



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

WELCOMING YOUR NEW ROSTERED MINISTER (PASTOR/DEACON):

Wikipedia describes what it means to welcome someone in the following way: “A welcome is a kind of greeting designed to introduce a person to a new place or situation, and to make them feel at ease.” A welcome introduces a person to a new place or situation and makes them feel at ease. St. Paul wrote, “Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.” (Romans 15:7). As you welcome a rostered minister to your congregation, let’s think together about some ideas that can help them feel welcome and at ease among you!

Every year, in our synod many congregations are in the call process looking for their next amazing, faithful pastor or deacon. Every year, we have congregations welcoming new pastors or deacons and their families into our churches and our communities. This time is exciting! And it is busy and filled with all sorts of details. It can be overwhelming for congregations and the leaders who have been called. How can we extend warm welcomes in this time? Here are a few ideas, but we encourage you to come up with your own as well.

- Introduce your new rostered minister to community leaders: the mayor, the police chief, the school administration, the funeral director. It is much easier to build these connections if a trusted member of the community makes these introductions, rather than the rostered minister making the introductions themselves.
- Give the rostered minister and family (if applicable) a tour of the community, including places that impact daily life. Where is the best coffee shop? Where is the nearest Urgent Care? What door do you use to get into school events?
- INVITE! Invite him/her and their family to events: school sports events, community celebrations like Memorial Day, big community dinners. Maybe even invite them to sit with you so that they don’t feel as new.
- Have a welcome basket filled with gift cards to community businesses: the café, the grocery store, a school activity pass, etc.
- Have a kitchen stocking party with staples that people maybe don’t move with themselves: foil, paper towels, spices, paper plates, easy to make meals.
- Wear name tags at worship for several weeks. You are learning one person or family’s names. They are learning hundreds of names.
- Have a welcome celebration with potluck or cake. That could be their first Sunday or the Sunday of their installation.
- Have items in the office ready for them: keys, passwords, etc.
- Think about the entire family. What might the spouse want to be connected to in the community? How can children of various ages be welcomed in church and connected to community friends?

These ideas are simply a starting point for how to extend a warm and lasting welcome to your next rostered minister and their families. If you have ideas that your congregation has found helpful, share them with us and we will keep adding to our list!