Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA
Transition and Call Process Manual
for Congregations in Transition
Contact Information

Sacramento Office of the Bishop
9985 Folsom Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95827-1405
916-756-1665
www.spselca.org

Bay Area Office of the Bishop
500 Airport Blvd, Suite 442
Burlingame, CA 94010-1938
650-590-0980
www.spselca.org

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois 60631-4101
773-380-2700
800-638-3522
http://www.elca.org

The Rev. Mark W. Holmerud, Bishop
916-756-1665
bpmark@spselca.org

The Rev. Katy Grindberg, Assistant to the Bishop
916-756-1665
katy@spselca.org

The Rev. Kathryn Gulbranson, Assistant to the Bishop
650-590-0980
kathryn@spselca.org

The Rev. Tita Valeriano, Director for Evangelical Mission & Assistant to the Bishop
916-756-1665
titav@spsela.org
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter from the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition and Call Process Summary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Terms</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview Flow Chart of the Transition and Call Process</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in the Transition and Call Process</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation Council Checklist</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase I: Our Pastor is leaving. What do we do?</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Concluding the partnership with your pastor</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Consultation with the Office of the Bishop</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Congregation Council accepts Pastor's Letter of Resignation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Complete all obligations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Saying Farewell to Your Pastor</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Planning for Transition</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Things to Remember</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Every Context Is Different</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Everyone needs to know their role</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Theological Context for Transitional Ministry</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II: Intentional Interim and Self-Study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Intentional Interim Begins</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-study: Encountering God in Our Midst</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Purpose of the Transition Time</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Forming a Call Committee</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Work of the Transition Time: Five Focus Areas</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The Work of the Transition Time: Other Tasks</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Helpful Documents for the Call Committee</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Report from the Transition Time</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase III: The Call Process</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Time of Intentional Prayer</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Establishing a Call Committee</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ministry Site Profile (MSP)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Overview of the Interview Process</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Interview Process</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Following up with Candidates</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Role of the Congregation Council</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vote of the Congregation on Candidate and Compensation Package</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Special Situations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Installation of the new pastor</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Call process for second pastors and deacons</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and Peace to you from our Savior Jesus Christ. Blessings as your congregation embarks on a journey of hope, trust, and wonder as the Holy Spirit will lead and guide you to issue a call for your next pastor or deacon. For communities of faith, transitions are meant to be a time for God’s transformational work.

As your congregation begins this journey of transformation, I want to assure you that the Sierra Pacific Synod Office of the Bishop is here to accompany you along the way. Congregational transitions are significant in the life of the whole church. Entering the transition process intentionally and thoughtfully allows the Holy Spirit to move and breathe new life into the ministry of your congregation.

Congregations that have been served by a pastoral leader who has resigned, retired or accepted another call have sometimes been referred to as having a “vacancy.” While you may be experiencing a pastoral vacancy, you are NOT experiencing a ministry vacancy. A congregation in transition is a congregation that has been given an opportunity to explore and celebrate its past and to discern a new vision for its future. You will be blessed with lay leaders and an intentional interim pastor to use this time wisely in the hope of transforming its ministry for a new season of representing Christ to the community it has been called to serve.

This Congregations in Transition manual is offered to provide resources and help you move through the necessary steps for both the intentional interim and call process. May God’s Holy Spirit inspire and bless and guide you during this journey of transformation.

Peace,

The Rev. Mark W. Holmerud, bishop
Sierra Pacific Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
The Transition and Call Process in the Sierra Pacific Synod

Congregations in transition are in a partnership with the Office of the Bishop, supporting one another and holding one another accountable to be who God is creating each to be: the Body of Christ. In the midst of a transition, the Office of the Bishop, and the congregation work closely toward the goal of 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 God, to be about the work of establishing your reign here on earth as the search for a new pastor or deacon continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibilities, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The Office of the Bishop recommends that every congregation take advantage of the critical opportunity for renewal that is presented during a time of pastoral transition. This “in-between time” offers congregations a rare opportunity to reflect on ministry and the future of the congregation in 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 intentional interim pastor and the congregation council, everyday ministry continues during the transition process: weekly worship, educational opportunities, outreach to the community, and care of members. During this in-between time, 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

Bridge Pastor
A pastor that bridges the time before and/or after the intentional interim pastor's service. Typically, primary responsibilities include worship planning and leadership, some administration, and pastoral care. This is a contract position, terms and specific duties are negotiated with the congregation council.

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

Call Packet
Once the call committee has selected a candidate to present to the congregation, they will notify the Office of the Bishop, 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.

Called Pastor or Deacon (also referred to as “Placed” or “Settled” Pastor or Deacon)
This is the pastor selected by the Call Committee, recommended by the congregation council, and voted on by the congregation to be the newly installed pastor of the congregation.

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 offset, et al.

Letter of Call
The Letter of Call is the official document, signed by the bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod and the congregational officers, authorizing a pastor to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry, or a deacon to serve in Word and Service ministry, at a particular congregation or specialized ministry setting.

Letter of Invitation to Extended Service
The Letter of Invitation to Extended Service is the official document, signed by the bishop and the secretary of the Sierra Pacific Synod, authorizing a pastor from a full-communion partner denomination to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry at a particular ELCA congregation or specialized ministry setting. This document is signed after the synod council affirms the invitation voted on and extended by a congregation through a regular call process.
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.

Office of the Bishop
The Office of the Bishop and its staff supports the work of the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod. See page 1 for contact information.

Rostered Minister
A person who is on one of the two Rosters of the ELCA: Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors), or Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons). These people have completed theological training and a process with the ELCA Candidacy process.

Rostered Minister Profile (RMP)
The Rostered Minister Profile is completed by rostered candidates. It includes questions about theology, gifts for ministry, personal information, employment and educational history and references.

Synod Representative
Every call process is a partnership among the congregation, the Office of the Bishop, and the whole Sierra Pacific Synod. In order to live into this partnership, a representative from the Synod will be present at every congregational vote. The representative is present at a connection to the larger church, a resource for questions that arise, and will report back to the Office of the Bishop the results of the congregational vote.

Transitional Pastoral Leadership
- **Intentional Interim Pastor**: A pastor who has specific training to guide congregations through the transition process due to a pastoral vacancy. They may be called through the Sierra Pacific Synod.

- **Supply 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 the arrival of an intentional interim pastor.

- **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. This pastor will be placed with the assistance of the Director for Evangelical Mission.

Transition Team
In some settings the intentional interim pastor will recommend the appointment of a transition team to assist with the congregation’s self-study process and develop the Ministry Site Profile. When a Transition Team is utilized, the call committee is appointed later in the process and the transition team hands off their work to the call committee.
Overview flow chart of the Call Process

Intentional Interim Pastor begins → Transition Team appointed

→ Call Committee selected

→ Ministry Site Profile worked on, reviewed, completed and submitted

→ Office of the bishop searches for candidates

→ Call Committee selected

→ Names submitted to call committee

→ Interviews

→ Candidate recommended to congregation

→ Compensation package determined; dates for Meet and Greet and Special Congregational meeting determined and noticed to the congregation

→ Congregation votes on call

→ Yes

→ Call extended to candidate

→ Candidate accepts the call

→ No

→ Candidate declines

Call papers signed and it’s official!
Overview of Steps in the Transition and Call Process

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

• When a rostered minister resigns, they submit a letter of resignation to the congregation council.
• The letter of resignation is copied and distributed to the Office of the Bishop and to the congregation, along with a letter from the council accepting the resignation and detailing any plans being made for a farewell event (if known).
• The President of the Congregation Council contacts the Office of the Bishop 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 (see Appendix 3), and notify the congregation.
• An exit interview is scheduled between the pastor and the congregation council.
• The congregation holds a farewell event for the pastor.

Phase II – Intentional Interim and Self-Study

• Each member of the congregation council completes an Interim Ministry Assessment Form and submits it to the Office of the Bishop.
• The Office of the Bishop will recommend an intentional interim pastor to the congregation council.
• The congregation council interviews and offers a contract to the intentional interim pastor.
• The intentional interim pastor begins their ministry.
• The Transition Team or Call Committee can be selected to work with the intentional interim pastor to lead the congregation through the transition and self-study process.
  o If a Transition Team completes Parts 1 and 2 of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and submits it to the congregation council, a call committee is then selected/appointed.
Phase III – The Call Process

- The Call Committee is established according to the congregation’s constitution. *Please refrain from establishing the call committee prior to the arrival of the intentional interim pastor.*
- A representative from the Office of Bishop meets with the Call Committee.
- The Call Committee finalizes the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), then sends it to the Office of the Bishop. A representative of the Office of the Bishop will review the MSP with the call committee before it is activated online.
- The Office of the Bishop enters into a time of intentional prayer and discernment to identify potential candidates to present to the Call Committee for interviews.
- The Call Committee receives the names of candidates. The Call Committee interviews candidates – remaining in contact with the Office of the Bishop – and ultimately recommends one candidate to the congregation.
- The council votes to recommend a compensation package to the congregation. They set a congregational meeting date. The compensation package is sent to the Office of the Bishop for review. The Office of the Bishop will send a representative for the congregational vote.
- If desired, a meet and greet with the pastor or deacon, and their significant other / family (if applicable) is scheduled to occur a week or two before the congregational meeting.
- The congregation votes on whether to extend a call to the pastor (a paper ballot, requiring a two-thirds majority to pass). If approved, the congregation votes on a second ballot on the compensation package (a paper ballot, hand, or voice vote, requiring a simple majority).
- The candidate receives the call and, if they accept, notifies the congregation and the Office of the Bishop of their desired start date.
- The new pastor or deacon is installed by the Conference Dean at a mutually agreed-upon date and time.
Congregation Council Checklist

___ Accept pastor’s letter of resignation and notify the congregation in writing
___ Schedule a farewell event for the pastor
___ Congregation 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
___ Conduct an exit interview with pastor and the Church Council
___ Meet with the Office of the Bishop to talk about transition
___ Office of the Bishop will recommend an intentional interim pastor
___ Agree on recommended interim pastor and compensation package
___ Welcome interim pastor
___ In some instances, select a Transition Team
___ In some instances, support the work of the Transition Team during the self-study
___ Elect/Appoint Call Committee
___ Install Call Committee
___ Call Committee interviews candidates for the call
___ Call Committee selects a candidate to recommend to the congregation
___ Call Committee Chair, Council President and candidate discuss and agree on compensation package
___ Set date for congregation vote with at least two weeks’ written notice to members
___ Office of the Bishop mails official call documents to Council President
___ Contact Office of the Bishop for a synod representative to be present at the congregation vote
___ Immediately contact candidate with results of the congregational vote
___ Mail signed call papers to the Office of the Bishop
___ Receive acceptance/rejection of call from candidate (up to 30 days)
___ Upon acceptance of a call, contact Conference Dean to set up a date/time for installation
___ Schedule Farewell for the Interim Pastor
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 all places on 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 Office of the Bishop is always in partnership with congregations and pastors and deacons, and will walk even more closely with congregations during pastoral transitions. As one minister is leaving and the congregation prepares to welcome a new minister into the future ministry, the Office of the Bishop offers specific and constitutionally-mandated recommendations for congregations. The relationship among the Office of the Bishop, the congregation, and the 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 Office of the Bishop

A. The current outgoing pastor or deacon indicates to the bishop and to the congregation council that they will be leaving. (If the minister is going to “On Leave from Call” status, they must send a formal written letter to the Synod Council.)

B. The congregation president contacts the Office of the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod to begin the transition process and sets up a meeting with the congregation council. A representative of the Office of the Bishop visits with the council to answer questions, to get to know the particular needs of the congregation, and to begin to build a stronger partnership with the congregation.

C. The congregation president schedules an exit Interview with the congregation council and exiting pastor or deacon.

3: Congregation Council Accepts the Letter of Resignation

A. When a pastor or deacon resigns, the congregation council shall receive the letter of resignation at a called meeting of the council. The date of departure should also be reflected in the minutes of the congregation council. The Pastor then notifies the congregation by means of a letter to all of the membership.
B. The congregation council or president shall communicate with all members of the congregation regarding the pastor’s resignation. The announcement should be made orally and in writing. An appropriate action would be a letter to all the members of the congregation, which includes:
   1. Notice that the congregation 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 pastor and their family;

C. The congregation president schedules an exit interview with the departing pastor. The exit interview will usually be with the exiting pastor and church council or executive committee. An exit interview (Appendix 2) is an intentional conversation whose purposes are:
   • 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 3).

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 Office of the Bishop as well.
- **Receive the Parochial Reports and financial records:** Upon the pastor’s departure, the secretary of the congregation council will meet with the departing pastor to review and receive parochial reports and financial records. The parochial reports of each congregation should be kept in a separate book and will remain the property of the congregation. The secretary addresses and completes the Certificate of Church Records and Certification and Completion of Financial Records (Appendix 5, Appendix 6).
• **Settle financial accounts with the departing 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**

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 their family. You may consider using a Service of Thanksgiving and Farewell in the final worship service (Appendix 7).

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

- A service and/or reception which may include invitations to conference pastors and deacons, ministerial colleagues, synod staff, 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 congregation council works with the Office of the Bishop 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 Office of the Bishop 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.

The standard in the Sierra Pacific Synod is that congregations will contract with an Intentional Interim Pastor. In consultation with the Office of the Bishop, in certain circumstances, it may be determined that an Intentional Interim Pastor is not feasible. In those cases, other options will be discussed.
Every Context is Different

If the intentional interim process is appropriate for the congregation, the Office of the Bishop will provide a potential candidate to the congregation council. The council then interviews the candidate and determines the best match. The council negotiates a time frame and compensation package with the interim pastor. In most intentional interim situations, the congregation contracts with the pastor.

It is the practice of the Sierra Pacific Synod that Intentional Interim Pastors are compensated according to the latest edition of the Synod’s Compensation and Guidelines. (Compensation Guidelines at www.spselca.org).

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 through your conference dean). If a more extended wait is anticipated, the Office of the Bishop can work with the council to identify a potential Bridge Pastor.

Because this time is so crucial in the life of the congregation, a long-term supply pastor is only a viable option when the future of the congregation is uncertain, or under other special circumstances.

*See Appendix 8: Preparing for the Interim Time*

Everyone needs to know their role

- **Remember, God is in charge!**
- **Office of the Bishop:** Responsible for holding you in prayer throughout the whole transition process, articulating the purpose of the intentional interim process, providing resources as needed to assist you and providing appropriate and qualified candidates to the call committee.
- **Intentional Interim Pastor:** Responsible for leading the ongoing ministry of the congregation, providing pastoral care, leading worship and administering the sacraments, and assisting in the transition process.
- **Congregational Leadership:** Responsible for supporting and leading the congregation in its ongoing ministry and providing prayerful support and encouragement to 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 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.
Theological Context for Transitional Ministry

A congregation in transition is shaped by the uniqueness of its individual context. Yet the Word of God transcends every context, moving and bringing forth what the congregation may need.

Transitional ministry - whether through a supply pastor, an intentional interim, or a long-term supply - finds its theological grounding within the Holy Scriptures. Consider the transitional ministries of some of the Bible's greatest leaders who encountered change in their context: Moses, Abraham and Sarah, and Deborah in the book of Judges. And that's just in the Hebrew Scriptures. We can turn to the New Testament and find even more biblical and theological grounding for transitional ministry. After all, isn't transitional ministry all about transformation? The Apostle Paul was transformed and became a transformational leader. There was John the Baptist, and, of course, Jesus. From death to resurrection, scripture points us to change and transformation.

History tells us that every congregation and every ministry is limited by time and scope.

For Moses, part of his life and ministry were spent wandering in the wilderness. Congregations in transition enter this wilderness experience immediately upon learning that there is going to be a shift in their leadership.

Margaret Morris and Joan Mabon, pioneering intentional interim pastors and trainers, have written in the Interim Ministry Network newsletter, The In-Between Times:

“Perhaps more than any other, the biblical motif ‘wilderness’ emerges most strongly as the metaphor for a congregation between installed pastors. ‘Wilderness’ is that place of sudden freedom, uncertain leadership, changed relationships, possible deprivation—temptations, hopes and disappointments. That place where all old fears reappear most threateningly... but where all the hopeful futures take on new promise. ‘Wilderness’ becomes a paradigm for the interim [transition] time.”

As far as biblical precedent goes, John the Baptist just might be considered the first ever transitional minister. He is definitely a model for intentional interim pastors. All transitional pastors strive to be the voice in the midst of the wilderness for any congregation in transition.

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. The transitional pastor prepares the way (i.e., the congregation) for the coming of the new called pastor, or another new direction the congregation will decide to take. John prepared the way for the new day, and transitional pastors do the same thing.

Intentional interim pastors work specifically within the congregational context, lifting a mirror to reflect to the congregation the culture within its own walls. The transition time led by the transitional pastor is one where the congregation does the work, preparing themselves to receive the newly-called pastor.

A transitional pastor, no matter what kind, works to work themselves out of a job. In John 3:30, John the Baptist points to the one who was called by God to take up ministry among the people: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

John the Baptist passed his ministry on to Jesus. Jesus, in turn, traveled throughout the countryside and into the villages and cities, constantly preparing his disciples to succeed him. The work of any congregation flows from the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, in, with, and through the will of God. Hence, transitional ministry in a congregation centers, first and foremost, on God.
PHASE II
Intentional Interim and Self Study
Phase II: Intentional Interim and Self-Study

1: Intentional Interim Begins

Litany for Beginning of Interim Ministry (Appendix 10)

2: Self-Study: Encountering God in our Midst

A. The Purpose of the Transition Time
The purpose of the transition time 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.

The Transition Team (or Call Committee) allows the congregation council to focus on continuing to support the ministries of the congregation and the regular business of the church. Other purposes of the transition time 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; and
- to involve the congregation in accomplishing the developmental tasks of the intentional interim period.

The members of the Transition Team (or Call Committee) 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 and Call Committee
The Holy Spirit is on the move in a congregation in transition. Four to eight weeks following the arrival of the intentional interim pastor, it is recommended that a Transition Team (or Call Committee) be created. They will be responsible for research, analysis, documentation, and study. The intentional interim pastor will help guide you through this process using a variety of tools 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.

Visibility of the transition team in the congregation is important. Some things to consider: commissioning / blessing the transition team in worship; including prayers for their work and listing their names in the weekly prayers; regular updates in the newsletter or bulletin; a bulletin board with their pictures; special name tags.
C. **Forming a Call Committee**

At the appropriate time, the call committee will be appointed by the congregation council or the congregation, depending on what the congregation's constitution and bylaws stipulate. The call committee is installed in a worship service (see Appendix 18 for a Sample Call Committee Installation rite).

In his book *Dry Bones Breathe* (1978), Robert Worley writes: “Members activate themselves. Leaders cannot activate others. They can model behaviors appropriate for church members to lead charismatically.” How does this apply to the call committee? A call committee must:

- Value each team member’s contributions and take suggestions and ideas seriously
- Listen
- Become acquainted with resources for gathering and evaluating information
- Hold and honor confidentiality
- Foster the trust of the church membership
- 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

D. **The Work of the Transition Time: The Five Focus Areas**

The Intentional Interim Pastor will work with the congregation to focus on **five central focus areas:**

- **Heritage** — Reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed
- **Leadership** — Reviewing the membership needs and its ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership
- **Mission** — Defining and redefining sense of purpose and direction
- **Connections** — Discovering all the relationships a faith community builds outside of itself
- **Future** — Developing congregational and pastoral profiles

**At all points, the congregation asks:**

- Who Are We?
- Who Are Our Neighbors?
- What Is God Calling Us To Do?

E. **The Work of the Transition Time: Other Tasks**

Congregational leadership will also attend to the following details, with the help of the Intentional 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

F. Helpful Documents for the work of the Transition Team and Call Committee
• Review of the Congregation's History (Appendix 11)
• Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies (Appendix 12)
• Development/Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement (Appendix 13)
• A Review of Staffing Needs and Resources (Appendix 14)
• Intentional Stewardship (Appendix 15)
• Stewardship of Property Inventory (Appendix 16)

3: Report from the Transition Time

After the congregation has spent time in self-study, collecting data, and working with the Intentional interim Pastor to tighten up the infrastructure of the congregation, the Transition Team and Call Committee will use this information as they work to complete 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 Office of the Bishop holds the congregation and its leadership in prayer. Because transitions are such critical opportunities for 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 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, at this particular time.

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 their own bias, and to challenge each member to see beyond their 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. (Please see Selecting a Call Committee, Appendix 17).

   The number of people on the committee can vary, but no more than 5 to 7 people is generally a good size, depending on the size of the congregation. The committee should reflect the diversity of the congregation. Pay attention to age, gender, length of time as a member, levels of involvement, and attendance at worship. The number of council members on the committee should be limited. If not indicated by the constitution, the committee selects its own chairperson. The congregation council should share the name of the committee chair and its members with the Office of the Bishop (see Call Committee Member Form, Appendix 17a).

C. Contact the Office of the Bishop
   Once the call committee is formed, contact the Office of the Bishop in order for a representative of the Office of the Bishop to meet with your committee and perhaps the congregation council to discuss the call process.
D. Announcement of Call Committee Members
   The names of the call committee members should be made public via your newsletter and bulletin. 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 publicly 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 18).

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 call 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 or deacon. Because of the cross-section of people on the committee, it is likely that each will learn something about the other and their 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 Prayers and Devotions for Call Committee, Appendix 19). 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.
When considering the calling of a new pastor or deacon, the congregation should know its challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry so that the gifts of the rostered minister meet the needs of the congregation. The work of the transition team and call committee during the interim time is critical to this process (cf. Phase II, Part 3). The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) provides the opportunity 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 MSP can be accessed online at www.elca.org/call-process. Gathering information to include in the MSP must be the work of the whole congregation, but the transition team (or call committee) is advised to choose one person to input data into the document to maintain consistency of voice. As this document is completed, it is important for committee members to be in consultation with the transition team (if applicable), the 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 their personal computer for updating as needed. (For more information, please see Appendix 21 Guide to the MSP).

After all sections are complete, the MSP should be shared with the Congregation Council and the congregation at large to make certain there is agreement and “buy in” on the congregation’s mission and the gifts needed in a new rostered minister. Once the MSP has been uploaded to the ELCA’s Portal, a synod staff person will review the profile and contact the call committee for conversation and review before the profile is activated. The congregation’s 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 Office of the Bishop that the MSP is ready to be shared with potential candidates to interview.

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

Email: __________________________________________

Password: ______________________________________

25
A. Basic Process Outline
All candidates being invited into the Sierra Pacific Synod will be vetted and cleared by the Synod Bishop, including any name raised from within the congregation. Once the Ministry Site Profile has been officially submitted, the Office of the Bishop will take approximately 4-6 weeks to gather and find the best candidates for your congregation. Below is an outline of appropriate protocol to follow once these names have been officially offered to the call committee:

1. The chairperson, or designee, will contact each candidate within 48 hours of receiving the names to let them know that their Rostered Minister Profile has been received. This communication is the first step in getting to know the candidate.
2. The committee will have an initial interview (usually by Skype or FaceTime) with each candidate. This initial interview usually lasts 60-90 minutes.
3. After the initial interview, the committee can release any candidate who does not seem like an appropriate fit for the congregation. Once released, the candidate may not be reconsidered.
4. The committee can invite any appropriate candidate(s) for an additional Skype interview, and eventually a face-to-face meeting to engage in further conversation and discernment.

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 deacon, 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 candidate given by the Office of the Bishop. It is the expectation that the call committee will interview all of the candidates provided to them. The Office of the Bishop has initially vetted each candidate and shared their information after prayer, discernment, and conversation. The call committee is encouraged to review its commitment to trust each other, share openly and maintain confidentiality at this time. When the call committee chooses to no longer consider a candidate, or a candidate withdraws, all materials related to that candidate should be shredded.

Information packets should be prepared and sent to each candidate prior to their 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. Many of these items can be found online, so giving a candidate a list of links is appropriate, rather than, or in addition to, mailing hard copies.

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 does not typically participate in the interview. Because the decision to accept a call impacts the entire family, it is important that the spouse be able to see the church and parsonage (if there is one) and have a chance to ask any questions s/he might have. The advance communication should contain travel instructions to reach the interview site and indicate the commitment of the congregation to provide reimbursement for all expenses. If a spouse is invited to accompany the candidate, the committee should indicate whether or not they will also cover all expenses for the spouse. A prompt reimbursement of the candidate for expenses incurred should follow the interview.

E. Hearing Candidates Preach

If desired, call committee members may travel to a candidate's current congregation to hear them preach. They should, however, request permission from the pastor ahead of time. 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. [Upon occasion, and after conversation with the Office of the Bishop, arrangements may be made for the pastor to preach at another congregation in the vicinity (not at your congregation) so that committee members may hear them preach in person. Please contact the Office of the Bishop to discuss this option and to help make these arrangements.]
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 an ELCA pastor?
- Tell us about what gives you life in parish ministry.
- Who have been the most influential people in your life?
- What excites you about our congregation?
- What would you like to know about us?

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

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

When the plan is to interview more than one candidate in person, an attempt is made to conduct each interview in the same setting and manner. For example, if the call committee meets with one candidate in a restaurant, the same pattern should be followed with any subsequent candidates. The call committee should be consistent in having the same person lead the interview each time and plan for committee members to ask the same basic questions of each candidate. This will ensure that all the bases are covered in each instance once the interview process begins.

The leadership needs which have been identified on the Ministry Site Profile should be used to form an outline for the interview. The committee will create approximately eight to ten detailed questions based on this outline. The committee should also be flexible and understand that a give-and-take conversation will not necessarily allow you to ask the questions in predictable order. (See Appendices 22 & 23 for sample questions for an interview.)
A crucial aspect of interviewing is the art of listening. To be a good listener, several elements are important:

- **INTEREST**: The person being interviewed has invested time and effort to be with you, and is worthy of the committee's undivided attention and respect.
- **BODY LANGUAGE**: Committee members can set the candidate at ease by their own relaxed body language, which conveys openness, and a welcoming and non-defensive atmosphere.
- **PATIENCE**: The interviewer gives the person time to formulate thoughtful answers.
- **LINKING**: Building on what the person has said, the interviewer asks questions that pick up on information already shared in the interview. This indicates that you are thoughtfully listening.
- **ALERTNESS**: The interviewer remains alert for key words and phrases, making certain that they are understood by all committee members.
- **CONCENTRATION**: The interviewer listens for main ideas, not just facts and figures. They should ask themselves, “What is this person telling us?”
- **CLARIFYING QUESTIONS**: Interviewers ask clarifying questions to make certain they really understand what the person is saying. If a response is not clear, the committee should ask for it to be clarified. Doing so does not reflect ignorance but demonstrates that the committee is truly interested and trying to understand what the person is attempting to communicate.
- **DELIBERATION**: Committee members guard against coming to a hasty decision about a candidate. Prayer, thorough dialogue with other committee members, and listening to all candidates are essential when making a final decision.

C. Preparing for the In-Person Visit

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

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

D. Conducting the Formal Interview

The call committee should designate one member to host the candidate at the interview site. If the member is not accompanying the candidate to the interview, be certain that they are 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 they 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 their vocation and role played in the congregation. It may be helpful to have the candidate begin the interview with a brief devotional or Bible study and prayer, but if you choose to do this, be sure they are aware of this long before they arrive!

Before the committee begins asking the interview questions, it is appropriate for the committee chairperson to ask the candidate to briefly tell the committee something about themselves (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. Do not 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.

Avoid asking questions which can be answered with a simple yes or no. For example, the questioner should not ask, “Do you think you are effective in your ministry to youth?” The candidate will almost surely answer, “Yes.” Ask instead, “Tell us about your approach to ministry with youth,” or “Give us some examples of how you have worked effectively with youth in your present or former parish.” (Refer again to sample interview questions, Appendices 22 & 23)
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
As soon as possible, definitely within one week of the interview, the call committee should meet 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.
- Clarify what it means for the committee to reach a consensus. We strongly discourage voting as a committee on candidates. The best practice is for prayer, conversation, and discernment to continue until consensus can be reached. A united front is the most effective way to communicate to the congregation why this person has been selected.
- 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, email, or note of appreciation to each candidate for their 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 they are no longer being considered. The decision should also be submitted immediately to the contact person from the Office of the Bishop who is assisting you with the call process.
Upon releasing a candidate from further consideration – whether after a phone, video, or a face-to-face interview – it is helpful for the candidate to hear the reasons why you do not think they would be a good match for your congregation at this time. This information is helpful to both the call committee and the candidate because it fosters clarity in the selection process and gives the candidate an opportunity for growth. (See sample Release of Candidate letter, Appendix 25)

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

C. Finalizing a Candidate Recommendation
Discussion with the 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.

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 notify the congregation council, and make a formal recommendation to the congregation. All other candidates should be released.

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. When communicating with the congregation, confidentiality around the candidate’s identity should be emphasized, particularly if the candidate is in a call.

7: The Role of the Congregation Council

A. Preliminary Compensation Discussions
When the call committee has identified a final 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 their 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 congregation president calls a special meeting of the council to hear the recommendation of the call committee. The committee chair presents the pastor or deacon, along with the information needed to determine compensation. A full report supporting the motion to recommend will accompany the recommendation.

Some things to keep in mind:

1. **Compensation package**
   The congregation council will determine the compensation package to be recommended to the congregation for its approval. This package will carry the consent of the candidate. Approval of forwarding the compensation package to the congregation requires a simple majority vote of the council. Please refer to the current compensation guidelines for helpful information regarding appropriate compensation figures (found at spselca.org).

2. **Special meeting of the congregation**
   The council shall organize a 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 and the compensation package. Proper arrangements will be made to notify the congregation of this meeting according to the congregation's constitution. Included in this notice will be the name and brief resume of the pastor and the compensation package. Prior to sending out this notice, the candidate should notify their current congregation council that they are now a primary candidate for this new call.

3. **Notification to the Office of the Bishop**
   When the call committee is ready to recommend a pastor or deacon to the congregation, the call committee chair, together with the council president, will notify the Office of the Bishop. The bishop's office will supply a draft of the ELCA Letter of Call with a working copy in the call packet sent to the president of the congregation. The president or vice-president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and sending it to the Office of the Bishop for the bishop's signature (S.14.11). Normally, a representative of the Office of the Bishop, or a member of Synod Council will be present at the meeting of the congregation when the vote is taken. This will be worked out in cooperation with the office of the bishop.
8: The Vote of the Congregation on the Candidate and the Compensation Package

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.

   2. First motion: vote to call the pastor
      At the congregation meeting, the first motion presented by the call committee chair, or designee, is that the congregation vote to call the pastor or deacon. It will be seconded and discussed. The call committee will present information about the candidate, 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 recommended by the call committee can be voted on at this meeting. The vote shall be by secret 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.

   3. Second motion: compensation package
      If the vote to call is successful, the second motion presented by the congregation council will be to approve the compensation package (salary, allowances, and other benefits) to be offered to the pastor or deacon. It will be seconded, discussed, and voted on by the congregation. Amendments to the package recommended by the council can be made by majority vote of the congregation. The vote needed to approve the compensation package is a simple majority. It may be taken by voice vote, show of hands, or written ballot. It will be noted that if the amounts in the package differ from the approved budget, then a favorable vote, in effect, changes the budget for the year. Beyond constitutional limit, a separate motion must be brought to approve the new budget.

B. If the Call Is Approved by the Congregation
   After the call and compensation package has been approved, a personal contact by the call committee chair, or designee, will be immediately made with the person being called. The following procedure is used to send the official ELCA Letter of Call.

   The president or vice-president of the congregation is responsible for completing the Letter of Call and Definition of Compensation and Benefits, including signatures of the president and secretary of the congregation, and sending them to the Office of the Bishop for the bishop's signature (S.14.11). The pastor or deacon will send a letter of acceptance or decline of the call to both the congregation and the Office of the Bishop. The minister will accept or decline the call within thirty (30) days, unless otherwise agreed upon.
C. If the Pastor or Deacon Accepts the Call

The newly-called minister, along with the congregation council, will set the date when ministry will begin in the new parish. The president or vice-president of the congregation council will consult with the newly-called minister to determine when the acceptance may be publicly announced.

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

D. If the Call Is Not Approved by the Congregation

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

E. The Call Is Declined

In the event that the pastor or deacon does not accept the call, the process will begin again with more names being offered to the call committee. Refer to the flow chart on page 7.

9: Special Situations

1. First Call Candidates and Ordination

In the case where this is the candidate's first call, they must be ordained before being installed. The ordination may take place at the candidate's home congregation or another location of their choosing (in consultation with the Office of the Bishop). Alternatively, they may choose to be ordained at their first call congregation. If this is the case, the officers of the congregation should contact the Office of the Bishop and the Conference Dean to prepare for a combined ordination and installation service.

2. Multiple-Congregation Parish

In the case of a parish with two or more congregations, each congregation votes separately on whether or not to call the pastor or deacon unless their constitutions specify another procedure. If there are not constitutional provisions for number of votes necessary for election, a 2/3 majority in each parish of all votes cast is necessary for approval. If the call is approved, the congregations authorize the joint council to issue the call and to agree on the salary and other items of support.

If one congregation approves the call and another does not, the call is not issued. No part of a joint parish may call a pastor without the participation of the other.

3. Associate/Assistant Pastors

When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor will be specified in documents that accompany the call. These documents must be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the congregation council, and the Office of the Bishop.
4. **Term Calls**
   A congregation may call a pastor for a specific term of years. This departure from the normal rule of permanency must be described in a statement of purpose, which the Bishop must approve.

5. **Part-time Ministries**
   Part-time ministries are normally defined as a minimum of 15 hours of work each week to qualify as a call. Anyone in part-time ministry must be given permission and opportunity to seek additional employment to supplement their income. All arrangement for part-time calls should be discussed with the Office of the Bishop beforehand and details need to be in writing.

### 10: Installation

The start of this new joint ministry between the pastor or deacon and the congregation is marked by the rite of installation. The date is set in partnership with the minister, the congregation, and the Conference Dean. The date and time should be set so that neighboring faith communities can celebrate with the congregation. The Conference Dean will normally preside at this service. The Order of Installation may be found in the Occasional Services Book.

**During the First Year**

The Office of the Bishop strongly recommends the first year of ministry be supported by an intentional program of relationship-building and leadership development. One such program is [Healthy Start](http://www.healthystartup.org). The Office of the Bishop can offer more details about the benefits of these kinds of programs.

**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 a deacon. All steps may not be required and should be adapted to the local situation (e.g. a person already employed by the congregation as a lay staff person and who becomes rostered). Assistance is available from the Office of the Bishop to help determine the appropriate process to follow in calling a Minister of Word and Service.
APPENDICES
Appendices

1. Frequently asked questions about the transition process 40
2. Exit Interview 42
3. Letter of Agreement 43
4. Sample Newsletter article for Congregation 44
5. Certification of Church Records 45
6. Certification and Completion of Financial Obligations 46
7. Thanksgiving and Farewell at the Conclusion of a Call 47
8. Preparing for the Interim Time 51
9. Sample Intentional Interim Pastor Contract 56
10. Litany of Beginning for Interim Ministry 64
11. Review of the Congregation’s History 65
12. Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies 66
13. Review of Core Values, Mission Statement, and Vision Statement 67
14. Review of Staffing Needs and Resources 70
15. Intentional Stewardship 72
16. Stewardship of Property Inventory 73
17. Selecting the Call Committee 74
   a. Call Committee member form 76
18. Installation of Call Committee 77
19. Prayers and Devotions for the Call Committee 78
20. Lutheran View of Call and Vocation 81
21. Guide to the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) 87
22. Hints for Completing the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) 91
23. Sample Questions for Candidate Interviews 99
24. Possible Questions Candidates might ask 102
25. Meet and Greet Weekend 103
26. Sample Release of Candidate letter 105

Covenantal Relationships

“A complete relationship needs a covenant . . . A covenantal relationship rests on a shared commitment to ideas, to issues, to values to goals, and to management processes . . . Covenantal relationships reflect unity and grace and poise. They are expressions of the sacred nature of relationships.”

from the 5th Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization written by Peter M. Senge.
Senge is quoting from a book called The Art of Leadership written by M. deFree in 1989.
Appendix 1
Frequently asked questions about the transition process

How long will it take to find a pastor?
Every congregation is different and the length of the transition varies in length. It will normally take between twelve and eighteen months, but some last longer. The length of the process depends on the time it takes the transition team and call committee to complete the MSP, the number of candidates interviewed, the time call committee and candidates have available for conversation, and the needs of the congregation for grieving and preparation for the next pastor.

What will the congregation do during this time of transition regarding pastoral leadership?
In a pastoral vacancy, the Office of Bishop, in consultation with the Congregation Council, will contract with an Intentional Interim Pastor who will, at a minimum, lead worship/preach (or arrange for this leadership) weekly, meet with the Council each month, and provide emergency pastoral care. The responsibilities of the Intentional Interim Pastor will vary and may range from a few hours a week to full-time, depending on the availability of the Intentional Interim Pastor and the needs of the congregation. A letter of agreement is signed between the Council and the Pastor that explains exactly what the Intentional Interim Pastor will be doing during this time and will be signed by the Office of the Bishop. (See Appendix 9)

What are the sources of names provided by the Office of the Bishop to the Call Committee?
The names of the candidates come from a variety of places, including:

- Pastors from the Sierra Pacific Synod asking to be available for conversation with Call Committees and having submitted their Rostered Minister Profile.
- Pastors from other synods who have asked that their Rostered Minister Profile be shared with congregations in the Sierra Pacific Synod. Please note that candidates from outside the Sierra Pacific Synod must be given clearance by their synodical bishop and approved by the Office of the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod before they can be considered for an interview.
- Rostered Ministers identified by the Office of the Bishop as particularly suited for a congregation.
- Recent seminary graduates awaiting their first Call.
- Names of Rostered Ministers suggested by members of the Congregation must be shared with the Office of the Bishop and approved by the office of the bishop to be considered potential candidates.

How do we determine appropriate compensation?
The synod compensation guidelines serve as a guide to congregations and candidates in helpful conversation regarding what is fair and adequate compensation. The compensation guidelines worksheet can be found on the synod website. A representative from the Office of the Bishop can be a resource through this process.
Can we invite the candidates to preach in our congregation on a Sunday morning?
It is not our recommendation that candidates be invited to preach in a congregation where they are being considered. If a candidate preaches in the congregation, the entire congregation becomes involved in the overall process and members are put in the position of deciding on that person's merit on the basis of worship leadership and one sermon alone, which is only one of many elements of pastoral ministry. The effect is to displace the careful, prayerful discernment of the Call Committee. The Call Committee members will have the opportunity to hear or see recordings of sermons provided by the candidates. If the candidate is local, the call committee could travel to the candidate's congregation or to a neutral site to hear them preach. If this is a desire, please arrange the timing of this visit with the pastor. When a minister being considered is not presently serving a site the Office of the Bishop can assist in setting up a supply location for them to preach and lead worship where the call committee could go to participate in worship. It is appropriate for the congregation to meet the final candidate at an informal meet and greet (see Appendix 24).

Should the congregation expect there to be expenses related to the work of the Call Committee?
Yes. Mileage reimbursement to committee members and to any candidates who interview with your committee can be expected. The committee may also have receipts for expenses related to meals or refreshments provided. We recommend that you use the standard IRS mileage rate for reimbursement. Often councils will designate the expenses of the Call Committee and the process out of any remainder left in your pastoral compensation package.

Should there be alternate members of the Call Committee?
We do not recommend alternate members; however, if alternates are elected or appointed, they should attend all meetings of the Call Committee and have voice, but should not vote unless a regular member of the committee finds it necessary to relinquish their position.
Appendix 2
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 or special talents do you see in this congregation? Do you have recommendations on how we might use or continue to use those gifts to the best advantage in the future?
5. What opportunities for ministry do you see in this community that we as a congregation might address in the future?
6. What was your assessment of this congregation when you first came? How has that assessment changed during your time here?
7. If you had a chance to start your ministry over again in this congregation, what might you do differently?
8. What have been the areas of growth in this congregation during your ministry here with us?
9. What would you like to see us doing five years from now? What unfulfilled goals of yours would you like to see carried forward?
10. What did we not ask you that we should have asked?
11. What has been your relationship with the leadership of the congregation? How might lay leaders be more effective in leading the congregation?
12. How can we be helpful to you in your leaving?

Questions the pastor might ask:
1. What were 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. How has the congregation grown/changed in our time together?
6. Are there any unfinished matters that we should discuss before I leave?
Appendix 3
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 their understanding that all pastoral and administrative duties in this congregation are terminated as of that date.

2. It is mutually understood that this termination of responsibilities applies also to the Interim period before another pastor is called, since the congregation needs some time and space between pastors to discover who they are now, where they want to go, and with what new leadership. It is agreed that the congregation council will make provision with the Office of the Bishop for interim pastoral leadership for the congregation.

3. The former pastor agrees that they will not officiate or assist at any baptism, wedding, or funerals in this congregation, or attend as a worshipper, even 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 they 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 they 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 (rather than a member). The former pastor will not be present in any way in the life of the congregation without the direct invitation of the current pastor. This expectation is in effect no matter how long the former pastor has been away from _______ Lutheran Church.

7. The former pastor will remove their 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 _________.

8. The former pastor will continue serving in the community in the following capacities:
   a) ____________________________________________
   b) ____________________________________________

Former Pastor: ___________________________ Congregation President: ___________________________
Appendix 4
Sample newsletter article for congregation

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONGREGATION AND DEPARTING PASTOR

Because we want everyone to be aware of some important issues related to the transition between pastors, we ask you to read this carefully.

The Church Council and former Pastor have agreed to the following, and seek your cooperation, regarding the positive future relationships among us:

**We will** do everything possible to uphold the mission of the Church and the positive quality of life in this congregation.

**We will** recognize the need for time to adjust to the new relationships, and will reach out in care and compassion to one another.

**We will** honor the departure of the former pastor so duties may be relinquished; and will honor the arrival of the new pastor by seeking their counsel and ministry. We are aware that conducting pastoral acts (such as baptism, weddings, funerals, confirmations, communions) and defining ministry programs and leadership styles are no longer the prerogative of the departing pastor, but belong to the arriving pastor with the Council and congregation.

While we recognize that we will continue to care about the departing pastor and family, **we will not** expect nor invite the pastor to participate in congregational life, with the possible exception of special congregational anniversaries or observations.

The nature of the relationship between pastor and people often gets translated as the pastor being a friend. The reality is that while the pastor may indeed have been very **friendly**, the relationship is not one of friendship.

Experience across the Church has shown that continuing relationships with former pastors is very positive when the above things are kept in mind.
Appendix 5
Certification of congregation records at the time of a pastoral transition

(To be completed by the secretary of the congregation and submitted to the Office of the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod)

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

_______________________________________________________________
Name of Congregation

_______________________________________________________________
Address of Congregation

_______________________________________________________________
Name of Pastor

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

_______________________________________________________________
Signature of Congregation Secretary

_______________________________________________________________
Date

The parochial records of each congregation shall be kept in a separate book, which shall remain its property. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in their 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, or
   c. retirement
Appendix 6  
Certification of Completion of all Financial Obligations

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

Also, satisfactory settlement of financial obligations has been made by
The Rev. ______________________________________________________
to ____________________________ Lutheran Church, ______________________, ____.  
                          city                state

_____________________________
Date

_____________________________
Pastor

_____________________________
Treasurer

Please return this form to:

Office of the Bishop
Sierra Pacific Synod
9985 Folsom Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95827
Appendix 7a

Thanksgiving and Farewell at the Conclusion of a Call
for Pastor __________ at __________ Lutheran Church City_________,
State__________

Pastor __________, in ______of ____ the people of _________Lutheran Church called you
to be their pastor. As pastor, you were called here to proclaim God's word, to baptize and
teach, to announce God's forgiveness, and to preside at the Lord's Table. With the gospel you
have comforted the people of ____________ in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of
loved ones. Sharing joys and sorrows, you have been important to the life of this community
within the church of Jesus Christ, in their service to this community, and in God's mission to the
whole world.

On Sunday ____________ the congregation's call to you comes to an end. As you leave this
community of faith and say farewell to one another, we give thanks for your ministry and pray
for God's blessing.

PULPIT: You were invited into this pulpit. From this place you have proclaimed
the saving
Gospel of Jesus Christ countless times throughout these past years. This pulpit has not
belonged to you; the saving message of Christ is not something one can possess, but only bear
witness to. You have been a faithful occupant of this church's pulpit and messenger of the good
news of God's love in Christ. As you leave this pulpit we thank God for your preaching ministry.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

FONT: At this font you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Through the cleansing
waters of baptism we welcome new members into the family of Christ. The gift of new life in
Christ belongs to God. The church is the custodian of this rite of welcome, and you have
introduced this congregation to many new siblings in the faith. You have presided as
confrirmands affirmed their baptismal promises. As you leave this font, we thank you for your
ministry surrounding baptismal promises.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

ALTAR: At this altar you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Communion. You have
reminded the members here of the story of Jesus' beginning of this meal. You have provided
instruction to those who would receive it for the first time. The meal is the Lord's, and this
congregation has been provider of this meal to all who seek to be fed with the living presence
of Christ. You have presided over this meal so that it could be served in an orderly fashion. As
you leave this table, we thank you for presiding at the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

CHANCEL STEP: Standing in front of this congregation you have led services of thankfulness to
God for people who had died. You led this community in the midst of grief while expressing
gratitude for God's gift of life. You proclaimed the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus Christ
and encouraged the community with the comfort of the gospel. As you leave this sanctuary, we
thank you for your presence in times of loss.
CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

CHANCEL: It is here that you presided at services where couples were married. You were present to rejoice with those who rejoice. Thank you for sharing those and other great times of joy.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

People of God, as representatives of the members of _________ Lutheran, and with thanks to God for the ministry of Pastor _________ among you, do you now release her/him/them from service as your pastor?

We do, and we give thanks to God.

Pastor _________, with thanks to God for the members of this community and for their ministry with you, do you recognize and accept the completion of your ministry with _________ Lutheran Church?

I do, and I give thanks to God.

Let us pray. (presider and council members lay hands on pastor): Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock. We give you thanks for the ministry of Pastor _________ among the people of God in this place.

You watch over our going out and our coming in: bless this time of ending and beginning. You surround your people in every time and place: keep us close in your love. You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial: prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together; heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us. Help Pastor _________, as well as the people of this congregation to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us.

As she/he/they has been a blessing to this congregation, so now send her/him/them forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Pastor _________ and representatives of _________ Church: your siblings in Christ in the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared. We promise you our continued support and prayer.

Rejoicing in the blessings of God in this congregation and in the ministry of Pastor _________, with hope in God's abundant grace in years to come, I announce that this pastoral relationship is ended effective _________.

48
Appendix 7b

Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call

The order follows the post-communion canticle (or prayer if no canticle is sung)

Address

A representative of the congregation addresses the pastor whose call is concluding

A pastor

L: **Name**, on **date** we of **Congregation Name** called you to be pastor in this place: to proclaim God's word, to baptize and teach, to announce God's forgiveness, and to preside at the Lord's table. With the gospel you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you [and your family] have been important to our life together in the church of Jesus Christ, in our service to this community, and in God's mission to the whole world. As you leave this community of faith, we say farewell, and we pray for God's blessing.

A deacon

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

Prayer

L: Let us pray for the saving presence of our living God:
   In your world, **be present God.**
   In this congregation, **be present God.**
   In this community, **be present God.**
   In this synod, and the whole church, **be present God.**
   In the homes and hearts of all your people, **be present God.**

L: Let us pray for the mercy of God:
   For work begun but not completed, **God have mercy.**
   For expectations not met, **God have mercy.**
   For wounds not healed, **God have mercy.**
   For gifts not shared, **God have mercy.**
   For promises not kept, **God have mercy.**

L: Let us give thanks for our journey together in this place:
   For friendships made, for joys celebrated and for times of nurture and growth, **thanks be to God.**
   For wounds healed, expectations met, gifts given and promises kept, **thanks be to God.**
   For our fellowship in Jesus Christ, and for the love of God which has sustained us, **thanks be to God.**
Dissolution
L:  People of God, members of Name of Congregation, do you release Name from service as our pastor / deacon
We do, and we give thanks to God for our ministry together.

The leader addresses the person whose call is concluding.
L:  Name, do you recognize and accept the completion of your ministry with Name of Congregation?
I do, and I give thanks to God for our ministry together.

Thanksgiving and Sending
L:  Let us pray....Almighty God, through Jesus Christ you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock. You equip your people with abilities that differ according to the grace given to them, and you call them to various avenues of service. We give you thanks for the ministry of Name among the people of God in this place.

You watch over our going out and our coming in:
bless this time of ending and beginning.
You surround your people in every time and place:
keep us close in your love.
You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial:
prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together;
heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us.

Help Name [and her/his/their family] and all of us, to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us.

L:  As he/she/they has been a blessing to us, so now send him/her/them forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

The service continues with the benediction

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

L:  Your siblings in Christ of the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared. We promise you our continued support and prayer. rejoicing in the blessings of God in Name of Congregation and in the ministry of Name.
With hope in God’s abundant grace in years to come, I announce that Name’s service as position in Name of Congregation is now concluded.

Appendix 8
Preparing for the Intentional Interim Time

Every congregation experiencing a new pastoral vacancy will, by the very nature of the vacancy, experience an interim. The question is: “Will the interim period be intentional or unintentional?” The Sierra Pacific Synod Office of the Bishop seeks for the congregation to experience an intentional interim period leading to a long, happy, relationship between the people and new pastor.

A vitally important step in beginning transition is to work with the Office of the Bishop in the selection and/or appointment of an Intentional Interim Pastor. Today many retired pastors and others have been trained and are prepared to help serve a congregation for the specific time between when a pastor leaves and a new regular pastor begins. The Office of the Bishop can work with the Council to help make this transition time a valuable, growing experience for the congregation.

Some congregations may feel they can "get by" with supply pastors on Sundays and call upon neighboring clergy for pastoral emergencies. While this may seem satisfactory for a short time, experience suggests that it is preferable to have continuity and at least part-time interim pastoral services. There are important parish developmental tasks to be accomplished during the interim time. If the congregation does not have the benefit of a trained Intentional Interim Pastor to serve in the role of John the Baptist, as a "way-preparer," the newly-called settled pastor may have a difficult time being accepted by members. Likewise, giving in to anxiety and pressures to "hurry up and get us a new pastor" can be counter-productive in the long run. Ghosts of an unresolved past may return to haunt a new pastor who is chosen through a hasty call process. Experience in many parishes over the years also indicates that the congregation which tries to save money by “getting by” with minimal interim pastoral services is "penny-wise and pound-foolish." If only minimal pastoral compensation is required, many members will perceive that their regular contributions are not needed and the congregation's overall financial stewardship can decline rapidly.

A typical interim arrangement for smaller congregations might be to engage the service of a trained Intentional Interim Pastor on a half-time basis. This will assure the congregation of ongoing continuity in Sunday worship, as well as basic pastoral care and some program leadership. Obviously, one who ministers on a part-time schedule will not be able to cover all the bases of a full-time pastor; this kind of arrangement gives unique opportunities for lay leadership to grow and assume functions which may have been previously carried out by the settled pastor. Keep in mind that the Intentional Interim Pastor will be needing to provide particular attention to the five focus areas in addition to attending to the regular pastoral functions. Some ministry programs may need to go on hiatus if they cannot be carried out by volunteers, particularly in a part-time setting.

Intentional Interim Pastors do not serve under call from the congregation. If retired, they retain clergy status and if under call as an Intentional Interim Pastor, the source of call is the synod council. For clarity of expectations regarding expected areas of ministry and compensation, an Intentional Interim Pastor Service Agreement should be completed and signed by the pastor, congregational officers and the Office of the Bishop. Compensation for full or part-time interim pastoral leadership should be based upon the synodical guidelines, with possible adjustment as dictated by the needs and circumstances of the Intentional Interim Pastor. In order to be free of pressures from members to become a candidate for the settled call, the Intentional
Interim Pastor Agreement includes a clear statement that the Intentional Interim Pastor is not eligible for the settled call. This also protects the call committee's ability to interview and consider a number of candidates without undue pressure from congregational members to call the one who is "close at hand."

**Interim Ministry in the Sierra Pacific Synod**

The period of transition in congregations, while in between permanent pastors, is an important time. It can be a defining moment in addressing the congregation's mission, clarifying it, and stimulating growth responses. It is an opportunity to review the past and anticipate the future, maintaining as well as envisioning the impact of its ministry. At the very least, the interim time will include carrying out tasks of preparation so that the next chapter of ministry begins with promise. The work of intentional interim ministry focuses on a congregation's continued sense of mission and service, while experiencing a change of pastors. The emphasis is on REVIEWING its past and current state while ANTICIPATING the future. Attention is given to the congregation's organizational structure and assessing its responsiveness in ministry without an exclusive concentration on the pastor's role. Maintaining programs and services is a concern during the interim in providing continuity.

Such an “interim emphasis”, objective in nature, allows for an examination of a congregation's health while seeking to prepare for the next era of its ministry. Preparation will consist of appropriate responses to the areas explored (such as pastor-lay mutual ministry with clarification of roles, mission priorities, leadership changes and training, effective organization and identifying unique characteristics of the congregation). This goes hand-in-hand with the developing the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) describing the congregation.

During the interim time there is review of the congregation's history in order to gain insight into significant patterns or themes that impact the present. Effort is given toward identifying the current active membership and its characteristics while also considering needed leadership changes. The Intentional Interim Pastor's role is vital in modeling a constructive pastor/lay partnership and in encouraging forward movement.

Loss of the previous pastor is experienced by members of the congregation in different ways (personal, organizational, momentum/vision) and opportunity needs to be given for people to share their feelings and support one another in accepting this new reality.

It takes time for a congregation to adjust to a new circumstance in which its pastor is no longer present. Individually and as a congregation, members will find their way as they utilize available resources. The process of RE-VIEWING, RE-DEFINING and RE-VISIONING will be time consuming and yet productive in the end, responding to present and future challenges in ministry.

Each congregation presents similar, but also differing challenges in the interim period. This is due in part to the circumstance that has resulted in the pastoral vacancy. For example, how difficult will it be to say good-bye to the pastor who is leaving? How long has it been since the congregation experienced a change of pastors? Is there division or brokenness which requires healing? Then, factors related to the congregation's program and priorities in ministry account for still other challenges. Additional situations requiring interim pastoral service may be congregations in which pastors are planning a sabbatical leave or where there is medical leave.
Identifying specific challenges and arriving at realistic goals for the interim period is an important discipline. Understanding the temporary but unique aspects of international interim ministry can lead to opportunities for exploration and growth.

**Benefits of Intentional Interim Ministry**

- Matching the special skills of a particular pastor with the special needs of a congregation in transition
- Assisting in any needed healing process for congregations that have recent or long-term histories of conflict or that face a particular crisis
- Enabling transition from the extended service of its previous pastor to the succeeding pastor
- Expediting any special transition the congregation must make as it does mission in a changing environment
- Providing ministry at a time when the congregation is open to reflection and growth or is in decline

(adapted from *Guidelines for Ordained Ministers Serving In Interim Ministry*, Division for Ministry, ELCA)

**Guiding Principles From Synod Constitution**

S14.15. 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) the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.

S14.17. During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any ordained ministers who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

**Activities of The Interim Period**

In addition to its usual work, the congregation council’s agenda during the interim period includes:

- Determining leadership skills needed
- Assessing the probable time span
- Securing and contracting with an Intentional Interim Pastor
- Selecting and supporting the call committee
- Promoting stability in the congregation amidst change
  - Determining preliminary salary/benefits for the next pastor
  - Providing leadership in the congregation
The congregation is assisted by the Intentional Interim Pastor in addressing the **five focus areas** during this time, as a means to prepare for the future.

- **Heritage:** Reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed
- **Leadership:** Reviewing the membership needs and its ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership
- **Mission:** Defining and redefining sense of purpose and direction
- **Connections:** Discovering all the relationships a faith community builds outside of itself
- **Future:** Developing congregational and pastoral profiles

**At all points, the congregation asks:**
- Who Are We?
- Who Are Our Neighbors?
- What Is God Calling Us To Do?

The value of the interim period will be enhanced if the congregation council develops goals and objectives to be achieved. These can result from sessions of frank discussion and planning. It is expected that after goals are set, future checkpoints will review progress, making adjustments along the way.

A successful interim experience requires negotiating a clear, specific, and realistic contract between the congregation and the Intentional Interim Pastor with support from the Office of the Bishop. Issues to be included are:

- Basic salary, housing allowance and expenses
- Benefits (vacation, continuing education, pension/health)
- Term of agreement
- Time: full-time, part-time, and how defined
- Duties in general and specifics emphasized
- Establish to whom the Intentional Interim Pastor is responsible

**Partnership of Congregation and Synod**

In reviewing its situation, each congregation council has responsibility to consult with the Office of the Bishop in making interim plans. Council members completing the interim assessment form provided by the Office of the Bishop will assist in the process of determining congregational needs. Some congregations find it best to engage a full-time Intentional Interim Pastor while for others a part-time Intentional Interim Pastor serves. In any case, members of the congregation are challenged to assume greater leadership at this time.

The Sierra Pacific Synod recognizes the importance of transition and seeks to provide direction and support to congregation councils as well as interim pastors. The Intentional Interim Pastor Steering Committee regularly offers training and support for those serving, or seeking to serve, as interim pastors. Trained Intentional Interim Pastors are given preference when recommendations are being made to congregations. Attention is given initially to the tasks of the interim period with the appointment of an interim pastor, followed closely by the establishment of the transition team (or call committee) and giving direction to the transition process.
Summary
The role of Intentional Interim Pastor is an important one for a congregation seeking a settled pastor and the five tasks are crucial in maintaining or establishing congregational health. The beginning of the interim is significant as it sets the tone for the entire period. From the outset, the Intentional Interim Pastor’s role is to help the congregation develop confidence in their ability to assist through this crucial time. To do this, the Intentional Interim Pastor seeks to communicate strength and sensitivity in appropriate ways in the congregation. Because it is in the midst of transition and uncertainty, a primary goal is to help the congregation feel secure with the leadership of the Intentional Interim Pastor, allowing for continued growth and health.

Revised July 2019
Appendix 9
Sample Intentional Interim Pastor Contract

This model interim ministry contract may be altered or revised to fit the particular practices of the congregation or the circumstances of the pastor. The office of the bishop should always be contacted for advice and counsel.

[Congregation letterhead]

In keeping with the policies and practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the “ELCA”) and the Sierra Pacific Synod, and in order to set forth clearly the agreement for interim service between the congregation and transition/intentional interim pastor, __________ Lutheran Church, _________________(city, state), a congregation of the ELCA based in the Sierra Pacific Synod (the “Congregation”) and the Reverend [Name] (the “Intentional Interim Pastor”) agree that the Intentional Interim Pastor will serve the Congregation in the position of Intentional Interim Pastor, as described below.

This is a [½ / ¾ / full] -time position, beginning date (the “Start Date”) to date (the “Estimated Completion Date”), in accordance with the following promises and on the terms set forth in this Letter of Service (the “Covenant”):

1. **Together the Congregation and Intentional Interim Pastor will:**
   
   1.1. Share in the mission given by Christ, which involves the whole people of God.
   
   1.2. Engage in ministry as we celebrate God's presence, experience renewal through the gospel, give witness to Jesus Christ, and provide care, fellowship and support for one another.
   
   1.3. Call forth leadership and equip our people for ministry, in order to meet the challenges and opportunities presented us in the Congregation and the community.
   
   1.4. Receive the Word of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments and witnessed to by the Lutheran Confessions.
   
   1.5. Subscribe to the Constitution, the Bylaws, and the Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Congregation. Update the Congregation's governing documents as needed to align with the governing documents of the ELCA and the Sierra Pacific Synod.
   
   1.6. Work through the transition dynamics and emotions that usually follow the departure of a pastor.
   
   1.7. Address the Five Focus Points below that constitute the Work of every Congregation in transition, in light of these Three Questions:
      
      1. Who are we?
      2. Who is our neighbor?
      3. What is God calling us to do?
1.7.1. Focus Point # 1) Heritage: Review how the congregation has been shaped and formed, and what the congregation values from its past, and then work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor.

1.7.2. Focus Point # 2) Leadership: Review the congregation’s needs and its ways of organizing; develop new and effective leadership.

1.7.3. Focus Point # 3) Mission: Discern a sense of purpose and direction considering the congregation's current values, attributes, gifts and resources, and context.

1.7.4. Focus Point # 4) Connections: Strengthen Congregation members’ understanding of themselves as Lutheran Christians. Examine and rediscover linkages with the Conference, the Sierra Pacific Synod, and the ELCA, as well as with the local network of ecumenical and interfaith communities.

1.7.5. Focus Point # 5) Future: Develop a Ministry Site Profile that accurately reflects the congregation and its commitment to new directions in ministry. (The Intentional Interim Pastor will not be in any way involved in selection of candidates; that work lies exclusively with the Call Committee.)

1.8. In conjunction with the congregational council, a Transition Team may be established whose purposes will be to:

1.8.1. Monitor and assist with the progress of the accomplishment of the Work of the Congregation.

1.8.2. Help the Congregation conduct a self-study.

1.8.3. Develop a vision for the Congregation's mission.

(If a Transition Team is not utilized, then a Call Committee is established according to the congregation’s constitution. The Intentional Interim Pastor will serve as a resource for the Call Committee.)

1.9. Learn the Congregation's story, and identify the values, strengths and resources that have served the Congregation well throughout its history. Identify and employ resources necessary to address issues.

1.10. Engage as much of the Congregation as possible in the transition process.

1.11. Update the congregation's governing documents as needed to align with the governing documents of the ELCA and the Sierra Pacific Synod.

1.12. Update the parish register in conformance with the congregation's governing documents.

1.13. Mutually assess our interim ministry together every [2 / 3] months, make course corrections as appropriate, and amend this Covenant as agreed by the Congregation Council, Intentional Interim Pastor, and Office of the Bishop.
1.14. Address the following:
  1.14.2.
  1.14.3.

1.15. For the sake of the ministry of Lutheran Church, the Intentional Interim Pastor and the Congregation Council agree to a minimum length of service of six (6) months.

2. The Intentional Interim Pastor will:

2.1. Preach and teach the Word of God.

2.2. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according to the practice of the Lutheran Church, as agreed, and arrange for substitutes for other times.

2.3. Officiate at (or provide an appropriate officiant for) weddings, baptisms, confirmations, and funerals. Funerals and weddings for members of the congregation are part of the Intentional Interim Pastor's congregational duties. The Intentional Interim Pastor may charge directly for funerals and weddings of non-members, lining up with the congregation's policies.

2.4. Provide for pastoral care to members of the Congregation, according to their needs, visit as necessary, and uphold the members in prayer.

2.5. As needed, serve as the Lead Pastor of the Congregation with supervisory responsibly for all staff and other leaders of the Congregation. [Delete this line only if not solo or senior pastor]

2.6. Serve as Head of Staff of the Congregation, with all the authority implied, including the authority to supervise all members of the staff, in consultation with the Congregation Council or its appropriate committee.

2.7. Develop or assist in developing educational programs when needed.

2.8. Welcome and follow up with guests to the Congregation.

2.9. Encourage the Congregation to support the total ministry of the ELCA and the Sierra Pacific Synod.

2.10. 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 Congregation promptly and fully, as requested by the Synod.


2.12. Respond to any requests by, or for, any former pastor to conduct any services of worship, including baptisms, weddings, and funerals, in any of the congregation's facilities in accordance with the policies of the ELCA.
2.13. Report monthly to the Congregation Council and quarterly to the Office of the Bishop.

2.14. Participate in the Sierra Pacific Synod’s regional interim gatherings and Synod-wide trainings, as required by the Synod, for the benefit of the Congregation.

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

2.16. Give special attention to:

2.16.1.

2.16.2.

2.16.3.

3. The Intentional Interim Pastor will not:

3.1. Under any circumstances, be available for regular call in this Congregation.

3.2. Be involved in the selection of the Congregation’s settled pastor, except at the request of the Office of the Bishop. The Intentional Interim Pastor may respond to inquiries from candidates for the call, as long as the initiative for the interaction comes from the prospective pastors. The Intentional Interim Pastor will not be in any way involved in selection of candidates; that work lies exclusively with the Call Committee.

3.3. Become a member of this Congregation after this Covenant terminates.

4. The Congregation will:

4.1. Commit to the gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship activities.

4.2. Seek to fulfill its calling to be servants to others through its members, in their families, occupations, neighbors, communities, civil and political institutions, and voluntary associations.

4.3. Support the ministry of the Congregation through service and regular giving.

4.4. Receive the Intentional Interim Pastor, uphold them in prayer, and accord them love, respect, and good will.

4.5. Look to the Intentional Interim Pastor to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and other rites of the church.

4.6. Deal promptly with any suggestions or other interference, or other difficulty with any former pastor (installed or temporary) of the Church. The Council will immediately refer all such experiences to the Office of the Bishop.

4.7. Compensate the Intentional Interim Pastor as follows:

4.7.1 Pay Intentional Interim Pastor a combined annual salary and housing allowance of [minimum $ _____ for full-time service, according to Synod guidelines], the payments to be made in equal installments as follows: ____.
Prior to the Intentional Interim Pastor’s start date, adopt a housing allowance resolution setting forth the amount the Intentional Interim Pastor wishes to have designated as housing allowance, and update that resolution prior to any changes in compensation taking effect.

**OR**

Pay the Intentional Interim Pastor an annual salary of $______, the payments to be made in equal installments as follows: $______, and provide a residence free of charge, utilities paid, and provide an equity allowance of $______.

4.7.2 Consider providing Self-employed Social Security payment allowance of 7.65% of combined salary and housing allowance [$_____ for salary and housing of $$_____], the payments to be made in equal installments of $[same schedule as salary & housing].

4.7.3. Contribute to the ELCA Pension & Benefits Plan (minimum 10% required) through Portico (formerly the ELCA Board of Pensions).

4.7.4. Provide for medical and dental coverage as follows:

- ELCA Medical-and-Dental Insurance (select one below):
  - Member only
  - Member and spouse
  - Member and children
  - Member, spouse, and children
  - Coverage waived

4.7.5. Other insurance or benefits:

4.7.6. Grant continuing education time of [recommended minimum of two weeks per year] weeks per year, including [2 / 3] Sundays, with a congregational contribution of $[minimum $____ for full-time service, according to Synod guidelines].

4.7.7. The Intentional Interim Pastor will accrue 1/3 week of paid vacation for each month of interim ministry served (four weeks annually), including [4 / 5 / 6] Sundays, in accordance with Sierra Pacific Synod guidelines. Vacation may be taken either during the interim period, or at its conclusion, at the choice of the Intentional Interim Pastor.

4.7.8. The Congregation will reimburse the Intentional Interim Pastor for the commute to and from her/his residence at the rate of $[same as 4.8.1, below], and will pay for the Intentional Interim Pastor’s lodging should it be necessary or desirable for the Intentional Interim Pastor to spend the night. This is taxable income and will be added to cash salary.

**OR**

The Congregation will pay moving expenses as follows: $______ ....
4.7.9. Grant four additional family leave days every eight (8) weeks shall be granted, not including Sundays, if the Intentional Interim Pastor lives more than 500 miles from the congregation and is separated from family.

4.7.10. Salary continuation ("bridge pay") contingency: Salary, housing allowance, self-employed Social Security payment allowance (if provided), and contributions to Portico for pension and benefits will continue to be paid at the same rate of payment and date of payment for a period not to exceed [1/2/3] months beyond the end of the Intentional Interim Pastor's service, provided that the Intentional Interim Pastor has served the Congregation for at least six months. Portico will need to be contacted in order to make these arrangements.

4.7.11. Compensation will be adjusted annually to meet or exceed minimum synod guidelines.

4.8. Reimburse the Intentional Interim Pastor for church expenses as follows:

4.8.1. Reimbursable automobile allowance will be at the rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service, payable upon presentation of documentation of mileage.

4.8.2. The Congregation will reimburse the Intentional Interim Pastor for expenses incurred in attending Synod Assembly, Professional Leaders Conference, Interim Ministry Network Conference, Synod interim gatherings and trainings, and other official meeting at which their participation is required or expected. Attendance at these events will not be counted as either continuing education or vacation time.

4.8.3. The Congregation will reimburse the Intentional Interim Pastor for professional expenses for books and periodicals, personal outreach, ministry related meals, and necessary supplies, up to $_____ annually/$_____ monthly, to be paid upon presentation of documentation of expenses. Office supplies and other supplies for the Congregation will be reimbursed separately.

4.8.4. Provide for a cell phone [and other items to be listed] necessary for the work to which he/she is called.

4.8.5. Grant _____ 8-hour days off per week.

4.8.6. Other:

4.9 Support the Intentional Interim Pastor in the following ways:

4.9.1. In consultation with the Intentional Interim Pastor, discuss the possibility of ongoing care through a Mutual Ministry Committee to be selected by the Intentional Interim Pastor and the Congregation Council 60-90 days from the inception of the Intentional Interim Pastor's tenure.
5. The Congregation will not:

5.1. Under any circumstances, consider the Intentional Interim Pastor to be available for regular call in this Congregation.

5.2. Ask any previous pastor to perform any pastoral functions during the term of this Covenant, except by arrangement with the Intentional Interim Pastor.

5.3. Ask the Intentional Interim Pastor to perform any pastoral functions after the termination of this Covenant, except by request of the Office of the Bishop.

6. The Office of the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod will:

6.1. Provide mutual support for the Intentional Interim Pastor.

6.2. Provide mutual support for the Congregation through periodic consultation and assistance during the call process.

6.3. Respond to reports of the Intentional Interim Pastor and the Congregation. Communication between the Congregation and the Office of the Bishop will be through its Intentional Interim Pastor, its President or its Call Committee Chair.

6.4. Provide, through the Synod’s Interim Ministry Steering Committee, interim ministry training opportunities for intentional interim pastors.

6.5. Provide, through the Synod’s Interim Ministry Steering Committee, opportunities for mutual support among intentional interim pastors.

This Covenant shall terminate when a new pastor begins ministry in this Congregation, or may be terminated by the Intentional Interim Pastor, Congregation, or Office of the Bishop after consultation among the parties and with a 30-day notice. This Covenant may be amended or extended upon the mutual agreement of the Congregation and the Intentional Interim Pastor, after consultation with the Office of the Bishop, by written addendum.

We, the undersigned, enter this Covenant as of the dates indicated below.

________________________________________________________________________
Congregation (President or Secretary)  Date

________________________________________________________________________
Intentional Interim Pastor  Date

Reviewed by

________________________________________________________________________
Bishop (or Assistant to the Bishop), Sierra Pacific Synod  Date

This document will be executed in triplicate originals, to be distributed as follows.

1. Intentional Interim Pastor
2. Congregation Council President
3. Office of the Bishop
ADDENDUM TO
LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR INTENTIONAL INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY

____________________________________
(Congregation)

____________________________________
(Location)

and

____________________________________
(Pastor’s Name)

agree that:

the original agreement dated ____________________________,

___ is hereby extended by this addendum to: _______________________________.  
Date

___ is amended by this addendum as follows:

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

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

______________________________________________________________
Congregation Council President or Secretary                      Date

______________________________________________________________
Intentional Interim Pastor                                     Date

Reviewed by

______________________________________________________________
Bishop / Assistant to the Bishop                                Date
Sierra Pacific Synod

Original to: Intentional Interim Pastor
Copies to: Congregation Council President or Secretary and Office of the Bishop
Appendix 10
Litany of Beginning for Interim Ministry

It would be appropriate to insert this into the Sunday morning liturgy on the first or second Sunday that the Intentional Interim Pastor begins ministry among you. As a symbol of beginning, it makes sense to place it at the beginning of the service after the greeting and Kyrie.

A representative of the Congregation Council: Pastor _____________ has been contracted to be the Intentional Interim Pastor at _______________________. This is a ministry of specific tasks designed for the particularities of transition. Congregation President or other representative will read the interim agreement between Pastor ________ and this congregation.

Congregation President: (Reads the Agreement)

Congregation President: (address Pastor): Is it also your understanding of our agreement?

Pastor: It is and I commit myself to this new trust and responsibility. I promise to fulfill my responsibilities here to the best of my ability in accordance with scripture, with the Lutheran Confessions, and the Constitution of the ELCA. Will you as a congregation receive me as your pastor and partner in ministry as we seek God's call for us in this interim period?

Congregation: We will.

Congregation President: Welcome Pastor ________. We now officially begin our partnership in this interim ministry in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor: Let us pray

Almighty God, you call you people in baptism into the death and resurrection of your son, Jesus Christ. You turn us from the old life of sin and gave us rebirth and everlasting life. May we be renewed daily by the gift of your Holy Spirit and may we be especially aware of your leading in this interim period. Grant us faithfulness and peace in all that we do so that you may be glorified among us. We pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Congregation: Amen
Appendix 11
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 them “remember” things they may not personally have experienced, and frees them from unexpected and seemingly unexplainable actions that might pop up later.

Your Intentional Interim Pastor will have some ideas on how to help the call committee lead 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. One might 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 (e.g. notable events, people, etc.). 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.

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 Intentional Interim 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 Intentional Interim Pastor does not know members as well as you do, be helpful in identifying for them people who may need special pastoral attention.
Appendix 12

Review of the Congregation Constitution and Policies

It will be important that your constitution is updated so that your call process goes smoothly. Review your current congregation 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 churchwide assembly in August. Every congregation council should have on their regular agenda, an update of the constitution at least every third year.

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

When you have updated your constitution, you may send it to the Synod Constitution Review Committee for review: Office of the Bishop 9985 Folsom Blvd., Sacramento CA 95827. The committee will make sure that you don't have conflicting statements in sections and that it is consistent with the ELCA model constitution. The committee will return your constitution within 120 days and keep a copy of file in the synod office. If the 120 days expire before it is returned, the constitution becomes effective as it was sent in. 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.

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 updating/creating a personnel manual, mutual ministry policy, sabbatical leave policy, parental leave 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 13
Review of Core Values, Mission Statement and Vision Statement

Every congregation has a purpose. We know that we have been sent “to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19). And we know congregations function in the areas of faith, fellowship and service. A mission statement that reflects those things could be applied to almost any Christian congregation. No two congregations are exactly the same. Each one has a different personality, a different ambience, a different realm in which it functions best. Each one has its own core values, some of which may be similar to other churches, but there are some core values that make your congregation unique. These are the lenses through which you see the world, and the priorities you have established for yourselves. As you begin to evaluate and update your mission statement, try to list four or five core values of your congregation.

Every congregation also has a vision, what it shall be some day. A vision is necessary for survival. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18) Maybe you have not given much thought to your congregational vision lately. The interim period is a good time to re-vision your congregation, preparing your hearts for the vision that God has for you. Spend intentional time in the interim period with spiritual disciplines. Establish a Bible Study and encourage everyone’s participation. The Book of Acts has a lot to offer a congregation doing a self-reflection and self-study as do Paul’s letters to the Corinthians. The Book of Nehemiah, probably less familiar to many, is the story of great visionary who sets about rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. He encounters many of the same things that congregations today encounter.

As you prepare your hearts and minds for God’s vision for your congregation, you will be asking yourself: “What is our purpose? What is God calling us to be? Who is our neighbor?” And then as you discover your vision for your future, you will identify the activities you will engage to get there. This becomes your mission statement.

A vision statement is more about becoming:
- It pictures the future of your congregation as God has planned it to be
- It describes the results you hope you will realize in the “real world”
- It captures the uniqueness that God has given your congregation
- It is short, motivational, and easy to memorize
  Example: to be a congregation that is known as a safe haven for all people.

A mission statement is more about doing:
- It tells something about your purpose as a part of the larger body of Christ
- It hints at how you will make your vision a reality
- It is short, motivational, and easy to memorize
  Example: We welcome our neighbor with enthusiasm and love, knowing that God will show us the ministry we might do.
Core values are more about **being**:  
- Each one will describe what people experience in your congregation  
- Together they capture the uniqueness which is your congregation  
- They are fundamental to the beliefs and lived out  
  
Example: Empowerment; Hospitality; Challenge; Journey; Community

So let’s think about the process you might engage in order to develop or redefine your core values, vision, and mission. Let’s begin with, **Core Values are intended to communicate what the congregation stands for and on what principles it operates. They guide the everyday actions of members and staff as well as congregational planning.** We assume that a congregation which demonstrates its core values at a high level will be more effective in its ministry as will be easier to be identified by others.

1. One way to help people discover and identify their core values would be to invite all congregation members to gather in focus groups after worship on a Sunday. It will actually take two Sundays, two weeks apart and they should both be scheduled before you have the first one. Make it celebratory and not a drudging “duty.” What could be more exciting than discovering what God is calling you to do? As people are seated at tables, tell them that the goal is to articulate your core values in order to be focused in your ministry. Define core values in a way that is clear to all, maybe as simply as using the definition above.

   - Give each person 10 sticky notes. Ask them to write on sticky notes (one comment per note), the main things that they personally live by. For example, some may write kindness, honesty, hospitality, friendliness, privacy, or integrity. Others may include things like family, friends, relationships, achievement, jokes and humor. All of these things reflect values of individuals. Ask them to go put all those sticky notes on the wall someplace where all may see them.

   - On different color sticky notes, ask them to write things that reflect the values of the congregation. What are some words that reflect how the congregation makes decisions, treats people, and does ministry? Some of the words might be the same, but new words may be added as well. Ask them to put those sticky notes on the wall as well.

   - Then there will be a time of storytelling. Ask people about a time when one of those “congregational values” was demonstrated. Keep that conversation going until everyone who is willing has had a chance to share. Ask if there have been times when the congregation has acted in ways that reflect values other than those listed. Add those values to the list. Ask if there are things on the personal values list that should be added to the congregation’s value list. Add those values to the list.

   - Let people think about the values as they leave this section and let them know that they will gather again to refine the list. Take the information from the sticky notes and put it on a single page and leave the values posted somewhere in the church where people have access to them. Ask people to add to the list if they think of something during the next two weeks. **How have they seen them reflected? How might they be guides in decision making? How have those values formed their thinking? How have those values shaped their faith journey?** Then ask the members to select the top five core values. They may decide they want to name them something different in order to incorporate one or more
values. For example, they may have kindness and helpfulness as core values but may decide to change the word to compassion in order to incorporate both words.

- At the second meeting, two weeks later, give everyone 10 ‘sticky dots’. Ask them to place their dots next to the ten values they believe the congregation should claim as its core values. In other words, what are the top 10 things to live by as a congregation? Have some conversation about those ten values.

- Post the core values in a place where people can see them and begin to ask about them in terms of stories that reflect those values. Bring up the values at council meetings as decisions are being made and ask what decision would best reflect our values. Live with them for a while and get feedback through the council. Note differences between the preferred values (what is listed) and true values (what is demonstrated) of the congregation. Set a time to talk about those at a later date.

2. Your congregation probably has a mission statement already. Does it reflect your core values? Does it describe the overall purpose of the congregation? Is it clear to those who are not members or part of the congregation? Does it guide the members of the congregation as they make decisions, make policies, and develop ministries? Do the members of the congregation know and embrace the mission statement? Where is the mission statement displayed? Where is it discussed? How does the mission statement shape the mission of the congregation and how is the mission of the congregation reflected in the mission statement?

It's usually easier to write a mission statement in a small group than in the congregation as a whole. It is important, however, to have a feedback loop that includes everyone, so that the statement is not something imposed on them and the congregation can “own” it.

3. A vision statement reflects where the congregation sees itself in the future if it is effectively carrying out its mission. Putting together a vision statement can be an enjoyable process allowing people to dream big and imagine success. The statement can be used as a motivational tool or as a reminder of why we do what we do as a congregation. A helpful vision statement is one that has an idealism mixed with realism. What will your congregation look like in ten years if you are actively engaged in your mission? What does God have in mind for you given the gifts he has placed in this congregation?
Appendix 14
Review of Staffing Needs and Resources

It is often the case that when a pastor resigns, staff members submit undated letters of resignation as well. The smaller the congregation, the more appropriate this is. A pastor should be allowed then to work with the people who are in place for a few months to decide if the working relationship is such that they can accept the resignation(s) or simply tear them up and rewrite new contracts for staff members.

This process of requesting staff resignation is sometimes difficult because our tendency is to want to take care of the people we have come to know on the congregation’s staff. Certainly compassion for staff members is important and that will be reflected in their compensation, bonuses, and severance packages if their resignations are accepted. Always keep in mind that your congregation has a purpose: a vision and a mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

As you begin to look for a new pastor it is time to look at the total staffing picture as well. Staffing is a function of the vision of the congregation. And as a function of vision, staffing should always be focused on the future. A rule of thumb is to staff for the next step of your future. What is your next step? What functions will need to be carried out to reach your vision? Who is gifted in those areas? Are there volunteers in the congregation who see this as their ministry? Is paid staff the best alternative? Should the staff position be full or part time? Are there people available for full time or part time?

Congregations are sometimes hesitant to evaluate staff members, however careful and regular evaluation is a benefit both to the employee and to the mission of the congregation. Volunteers might also be given opportunity for evaluation as well. Keep in mind that evaluations are not a measure of the person so much as they are a measure of whether that person is right for that particular task or job. Every existing job should have a job description. Checking the written job description against what that employee may be now expected to do is a task for this interim period. Your Intentional Interim Pastor will help you find resources for staff evaluations, for writing job descriptions and for developing a policy for regular evaluations in the congregation.

As you look at the tasks ahead to carry out your mission, you will need to discern whether volunteers will be as effective as paid staff and whether the task requires full time or part time work. If the task requires part time staffing now, how will it increase as the ministry grows? Continually evaluate your ministry and the increases in work that employees and volunteers take on. Look at the market to establish fair wages and benefits. Annually review employee compensation and compare to cost of living increases, market parity, and value to the congregation. Treat employees fairly.

You are in the process right now of evaluating your pastoral needs. How should those be balanced with other staff positions in your congregation? Remember that Deacons are trained in a variety of specialties such as Youth and Family Ministry, Educational Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Music Ministry, Administration, Spiritual Care and Counseling. It is possible that a Minister of Word and Service or lay person might fill some of your ministry needs as you grow into your future.
Some congregations have staff positions in these areas:

- Director of Music
- Office Administrator
- Director of Christian Education
- Director of Adult Ministry
- Director of Small Group Ministry
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Hospitality Coordinator
- Visitation Coordinator
- Director of Family Ministry
- Youth and Family Minister
- Director of Outreach and Social Ministry

Clearly each one of these comes with a job description that helps the specific congregation carry out its mission. Once you are clear about your values, vision and mission, and appropriate staff, and then look at the possibilities for staffing.
Appendix 15

Intentional Stewardship

Stewardship is a key to accomplishing the mission of the congregation and is a reflection of its health. There is no perfect stewardship plan for a congregation and the same plan may or may not be effective in any two years. Every stewardship plan should be reflective of your core values, your vision, and your mission.

We are sometimes hesitant to talk about stewardship in churches, forgetting that we exercise stewardship every time we make a decision about what we will or will not do. Christians are called to be intentional about their stewardship, not just of money, but of their time and other resources as well. Intentional stewardship is bringing to consciousness and witness those things that we are already doing and those things that we intend, with God’s help, to do in the future.

As you develop your stewardship plan in the congregation remember these things:
- People give to purposes they believe in
- People give to things that make a difference
- People give to things where they feel they have “ownership”
- People tend to be generous, decent, and fair

Think about how you present an overall stewardship plan that includes regular offerings to the congregation, special gifts and capital campaigns, and end of life of legacy gifting. The congregation council has the opportunity to take leadership on stewardship during the transition time. Work with your Intentional Interim Pastor as you develop your intentional stewardship plan.

Related to your overall stewardship plan is an inventory of your corporate physical plant. As you get ready to call a new pastor and re-evaluate your ministry as a congregation, the following inventory will give you some questions to ask yourselves about property and the message the property gives as a witness to who you are. It isn't meant to be a check list, to simply answer the questions, but as a guide for conversation, learning, and potentially making improvements and upgrades to make the building more inviting and hospitable to guests.
Appendix 16

Stewardship of Property Inventory

1. Are you proud to bring friends, guests and visitors to your church building?
2. When was the facility built?
3. Is the building well located for present and future community needs?
4. When was the last renovation? What kind of renovation was it? How much did it cost?
5. How were the funds raised for the last remodel/renovation?
6. Are outdoor signs well placed for traffic visibility? Are they lighted?
7. Is information current on outdoor signs?
8. Do outdoor signs have phone numbers, email and website address?
9. Does the property look well kept? Is it landscaped?
10. Is access to the main entrance to the building easily identified?
11. Do the main doors have glass for easy visibility?
12. Is the facility handicapped accessible? Do the outdoor signs have accessibility symbol where appropriate?
13. Is there adequate parking? Is the parking lot lighted?
14. Is there well marked visitor and handicapped parking?
15. Are there good directional signs inside the building (to bathrooms, office, sanctuary, fellowship hall, etc.)?
16. Are hallways and rooms well lit?
17. Are the windows clean?
18. Are closets and storage areas assigned and tidy?
19. Are education rooms free of excess paper and clutter, and do they invite?
20. Are the bathrooms clean?
21. Is there at least one all-gender bathroom on the campus?
22. Is there a baby changing table in the bathrooms (both men's and women's)?
23. Are faucets and drinking fountains free of leaks?
24. Have the halls and rooms been recently painted?
25. Are bulletin boards updated and kept tidy?
26. Is the nursery clean and in good repair? Are toys checked and cleaned on a regular basis (is there a way to track this)?
27. Are the floors in good repair? Is the carpeting up to date?
28. Is the roof in good repair? Has water damage been repaired?
29. Are fellowship areas welcoming to strangers?
30. Are chairs and tables in fellowship areas clean and orderly?
31. Is the sanctuary inviting and inspiring?
32. Are the pews or chairs in the sanctuary comfortable and convenient for families and elderly?
33. Is there a convenient space for wheelchairs in worship? Can wheelchairs and other mobility aids move easily in the space?
34. Is the furnace and heating system in good repair?
35. Is there a need for air conditioning in offices or sanctuary? Is it in good repair?
36. Is there ongoing capital fund for building emergencies and planning remodels?
37. Are your light fixtures and bulbs energy efficient?
Appendix 17
Selecting the Call Committee

The members of the call committee may be elected by the congregation or appointed by the congregation council. Be sure to check your congregation's constitution. If allowed, we recommend that the council appoint a committee size of 5 - 7 members representative of the areas of congregational life.

A critical relationship is that between call committee and the Congregation Council. Again, be sure to check your constitution. Most often, the Call Committee is commissioned with all the aspects of identifying a candidate to recommend to the congregation for call, with the Church Council preparing a compensation package in keeping with the synod guidelines.

It is helpful to select a chairperson for the Call Committee who is not the chief elected lay officer of the congregation (president or vice president, depending on your structure). That person will have ongoing responsibilities for congregational life. The Call Committee chair need not be a member of the Council.

The characteristics desired in Call Committee members are as follows:

1. **Worship Participation**
   Regular participation in worship speaks of a commitment to honor God, hear God's word, and receive God's gifts of mercy and grace. Familiarity with the worship life of a congregation is critical for a call committee member. The member should know how the congregation worships and what its expectations are relating to worship. If there is more than one worship service time,

2. **A Person of Prayer**
   The call committee will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer as it goes about its work. The committee will invite and lead the congregation in praying that God's will be accomplished in the call process. A person who prays will be able to entertain new thoughts and directions as the Spirit leads.

3. **Can Represent the Whole Congregation**
   The call committee should consist of persons who know the needs of the whole congregation, and while they might have a primary interest in one area, they are able to make judgments based on the greater good of the whole congregation. The goal is to make winners of the whole congregation with no one feeling that they were the loser.

4. **Able To Speak Out**
   People on the call committee need to be able to express their thoughts and feelings. They should not be domineering or authoritative persons. Rather, they should be people who have confidence in their thoughts and reflections, and be able to give them voice at the appropriate times.

5. **Able to Listen**
   While they need the confidence to speak, they will also need the skill of being a good listener. They will need to listen to one another, and they will need to listen deeply and thoughtfully to a candidate being interviewed.
6. A Person of Conviction with the Ability to Reach Consensus
The most effective members will be those who have clear convictions and are able to express them, while listening to the thoughts and convictions of other members. They will need to be people who are capable of working together towards consensus, trusting that the Holy Spirit is at work through them. Taking a vote is discouraged as it tends to cause more division than consensus. Continued conversation will ultimately allow one candidate to rise to the top or not.

7. Available
The time commitment is normally around one year. During that time, there will be regular meetings early in the process and more frequent meetings during the interview time. Call committee members will need to be able to adjust their schedules so that they can attend ALL committee meetings, especially during the interviewing time. Only members present during the interview of all the candidates being considered should participate in the decision making discussion.

8. Balance and Representation
The committee should reflect the various groups in the congregation, seeking age and gender balance, racial representation, and take into account each person’s length of membership in the congregation to make certain both new and longer time members are included. It is often very helpful to include a youth member (15-20 years old) to serve on the committee, using the same set of expectations for involvement, availability and maturity.

9. Additional Best Practices
- It is rarely helpful to have a staff member serve on a call committee (a bit like hiring one’s own boss, from the corporate perspective). Essential staff members might be incorporated into the interview process as things progress.
- It is never a good idea for more than one member of a family (no matter how “extended”) to serve on a call committee. That places a disproportionate amount of power in one group.

Revised July 2012
Appendix 17a

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 to:
Office of the Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA
9985 Folsom Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95827
Appendix 18

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/elected 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 regard to our ministry and leadership needs.

You will examine the qualifications and interview prospective pastors/deacons. Ultimately you will provide a recommendation to the congregation regarding the issuance of a call. 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 siblings in Christ, I now ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the Call Committee?

Call Committee: 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 siblings 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 19a
Prayers 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 or deacon 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/they leaves to a new call/retirement surround her/him/them with your Spirit. Give us the courage to release her/him/them 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 kin-dom even as the search for a new pastor/deacon 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 Savior. Amen.

During Interviews:
Loving God, be with us and guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us O Lord to be about the work of your kingdom even as the search for a new pastor/deacon continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Beloved Child's name, Jesus Christ, our Savior. 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 new 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/deacon 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 19b

Devotions and 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
- 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:

- 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 their 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.
   • As time allows, a 10-20 minute open discussion may be included at this time.

Closing Prayer:
   LEADER: Gracious God, we are your servants in need of your love.
   The leader then offers a prayer for the person to their right. That person prays for the person on their right, continuing around the room until each person has been included.
   Close with The Lord’s Prayer
Appendix 20
Lutheran View of Call and Vocation

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

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

We believe it is our Savior Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who guides the call process. The calling of a pastor or deacon represents a valuable partnership between God, the calling congregation, and the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. An ideal call process builds on trust, openness, and good communication. When the call process results in a good match between minister and congregation, the total mission of the church is furthered.

Luther Says...

“... God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these God gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where God pleases, and those who hear the Gospel. Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call. All Christians are called to the ministry of serving God and neighbor, but for the sake of good order in the church certain Christians are specially called to the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament.”

The Call to Ordained Ministry

It is through the church that God calls certain Christians to ordained ministry. Once that call is discerned, the candidate devotes years to study, training, and preparation under the guidance of the whole church through the bishop and the candidacy committee. Not only does the local congregation participate in the call process, but so does the whole church through the Office of the Bishop

Discerning the Call of Your Specific Ministry

During the time of transition between pastors or deacons, a congregation is invited to engage in a spiritual discernment process to discover its call—what God wants the church to be and do in the next phase of its ministry.

Without knowing where God is leading your congregation, a congregation cannot know what skills, direction, and priorities it needs in their pastor. Pastors are not called to provide the vision for congregations; pastors are called to help congregations move toward the vision they have for where God is taking them.

The interim time is a period for your congregation to intentionally engage in a process that involves Bible study, prayer, and an honest and thoughtful look at your congregation and community, as a way to discern the ministry direction where God is leading you. Only after your congregation discerns its ministry direction can the call committee begin to discern what type of pastor to call to serve them.
Once this becomes clear, the call committee, in consultation with Office of the Bishop, begins the discernment process of discovering who God is calling to be the pastor in this next chapter of your congregation’s life and ministry. The discernment process is an exciting journey that will take you through specific steps but moves according to the Spirit’s timing. Faithful attentiveness to and trust in the guidance of God’s spirit, will help to make your journey rich and fruitful.

**The Partnership Between the Whole Church and the Local Church**

The local congregation is fully the church, but the local congregation is not all the church there is. The local congregation calls a person to be its pastor, but the whole church everywhere has a stake in who is called and how the call process is handled.

The call committee, the congregation council, and the entire congregation all participate fully in the process. As does the Office of the Bishop, who represents both the interest and the commitment of the whole church in seeing that the pastor called is suited to ministry under the call that is extended.

The Office of the Bishop has deep concern for the well-being of the congregation’s life and ministry. The Office of the Bishop also has deep concern about the person and gifts of the prospective pastor. In the call process the Office of the Bishop, the congregation, and the prospective pastor or deacon work together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring about a new partnership that is faithful to the Gospel, empowers the local congregation in its ministry, and strengthens the whole church as people of God.

**The Call Process is Unique**

On the basis of our Lutheran theology, a pastor or deacon is **called**. The call process is not simply hiring a new employee for the church as would be done in a secular workplace. It is participating in God’s own choice for the church by opening ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit who will guide, nudge, empower, inspire, comfort, and inform the journey toward finding new leadership.

**Called, Not Placed**

Unlike some other denominations, Rostered Ministers in the ELCA are not “placed” or “moved around” by bishops. Neither can congregation councils or senior pastors unilaterally secure rostered people for congregational leadership. All rostered ministers must be **called** by a congregational vote.

**Called, Not Hired**

The call process is not the same as the hiring process in other parts of society. The pattern that includes head hunting, résumé shuffling, or personality contests is highly inappropriate in the calling of a pastor. Neither is the call process like a popularity contest in which hosts of candidates present themselves to their best advantage so the call committee can select one as the winner.
The ELCA call process is unique because it is an effort to discern what God wants for this congregation and for the whole church, in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed and the sacraments administered in accordance with the Gospel.

**The Wrong and Right Questions**

It is not appropriate for a call committee to be guided by questions such as: “Will the congregation like this pastor?” “Will they approve of the call committee’s choice of candidates?” “Will people feel good having this pastor around on Sunday morning?” “Will this person do for now until a better pastor comes along?” “How will this person look to the rest of the community?”

The foremost question for the call committee always should be “Is this is the person God intends this congregation to have as its pastor or deacon?” Human preferences and personalities should never come before the mission to which God calls the church. That is why every meeting of the call committee will include prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work that is being done.

This means that candidates for the call will not be submitted — and should not be evaluated — on the basis of age, gender, race, physical limitations, or any other “human distinctions.” The call is about the spiritual gifts needed for leading and facilitating ministry in a particular setting; nothing more, and nothing less.

**The Significance of Service on a Call Committee**

Many people report that serving on a call committee turned out to be one of the most important things they ever did as members of a congregation. It allowed them to experience firsthand how the Holy Spirit works through committed Christians to help the church be faithful to its calling. It gave them an opportunity to see how the local congregation is vitally connected to the whole church. And it let them participate in opening a new chapter in the life and ministry of their congregation as part of the history long, worldwide Church of Jesus Christ.

**Expectations**

It is important to be clear about expectations. What do you and this congregation expect of your pastor in:

- Worship
- Learning, Teaching
- Stewardship leadership
- Fellowship leadership
- Witness, Evangelism, Outreach
- Pastoral Care
- Communication
- Administration
- Ecumenical leadership
- Service in the Sierra Pacific Synod/Wider Church
- Service Projects / Social Justice
- Other ...
Conversely, since congregational ministry is always a mutual ministry between the called minister and the congregation, what can or should the pastor or deacon expect of you in:

- Support of family and time for family life, or personal time / time with friends if single
- Compensation package
- Continuing education opportunities
- Opportunities to serve and lead at the synodical and churchwide levels
- Support through your prayers
- Honor and respect them as a leader in the Church
- Other...

**Doing the “Rite Thing”**

It's often helpful to listen carefully to the words that are spoken during the Rite of Installation. A pastor is asked, “Will you...”

- discharge your duties in harmony with the constitutions of the church (See Chapter 7.31.11 & 7.31.12 of ELCA Constitution; Chapter 14 of the Synod Constitution; and Chapter 9 of the Constitution for Congregations);
- preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church;
- love, serve and pray for God's people; 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; and
- give faithful witness in the world, that God’s love may be known in all that you do?”

And the congregation is asked, “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 them as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God?;
- pray for them, help and honor them for their work’s sake and in all things strive to live together in peace and unity of Christ?”

**Other “Right Now” Expectations**

1. What are your expectations of the Call Process itself?
   a. Do you clearly understand the process?
   b. Do you understand the general time line for a “normal” process, and that this process ought neither be protracted nor rushed?
   c. Do you understand how calling your pastor (or other rostered person) involves the entire synod and the whole church?
2. What are your expectations of this Call Committee?
3. What are your expectations of your Congregation Council?
4. What are your expectations of the Office of the Bishop?
   a. In the ELCA, the Office of the Bishop and the congregation work in mutual consultation regarding the process and in identifying candidates for call. (C 9.01)
   b. The bishop: attests Letters of Call, authorizes and provides for the installation of the pastor, authorizes and provides for the ordination of pastors.
5. What expectations do you have of yourself?
   a. Pray; perhaps more than you have done in a while!
   b. The Holy Spirit “calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps us united in faith.”
      (Luther’s Small Catechism - The Apostle’s Creed, Article 3)

Confidentiality Revisited

Confidentiality cannot be overemphasized in the task of calling a pastor. Mention of specific candidates outside the call committee meetings is inappropriate until the committee is ready with its recommendation to the congregation. It is important to keep all names and both verbal and written information about prospective candidates within the confines of the committee. Committee members will need to establish ground rules and boundaries, not only with the congregation at large, but also with those in their household or place of work.

Openness

Reporting regularly to the congregation council and to the congregation helps keep everyone on the same level of understanding about the process.

Holding Confidence

The Call Committee must keep all verbal and written information about each and every candidate strictly confidential.

The reasons for this are at least twofold.
1. The congregations the candidates are serving are (most likely) unaware that they are interviewing. If a name should get out and back to a candidate’s congregation it could severely damage their ability to do effective ministry at that site. Never underestimate the “connectedness” - who knows whom - within the Lutheran community!
2. You run the risk of turning the whole congregation into a call committee. People will be second guessing why you decided what about whom; without having all the information - “the rest of the story” - before them. The call committee has been chosen and set aside to do this work on behalf of the congregation. The whole congregation will meet the final candidate when the time is right.

Communication

While confidentiality is important, that does not mean secrecy. Every means ought to be utilized to keep the members of the congregation informed about the call committee’s work and progress. There must be as much transparency as possible. Consider using:
1. Newsletter articles explaining the call process to the congregation; with follow-up articles each time another stage in the process is reached.
2. Notes in the Sunday bulletin announcing that the call committee is meeting helps keep the congregation informed of progress.
3. Temple Talks by a member of the call committee to update the congregation on a weekly basis might also be welcomed. (Even if the report is “nothing has changed from last week” - it is very helpful to let people know what is happening in the call process. Also, from one week to the next, you will not be reporting to exactly the same audience).
4. Announcements via email or newsletters to announce open meetings.
5. **Have a Website section or page** dedicated to the Transition Process.
6. **Forums** can be used to make sure the congregation understands the call process; and to update them along the way. This format invites interaction and feedback.

As you keep the congregation informed:
- Always familiarize them with the process.
- Summarize specific presentations from the visit from the Office of the Bishop, and others the congregation may engage with during this time
- Keep them apprised of progress.
- Spell out preferred process for communicating with the members of the call committee

Do these things and:
- The congregation will clearly understand the process, including the roles of the Office of the Bishop, congregation council, call committee and congregation.
- The congregation will be able to identify and communicate with the members of the call committee.
- People will have a clear understanding of the proper process for communicating with the members of the call committee.

**With the exception of confidential materials, there is no such thing as too much information.**
Appendix 21
Guide to the Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

Call Process Online: http://www.elca.org/call-process/
Ministry Site Login: https://webapps.elca.org/call/Login/

The Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and other forms that ministry sites will need can be found at Call Process Online (www.ELCA.org/call). The information from your submitted MSP is stored in the Mobility Database System which makes it possible for MSPs to be sorted, studied, searched and shared in a quick and efficient manner.

Purpose And Structure
The MSP is designed to stimulate your reflection, to be a summary of the characteristics and ministry of your ministry site, and to serve as the first impression that you wish to give to prospective candidates.

• **An Introduction**: The MSP is meant to be a conversation starter or introduction to the life and work of your ministry site. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of every aspect of your ministry. Focus on the key things that describe your ministry site in order to pique the interest of prospective candidates for call. Give special attention to writing your “Summary Description” since what you write will be featured prominently on the Current Openings web page.

• **Flexibility**: The MSP seeks to encourage your creativity and initiative by offering options and choices for presenting your ministry site. Your responses in the “Narrative” sections should be thoughtful and concise. The “Commentary” section of the MSP invites you find ways to creatively talk about the life and ministry of your site. The optional “Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context” gives you the opportunity to go deeper into some key issues of your context if you wish.

• **Corroboration**: The MSP requires that a recommendation form be submitted. Choose someone who is in a position to know your ministry and send them the form found on Call Process Online. The reference will be asked to identify your ministry site’s characteristics using the same “Ministry Site Characteristics” survey that you filled out on your MSP. This helps to validate the information on the MSP and gives prospective candidates another perspective.

Discernment Process
What is God’s hope and dream for your congregation? In what ways is your congregation strong and unique? Would your neighborhood miss you if you were gone?

One of the final questions on the MSP asks about your Discernment Process. Before starting to work on your MSP, along with the Intentional Interim Pastor, the leaders of the ministry, the transition team, and call committee should spend time in discernment. Think and pray about your sense of Mission at this time in your history and consider these three things:

• Why do you exist, and for whom? What would someone who observes you from the outside conclude about your sense of purpose and mission?
• What are you clearly good at? What ministry activities bring out the best in you and seem to be valued by others?
• What does your neighborhood really need right now, and how are you helping to meet those needs? An experience of Mission that feels powerful, Spirit-inspired and authentic often happens where these three things converge. That is, Mission is what happens when we are true to our purpose, using our best gifts and responding to the needs that are before us in our community and world. Ministry that only touches on one or two of these things may not be at the core of what your mission is. Thus your prayerful discernment is important, and much of the MSP will give you the opportunity to share what you have discerned.

Steps in Completing the MSP
1. Create an Account
   To create an account, click on “Ministry Site Profile” (https://webapps.elca.org/call/Login) and then click on the link for a New User. You will be asked to supply an email address and a password for your account. Write your password down and store it safely.
   • Next you will be asked to enter information for your account profile. If your site is a congregation, choose “Congregation” and give your ELCA congregational ID number. If your site is a congregation and a part of a cooperative of congregations, choose “Multiple Point Parish”. If your site is a church-related organization, choose that option. Whatever you enter on your Profile page will automatically show on the MSP form that you open. Click “Update” and then “Create a New MSP”.
   • You can return at any time to the “Account Profile” screen to update your Profile. Whatever you enter will be reflected in your MSP. Remember to click “Update”.
   • Now that you have an account, you will find that the next time you login you will have the option to update your Profile or go to “MSP Status” where you can review your work, update an existing MSP, or manage other aspects of your account.

2. Filling out and Submitting the MSP
   The MSP is completed on the web; it does not require that you download software in order to work on the form.
   • SAVE YOUR WORK frequently as you proceed using the “Save and Continue” button on the bottom of each page. If your online session times out, you will lose the work you have done on it since you last saved your work.
   • REQUIRED FIELDS (marked with *) must be filled in before proceeding to the next section or page.
   • TWO USERS: Congregations must fill out the entire MSP. With the concurrence of the synod bishop, church-related organizations may fill out only Parts I, III, IV.
   • CALL PROCESS CONTACT PERSON: At the end of the MSP you will be asked to insert the name of your “Call Process Contact Person”. This should be the staff member from the Office of the Bishop that is working with your congregation or organization in the call process.
   • FINAL REVIEW: When you get to the final page of the MSP you will be prompted to download a PDF copy of the MSP so you can review it one last time.
   • CORRECTIONS: You can reopen your MSP to make any last corrections.
   • SUBMIT: When you are really sure your MSP is ready, and opportunity for review and feedback has been provided to the members and friends of the ministry, click on “Submit” on the final page of your MSP. Both you and the Office of the Bishop will receive an email confirming that the MSP has been received.
• ACTIVATION: The MSP does not become active in the Mobility Database System until the Office of the Bishop approves it.

• MSP STATUS: You can, as needed, monitor your MSP forms by logging into Call Process Online. Click on the tab marked “MSP Status”. Here you can choose to review your MSP, update your MSP, look at the status of your MSP, or request the supporting forms.

• UPDATE: If you edit and resubmit a MSP that is already active in the system, your new MSP will require re-approval by the office of the bishop.

• ARCHIVING: Your approved MSP will remain active until you request that it be archived, or the bishop determines that it must be archived, or a year has elapsed since it was first submitted.

• MULTIPLE POINT PARISHES are encouraged to collectively complete one MSP. The “Commentary” section of the MSP can be used to describe any unique features of each of the cooperating congregations. If it is necessary for each congregation to fill out its own MSP, then the “Commentary” section should contain the congregations’ collective description of how the parish cooperative functions.

• MORE THAN ONE OPENING: If your ministry site has more than one opening to be filled by a rostered minister, you may edit your existing MSP to reflect this second position and then resubmit it. If you need a blank MSP in order to describe this second position, you can download a blank form on your “MSP Status” page. Your MSP Status page will have a snapshot for each of the MSPs you have submitted under the same email address.

Some Helpful Tips

• BE CREATIVE: The MSP gives you the freedom to add comments, share ideas and passions, and present your ministry site’s gifts. Make your MSP distinctive.

• BE THOUGHTFUL: The narrative questions are the most important. It is more important to write concisely and insightfully than to just write many words.

• BE HONEST: It never pays to represent your ministry site in a way that will not prove to be true over time. You are more likely to match successfully with a rostered minister if both you and they are honest about your respective ministry, style and gifts. Romans 12:3 is good advice: For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

• BE SPECIFIC: Study the list of characteristics and preferences you identified and focus your answers. Avoid being too general in your responses.

• SEEK COUNSEL: Involve as many people as possible at your ministry site in thinking and writing about the questions of Identity/Purpose, Gifts/Resources, and Context/Needs. Begin every conversation with Bible study and prayer. Share what you propose to submit with the leadership and membership of the congregation. Listen to the critique that is offered.

• COOPERATE: Never approach a rostered minister directly about your position. Each synod staff has a shepherding role in call process within their synod that must be respected.
Two Supporting Forms
The various forms that ministry sites use in the Call Process come together to form the Ministry Site Portfolio. The portfolio contains the Ministry Site Profile, the following two supporting forms, and other documents that you may choose to submit to the synod staff person working with you.

Reference Recommendation
Someone from outside your congregation who knows your ministry site well can complete a recommendation form about your characteristics and ministry. Before having a Reference Recommendation form sent to them, you should first secure their willingness to do this. Then return to Call Process Online and login to your MSP Status page. Click on “Request a Reference Recommendation” and enter the person’s name and email address. The system will send the person a request and the login information to access the form. After the person has submitted the form, you and the reference will receive an acknowledgement by email. The form automatically attaches to your MSP. The form is considered confidential. If you would like to review it, please ask your reference for a copy.

Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context
You may choose to enhance your MSP by providing additional information on the Seven Reflections form. The form is listed immediately alongside the Reference form (see above). Once submitted it automatically attaches to your MSP.

Updated July 2019
Appendix 22

Hints for Completing the Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

The information contained in the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is valuable for helping a candidate understand the opportunity to serve that your congregation or organization presents. What you learn about yourselves and your opportunities for ministry as you gather information and consider the questions posed in the MSP is also valuable.

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

Following are some hints and clarifications of the questions asked in the Ministry Site Profile.

Summary Description
This is a 75 word statement that people who search for your MSP online will be able to read. It is like your ‘personal ad’. We suggest that, despite this being first on the MSP, you leave this section until last, as the information you gather and compile for the rest of the MSP will inform this section. The goal is to describe yourselves and what you’re looking for in a Rostered Minister in such a way that the prospective pastor or deacon might begin to hear the stirring of a call from God to partner with you in ministry.

PART I: WHO WE ARE

Demographics
The form allows only 5% increments. More discrete percentages can be stated in “Additional Information” or in Part IV: Commentary.

   Gender Comparison and Age Distribution
   These sections describe the congregation, not the community.

   Average Weekly Worship Attendance
   The selections provided are very broad ranges. It is helpful to mention the actual average worship attendance in Part IV: Commentary.

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

1 Perfect accuracy is not necessary, but a fairly accurate comparison with the congregation’s community is helpful. See below for sources of age demographics for the community.
Total Debt includes outstanding mortgage balance, any line of credit balance, amounts borrowed from dedicated funds, payroll taxes owed, balances owed for benefits, and outstanding obligations to vendors at the end of the last fiscal year even if these balances have changed since then. If there has been significant change in balances owed since the end of the last fiscal year, this can be noted in Part IV: Commentary.

Mission Support to the ELCA/Synod for the last fiscal year refers to regular remittances through the Sierra Pacific Synod for mission support and any other contributions to mission support sent by the congregation such as in response to a year-end annual appeal.

Total Savings, Reserves, Endowment at the end of the last fiscal year refers to the total of all liquid assets in checking, savings, certificates of deposit, bonds, stocks, or any other account or instrument that can be converted to cash. This includes funds that are assigned to the general fund, dedicated accounts, restricted funds, and endowment.

Part II: OUR VISION FOR MINISTRY

Trends in the Community Context of the Congregation or Organization

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

Trends
This is about the congregation. What are the three most significant changes in the last 3-5 years? New building? Renovation? New use of facilities? Addition or loss of staff? Worship attendance increase or decrease? Financial support increase or decrease? New programs? Significant losses? All changes, positive or negative, are accompanied by challenges. It would be helpful to identify the work that the congregation and the new pastor or deacon need to do in response to change.

2 There are two free sources for this information: Demographic information for zip codes can be obtained from the ELCA website at: https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Research-and-Evaluation. You will need your synod code (2A) and your congregation ID, which can be obtained from your church office. You will need to either select one zip code or to combine information for multiple zip codes. A useful alternative is to go to http://thearda.com/DemographicMap/ input the street address or zip code where your congregation is located, find and click on your congregation on the map, and then choose a radius for your service area. 5 miles is a good figure. In the Part IV Comments, it may be helpful to note the source of your demographic information and what you chose as your service area.
Context
This section is again about the community, not the congregation. In the last 3-5 years, what has changed in the community surrounding the congregation? Is there new industry? Have employers laid off workers? Is there new business investment? Is there increased unemployment? Is there new housing? Community revitalization? Urbanization? Loss of young people to urban areas? Cultural or demographic changes? Are new schools being built or are schools closing or consolidating? Is the real estate market on an upswing or a downturn? Are there significant people issues in the community?

Programs
It is helpful to organize your response to this question under headings that correspond with your congregation's various areas of ministry (see footnote). Describing your programs in an orderly manner helps you to appear organized.

Goals
In strategic planning, goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely (SMART). These should be current goals formed to help your congregation or organization minister in your context today. Every ministry says they want to grow (whether they really want to do so or not). Rather than saying that you want to grow, identify the things you are willing to do that might result in growth. You are completing the MSP because you are looking for a pastor or deacon. You do not need to identify calling a minister as one of your goals. Instead, state the kind of goals you and your new pastor or deacon will work on together.

Energy
What are the things that people put forth considerable effort, time, and money to do? What is delightful, well received, well supported in the congregation's ministry? What about the congregation's ministry are people talking about inside and outside the congregation? You may be putting a lot of energy into calling a pastor or deacon at this time, but you want to identify areas of ministry that might stir up a minister's energy for working in partnership with you.

Partnership
Describe the ways in which you cooperate with ELCA churchwide ministries, the Sierra Pacific Synod, local Lutheran congregations, local ecumenical or interfaith congregations, and local agencies serving your community. What kinds of ministry are you doing in partnership with others?

---

3 It is helpful to consult your local chamber of commerce, mayor's office, school district, regional planning office, or other business or government agencies that have this kind of information. There may be changes and trends in your community of which you are unaware.
Part II: OUR VISION FOR MISSION

Ministry Site Characteristics
The choices are intended to represent points along a continuum. If you gather information from congregational surveys, be sure to tell members to select only one choice for each line. As a committee, you may select the bubble that most nearly represents the preferred response of the congregation or you may use your own judgment based on the congregation's input.

*We understand that these are not true polarities, so think of the scales as a description of who you are at this point in time. There are no right or wrong answers in this section.*

Purpose, Giftedness, and Mission

Purpose
This is perhaps the most significant section of the MSP. “Who are you” and “Why are you here” are questions that go to the heart of your identity as a community of baptized Christians. This is not a superficial question. The Holy Spirit has called and gathered you as God’s people. This is about your core identity and purpose.

Giftedness
You might identify spiritual gifts evident in your congregation such as those described in Paul’s Letter to the Romans: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy. You might identify gifts that are more mundane, such as your building, or more personal, such as your human resources, or programmatic, such as ministries for which you are well known in your community.

Mission
Every congregation should regularly review its identity, gifts, opportunities, challenges, resources, and mission priorities. This is your opportunity to identify your three most important mission priorities and to state them in such a way that you invite a pastor or deacon to partner with you to work on these.

References
You should give careful consideration about who to include in this section. Of course, you want to choose people who will speak knowledgably and confidently about your ministry, but you also need to choose people who can keep confidence about who is phoning them, and people who will be honest with the candidates.

It is not appropriate to list any former pastors as a reference. You certainly may list your interim pastor if you choose.

---

5 This section is of fundamental importance for your congregation’s understanding of its reason for being. Start by reading and reflecting on Chapter 4 of your congregation’s constitution. It can be helpful for the council and other leaders of the congregation to study these questions on a weekend retreat or over several extended study sessions. Resources for this study may be found at [http://www.elca.org/Resources/Mission-Planning](http://www.elca.org/Resources/Mission-Planning). Other resources are available from the Office of the Bishop. The call committee should work with the intentional interim pastor to work through this process. Your task during this interim period is to know your purpose, resources, and mission well enough that you can identify what attributes you need in a pastor or deacon to help you to answer God's call to mission.
Part III: LEADERSHIP NEEDS
Transition Teams or call committees often present a survey asking for members' opinions on these items. What is most helpful is if the opinions offered are informed opinions and not merely personal preferences. If the transition team or call committee presents to the congregation a description of the congregation's context, programs, goals, purpose, and calling to mission, the committee will inform the congregation's opinions with useful information and thoughtful interpretation, not be merely surveying personal preferences. You want to put before the congregation their calling to mission and how a pastor or deacon contributes to that mission. This should be one of the last pieces of information gathered for the MSP.

Top Five Ministry Tasks
These tasks should support your mission stated above. A congregation survey may be used to inform the transition team or call committee's choices. Evaluation of survey results in light of the congregation's mission should determine the choices selected on the MSP.

Gifts for Ministry
Out of 25 gifts, you are asked to choose 5 top priority gifts and 5 helpful gifts, in all, 10 out of these 25. Again, the committee should evaluate any input received from the congregation and identify the gifts that are most needed and most helpful to aid your congregation to answer its call to mission in this particular context.

Mutual Expectations
These tasks to be addressed in the first year may provide the foundation from which the pastor or deacon and congregation may reach toward longer range mission priorities.

The five ways that the congregation might assist the minister in the first year may include things such as providing opportunities for them to meet the members of the congregation, introducing them to community leaders, working alongside them in some tasks, prayer, financial support for specific mission-related training, conducting an every member response stewardship program to provide financial resources for mission priorities, etc. What is important here is that the pastor or deacon and congregation not have the impression that the minister is going to accomplish the congregation's mission goals all through their own effort

Compensation\textsuperscript{6}
“Defined Compensation” includes salary and housing. If the congregation offers a parsonage, the fair market rental value of the parsonage plus utilities is included in “defined compensation” along with salary and housing equity allowance (if offered). Items such as auto mileage reimbursement, continuing education, professional expenses, health care, and retirement are NOT included in the “defined compensation” figure.

Benefits
If a congregation would like to have a long term pastor or deacon, offering a sabbatical provides them an opportunity to develop new skills or a renewed focus on ministry that can benefit the congregation in the long term. If your congregation does not have a sabbatical

---
\textsuperscript{6} Compensation and Benefits are determined by the congregation council. It may be helpful for the call committee to be familiar with the synod compensation guidelines (found at spselca.org in Resources) in order to provide advice to the congregation council and to answer questions for candidates.
policy, noting that you are willing to discuss offering a sabbatical may be helpful.

Beyond the candidacy process, the synod does not perform background checks on rostered ministers. It is the congregation's responsibility to perform a background check on the pastor or deacon at the time of call, just as it is the congregation's responsibility to perform background checks on all persons in the congregation who work with vulnerable populations. If a candidate refuses a background check, inform the Office of the Bishop immediately.

**Professional Expenses**  
The more of these items that are checked “yes,” the more attractive the call looks to the candidates.

**First Call Theological Education**  
Rostered Ministers in their first three years of ministry are required to attend first call events. Sierra Pacific Synod does these in conjunction with the other synods of Region 2 of the ELCA. Congregations and organizations are expected to grant time for these events and to provide for expenses, ideally separate from the ‘regular’ continuing education line. If you have questions, please contact the Office of the Bishop.

**Other Supporting Resources**  
The more of these the congregation or organization can provide, the better informed a candidate can be in deciding to accept a call. Several of these may have been produced in the process of preparing the MSP.

**Part IV: COMMENTARY**  
Some areas of comment might include: a strategic or long-range plan, vision or mission statements, facilities renovation or future construction plans, present programs, staffing or community involvement, how the current budget expresses your mission priorities, description of worship life and practices.

This section provides an opportunity to add detail or explanation to any previous section of the profile.

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

**Seven Reflections on Ministry and Context**

The Seven Reflections document is available to you as an addendum to the MSP and provides opportunity to provide more in depth answers in several areas. This is an optional document, but we recommend that you review it and decide if you would like to use it.

1. This question provides an opportunity to demonstrate how your congregation’s ministry is relevant to people’s needs in today's world.

2. Do you “put your money where your mouth is?” In other words, are your financial priorities consistent with your mission priorities?

3. This is basic demographic information. What are the demographic characteristics of people who live where the congregation is located and how is this similar to or different from the membership of the congregation. If there is a disparity, hopefully addressing that disparity is reflected in the congregation's mission plan.

4. What events in the life of the congregation continue to “echo” in the congregation's life? Have significant events in the life of the congregation been “swept under the rug” and continue to influence congregational life? Have there been events that have had a significant impact on the congregation's identity?

5. This is your opportunity to show how you cooperate with other congregations and people of good will to have a positive impact in your community.

6. How your congregation deals with conflict and what you have learned about yourselves in dealing with conflict is more important here than the actual issues over which you have had conflict. This question is more about process than it is about content.

7. You might include here a description of any portions of your building or property that are not being used for their intended purpose and how they are being used presently.

**Final Comments:**

Be honest about your congregation and your community. It is better for a pastor or deacon to know up front what the challenges are rather than to discover them after accepting the call. If you have challenges, try to state them as opportunities for development and growth. If you have challenges, you want a pastor or deacon who is willing to address them.

Avoid words such as “don’t,” “not,” “can’t,” “haven’t,” etc. Make positive statements about who you are, what you do, and your hopes for the future. Avoid negative comparisons such as, “We are not a megachurch, but we are a growing congregation that cares for its members and welcomes newcomers.” Just say that you are a growing congregation that cares for your members and that welcomes newcomers. That sounds more positive than a negative comparison.
Practically every congregation thinks of itself as “friendly.” Sometimes, being friendly means that members who already know one another are friendly with and care for one another. Before saying that you are friendly, a question to consider is whether you are friendly in a way that includes insiders and excludes outsiders or friendly in a way that invites, welcomes, and accepts newcomers. If you see your congregation as friendly and welcoming, don’t offer that as a general statement. Be specific. Describe how persons of various races, cultures, ages, physical abilities, religious backgrounds, sexualities, gender identities, economic status, marital status, with children or without are invited, welcomed, and accepted. The interim time may be a good time to address the question of whether your congregation is really and truly welcoming of any and every person who might walk through your front door on Sunday morning or any day of the week.

Your intentional interim pastor can be a valuable consultant to your process of gathering and evaluating information for your MSP. Intentional Interim pastors have varying levels of training and experience in conducting church and community studies and identifying mission priorities. Some are capable leaders for retreats and workshops for identifying a congregation’s mission and for mission planning. Use your international interim pastor as a resource for your work, but be sure that your MSP is your document, written by your committee and the congregation council.

God calls people to ministry through the church. Be open, prayerfully, to how God may be using you to put words to God’s call to a prospective pastor or deacon.

*updated July 2019*
Appendix 23
Sample Questions for Candidate Interviews

The following questions are merely suggestive. In forming any particular question the key issue is, “What answer are you looking for? How will you know when it's answered well?” Each question may be evaluated in three ways: (a) What does it have to do with the position? (b) What do we need to know? (c) Would we be willing to answer the same questions about ourselves?

1. Tell us about your faith journey.
2. Share with us your calling that led you to become a pastor.
3. Describe the areas of ministry which you value as high priorities.
4. Talk about the ministry areas you like to do. Why?
5. What pastoral roles give you the most trouble? Why?
6. Discuss your strengths as well as those areas on which you need work.
7. What are your expectations for yourself and lay persons in liturgical practices?
8. Describe your preaching philosophy and style. What themes do you emphasize in your preaching? What are your ideas regarding children's sermons?
9. Discuss your thoughts, expectations and requirements concerning catechetical instruction.
10. Discuss in detail your expectations/philosophy of, and pastoral involvement in: Educational Ministry, Evangelism, Stewardship, Benevolence, Youth Ministry and Social Ministry.
11. From your perspective, what were the areas in your last/current call which gave you personal satisfaction?
12. What role do you see the pastor fulfilling in relating to committees?
13. How do you see your role in relation to congregation council?
14. Describe your philosophy of visitation and pastoral calling.
15. We'd like to hear about your family.
16. Why are you considering accepting this call?
17. How do you see yourself involved in our community and the synod?
18. Tell us about your hobbies.

The Committee may want to ask specific questions based on the areas that they have identified as high priority on their Ministry Site Profile. Following are some sample questions in each of the areas.

Worship/Preaching
1. Describe how you go about preparing for the worship service.
2. Tell us about the most difficult sermon you ever preached.
3. Share some of your thoughts about the worship life of a congregation.
Social Ministry/Outreach
1. Tell us how you evaluate community needs and community strengths.
2. Describe how you have contributed to the quality of life in your community.
3. Describe how you go about motivating members of your congregation to respond to community needs.

Administrator/Leader
1. Describe the steps you take normally when working with groups to achieve consensus.
2. How would you describe your style of leadership in overseeing the work of the congregation.
3. Tell us about a period in your life when you had to manage multiple demands in your work and how you determined priorities.

Teaching the Faith
1. How do you evaluate the faith development of others?
2. Describe your approach to helping adults to grow in their faith.
3. Describe your approach to teaching children and young people about the Christian faith.

Evangelism
1. Describe ways in which you typically become acquainted and associate with unchurched people in your community.
2. What kind of guidance and training do you provide members of your congregation for reaching unchurched persons in the community?
3. Describe how you have achieved a multicultural approach to your ministry.

Interpersonal Climate
1. What steps do you take in helping others feel secure, trusted, and open with you?
2. When pressure mounts how do you maintain your cool in ministry?
3. Describe an experience where conflict arose between yourself and another person and how resolution was finally achieved. What did you learn?

Ministry In Crisis/Counseling
1. Describe your style of ministry to people in crisis.
2. Describe how you have used the establishment of boundaries to strengthen your ministry.
3. How do you assess your own professional limitations when ministering to persons in crisis?

Interpreter Of Theology
1. Describe ways in which you communicate the faith.
2. Describe your skills as teacher and preacher.
3. What resources keep you theologically and biblically fresh and current?

Innovator
1. Describe your approach to introducing new ideas in the congregation.
2. Describe your current vision for ministry and how you would help others in the congregation to capture that vision.
3. Share a situation that was stagnate or failing and describe how you revitalized it.
Denominational Leadership
1. Describe how you have guided your congregation into understanding their relationship to the greater church.
2. Describe your participation in the work of the church beyond the congregation, including ecumenical relationships, church agencies and institutions.
3. Describe what your congregation believes to be their role as a congregation of the ELCA.

Stewardship
1. Describe how you have helped others grow in their personal stewardship.
2. In what ways have you helped members understand the management of their money and their responsibilities as Christian stewards?
3. Describe the development of your personal sense of Christian stewardship.

Personal Growth
1. Describe some of your most important accomplishments and how you went about reaching those goals.
2. How do you work at making yourself more effective in your work?
3. Briefly describe ways in which you care for yourself physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Your Call To Ministry
1. Briefly describe the events which led you to prepare for the ministry.
2. Describe the process of deliberation which helps you determine God's call.
3. In what ways has your call to ministry changed over the years?

The Call Committee may find it useful to conclude the interview by asking the candidate:
• What are two or three things that we should know about you that we didn't ask?
• Do you have any further questions that you want us to answer?

Possible Interview Questions for Associate Pastor Candidates
1. What are the essential things for maintaining a good and effective relationship with the senior pastor and other staff?
2. Tell us about a time when you had a disagreement with a co-worker or supervisor. How did you react? What was the conclusion of the disagreement? What did you learn? What would you do differently?
3. Tell us about a time when you were unclear about direction from your supervisor or colleagues. How did you handle it? What did you like about your reaction and what would you change?
4. [Assuming that the candidate has met with the senior pastor, and that the sr. pastor is not in the room] After your meeting with the senior pastor how do you see your styles complementing each other? What do you see as the potential difficulties in your working relationship?
5. [Who does the Assoc Pastor report to? Who does their evaluations?] How does the candidate react to that structure?
Appendix 24
Possible Questions Candidates Might Ask

Types of Questions Asked by Candidates

1. What do you think people like about this congregation?
2. What are some of the things you hope this congregation will do in the future that would benefit you? others?
3. What are some of the reasons why you are members of this congregation and not some other one?
4. What kind of organizations do you relate to?
5. What kinds of activities take place on a weekly/monthly basis?
6. How do you welcome and assimilate new members?
7. What plans has the council made for doing additional self-study and goal setting?
8. What structure of government does this congregation have?
9. What kind of benevolence do you support?
10. In what area(s) of social concern has the congregation been active?
11. What kind of priority do you give to the functions of a pastor, both in terms of importance and number of hours? What gets deferred if time runs out?
12. What view does the congregation have about continuing education? What about time off? financial support? Will the pastor be encouraged to attend the annual pastors' conference? Who will pay the expenses?
13. How does the pastor's family receive support? Are there expectations of the pastor's family?
14. Administratively, who prepares the council and congregational meeting agendas?
15. Who chairs meetings?
16. What are the housing opportunities in the neighborhood? What present financial arrangements have been made for the pastor's housing? Has the council and/or congregation envisioned any future ideas for the pastor's housing (shared equity, mortgage loan from the congregation, etc.)?
17. What is the school situation in this area?
18. (In the case of multiple-staff ministries) How do you describe the task divisions, lines of authority, conflict management and reporting methods for the pastoral staff, council, congregation and committees?
19. Describe what the community's image of the congregations is (if you can tell).
20. What hardships has the congregation experienced in the past? Have there been any major conflicts?
21. What is the attitude of the congregation toward the church at large? Synod? ELCA?
22. What are the possibilities for growth in size and involvement?
23. How many pastors has this ministry had in the past twenty years?
24. How is the pastor's leadership accepted by the congregation?
25. What kind of secretarial service will the congregation provide?
Appendix 25
Meet and Greet

When the call committee has identified a final candidate to recommend to the congregation, a Meet and Greet weekend is highly recommended. This provides the members and friends of the ministry to meet the candidate (and their family, if applicable), to interact informally and maybe in some more formal ways. This time also allows the candidate to see the congregation in worship, spend time in the area, and research specific areas of interest or need. All costs for this weekend should be covered by the congregation. Be mindful of any changes in time zone the candidate will need to be navigating as you set the schedule.

The Meet and Greet should be scheduled in tandem with the special congregational meeting for the purposes of voting on the call. The recommendation is that the Meet and Greet happen one to two weeks before special congregational meeting.

A sample schedule is below. Please modify to meet the needs of the congregation and the candidate.

**Friday**
- The candidate (and their family) arrive and settle into hotel
- A rental car – or the lending of a car is helpful so they can move about on their own
- An informal dinner or BBQ at someone’s home with the call committee, council, staff members, and their families. This allows time for more informal interaction and some good interpersonal time.

**Saturday**
*This day is customized to meet the needs of the candidate (and their spouse). Be sure to schedule in some ‘down time’ in this day.*
- At some point, there should be a block of time when the candidate, their spouse (if applicable / desired), a couple members of the call committee meet with council members &/or finance team members to discuss the Compensation and Benefits in detail. A good practice is to fill out the Definition of Compensation and Benefits form at this meeting so that all are on the same page before it goes to a congregational vote.
- Other options for this day:
  - meet with realtor
  - tour rental properties
  - talk with people knowledgeable about school districts
  - free time to drive, walk, hike, or bike in the area
  - an extensive tour of the congregation facilities
  - meet with ministry partners in the area
  - meet with staff members
Sunday

- The candidate (and family) are present in worship – at all worship services
- They are introduced in worship
- They *should not* preach or preside at worship, but it is appropriate for them to read a lesson or lead the prayers or have some other role in worship. This allows the members to experience their ‘up front’ presence.
- There should be opportunity for members and friends of the congregation to interact with the candidate. This can take many forms. Some examples are:
  - a more formal Q&A where people have the opportunity to ask the candidate questions directly in a large group setting
  - a more ‘informal’ model is to have the candidate move from table to table during a fellowship time to have conversation with different people.
  - a moderated conversation in a large group setting with questions that have been submitted ahead of time
  - *In all cases, at least one member of the call committee should accompany the candidate and be ready to redirect or stop any questions that are inappropriate or that veer into an attempt at an ‘interview.’* The candidate should not be put in a situation where they are having to answer (or refuse to answer) questions that are not appropriate and potentially damage a relationship that hasn’t yet had a chance to even begin.
- The candidate departs for home
Appendix 26

Release of Candidate:
Sample letter to candidates not recommended for call

Dear Pastor Smith,

On behalf of the Call Committee of _____________ Lutheran Church, I would like to thank you for your willingness to be considered as a candidate for the position of (Senior) (Associate) Pastor. We were impressed by your fine record and sample sermon.

(You may wish to go into more detail of strengths and areas of concern)

At this time, we have chosen another candidate to recommend to our congregation. The choice was difficult because of the quality of the candidates recommended to us. We wish you blessings upon your continued ministry.

Sincerely,
Jane Doe, Chair
Call Committee