



Congregations in Transition
Moving into the Future



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

If you are reading this short letter, there is a pretty good chance you and your congregation(s) are looking for a new pastor, or, you are a pastor (or rostered person) searching for a new call.

This is a sacred time! This is a time when God's Spirit will be blowing through the words and actions of all who take the time to read and process this document.

As your synod staff, we have worked hard to prepare a Call Process guide that will help you follow the Spirit's lead in this time of transition.

In our theology, we truly believe, and I truly believe, that this is never about "hiring" a new pastor, or "finding a new job." This is a time grounded in prayer, listening, asking and exploring. This is a time when God is tending to the leadership of God's church, and every Call is the work of people seeking God's face and listening for God's voice.

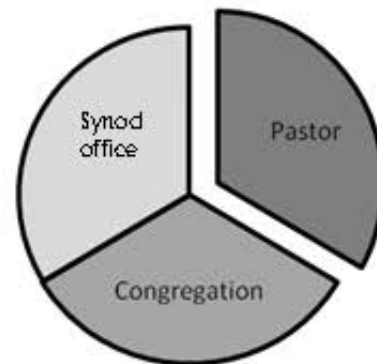
The prayers of your entire synod staff will support you through this process. We will walk with you and guide you through a time of uncertainty and certainly some anxiety.

If you have questions or suggestions concerning this Call Process guide, please do not hesitate to contact the synod staff person who is working with you.

Reverend Laurie Skow-Anderson, Bishop

The Transition and Call Process in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

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



Prayer: Loving God, be with us and guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us, O Lord, to be about the work of your kingdom, even as the search for a new pastor continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibilities, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

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

Glossary of Terms

Call Committee

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

Call Packet

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

Compensation Package

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

Letter of Call

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

Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

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

Rostered Leader Profile (RLP)

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

Called Pastor (also referred to as "Settled" Pastor)

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

Synod Staff

Every call process is a partnership among the congregation, the Synod Office, and the whole Northwest Synod of Wisconsin.

Transition Team

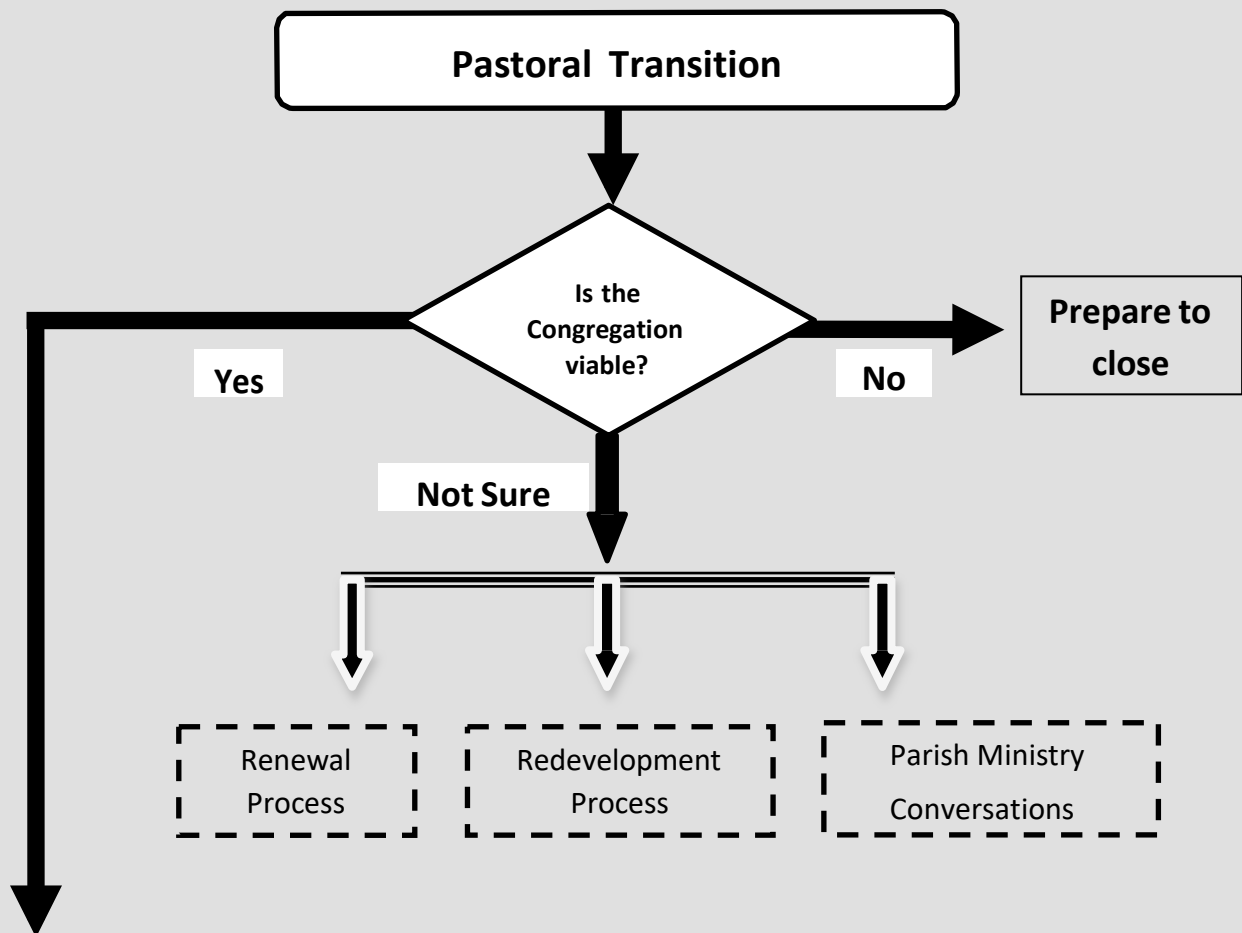
The transition team is selected by the congregational council. The team's primary purpose is to gather data for MSP. Pastoral leadership and synod staff will guide the transition team through this process.

Transitional Pastoral Leadership

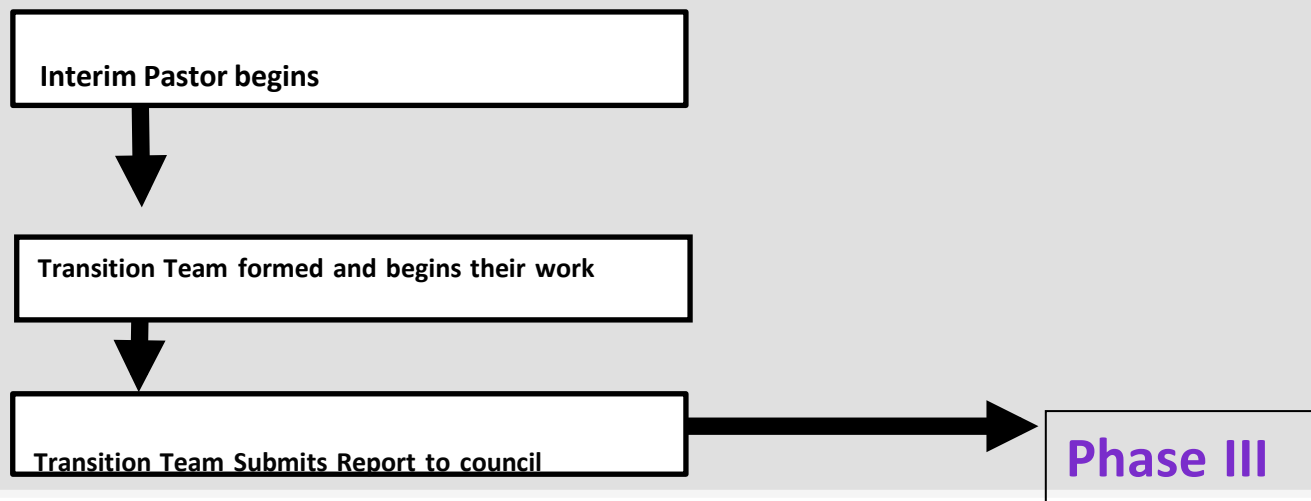
- **Bridge Pastor:** A pastor who is contracted on a short-term basis to provide Word and Sacrament ministry (i.e. preaching and worship leadership) and provide pastoral care prior to/or after the work of an interim pastor.
- **Interim Pastor:** A pastor who is called through the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and has specific training to guide congregations through the transition process due to a pastoral vacancy.
- **Redevelopment Pastor:** A pastor who is specially trained with a specific set of skills to work with a specific congregation whose direction in mission and focus have changed due to a changing neighborhood or declining membership.
- **Term Call Pastor:** A pastor who is called by the congregation for a specific period of time renewable if the congregation, pastor and synod agree. This call can be changed to a regular call at completion of the term.

Overview flow chart of the Transition and Call Process

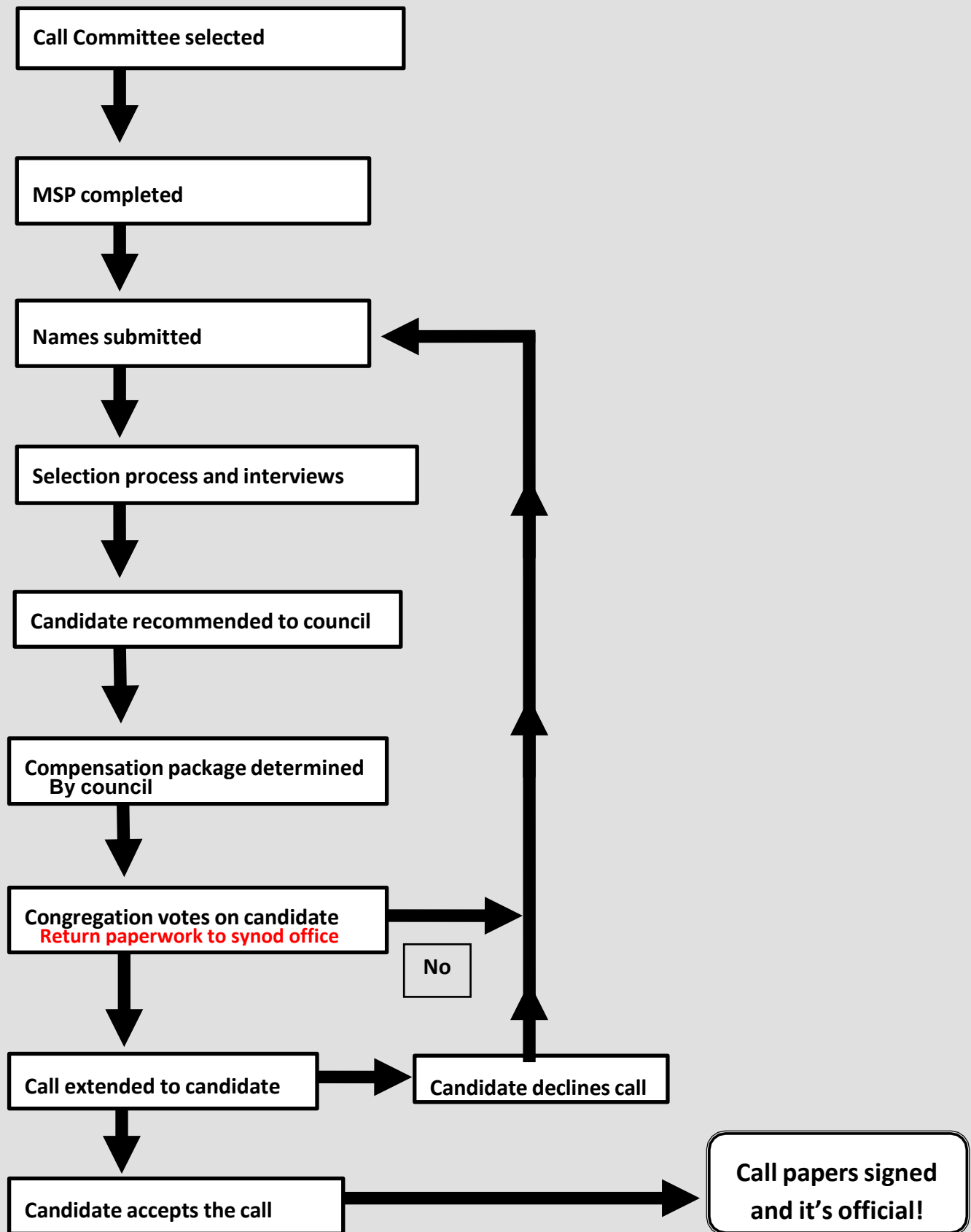
Phase I – Pastoral Transition



Phase II --- Interim



Phase III --- Call Committee



Overview of Steps in the Transition and Call Process

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

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

Phase II –Interim and Self-Study

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

Phase III – The Call Process

- The Call Committee is established according to the congregation's constitution.
- A synod staff person meets with the Call Committee.
- The Call Committee develops the completed Ministry Site Profile and compiles the data collected from the Transition Team, then sends it to the Synod Office.
- The Synod Office enters into a time of prayer and discernment to identify potential candidates to offer the Call Committee for interviews.
- The Call Committee receives the names of candidates. The Call Committee selects and interviews candidates – remaining in contact with the Synod Office – and ultimately recommends a candidate to the Council.
- After the compensation package is negotiated with the recommended candidate and the council votes on a compensation package (requiring a simple majority for approval). They recommend the candidate to the congregation and set a congregational meeting date. The compensation package is sent to the Synod Office for review.
- The congregation votes on whether to extend a call to the pastor (requiring a two-thirds majority).
- The paperwork is returned to the synod office. This includes an Official Letter of Call, the official tally of vote results, and the Definition of Compensation.
- The bishop reviews the paperwork and signs the letter of call.
- The candidate receives the call and, if he or she accepts, notifies the congregation and the Synod Office of their desired start date.
- The new pastor is installed by a synod staff person at an agreed-upon time.

Congregational Council Checklist

- Accept pastor's letter of resignation and notify the congregation in writing
- _ Schedule a farewell event for the pastor
- _ Congregational Council and pastor fulfill all obligations
- _ Council facilitates an internal review of Parochial Records
- _ Certification of financial records and obligations between pastor and congregation
- _ Clarify new relationship with departing pastor, complete Letter of Agreement, notify congregation
- _ Meet with the Synod Office to talk about transition
- _ Synod Office will recommend an interim pastor for concurrence
- _ Agree on recommended interim pastor and compensation package
- _ Welcome interim pastor
- _ Select a Transition Team
- _ Support the work of the Transition Team during the self-study process
- _ Elect/Appoint Call Committee
- _ Install Call Committee
- _ Receive name of primary candidate from Call Committee
- _ Council President/Treasurer and candidate discuss and agree on compensation package
- _ Set date for congregational vote with at least two weeks' written notice to members
- _ Synod Office mails official call documents to Council President
- _ Immediately contact candidate with results of the congregational vote
- _ Mail signed call papers to the Synod Office
- _ Receive acceptance/rejection of call from candidate (up to 21 days)
- _ Upon acceptance of a call, contact Synod Office to set up a date/time for installation



PHASE I

Our pastor is leaving.
What do we do?

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

1: Concluding the Partnership with your Pastor

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

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

2: Consultation with the Synod Office

- A. The current outgoing pastor indicates to the Bishop and to the congregational council that s/he will be leaving.
- B. The council president contacts the Synod Office to begin the transition process and sets up a meeting with the Congregational Council and rostered minister. A representative of the Synod Office visits with the Council to answer questions, to get to know the particular needs of the congregation, and to explain to the council how the call process works. This document should form the core of that conversation.
- C. The council president may schedule an exit Interview with the exiting pastor.

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

- A. When a pastor resigns, the letter of resignation should be submitted to the congregation. Unless specified in the letter, the recommended thirty-day notice starts with the date on the letter. A letter of resignation is not voted upon.
- B. The congregational council shall promptly inform all members of the congregation of the pastor's resignation. The announcement may be made orally and in writing. An appropriate action would be a letter to all the members of the congregation, which includes:

1. Notice that the congregational council has accepted the pastor's letter of resignation;
 2. The last date the pastor will serve the congregation and any plans for a farewell event;
 3. Expressions of gratitude to the rostered ministers;
 4. A copy of the pastor's letter of resignation.
- C. The council president schedules an exit interview with the exiting pastor and church council. The purpose of the exit interview are: (Appendix 1)
- To evaluate the ministry;
 - To identify areas of potential growth for the pastor and the congregation;
 - To celebrate the ministry;
 - To articulate appropriate boundaries and establish a covenant of behavior between the pastor and the congregation for the future health and well-being of the congregation (Appendix 2).

4: Complete All Obligations

- **Portico Benefits:** The president and treasurer ensure that an End of Call form is completed in order to cease billing from Portico. The document can be found at www.porticobenefits.org. The congregation is responsible for the pension and benefits until this document is completed. The exiting pastor must complete a Change of Call form to inform Portico where to mail upcoming invoices.
- **Parsonage:** If there is a parsonage, consider scheduling a walk-through with the current pastor to plan for the resolution of any issues identified in the walk-through.
- **Future correspondence:** Obtain a forwarding address, phone number, and e-mail address to forward any mail that the pastor may receive and to mail anything that is not completed by the time of departure. It is helpful if this information is communicated to the Synod Office as well.
- **Receive the Parochial Reports and financial record:** Upon the pastor's departure, the secretary of the congregation council will meet with the departing pastor to review and receive parochial reports and financial records. The parochial reports of each congregation should be kept in a separate book and will remain the property of the congregation. The secretary addresses and completes the Certificate of Church Records and Certification and Completion of Financial Records (Appendix 3, Appendix 4).
- **Settle financial accounts with the resigning Pastor:** A congregation under financial obligation to its former pastor must make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling another pastor. Such financial obligations may include loans on housing, grants, vacation pay, etc.

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

5: Saying Farewell to Your Pastor

Because a resignation signals the end of an important covenantal relationship, it is common for congregation members to experience feelings of grief, sadness, anger, anxiety, etc. In order to help the congregation move through this experience, the council should arrange a farewell event (or events) for the exiting pastor and his or her family. You may consider using a Service of Farewell and Godspeed in the final worship service (Appendix 5).

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

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

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

6: Planning for Transition

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

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

- **Supply Pastor** – Consult the list of pastors found on the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin website (www.nwswi.org/leadership/congregations)
- **Bridge Pastor** – Under special circumstances, the Synod Office can appoint a pastor for long-term supply for Word and Sacrament ministry. This is a contracted position or a called position.
- **Redevelopment Pastor** – In consultation with the Synod Office, a specially- trained Redevelopment Pastor may be appointed to work with a congregation whose focus and direction in mission have changed due to a changing neighborhood or membership. This is a term call (1-7 years).
- **Interim Pastor** – In consultation with the Synod Office, an Interim Pastor is selected by the congregation council. An Interim Pastor is contracted by the congregation and called by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Council.
- **Term Call Pastor:** A pastor who is called by the congregation for a specific period of time renewable if the congregation, pastor and synod agree. This call can be changed to a regular call at completion of the term.

Things to remember

Every context is different

If the interim process is appropriate for the congregation, the Synod Office will provide an interim pastor for a concurrence interview with the congregational council. The council then interviews the pastor and determines if he/she is a good fit for the congregation. If the council does not concur with the bishop's selection, the synod office will continue to look for an appropriate candidate. The council negotiates a time frame and compensation package with the interim pastor. In most interim situations, the congregation contracts with the pastor while the official call comes from the Synod Council.

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

Compensation package for an Interim Pastor

Recommendations by the Synod Office:

- **Non-negotiable:** Benefits, vacation, and involvement in the life of the Synod (Synod Assembly and conference gatherings).
- **Negotiable:** Salary. This is negotiated by factoring in the exiting pastor's salary, the potential range of the new pastor's salary, continuing education, mileage, percentage of time needed, and Social Security offset.

Everyone needs to know his or her role

Remember, God is in charge!

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



PHASE II

Interim and Self Study

Phase II: Interim and Self-Study

1: Intentional Interim Begins

- Liturgy for Receiving an Interim Pastor (Appendix 6)

2: Self-Study: Encountering God in our Midst

A. The Purpose of the Transition Team

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

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

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

B. Forming a Transition Team

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

A transition team will:

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

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

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

1. *Coming to terms with history*

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

2. *Discovering a new identity*

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

3. *Managing shifts in leadership*

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

4. *Strengthening our sense of being the church together*

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

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

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

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

D. The Work of the Transition Team: Other Tasks

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

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

E. Helpful Documents for the Transition Team

- Review of the Congregation's History (Appendix 7)
- Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies (Appendix 8)
- Congregational Ministry Assessment (Appendix 9)

3: Report from the Transition Team

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



PHASE III

The Call Process

Phase III: The Call Process

1: Time of Intentional Prayer and Discernment

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

2: Establishing a Call Committee

A. Purpose of a Call Committee

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

B. Make-up of the Call Committee

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

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

The number of people on the committee can vary, but 6 to 8 people is generally a good size, depending on the size of the congregation. In an addition it is recommended that an alternate be appointed that will attend all meetings. The committee should reflect the diversity of the congregation. Pay attention to age, gender, length of time as a member, levels of involvement, and attendance at worship. The number of council members on the committee should be limited to 1 or 2 persons; ideally one of these people should have served on the transition team. If not indicated by the constitution, the committee selects its own chairperson. The Congregational Council should share the name of the committee chair and its members with the representative of the Synod Office (see Call Committee Member Form, (Appendix 10).

C. Contact the Synod Office

Once your call committee is selected, contact the synod office to arrange orientation of the call committee with a staff person.

D. Announcement of Call Committee Members

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

E. Installation of Call Committee

The work of the call committee is critical to the health and future well-being of the congregation. Installing the members to the call committee in a worship service and publically blessing their work is encouraged. Ask the congregation to pray for the people who will serve in this ministry (see Installation of Call Committee, Appendix 11).

F. Expenses of the Call Committee

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

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

G. Getting Started with the Call Committee

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

H. Meetings

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

Each meeting should begin with devotions and prayer (see some options for these under Prayers and Devotions for Call Committee, Appendix 12). Devotions should be intentional, not rushed. Inviting God into the conversation and opening one's ears to hear God's invitation are vital components to this process.

3: Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

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

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

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

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

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

Email: _____

Password: _____

4: Overview of the Interview Process

A. Basic Process Outline

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

1. The chairperson will call each candidate within a week of receiving the names to let them know that their Rostered Leader Profile has been received and whether or not they will have an initial interview with the committee. This call is the first step in getting to know the candidate. (Sample Interview Questions: Appendix 13)
2. An initial interview (usually by Skype) with each candidate is completed. This initial interview usually lasts a half-hour or more. Whatever method (Skype, Face-to-Face) is chosen for the initial interview all candidate interviews should be done in the same manner.
3. After the initial interview, the committee should release any candidate who does not seem like an appropriate fit for the congregation. The chairperson notifies each candidate of the decision.
4. If the committee releases all initial candidates and would like to consider more candidates, additional names will be provided dependent upon availability.
5. The committee can invite any appropriate candidate(s) for an additional Skype interview or a face-to-face meeting to engage in further conversation and discernment.

Some ideas for this time together might include:

- Tour of the broader community
- Sharing a meal
- Tour of ministry site
- Speaking with a realtor about potential housing opportunities

6. The committee is strongly encouraged to run a background check on the finalist candidate(s). The ELCA Churchwide Office recommends Oxford Document Management Company, Inc. (www.oxforddoc.com, info@oxforddoc.com, 800-801-9114). You may also check with your current insurance provider for completing the background check.

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

B. Confidentiality

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

C. Communication by the Call Committee to the Congregation

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

D. Preparing to Interview Candidates

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

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

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

Hearing Candidates Preach

If desired, representatives from the call committee may travel to a candidate's current congregation to hear him or her preach. Please ensure that this visit is kept confidential so that people in the pastor's congregation do not recognize you as a call committee! If such a visit is not possible, the call committee may ask for audio and/or video recordings of the pastor's preaching.

5: The Interview Process

A. Initial Phone/Skype Interview

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

- Tell us about yourself and your life of faith.
- Why are you a pastor?
- Tell us about what gives you life in parish ministry.
- What excites you about our congregation?
- What would you like to know about us?

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

B. Preparing for the Face-to-Face Interview

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

When the plan is to interview more than one candidate, an attempt is made to conduct each interview in the same setting and manner. For example, if the call committee meets with one candidate in a restaurant, the same pattern should be followed with any subsequent candidates. The call committee should be consistent in having the same person lead the interview each time and plan for committee members to ask the same basic questions of each candidate. The interview questions, along with a Bible passage for the candidate to lead a study on, shall be sent to the candidate no later than 10 days prior to the interview. This will ensure that all the bases are covered in each instance once the interview process begins.

The leadership needs which have been identified on the Ministry Site Profile should be used to form an outline for the interview. The committee will create approximately eight to ten detailed questions based on this outline. The committee should also be flexible and understand that a give - and - take conversation will not necessarily allow you to ask the questions in predictable order. (See Appendix 13 for sample questions for an interview.)

C. Preparing for the In-Person Visit

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

Remember

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

D. Conducting the Formal Interview

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

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

Before the committee's begins asking the interview questions, it is appropriate for the committee chairperson to ask the candidate to briefly tell the committee something about herself or himself (this should take no more than five to seven minutes). After this, the formal questioning may begin. Questions may be assigned to various members of the call committee, assuring that all members are actively participating. Don't hesitate to ask follow-up or clarifying questions if an

answer is unclear to all members. Remember, the interview is intended to be a dialogue, not an inquisition! Just as the committee members are discerning the candidate's viability for the congregation, so is the candidate discerning whether the congregation is a good fit.

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

Avoid asking questions which can be answered with a simple yes or no. For example, the questioner should not ask, "Do you think you are effective in your ministry to youth?" The candidate will almost surely answer, "Yes." Ask instead, "Tell us about your approach to ministry with youth," or "Give us some examples of how you have worked effectively with youth in your present or former parish." (Refer again to sample interview questions, Appendix 13.)

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

E. After the Interview

Immediately following the interview or as soon as possible after the interview, the call committee will reconvene to share initial impressions. It is important that these shared impressions are recorded for later reference.

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

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

6: Following Up with Candidates

A. Follow Up

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

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

Upon releasing candidates from further consideration – whether after an initial phone or a face-to-face interview – it is helpful for the candidate to hear the reasons why you do not think she or he would be a good match for your congregation at this time. This information is helpful to both the call committee and the candidate because it fosters clarity in the selection process and gives the candidate an opportunity for growth. The synod office should also be informed as to why the candidate was released. (See sample Release of Candidate letter in Documents, 1 and 2.)

B. Communication

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

C. Finalizing a Candidate Recommendation

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

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

D. Making a Recommendation to the Congregation

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

The call committee should have considerable conversation before moving forward with a less than unanimous candidate. The call committee should be able to articulate why it is moving forward with the recommending the candidate without unanimous consent.

7: The Vote of the Congregation on the Candidate

A. Preliminary Compensation Discussions

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

B. Special Congregation Council Meeting

The council president calls a special meeting of the council to hear the recommendation of the call committee. The committee chair presents the name of the pastor. The council must maintain absolute confidentiality.

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

1. Special meeting of the congregation

The council will establish a date, time, and place for the special meeting of the congregation to vote on the call of the pastor. Proper arrangements will be made to notify the congregation of this meeting according to the congregation's constitution. Included in this notice will be the name and brief resume of the pastor and the compensation package. (Sample Document 3)

2. Notification to the Synod Bishop

When the congregation council receives the name of the candidate from the call committee it will notify the Synod Office. The synod office will supply the necessary documents in the call packet sent to the president of the congregation. The president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and sending it to the Synod Office for the Bishop's signature.

8: The Vote of the Congregation on the Candidate

A. Special Congregational Meeting

1. Quorum required

The person presiding at the meeting will determine that a quorum is present according to the congregation's constitution and bylaws. (See Sample Document 4)

2. Vote to call the pastor

Call committee will present information about the pastor, why they were led to recommend this candidate to the congregation, and the strengths and gifts that the candidate offers to the ministry of the congregation.

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

B. If the Call Is Approved by the Congregation

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

The president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and sending it to the Synod Office for the Bishop's signature. The pastor will send a letter of acceptance or decline of the call to both the congregation and the Bishop's office. The pastor will accept or decline the call within twenty-one (21) days.

C. If the Pastor Accepts the Call

The newly-called pastor, along with the congregational council, will set the date when ministry will begin in the new parish. The president of the congregation council will consult with the newly-called pastor to determine when the acceptance may be publicly announced. Arrangements for moving will be made between the pastor and the officers of the calling congregation. The calling congregation is responsible for moving expenses. In some circumstances, the pastor and the congregation may negotiate other arrangements.

D. If the Call Is Not Approved by the Congregation

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

E. The Call Is Declined by the Pastor

In the event that the pastor does not accept the call, the process will begin again with more names being offered to the call committee. Refer back to the flow chart on pages 6 & 7.

9: Special Situations

1. First Call Candidates and Ordination

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

2. Multiple-Congregation Parish

One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synodical bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

3. Associate/Assistant Pastors

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

4. Term Calls

A congregation may call a pastor for a specific term of years. A term call may transition into a settled call upon completion of the initial term.

5. Part-time Ministries/Share-time Ministries

Part-time ministries are normally defined as a minimum of 20 hours of work each week to qualify as a call. Share-time ministries are normally defined as a minimum of 20 hours of work each week to qualify as a call. Please refer to the compensation guidelines and Roster Manual for more details. All arrangement for part-time calls or share-time ministries should be discussed with the Synod Office beforehand and details need to be in writing.

10: Installation of the new Pastor

The start of this new joint ministry between the pastor and the congregation is marked by the ritual of installing the pastor. The date is set in partnership with the pastor, the congregation, and the Synod Office. We encourage the date and time should be set so that neighboring faith communities can celebrate with the congregation. Either the Bishop or a representative from the Synod Office will preside at this service. The Rite of Installation of the Pastor will be sent to you.

During the First Year

The Synod Office strongly recommends the first year of ministry be supported by an intentional program of relationship-building and leadership development. We recommend **Healthy Start** (www.healthystartup.org). The Synod Office can offer more details about the benefits of this.

The Call Process for Second Pastors and Deacons

Congregation councils and call committees are encouraged to follow the same process as previously listed for rostered ministers when calling a second pastor or deacon. All steps may not be required and should be adapted to the local situation (e.g. a person already employed by the congregation as a lay staff person and who becomes rostered).

Assistance is available from the Synod Office to help determine the appropriate process to follow in calling a deacon.



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Appendix 1

Exit Interview – Sample Questions

Questions the committee might ask:

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

Questions the pastor might ask:

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

Appendix 2

Letter of agreement between a former pastor & congregation

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

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

Appendix 3

Certification of Congregation Records

(To be completed by the secretary of the congregation and submitted to the Synod Office in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin)

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

Name of Congregation

Address of Congregation

Name of Pastor

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

Signature of Congregation Secretary

Date

The parochial records of each congregation shall be kept in a separate book, which shall remain its property. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

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

Appendix 4

Certification of Completion of Financial Obligations

*S14.16.

The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another field of labor, or*
- b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.*

Upon completion of all financial obligations, the pastor and treasurer of the congregation shall complete the form below and forward it to the synod bishop. Also enter the form into the minutes of a Congregation Council meeting.

All financial obligations, salary, pension, health, death benefits and allowances, together with continuing education funds have been met and paid to the Rev. _____ up to the effective date of termination of services.

Also, satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations has been made by the Rev. _____ to _____ Lutheran Church

Treasurer of the Congregation

Date

Pastor

Date

Please return this form to:

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
944 24 ¼ Street
Suite 2
Chetek, WI 54728

Appendix 5

Sample Service of Farewell and Godspeed

A local leader or a member of synod staff presides over this portion of the service. It is placed within the liturgy for Holy Communion after the Post Communion Prayer and before the closing hymn. The congregation may be seated.

R

Hear the words addressed to the Philippians:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

“I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it.” *Philippians 4.4–10*

Our Lord Jesus Christ says, “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.” *Luke 12.35–38*

P

On the ___ day of _____, _____, I began ministry in this congregation. We have been partners in the mission of _____ Lutheran Church. I have, with God’s help and to the best of my abilities, exercised this trust. After prayer and careful consideration, I have resigned this pastorate, and I publicly state that my time as pastor of this parish ends _____.

R

People of God, do you accept the conclusion of this pastoral relationship?

all

We do.

The departing pastor may express thanksgiving for the shared ministry that has occurred during their tenure, with all its joys and sorrows, and may state hopes for the future of the congregation. Conclude with:

P

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.” *Romans 1.8*

all

“The Lord is loving to everyone; God’s compassion is over all God’s works. All your works praise you, O Lord, and your faithful servants bless you.” Psalm 145:9-10

P

Let us thank God for these years of partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

all

We give you thanks for your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all people. For our partnership in the Gospel, for the Spirit that has empowered us to witness, we give you praise. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit we pray. Amen

A local leader or a member of synod staff may then indicate what provisions have been made for continuation of ministries in the parish. The departing pastor joins the presiding minister at the front.

P

Dear friends, you have allowed me to share the responsibilities of the ordained ministry in your midst. At the beginning of our ministry, you presented me with symbols expressing my special role among you. It is time for me to return to you what you have lent me.

The presiding minister and departing pastor move to the font.

P

I was called among you to baptize and to forgive sins. Here is water which symbolizes God’s gift of belonging in Christ.

A vessel of water is given to a lay leader.

all

There is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Ephesians 4.4–6

The presiding minister and departing pastor move to the pulpit.

P

I was called among you to proclaim the Good News. Here is the Bible that expresses this call.

A Bible is presented to a lay leader.

all

For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. Psalm 33.4

The presiding minister and departing pastor move to the altar.

P

I was called among you to lead worship and preside at Holy Communion. Receive now this chalice as a symbol of our worship life.

A chalice is presented to a lay leader.

all

O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.

Psalm 34.8

The presiding minister and departing pastor return to the front.

P

I was called among you to teach. Here is Luther's *Small Catechism* which represents this call.

The Small Catechism is presented to a confirmation student.

all

It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. *Philippians 2.16*

P

And now, it is time for me to say farewell. I ask that you send me forth in your love with a blessing.

all

We send you forth with our blessing.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

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

The presiding minister addresses the whole congregation.

R

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.

Appendix 6

Liturgy for Receiving an Interim Pastor

This liturgy takes place following the hymn of the day.

P Having been authorized by the Church to assign [full name], our co-worker in the Gospel, as interim pastor, I now ask for certification of this appointment.

A representative of the Congregation Council comes forward and addresses the minister:

L We, of _____, after prayerful deliberation, have concurred with the appointment of [name] to be interim pastor. I present him/her for appointment under the terms of our agreement.

P Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." *John 20:21–23*

And again: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:18–20*

Hear the words addressed to Timothy: Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. *1 Timothy 4:12–16*

The minister questions the interim pastor being installed:

P Pastor [Name], in the presence of this congregation will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility, and promise to discharge your duties in harmony with the constitutions of the church?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people? Will you nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, leading them by your own example in the use of the means of grace, in faithful service and holy living?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

When the interim pastor is being installed into a multiple staff position, include the following question.

P Will you share responsibility for the ministry with the Reverend [Name]?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

A Amen

P Will you covenant to so minister with us during this interim that we are able to value the past, plan for the future and minister in the present?

R I will, and I ask God to help me.

The minister addresses the congregation:

P And you, people of God, will you receive this messenger of Jesus Christ, sent by God to serve God's people with the Gospel of hope and salvation? Will you regard him/her as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God?

All We will.

P Will you pray for him/her, help and honor him/her for his/her work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

All: We will

The minister addresses the pastor being installed:

P The office of interim pastor is now committed to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The newly installed pastor may kneel for the blessing:

P The God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever.

All: Amen

The pastor stands.

Prayers of the People

A Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Silence.

For the holy catholic Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the Day of your coming; Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

A For all members of your Church in their vocations and ministries, that they may serve you with true and godly lives; Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

A For all bishops and pastors, especially for Elizabeth Eaton, our Presiding Bishop, for Rick, our Bishop, and for pastors of our sister congregations, that they may be filled with your love, may hunger for the truth, and may thirst after righteousness; Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

A For Pastor [Name], appointed to be interim pastor in this Church, that he may faithfully fulfill the duties of this ministry, build up your Church, and glorify your name; Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

A For the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in him, that he may be sustained and encouraged to persevere to the end; Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Appendix 7

Review of the congregation's history

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 8

Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies

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

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

When you have updated your constitution, you may send it to the synod office for review by the synod's constitution reviewer: Rev. Lowell Bolstad. The reviewer will make sure that you don't have conflicting statements in sections and that it is consistent with the ELCA model constitution. Remember that a change in the constitution, even an update, takes a congregational vote, so be sure to do this early in the transition process.

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

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

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

Appendix 9

Congregational Ministry Assessment

The following is a list of important areas of congregational life that can be productively explored by the lay and pastoral leadership of the congregation during the interim between called pastors. Addressing these nine areas will assure that things are in good order in the congregation in anticipation of calling a new pastor.

History (Organizational Genogram)

- List of pastors who have served the congregation
- List of presidents who have served recently or at crucial moments
- Major events in the life of the congregation
- Identification of informal power structures in the congregation (past and present)
- Other significant data

Mission and Purposes

- When were the mission statement and purposes last updated? By what process?
- How well understood are they by the congregation?
- How intentionally are they pursued?

Constitution and Bylaws

- When were they last revised?
- What was the process?
- Are they adhered to? If not, in what areas?

Governance

- Do you have an organizational chart?
- Describe how the Council functions.
- What are strengths and weaknesses of the Council?
- Describe how committees function in relation to the Council
- Are the committees functioning congruent with their charge in the Bylaws?
- What changes in leadership have affected governance?

Whole Life Stewardship

- What is the congregation's approach to stewardship?
- How does it function?
- Do committees and the Council set and follow annual goals?
- Are the programmatic goals tied to the mission plan?
- Are strategies and timelines for implementation of goals developed and followed?

Ministry and Programs

- Describe the most significant ministries, initiatives, and programs of the congregation.
- What ministries, initiatives, and programs have failed or are most needed?
- Describe a vision for the ministry and programs of the future.

Relationship to the Synod, ELCA, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Organizations

- Describe briefly the congregation's significant relationships with the broader faith community.
- How are these relationships maintained?
- What is the vision for renewing relationships with the synod during the interim?

Issues

- What are the significant issues facing the congregation today?
- Is there any conflict in the congregation? What is it? How is it being managed?
- Have issues and/or conflict been identified and acknowledged? By whom?
What was the process?
- How is the leadership of the congregation dealing with these issues?
- What is needed to address unresolved issues?

Tasks During the Interim

- What challenges and opportunities face the congregation during the interim?
- What specific tasks need to be accomplished during the interim?
- Who will be the major players?
- Who will provide leadership? What will be the process?
- What will be the role of the pastor during the interim regarding issues and tasks?

Appendix 10

Call Committee member form

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

Congregation: _____

Address: _____

President: _____

Address: _____

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

E-mail: _____

Chair of the Call Committee: _____

Address: _____

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

E-mail: _____

Secretary of the Call Committee: _____

Address: _____

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

E-mail: _____

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

Mail or FAX to:
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA
944 24 ¼ Street
Suite 2
Chetek, WI 54728
FAX: 715.859.6812

Call Committee Covenant

Pray for guidance of the Holy Spirit

- trust and believe that God will provide a pastor for our church
- lay aside personal agendas and biases
- pray for the long-term mission of the whole congregation
- pray for the candidate(s) you will interview and for the present staff

Pledge to attend all interviews

- prepare well for the interviews: pray, establish questions, do a practice interview
- become very familiar with our Mission Site Profile; the candidates will know it well
- if you or the congregation surface candidate names, pass on those names to the synod staff
- interview all the candidates whose names are provided to you; the number will vary depending upon availability of candidates who match your mission needs
- interview in person, not on the telephone (long distance may require an initial interview by phone)
- you may arrange to have candidates provide a tape or video
- welcome and show hospitality to candidates; give a tour; eat a meal together
- invite spouses to sit in on interview if they wish (but they should not be asked questions)
- determine how you will evaluate candidates; reflect and debrief immediately after interviews
- interview all candidates within 10–14 days
- ask questions that get to the heart of mission and ministry

Practice confidentiality

- respect the confidentiality of all candidates
- the circle of confidentiality grows to include the Congregation Council when you recommend a candidate
- those candidates not selected must forever remain in confidence

Communicate

- explain to the congregation frequently what is happening in writing and orally
- after receiving the names of candidates, schedule interviews and arrange for lodging and meals, mail a packet to each that contains the Mission Site Profile, supplemental material from the church and information about the surrounding community
- after interviews, thank candidates, report your decision as soon as possible, and arrange for reimbursement of travel, lodging, or meal expenses
- stay in contact with candidates after interviews
- inform candidates in writing of your decision to recommend for call or release from consideration immediately after decision is made

Bring a united decision to the congregation

- come to a consensus on one candidate
- be positive and unified in public support of the chosen candidate
- remember there are no perfect pastors or perfect churches
- bring recommendation to the Congregation Council to approve salary and benefits
- bring complete information about the candidate, salary and benefits to the congregational meeting for the vote ($\frac{2}{3}$ majority required)

It is a privilege, a joy, and a responsibility to be on a Call Committee. Plan to work hard and you will meet some fine candidates, and trust that God has already selected your next pastor—you are engaging in a process wherein the Spirit helps you discover who that pastor is!

Appendix 11

Installation of Call Committee

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The committee faces the congregation, which stands.

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

Congregation: We will.

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

Appendix 12

Prayers and devotions for the Call Committee

FOR THE WORK OF THE CALL COMMITTEE

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

FOR THE DEPARTING PASTOR:

Gracious God, you have united us all in one body. We give you thanks for the work of Pastor _____ among us. As he/she leaves *to a new call/ retirement* surround *her/him* with your Spirit. Give us the courage to release *her/him* to a new call and bless our remembering of the work that has been done among us. Guide

Pastor _____ and us as we continue to seek to share the Good News of salvation through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

DURING THE INTERIM TIME

Loving God, be with us and guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us O Lord to be about the work of your kingdom even as the search for a new pastor continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

DURING INTERVIEWS:

Loving God, be with us and guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us O Lord to be about the work of your kingdom even as the search for a new pastor continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

DURING INTERVIEWS:

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

AT MEETINGS

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

Appendix 12

Suggested Biblical texts

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

- Matthew 28: 16-20
- The Call of Matthew: Matthew 9:9-13
- Call of the first Disciples: Luke 5: 1-11
- Romans 12: 1-8 (9-21)
- I Corinthians 3:1-9
- Ephesians 6: 10-18
- Philippians 2: 1-11
- I Timothy 2: Instructions concerning Prayer
 - 3: 1-7 Qualifications of Bishops
 - 3: 8-13 Qualifications of Deacons
 - 4: 6-16 a Good Minister of Jesus Christ
- Reflections on God's Call:
 - Call of young people:
 - Samuel : I Samuel 2:1- 3:18
 - Mary: Luke 1: 26-38
 - Call of Elderly:
 - Elizabeth and Zechariah : Luke 1
 - Abraham and Samuel: Genesis 18: 9:15
 - Simeon and Anna: Luke 2: 22-38
 - Call of the Disciples:
 - Follow Me: Matthew 4:18-22; Mk:1-16-20; Luke 5: 1-11
- Reflections on being the Church:
 - Read The Book of Acts together. Read one chapter a week and begin meetings by reflecting on recent readings and the ministry of your congregation.
- Reflections on "Wilderness Wandering"
 - God's People waiting for clarity: Numbers 9:15-23
 - God's people grumbling in the wilderness – and God providing: Exodus 16:1-7

Bible Study

LEADER: Open with Prayer:

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

A. One person reads the lesson:

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

B. A second person reads the lesson:

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

C. A third person reads the lesson:

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

Closing Prayer:

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

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

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Appendix 13

Potential Interview Questions

This list of possible questions is not comprehensive but suggestive for the Call Committee. On the other hand, some questions may seem repetitive. Choose what seems best and add others to get at issues you feel important.

Life and Faith

- Briefly, tell us your life story.
- Describe your faith journey and your sense of call to be a pastor.
- Describe your theology. How will it apply to our congregation?
- What personal traits and gifts do you have that make it possible for you to be effective as a pastor?

The Image of Ordained Ministry

- Describe your style of ministry.
- What are the primary responsibilities of the pastor?
- What is the role of the laity in the life of the congregation?
- What is the purpose of a congregation? of the wider church?
- Describe the areas of pastoral ministry you enjoy the most. The least.
- What areas of involvement in your last/current parish give you personal satisfaction?

The Place of Worship in the Church

- What is the place of worship in private life, family life, and the corporate life of the congregation?
- What is the chief function of the pastor in worship? of the laity?
- Describe your practices in leading and shaping liturgy.
- Do you have a preference for worship style?
- Walk through the process of sermon creation from initial preparation through presentation.
- What have been your practices for preparing for Baptism and First Communion?
- How do you receive feedback and constructive evaluation?

The Place of Pastoral Responsibilities

- Tell us about your philosophy and style of pastoral visitation and counseling. Describe your practice.
- How much of the responsibility for visitation should be shared with trained groups of laity? How would you conduct such training?
- What areas of pastoral care are the sole responsibilities of the pastor?

Discipleship

- What type of plan do you envision for training children, youth, and adults for discipleship?
- What is your evangelism strategy?
- How should we care for inactive members?
- How can congregations effectively assimilate new members into the life of the congregation?
- What strategies do you have for engaging youth and young adults in the life of the congregation?
- What is your understanding of stewardship?
- What is the pastor's role in lifting up stewardship in the congregation?
- How do you talk about money and mission plans (budgets)?
- How do you model good stewardship in all its aspects?

Christian Education

- How do you view Christian education and its role in the life of the congregation?
- How would you encourage our congregation to enter into adult Christian education?
- What is your attitude toward training, assisting, and supervising the teaching staff of the church?
- Are there qualifications necessary for teaching?
- How do you recruit teachers?

Leadership and Management

- What role do you see yourself fulfilling in relating to committees?
- How do you encourage goal setting by committees?
- What are your administrative strengths? growth areas?
- What kind of accountability structures are most helpful for improving ministry and mission?
- Would you be willing to meet periodically with a Mutual Ministry (Staff Support) Committee?
- How do you determine what you will pursue for continuing education?
- What is it about our congregation that interests and challenges you?

Community and Social Action

- In what ways do you participate in the community?
- How do you view the pastor speaking on social issues?
- What is the place of the pastor in social action?

The Church at Large

- In what ways do you participate in the synod?
- What is your commitment level to the general mission support to the ELCA and other agencies of the church?
- What are your views on ecumenical involvement locally? globally?

Personal Life and the Pastor's Family

- How is your spiritual life nurtured?
- What spiritual disciplines do you practice?
- Tell us about your devotional life.
- How do you care for yourself physically, emotionally, and socially.
- What are your views on involvement of your family in the congregation? in the community? in employment?
- Tell us about your priorities regarding family and personal friends?
- What are your specific hobbies and special interests?
- What books have you read recently that have made an impression on you?

Practical Arrangements

- (*Introduce your salary range and benefits proposal.*) Do you feel it will meet your needs?
- Are our expectations for living arrangements (parsonage or housing allowance) satisfactory?

Questions That May Be Asked of You as a Committee

- What is the focus of your congregation? Describe your mission.
- What is the role of staff and what is the role of the laity in your congregation?
- How many people are involved in leadership roles? How are lay people involved in worship?
- In your opinion, how are decisions made in your congregation?
- What long and short-term goals has the congregation adopted?
- When was the last time an in-depth self-study was conducted?
- What is the congregation's commitment to the support of and partnership with the synod and the wider church?
- How does the congregation respond to change and how are changes made?
- What part should family members of staff play in the congregation?
- What would you display on a highway billboard regarding your congregation?
- Why did the previous pastor leave?
- Are there skeletons in the closet that I should know about in considering the call here?

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

1. Following Candidate Interview—Not Recommended for Call

Date

Name Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____,

Thank you for interviewing with the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church as we seek a new pastor. We hope that our time together was as enriching and insightful for you as it was for us.

While we will not be recommending your name to our church leadership and congregation for call, we want to thank you for your conversation, thoughtful consideration, and openness to the call process.

We trust that God will guide and direct you as you discern what God has in store for you next. May God bless the ministry that you carry out in the name of Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Name, Call Committee Chair Phone
number(s)

Cc: Assistant to the Bishop _____, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

2. Following Candidate Interview— Recommend to Council

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____,

Thank you for interviewing with the Call Committee of _____ Lutheran Church as we seek a new pastor. We hope that our time together was as enriching and insightful for you as it was for us.

We are delighted to inform you that the Call Committee, with your permission, will be recommending your name to our Congregation Council for call. Following the successful resolution of salary package and ministry goals, the Council will set a meeting for the congregation to vote to extend you a Letter of Call to be our pastor.

This is an exciting time for the people of _____ Lutheran Church! Please know that you are in our prayers during this time of discernment, and we trust that we are in your prayers as well. If you have any questions or concerns about your recommendation to the congregation or about the process that will unfold, please do not hesitate to call.
May God guide and direct us in the days to come.

Yours in Christ,

Name, Call Committee Chair

Phone number(s)

Cc: Assistant to the Bishop _____, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

3. Calling the Special Meeting of the Congregation

Date

Dear Members of _____ Lutheran Church,

The Congregation Council of _____ Lutheran Church has called a special meeting of the congregation for ____ day, _____, 20____, at _____, to be held in the sanctuary of the church.

The sole item on the agenda for the special meeting of the congregation is to act upon a recommendation from the Congregation Council to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

In addition to the enclosed biographical information for Pastor _____, the Call Committee will share about their work as a committee and provide further material about the recommended pastor. The Letter of Call and compensation details will be shared at the congregational meeting.

Hold our congregation in prayer, so that what we discern in selecting a pastor might be guided by the Holy Spirit. Pray, too, for Pastor _____ as he/she discerns whether or not God is calling him/her to lead us.

Yours in Christ,

Name

President of the Congregation

Encl: Biographical Information

Cc: Bishop _____, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

4. Sample:

Congregational Meeting Agenda for Calling of a Pastor

The following is an agenda draft for a special meeting of the congregation for the purpose of voting to extend a Letter of Call to a recommended pastoral candidate. The lines in bold are the agenda headings. The text suggests wording for the congregational president; revise as needed.

Have the following arranged prior to the meeting:

- Someone who will lead an opening prayer
- A prepared Call Committee chair who will share information about the recommended candidate
- Someone who will read the Letter of Call and compensation information
- Ballots for distribution
- Ushers who are prepared to hand out and retrieve ballots at the appropriate times
- A small group entrusted with counting the written ballots

Call the Meeting to Order

This duly called special meeting of _____ Lutheran Church shall come to order.

Declaration of a Quorum

According to our constitution and bylaws, _____ active members of _____ Lutheran Church constitute a quorum for a meeting of the congregation. Let the minutes reflect that a quorum is present.

Opening Prayer

I call upon _____ to lead us in an opening prayer.

Stated Purpose of the Special Meeting of the Congregation

The purpose of this specially called congregational meeting is to act upon a recommendation from the Congregation Council to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be our pastor.

This is the sole item on the agenda for this meeting.

At this time I call upon _____, chair of the Call Committee, to provide information about Pastor _____.

Report of the Call Committee

The Call Committee chair provides a brief overview of the work of the committee, shares biographical and ministry history information, and enthusiastically expresses support for the recommended pastoral candidate. Sometimes the pastoral candidate provides a video greeting that can be shared with the membership at this time.

The Letter of Call and recommended compensation are read aloud by either the Call Committee chair or another designated person from the Call Committee or Congregation Council.

Recommendation of the Congregation Council (motion)

Because the Congregation Council recommends that Pastor _____ be extended a Letter of Call to become our pastor, the recommendation comes as the motion on the floor for action. Is there a second to the motion to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to become the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church?

The motion is seconded. Is there any discussion for or against the motion?

Vote on the Recommended Pastoral Candidate

We are now ready to vote upon the motion to extend Pastor _____ a Letter of Call. Our governing documents direct that the vote be by written ballot and that a two-thirds majority vote is required in the affirmative for the motion to pass. I ask that the ushers pass out the ballots at this time.

A reminder that only those who are active members of the congregation are to receive ballots. Please do not cast your vote until instructed to do so.

When I instruct you to cast your vote, know that you may vote in one of three ways: "Yes," if you are in favor of the motion; "No," if you are against the motion.

Check to ensure every active voting member of the congregation has a ballot.

Seeing that everyone entitled to vote has a ballot, you may now mark your ballot "Yes," or "No" The motion again is to extend a Letter of call to Pastor _____ to be pastor of _____ Lutheran Church.

After you have voted, fold your ballot in half and hold on to it until I ask you to turn it in. Please vote and hold on to your ballot.

Ask if anyone needs more time to vote. When all have voted say the following.

Voting is now closed. Please pass your ballot to the center aisle for the ushers to retrieve.

Hymn Sing

Because it will take a while to count the votes, perhaps a "hymn sing" can help pass the time. Remember, the meeting is still "in order."

Report of the Vote to Extend a Letter of Call

The vote on the motion to extend a Letter of Call to Pastor _____ to be the pastor of _____ Lutheran Church is as follows:

A total of _____ votes were cast.

_____ voted "Yes" _____ voted "No"

_____ % of the votes cast are in favor of the motion, thus, the two-thirds requirement for passage has been met. The motion carries. OR

_____ % of the votes cast are in favor of the motion, thus, the two-thirds requirement for passage has not been met. The motion fails.

Immediately following adjournment of this meeting, I will be phoning Pastor_____ to let him/ her know the results of our action. Then, the Secretary and I sign the Letter of Call and compensation and attest to the vote of this congregational meeting. This material will be in tomorrow's mail to the bishop, who will ensure that everything is in order, sign the Letter of Call, and forward it to Pastor_____. Once Pastor_____ has the Letter of Call in hand, he/she has three weeks to respond.

Thank you

This is an opportunity to thank the Transition Team who assembled the Mission Site Profile, the Call Committee for their interview and discernment work, the Congregation Council who made the recommendation to the congregation, and all who held the church, leaders, and candidates in prayer. It is appropriate to name all individuals involved and encourage a round of applause for their diligent work on behalf of the congregation.

Adjournment

Given that we have completed the purpose for which this special meeting was called, we are now adjourned.

Closing Prayer

Let us stand and together pray the Lord's Prayer.

Congregation President:

- Immediately phone the pastoral candidate and report the results of the vote.
- Sign the Letter of Call and compensation sheet—please follow the instructions exactly.
- Place the call material in tomorrow's mail to the bishop at the synod office.

5. A Litany of Farewell for the Interim Pastor

L A church community is constantly changing. Loved ones come to the end of their lives; new lives are born and baptized into the faith community. Individuals and families come and go throughout our life together. It is important for us to recognize and mark well these times of passage, these endings and beginnings. Today we bid farewell and Godspeed to _____ who has served us as Pastor for the Interim for the past _____ months, whose time with us has now drawn to a close.

P I thank you, the people of _____ Church, both members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support you have shown me these past months. I thank you for accepting my leadership and receiving me as pastor in your midst for this time of transition. I recall with joy the many things we have been able to accomplish together, and with sadness the things we were not able to do. I ask your understanding and your forgiveness for the mistakes I have made and for the times I may have let you down.

all We receive with thankfulness the ministry you have offered us in the time we have shared. We accept that you now leave us to minister elsewhere, trusting that God goes with you on that journey. Your presence among us will not be forgotten. We are grateful for the time you have been with us and ask your forgiveness for our own shortcomings and our sometimes flagging faith.

P I forgive you your failures, as Christ has forgiven me, and graciously accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to the Christ we are called to serve.

L Do you, the members and friends of _____ Church, now release Pastor _____ from the duties of Pastor for the Interim?

all We do, with the help of God.

L Do you, Pastor _____, release _____ Church from turning to you and relying on you to serve them as Pastor?

P I do, with the help of God.

L Do you, Pastor_____, offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here at _____ Church?

P I do, with the help of God.

L Let us pray.

all O God of all creation, whose love for all is trustworthy and true, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. During our time together we have experienced laughter and tears, hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we carry these cherished memories with us in new directions until that time when we are completely one with you and with one another. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen.

L Go now, Pastor_____, with our blessing, surrounded by our love and led by the promises of God, the presence of Christ Jesus, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

all Amen

LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Our ministry comes from Christ through the Church and belongs to the whole people of God. The Gospel calls all Christians to be ministers in word and deed. So it is the privilege of every Christian to be a steward of the gospel of God's reconciling love. The whole church ministers as it celebrates God's presence, shares the good news, cares for those in need, and witnesses to the power of God's love.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) holds the congregation and the office of ordained ministry in high regard. Consequently, this church body invests substantial resources in support of the congregations during times of change in pastoral leadership. The Congregation's ministry is ongoing: a pastor serving such a congregation is doing interim ministry, a temporary but necessary pastoral ministry. Interim pastoral service conditions are stated in the "Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry."

In keeping with the policies and practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, 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 ☐ part-time ☐ full-time basis

from _____ to _____

in accord with the following conditions and mutual promises:

Together the congregation and Interim Pastor will:

- A. Examine the history of the congregation and work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor.
- B. Seek to confirm and identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.
- C. Develop a vision for the congregation's mission.
- D. Examine the congregation's connection with synod, conference, churchwide units, and the resources that may be available for ministry.
- E. Prepare for the arrival of the new pastor.
- F. Align the congregation in accordance with the constitutions and bylaws of the ELCA, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and update the congregation's constitution as needed.
- G. During this transition period, agree to address the following specific concerns:

- H. In the case of part-time ministry, agree to the following schedule of service:

The Interim Pastor will:

- A. Preach and teach the Word of God.
- B. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according the practice of the ELCA.
- C. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs, visit as necessary, officiate at weddings, baptisms, confirmation, funerals, and uphold the members in prayer.
- D. Give pastoral leadership for the meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
- E. Encourage support of the total ministry of the ELCA.
- F. Be responsible for the recording of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals, attendance at Holy Communion, and the maintenance of the membership rosters; and report the statistics of the parish promptly and fully, as requested by the ELCA.
- G. **Agree under no circumstances to be available for regular call to this congregation.**
- H. Agree not to be involved in the congregation's call process except when the synod bishop requests such participation.
- I. **Agree not to become a member of this congregation after this agreement terminates.**
- J. Participate with key leadership of the congregation and the appointed synodical staff person in evaluation of the interim ministry on a quarterly basis and at the conclusion of the transition period.
- K. During this transition, give special attention to:

- L. Submit quarterly interim reports to the synod office.

The congregation will:

- A. Commit to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship activities.
- B. Support the ministry of the congregation through service and gifts.
- C. Accept the interim pastor, uphold him/her in prayer, and accord him/her love, respect, and good will.
- D. Expect the interim pastor to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and other rites of the church.
- E. **Agree that the interim pastor will not be considered for regular call to this congregation.**
- F. Provide for a review and evaluation of the interim ministry on a quarterly basis and at the conclusion of the transition period by key leadership of the congregation with the interim pastor and the appointed synodical staff person.
- G. Compensate the interim pastor in the following ways:
 - 1. Pay an annual salary of \$_____, the payments to be made in ____ equal installments on the ____ and ____ of the month.
 - 2. ☐ Pay a housing allowance in the amount of \$_____ per year, the payments to be made in ____ equal installments on the ____ and ____ of the month.
OR
☐ Provide the use of a parsonage in lieu of a housing allowance.
OR
☐ Provide a housing allowance resolution excluding a portion of the salary set forth above.
 - 3. Provide a Social Security allowance of \$_____ per year.
 - 4. ☐ Contribute to the ELCA Pension and Benefits Plan ____% of salary and housing allowance (plus Social Security allowance).
OR
☐ Does not apply.
OR
☐ Provide Pension, Medical, Dental, Disability, and/or Death benefits (circle any that apply) as follows:

 - 5. Grant one (1) week of vacation for every ____ weeks of service, not to exceed ____ weeks per year.
 - 6. Grant continuing education leave at the rate of ____ weeks per year (day[s] per month) and \$_____ per year (per day) toward study expenses.
 - 7. Grant ____ day(s) off per week.
 - 8. Other _____

H. Reimburse expenses related to our common ministry as follows:

1. ☐ Pay a travel allowance in the amount of \$_____ per year
OR
☐ Reimburse automobile travel at the rate of ____¢ per mile upon substantiation of business miles traveled.
2. Pay expenses, not otherwise provided for, incurred in attending synod assemblies and other official meetings at which attendance is required.
3. Pay moving expenses as follows:

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

Additional Agreements:

This agreement terminates on the date specified on page one of this agreement or thirty days after a new pastor has declared acceptance of the call to this congregation, whichever comes first; or upon thirty (30) days written notice from the congregation, the interim pastor, or the bishop of the synod. All financial obligations between the interim pastor and the congregation will be fulfilled by or on the date of termination.

This agreement may be amended or extended upon the mutual agreement of the congregation council and the interim pastor, after consultation with the bishop of the synod, by written addendum attached hereto.

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

Congregation (Council President or Secretary) Date

Interim Pastor Date

Reviewed by

Bishop, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin 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

GUIDELINES FOR INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Congregations periodically experience transitions in pastoral leadership. Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide for the care of congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy through the appointment by the bishop of the synod of an ordained minister to provide pastoral care on an interim basis. An interim pastor is appointed by the synod bishop with the consent of the congregation or the Congregational Council (C.9.06). Pastoral care is then provided on a contract basis, either through appointment or a term letter of call. The following policy statement describes the guidelines by which interim ministry is provided to congregations.

Congregations in Transition

Because of the importance of the ministry of Word and sacrament, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to insure appropriate pastoral leadership for congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy. Interim ministry is provided by synods during the time of transition following the completion of service by the congregation's former pastor and prior to the calling of a new pastor. This is also provided for in a congregation served by a multiple staff when a congregation's senior pastor leaves, or when an associate pastor or other pastoral staff leaves. The interim period is thus a time in which pastoral care is provided a congregation by the synod as the congregation moves through a process of self-study and change toward new pastoral leadership. A congregation facing the normal range of congregational concerns related to a pastoral transition may be served by an interim pastor without formal training. The synod bishop arranges for the congregation to receive Word and sacrament leadership during the period prior to the regular calling of a pastor through the appointment of an interim pastor. An appointed interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to an 'interim supply pastor' with the consent of the synod bishop (S.14.17). The interim pastor normally serves the congregation in a contracted and compensated arrangement. A congregation in a situation of significant concerns and stress related to a pastoral transition may benefit from the leadership of an experienced and trained interim pastor. Situations in which this is particularly appropriate include the transition following a long pastorate, a

congregation facing new mission opportunities and/or a changed context for ministry, a transition following the resignation of a pastor related to disciplinary action by the synod, or a transition marked by significant discord or upheaval within a congregation.

Appointed or Called Interim Ministry

An interim pastor may either be appointed by the synod bishop or may serve under a term call extended by the Synod Council (7.41.1 1.b.) Calls to interim ministry may not be extended by a congregation. A pastor serving either under appointment by the bishop or under a term Letter of Call normally serves the congregation in a contracted and compensated arrangement. Unless previously agreed to by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served during this time of transition and shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. (C9.97.).

Guideline for Called Interim Pastoral Ministry

1. A called interim pastor shall provide a minimum of a half-time ministry (at least twenty hours per week) to the congregation with commensurate compensation in accordance with synod guidelines, and consistent with the ELCA guidelines for shard-time calls. A call to interim ministry shall be primarily for the benefit of the congregation served, not for the status of the ordained minister. Such a call may either be a term call to a specific congregation, or a term call to interim ministry in the synod. The determination of this will be with the concurrence of the congregation being served.
2. Prior to being eligible for a call to interim ministry, the pastor shall normally receive appropriate training for interim ministry. The Division for Ministry will review interim ministry training programs and serve as consultant to synods in evaluating such programs.
3. Only pastors who have served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years are eligible to serve in a called interim ministry.
4. The interim ministry agreement between the congregation and the called interim pastor will specify compensation, benefits, and the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry. The Letter of Call issued by the Synod Council may include salary and benefit

matters. Normally, however, matters of compensation and benefits are stipulated in the interim ministry agreement with the congregation.

5. In issuing a call to interim ministry, the synod assumes no responsibility for guaranteeing continuous employment, compensation, or benefits for the pastor under call (7.43). It is understood that compensation and benefits are normally provided entirely by the congregation or ministry setting being served. Where possible, continuity of Board of Pensions health benefits will be advocated by the synod. It is explicitly understood that the synod is the calling agent and not the employer of record at any time during the service of an interim pastor under call from the Synod Council.
6. Call to interim service within a synod may be issued for a one to three-year term of service, with an annual review by the Synod Council or its designated committee. However, if a pastor under a term call to interim ministry has not served in a congregation during the preceding twelve months, the call may be terminated by the Synod Council. A term letter of Call issued by the Synod Council may also be coterminous with the duration of service within the congregation served (7y.43). The term call may be terminated by action of the Synod Council. A pastor may resign a call to interim ministry at any time.
7. Initial issuance of a call to interim ministry by the Synod Council shall be upon the recommendation of the bishop. The initial interim ministry agreement with a congregation may be reviewed by the bishop or synod staff prior to the acceptance of the contractual arrangement by the interim pastor.

Guidelines of Appointed Interim Ministry

1. An appointed interim pastor is authorized to provide Word and sacrament ministry to a congregation by the synod bishop with the concurrence of the Congregational Council. The interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The appointed interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the synod bishop. (S 14.17.).
2. A retired pastor or pastor on leave from call who serves an interim ministry is recommended by the bishop and signs an interim ministry agreement with the congregation which provides for the compensation, benefits, and the specific goals and expectations related to the period of interim ministry.
3. Normally, only pastors who have previously served in a regular called congregational ministry for a minimum of three years will be eligible to serve in an appointed interim ministry.

Adopted by the church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as policy of this church, November, 1996.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR BRIDGE PASTOR MINISTRY

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Our ministry comes from Christ through the Church and belongs to the whole people of God. The Gospel calls all Christians to be ministers in word and deed. So it is the privilege of every Christian to be a steward of the gospel of God's reconciling love. The whole church ministers as it celebrates God's presence, shares the good news, cares for those in need, and witnesses to the power of God's love.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) holds the congregation and the office of ordained ministry in high regard. Consequently, this church body invests substantial resources in support of the congregations during times of change in pastoral leadership. The Congregation's ministry is ongoing: a pastor serving such a congregation is doing bridge ministry, a temporary but necessary pastoral ministry.

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

(Congregation)

(Location)

agrees that

(Pastor's Name)

will serve as BRIDGE PASTOR

on a ☐ part-time ☐ full-time basis

from _____ to _____

in accord with the following conditions and mutual promises:

The Bridge Pastor will:

- A. Preach and teach the Word of God.
- B. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according the practice of the ELCA.
- C. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs, visit as necessary, officiate at weddings, baptisms, confirmation, funerals, and uphold the members in prayer.
- D. Give pastoral leadership for the meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
- E. Encourage support of the total ministry of the ELCA.
- F. Be responsible for the recording of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals, attendance at Holy Communion, and the maintenance of the membership rosters; and report the statistics of the parish promptly and fully, as requested by the ELCA.
- G. Agree under no circumstances to be available for regular call to this congregation.
- H. Agree not to be involved in the congregation's call process except when the synod bishop requests such participation.

The congregation will:

- A. Commit to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship activities.
- B. Support the ministry of the congregation through service and gifts.
- C. Accept the bridge pastor, uphold him/her in prayer, and accord him/her love, respect, and good will.
- D. Expect the bridge pastor to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and other rites of the church.
- E. Agree that the bridge pastor will not be considered for regular call to this congregation.
- F. Provide for a review and evaluation of the bridge ministry on a quarterly basis and at the conclusion of the transition period by key leadership of the congregation with the bridge pastor and the appointed synodical staff person.
- G. Compensate the bridge pastor in the following ways:
 - 1. Pay an annual salary of \$_____, the payments to be made in ____ equal installments on the ____ and ____ of the month.
 - 2. ☐ Pay a housing allowance in the amount of \$_____ per year, the payments to be made in ____ equal installments on the ____ and ____ of the month.
OR
☐ Provide the use of a parsonage in lieu of a housing allowance.
OR
☐ Provide a housing allowance resolution excluding a portion of the salary set forth above.
 - 3. Provide a Social Security allowance of \$_____ per year.
 - 4. ☐ Contribute to the ELCA Pension and Benefits Plan ____% of salary and housing allowance (plus Social Security allowance).
OR
☐ Does not apply.
OR
☐ Provide Pension, Medical, Dental, Disability, and/or Death benefits (circle any that apply) as follows:

 - 5. Grant one (1) week of vacation for every 12 weeks of service, not to exceed 4 weeks per year.
 - 6. Grant continuing education leave at the rate of 2 weeks per year and \$900 per year toward

study expenses.

7. Grant ___ day(s) off per week.

H. Reimburse expenses related to our common ministry as follows:

1. ☐ Pay a travel allowance in the amount of \$_____ per year

OR

☐ Reimburse automobile travel at the rate of ____¢ per mile upon substantiation of business miles traveled.

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

Additional Agreements:

This agreement terminates on the date specified on page one of this agreement or thirty days after a new pastor has declared acceptance of the call to this congregation, whichever comes first; or upon thirty (30) days written notice from the congregation, the bridge pastor, or the bishop of the synod. All financial obligations between the bridge pastor and the congregation will be fulfilled by or on the date of termination.

This agreement may be amended or extended upon the mutual agreement of the congregation council and the bridge pastor, after consultation with the bishop of the synod, by written addendum attached hereto.

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

Congregation (Council President or Secretary) Date

Bridge Pastor Date

Reviewed by

Bishop, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Date

Upon signature, copies will be distributed as follows:

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