



**METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON, D.C.
SYNOD** ELCA

Healthy Transitions: From Rostered Minister Vacancy to Installation

A Handbook from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Revised October 9, 2024



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD ELCA

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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 rostered minister. Your congregation has entrusted you with special responsibilities during this time of transition. Whether you are a member of the Congregation Council or Call Committee, you will help to focus the attention of your community of faith, define its mission, and discover the leader God is preparing for you.

You are not alone in this ministry. This handbook describes some of the things you can expect and offers resources to guide you. Some of the procedures described are standard throughout our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They reflect our Lutheran practices and traditions reminding 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 of what is best practice for our vibrant, diverse metropolitan area.

Please note, much of your work requires great discretion. You have been selected for your task because people trust you. Make sure that you preserve that trust by keeping confidences and being careful how you speak about the process. 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 shows them how to make decisions that protect everyone and build up the Church.

Thank you for your ministry. At times, it will seem demanding, but it also will be satisfying in ways you have yet to discover.

In Jesus,

Bishop Leila Ortiz



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD ELCA

lortiz@metrodcelca.org

Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA

The Call Process Overview

The transition from one called rostered minister to another is exciting and uncertain. This handbook is intended to guide your ministry site through the transition process and empower you to lead boldly and faithfully.

In this handbook, you will find thorough and easy-to-follow steps for calling your next rostered minister (pastor or deacon).*

You will notice four main parts to the call process:

- 1) The resignation of the rostered minister (or the discernment to call another rostered minister)
- 2) The use of an interim minister or transition consultant (when calling a lead or solo pastor)
- 3) The work of the Call Committee
- 4) The installation of the newly called rostered minister

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

Questions?

If you need assistance or have any questions about this process, please contact Pastor Sarah Garrett Krey, Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility and Candidacy at sarahgk@metrodcelca.org or call (202) 417-3678, ext. 3681.

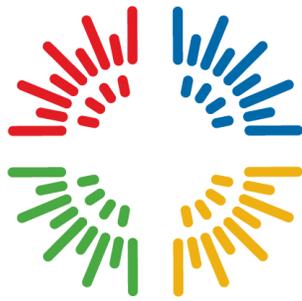
**The ELCA adopted the language Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastors) and Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) at the 2016 Churchwide assembly. This handbook will use the language, Rostered Minister, to refer to both pastor and deacon in the call process.*



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Resignation of the Rostered Minister

1. The rostered minister should be in touch with the Bishop and/or the Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility to alert them of an upcoming resignation.
2. Outgoing rostered minister writes letter of resignation to ministry site and sends a copy to the bishop and synod representative.
3. Bishop or synod representative contacts outgoing rostered minister and council to review and clarify the transition process.
4. Rostered minister and Congregation Council finalize outgoing rostered minister's timeline, including the planning of a "Farewell Sunday" where the congregation celebrates their joint ministry.
5. Bishop or synod representative meets with the Congregation Council to discuss how the congregation is doing, explore the way forward, and answer questions. The bishop or a synod representative conducts an exit interview with the outgoing rostered minister.
6. Council president sends contact information (name, phone number, and email address) to the synod representative to foster regular contact through the transition process.
7. Congregation recognizes the shared ministry between the outgoing rostered minister and the congregation in a "Farewell Service."
8. Synod representative offers to meet with the congregation to explain the transition and call process. The council president contacts the synod office to schedule a time and place for this session.



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Use of an Interim Minister or Transition Consultant

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

An interim minister is an ordained pastor who serves your congregation while it engages the discernment and call process. Interim ministers bring specialized skills to help lead a congregation through transition attending to care and pastoral responsibilities in your congregation during the vacancy. They may be full or part-time, depending on the congregation's needs.

1. Bishop recommends an interim minister for your congregation and presents the minister's name to the Congregation Council for its approval.
2. PLEASE NOTE: The interim minister is not available for call in your congregation which frees them to be a more effective interim and allows them to be with you as you pray, wrestle, and rejoice in the process of calling another rostered minister.
3. Congregation Council and interim minister create a Covenant for Interim Ministry (found on the synod website [here](#)) to serve as a contract for the interim minister's work.
 - a. A copy of the completed covenant should be sent to the synod office upon the arrival of the interim minister.
4. Interim minister may 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 minister and the congregation. The team should be comprised of three to five energetic members who represent different demographics of the congregation. Their primary function is to be a liaison between the congregation and the interim minister and to assist the interim minister with analysis and process.
 - a. Responsibilities of the Transition Team may include:
 - i. Advise the interim minister on questions that arise about the congregation (culture, traditions, etc.).
 - ii. Encourage healthy relationships between the interim minister and the congregation as a whole.



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- iii. Meet with congregation members and the Congregation Council to identify and work through challenges and opportunities in the congregation in preparation of forming the Call Committee.
- iv. Work with the interim minister and Congregation Council to determine when it's time to form a Call Committee.
- v. Assemble the Ministry Site Profile (MSP). See page 8 for more information.

5. A Call Committee is formed according to the congregation's constitution.

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

1. Outgoing rostered minister continues as minister 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 the congregation and Congregation Council (depending on what the congregation's constitution states) to form Call Committee.



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Calling a Rostered Minister

1. A Call Committee is formed according to the congregation's constitution and represents the demographics of the congregation. The constitution often names the council president a member ex officio, although having a call committee that is fully separate from the church council can be helpful. Other council members should not be on the Call Committee, as the church council will have a role later in the process. The chair of the call committee should provide contact information to the Synod and becomes the contact person with the Synod. If the chair of the committee changes, please update the Synod with new contact information.
2. A synod representative meets with the Call Committee to go over the call process, answer questions and keep the synod updated on the congregation's progress.
3. Call Committee or Transition Team to write the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), which is a description of the congregation's mission and discernment process.
 - a. Go to <https://www.elca.org/Call-Process/Ministry-Sites> and click the blue "Ministry Site Profile" button in the left side menu and follow the proceeding steps. (At least one person will have to create an ELCA account to complete this task if it has not already been completed. If you need your Congregational ID, please contact the synod office for assistance.) 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 rostered ministers in the ELCA.
4. Call Committee prepares for interviews with candidates. [See page 13](#) for sample interview questions.
5. Synod office sends names of candidates to the Call Committee.



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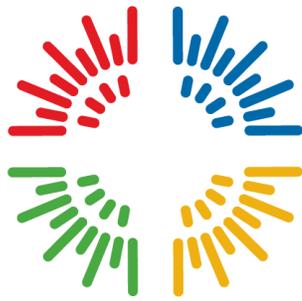
6. Within 72 hours of receiving the Rostered Minister Profiles (RMP), the Call Committee chair contacts each candidate to acknowledge receipt of the candidate's name. The committee schedules a time to meet with each candidate being mindful to treat all candidates equally regardless of location. For example, if the Call Committee meets one candidate over a video call, all candidates must meet over a video call. It is common to complete the first round of interviews via Skype/Zoom, narrow the list, and meet the remaining candidates for in-person interviews. If you are able, you are encouraged to share a meal with each candidate after an in-person interview. Please note that the call committee is responsible for covering all travel expenses for in-person interviews if the candidate is not local - this may include airfare, rental car/gas, hotel, etc. The call committee may work with the council to approve funds for this purpose but should be sure to keep the candidate's name confidential during the interview stage.
 - 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, and informing them a date by which they can expect to hear about next steps.
 - c. Candidates' references can be called at any point during the process, but it is recommended to call references after an initial interview but before identifying a primary candidate.
7. If the Call Committee chooses not to move forward with a candidate, please release the candidate ([example letter found on page 17](#)) and schedule a second round of interviews with the remaining candidate(s) in person.
8. We encourage the Call Committee to request videos or access to online worship opportunities to observe the candidate(s) preaching and leading worship.
 - a. If needed, 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



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the synod office to find a congregation where the candidate can preach and the Call Committee can observe.

- b. If the candidate is in your synod or in a neighboring synod, it is imperative the Call Committee is very discreet during their visit—they should act as visitors and not tell anyone in the congregation 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 must vote unanimously on this recommendation (unless the congregation constitution says otherwise). At this point, the Congregation Council becomes more involved in the call process, but the Call Committee continues their work as well.
10. The Congregation Council schedules a time to meet with the candidate, and if possible, share a meal. After this conversation, the Congregation Council votes to accept or reject the Call Committee's recommendation (while the Call Committee's vote must be unanimous, the Congregation Council vote must be a simple majority).
11. If the Congregation Council votes in favor of the recommendation, the council president and another representative from the council (usually the treasurer) meet with the candidate to discuss a compensation package. **Compensation Guidelines** are found on the synod website at the bottom of this [page](#) and the candidate and council should use the **Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities Worksheet** (found on [page 17](#) of this handbook) to outline the entire package. Once the Congregation Council has voted to approve the final compensation package, the council president contacts the synod office to schedule a Congregational Meeting/Call Vote where the congregation votes on the candidate and compensation package.
12. The Congregation Council and candidate schedule a "Meet and Greet" with congregation. For example: the congregation can host an ice cream social on a 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



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worship service on the morning of the call vote.

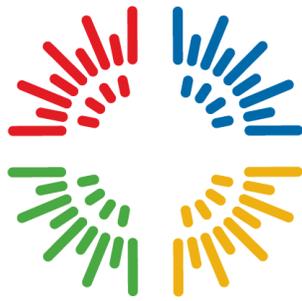
13. The Congregation Council informs the congregation of the Call Meeting as outlined in the congregation's constitution.
14. Congregation Council initiates background checks of the candidate. For more information on how to obtain these checks, contact your congregation's insurer.
15. A Call Meeting normally takes place on a Sunday after worship to vote on whether to call the candidate as its rostered minister. Before the Call Meeting, the council president contacts the synod representative to review the Call Meeting process. **The bishop or synod representative must be present at the Call Meeting.**

A copy of the Call Meeting template can be found [here](#):

16. After the Call Meeting, the council president immediately notifies the candidate of the Call Meeting results. If the congregation extends a call, and the candidate accepts (the candidate has 30 days to accept), complete the Letter of Call and return it to the synod office.

If the congregation votes not to extend the call, the Call Committee gathers immediately following the meeting to notify the candidate of the decision and schedules the next Call Committee meeting. The synod office should be notified immediately of the congregation's decision. If the candidate declines an extended call, the Call Committee shall notify the synod office immediately and arrange the next Call Committee meeting.

17. The pastor or deacon-elect, in consultation with the council president and the bishop, chooses a start date.
 - a. If the pastor or deacon-elect is in the process of resigning from their own call, it is normal for the pastor or deacon-elect's congregation require four to eight weeks of ministry beyond the resignation.
 - b. The council president or vice president consults the pastor or deacon-elect to determine the best time for the acceptance to be announced publicly. Once the congregation knows the start date of the newly called rostered minister, arrangements for moving will be made between the pastor or deacon-elect and the officers of the Congregation



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Council. The congregation is responsible for moving expenses.

18. Congregation Council notifies synod office of Acceptance of Call, start date, and installation date.
19. Congregation Council sends to synod office:
 - a. Signed Letter of Call
 - b. Signed Definitions of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Rostered Minister and Congregation, [found on page 18.](#)
20. Congregation puts together a Welcoming Team to help the new rostered minister transition into the new community ([more on page 21](#)).
21. The new rostered minister 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 follows 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 but in partnership with the Call Committee. 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 for their first call, there are additional details [on page 25.](#)

Interviewing Candidates

To begin a conversation on a given topic, it works 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 offer the Call Committee opportunities to probe deeper. Ask the candidate to share their experience and listen for their experience versus what they think. 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 rostered minister might be a good “match” for the congregation. Questions that lead to long answers mean



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fewer questions can be asked in the time period set for the interview. The Call Committee should plan which questions will be asked and who will ask them. Time should also be allowed for the rostered minister to ask their questions.

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? What happened?
- 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 Minister Profile (RMP), 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 will you equip and empower us to leverage our ministry gifts for the work of God's kingdom?

Evangelism

- Tell us how you approach the conversation of 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 discipled.

Stewardship

- Describe your last stewardship campaign.
- How did it incorporate stewardship into all aspects of peoples' lives?



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- 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 wanted to establish a new program or ministry or wanted to make a significant change in an existing program or ministry. What happened? If it wasn't successful, what did you learn from the experience?
- How did you communicate with the congregation—individually and as a whole?
- 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 in congregational life?
- How do you know if your pastoral leadership is 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 rostered ministers. 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, changed, or sustained you.

Discipleship



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- Tell us about your own experience of discipleship. How have you been disciplined?
- Tell us about someone you disciplined.

Emotional Intelligence

- What bothers you most about other people?
- Tell us about a day when everything went wrong.
- Tell us about a colleague you got along with well and why.
- Tell us about someone you admire and why.
- Tell us about something you are proud of and why.
- If you could start with a clean slate in our church, tell us what kind 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 rostered minister's theology address the spiritual needs of this congregation? Do they seem to understand the mission of the church?
- Does this rostered minister's leadership style work with our own expectations? If not, could it be a style we need? If not, why not?
- Will this rostered minister partner, equip, and empower us in our ministry together? If the answer is yes, what evidence do we have from our interview and from the references?
- Does this pastor have a passion for ministry? How was passion for the Gospel and ministry evident in the interview? If not, why not?

Ministry

- What specific skills does this rostered minister have that address the ministries set out in our congregational profile? Do they have a vision and skills for evangelism and outreach as well as pastoral care?
- Was I comfortable during the interview? How will the rostered minister relate to the members of this congregation?

Professional Growth

- Has the rostered minister had the opportunity for professional growth? How has it affected their understanding of ministry?



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- Beyond accountability to leadership in the congregation, does the rostered minister have habits of accountability with others?
- Is this rostered minister teachable? If so, what is the evidence?
- Does this rostered minister have a desire to grow? To improve? If so, what is the evidence?

Rostered Minister as Person

- How does the rostered minister care for self? Does the rostered minister's basic work orientation fit the needs and rhythm of our parish life?



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**SAMPLE: Letter for Releasing a
Candidate from the Process**

January 1, 2020
The Rev. Pat Smith
26643 Church Road
Springfield, VA 22151

Dear Pastor Smith:

On behalf of the Call Committee, I want to thank you 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



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WORKSHEET: Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Rostered Minister and Congregation

Prepared by:

For the Reverend/Deacon:

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 rostered minister 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
 - Member only
 - Member and spouse
 - Member and children
 - Member, spouse and children



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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
 - i. _____ 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 the pastor is physically or mentally disabled; and



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- f. Where applicable, parental leave of at least eight weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits.

5. Other Provisions

A description of the 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



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

Congregational Council President

Congregational Council Secretary

Date:

Date:

I certify that I accept the above statement:

Title:

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)



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Welcoming Team

The Welcoming Team is a wonderful resource for the new rostered minister to transition into a new area. This team will not only help the rostered minister (and family) become 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 rostered minister (and their family). The following is a list of recommended tasks for Welcoming Teams. It would be helpful to plan these tasks ahead of time, consult with the new rostered minister, 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 rostered minister and 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 rostered minister after an exhausting move but also allows more members to meet the rostered minister (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 rostered minister (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 rostered minister (and family) with the surrounding area.

Community

- Organize a list of helpful community resources and recreational activities such as, 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.



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Installation

The installation is the last step in the call process. *If you are calling a First Call Pastor or Deacon, [see page 25](#).* It is a time to welcome your new pastor into the community with a festive worship celebration.

Planning the Service

The new rostered minister works together with members of the congregation to plan the worship service.

The installation service can be found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book of Occasional Services or online 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 rostered minister. The new rostered minister may ask another rostered minister to preach. If the newly called rostered minister is a minister of word and sacrament, they traditionally preside.

Date of the Installation

The conference dean, Congregation Council, and new rostered minister decide on a date together. Since the conference dean typically serves as a pastor in another congregation, the installation service usually occurs at a time other than Sunday morning. **Note: Please notify the Synod Staff as soon as an installation date is set so that they can share the date with the wider synod.**

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 the Congregation Council informs the synod office of the installation date at least two weeks prior, the synod will send out a notice by email to all rostered ministers 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!



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First Call Ordination/Consecration

A rostered minister entering first call is often ordained and installed in the same service (some exceptions are made when the rostered minister desires to be ordained in the home church and installed at the congregation of call). This is a celebratory time to welcome your rostered minister to your congregation and also to ministry!

Planning the Service

The rostered minister plans the worship service. The order is always ordination first and then installation. The new rostered minister 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 to all congregations in the synod, as well as anyone requested by the new rostered minister.

Date of the Service

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

Ordaining, installing, preaching, and presiding

The bishop ordains and installs the new rostered minister. The new rostered minister may ask another rostered minister to preach. If the new rostered minister is a minister of word and sacrament, they traditionally preside.

Welcoming the Congregation

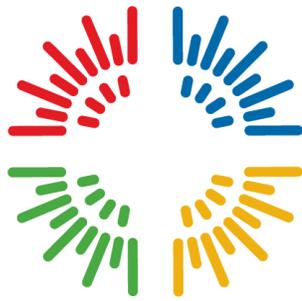
The bishop or the council president offers the welcome. Congratulations! The call process has ended and the new ministry has just begun!



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Checklist for Transition

Complete?	Task Description
	Rostered Minister resigns from congregation
	Rostered Minister and Congregation Council finalize timeline and plan a "Farewell Service"
	Congregation holds "Farewell Service"
	Council president sends their contact info to synod office
	Synod rep holds Q&A session with congregation concerning call process
	Congregation decides whether to use an 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 steps address an interim pastor. If using a transition consultant, skip the next four steps.</i>	
	Bishop recommends an interim pastor
	Congregation Council and interim minister create a Covenant for Interim Ministry (found here on Synod Website)
	Interim minister forms a Transition Team
	Interim minister forms a Call Committee
<i>The following three steps address 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>	
	Call Committee completes a Ministry Site Profile <i>View page 8 in handbook for instructions</i>
	Call Committee sends completed Ministry Site Profile to synod office
	Call Committee prepares for interviews with rostered minister candidates <i>Sample interview questions in handbook</i>
	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 <i>Explanation in handbook</i>
	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)



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	Congregation Council schedules time to meet with candidate and vote on whether 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 on whether to call the candidate to the congregation in consultation with the congregation's constitution and bylaws
	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/deacon-elect, in consultation with council president and bishop, decides on a start date
	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 Rostered Minister and Congregation to the synod
	Congregation Council puts together a Welcoming Team
	New rostered minister is installed