



Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Transition Process

What is the Transition Process?

The transition process is the time between one pastor leaving a congregational call, and another accepting a call to the congregation. Use this information when a pastor resigns or leaves a congregational call.

What's Next?

What do we have to do to call another pastor?

Call the synod office at 773-248-0021 to find out which pastoral staff member (associate to the bishop) will be working with your congregation.

After calling the synod office and setting up a meeting with the bishop's associate, the bishop's associate meets with the congregation council to review the five-step transition process.

An associate to the bishop will walk with your congregation throughout the process, and will be available for questions and consultation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Until we call a new pastor, what do we do? Congregations will either contract with an Interim Pastor, or rely on pulpit supply.

How much do we pay? This is negotiated between the interim pastor and the congregation according to synod salary guidelines. The synod office will help with this.

Recommended pulpit supply rates are available at http://www.mcselca.org/congregation/admin/pulpit_supply/.



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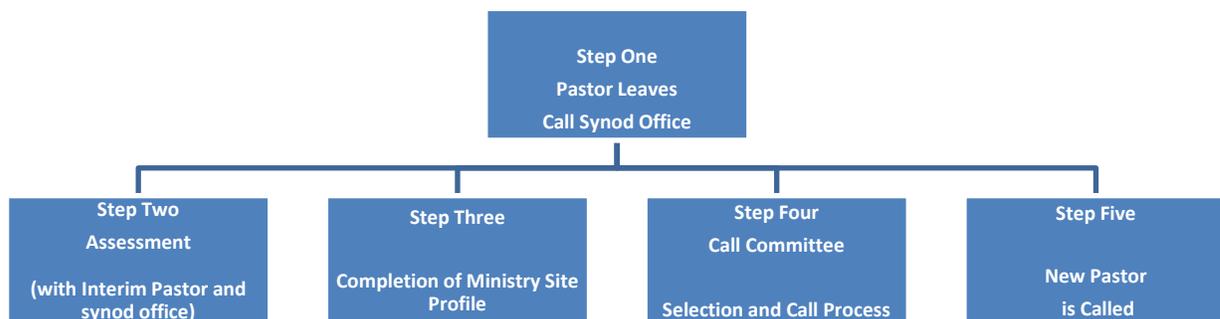
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Transition – The Five Steps

The time between one pastor leaving, and another being called, is called the Transition Process. There are five steps that are included in this process.

1. When a Pastor Leaves
2. Assessment
3. Completion of Ministry Site Profile
4. Call Committee and Selection and Call Process
5. New Pastor is Called





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Step One When a Pastor Leaves

Meet with a member of the synod's pastoral staff to review the process for calling a new pastor.

What is included?

The initial transition into the interim period includes three components:

1. Meeting with a member of the synod pastoral staff (associate to the bishop)

- Review of congregation council congregational exit tasks
 - a.) Exit interview with pastor
 - b.) Farewell to pastor
- Name the issues to be addressed in the transition period
- This transition packet reviewed with congregation council
- Review of available resources

2. Supply Pastors to meet basic needs while Interim Pastor is selected

- Supply pastors can be any pastor on synod pulpit supply list
- Supply pastor is paid hourly or by pulpit supply guidelines
- Tasks include preaching, worship leading, basic pastoral care

3. Interim Pastor May Be installed by a member of the synod pastoral staff

- Consultation with the synod office regarding interim needs
- Interim pastoral candidates interviewed by congregation council
- Interim contract and compensation negotiated by council

Interim Pastor is installed at worship by member of the synod pastoral staff

Note: In some cases, an extended contract with a supply pastor may be in place of or precede a trained/called interim. This may be either full or part-time.



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Step Two Assessment

The Interim Pastor will lead a complete assessment of the congregation's situation.

The assessment includes:

Resources

- Financial situation
- Building and property
- Key leaders, teams, committees

History

- Growth patterns
- Congregational size and organizational style
- Key moments of trauma or success in the past

Mission Field Analysis

- Who lives in the congregation's identified mission field
- Relationship between congregation and the field
- Target mission populations

Constructing a Vision

- What will the future look like for this congregation?

Analysis of "system dynamics" of the congregation

- How are power and influence managed here?
- Are there subtle patterns of unhealthy or dysfunctional interaction?



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Step Three Completion of Ministry Site Profile

The congregation council oversees the completion of a Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

Ministry Site Profile **A Guide to the ELCA Mobility Database System**

The Ministry Site Profile form (MSP) provides congregations (single and multiple point parishes) and church-related organizations (schools, social ministry organizations, healthcare institutions, and agencies) a single, common form to use to describe their mission and their search for a rostered leader.

The MSP is filled out by leaders within the congregation or organization, under the guidance of the synod bishop or synodical staff. Once completed and submitted, the MSP will be stored within the ELCA's mobility database. "Ministry Opportunities" makes it possible for rostered leaders and others to search the database of MSPs to learn of ministry openings, to read a basic snapshot of information about each opening, and to learn about the appropriate contact person for each call process.

The MSP and Mobility Database System are designed only for searches for those rostered within the ELCA. It is not intended for searches for other church workers, including lay professionals, non-rostered musicians, or program directors.



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Step Four
Call Committee and
Selection and Call Process

As the assessment process continues, the process of calling the next pastor begins.

Call Committee is formed

Following the congregation's constitution, a Call Committee is either elected or appointed. Usually, at least one member is also on the congregation council.

What is a call committee?

The call committee screens, interviews, and recommends candidates to the congregation council.

Candidates are identified in consultation with the synod office

After an initial meeting with the call committee, a member of the synod staff will begin to submit rostered leader profiles to the call committee.

Candidates are interviewed

- Candidates selected are usually interviewed at least twice.
- The committee may choose to hear candidates preach, either in between the interviews or after.
- References are checked.
- Proposed compensation is negotiated following synod guidelines.
- At any point, candidates or call committees can end the process.
- Clear and direct communication between parties regarding discernment is expected.

Committee recommends candidate to the congregation council

- The Council may meet the candidate prior to recommendation.
- Council recommends candidate to congregational meeting.
- A "meet and greet" event may be arranged for the congregation prior to the specially-called congregational meeting.



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Step Five New Pastor is Called

Once the new pastor has been selected and properly called, a letter of call will be prepared by the synod office. The prospective pastor has 30 days to accept or refuse the call. Usually, the process goes much faster. During this time, the congregation should engage in hospitality and welcome.

Thanking your Interim Pastor

Your interim pastor has played a very important role in the life of your ministry. It is appropriate to plan a public farewell and thanksgiving. Interim pastors are asked not to continue their involvement in congregational life after the interim is over.

The Pastor's Office

Cleaning and painting the pastor's office prior to her or his arrival is appropriate, but any serious redecorating should probably be done in consultation with the new pastor.

The Pastor's Home

If there is a parsonage, the home should be clean and presentable. Utilities should be turned on and appliances in good working order. Redecorating should be done in consultation with the new pastor.

Installation of the New Pastor

The installation must be planned in consultation with the synod office and should ordinarily occur within the first two months of beginning the new ministry.



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Online Resources

Each step of the process has resources that are available online.

When a Pastor Leaves

- Things You Should Know When a Pastor Leaves
- Sample Service of Farewell and Godspeed
- Exit Interview
- Ethics of Pastoral Transition
- Sample Interim Ministry Covenants

Assessment

Completion of Ministry Site Profile

- Links to the ELCA Mobility Site Profile Webpage

Call Committee and Selection and Call Process

- Current Salary Guidelines
- Interview Strategies / Questions
- Installation of a Call Committee
- Devotions for the Call Committee
- Evaluation Forms
- Enrich and Transform - Welcoming LGBTQ Candidates into the Call Process

New Pastor is Called

- A Planning Guide for Ordinations and Installations
- Evaluation Forms