



SECTION 9

Welcoming the Congregation's New Pastor

Preparation for Welcoming the Pastor

The word that the pastor has accepted the congregation's Call to serve as its new pastor is exciting news and needs to be shared immediately with all members. The date that the Pastor will lead the first service of worship at the church should be included. Often a social time or reception in honor of the new pastor and his/her family is scheduled after each service of worship providing informal time for some introductions. If it is not a year-round practice, the use of name tags for the first couple of months that a pastor serves the congregation is immensely helpful.

The council president will want to maintain close contact with the new pastor in the days leading to his/her arrival to begin ministry. There will be many questions and concerns to be discussed. In addition to phone contact information, it is most helpful to establish email communications as well.

A member of the Worship Committee or the church secretary should work closely with the new pastor in the planning of the first worship services. This can often be done through email notes and attachments. Worship assistants should be recruited who will assist the pastor in understanding the local worship practices of the congregation, including the manner in which Holy Communion is administered and received at worship. The bulletin should include a gracious welcome of the new pastor and members of his/her family with personal information about the pastor. If the date and time of the Installation Service has been determined, this should be included in this first bulletin and all bulletins leading up to the date of the installation.

The Pastor's Move to a New Home

The Pastor and his/her spouse or partner will likely need to make several trips for the purpose of house hunting or to determine where they or the family will live until a permanent home is found. The name of a good realtor, perhaps a member of the congregation, might be helpful. The council will want to do everything possible to facilitate this process, including covering such travel expenses and arranging lodging as may be required. The congregation will pay for all moving expenses, including the expense of driving multiple cars to the new area. Usually all such expense reimbursements do not need to be reported on W-2 forms, but both the congregation and the pastor should check with current tax laws and information.

A Farewell for the Interim Pastor

It is appropriate to celebrate and recognize the ministry of the interim pastor who has served the congregation during the transition period. The celebration should be scheduled for **the Interim Pastor's last Sunday, which will be the Sunday prior to the arrival of the newly called pastor.** At the end of

Section 9 of this manual, the *Order of Farewell for the Interim Pastor* can be found. A simple reception following each worship service helps to make the day special.

Scheduling and Planning the Installation Service

The scheduling of the Installation Service needs to be coordinated with the pastor, the congregation and the Office of the Bishop. The service is usually scheduled at a time that makes it possible for rostered leaders and laity from nearby churches to join in the celebration, most often late afternoon on a Sunday. A representative of the Office of the Bishop, usually the dean of the conference, will be the installer. Members of the congregation, community and conference leaders, and a representative of the Office of the Bishop may be invited to participate in the service. It is appropriate to recognize and show appreciation to the members of the Call Committee and the council as part of the Installation Service.

If the person called to be the new pastor is a recent graduate of seminary (“First Call”), an Ordination Service also needs to be planned. The Ordination Service is planned by the recent graduate in consultation with the bishop who officiates at an ordination. The Ordination Service is often held at a location other than the church to which the person has been called, possibly the ordinand’s “home congregation.” Participants in this service may include persons special to the ordinand’s faith and life development. In such a case, the Installation Service is scheduled at the congregation that has called the ordinand sometime soon after the Ordination Service. However, if the ordinand chooses to have the Ordination Service at the congregation that has called him/her as their new pastor, the Ordination Service and the Installation Service are combined into one service.

A copy of the Service of Installation for a pastor may be obtained from the synod office and is printed in the Occasional Services book, a copy of which most rostered leaders have in their personal libraries.

[Offering: it is appropriate for the offering at the ordination or the installation to model good stewardship practices and generosity. Suggestions for consideration include giving beyond the congregation to a particular ministry passion of the pastor or congregation, and/or to the synod mission fund.]

The Reception

As part of the festive celebration of the new pastor’s installation, a reception is usually held following the Installation Service. The council could appoint a task force to plan and set up for the reception. It is appropriate to again introduce the pastor’s family and invite the pastor to say a few words of greeting to those gathered at the reception.

Invitations

As soon as the date and time of the Installation Service is known, work should begin on preparing and designing invitations that may be printed professionally or within the congregation. A sample Invitation to an Installation Service is included at the end of this section. A task force working with the new pastor should develop a list with mailing addresses of those to receive printed invitations.

It is nice to include the members of the congregation on the invitation mailing list even though they will know of the Installation Service through many other means. Invitations could also be sent to the

extended family and friends of the pastor, the interim pastor and former pastors and their families, to the congregation councils of surrounding Lutheran congregations addressed to the president, to all rostered leaders within the conference, to the clergy of denominational churches within the community, to community leaders, to members of the Synod Council and the Office of the Bishop, and to any others desired by the pastor and task force.

Communications and Press Releases

The Calling and Installation of a new pastor is a wonderful time to provide local media with press releases and appropriate pictures. An early release could share the news of the congregation's Call of a new pastor, providing detailed information about the pastor's background, schooling, other churches served and family information. A second press release could share information about the Installation Service, including information about the new pastor, the congregation, and the participants in the service. Depending upon lead time and awareness of media practices, these releases could be combined into one article.

The religious editor of the local newspaper may wish to conduct an interview and include pictures taken by their own photographer. This might take the form of a feature story even after the Installation Service. Other forms of communication within the congregation and community should also be explored.

The bishop also sends out a communication to rostered leaders of the synod living in the area of the congregation inviting them to share in the celebration of a colleague's Installation Service. Notice of the installation is also posted in synod communications to all congregations and rostered leaders of the synod.

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Resource A
Sample Invitation to the Installation Service

We request your prayers and presence
with us for a service of Holy Communion and
The Order of Installation.

By the Grace of God,

The Rev. Jane A. Pastor

will be installed to the
Office of Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church.

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 12, 2010
at 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

St. John Lutheran Church
1234 Main Street
City, State

Reception immediately following In the Fellowship Hall.

Clergy and Rostered Leaders are invited to vest; color of the day.

Please *RSVP* by Sunday, August 29, 2010.

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Resource B

Order of Farewell for the Interim Pastor

At the last service in which an Interim Pastor leads worship, the following may be used before the Benediction. The following may be spoken by the President of the Congregation Council or an Assisting Minister.

A: People of God, the Rev. _____ has completed his/her work among us as our Interim Pastor and a new Pastor/Interim Pastor will arrive soon. We thank Pastor _____ for being our shepherd and guide for our ministry during the past _____ weeks/months/years and wish him/her every blessing for his/her continued ministry in the Church of Jesus Christ.

A review of the highlights of the interim ministry may be shared at this time.

A: Let us together give God thanks for Pastor _____ and for the work that we have done together in Christ's name.

A: Loving God, we thank you for the blessings of your presence during our time of transition, especially as made known to us through the gifts and ministry of Pastor _____. Through him/her we have received your Word for our lives and celebrated the Sacraments, made plans for our ministry and preparations to receive a new shepherd in our midst. Continue to guide us through the completion of our transition process until all things are brought to fulfillment according to your will. Guide as well Pastor _____ that he/she may know the comfort of your love and be a blessing to others as he/she has been a blessing to us. All these things we ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

The Interim Pastor may wish to respond with a few informal remarks.

The service concludes with the Benediction by the Interim Pastor.

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SECTION 10

The Early Ministry

Transition Team for the New Pastor

After the arrival of a new pastor, there will be a significant time of adjustment. The new pastor brings new ideas and different ways of doing ministry. The congregation itself has undergone an in-depth self-study and developed a Congregational Ministry Site Profile. During the interview process and early conversations, many ideas and visions were shared among members and with the new pastor. As the new pastor begins his/her ministry with the congregation, it is helpful to create a Transition Team that will work closely with the pastor and the congregation to shape and support the development of this new ministry.

It is often wise to include several members from the call committee on this team since they were most intimately involved with developing the profile, articulating the congregation's mission and vision, and conducting the first conversations with the new pastor.

The purpose of the Transition Team would be to affirm and strengthen the mission of the congregation and the ministry that the new pastor, the council and the members of the congregation will now undertake together. An important concern of this team will be open communication about expectations and interpreting new visions and directions. This team might serve for six to twelve months and could evolve into a Staff Support Committee (or Mutual Ministry Committee) if one does not already exist within the congregation.

Post Call Retreat

Every new call will include the written expectation that an overnight "Healthy Congregations" retreat (night may be spent at home) with the new pastor and congregation be scheduled within three months of the start of a ministry. At least 20% of the congregation should attend retreat for it to be successful throughout the congregation.

The main purpose of such a retreat is to develop healthy relationships in order to promote a healthy congregation. The scheduling of the retreat should be done soon after the arrival of the new pastor to reserve a retreat facility and to secure a retreat facilitator. An outside leader will facilitate this retreat. Please contact the Specialist for Resources and Training of the Florida-Bahamas Synod or the Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership for the names and contact information of trained retreat facilitators. The retreat design could include: team building activities; spiritual enrichment; roles and expectations clarification; vision, planning and strategy development; or other important leadership emphasis and can be tailored to the needs and desires of the congregation.

This may also be a good setting in which to continue to think about the short and long term future of the congregation. Visioning and goal setting are important to the success of a good ministry and should be a constant feature of the work of the new pastor and council leadership together.

When the design and date of the retreat is set, good publicity and personal invitations will ensure the greatest level of participation by congregational leaders.”

Reflecting on the Transition Process

Every congregation experiences the transition process in unique and different ways. An important step to make this process the best that it can be is for those who have completed the process to provide feedback to the Office of the Bishop. A copy of the form, *Reflections on the Transition Process*, is included with the resources at the end of this section. This form invites responses to the Office of the Bishop regarding the congregation’s experience of the transition period. By completing this form, members of the Call Committee, and the council, if desired, provide valuable information to assist other congregations in similar transition processes.

The form may be copied and completed by each individual member of the call committee, or the committee may choose to work together to complete only one form. The council or council president may also desire to reflect on the transition process and complete a form. All completed forms should be sent to the bishop.

A Gathering for New Pastors

While an ordained minister is called by a congregation to serve as its pastor, the pastor also remains a pastor of the whole church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has a Vision and Expectations document for all ordained ministers. At the end of this section are resources on expectations of rostered leaders.

The bishop further expects all new pastors to the synod to participate in the “New Transitions Gathering” that is held each year in September just prior to the Conference on Ministry.

At the “New Transitions Gathering,” the new pastor has opportunity to meet with other rostered leaders who have accepted new Calls during the previous year and with the bishop and members of the bishop’s staff. This invaluable time together helps provide orientation and support for new ministry settings and a greater sense of collegiality.

Resource A

Reflections on the Transition Process

This form invites helpful feedback on the Transition Process. It may be copied and completed by individual members of the Call Committee and of the Council, or the Call Committee and the Council may each complete one form. Completed forms should be sent to the Bishop's office.

1. Please rate the overall experience of the Transition and Call Process:

Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

2. Please rate the helpfulness of the resource manual *Walking Together Through The Transition Process*:

Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

3. What was most helpful or useful about the *Walking Together Through The Transition Resource*?

4. What was least helpful or useful about the manual *Walking Together Through The Transition Process*?

5. Please rate the experience of working with the representatives of the Office of the Bishop:

Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

6. Please rate the experience of developing the Congregational Ministry Site Profile:

Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

7. Please rate the Interview Process in the call process (Call Committee, only):

Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

8. How did the participation in the transition process and the development of the Congregational Ministry Site Profile affect the congregation's sense of mission and ministry?

9. In what ways did the participation in the transition process bring greater understanding of the congregation's inter-connectedness with the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (synod and churchwide)?

10. What was most helpful in the transition process?

11. What was least helpful in the transition process?

12. Please share any helpful or creative ideas that could strengthen and improve the transition process in the Florida-Bahamas Synod:

Name of Congregation: _____ City _____

This form was completed by:

- _____ Call Committee as a whole
- _____ Congregation Council as a whole
- _____ Call Committee members individually
- _____ Congregation Council members individually

Name of Person Completing this Reflection Form: _____

Date: _____

**Please return this completed Reflections Form to:
Office of the Bishop
3838 W. Cypress Street
Tampa, FL 33607**

Resource B

Expectations of the Bishop's Office for Rostered Leaders of the Florida-Bahamas Synod

*The Mission of the Florida-Bahamas Synod is to
Share Christ, make disciples and
Do justice in the world.*

In its role in supporting the Mission Statement of the Florida-Bahamas Synod and in its episcopal task of oversight, the Office of the Bishop has developed expectations for all rostered persons who serve our synod. These expectations supplement constitutional requirements (see Constitution for Congregation, Chapter 9). Their goal is to support and resource the ministries of our congregations and rostered persons by encouraging all to conduct their ministry in as healthy and well-informed way as possible.

Personal, Spiritual, and Devotional Life

The Bishop expects that all rostered persons of this synod will be persons of prayer. A strong devotional life is necessary for ministry.

Personal Stewardship of Life

The Office of the Bishop expects that all rostered persons will be good stewards of their life and health. This includes healthy habits of nutrition, exercise, rest and time management. It means nurturing close relationships with spouse/partner, family and friends. The “Visions and Expectations” document from the ELCA outlines what the church understands to be a healthy life and ministry style. Our Bishop expects careful adherence to that model.

Good Personal Financial Stewardship

All rostered persons of this synod are expected to be good stewards of their own financial resources. Growing stewardship will result in joyful generosity to the work of God's kingdom, moving towards a tithe and beyond. The financial stewardship of our rostered persons serves as a role model for congregation members seeking to grow in their own discipleship.

Call Process

The Office of the Bishop expects that all rostered persons will follow the call process established by this Synod. Rostered persons will neither initiate nor participate in negotiations with congregations for a new call outside the synodical process. If irregularly contacted, the rostered person will immediately refer the congregation to the Office of the Bishop for further conversation.

Continuing Education

In support of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly resolution, the Office of the Bishop expects all rostered persons to participate annually in 50 hours of continuing education in order to keep their ministry skills sharp and to keep current on ministry issues in our rapidly changing context. It is most helpful to develop a plan for continuing education in consultation with your Mutual Ministry Committee or other support group. All first-call pastors are required to participate in First Call Theological Education. This is a program requiring 25 hours of designated study and 25 hours of elective continuing education each of the first three years of ministry.

Colleague Contact

Experience has shown that some rostered persons who encounter difficulties in their ministry have become isolated from their colleagues. The Office of the Bishop expects that all rostered persons in our synod will have regular contact with colleagues. This may occur through conference clergy gatherings, pericope studies or other informal settings. However, in order to assure adequate opportunity for collegial support, the ELCA and the Office of the Bishop in Florida-Bahamas have organized conference colleague groups, with each conference dean convening the gatherings.

Synodical Involvement

The Office of the Bishop expects that all rostered persons will be involved in the life and work of our synod. Each rostered person is expected to attend the Synod Assembly and the Conference on Ministry annually. Each rostered person files a report to the Bishop annually. Each pastor will lead the effort in his or her congregation to increase the financial covenant support given to the synod and the ELCA (see C9.03.c.4), moving toward a goal of 15% of undesignated congregational income. It is also expected that each rostered person will support our life together through personal involvement and congregational participation in conference, synod and churchwide committees, workshops and ministry opportunities.