

WELCOMING THE NEW PASTOR

Making the Move

- + Make sure the congregation is actively involved in welcoming the new pastor and family. Send cards or emails.
- + If there are children coming with the family, have similar aged children make contact.
- + Make sure someone e.g. call committee member is helping coordinate travel and shipping arrangements.
- + Plan to have folks at the airport/dock/church to welcome the pastor/family.
- + Offer to arrange for volunteers to help the family: prep & painting the new home, have a moving in workparty (if desired), and have others bring food.
- + Early in the month of their arrival, host a pantry/house "shower" to fill the cupboards and provide supplies.

First Six Months:

- + Have the call committee act as a support group during this time. This will give the pastor time to form a Mutual Ministries Committee.
- + Call committee "debrief" to give feedback to the council about the process; what we have done differently and celebrate the good work done.
- + Council and new pastor should avoid making any changes in worship schedules, restructuring, or new hires or firings of program staff.
- + One to One meetings with leadership and others can be critical for the new pastor and elected leadership.

For More Information about Pastoral Transitions with Congregations Contact:

Alaska Synod'-ELCA
1847 W Northern Lights Blvd #2
Anchorage, AK 99517
907-272-8899

Office elcaalaska@gmail.com
Bishop aksynodbishop@gmail.com



Alaska Synod of the ELCA
Congregational Resources

Pastoral Transitions...

Celebrating, Closure, Planning, & New Beginning

CLOSURE TO A MINISTRY

When a pastor accepts a new call or retires, there is work for the congregation to do around closure of this relationship.

~ Allow the congregation to feel all of the emotions. Some will be shocked that they did not know, others sad or even feeling betrayed, others will already be planning what the next pastor should be like.

~ Create time and space for the leaving pastor to put closure on as many relationships as possible.

~ Celebrations of the pastor's ministry are to be scheduled (whether or not the pastor wants them). This is about the congregation, not the leaving pastor. Check with the pastor and family about times.

~ If the pastor is resigning without call or has been asked to resign, special sensitivity must be given to the pastor and family. Consultation about ending events/celebrations is required.

~ Review congregation budget for how and what transition and call process costs will be handled during the coming year.

~ Stay in contact with the synod office and the bishop. They can be very helpful with ideas and what needs to happen next.

~ Often, people will want to begin the call process before the pastor is even out the door. There is much work to do before the call process begins and call committee is chosen.

TRANSITIONS

When closure with the resigned/retired pastor is accomplished, many congregations want to rush ahead with the call process. This is done with complications that often force the congregation into short or unhealthy "unintentional interim" call. The transition work has to get done so that the congregation knows what it needs and wants from the new pastor. This work is the basis of the congregation profile. This work may be facilitated by resource people or the bishop.

Key Characteristic of this Work: Praying, Listening and Planning

Key Roles: Church Council-responsibility for the congregation's ministry
Transition/Call Team-Mission & Ministry planning
Interim Pastor-Word/Sacrament and lay leadership support
Congregation-ministries and relationships of the community

Transition Work

Sabbatical Time It can be beneficial to the congregation to have some time where no pastor is involved with the congregation. This window calls forth from the community the identification and sharing of gifts for the sake of the community and its ministries. The interim or term call pastor is then able to utilize this emerging leadership while assisting/facilitating the work of transition and call. E.g. one to three months; planned with bishop and dean.

In the Word The Word is critical to effective transition work. Bible work needs to increase as gifts within the community are identified, nurtured and used; focus the mission and ministry strategy for the community; and build consensus and commitment within members and stakeholders.

God's Mission is grounded in the Great Commandment-love God and love your neighbor-and the Great Commission-go make disciples, Start the work for Vision, Ministry Strategy, and Congregation Profile with these.

Vision What would it look like if our church was living into God's mission? What is the Desired Result that our church hopes to accomplish five years from today? How will we be different than we are today?

Ministry Strategy What are the specific, measurable benchmarks that will demonstrate our movement toward our desired result? E.g. 5-3-1 yrs
Goals/Objectives: SMART Specific-Missional-Attainable-Relational-Timely

Asset Mapping Congregation Gift Assessment/Member Assets

CALL PROCESS CHECKLIST

Lord, lead us to the person who can share our ministry and minister with us, in this time and place. Amen.

Preparing the Congregation

- Prepare/Discuss the understanding of church council and call committee communication, involvement, and decision making responsibilities.
- Elect/appoint call committee that reflects Ministry Plan focus
- Pray each week at worship and as a call committee/council.
- Survey the congregation with a short questionnaire
 - e.g. What is exciting about the ministries of our church?
 - What is important for a candidate to know about our church?
 - What does a candidate need to know about living in our town?
- Assign 3 people to prepare a draft of the congregation profile.
- Review Mission-Vision-Ministry Strategy in relation to the profile and complete final version to be mailed to the Bishop
- Receive names of candidates from congregation; send to the synod
- Consult with bishop's office on candidates
- Prepare packet of info about community/church for candidates

Interview and Recommendation of Candidate

- Prepare questions for an initial phone interview;
 - assign who will ask the questions
- Contact the candidate and arrange time for interview.
- Conduct phone interview with candidate
- Decide on whether to bring up the candidate and the spouse
- Visit by the candidate and spouse; arrange meetings with elders/leaders and groups in community
- Conduct an interview with call committee; have prepared questions.
- Call Committee/Council makes recommendation on putting forward the candidate to the congregation
- Schedule a Congregational Meeting to vote on the candidate
 - (check your Constitution for proper notification)
- When election occurs, congregation officers complete call document
 - (from the synod office) and forward to bishop to sign.
- The pastor elect can be expected to respond within 21 days.
- Complete negotiation on financial package, moving expense reimbursement, transition schedule, and short term housing arrangements
- When the response is positive, it may take 30 days or more to make the transition/move to the community.