational members, instead referring them to the current rostered leader(s). For the health of the congregation and the integrity of the ministry of the current pastor/deacon, this rule will be without exception.
- Will politely but firmly refuse all requests to perform or participate in pastoral/diaconal acts, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, home communions, etc., instead referring them to the current pastor/deacon. (Former pastors/deacons will respond to all such requests with an unequivocal "no" and not suggest members ask the current pastor/deacon if it is okay. Such a request puts the current pastor/deacon in a very difficult position, creates an unhealthy relationship, and can set a dangerous precedent.)
- Will decline to comment on matters relating to the former congregation, including worship life, finance, administration, interpersonal relationships, conflicts, or politics. Former pastors/deacons will counsel their family members similarly to decline. It is wise for former pastors/deacons to discourage members even from talking with them about congregational affairs.
- Will move the official membership for themselves and immediate family members to another congregation. Former pastors/deacons and family members will refrain from attending worship or participating in regular events and activities in the life of the congregation. Adult children of are strongly encouraged to move their membership as well.
- Will speak well of the former congregation, its leaders, and its members. As Martin Luther explains in the Small Catechism, the Eighth Commandment instructs us to do so: "We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray, or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light."
- Will, in continuing personal relationships, regard members of the former congregation as friends only. Considering this new relationship, former pastors/deacons may encourage former congregation members to address them by their given name. When addressed with the honorific of pastor/deacon ministers may remind, as appropriate, former members they no longer serve as their pastor.

Covenant of Closure

To promote a healthy closure to the ministry tenure of our departing pastor/deacon and a healthy beginning to the tenure of successor pastors/deacons, we the undersigned agree to do our best to abide by the conditions of this covenant. We will encourage others in our congregation and our families to do the same by making this covenant a public and living document.

Signatures

Congregation Council President

Pastor

Vice President

Date:

Sample 2: Clarifying Future Relationships

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

It is with a mixture of emotions I have offered my resignation to the Congregation Council. My time with you has been filled with the joy of the Gospel, the sorrow of loss, the challenge of service, and the difficulties of decision-making.

For both (Name of Ministry Site) and myself, the years ahead will again know joy, sorrow, challenge, and difficulty. However, we will no longer share those experiences together as pastor and congregation.

You will be receiving a transition pastor and calling a new pastor to be with you. During this time, I will be praying for you and entrusting you to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Because I will not be your pastor after (*date*), and because I respect the constitution and guidelines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I will not be available after this date for baptisms, confirmations, weddings, hospital visits, funerals, or counseling. I know these are crucial times in your life, but I must ask you not to call me for these pastoral duties. I will have to say no. Instead, call upon your interim pastor and, then, your next called pastor. It will be important for you to begin your relationship with them as quickly as possible so you might again know continuing pastoral care and concern.

Thank you for honoring my request. I will continue to love and pray for you even as I leave you and as our pastoral relationship ends. I ask for your prayers for me and for my family during this time of transition for us, too.

May each one of us realize anew during these days Jesus' promise is good. Remember, Jesus is with us always, even until the end of the age.

Love, Joy, Peace,

The Rev. (Name)

cc: Bishop's office

Appendix 3: Audit of Parochial Records

The Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: “The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster” (C12.07.). The model constitution also states, “The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation” (*C9.12.). It is therefore important to audit these records:

- a. annually,
- b. upon the resignation of the pastor, and
- c. when an interim pastor concludes service to a congregation.

The following steps will ensure a thorough audit of the congregation’s records (check the line to the left of each item indicating completion of the step in the audit):

- _____ 1. Verify the Congregation Council information is up to date.
- _____ 2. Review the listing of new members for the year. Verify:
 - a. they have been listed in the “Communion” section of the records and current records have been entered for them; and
 - b. they have been listed in the “Communing and Contributing” section and current records have been entered for them; and,
 - c. their method of joining is specified (if received from another Lutheran Church [ELCA, LCMS, etc.], it should be denoted as “transferred,” if from another Christian denomination, “affirmation of faith,” and if by baptism, “baptized”).
- _____ 3. Review the listing of members removed for the year. Verify:
 - a. they have been removed from the “Communion” section; and,
 - b. they have been removed from the “Communing and Contributing” section; and,
 - c. their method of removal is specific (if transferred to another Lutheran Church, [ELCA, LCMS, etc.], it should be denoted.
- _____ 4. Review the listing of baptisms for the year. Verify they have also been listed in the “Roll of Members” section.
- _____ 5. Review the listing of confirmations for the year. Verify the confirmation date has also been listed by their name in the “Roll of Members” section and they have been added to the “Communion” and “Communing and Contribution” sections.
- _____ 6. Review the listing of first communions for the year. Verify:
 - a. the date is listed by their name in the membership listing; and
 - b. their name has been added to the “Communion” list.

- _____ 7. Review the listing of marriages for the year. Verify their marriage date has also been listed by their name in the “Roll of Members” section, and if necessary, their name has been changed in the “Roll of Members,” “Communions” and “Communing and Contributing” sections
- _____ 8. Review the listing of funerals. Verify they have been removed from:
 - a. “Roll of Members,”
 - b. “Communions,” and
 - c. “Communing and Contributing” sections.
- _____ 9. Verify annual “Statistics” have been entered.
- _____ 10. When auditing the records upon the resignation of a pastor, verify the appropriate information has been recorded in the “Pastor” section.

The model constitution for the congregation states: “The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor” (*C.9.14.).

Upon completion of an audit of the congregational record, the congregation council secretary will send a letter to the synod office on church letterhead stating the following:

The Congregational Record of (name of congregation), (city), (state) was audited by (list names of auditors) on (date). We attest these records are up to date and in good order. (if this is the case)

(Pastor signature)

(Congregational Secretary signature)

If records are missing or incomplete and it will take some time to reconstruct the record, describe the condition of the records and notify the office of the bishop. Form a committee to research and reconstruct the parochial record from bulletins, newsletters, personal accounts, and whatever other resources are available. Congregation members have a right to expect accurate permanent records.

Appendix 4: Thanksgiving at Conclusion of Call

This order is appropriately set within the service of Holy Communion on the final Sunday of a minister's service under call in a congregation⁹. The order follows the prayer after communion. This order may be led by a pastor of the congregation (unless the pastor's call is the one concluding), another rostered minister, a representative of the congregation, or a representative of the synod.

Address

The person whose call is concluding and representative/s of the congregation come before the assembly.

A pastor

A representative of the congregation addresses the pastor whose call is concluding with these or similar words.

Name, on date of call, we of name of congregation called you to be pastor in this place: 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 us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you [and your family] have been important to our life together in the church of Jesus Christ, in our service to this community, and in God's mission to the whole world. [As you leave this community of faith, we say farewell, and we pray for God's blessing.]

A deacon

A representative of the congregation addresses the person whose call is concluding with these or similar words.

*Name, on date of call, we of name of congregation called you to serve among us as a *deacon*. *Here a description of the particular ministry may be included.* Sharing our joys and sorrows, you [and your family] have been important to our life together in the church of Jesus Christ, in our service to this community, and in God's mission to the whole world. [As you leave this community of faith, we say farewell, and we pray for God's blessing.]*

The leader addresses the assembly with these or similar words.

People of God, members of name of congregation,
do you release name from service
as your *pastor / deacon*?

We do, and we give thanks to God for our ministry together.

The leader addresses the person whose call is concluding.

*Name, do you recognize and accept
the completion of your ministry with name of congregation ?
Response: I do, and I give thanks to God for our ministry together*

⁹ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly* (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers: 2009), 111. Liturgy can be downloaded from *Sundays and Seasons*.

Thanksgiving and Sending

The presiding minister leads the assembly in prayer.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock. You equip your people with abilities that differ according to the grace given to them, and you call them to various avenues of service. We give you thanks for the ministry of name among the people of God in this place. You watch over our going out and our coming in: bless this time of ending and beginning. You surround your people in every time and place: keep us close in your love. You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial: prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together; heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us. Help name [and *her/his* family] and all of us to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us. As *they have* been a blessing to us, so now send *them/us* forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Blessing

The presiding minister, or the pastor whose call has concluded, proclaims God's blessing in these or similar words.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. Amen

A sending song may be sung.

Dismissal

The assisting minister may send the assembly into mission.

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

This order may be adapted for use in settings other than ministry in a congregation. At the conclusion of a call to a rostered minister other than an ordained pastor, Farewell and Godspeed may be used instead of this order. Farewell and Godspeed may also be used at the conclusion of a lay professional worker's time of service. The address may be adapted as appropriate when this order is used on the occasion of the retirement of a rostered minister.

When a representative of the synod leads this order, the representative may address the person whose call is concluding and the assembly with these or similar words. This address may precede the blessing.

Your sisters and brothers in the name of synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared. We promise you our continued support and prayer. Rejoicing in the blessings of God in this congregation and in the ministry of name, with hope in God's abundant grace in years to come, I announce *name's* service as position in this congregation is now concluded.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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Appendix 5: Exit Interview

The purpose of the exit interview is to:

- Evaluate (does not mean critique) the ministry of rostered leader and congregation,
- identify areas of potential growth for the rostered leader and congregation,
- celebrate the ministry of the rostered leader and congregation, and
- clarify the relationship the departing rostered leader will have with the congregation.

Questions directed to congregation members:

- What has gone particularly well during our pastor's/deacon's leadership?
- In what areas of ministry did the rostered leader excel while serving the congregation and how?
- What did not go as well as hoped?
- What professional skills or personal attributes could the rostered leader improve in moving to a new call?
- In what ways are you thankful for the rostered leaders ministry in this congregation?
- What are the major strengths of our congregation?
- What are the major challenges of our congregation?
- Were there any surprises when the rostered leader first arrived?
- What goals does our congregation need to work toward in the next 5 years?
- Any thoughts you would like to share with the rostered leader about his/her leadership style?
- Where can you find important congregation documents (e.g., Constitution, Certificate of Incorporation, Deed(s), Membership records, Minutes, etc.)?

Questions directed to the rostered leader:

- How would you describe the congregation when you arrived?
- What did the congregation do exceptionally well during your ministry?
- How would you describe the congregation as you leave?
- In what ways could the congregation improve its ministry?
- What do you believe has gone particularly well during your leadership?
- In what ways are you thankful for this congregation?
- What did not go as well as you had hoped?
- What are the major strengths of this congregation?
- What are the major challenges of this congregation?
- What ministry goals would you suggest for the congregation to strive toward during the next 5 years?
- What other comments would you like to share?

Sometime in the process of the interview, the rostered leader should be asked to describe a departing rostered leader's ethical responsibilities toward the ministry of the next rostered leader and how the departing rostered leader expects to relate to the congregation in the future. See Appendices 1 and 2.

Appendix 6: A Practical Theology of Interim Ministry

The time between pastors is an opportunity for congregations to look at their community, themselves, and their calling to ministry. It is an opportunity to be renewed in their sense of mission and ministry as they seek a new pastor. Interim ministry can be more than merely “covering the bases” or marking time until the office of the bishop recommends candidates for call. Interim ministry can be a calling.

Preach the Gospel

The most important work of an interim pastor is to preach the Gospel. Some congregations feel lost and abandoned at the resignation, retirement, or death of a beloved pastor. They need to hear a Gospel message affirming God loves them and will not abandon them. They need to hear God will be with them through their grief and lead them into a renewed ministry.

Some congregations have experienced a period of conflict leading up to the departure of their last pastor. They may have emotions ranging from trauma to self-righteous indignation. People need to hear the Gospel of God’s call to repentance and the assurance of God’s forgiveness and love. This is not to excuse hurtful or unjust behavior, but an invitation to trust in God’s mercy. When there has been conflict, congregations sometimes fear they will be on the bishop’s list of “bad” congregations and they will not be sent a caring pastor. They may have been told this by the departing pastor or their fear may come from a sense of guilt or shame. They need to be reminded “every sinner’s got a future and every saint has got a past.”¹⁰

When there has been conflict or when there has been long-term stagnation, often, what people have been hearing from the pulpit has been law, not Gospel. They should have been working harder, they should have been getting along together, they should have been supporting the pastor better, they should have been learning the Scriptures in Bible study. They should have put more money and volunteer efforts into ministries for the poor. All of this may be true. People do not benefit from hearing what a disappointment they have been to God or to the pastor. People need to hear the Gospel of God’s love, grace, forgiveness, and new life. They need to be reminded God continues to love them.

Love the People

In the Heidelberg Disputation, Luther wrote God’s love “does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it” and “the love of God which lives in [human beings] loves sinners, evil persons, fools, and weaklings in order to make them righteous, good, wise, and strong.” Congregations have more than their fair share of sinners, evil persons, fools, and weaklings. It may be necessary for an interim to set boundaries and establish rules in the midst of chaos; however, people are not transformed by the law. The law may curb some bad behavior, it may convict some people of sin, and it may provide useful guidelines for living; however, divine love is what transforms people. The interim’s task is to convey God’s love in the hope God’s love can be transforming and redemptive.

¹⁰Whiskey Drinkin’ Preacher by Chuck Cannon

Supporting the Congregation

Professionals keep an appropriate emotional distance from their clients. Interims are professional outsiders who enter a congregation to assist them in completing the process of calling a new pastor.

The interim should practice “joining,” learning the congregation’s unique story, identity, and ways of making decisions. The interim should be connected to the congregation members well enough to get a “feel” for the emotional processes of the congregation. At the same time, the interim should be aware of and maintain personal and professional boundaries.

Consultant Pete Steinke warns, “Do not go gently into that glob of glue.” Interim pastors need to be aware of how they are affected by the emotional processes of the congregation, the subtle, emotional “push and pull” exerted on the interim by congregation members. Every interim is susceptible to being affected by the behaviors of congregation members. Each interim has valances for responding to particular behaviors uniquely matched to the interim’s family history. Maintaining contact with a coach or staff person in the office of the bishop can help an interim maintain a good balance between emotional connectedness and emotional distance.

If an interim pastor finds herself or himself using the word “we” in relation to the congregation, the interim is at risk of becoming one of the congregation. More preferable is to use the words “you” and “your” in relation to the congregation. Asking, “How do you make that kind of decision here in your congregation?” differentiates the interim from the congregation in a healthy manner. The interim is encouraged to use the word “we” in relation to the synod and in relation to the ELCA because the interim represents the office of the bishop and is part of the synod’s ministry to the congregation.

Pastors of congregations are accustomed to responding to ministry needs, following the philosophy, “Don’t just sit there, do something.” Interim pastors should consider the opposite philosophy, “Don’t just do something, sit there.” Interim pastors should be more concerned with training and supporting congregation members to do the congregation’s ministry than in doing ministry tasks for the congregation.

Be Curious

People in congregations think they know more than they do about one another and about how their congregation functions. Being curious and asking good, open-ended questions encourages people to talk about themselves and to learn more about one another and their congregation.

There is a temptation among helping professionals and leaders to want to know etiology, the origin, source, or cause of a malady or condition. This can be very helpful in medicine but in working with groups of people, knowing *why* a condition exists is sometimes less helpful than knowing *how* a condition affects people. Every figure is seen against a ground. Being aware of the ground, what happens around a problem, is often more helpful than understanding a problem itself. The interim can help congregation leaders to shift their focus from individuals to the larger system and how it responds.

The Interim and the MSP

The document, “Hints for Completing the Ministry Site Profile,” in this manual has detailed instructions for call committees to do the work necessary for completing the MSP. The interim can be very helpful to the call committee in finding resources and suggesting methods to study the congregation’s community, itself, and to clarify its mission.

The MSP is not just a form to be filled out in order to provide information for calling a pastor. Completing the MSP is an opportunity for the congregation to be renewed in its sense of mission and to learn how to identify the gifts and skills needed in a pastor to lead them in their mission.

The call committee uses online demographic information and information available from local government and business sources to gain an understanding of who lives in the church’s service area. These same sources can help the committee to identify trends in the community.

The committee also looks at the demographics and trends in the congregation. When there is wide disparity between the demographics of the congregation and its surrounding community, this may raise questions about the congregation’s mission priorities. If the congregation is not including and serving the persons in its neighborhood, they might consider addressing this. The demographics of the congregation may suggest where they should spend their efforts for the most effective ministry.

From time to time, congregations adopt mission statements, mission goals, and strategic plans. These should grow out of three things 1) the needs, challenges, and resources of the community surrounding the church, 2) the needs, challenges, and resources of the congregation, and 3) the congregation’s purpose as stated in the Scriptures and in Chapter 4 of the congregation’s constitution. Each congregation reads the purpose statement in the constitution differently based on their context giving greater importance to some things than to others. The interim pastor can help the call committee, the council, and the congregation to process these elements to craft a statements of purpose and mission relevant to the needs, opportunities, and resources of the congregation and community today.

Once the congregation’s mission priorities are clear, then the call committee can go about the task of deciding what skills, interests, and gifts in a pastor would be most helpful to the congregation in fulfilling its mission. The call committee should prepare and present to the congregation a picture of the congregation’s community, the congregation, and the congregation’s mission and then ask the congregation what kind of pastor they think they need. An accurate and coherent presentation of the congregation’s situation has a better chance of soliciting informed opinions from the congregation than the call committee merely sending out a survey for congregation members to fill out stating their preferences in the next pastor. The role of the interim pastor is to help the call process be one in which congregation members become aware of what kind of pastor is needed to support the congregation’s ministry in its context.

The interim should be involved in the study process aimed at completing the MSP. Once complete, the office of the bishop can work with the call committee on how to interview candidates and to decide on one to recommend to the council and congregation.

The Five Focus Points

History

There are a number of methods for exploring a congregation's history. Gathering for a congregational dinner and constructing a timeline with stories of significant events and persons in the congregation's history will work in some situations. Cottage meetings where members tell stories of the congregation can work in some situations. It is helpful to learn how the congregation's history has contributed to its identity. It is also helpful to learn how the congregation has responded to challenges throughout its history. Hopefully, the congregation's stories provide evidence for the congregation's resilience and faithfulness.

Sometimes the congregation may be suffering from a traumatic event such as clergy misconduct or divisive conflict. When there has been a traumatic event, there is a tendency to not talk about the event because it raises emotional responses. The interim's task is to find ways to allow the congregation to talk openly about the events so they may lose some of their emotional energy and become part of the historical narrative of the congregation. Allowing people to tell their experience uninterrupted, without argument or rebuttal, and with appropriate understanding responses from a leader can be healing. When there has been trauma, it may be useful to use an outside consultant or to keep in close contact with the bishop's staff in addressing this kind of painful history.

Leadership

When a pastor leaves, sometimes persons who have not been in leadership become available for leadership positions. Sometimes these are people who have been outside the leadership circle with which the pastor was comfortable. Sometimes, these may be persons who are new to the congregation. Some people who return to the congregation seeking leadership positions after a pastor's departure should remain excluded from leadership and for good reason. The interim's task is to encourage the congregation to be open to new leadership and at the same time to be careful in selecting leaders who will keep the good of the whole congregation in mind.

In addition to concern for the congregation's leadership, the interim pastor should encourage the congregation council to address any governance issues needing attention such as updating the congregation's constitution and bylaws, looking at safe practices for the protection of children, reviewing personnel policies for employees and the pastor, reviewing procedures and controls for the receipt and disbursement of funds, and reviewing job descriptions for officers, committee chairs, and staff.

Mission

An emphasis on mission throughout the interim period can encourage the congregation to consider how God may be calling them to participate in God's mission in their community and in the world. Helping the congregation to recognize its purpose and how this purpose is carried out in mission and programs is part of the process of completing the MSP. It may be necessary for the interim pastor to lead the congregation council in clarifying the congregation's mission or for the interim pastor to recruit another church leader to lead the council in doing so.

Connections

The congregation is part of a community, a cluster, a synod, and the ELCA. The interim's presence in the congregation is an expression of the synod's care for the congregation. Part of the interim's task is to help the congregation identify how they can do more in ministry through cooperating with other churches, communities of faith, and community organizations. Some congregations are turned in on themselves. They don't realize how much energy they can gain from cooperating in ministry with others. Part of the interim's task is to help the congregation see themselves as participants in something larger than themselves.

The Future

So long as a congregation is grieving the past, it cannot embrace the future. The interim's task is to help the congregation reorient its attention from the past to the future, to move through grief to expectancy. The process of congregational and community study, mission planning, and completing the MSP helps the congregation to orient toward the future and get ready for new leadership.

Interims should remember the five focus points are not sequential steps to be accomplished before a call committee is formed, but points the interim and the congregation pay attention to during the transition between pastors. Attention paid to these focus points helps the congregation become ready to begin a new ministry partnership.

Resources

The Interim Ministry Network holds an annual conference with speakers, workshops, and networking opportunities. Their web page has a good list of resources. www.imnedu.org

There is a Facebook group, Lutheran Interim Pastors, with discussion, peer support, and helpful files. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/120425928152537/>

Another excellent resource is the book *Interim Ministry in Action* by Norman B. Bendroth

– Ben Moravitz, Th.D.

Appendix 7: Interim Letter of Agreement

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD
22598 Titusville Road
PO Box 43
Pleasantville, PA 16341
(814) 589-7660

LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY

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

(Congregation),
(Location)

agrees that

(Pastor's Name)

will serve as Interim Pastor

on a () flexible time / () full-time basis from (*date*) and to (*date*)
in accord with the following mutual promises,
upon appointment by the Bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod

Together, the congregation and the interim pastor will:

1. Examine the congregation's heritage—the history of how the congregation was formed, how it has developed, the recent history of the previous pastor's departure—and address the work of adjusting to change in pastoral leadership.
2. Examine and update the governance documents, personnel policies, and practices of the congregation, assuring that the congregation is operating according to its constitution and bylaws, according to best practices for child safety, and according to best practices for the receipt, disbursement, and reporting of funds, and examining the leadership needs of the congregation, allowing for the emergence of new leaders and for seasoned leaders to recommit to leadership roles or to refocus their gifts.
3. Examine the congregation's connections to its conference, the synod, and the ELCA and to examine its connections to other congregations and organizations in its community.
4. Examine the congregation's purpose and identity by studying its context for ministry—the congregation's community, its opportunities and resources for engaging in mission, its grounding in the Scriptures and God's call to mission and creating a plan for congregational mission.

5. prepare for the future by engaging the congregation in study aimed at completing the MSP and engaging in the call process in accordance with synod guidelines.
6. During this interim period, agree to address the following goals:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
7. At the conclusion of the interim period, participate with key leaders of the congregation and the designated representative of the office of the bishop in an evaluation of the interim ministry.

The Interim Pastor will:

1. Serve in the capacity of a duly called pastor with all the privileges and responsibilities accorded that position by the constitutions and bylaws of the ELCA, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, and this congregation (S14.17.).
2. Preach and teach the Word of God.
3. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according to the practice of the Lutheran Church.
4. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs, visit as necessary, and uphold the members in prayer.
5. Give pastoral guidance and direction for meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
6. Encourage support of the total ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
7. Be responsible for the recording of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals, attendance at Holy Communion, the maintenance of the membership rosters, and report statistics of the parish promptly and fully, as required by the constitution (S14.03.).
8. Agree to not be available for a regular call to this congregation except with approval of the bishop in special circumstances (S14.17.A04).
9. Agree to serve as a consultant to the call process, but to be excluded from any matters pertaining to specific candidates.
10. During this interim, to give special attention to the following duties:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

The Congregation will:

1. Commit to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning and fellowship activities.
2. Support the ministry of the congregation through service and gifts.
3. Accept the interim pastor, uphold him/her in prayer, and accord him/her love, respect and good will.
4. Expect the interim pastor to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and other rites of the church.
5. Agree that the interim pastor will not be considered for regular call to this congregation except with the approval of the bishop in special circumstances (S14.17.A04).
6. Support the interim pastor's attendance at twice yearly meetings held for interim pastors in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (including room, board and travel).

7. Compensate the interim pastor as follows:

(As a general rule, compensation is based on the compensation of the previous pastor or the minimum standard for years of service experience of the interim pastor based on synod guidelines. Flexible time service is prorated: ½ time would receive ½ total compensation levels, etc.)

- A. Pay an annual salary of \$(dollar amount), the payments to be made in (number) equal installments on the (day of month) (and day of the month).
- B. a.) Pay a housing allowance in the amount of \$(dollar amount) per year, the payments to be made in (number) equal installments on the (day of month) (and day of the month).

OR b.) Provide the use of a parsonage or other housing in lieu of a housing allowance.

OR c.) Provide a housing allowance resolution excluding a portion of the salary set forth above.

C. Provide a Social Security allowance of \$(dollar amount) per year. *(Optional.)*

D. a.) Contribute to the ELCA Pension and Benefits Plan (number)% of salary and housing allowance (plus Social Security allowance).

OR b.) Does not apply.

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

E. Grant one week (including Sunday) of vacation for every (number) weeks of service, not to exceed (number) weeks per year.

F. Grant continuing education leave of (number) days per year and \$(dollar amount) per year toward study expenses.

G. Grant (number) day(s) off per week.

H. Other _____

8. Reimburse expenses related to our common ministry:

A. ___ Pay a travel allowance in the amount of \$(dollar amount) per year.

OR

B. ___ Reimburse automobile travel at the rate of standard IRS mileage rate of (amount) per mile upon substantiation of a record of business miles traveled.

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

D. Pay moving expenses as follows:

9. Provide (number) months of defined compensation (salary, housing, & social security) at the conclusion of the interim period or until start of a call or contract with another congregation or institution, whichever occurs sooner. (optional)

10. Provide (number) months of pension and health benefits at the conclusion of the interim period or until start of a call or contract with another congregation or institution, whichever occurs sooner. (optional)

Termination:

This agreement terminates:

- a. on the date specified on page one of this agreement;
- b. or when the duly called pastor begins his/her ministry in the congregation;
- c. or when deemed necessary by the interim pastor with the approval of the bishop, giving the congregation a 30-day notice;
- d. or when deemed necessary by the congregation with the approval of the synod bishop, giving the interim pastor a 30-day notice;
- e. or whenever deemed necessary by the synod bishop.

All salary and benefits will be forfeited beyond that point, except as otherwise noted.

This agreement may be extended upon the mutual agreement of the congregation council, the interim pastor, and the synod bishop for a term specified by an addendum attached hereto.

All financial obligations will be fulfilled by or on the date of termination.

The terms of this agreement may be renegotiated at the time of its renewal at the request of the interim pastor, the congregation council, or the synod bishop.

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

Congregation (*Council President or Secretary*)

Date

Interim Pastor

Date

Reviewed by

Michael L. Lozano
Bishop, Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod

Date

Upon signature, copies will be distributed as follows:

1. Original to the Interim Pastor
2. Copy to the Congregation Council President
3. Copy to the Bishop's Office

Notes:

The interim pastor and congregation council make an agreement for service. The interim pastor is appointed to serve by the synod bishop. The interim pastor may request the bishop to recommend the synod council extend a one-year term call to serve as an interim pastor. Interim agreements, bishop's appointments, and synod council calls to interim ministry may be extended year by year.

†**S14.23.** 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 rostered 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.

S14.13. The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the 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.

Note: The parochial record is kept on paper, handwritten, and in ink, unless computer printed on archival paper. If the interim finds the parochial record is not current or is missing, the interim ensures a parochial record is provided and is nearly accurate as possible.

Compensation and benefits should be based on the interim pastor's years of experience in ministry and in light of current synod compensation guidelines. Flexible time service is prorated. Compensation may be paid as a salary or paid hourly upon receipt of an itemized statement. If pension and insurance are provided, it is usually necessary to agree to a set salary rather than an hourly rate. See current compensation guidelines on synod website under the Resources tab)

The congregation council may use this worksheet to determine items to be included in the agreement with the interim pastor.

An agreement with an intentional interim pastor may include additional items such as the leadership by the interim pastor in developmental tasks of the congregation. Please bear in mind the interim ministry is not necessarily full-time and some expectations for ministry will have to be met from within the lay membership of the congregation.

1. What do you understand to be the needs of your congregation at this time?
2. How do you see the interim pastor or other leaders helping meet these needs?
3. We would like the interim pastor to preach:
 - a. How many Sunday services a month?
 - b. How many special services?
 - c. How many weekday services?
4. We would like the interim pastor to teach:
 - a. Catechetics/Confirmation Time/Place
 - b. Bible Study Time/Place
 - c. First Communion Time/Place
 - d. Sunday Church School Time/Place
 - e. Other _____ Time/Place
5. How would you like the interim to be involved with council meetings?
 - a. When and where does the council meet?
6. What other meetings do you expect the interim to attend?
 - a. Committee(s) When and where?
 - b. Staff When and where?
 - c. Other
7. Do you anticipate any upcoming baptisms? Weddings? Funerals?
8. Do you expect the interim pastor to do counseling?
 - a. Baptismal _____
 - b. Crisis _____
 - c. Pre-Marital _____
 - d. Other _____
9. Do you expect the interim pastor to administer home communions?
 - a. How often?
 - b. When?
 - c. In whose homes?
10. What visitation responsibilities do you anticipate the interim doing?
 - a. Home visits _____
 - b. Hospital visits _____

- c. Nursing Home Visits _____
 - d. Other (Describe)
11. For what other duties would you expect the interim to be responsible?
 12. Who are some people in the congregation who can visit with the interim in situations #9 and #10 above?
 13. Do you expect an interim pastor to attend to these responsibilities in:
a full-time position? $\frac{3}{4}$ time? $\frac{1}{2}$ time? $\frac{1}{4}$ time?
(Interim pastors who are needed less than one day a week are sometimes paid on an hourly basis at \$25/hour. Interim pastors will be compensated for travel, including to attend meetings and worship services at the church.)
 14. Who and how should the interim pastor contact leaders in the congregation?
 - a. Council President
 - b. Council Vice President
 - c. Congregational Treasurer
 15. Regarding visitations
 16. If the interim pastor becomes ill?
 17. What should be the starting date be for the interim pastor?

Appendix 8: Interim Pastor Report to Office of the Bishop

Please return to the office of the bishop.

Month: _____

1. **WORSHIP**
 - a. What is your view of the atmosphere at worship services?
 - b. What is happening to attendance?
 - c. What else can you say about the worship life of this congregation?
2. **STEWARDSHIP**
 - a. How has financial support for mission been this month?
 - b. How has support for ministry been this month?
3. **ISSUES**
 - a. What conflicts or changes have you been working on this month?
4. **SUPPORT**
 - a. Do you feel you are receiving support from council/members/neighboring pastors?
5. **CONCERNS**
 - a. Any continuing concerns or comments you have regarding previous pastor, parish, etc.?
6. **CALL PROCESS**
 - a. How have you dealt with members inquiring about your availability for call? Or call process questions?
7. **SATISFACTIONS**
 - a. What has pleased you the most in your ministry this month?
8. **OTHER**
 - a. Comment on anything else you think the bishop's office needs to know.

Appendix 9: Call Committee Installation

This order is used before the prayers of intercession. Those who are being installed may come forward at the conclusion of the hymn of the day or after the creed.

The assembly is seated. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

The following people have been elected/appointed to serve as the call committee of this congregation. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that these sisters and brothers will carefully and prayerfully seek a pastor to recommend to the congregation to be called to lead this congregation as it seeks to fulfill God's mission.

The names of those who are to be installed are read by a representative of the congregation. The presiding minister addresses those being installed.

A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

The presiding minister continues.

You have been appointed/elected to serve as the call committee of this congregation, a position of leadership and trust. You will lead this congregation in discovering the trends, challenges, opportunities, and resources of this congregation and its community, in clarifying this congregation's mission, in identifying the gifts for ministry needed in pastoral leadership for this congregation, and in selecting a candidate to recommend to the congregation for call.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the office to which you have been appointed/elected?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

The assembly stands. Those being installed face the assembly. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

People of God, I ask you: Will you support these call committee members in their work? Will you hold them, the congregation council, and the office of the bishop in prayer as they work together to discern who God is calling as the next pastor of this congregation?

Response: **We will, and we ask God to help us.**

Those being installed face the presiding minister, who addresses them.

I now declare you installed as the call committee of this congregation. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ.

Amen.

The service continues with the prayers of intercession. Prayers are included for the newly installed leaders. After the greeting of peace, the newly installed leaders return to their places. (See Sundays and Seasons, ELW / Occasional Services for the Assembly, for a downloadable copy of this service)

Appendix 10: Hints for Completing the Ministry Site Profile

The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) presents valuable information for helping a candidate understand the opportunity to serve your congregation. Completing the MSP provides you with an opportunity to study your context for ministry, its challenges, and opportunities for ministry in your community and among the people of your congregation. You also describe your congregation's gifts and resources for ministry. After studying these two aspects of your context, your community, and your congregation, you are challenged to rethink your mission, what God is calling you to do. With a clear idea of the work to which God is calling you, you can then better identify the skills, abilities, and gifts needed in your next leader.

When a pastoral vacancy occurs, congregation leaders sometimes think they can pull out a copy of their last MSP and merely update the information. There are two problems with this. First, in as little as three to five years, conditions in a congregation's mission area and in the congregation can change dramatically. When change occurs, there is often a need for change in a congregation's mission focus. The second, problem with "brushing up the old MSP," is your congregation will miss the opportunity to be renewed in its call to mission this the process of creating an MSP provides.

Your finished product should provide a clear picture of the work a pastor/deacon is being called to do. Hopefully, through your description of your context, your mission, and your leadership needs, a candidate will hear the calling of God's Spirit to ministry in partnership with you.

Following are some hints and clarifications of the questions asked in the MSP.

Part I: Who We Are

3. Demographics

Race/Ethnicity (in the congregation) (surrounding community)

The form allows only 5% increments. More discrete percentages can be stated in "Comments or Additional Information."

Gender Comparison, Age Distribution

This section describes the congregation, not the community. If your congregation uses a membership database with birthdates, this information may be generated easily as a report from the database. If there is no database, the committee may need to find or estimate the age of every member in the church directory and count how many members fall into each age category. Perfect accuracy is not necessary. After you compile the congregation's gender and age data, use one of the demographic tools available to compare your congregation's gender and age figures with those of the community. You may be surprised at what you learn. See below for sources of gender and age demographics for the community.

Average Weekly Worship Attendance

The selections provide very broad ranges on the form, which is not very helpful. There is a difference between a congregation with 51 average worship attendance and one with an average of 149, it would be helpful to state the actual average worship attendance in “Part IV: Commentary.”

4. Budget of the Congregation/Organization

Total Budget for the Past Fiscal Year refers the category “Total Disbursements” on your parochial report.

Total Debt includes outstanding mortgage balance, any line-of-credit balance, amounts borrowed from dedicated funds, payroll taxes owed, balances owed for benefits, and any accounts payable at the end of the last fiscal year even if these balances have changed since the first of the fiscal year. Significant change in balances owed since the end of the last fiscal year, can be noted in Part IV: Commentary.

Mission Support to the ELCA/Synod for the last fiscal year refers to regular remittances to the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod for mission support and any other contributions to mission support sent by the congregation.

Total Savings, Reserves, Endowment at the end of the last fiscal year refers to the total of all assets in checking, savings, certificates of deposit, bonds, stocks, or any other account or instrument convertible to cash. This includes funds assigned to the general fund, dedicated accounts, restricted funds, and endowment. This does not include the value of real estate or other fixed assets.

5. Trends in the Community Context of the Congregation or Organization

Characteristics

This section is about the community, not the congregation. What is asked for is straightforward demographic information: population, ethnicity, household type, age categories, average household income, average home value, single family vs. multi-family dwellings, largest employers or most predominant employment sectors. Lifestyle refers to categories such as retirement, resort, rural, farming, working class, middle class, poor, young professionals, etc.

There are two free sources for this information: Demographic information for zip codes can be obtained from the ELCA website at: elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Research-and-Evaluation. You will need your synod code (Northwestern Pennsylvania is 8A) and your unique congregation ID, which can be found on your parochial report. You will need to either select one zip code or to combine information for multiple zip codes if your congregation serves several zip codes.

A useful alternative is thearda.com/DemographicMap/ Input the street address or zip code where your congregation is located, select a radius for your service area, and then find and click on your congregation on the map. An advantage of using ARDA is it uses census tracts rather than zip codes. Census tracts are smaller units. You can gain information for more than one zip code at one time.

In the Part IV Comments, it may be helpful to note the source of your demographic information and what you chose as your service area.

Trends

This is about the congregation. What are the three most significant changes in the last 3-5 years? New building? Renovation? New use of facilities? Addition or loss of staff? Worship attendance increase or decrease? Financial support increase or decrease? New programs? Discontinuing programs? Significant gains or losses?

Context

This section is about the community, not the congregation. In the last 3-5 years, what has changed in the community surrounding the congregation? Is there new industry? Have employers laid off workers? Is there new business investment? Increased unemployment? Is there new housing? Community revitalization? Urbanization? Loss of young people to urban areas? Are new schools being built or are schools closing or consolidating? Is the real estate market on an upswing or a downturn? Are there significant people issues in the community? Cultural or demographic changes? What are the population trends in the community? Are particular age groups growing or declining? Has there been a growth or decline of particular ethnic groups in the community? You may think you know this information simply from living in the community. If you do some research on these questions, you might be surprised to learn things about your community you did not know. Your mission needs to be relevant to how your community really is not what you remember it being.

It is helpful to consult your local chamber of commerce, mayor's office, school district, regional planning office, or other business or government agencies have this kind of information. There may be changes and trends in your community of which you are unaware because they have escaped your notice.

Programs

It is helpful to organize your response to this question under headings corresponding to your congregation's various areas of ministry (see footnote). Describing your programs in an orderly manner helps you to appear organized. Provide some detail. For example, don't just say you provide worship. Describe how many worship service, when they are offered, how different services might be characterized, other opportunities for worship besides Sunday mornings, prayer groups, etc.

One organizational scheme to follow is W.I.N.G.S. Worship (including music, arts, prayer ministry), Inviting (evangelism, welcoming, public relations), Nurture (caring, visiting, small groups), Growth (Christian education, stewardship, youth group), and Service (social ministry, community outreach).

Another organizational scheme might follow your committee structure: Worship and Music, Learning, Evangelism, Social Ministry, Caring Ministries, Stewardship, Property, Finance, Fellowship Planning, Youth, etc.

Goals

Hopefully, your interim pastor has helped you to create or revise a strategic plan. In strategic planning, goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely (SMART). This is your

opportunity to clearly identify the work you are asking a new leader to join you in doing. Every congregation says they want to increase worship attendance, membership, and contributions. Can you identify other goals having potential to result in such growth?

Energy

What gets you stirred up? What are people passionate about doing? What do people put time, effort, energy, and money into doing? What do you derive pleasure in doing? Don't say you are excited about calling a new pastor. Every congregation is excited about calling a new pastor. It goes without saying. You want to describe activity you will want your new pastor to feel excited about joining you in doing.

Partnership

What kinds of ministry are you doing in partnership with others? Describe the ways in which you cooperate with other local Lutheran congregations, other local communities of faith, local agencies serving your community, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, and the ELCA.

Part II: Our Vision for Mission

6. Ministry Site Characteristics

The choices are intended to represent points along a continuum. If you gather information from congregational surveys, be sure to tell members to select only one choice for each line.

As a committee, you may select the bubble most nearly represents the preferred response of the congregation or you may use your own judgment based on the congregation's input.

There are no right or wrong answers in this section. This is simply a description of who you are at this point in time.

7. Purpose, Giftedness, and Mission Purpose

This section is of fundamental importance for your congregation's understanding of its reason for being. Start by reading and reflecting on the Statement of Purpose in Chapter 4 of your congregation's constitution. It can be helpful for the council and other leaders of the congregation to study these questions on a weekend retreat or over several extended study sessions. Resources for this study may be found at <http://www.elca.org/Resources/Mission-Planning>. The call committee or transition team may choose to lead the congregation council and other leaders in this study. You may ask your interim pastor to lead this study or you may wish to bring in an outside consultant such as a synod staff person or a call process consultant. Your task is to clarify your purpose, resources, and mission well enough you can identify what attributes you need in a pastor to help you to answer God's call to mission.

Giftedness

Describe your building, your human resources, the ministries for which you are well known in your community, your economic resources, your level of commitment to the church's mission.

Mission

Identify the three most important mission goals you and your new leader will work on together. These are not just areas of emphasis, but specific goals you intend to accomplish in order to help your ministry move forward in a positive direction. You want to state these in such a way a candidate will recognize this as the work she or he is being called to do.

Do not include calling a new pastor as one of these goals. Include goals you and the new pastor will work on together.

Summary Description

This 75-word statement is what goes on the cover page of your MSP. It is like the cover of a book. This is where you pull together your context, identity, challenges, resources, opportunities, aspirations, and your reasons for calling a leader in such a way the candidate might begin to hear the stirring of a call from God to partner with you in ministry.

Part III: Leadership Needs

Call committees often survey their congregation asking for members' opinions on these items. What is most helpful is if the opinions offered by the congregation are *informed opinions* and not merely personal preferences. In order to solicit informed opinions, the call committee should present to the congregation a description of the congregation's context, programs, goals, purpose, and calling to mission. The congregation can then respond thoughtfully by identifying the gifts, skills, and abilities needed in a new leader to help engage in the mission. Uninformed opinions are not helpful for identifying actual leadership needs.

Top Five Ministry Tasks

These tasks should support your mission stated above. This section may be completed by the call committee based on what has been learned in completing the MSP. If a congregation survey is used, again, the survey should follow a presentation by the call committee as described above so the opinions on the survey are informed opinions and not merely personal preferences.

Gifts for Ministry

Out of 25 gifts, you are asked to choose 5 top priority gifts and 5 helpful gifts, in all, 10 out of these 25.

Again, the committee should evaluate any input received from the congregation and identify the gifts most needed and most helpful to aid your congregation to answer its call to mission in this particular context.

Mutual Expectations

These five areas of activity or focus are not necessarily the same as the top five ministry tasks identified above. These tasks to be addressed in the first year may provide the foundation from which the pastor and congregation may reach toward longer range mission priorities.

The five ways the congregation might assist the pastor in the first year may include things such as providing opportunities for the pastor to meet the members of the congregation, introducing the pastor to community leaders, working alongside the pastor in some tasks, prayer, financial support for specific mission-related training, conducting an every member response stewardship program to provide financial resources for mission priorities, etc. What is important here is the

pastor and congregation not have the impression the pastor is going to accomplish the congregation's mission goals all on the pastor's own effort.

Compensation

“Defined Compensation” includes salary, housing, and social security allowance. If the congregation offers a parsonage, a housing equity allowance may be offered so upon retirement, the pastor might have funds set aside for a down payment on a house. This allowance is included in “defined compensation” (if offered). Benefits such as retirement, health insurance, life insurance, and disability insurance are not included in the “defined compensation” figure. Professional expenses such as mileage reimbursement, continuing education, books/publications, and professional meetings are not included in “defined compensation.”

Do not place the total amount available for compensation, benefits, and expenses in the “defined compensation” line as this could cause confusion. Forms are available at: See forms at <https://www.elca-ses.org/formsanddocuments>

Benefits

If your congregation would like to have a leader who serves the congregation for a long period of time, offering a sabbatical provides the leader an opportunity to develop new skills or a renewed focus on ministry can benefit the congregation in the long term. If your congregation does not have a sabbatical policy, noting you are willing to discuss offering a sabbatical may be helpful.

If your congregation would like to call a relatively young rostered leader, a parental leave policy makes the call more attractive for a pastor who plans to have children.

The synod does not perform background checks on rostered ministers after they have completed candidacy. It is the congregation's responsibility to perform a background check on a candidate at the time of call just as it is the congregation's responsibility to perform background checks on all persons in the congregation who work with children.¹⁵ If a candidate refuses a background check, inform the bishop's office immediately.

Professional Expenses

The more of these items checked “yes,” the more attractive the call looks to the pastor.

First Call Theological Education

Pastors in their first call are required to attend first call events for three years following ordination. Congregations are expected to grant time for these events and to provide for expenses.

Other Supporting Resources

The more of these items the congregation can provide, the better informed a candidate can be in discerning a call. Several of these items may have been produced in the process of preparing the MSP.

Part IV: Commentary

Add detail or explanation to any previous section of the profile. Areas of comment might include: strategic or long-range plan, vision or mission statements, facilities renovation or future construction plans, present programs, staffing or community involvement, how the budget expresses your mission priorities, description of worship life/practice.

Part V: Completion of the Profile

Hopefully, you will have read this paragraph before starting to complete the profile. The more people you involve in providing input in the creation of the MSP, and the more intentional the process used to create it, the more likely it will be your MSP reflects the actual mission needs of your community and your congregation's needs and expectations for a pastor. If only a handful of people participate in creating the MSP, there is a chance it will reflect a narrow perspective and might not be representative of the community's and the congregation's needs.

Additional Information

Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context

1. This question provides an opportunity to demonstrate how your congregation's ministry is relevant to people's needs in today's world.
2. Do you "put your money where your mouth is?" In other words, are your financial priorities consistent with your mission priorities?
3. This is basic demographic information. What are the demographic characteristics of people who live where the congregation is located and how is this similar to or different from the membership of the congregation? If there is a disparity, addressing it should be reflected in the congregation's mission plan.
4. What events in the life of the congregation continue to "echo" in the congregation's life? Have significant events in the life of the congregation been "swept under the rug" and continue to influence congregational life? Have there been events a significant impact on the congregation's identity?
5. This is your opportunity to show how you cooperate with other congregations and people of good will to have a positive impact in your community.
6. How your congregation deals with conflict and what you have learned about yourselves in dealing with conflict is more important here than the actual issues over which you have had conflict. This question is more about process than it is about content.
7. You might include here a description of any portions of your building or property not being used for their intended purpose and how they are being used presently.

Final Comments:

Be honest about your congregation and your community. You want a leader who is willing to address challenges they know about up front. You don't want a leader to feel deceived about the challenges to be faced. If you have challenges, it may be helpful to try to state them as opportunities for development and growth.

In answering questions in the MSP, avoid negative words such as “don't,” “not,” “can't,” “haven't,” etc. Make positive statements about who you are, what you do, and your hopes for the future. Avoid negative comparisons such as, “We are not a megachurch, but we are a growing congregation caring for its members and welcoming newcomers.” Just say you are a growing congregation caring for your members and welcoming newcomers. This is more positive than making a negative comparison.

Practically every congregation thinks of itself as “friendly.” Sometimes, being friendly means members who already know one another are friendly with and care for one another. Before saying you are friendly, a question to consider is whether you are friendly in a way which includes only insiders and excludes outsiders or whether you are friendly in a way which invites, welcomes, and accepts newcomers. If you see your congregation as friendly and welcoming, don't offer a general statement. Be specific. Describe how persons of various races, cultures, ages, physical abilities, religious backgrounds, gender identities, economic status, marital status, with children or without are invited, welcomed, and accepted. Now may be a good time to address the question of whether your congregation is really and truly welcoming of any and every person who might walk through your front door on Sunday morning or any day of the week.

Your interim pastor can be a valuable consultant to your process of gathering and evaluating information for your MSP. Use your interim as a resource for your work, but be sure your MSP is your document, written by your committee and the congregation council.

If you need additional help in analyzing your context and clarifying your mission, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod has a handful of call process consultants you can engage to help with this part of the process.

Your description of your congregation, your community, and your mission is part of the process through which God calls people to ministry.¹⁶

¹⁵ Modified from a document created by Rev. Ben Moravitz, July 2019

Appendix 11: Sample Interview Questions for the candidate

Before the interview takes place, the questions used during the process need to be formulated. Each question may be evaluated in three ways: (a) What does it have to do with the position and our MSP? (b) What do we need to know? (c) Would we be willing to answer the same questions about ourselves?

In general, formulate questions allowing the candidate to describe past experiences, gifts, and passions and how these might fit into your ministry context. Ask open ended questions this allow you to explore together a possible future ministry together.

1. Tell us about your faith.
2. Share with us your calling to become a pastor or deacon.
3. Describe the areas of ministry which you value as high priorities.
4. What parts of ministry give you great joy? Why?
5. What pastoral tasks just make you tired. Why?
6. Discuss your gifts for ministry. What are your growth areas?
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.
10. Describe one of your favorite children's sermons?
11. Discuss your thoughts, expectations and requirements concerning catechetical instruction.
12. Discuss in detail your expectations/philosophy of, and pastoral involvement in:
Educational Ministry, Evangelism, Stewardship, Benevolence, Youth Ministry and Social Ministry.
13. What ministry areas, in your last parish, gave you personal satisfaction?
14. What role do you see the pastor / deacon fulfilling in relating to committees?
15. How do you see your role in relation to congregation council?
16. Describe your philosophy of visitation and pastoral calling.
17. Why are you considering this call? What excites you about this call?
18. How do you see yourself involved in our community? The synod?
19. Tell us about your hobbies.
20. What are two or three things we should know about you we didn't ask?

An interview should always provide an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions of the Call Committee or the Congregation Council.

Appendix 12: Questions a candidate might ask a Call Committee

1. Why am I of particular interest to you?
2. What has been the most significant event in the life of this congregation?
3. Aside from the upheaval of looking for a new rostered minister, what has been the most upsetting event in the life of this congregation?
4. In your opinion, what areas of concern need to be addressed by this congregation?
5. What kinds of things did your former rostered minister do particularly well?
6. What were the circumstances surrounding your former rostered minister's departure?
7. In what areas did you wish your former rostered minister(s) had more expertise?
8. What formal and informal methods of support have you used in the past to help your rostered minister become a better minister?
9. How should your rostered minister spend their time? In the course of a week, how much time should be spent in prayer? Personal study? Sermon preparation? Administration? Individual and family counseling? Visiting? With their family?
10. What organizations in the congregation are the most active and/or successful?
11. Describe your relationship and involvement with community organizations.
12. Beyond calling a rostered minister, what is the highest congregational priority for the next twelve months?
13. What goals have you established for the future? What methods can be used to achieve these goals?
14. What plans have you made for the expansion of staff or building?
15. How stable is this congregation financially?
16. What programs have you planned to implement in the next ten years?

Appendix 13: Helpful Tips for Video Conferencing

Whether you're a total pro with Skype or Zoom calls, or have never taken part in a video conference before, these tips can help you prepare to put your best foot forward on your next video conference call.

- 1. Make sure you have a stable internet connection.** The most important aspect of video conferencing is a stable and fast internet connection. Otherwise, it will affect the conference with visual disruptions and inconsistent audio. Make sure you're seated near your internet router if on a laptop, or your hardwire connection is secure.
- 2. Take time to introduce everyone.** While some programs will have on screen names available during the entire meeting, some do not and so it's important to take a moment to greet one another. It helps allow folks to put names with faces.
- 3. Sit close to the screen so your face fills most of it.** It's a big help for others conferencing in to be able to see your face clearly, so when you are speaking and sharing ideas, they can be better understood.
- 4. Use an external microphone/headset, and headphones.** Most built in microphones on devices can do the job, but an external microphone or headset can go above and beyond helping to be sure you are heard clearly when you speak.
- 5. When you're not talking, hit the mute button on yourself.** When you are muted, it allows everyone in the meeting the opportunity to clearly hear who is speaking and what they have to say, and it will provide you the platform to clearly share your ideas when it's your turn to speak.
- 6. Maintain appropriate behavior for a meeting.** Do not eat during the meeting, do not dress inappropriately, don't have side conversations. If you wouldn't do it during an in person meeting, don't do it during a video conferencing meeting!
- 7. Stay engaged.** When you're on mute during an audio call, you have the ability to do whatever you want. But when you're on mute on a video call, it's important to stay truly engaged. Nod your head. Focus on the screen. Take notes. Participate in active listening, don't get up for a cup of coffee.
- 8. Don't sit with a window behind you.** Adjust where you sit so the lighting will allow you to be clearly visible. Clean up the room you're sitting in too!
- 9. When you're talking, spend some time looking at the camera, not the screen.** You'll appear more earnest and honest this way, and it will feel to those listening like you are speaking directly to them, rather than looking elsewhere.

Appendix 14: Interview Evaluation

Name of Candidate:

Name of Person Completing this Form:

1. What contact have you had with the candidate?

2. How might this candidate have been a good match for your congregation?

3. How was this candidate not a good match for your congregation?

4. What appear to be the major strengths of the candidate?

5. What appear to be the weaknesses of the candidate?

6. What words would you use to describe this candidate's ministry style

7. What other factors affected your decision?

Appendix 15: Sample Letters to Candidates

Dear *(title and name)*,

On behalf of the Call Committee, I want to thank you and *(spouse's name)* for visiting with us as a beginning step toward consideration of a call to *(name of ministry site)*. We were pleased with the openness and depth of our conversation. We felt our meeting was most productive.

We will begin work on the next steps in the process and will reach out to you once we are prepared to move forward.

In the mean time, please feel free to call me at any time at *(phone number)* if you have any questions or concerns.

Cordially,

Name of Call Committee Chair

cc: Bishop Lozano

Dear *(title and name)*,

On behalf of the Call Committee, I want to thank you and *(spouse's name)* for visiting with us as a beginning step toward consideration of a call to *(ministry site name)*. We appreciate your responses to our questions and were glad you shared your concerns with us.

After considering the challenges and needs of our congregation in light of your strengths and interests, we feel it would be best not to continue conversation with you toward a call.

Again, we thank you for your time and interest. Our prayers are with you in your ministry.

Cordially,

Name of Call Committee Chair

cc: Bishop Lozano

Appendix 17: Conducting a Congregational Meeting to Call a Rostered Leader

1. Council President calls the meeting to order. Introduces the synod representative and then leads the congregation in prayer.
2. We begin with prayer. The Lord be with you. *(And also with you.)* Let us pray. Loving God, you call us to labor in your vineyard, and without you we can do nothing. Grant us your gracious presence at this meeting, so what we do will build up your Church. As we consider the call of a new *pastor/deacon*, let your Holy Spirit govern and direct our deliberations and decisions, so we may please you in all we say and do; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
3. The constitution of this congregation states the presence of *(number)* voting members constitutes a quorum, and I determine a quorum is present.
4. The constitution also stipulates only one item of business may be conducted at this meeting - the Council's recommendation regarding the call of a *(pastor/deacon)* including the Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Duties previously agreed between the rostered minister and the Congregation Council.
5. The first vote conducted, based on the method indicated in the constitution, and a 2/3 majority of the votes cast is necessary to elect. The second vote, regarding compensation may be voted on by voice vote or show of hands. A simple majority is required to approve the compensation package. Absentee or proxy votes are not allowed for either matter.
6. The first motion presented by Council is we elect the *(title and name)* to be our *(pastor/deacon)*. Is there a second? *(Wait for someone to second.)* It is moved and seconded that *(name of ministry site)* call the *(title and name)* to serve as our *(title)*.
7. *(name of individual from call committee or council)* will present the rationale of the call committee and council in making this recommendation.
(After committee or council rep offers rationale.)
8. Thank you. The floor is now open for discussion of the motion to call *(name)* as *(title)*.
Give time for all comments and questions.

The congregation council president turns the meeting over to the synod representative to conduct the call vote. The synod representative does not conduct the defined compensation vote.

9. Are you ready to vote? Tellers, please distribute the ballots (if written). Please mark either Yes or No on the ballot. A **Yes** vote is to call *(title and name)*. A **No** vote is not to call *(title and name)*.
Give time for members to complete their ballots.

10. Tellers, please collect and tally the ballots and report the results to me.

*(If you wish to sing a hymn while waiting for the tellers to tally the ballots
ELW 576, "We All Are One in Mission" would be a good choice.)*

11. The tellers' report will be in this form:

A. Number of ballots cast: _____

B. Number of invalid ballots: _____

(Valid means the member wrote either Yes or No or some other words whose plain meaning is we should or should not call the candidate. Anything else – a vote for any other name written in is an illegible ballot, etc. is an invalid ballot.)

C. Number of valid ballots: _____ (A minus B)

D. Votes required to elect: _____ (2/3 or .667 times C.)

E. Number of yes votes: _____

F. Number of no votes: _____

12. The teller's report is received by the synod representative, who verifies the vote along with the congregation council president.

If E is equal to or greater than D, the congregation council president announces(name) is elected. The council president thanks the synod representative and then move on to the recommendation regarding compensation.

*If E is less than D, congregation council president announce the vote call fails. The congregation council president thanks the synod representative and adjourns the meeting.
Go in peace.*

13. *If the candidate is elected, the congregation council president moves to the second recommendation:*

The second recommendation is to approve the compensation package our congregation council offered to (*title and name*). The information was included with the letter from the congregation council along with (*title and name*)'s biography. Please note, the amounts in this package are in line with the amounts in our congregation's (*year*) budget / spending plan.

This motion comes from the congregation council and needs only a second from the floor. Is there a second? (*Wait for someone to second.*) The floor is now open for discussion.

Give time for all comments and questions. Members can offer amendments, and each amendment (if seconded) is voted on before returning to the main motion. Discussion at this point would be limited to the amendment, until all have spoken and a vote is taken, and the amendment either passes or fails. If it passes, it then alters council's recommendation. If it fails, the recommendation as submitted by the congregation council is still before the congregation and is voted on.

After all who wish to have spoken:

14. Are you ready to vote? All those in favor of the compensation package as recommended (or as amended) please say “**Aye.**” Those opposed by “**No.**”

If the voice vote is not close, you can announce the Ayes have it and the motion is adopted. Conclude the meeting below.

If it is or appears to be too close for you to call, ask those in favor to raise their hands. Then ask those opposed to raise their hands. If one side had enough votes, announce the results.

*If it is **still** too close to call, ask people to raise their hands and keep them up and have the tellers count the raised hands. Ayes first, then no's. Tellers report the count and you announce the results.*

If the compensation package is not approved, modifications can only be made by a majority vote of the congregation. Announce this and move to adjourn the meeting with the announcement a new meeting date and time will be set to address the compensation package.

If the compensation package is approved, continue with the following:

15. The results of these votes will be shared immediately with (title and name), who has thirty days to respond. It is imperative their candidacy and the results of our meeting today **REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL** until such time as we are able to make a public announcement.
16. As there can be no further business to come before us today, I declare the meeting adjourned.
17. Thank you for your attendance and participation. Please hold (title and name) in prayer as they consider their response to this call.
18. Go in peace. Serve the Lord. *Thanks be to God!*

Appendix 18: Sample Letter of Call



LETTER OF CALL

TO AN ORDAINED MINISTER OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

*In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

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

a congregation of the

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
meeting on

extends to you this call to serve as

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

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

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

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

President

Secretary

Attested by _____

Bishop of the _____

Date of synodical bishop's signing _____

Appendix 19: Sample Definition of Compensation and Benefits

Definition of Compensation, Benefits, And Responsibilities for Ministers of Word and Sacrament Under Call

Prepared by _____
for the Reverend _____
for the period: _____ to _____

A. COMPENSATION

The congregation will provide the following annual compensation:

1. Base Cash Salary \$ _____
2. Housing Allowance (if provided) \$ _____
3. Self-employed Social Security payment allowance (if provided) \$ _____
4. If a parsonage or other housing is provided:
 - a. Utilities allowance \$ _____
 - b. Furnishings allowance \$ _____
 - c. Housing equity allowance \$ _____

B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS

The congregation will sponsor the pastor in the Pension and Other Benefits Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which provides retirement, disability, survivor, and medical-dental coverage.

(Sponsorship will include medical-dental coverage for the individual's spouse and children unless they have other employer-provided group medical insurance coverage and the individual consents to waiving medical-dental coverage for them under the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program.)

1. ELCA Pension at _____ % of defined compensation
2. ELCA Medical-and-Dental Insurance (check one below):
 a. Member only c. Member and children e. Coverage waived
 b. Member and spouse d. Member, spouse, and children
3. Other insurance or benefits: _____ \$ _____
_____ \$ _____

C. EXPENSES

The congregation will provide for the following expenses related to this pastor's ministry.

1. Automobile and travel allowance \$ _____
2. Other professional expenses \$ _____
3. Expenses for official meetings of the synod, as reimbursed
4. Continuing education (\$1,000 recommended; minimum \$700 from calling source) \$ _____
5. Other (_____) \$ _____
6. Pay the moving expenses to this field of service as follows: _____

D. AGREEMENT

1. Vacation time of _____ days per year, including _____ Sundays;
2. Continuing education time of _____ weeks per year (recommended minimum of two weeks per year that may be accumulated up to three years, as reflected in a continuing-education agreement developed by the rostered lay person and congregation council);
3. Participation in a First-Call Theological Education Program, where applicable;
4. Ongoing care through a Mutual Ministry Committee;
5. Up to two months of continued salary and contributions to the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program in a 12-month period in the event that the pastor is physically or mentally disabled*; and
6. Maternity/Paternity or Adoptive leave of _____ weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits (Recommended 6 weeks; 4 weeks minimum).

* Provision may be made for further unpaid time for disability recovery as agreed by the congregation, but with the stipulation that unused accumulated sick leave will not be compensated at the end of this call.

A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities."

<or the following may be completed>

E. OTHER PROVISIONS

Special emphases of the pastor and special encouragement by the congregation:

1. During this time period, the pastor will give special attention to the following:

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____

2. The congregation will encourage and support this pastor's ministry in the following ways:

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____

F. OTHER MATTERS

(Such as accountabilities, service on synodical or churchwide boards and committees, work in church-camp programs, or other such details.)

We, the undersigned, certify that the necessary approvals of the congregation and congregational council have been granted for the provisions set forth above.

Congregation President

Council Secretary

Date: _____

I certify that I accept the above statement:

The Reverend _____ Date of signature: _____

NOTE: Retain original in records of the congregations. Make a copy for the pastor. As a matter of information, send a copy to the synod office. A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities."

(Revised Jan. 2018)