



Southeastern Minnesota Synod, E.L.C.A.

Call Process

STEP 1: A TIME OF FAREWELL

Things to do: Church Council

- Conduct an exit interview with pastor, Council, and Synod Staff.
An **example of an exit interview** is included.
- Plan a time to say goodbye.
A reception in honor of the pastor and family can be planned.
A **Litany of Farewell and Godspeed** is included for use during a worship service.
A **Litany of Closure of a Ministry** is also included, for use at the close of a worship service.

Call Process – Step 1

EXIT INTERVIEW WITH CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

Plan a special meeting with your terminating pastor including appropriate leaders of the congregation, church staff and a representative from the Bishop's office. Make it informal and open, understanding it to be a learning and growing experience for everyone.

Some possible questions to discuss might include:

- *When you accepted a call from us _____ years ago, what were the compelling reasons for your coming here?*
- *What was so attractive to you in this parish at that time?*
- *In your ministry here, did you find what you expected?*
- *What things have given you the sense of greatest fulfillment? With what are you happy or pleased?*
- *What things have frustrated you? With what are you unhappy or disappointed?*
- *What do you consider our strengths and weaknesses as you leave?*
- *What elements are present in your new call that have influenced you to make a change at this time?*
- *What type of ministry do you feel we need?*
- *What areas of ministry and program do you feel we should retain and continue?*
- *What present and new areas should get emphasis in the future?*
- *What do you feel that we, the congregation, can do to strengthen and support the incoming pastor?*
- *What can we do to help you and your family in the transition soon to take place?*

Call Process – Step 1

LITANY OF FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

Leader: For _____ years, Pastor _____ has served as our pastor. He/She has offered his/her gifts and has worked diligently for the up building of the church in this place. By the grace of God, he/she has served us well.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: We have contributed to Pastor _____'s ministry, supporting and encouraging him/her, responding to his/her skills as a pastor. By the grace of God, we have blessed Pastor _____ in his/her ministry among us.

Pastor: I am grateful for your care and encouragement, and for your partnership in the gospel.

Leader: For everything there is a season,
a time for every matter under heaven;
a time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to pluck up what has been planted;
a time to weep and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn and a time to dance;
a time to seek and a time to lose;
a time to keep and a time to let go.

People: So, too, there is a time for coming together and a time for parting. While we continue as the church of Jesus Christ in this place, you, Pastor _____, will go to a new place of ministry. May God go with you.

Pastor: While I go to a new church and a new community, you, my brothers and sisters, will continue to share life and ministry in this community. May God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray. . .

**All: For our time of ministry together, we give thanks to you, O God.
In the hour of parting, we ask the comfort of your Holy Spirit.
And in looking toward tomorrow, we trust that your hand will
guide us to new strength, new hope, and new joy in the ministry
of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in whose name we work and pray.
Amen.**

Call Process - Step 1

LITANY OF CLOSURE OF A MINISTRY

Congregation representative: Pastor _____, on (date called to be pastor), we called you to be our pastor: to proclaim God's Word, to baptize new members into the Church of Jesus Christ, to announce God's forgiveness to us, and to preside at our celebrations of the Lord's Supper. With the gospel you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community.

Congregation: We release you from (name of the congregation) to share God's gifts as an ordained pastor in (name of congregation and city of new call).

Pastor: I give thanks for the life we shared in Christ. I have found our time together rewarding and memories of what we have shared will always remain precious and meaningful. I return to you symbols representing my role and responsibilities as an ordained minister in your midst.

I have tried to proclaim the word of God faithfully among you. Here is the Bible which expresses this. (The Bible is presented to a lay leader.)

I have baptized people in the name of the Triune God, using water as a symbol of cleansing and rebirth. Here is water which symbolized God's gift of belonging in Christ. (A vessel of water is given to a lay leader.)

I have celebrated Holy Communion with you. Here is bread and wine, the means by which we are strengthened in our faith and are transformed into the Body of Christ. (Bread and wine are given to a lay leader.)

Congregational Leader: Prayer, both individual and corporate, is the means by which our relationship with God and with one another grows, deepens and strengthens. We will continue to pray for you.

Congregation: Eternal God, we thank you for Pastor _____ and for our life together in this congregation and community. As he/she has been a blessing to us, so now send him/her for forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregational Leader: We send you forth with a "going away" blessing.

Congregation: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace now and forever. Amen.

This litany can be used at the close of a worship service.