

Guide for  
**Pastoral Transition**  
& the **Call Process**

For the Congregations  
of the  
**Metropolitan**  
**New York Synod**



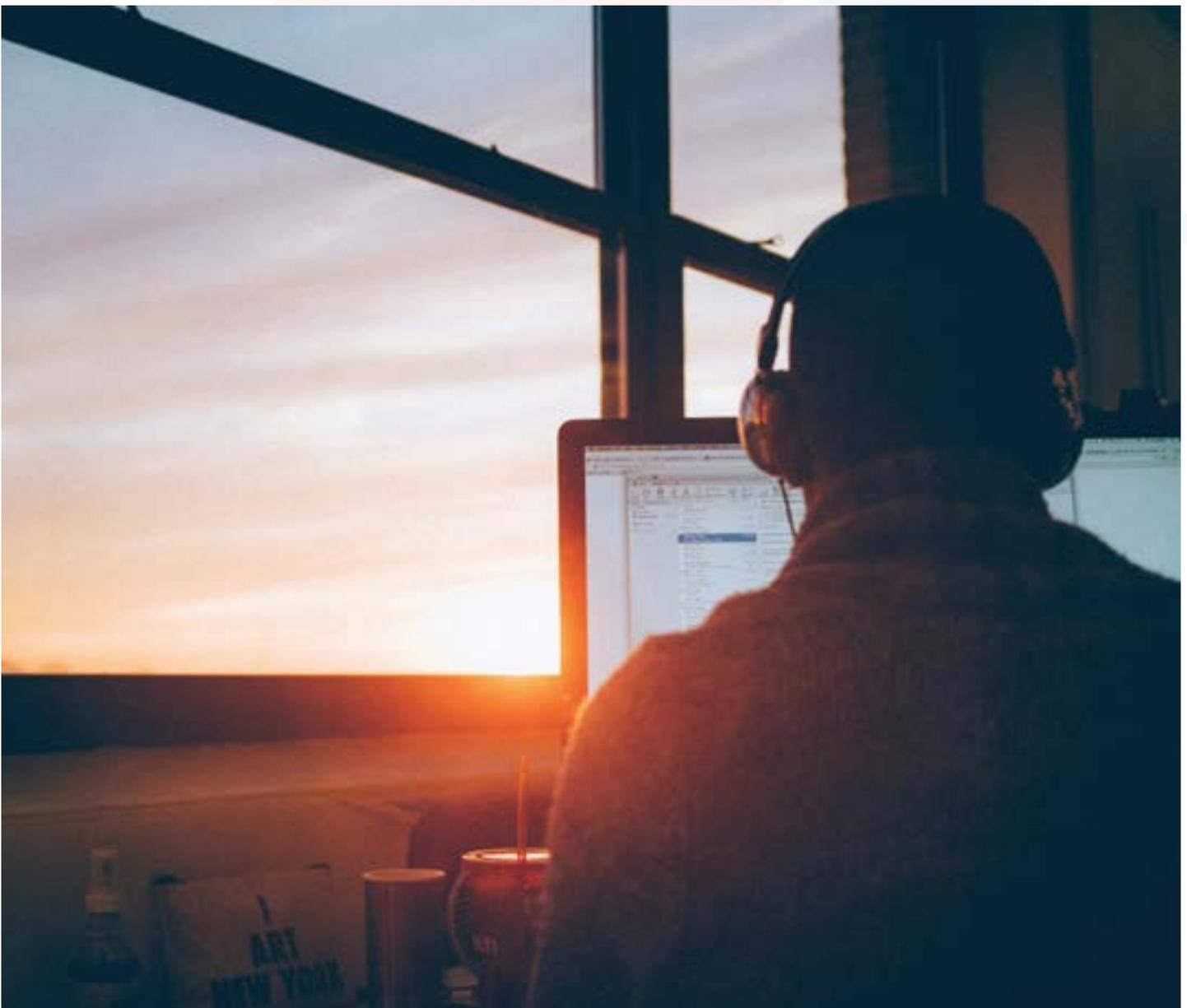
# Stay Connected, Stay Updated, Stay Informed with Us!

The **MNYS Weekly Newsletter** is an excellent tool to stay connected and informed. Now, more than ever, we must remain engaged with one another, relevant in our faith communities, and prepared for what lies ahead. Offering access and information regarding synod resources, digital synodical events, to raising awareness of congregations' upcoming events. MNYS email is here for all of us.

## Sign Up

Help us create awareness of our email program among your congregation members!

To list your congregation's digital services or events, please send us an email with the pertinent information and links, at [Info@mnys.org](mailto:Info@mnys.org).





## A Message from Our Bishop

Change is hard. And forces beyond your control can overwhelm you and your community of faith as you try to figure out what is next..

You are not alone. You are not the first to experience all that is happening right now. You and your community will get through this process.

And we at the Metropolitan New York Synod will walk and pray with you through it.

In the time ahead, you and your fellow servant leaders will help guide your community through a time of transition. There will be assessments of your property and finances. There will be new information about the demographics of your neighborhood through reliable data research. And your congregation will pray and discern who you are and who God is calling you to become.

As you read this ***Guide for Pastoral Transition & the Call Process***, remember we will get through this together.

I and the Assistants to the Bishop will walk with you, encourage you, meet with you and help you and your congregation navigate this transition.

We will read and respond to your emails, and we will return your calls. We are here to serve as a companion to our congregations.

My vision is for every congregation of our synod to be a place rooted in Evangelism, Discipleship, and Financial Stewardship. We are to be communities of faith where we see the face of Jesus in the face of all our neighbors.

We want each community to be a place where pastor and people can pray, worship and serve.

I am excited by how God is lifting up new servant leaders among you and among our clergy! Together, we will help all to know what a difference being loved by Jesus makes in our lives and in our communities.

Peace,  
**Bishop Katrina Foster**

# Pastoral Transition & The Call Process Overview

The steps outlined in this document provide a procedure that is orderly and helpful in calling a pastor. However, the real work has been done by the Holy Spirit who has been present in all of the activities, and in the hearts and lives of the persons who have worked with the process, guiding us all into a new season of ministry. We thank God for this gift of power that assists us all in fulfilling God's mission in the world in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Contact the Office of the Bishop

- Departing pastor should schedule separate meetings with the Bishop and Assistant to the Bishop (assigned to conference) prior to public announcement)
- Review with the Assistant to the Bishop: *A Guide for Pastoral Transition & the Call Process*

## PHASE I: Healthy Transitions

### 1. Expectations of/for a Departing Pastor & Congregation

- Communicate with the congregation (letter, congregation newsletter, Sunday bulletin)
- Review [Checklist for the Departing Pastor](#) with Assistant to the Bishop
- Review [Checklist for the Congregation President](#) with Assistant to the Bishop
- Review [Checklist for Conference Dean](#) with Assistant to the Bishop
- Plan farewell and celebration of ministry events
- Review/sign covenants for departure/distribution to congregation
- Contact Conference Dean to review and attest official church records of pastoral acts (baptisms, funerals, weddings) and conduct exit interviews with departing pastor and congregation council
- Review/update membership roster. The roster shall be saved online and printed, as well
- Review/update constitution
- Review current staff policies (staff reviews, sexual harassment prevention training, Safe Church Policy)
- Review [Clergy Compensation Guidelines](#)
- Conduct a [Financial Review](#) and provide to the Assistant to the Bishop
- Conduct a Property Review/Assessment and provide to the Assistant to the Bishop
- In consultation with the Assistant to the Bishop schedule the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) with Holy Cow Consulting
- Appointment by the Bishop of the transition pastor (coverage, term, interim, intentional interim) to provide pastoral ministry and service following the departure of the pastor

### 2. Transition Team

- Establish a Transition Team to coordinate the transition process
- Conduct a review and validation of current and necessary licenses, permits and other regulatory requirements for safe public assembly for worship and other ministries
- Review and validation of current insurance appraisal of all properties and review of all current insurance coverage policies

## PHASE II: Congregation Mission & Ministry Assessment

### 3. Congregation Mission & Ministry Assessment

- Plan a congregational history celebration event
- Define and research the demographics of the surrounding community with the Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission via the FaithX Neighborhood Insights Report
- Interview members of the community/conduct a Community Assessment Probe

### 4. The Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

- Review [ELCA Guide to the Ministry Site Profile](#)
- Developed by the Transition Team using information from the Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT), FaithX Neighborhood Insights Report, and Community Assessment Probe
- Development of the suggested compensation package
- Present to the congregation for review and input
- Final approval by Council for public release

## PHASE III: Call Process

### 5. Call Committee

- Appointment of a Call Committee (by the Congregation Council)
- Schedule a commissioning/installation of the Call Committee
- Orientation of the committee with Assistant to the Bishop
- Review the [Called To Be Among Us](#) resource for Call Committee
- Anti-racism/Anti-bias training for the Call Committee/Council
- Submit the suggested [compensation package](#) to the Assistant to the Bishop for review

### 6. Candidates

- Nomination by the Bishop of a candidate to be interviewed by Call Committee
- Interview candidate
- Call Committee's participation in worship to experience the candidate's preaching and worship leadership at the candidate's current parish or at a mutually agreed-upon neutral site. Worship participation via a digital platform (i.e., Facebook or YouTube) must be authorized/approved by the Bishop.
- Final interview of the primary candidate by the Call Committee
- Request authorization to obtain background check
- Recommendation of candidate to the Congregation Council by the Call Committee. Compensation package drafted
- Council meets with the candidate to discuss compensation package, start date, moving arrangements, and other details related to the call
- Congregation Council votes to recommend the candidate to the congregation

### 7. Call Vote by the Congregation

- Contact the Assistant to the Bishop to schedule a date for a congregational call

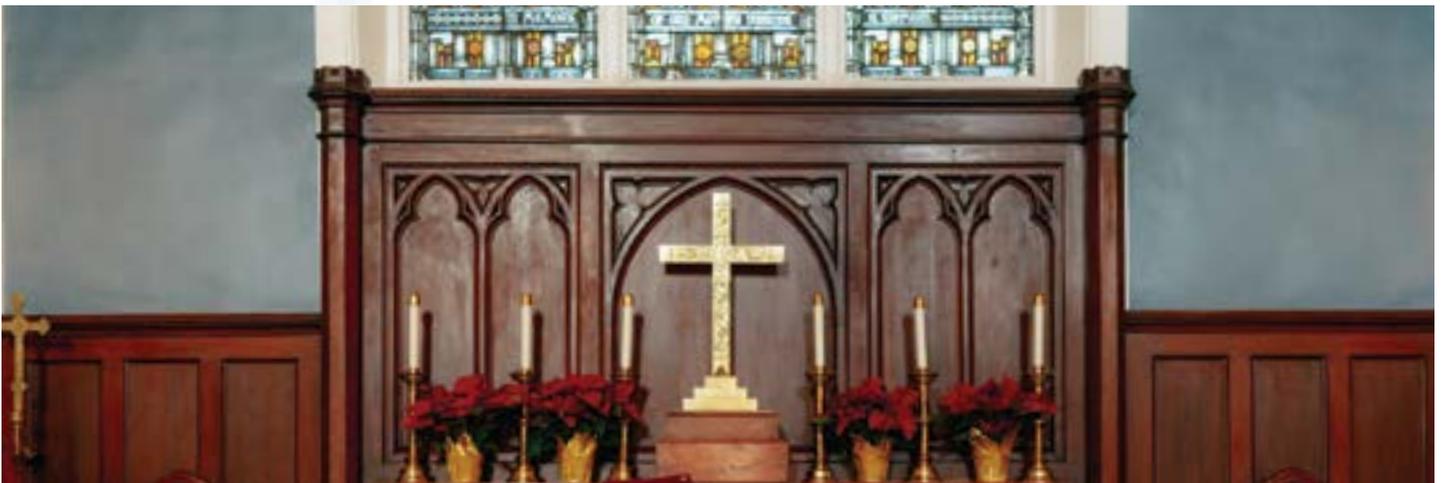
meeting in accordance with constitutional provisions. A date for the call meeting will be determined based on the availability of a synod representative to facilitate the meeting. The congregation president will receive a Call Meeting Packet containing required documents for the meeting

- The candidate (and family) may participate in a “Meet & Greet” with the congregation the day prior to the call vote
- Candidate is to preach and lead worship onsite (followed by the call meeting vote)
- Congregation call meeting is facilitated by the synod representative
- Candidate requires a 2/3 majority vote by written ballot; no absentee ballots allowed
- Candidate has 30 days to respond to and accept the call, from the date of the call meeting
- The Call Committee becomes a “Support Team/Mutual Ministry Committee,” meeting monthly with the newly called pastor, for the first year

## **PHASE IV: New Beginnings**

### **8. Welcoming the New Pastor/Goals for the First Year**

- Establish a welcome team for the new pastor (and family). If the pastor is moving with a rented truck, the congregation may be asked to help unload and move furniture/furnishings into the parsonage
- Create a “Welcome To Our Community Guidebook;” include suggestions for best restaurants, medical professionals, fitness locations, hair/nail salons, etc., and solicit a local realtor for a community welcome packet
- Plan a Welcome Event/Party for the pastor (and family) for their first Sunday, or another convenient day
- Coordinate and plan the Service of Installation for the pastor and the congregation with the Conference Dean within the first three months
- At the six-month mark, the Pastor and Council invite the Conference Dean to join them in a time of review and reflection of their ministry partnership
- At the six-month mark, establish a Mission/Vision Team to work with the pastor to engage in a process of visioning together
- At the six-month mark, coordinate a check-in with the Assistant to the Bishop
- At the twelve-month mark, establish a Mutual Ministry Committee, with selections made by the Pastor and Council President



# Timeline for the Pastoral Transition & the Call Process

**PHASE I**  
1-3 Months



**Healthy Transitions: Healthy Termination of Call**

- Expectations
- Checklists & Covenants of/for the Departing Pastor & Congregation President
- Letters of Agreement/Property Assessment for Congregations in Transition
- Financial Review/Assessment for Congregations in Transition
- Covenants for the Arriving Transitional Pastor

**PHASE II**  
3-12 Months



**Healthy Transitions: Pastoral Transition Process**

- Establish Relationship with Transitional Pastor
- Establish a Transition Team

**Congregation Mission & Ministry Assessment**

- History of our Church Event
- Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT)
- FaithX Neighborhood Insights Report
- Community Assessment Probe
- “Play It Forward” Sunday
- Draft of Ministry Site Profile (MSP)

**PHASE III**  
12-18 Months



**Call Process**

- Appoint a Call Committee
- Anti-bias/Anti-racism Training
- Compensation Package
- Candidate Interview Process
- Recommending the Candidate
- The Council Meeting
- Essentials/Announcement of the
- Congregational Call Meeting
- The Work of the Congregation

**PHASE IV**  
18-24 Months



**New Beginnings**

- Establish a Welcome Team
- Mutual Ministry/Staff
- Support Committee
- Service of Installation
- Three & Six-month Follow-ups
- Visioning: Discerning a New Season of Mission & Ministry

**Anticipated Costs/Price Sheet**

1. Transitional Pastor.....\$ determined by category
2. Anti-bias/Anti-racism Seminar.....\$ 750 - \$1500
3. Financial Review.....\$ determined if Phase 3 is necessary
4. Property Assessment .....\$ 1000 - \$2500 (will vary based on number of buildings & geographic area)
5. Congregation Assessment Tool.....\$ 450 (+ interpretation fee)