



CALL PROCESS

Introduction & Phases

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all things acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

Grace and peace to you as your parish enters a new phase of life as a worshipping community and begins to work through the process of calling a new pastoral leader. This handbook is designed to help guide parish leaders through the transition process from beginning to end... from an appropriate farewell for the current pastoral leader, through a time for self-reflection, identification, and preparing for new ministry, through the search, and finally to the excitement of a new beginning. Please know that you are in our prayers and we value your partnership in this ministry.

The Call Process is divided into four phases:

I. The “**Ending Well**” Phase outlines how the parish’s leadership team will manage the period of time between the resignation of the departing pastoral leader to the arrival of Transitional/interim pastoral leadership. This phase includes:

1. The resignation or retirement announcement
2. Transition options, steps and timelines (coordinated between Council and synod staff)
3. Identification of the Farewell Committee
4. Exit interview with departing pastoral leader (to include pastoral leader, Council and synod representatives)
5. Council’s appointment of a Transition Team
6. Farewell to the departing pastoral leader (See Farewell Worship Litany)
7. Scheduling a “Planned Pause” for healthy separation
8. Welcome and installation of Transitional/Interim Pastoral leadership (See Welcome/Installation Litany)

II. The **“Discovery & Transition” Phase** describes how the parish discovers its spiritual identity, its mission and vision for ministry, and readies itself for changes that will accompany a new pastoral leader. This phase includes:

1. Transition Team implements self-study and visioning
 - Structured leadership of Five Focus Points
 - a. Heritage
 - b. Leadership
 - c. Mission
 - d. Connections
 - e. Future
2. Congregational Resource Team/*Healthy Congregation* Workshops
 - One: Healthy Congregations
 - Two: Healthy Congregations Respond to Anxiety & Change
 - Three: Leadership in Healthy Congregations
 - Four: Relationships in Healthy Congregations
 - Five: Healthy Congregations Develop Generous Givers
 - Six: The Spiritual Care of Healthy Congregations

III. The **“Search & Call” Phase** identifies responsibilities that relate specifically to interviews, the recommendation and selection of pastoral leadership. This phase includes:

1. Council's preparation of Part 1 and Part 2 of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP)
2. Appointment and Installation of the Call Committee (See Installation Service)
3. Call Committee completes the Ministry Site Profile (Part 3 - Part 5 and Summary)
4. Council Approval of the Ministry Site Profile
5. Call Committee Orientation
6. Interview readiness
7. Call Committee interviews with candidates
8. Recommendation to the Parish Council
9. Council Interview
10. Compensation package negotiation
11. “Meet and Greet” with the parish
12. Special parish meeting
13. Farewell to Interim/Transitional Pastoral leadership (See Farewell Worship Liturgy)

IV. The **“Starting Strong” Phase** outlines mutual expectations for the first 18 months of the ministry for the parish, pastoral leadership and the synod. This phase includes:

1. A Warm Welcome by the parish and the synod
2. Appreciation for and healthy ending of the Transition Team and Call Committee
3. Establishment of a Mutual Ministry Team
4. Synod connections (periodically over next 18 months)
5. Conversation to assess vision and mission strategies (Held at 18-month mark, to include Council, Mutual Ministry Team, and synod representatives)

Notes:

- Exit Interview/Review of Call Process – The first official farewell activity for the departing pastor: Pastor, Parish Council, and a representative from the Office of the Bishop participate in the Exit Interview.
- Transition Team – The Parish Council appoints the Transition Team to prepare the parish for a new pastor. This Team includes the council president as an *ex-officio* member, plus four to six additional members, one of whom is a member of council.
- Interim Ministry – The Office of the Bishop works with the parish to establish most effective interim pastoral leadership for the parish during the call process.
- Healthy Congregation Workshop – Parish leaders and members participate in this workshop as scheduled by the Transition Team and conducted by the NWOS Congregational Resource Team.
- Five Focus Points – Using the means established by the Transition Team and the Interim Pastoral leadership, parish members determine God's mission for the parish and the qualities of the pastor best suited to accomplish that mission.
- Call Committee – Membership is established as specified in the parish constitution. The Call Committee works with Council to complete the Ministry Site Profile. Among other responsibilities, the Call Committee interviews candidates and makes recommendations to council.

FIVE FOCUS POINTS

A parish needs to take time to discern God's mission for its future. What is God calling this parish to be or to do in its next phase or season of ministry? In what direction should it be headed? The **Five Focus Points** are a road map to help determine God's mission so the parish can call the pastoral leader who is best suited to partner in the accomplishment of that mission.

The Transition Team and the Interim Pastoral leadership work together using various means (i.e., surveys, Bible studies, cottage meetings, discussion groups, etc.) to accomplish the Five Developmental Tasks:

1. Heritage
 - Grieve the end of an era in the history of the parish
 - Celebrate accomplishments
 - Identify and address unresolved issues
 - Come to Terms with the Parish's History
2. Leadership
 - Examine leadership needs for transition and future ministry
 - Facilitate shifts in lay leadership
 - Develop current leadership
 - Create new leaders
3. Mission
 - Look objectively at parish strengths and weaknesses
 - Examine the community context for ministry
 - Redefine parish purpose and direction
 - Orient towards the future
 - Develop core values, vision, and mission

4. Connections

- Reconnect with ELCA and Synodical staff and resources
- Reflect on Lutheran theology and tradition as it affects mission and ministry
- Develop community connections

5. Future

- Gather and create a parish snap shot of gathered data for Call Committee
- Support the Call Process
- Communicate outcomes with parish