

Call Process Manual – Step 2 – Beginning the Interim



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Roles of Leadership

As the transition time begins in the life of the congregation following the resignation of a pastor, there is an immediate need for an ordered process to keep a sense of stability in the congregation's life and to help people stay focused on the mission they share as God's people in this place.

Prayer is an important activity for the entire congregation throughout this process. Members are encouraged to commit themselves to pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation. Special prayer at worship and during other meetings of the congregation is encouraged.

Pastoral Ministry Transition Team

Appointed by the congregation council following the resignation of the pastor, the pastoral ministry transition team should meet with the exiting pastor as soon as possible in order to ascertain the ongoing and special pastoral ministries which merit attention. They should be commissioned at a worship service as soon as possible after their appointment.

Purpose: Oversee and guide the ministry of the congregation during the time between pastoral leadership.

Tasks:

- Reassure members that pastoral ministry tasks will be fulfilled;
- Provide leaders to assure continuation of worship services and assist worship leaders (supply and interim pastors, assisting ministers, musicians, etc.);
- Give support and guidance to staff persons who normally function under pastoral supervision (continuation of staff meetings to help clarify needs, directions, expectations);
- Assure continuation of pastoral ministries (hospital and other visits, emergency pastoral response, funerals, weddings, confirmation, baptisms);
- Support congregational leaders in the service of their various responsibilities;
- Assure confidentiality in regard to sensitive issues which arise during the transition;
- Be a resource to the next called pastor and assist her/him in the continuation of immediate and special pastoral ministry needs.

Who Should Serve:

- Not more than seven persons who represent the composition of the congregation;
- Persons held in high regard and trust by the members of the congregation;
- Persons with some history of experience and participation in the life of the congregation.

Length of Term: The team should function from the time of their appointment until the arrival of the newly called pastor. The transition team should meet with the new pastor in order to share information relative to events and activities which have transpired during the transition period.

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3 Models for Interim Leadership by Pastors

Model One – Transitional Ministers (replace, substitute, or fill-in)

Sunday supply: These pastors preside at worship, preach and teach on Sunday morning, and may provide a minimum of pastoral care for the seriously ill or those in crisis. (*Click on Worship Supply List at www.swmnelca.org.*)

Part-time: These pastors provide pastoral services on a part-time basis, which might include Sunday worship, teaching, visitation, and minimal administrative duties. They work from a carefully designed contract which outlines the scope of their work and range of authority.

Transitional ministers could be pastors who are retired or on leave from call, or lay persons with special training who have been authorized by the bishop to engage in this ministry.

Model Two – Intentional Interim Ministers (lead congregation through process)

*Note: Those who serve as intentional interim ministers work under contract, not under call, and they **will not** be available as a candidate for a regular call to the congregation.*

Consultant: These pastors or lay persons have been trained and certified as intentional interim ministers who normally provide administration for the transition period, but not pastoral care or other pastoral services. They may lead worship and preach on Sunday morning depending on the scope of their contract with the congregation.

Interim (part-time): Depending on local circumstances and their personal availability, these interims would serve congregations in a limited way in the role of interim pastor.

Interim (full-time): These interims would serve congregations full-time during the transitional period with all of the usual pastoral duties of a full-time pastor.

Model Three – Pastors Under Term Call (for duration of transitional period)

These are pastors are called by the congregation for a specific term, usually for the duration of the transition period. Their availability as a candidate for regular call following the ending of the term call must be negotiated prior to the issuance of the term call. A congregational meeting is required in this case, with a 2/3 vote in favor of extending a Letter of Call.

Resources

- +2A – Synod Policy for Interim Ministries
- +2B – Letter of Agreement for Interim Pastoral Ministry (and Addendum)
- +2C – Information Package for Interim Pastors
- +2D – Statute §604 Information
- +2E – §604 Compliance Administrator Form
- +2F – Sample Litany of Welcome and Blessing
- +2G – Reflections on an Interim Pastorate

Note: All resources will be provided by the synod office and are available under Call Process Manual at www.swmnelca.org.