



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

From Pastoral Vacancy to Installation

A Handbook from the
Metropolitan Washington,
D.C. Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America

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Getting Started: A Call Process Overview

The transition from one called rostered leader in your congregation to another can be both exciting and uncertain. This handbook is intended to guide your congregation through the process and answer questions.

In this handbook, you will find thorough and easy-to-follow steps for calling your next pastor/deacon.*

You'll notice four main parts to the call process:

- 1) The resignation of the pastor (or the need to call another pastor)
- 2) The use of an interim pastor or transition consultant (when calling a senior or solo pastor)
- 3) The work of the Call Committee
- 4) The installation of a new pastor

The following pages will guide you through the call process chronologically.

** Because pastors are primarily called in congregational settings in this synod, the word "pastor" is used repeatedly. If your congregation plans to call a deacon, the steps are the same. Contact the synod office with questions or concerns. Staff are happy to discuss this in further detail.*



A Letter from Your Bishop

Dear friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus, and welcome to the special ministry of helping your congregation find a new pastor. Your congregation has entrusted you with special responsibilities during this time of transition. Whether you are a member of the Congregation Council or of a Call Committee, you will be helping to focus the attention of your community of faith, helping to define its mission, and helping to find the leader God will show you.

I want you to know that you are not alone in this ministry. This booklet describes the way you will be going about your work. It also tells you about some of the things you can expect and offers resources to guide you. I will help you, and so will others from our Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod. Above all the Holy Spirit will help you in your care for your own special portion of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Some of the procedures this booklet describes for you are standard throughout our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They reflect our Lutheran practices and traditions and remind us that Luther and the other Reformers insisted on the importance of giving every local community of faith the right to call its own pastor or deacon. Other procedures in this booklet are unique to our own synod. They reflect our experience, gained over more than twenty years now, of what works best in our vibrant, diverse metropolitan area.

Please note that much of your work will require great discretion. You have been selected for your task because people trust you. Make sure that you preserve that trust by keeping confidences and by being very careful how you speak about what you are doing.

Please note, too, the importance of seeking truth and clarity in your conduct both as an individual and when working with others. Our “call process” grows out of our conviction that when Christian people speak the truth with each other as clearly as they can, God will show them how to make decisions that protect everyone and that build up the Church.

Thank you for this ministry you are undertaking. It will sometimes seem demanding. But it will also be satisfying in ways that you could never anticipate. You will never forget this experience, and you will always be grateful that you had this chance to help God shape the future. With blessings and

In Jesus,

The Rev. Richard H. Graham
Bishop
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod

Resignation of the Pastor

1. **Outgoing pastor** writes letter of resignation to congregation.
2. **Bishop or synod representative** contacts outgoing pastor and council to go over the transition process and decide on a path to calling a new pastor.
3. **Pastor and Congregation Council** finalize outgoing pastor's timeline, including the planning of a "Farewell Sunday" when the congregation will recognize the outgoing pastor's ministry.
4. **Bishop or synod representative** will meet with the Congregation Council to discuss how the congregation is doing, explore the way forward and answer questions. The bishop or a synod representative will also speak with the outgoing pastor about his/her experience in the congregation and what the pastor thinks would be helpful for the congregation in its transition process and new call.
5. **Council president** sends her/his name, phone number and email address to synod office. The synod office will keep in regular contact with the Congregation Council through the council president throughout the call process.
6. **Congregation** recognizes outgoing pastor's ministry in "Farewell Service."
7. **Synod representative** will offer to hold a Q&A Session with the congregation to explain the transition process and the call process. The council president should contact the synod office to schedule a time and place for this session.

Use of an Interim Pastor or Transition Consultant

In consultation with the synod, the Congregation Council decides whether to use **an interim pastor** or a **transition consultant** during the transition period.

An intentional interim pastor is an ordained pastor who serves your congregation while it searches for a new pastor. Intentional interim pastors bring additional, specialized skills to help lead the congregation through transition. This person will take care of all the pastoral responsibilities in your congregation during the vacancy. S/he may be full or part time, depending on your situation.

1. **Bishop** recommends an interim pastor for your congregation and presents that person's name to the Congregation Council for its approval.
2. **PLEASE NOTE:** The interim pastor is not available for call in your congregation. One reason an interim pastor is effective is because s/he is not part of the call process. Instead, the interim pastor is a pastor to and in the congregation while the congregation prays, struggles and rejoices in the process of calling another pastor.
3. **Congregation Council and interim pastor** create a **Covenant for Interim Ministry** (found on the synod website - <http://metrodcclca.org/for-congregations/forms/>) to serve as a contract for the interim pastor's work during his/her time in your congregation.
 - a. A copy of the completed covenant should be sent to the synod office upon the arrival of the interim pastor.
4. **Interim pastor will normally work with the congregation** to appoint a **Transition Team** (apart from the Congregation Council and different from a Call Committee) to assist in the formation of the relationship between the interim pastor and the congregation. The team should be comprised of three to five energetic members who represent different demographics of the congregation. Its primary function is to be a liaison between the congregation and the interim pastor and to assist the interim pastor with analysis and process.
 - a. **Responsibilities of the Transition Team may include:**
 - 1) Advise the interim pastor on questions s/he may have about the congregation (culture, traditions, etc.).

- 2) Relate to the congregation to help create a stronger, more trusting relationship between the interim pastor and the congregation as a whole.
 - 3) May meet with congregation members and the Congregation Council to identify and work through challenges and opportunities in the congregation in preparation for forming the Call Committee.
 - 4) Work with the interim pastor and Congregation Council to determine when it's time to form a Call Committee.
 - 5) Assemble the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), which is a description of the congregation's mission and search for a new pastor, if the Call Committee does not. See page 8 for more information.
5. A **Call Committee** is formed according to the congregation's constitution. (See more on following page)

A transition consultant is a third-party adviser who accompanies the congregation's process of calling a new pastor without the use of an interim pastor. The specifics of this role are determined by a contract established with the transition consultant and in consultation with the synod office.

1. **Outgoing pastor** continues as pastor of the congregation during the consultant work.
2. **Transition consultant and congregation** establish church leadership teams (Transition Team, Call Committee, Welcoming Team) during the consultant work.
3. **Church leadership and transition consultant** schedule retreats and meetings.
4. **Transition consultant** meets with congregation and Congregation Council (depending on what the congregation's constitution states) to form Call Committee.

Calling a Pastor

1. **A Call Committee is formed** according to the congregation's constitution and represents different demographics in the congregation. The constitution often names the council president a member ex officio, but other council members should not be on the Call Committee. They will have a role later in the process.
2. **Synod representative meets with the Call Committee** to go over call process, to answer questions and to keep the synod updated on the congregation's progress.
3. **Call Committee or Transition Team** makes a **Ministry Site Profile (MSP)**, which is a description of the congregation's mission and search for a new pastor.
 - a. Go to www.elca.org/call-process/ministry-sites and click the blue "Ministry Site Profile" button and follow the proceeding steps. (At least one person will have to create an ELCA account to complete this task if no one has done so already.) It is best to complete your draft MSP in the program and save it as you go along. When the MSP is complete, submit it through the ELCA website. Only the synod office will be able to view it at this point.
 - b. A synod office representative will discuss the MSP with the Call Committee chair, and they will make it available to pastors in the ELCA.
4. **Call Committee prepares for interviews** with candidates. See page 13 for sample interview questions.
5. **Synod office will send names** of candidates to Call Committee.
6. Within 72 hours of receiving the Rostered Leader Profiles (RLP) of candidates shared with the congregation, **the Call Committee contacts all candidates** within 72 hours to acknowledge receipt of their name. The committee should schedule a time to meet with each candidate. All candidates should be treated the same regardless of location. If the Call Committee must meet one candidate over a video call, they must meet all candidates over a video call, even if some candidates are nearby and others are far away. It is common to complete one round of interviews by Skype, narrow the list and bring in remaining candidates for in-person interviews. It is advantageous to share a meal with each candidate, if possible, but not required.
 - a. **Call Committee** should ensure that all candidates have the **same basic experience** at each stage in the interview process. All Call Committee members

are expected to participate in all Call Committee meetings. More information on interviews is found on page 13.

- b. **Letters to candidates** should be sent by the Call Committee promptly after each interview, thanking the candidate for coming and meeting with the Call Committee and informing them a date by which they can expect to hear from the Call Committee next.
- 7. If the Call Committee **decides not to move forward with a candidate**, they release the candidate (example letter found on page 17) and should schedule a second round of interviews with the remaining candidate(s) in person.
- 8. If preferred, the Call Committee may request **Neutral Site Sermons**, which are sermons preached in another congregation where the Call Committee can listen and observe. The Call Committee chair works with the synod office to find a congregation where the candidate can preach and the Call Committee can listen.
 - a. If the candidate is in your synod or in a neighboring synod, and the Call Committee would like to hear the candidate preach and see the candidate lead worship in his or her own congregation, the Call Committee may visit the congregation. **Please note:** Should the Call Committee visit the candidate's congregation, it is imperative that the Call Committee members are very discreet during their visit—they should simply act as visitors and should not tell any of the pastor's congregation members why they are visiting.
- 9. **The Call Committee narrows the list of candidates to one name** and gives that name to the Congregation Council for approval. The Call Committee should have voted unanimously (unless the congregation constitution says otherwise). At this point, the Congregation Council becomes more involved in the call process, but the Call Committee continues working as well.
- 10. **The Congregation Council schedules a time to meet with the candidate**, and if possible, share a meal. The Congregation Council and candidate will discuss a compensation package at this meeting. Guidelines for this are found at <http://metrodcelca.org/for-congregations/salary-guidelines/>. The Congregation Council will vote to accept or reject the Call Committee's recommendation. If the Congregation Council votes in favor of the recommendation, then the council president should contact the synod office to schedule a Call Meeting when the congregation can vote on the recommendation.

- 11. The Congregation Council and candidate schedule a “Meet and Greet”** with congregation. This can take many forms; an example might be to include an ice cream social on the Saturday before the Call Meeting or time with the candidate between worship services on Sunday morning. It is good for a congregation to become acquainted with the candidate before the call vote. If the candidate has a spouse, this is a good chance for the spouse to meet the congregation as well. It is also customary for the candidate to preach during the congregation’s worship service on the morning of the call vote.
- 12. The Congregation Council** informs the congregation of the Call Meeting as outlined in the congregation’s constitution.
- 13. Congregation Council** initiates **background checks** of the candidate. For more information on how to obtain these checks, contact your congregation’s insurer or the synod office.
- 14. A Call Meeting** normally takes place on a Sunday after worship for the congregation to vote on whether or not to call the candidate as its pastor. Before the Call Meeting, the bishop or a representative from the synod will contact the council president and go over the procedure for a Call Meeting. The bishop or a representative from the synod will be present at the Call Meeting and facilitate the vote. A copy of the Call Meeting template can be found on <http://metrodcelca.org/for-congregations/forms/>.
- 15. The Congregation immediately notifies the candidate of Call Meeting results.** Should the congregation extend a call, and the candidate accepts, the synod office will send the formal hardcopy Letter of Call to the council president, who will complete it and send it back to the synod office. Should the congregation not extend the call, the Call Committee will gather immediately following the meeting to notify the candidate of the decision and to arrange for the next Call Committee meeting. The synod office should be notified immediately of the congregation’s decision. Should the candidate decline an extended call, the Call Committee shall notify the synod office immediately and arrange the next Call Committee meeting.
- 16. The pastor-elect,** in consultation with the council president and the bishop, decides on a date for the new pastorate to begin.

- a. If the pastor-elect is in the process of resigning from his or her own congregation, it is normal for the pastor-elect's congregation constitution to require four to eight weeks of ministry beyond the resignation.
- b. The council president or vice president will consult the pastor-elect to determine the best time for the acceptance to be announced publicly. Once the congregation knows when the new pastorate will begin, arrangements for moving will be made between the pastor-elect and the officers of the Congregation Council. The congregation is responsible for moving expenses.

17. **Congregation Council notifies synod office** of Acceptance of Call, start date and installation date.
18. **Congregation Council** sends to synod office: signed **Letter of Call** and completed **Definitions of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor and Congregation**, found on page 18.
19. **Congregation** puts together a **Welcoming Team** to help the new pastor transition into his or her new community (more on page 21).
20. **The new pastor is installed.** Congratulations! Installation guidelines are found on page 22.

Calling an Additional Staff Pastor or Deacon

If your congregation intends to call an additional staff pastor or a deacon, the congregation will follow the same steps listed in this handbook, with assistance of the senior pastor. The senior pastor often meets with candidates before they meet with the Call Committee or in addition to the Call Committee meetings. The role of the senior pastor will be determined in conjunction with the Call Committee, the synod office and the senior pastor.

If you are calling a pastor or deacon to their first call, there are additional details on page 23.



Interviewing Candidates

In order to begin a conversation on a given topic, it is best to ask open ended questions that invite elaborate responses and not a simple “yes” or “no.” Open ended questions often lead to follow-up questions that can give the Call Committee opportunities to probe deeper. Ask the candidate to share their experience and listen for what s/he has done vs. what s/he thinks. Resources for interview training are available by contacting the synod office.

The following sample interview for candidates are meant to be suggestions. Each Call Committee should design its own questions to determine if the pastor might be a good “match” for the congregation. Questions that lead to rather long answers mean that fewer questions can be asked in the time period set for the interview. The Call Committee should take time before interviews take place to plan which questions will be asked and who will ask them. Time should also be allowed for the pastor to ask about the congregation.

Theology

- Not everyone interprets the Bible the same way. Tell us about a time when you found that to be the case in a congregation. How did you work with the people involved? How did it play out?
- What is your articulation of the Gospel? How does it inform your pastoral leadership? How will it shape how you lead us here?
- Many ELCA congregations have at least one service each week that is not in the hymnal. Describe an experience when you either led such a style of worship or when your congregation considered such a change and may or may not have implemented such worship.

Ministry

- In your Rostered Leader Profile (RLP), you evaluated your skills in ministry. You indicated that preaching is one of your top skills. What is your goal when you preach a sermon? How would you describe your preaching style?

- The neighborhood around us is rapidly changing. Tell us about an instance when you led a congregation in working with people in the surrounding neighborhood. How did it incorporate the diversity of God's people? How did you encourage congregational involvement? What was the response from the congregation and the neighbors?
- How do you understand the role of laity in congregational life?
- We have an embarrassment of riches here at _____. How will you equip and empower us to leverage our ministry gifts for the work of God's kingdom?

Evangelism

- Tell us about how you approach the conversation on evangelism in your current call?
- Tell us about the most recent person whom you connected to the church who had not been a part of it before.
- Tell us about someone you brought to faith.

Stewardship

- Describe your last stewardship campaign.
- How did it incorporate stewardship into all aspects of peoples' lives?
- How much more money did it raise than the previous year?
- Tells us about your personal stewardship practices.

Leadership Style

- Describe a time when you wished to establish a new program or ministry in a congregation or wanted to make a significant change in an existing program or ministry. How did it work out? If it wasn't successful, what did you learn from the experience?
- How did you communicate with the congregation—both with individuals as well as with the whole congregation?
- Describe a time when someone pushed back against an effort you led. How did you respond?
- What is your model for pastoral leadership? How do you live it out in congregational life? How do you know if it's effective or not?
- Tell us about a time when you had to revise your leadership paradigm.

- Ministry can be like running through the weeds. How do you find and get perspective when you've lost it?

Professional/Personal Growth

- Share a recent experience that challenged your thinking, inspired you or deepened your understanding of the ministry and/or life.
- The ELCA sees continuing education as very important for its pastors. Other than providing time and funding to continuing education, how can this congregation support you in lifelong learning?
- What continuing education did you complete in the past year?
- Do you have a mentor? Why or why not?
- Do you have a ministry coach? Why or why not?

Pastor as Person

- Describe ways you take care of your physical, emotional and spiritual self. How do you spend your free time?
- What role does collegiality play with local pastors (ELCA and beyond) in your life and ministry?
- Tell us about a time when collegiality with others helped you, changed you or sustained you.

Discipleship

- Tell us about your own experience of discipleship. Have you been discipled?
- Tell us about someone you have discipled.

Emotional Intelligence

- What bothers you most about other people?
- Tell me about a day when everything went wrong.
- Tell me about a colleague you got along with really well and why you think you did.
- What's something you can teach us?
- Tell me about someone you admire and why.



- Tell me about something you are proud of and why are proud of it.
- If you could start with a clean slate in our church, tell us about what kinds of people you would hire and why.

The following discussion questions for a Call Committee are intended as suggestions for use after an interview and preaching visits.

Theology

- How will this pastor's theology address the spiritual needs of this congregation? Does he/she understand the mission of the church?
- Does this pastor's leadership style work with our own expectations? If not, could it be a style we need? If not, why not?
- Will this pastor be a partner, equipper and empowered in our ministry together? If the answer is yes, what evidence do we have from our interview and from the references that this is actually the case?
- Does this pastor have a fire in his or her belly? How was passion for the Gospel and ministry evident in the interview? If it wasn't there, should we be concerned?

Ministry

- What specific skills does this pastor have that address the ministries set out in our congregational profile? Does s/he have a vision and skills for evangelism and outreach as well as pastoral care?
- Was I comfortable during the interview? Will he/she relate to the members of this congregation?

Professional Growth

- Has the pastor had opportunity for professional growth? How has it affected his/her understanding in the ministry?
- Beyond accountability to leadership in the congregation, does this pastor have habits of accountability with others?
- Is this pastor teachable? If so, what is the evidence?
- Does this pastor have a desire to grow? To improve? If so, what is the evidence?

Pastor as Person

- How does the pastor care for himself/herself? Does the pastor's basic work orientation fit the needs and rhythm of our parish life?

SAMPLE: Letter for Releasing a Pastor from the Process

January 1, 2010

The Rev. Pat Smith
26643 Church Road
Springfield, VA 22151

Dear Pastor Smith:

On behalf of the Call Committee, I want to thank you very much for talking with us in our first steps to call a pastor to the ministry at X Lutheran Church.

The Call Committee met and reviewed our impressions of the interview. While we enjoyed our time together, we have discerned that God is not calling us to move forward in ministry with you as our pastor. Thank you for taking the time to interview with us and sharing so much of yourself and your ministry.

We pray God's continued blessings upon you!

Sincerely,
Chris Jones
Call Committee Chair

cc. Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Office



WORKSHEET: Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor and Congregation

Prepared by: _____

For the Reverend _____

For the period: _____ to _____

1. Annual Compensation

- a. Base salary (including social security allowance) \$ _____
- b. Housing allowance \$ _____
- c. In a parsonage or other housing is provided
 - i. Utilities allowance \$ _____
 - ii. Furnishing allowance \$ _____
 - iii. Housing equity \$ _____

2. Pension and Other Benefits

The congregation will sponsor the pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Board of Pensions Program, which provides retirement, disability, survivor, and medical-dental coverage. (Sponsorship will include medical-dental –optical coverage for the pastor’s spouse and children unless they have other employer-provided group medical insurance coverage and the pastor consents to waiving medical-dental coverage for them under the ELCA Board of Pensions Program).

- a. ELCA Pension at _____% of defined compensation
- b. ELCA Medical-Dental-Optical Insurance
 - i. __ Member only
 - ii. __ Member and spouse
 - iii. __ Member and children
 - iv. __ Member, spouse and children
 - v. __ Coverage waived
- c. Other insurance or benefits: _____

3. Expenses

- a. Automobile and travel allowance \$ _____



- b. Other professional expenses \$ _____
- c. Expenses for official meetings of the synod \$ _____
- d. Expenses for First Call Theological Education \$ _____
- e. Continuing education (minimum \$500) \$ _____
- f. Other _____ \$ _____
- g. Moving expenses to this congregation as follows:

 _____ \$ _____

4. Agreement

- a. Vacation time of _____ per year, including _____ Sundays (at least four weeks including Sundays for full-time calls);
- b. Continuing Education time of _____ weeks per year (minimum of two weeks per year that may be accumulated up to three years, as reflected in a continuing- education agreement developed by the pastor and Congregation Council);
- c. Participation in First Call Theological Education, if applicable;
- d. Outgoing care through a Mutual Ministry Committee
 - i. Meeting frequency: _____
 - ii. Members: _____

- e. Up to two months of continued salary, housing, and contributions to the ELCA Pension and other benefits program in a 12-month period in the event that the pastor is physically or mentally disabled; and
- f. Where applicable, parental leave of at least eight weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits.

5. Other Provisions

A description of the particular responsibilities of the position may be attached or a list may be included here indicating the areas to which the pastor will give special attention and the way in which the congregation will offer encouragement. The pastor will give special attention in ministry to:



- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

This congregation will encourage this pastor’s ministry in the following ways:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

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

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

Congregation Council President

Congregation Council Secretary

Date: _____

I certify that I accept the above statement:

The Reverend _____

Date: _____

NOTE: Retain original in records of congregation. Make a copy for the pastor. Send a copy to the synod office. It is suggested that a description of the particular responsibilities of this position be attached to this “Definitions of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities (7/16/09)



Welcoming Team

The Welcoming Team is a wonderful resource for the new pastor to transition into a new area. This team will not only help the pastor (and family) get acclimated but also alleviate some of the initial challenges of joining a new community. Form a group of 5-7 people who can work on ways to welcome the new pastor (and his/her family). The following is a list of recommended tasks for Welcoming Teams. It would be very helpful to plan these tasks ahead of time, consult with the new pastor, and see if any adjustments should be made.

MOVING

- If a parsonage is available, make sure it is clean and ready for move-in.
- If a parsonage is not available, identify a realtor who knows the area and the schools well.
- Assist in the move-in. Assemble a team to help the pastor and his/her family unload moving trucks.
- Stock the fridge and pantry with some staples.

CONTINUE TO WELCOME DURING ENTRY PERIOD

- Have members sign up to bring meals for the next few days (or weeks). This not only helps the pastor after an exhausting move, but also allows more members to meet the pastor (and family) in a more personal setting.
- Organize small group dinners with other parishioners.
- Designate one member of the Welcoming Team to regularly check in with the pastor (and family). It shows they are loved and cared for and communicates an understanding that transitions can be difficult.
- Donate gift cards to various restaurants and services to familiarize the pastor (and family) with the surrounding area.

COMMUNITY

- Organize a list of helpful community resources and recreational activities. Items to include can be recommended doctors, schools, electricians, dry cleaners, community service agencies, etc.

CHURCH EVENTS

- Organize a series of welcome receptions with the congregation.
- Organize a reception for the Installation service.
- Encourage members to wear name tags.

Installation

The installation is the last step in the call process. If you are calling a First Call Pastor or Deacon, see page 23. It is a time to welcome your new pastor into the community with a festive worship celebration.

Planning the service

The new pastor works together with members from the congregation to plan the worship service. The installation service can be found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book of Occasional Services or on-line at www.sundaysandseasons.com (accessible with a congregation membership). The service is usually set within the service of Holy Communion.

Installing, preaching and presiding

The conference dean will install the new pastor. The new pastor may ask another pastor to preach. The new pastor traditionally presides.

Date of the Installation

The conference dean, Congregation Council and new pastor decide a date together. Because the conference dean is a pastor at his/her own congregation, the installation service takes place at a time other than Sunday morning. There are plenty of opportunities for members and family to be involved.

Invitations to the service

If the congregation would like to send formal invitations to the installation, the congregation is responsible for printing and distributing them. If someone from the Congregation Council informs the synod office of the installation date with enough advance notice, the synod will send out a notice by email to all pastors in the synod regarding the date and time of the upcoming installation.

Welcoming the congregation

The installing conference dean or the council president of the congregation offers the welcome.

Congratulations! The call process has ended and the new ministry has just begun!

First Call Ordination/Consecration

A pastor entering his/her first call is often ordained and installed in the same service (some exceptions are made when the pastor desires to be ordained in her/his home church and installed where s/he is called). Likewise, a new deacon to the roster of Ministry of Word and Service is consecrated for public ministry. ** It is a celebratory time to welcome your pastor or deacon not only to your congregation but also to ministry!

Planning the service

The pastor/deacon-to-be plans the worship service. The order is always ordination/consecration first and then installation. The new pastor/deacon-to-be sends a copy of the planned service to the bishop to be reviewed.

Invitations to the service

The synod sends out invitations to an ordination/consecration to all congregations in the synod, as well as anyone requested by the pastor/deacon-to-be.

Date of the service

The date of the service is determined with the bishop, the pastor and the congregation hosting the ordination.

Ordaining, installing, preaching and presiding

The bishop ordains/consecrates and installs the new pastor/deacon. The new pastor/deacon may ask another pastor to preach. A new pastor traditionally presides.

Welcoming the congregation

The bishop or the council president offers the welcome.

Congratulations! The call process has ended and the new ministry has just begun!

***Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, associates in ministry, deaconesses of the ELCA and diaconal ministers will be a single, unified roster of Ministry of Word and Service as established by action of the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. The entrance rite for an associate in ministry has been commissioning and for either a deaconess or diaconal minister has been consecration. Until recommendations for the entrance rite are finalized for this new roster of Ministry of Word and Service, consecration will be used as the entrance rite.*

Checklist for Pastoral Transition

Complete?	Task
	Pastor resigns from congregation
	Pastor and Congregation Council finalize timeline and plan a "Farewell Service"
	Congregation holds "Farewell Service"
	Council president sends his/her name and contact info to synod office
	Synod rep holds Q&A session with congregation concerning call process
	Congregation decides whether to use an intentional interim pastor or transition consultant during the transition period (if calling an additional staff pastor or deacon, the senior pastor leads the general call process)
<i>The following are in regard to an intentional interim pastor. If using a transition consultant, skip the next four steps.</i>	
	Bishop recommends an interim pastor
	Congregation Council and interim pastor create a Covenant for Interim Ministry (found on synod website)
	Interim pastor forms a Transition Team
	Interim pastor forms a Call Committee
<i>The following three steps are in regard to a transition consultant.</i>	
	Transition consultant and congregation establish church leadership during consultant work
	Church leadership and transition consultant schedule retreats and meetings
	Transition consultant meets with congregation and Congregation Council to form Call Committee
<i>General call process continued</i>	
	Synod representative meets with the Call Committee to go over the call process
	Call Committee completes a Ministry Site Profile (view page 7 in handbook for instructions)
	Call Committee sends completed Ministry Site Profile to synod office
	Call Committee prepares for interviews with pastor/deacon candidates (sample interview questions in handbook)
	Synod office sends list of names of candidates to Call Committee
	Call Committee contacts and interviews all candidates received
	Call Committee releases candidate(s) with whom they have decided not to move forward
	Call Committee conducts second round of interviews, if necessary

	Call Committee and candidate(s) plan Neutral Site Sermons (explanation in handbook)
	Call Committee narrows list of candidates to one (unless they've released all candidates, in which case the synod prepares a new list of candidates)
	Congregation Council schedules time to meet with candidate and vote whether or not to present the candidate to the congregation
	Congregation Council and candidate negotiate compensation and benefits
	Congregation Council schedules a Call Meeting with the congregation, where they will vote whether or not to call the candidate to the congregation
	Congregation Council and candidate schedule a "Meet and Greet" with congregation
	Congregation Council is required to run background checks on any candidate it wishes to call
	A Call Meeting takes place and the congregation votes on the candidate
	Congregation immediately notifies the candidate with the Call Meeting results
	Pastor-elect, in consultation with council president and bishop, decides on a date to begin
	Congregation Council notifies the synod of acceptance of call
	Congregation Council sends Letter of Call and completed Definitions of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor and Congregation to the synod office
	Congregation Council puts together a Welcoming Team
	New pastor is installed

