

THE CALL PROCESS
A GUIDE FOR CALLING A PASTOR/DEACON
(FOUR BOOKLETS)



Booklet 4
WELCOMING & SUPPORTING



Booklet 1:
TRANSITION/CLOSURE



Booklet 2:
SELECTING A PASTOR or DEACON



Booklet 3:
EXTENDING
THE CALL

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**TRANSITION/CLOSURE**

**Booklet 1 in the Call Process
*(Congregation Council & Resigning/Retiring Pastor)***

* **Pastor notifies bishop of intent to resign or retire and sends copy of resignation letter to bishop (2)**
* **Congregation Council receives resignation—notifies congregation and contacts synod office (2)**
* **Synod provides Pastoral Transition/Closure booklet to council chair and pastor including “Pastoral Ethics for Resigning/Retiring Pastor” and assigns a bishop staff person (2)**
* **Meeting of Congregation Council with bishop’s staff person (3-5)**
* **Council oversees selecting/appointing and installing a call committee (6)**
* **Council sets date for congregational study and date for meeting to gather data for Ministry Site Profile. (7-9)**
* **Congregational study is conducted in congregational event by bishop’s staff person (8)**
* **Council works with call committee on Ministry Site Profile in council input session (8-9)**
* **Call committee is trained by synod trainer**

******SELECTING A PASTOR/DEACON**

**Booklet 2 in the Call Process
*(Call committee & call chair with communication to council & congregation)***

* **Call committee finalizes competencies/ characteristics**
* **Ministry Site Profile completed in cooperation with council (2)**
* **Candidate nomination forms made available and received from congregation members (4)**
* **Call committee begins to receive candidates (may meet with bishop’s staff; receive first forms) (4-5)**
* **Call committee selects primary candidate (6)**
* **Background checks are performed, and compensation and benefits finalized (6)**
* **Call committee determines best way to present information about candidate to Congregation Council (6)**
* **Call committee recommends primary candidate to Congregation Council (6)EXTENDING THE CALL**

**Booklet 3 in the Call Process
*(Congregation Council, Call Committee & Synod)***

* **Council and call committee plan meeting with primary candidate (2)**
* **Council meets & recommends extending a call (2)**
* **Representatives from council/call committee discuss with candidate and agree upon compensation/benefits (2)**
* **Council and call committee determine best ways to share information about the candidate with congregation (2)**
* **Council and call committee plan opportunity for congregation to meet informally with candidate (2)**
* **Congregational meeting is set to vote on candidate and compensation/benefits package and synod contacted (2-3)**
* **Congregation votes on call and terms of call**
* **Letter of Call /Compensation/Benefits form completed, signed by council chair and sent to bishop’s office (3)**
* **Council plans to say farewell to interim pastor and welcome new pastor (Last booklet)**
* **Evaluation of Call Process sent to synod (3)**

 **WELCOMING & SUPPORTING YOUR NEW PASTOR/DEACON
Booklet 4 in the Call Process
*(Congregation Council & Ministry Support [Mutual Ministry] Team)***

* **Installation service is planned by council, new pastor and conference dean. Once date/time of service is set it is shared with synod office (2)**
* **Council appoints a Ministry Support (Mutual Ministry) Team to work with new pastor. (2-3)**

**WELCOMING AND SUPPORTING YOUR NEW PASTOR**

**(Congregation Council and Ministry Support/Mutual Ministry Team)**

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| **STEPS** | **Pg** |  | **LINKS TO RESOURCES FORPARTICULAR STEPS** | **Pg** |
| Installation service is planned by congregation council, new pastor and conference dean. Once date/time of service is determined it is shared with synod office staff. |  |  | Installation of the pastor |  |
| Council appoints a ministry support (mutual ministry) team to work with new pastor. |  |  | Resources for Mutual and Staff Ministry6-9 Month Ministry ReviewSelf-care for rostered leader |  |

**WELCOMING & SUPPORTING**

**I.THE CALL BEGINS**

This can be an exciting time of thanksgiving and looking ahead for a congregation and their pastor/deacon-elect. At the same time, it can be a difficult time for the pastor/deacon being called and their family. A congregation must be sensitive to the needs of its new pastor/deacon who is leaving one ministry and moving to a new ministry that may be very different. A pastor/deacon who accepts a call must be sensitive to the congregation they are entering, and also to the congregation they are leaving. Each congregation is experiencing a transition, which includes both joy and grief.

1. **THE INSTALLATION**A date and time for the installation is established by the new pastor/deacon, the congregation, and the dean of the conference, in consultation with the bishop’s staff. The conference dean normally installs the newly-called pastor/deacon. The new pastor/deacon, the person presiding at the installation, and members of the congregation arrange the service and select other participants. The installation is held as soon as possible after the new pastor/deacon’s arrival. The rite of installation is provided in a downloadable form on the synod website. The installation is normally scheduled for a Sunday afternoon or evening which enables the conference dean, area rostered persons, and others in the community to attend. If the congregation insists on the installation as part of Sunday morning worship services, the congregation would be responsible for providing the cost of a supply pastor for the dean so that they may do the installation. The pastor/deacon, in consultation with the congregation council, may designate an installation offering for a special cause. It is good to include a social event at the time of installation. See “Installation of the Pastor/Deacon” below.
2. **THE TRANSITION**During this new ministry transition it is important for a congregation and its new pastor/deacon to share the expectations openly and negotiate priorities. A transition team can be very helpful during this time. It may be appropriate for the congregation council to ask the call committee to serve in this capacity, at least for six months, since they are often the ones who know the new pastor/deacon the best. In the course of selection, they have already enjoyed a frank and open relationship, and have begun to develop a sense of mutual ministry. If some members of the call committee feel they cannot serve, they could be replaced as needed. A transition team can meet regularly with the pastor/deacon and other staff persons to discuss mutual concerns. Together they can seek to develop and strengthen their ministry. Some beginning activities in which the transition team might be involved include the initial move and settling in of the new pastor/deacon and their family. Arrangements for moving are made between the council and the new pastor/deacon.
3. **CARING FOR THE NEW PASTOR/DEACON**Caring for caregivers is a ministry that congregations can provide for their pastors/deacons. The transition team should keep the council and congregation aware of the need for adequate time for the pastor’s/deacon’s spiritual, physical, and emotional self-care. The needs of the pastor’s/deacon’s family should be considered during the transition. The transition team should ensure that their new pastor/deacon has time for personal study, study in the company of others, participation in programs of continuing education, and extended study. The congregation is expected to provide the new pastor/deacon the assistance, understanding, and financial resources needed for such study. Continuing education is an important time of renewal and learning for a pastor/deacon. Recent seminary graduates are expected to be involved in First Call Theological Education managed by the synod. Congregations with a first call pastor/deacon would benefit from viewing the DVD “Becoming a Vital First Call Congregation” available from the Heilig Resource Center at the synod office.
4. **MINISTRY EVALUATION**Evaluation is a normal process and is often scheduled for six months after the installation and annually thereafter. The leadership for this procedure may lie with the transition team, mutual ministry committee (staff support committee), or a committee established for this purpose. Such a process provides a way to periodically review how the ministry of the pastor/deacon and congregation meets shared expectations. Conflicts are reduced and effective ministry is enhanced when mutual expectations are clearly discussed. A list of resources for mutual ministry committees and a sample six-month ministry review are available at the end of this document.
5. **PASTOR’S/DEACON’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR FORMER CONGREGATION**A pastor’s/deacon’s leaving can be a very emotional time. Once the pastoral relationship with the congregation has ended by resignation or retirement, the former pastor/deacon should not return to do official pastoral acts such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc. The former pastor/deacon may return after a period of time at the newly called pastor’s invitation to preach for a homecoming or other special occasion. A pastor/deacon should never maintain friendships with members of a former congregation in ways that might undermine the developing relationship between the new pastor/deacon and congregation. A former pastor/deacon should remove themselves as completely as possible from the life and ministry of their former congregation.

INSTALLATION OF THE PASTOR/DEACON

**Installation Planning Notes**

Installations should normally be arranged with the dean of the conference. An installation should take place as soon as is reasonably possible after the arrival of a pastor/deacon and after all records from the previous congregation are certified—preferably within the first six weeks. An afternoon installation allows for attendance by other congregations in the conference and in the community. The date and time of the installation should be shared with the bishop’s office.

The installation service should be planned with the dean, whose name and contact information can be found on the synod website—[www.nclutheran.org](https://www.nclutheran.org/about-us/synodstructure/)/about-us/synodstructure. Normally the dean will preach, though occasionally the pastor/deacon to be installed may want to invite someone to preach. Lessons may be the lessons for the day, or, for an afternoon service, different lessons may be chosen. Suggestions for lessons are in the *Occasional Services* *ELW*. Generally, an installation service includes communion.

It is appropriate for the new pastor/deacon to robe and to be seated near the front with family at the beginning of the service. The installation itself usually follows the sermon, or the hymn following the sermon. It is permissible to leave out the creed. The dean presides through the installation, and then the newly-installed pastor/deacon presides for the rest of the service, including communion. The prayers are at the end of the installation service, and it is appropriate for the dean or a member of the congregation to serve as assisting minister for the prayers so that prayers can be offered for the new pastor/deacon and for the congregation.

The service of installation is found in the *Occasional Services* *ELW*. It can be used as-is for the bulletin if that is the most convenient way to print it. A bulletin-ready version can also be downloaded from the synod’s website. The service requires four participants from the congregation. One should be the council or call committee chair who should be prepared with a sentence or two saying that the new pastor/deacon was properly called. The others will stand at the altar, pulpit, and font, to deliver the one-line charges from the installation service.

Following the installation, it is good to provide a meal or refreshments that allow those attending to greet the new pastor/deacon and to visit with one another.

6-9 MONTH MINISTRY REVIEW

Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Congregation Click or tap here to enter text. City Click or tap here to enter text.

Pastor/Deacon Click or tap here to enter text.

**Reflections on our ministry**

A time of joy was: Click or tap here to enter text.

The most difficult aspect of the start-up time has been: Click or tap here to enter text.

A specific instance in which the council supported the pastor/deacon was: Click or tap here to enter text.

A time when the council could have been more supportive of the pastor/deacon was: Click or tap here to enter text.

A time when the pastor/deacon could have provided stronger support for the council or a committee was: Click or tap here to enter text.

How well have we met our goals for 6 months of ministry? Click or tap here to enter text.

**Checking the vital signs**

1. How are we doing in:

a. Worship Click or tap here to enter text.

b. Programs Click or tap here to enter text.

c. Care of members Click or tap here to enter text.

2. What is the congregational climate? Click or tap here to enter text.

3. How is our financial response? Click or tap here to enter text.

**Looking ahead to next year**

1. Are there changes or adjustments that need to be made? Click or tap here to enter text.

1. What are they? Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Who is responsible for making them? Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Two specific steps we can take to strengthen our mutual ministry as pastor/deacon and congregation council:

1. Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Click or tap here to enter text.

**This review is to be completed by the council and/or staff support committee and should be forwarded to the bishop’s office (1988 Lutheran Synod Drive, Salisbury, NC 28144).**

SELF CARE FOR ROSTERED PERSONS
(NC SYNOD RESOLUTION, 1998)

WHEREAS, our Lord God, in his love for what he has created, has drawn humankind into participating in his care for all creation; and

WHEREAS, humankind is God’s creation, and therefore, is called to make provisions to care for itself; and

WHEREAS, God in his love has instituted “Sabbath time” as a special provision for humankind to be revitalized in body, soul, and spirit; and

WHEREAS, the temptations to forget the benefits of “Sabbath time” may befall many of those who are called as rostered persons, as well as those whom they serve; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations and rostered persons of the North Carolina Synod be encouraged to provide “Sabbath time” for each rostered person in the synod and form a Mutual Ministry Committee (*suggested guidelines are provided in,* [*“Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work,”*](https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9780806646510/Pastor-and-People) *Augsburg Fortress*); and be it further

RESOLVED, that a full day every three months be set aside for prayer as a necessary ministry of absence; a day each month, or its equivalent, for participation in a peer growth group to engage in worship, mutual study, reflection on ministry, and to develop collegiality with other persons; and at least one day off, or its equivalent, each week.

And be it further

RESOLVED, that rostered persons with calls to part-time ministry or special service, and rostered persons who serve in remunerated positions in congregations, institutions, and agencies within the synod be afforded similar provisions according to their respective roles and responsibilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

RESOURCES FOR MUTUAL/STAFF MINISTRY

**The Heilig Resource Center** is the library of the synod. Please contact us to borrow the resources below or any of the many other resources which are available for loan.
**Catherine Fink**, Director of Communications & Resources 704-680-9574 cfink@nclutheran.org
**Elizabeth Smith**, Heilig Resource Center Assistant 704-680-9573 esmith@nclutheran.org

**PRIMARY MUTUAL MINISTRY RESOURCES**

BOOK
*Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work* Augsburg Fortress (2003)

DVD
*Why You Should Develop a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee* Alban Institute (2001)

*Making Mutual Ministry Work* Select (2005)

**OTHER RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONAL PLANNING**

BOOKS
*Alban Personnel Handbook for Congregations*, Erwin Berry (Alban Institute, 1999)

*Called by God to Serve: Reflections for Church*, Holley & Walters (Augsburg Fortress, 2004)

*Church as Employer: Employee Handbook*, Jerry Johnson (St John/Winter Park FL, 1999)

*The Great Permission: An Asset-Based Field Guide*, Bob Sitze (ELCA, 2002)

*Growing Together: Spiritual Exercises for Church Committees*, Melander & Eppley (AF, 1998)

*Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice*, Rendle & Mann (Alban, 2003)

*How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry*, Kevin E. Lawson (Alban Institute, 2000)

*Leading on Purpose: Intentionality and Teaming in Congregational Life*, Eric Burtness (AF, 2004)

*On a Wing and a Prayer: Faithful Leadership in the 21st Century*, Michael Cooper-White (AF, 2003)

*Our Staff: Building Our Human Resources, Trish Holford* (Augsburg Fortress, 2002)

*Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church*, Diana Butler Bass (Alban Institute, 2004)

*Reclaiming the L Word: Renewing the Church from Its Lutheran Core*, Kelly A Fryer (AF, 2003)

DVDS
*Becoming a Vital First-Call Congregation,* ELCA (2009)

*Celebrate What's Right with the World,* StarThrower (2001)

*Everyday Creativity,* StarThrower (1999)

*Fish!,* Charthouse (1998)

*Focus Your Vision,* StarThrower (2003)

*Forward Together, A Renewed Church for a New Age,* NC Synod (2015)

*Working without a Script*, StarThrower (2005)

Visit the Heilig Resource Center online: <https://www.nclutheran.org/resources/heilig-center/>