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*Resource A*  
*Overview of the Transition Process*  
*Florida-Bahamas Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

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## **I – Current Pastor Resigns or Retires**

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- The congregation council receives the written resignation of the pastor and notifies the Office of the Bishop of the resignation.
- The bishop or a representative of the Office of the Bishop meets with the congregation or council to provide an overview of the transition process. People from the congregation are welcome to attend.
- A farewell celebration for the pastor is planned.
- Closure conversations with the pastor are completed.
- The Office of the Bishop appoints an interim, who meets with the council.
- Interim Letter of Appointment completed.
- The pastor concludes ministry at this congregation; congregational records are certified, Ethics of Transition are received.

## **II – The Transition Period Begins**

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- The interim pastor arrives to serve the congregation and is installed in worship.
- The council and the Office of the Bishop determine immediate needs of the congregation, usually including a ministry assessment/discernment.
- With the interim, the council and leadership work through the transition process checklist.
- Coaching as needed.
- The congregation addresses issues and concerns that need resolution prior to initiating the call process; updates constitution if needed.
- Financial documents for the congregation are sent in to the Office of the Bishop for review.

- A representative of the Office of the Bishop meets with the council to review progress through the checklist.
- The council, interim and the bishop mutually agree that the congregation is ready to move forward with the call process.

### III – The Call Committee is Selected

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- The council and the Office of the Bishop assent to the appointment/election of the call committee.
- A prayerful and careful process is begun to select a call committee that is representative of the congregation.
- The call committee is installed at a service of worship
- A representative of the Office of the Bishop meets with the call committee and a representative of the council may attend to review the call process and responsibilities of all.
- The chairperson, the secretary, the computer person, the communicator and chaplain of the call committee are selected by committee members.

### IV – The Work of the Call Committee Begins

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- The call committee commits itself to faithful worship, prayer and regular devotions.
- The manual *Walking Together Through the Transition Process* is reviewed, and the call committee begins its responsibilities.
- Means for communicating, reporting and sharing information with the council and congregation are discussed and procedures developed.
- The call committee and the council agree upon a budget for funding the call process.

### V – The Congregational Ministry Site Profile and Seven Reflections Document

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- The call committee reviews the process for developing the Ministry Site Profile & Seven Reflections (optional document) and determines ways that the council and the congregation will be involved in the process.
- Careful and prayerful time and effort is committed to the completion of the first draft of the Congregational Ministry Site Profile and Seven Reflections.

- The first draft is reviewed and approved by the Office of the Bishop for further editing prior to sending the approved draft to council.
- A representative of the Office of the Bishop will meet with the call committee and a representative of the council for a final review and further editing of the Congregational Ministry Site Profile and Seven Reflections.
- The final version of the Congregational Ministry Site Profile and Seven Reflections, which may include pictures and attachments, is approved by the council and shared with the congregation.
- The call committee electronically submits the Congregational Ministry Site Profile and Seven Reflections to the ELCA and forwards a copy to the Office of the Bishop for distribution to pastoral candidates.

## **VI - Pastor-Candidates Are Identified, A Call List Formed**

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- The call committee identifies their interview questions and develops the interview plan.
- The call committee holds a practice interview with the interim, dean or neighboring pastor.
- The bishop and the assistants to the bishop begin consideration of potential candidates for the call list; normally, up to three candidates are identified as best possible matches.
- A seminarian (first-call candidate) is presented on a single name call list after consultation with the call committee about such a possibility.
- The Office of the Bishop makes contact with the potential candidates for the call list to determine openness to considering a call to this congregation.
- The dean regularly communicates with the call committee chair to provide status updates about the formation of call list.
- The Congregational Ministry Site Profile and Seven Reflections is sent to the candidates; the candidates agree or decline to have their name placed on the call list.
- The process continues until a call list of interested candidates is formed.
- A representative of the Office of the Bishop personally delivers the call list to the call committee, reviews the interview process and interview covenant.
- This information, including the names of candidates, is confidential and is not to be shared outside of the call committee.

## VII – The Interview Process

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- The call committee reviews the Rostered Minister Profile for each candidate on the call list carefully; the candidates are contacted within 48 hours and interview dates are set as early as possible.
- The call committee ensures that all arrangements for the visit and interview are completed in advance of the visit.
- A similar format is to be used for each of the candidates. Using the guidelines and suggested questions provided in ***Walking Together Through the Transition Process***, the call committee prepares for the interview.
- The interviews are conducted in a timely and confidential way by the call committee.
- Promptly, upon the completion of all the interviews, the call committee meets to identify the primary candidate whose name will be presented to the congregation council for recommendation to the congregation.
- By phone call, with e-mail or letter confirmation, the call committee thanks the candidates being released for their willingness to be considered for this call.
- Should all candidates be released from consideration, or should the council decline to recommend the primary candidate to the congregation, a representative of the Office of the Bishop meets with the call committee for review, and the process begins to form a new call list.
- Rostered Minister Profiles for released candidates are collected by the call committee chair and shredded.

## VIII – Calling the New Pastor

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- After receiving the name of a primary candidate from the call committee, the council arranges to interview the candidate.
- Following the interview, the council president discusses compensation and benefits with the candidate, and negotiates the compensation package to be proposed to the congregation for approval.
- Following these conversations with the primary candidate, the council votes to recommend to the congregation the primary candidate for call as the congregation's new pastor and votes to recommend the compensation package.
- A date is set for the primary candidate to return (with family) to meet the congregation.

- A copy of the proposed compensation package is sent to the Office of the Bishop for review.
- An additional date, other than the meet and greet day/weekend, is set for a special congregation meeting in consultation with the conference dean to assure that a representative of the Office of the Bishop can be present.
- Notice of the meeting is given to the congregation according to constitutional guidelines.
- By written ballot, the congregation votes on the recommendation to extend a Call to the candidate to become its new pastor. A 2/3 affirmative majority vote is required. If the congregation declines to extend a Call to the candidate, the candidate is notified of the decision, and a representative of the Office of the Bishop will meet with the call committee for review and to begin the process of forming a new call list.
- Promptly, the call documents are signed and delivered to the bishop for signature. The bishop forwards the call letter to the pastor who prayerfully decides about the Call.
- Within three to four weeks the pastor accepts or declines the Call. If the Call is accepted, the newly called pastor and the council president will contact a representative of the Office of the Bishop to schedule and initiate plans for an installation service. If the Call is declined, a representative of the Office of the Bishop will meet with the call committee for review and to begin the process of forming a new call list.
- A service of farewell is planned for the interim pastor.

## **IX – Welcome and Installation of the New Pastor**

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- The congregation plans an initial welcome for its new pastor and his/her family. This may follow the services of worship on the pastor's first Sunday with the congregation.
- Plans for an installation service and formal reception are completed. Invitations are extended to the other Lutheran congregations in the conference, local clergy, community leaders, and others identified by the congregation or by the new pastor.
- The new pastor is officially installed by a representative of the Office of the Bishop at the Service of Installation. An appropriate reception follows.
- The call committee and the council are recognized and thanked at the installation service for their leadership during the transition process.

## **X - The Early Period of Ministry**

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- The new pastor, members of the call committee and the congregation council are invited to share reflections and evaluations of the transition process with the Office of the Bishop.
- The bishop encourages the council and the new pastor to schedule a leadership retreat within three to six months of beginning ministry together. Other congregational leaders may be invited.
- The plan of the retreat should include a review of expectations and opportunity to discuss the congregation's mission and vision.
- The new pastor attends the Transitions Seminar for new rostered ministers hosted by the bishop and held the day before the yearly Conference on Ministry.

The Transition Process is Concluded!



**Step 1:**  
Current pastor resigns or retires... A celebration of ministry together

**Step 12:**  
Evaluation of the process

**Step 2:**  
Congregation receives a transition pastor or interim.

**Step 11:**  
Installation

# Steps in the Calling of a New Pastor

Your pastor has resigned or retired...

**Step 3:**  
A Ministry assessment & discernment process occurs

**Step 10:**  
Congregation votes to extend a call; pastor accepts or declines call

## *What happens next?*

These steps illustrate the process your congregation will experience.

(Introduction, Resource B)

**Step 4:**  
The call process begins... call committee is formed

**Step 9:**  
Congregation meets primary candidate

**Step 5:**  
Congregational Ministry Site Profile is created

**Step 8:**  
Primary candidate identified & interviewed by congregation council

**Step 6:**  
A Call List is formed

**Step 7:**  
Interview of candidates

