

SECTION D: NEW BEGINNINGS

Establish a Welcome Team

After the call has been voted upon by the congregation, a **Welcome Team** should be established to coordinate the welcome of the new pastor and family. It is recommended that this group first oversee any renovation that is required for the parsonage. It will surely be an important sign of the congregation's reception to the new pastor if the parsonage is freshly painted, carpets cleaned, all appliances in good repair, bushes trimmed and grass mowed. This group can also assist with other aspects of the pastor's relocation and serve as a steering committee for a social time on the pastor's first Sunday, in addition to other opportunities to get acquainted with the congregation and community.

Once the move has been planned, **it will also be important to provide such additional activities as hospitality to the pastor and pastor's family** on moving day, assistance with settlement into the community, and an event in the congregation to welcome the new pastor. All these efforts to prepare housing, greet and welcome the pastor and family, and provide assistance, will be much appreciated, and will help to assure the good beginning of a strong ministry between pastor and congregation.

Moving Costs

The congregation is responsible for the cost of the move. These include payment for moving personal goods, mileage for family cars, and costs of meals and motels, if the distance requires. Estimates from moving companies offering discounts should be received and the congregation invoiced directly.

In a short distance move, it may be tempting for the pastor to assume the move personally, or for a moving crew from the congregation to undertake it in order to reduce expenses. Congregations should bear in mind, however, that either has the potential of injury to persons or property, thereby straining the future relation between the pastor and congregation. If necessary, the pastor may be encouraged to carefully pack as many personal belongings as possible, thereby reducing professional moving costs.

There may be tax implications for the pastor connected with moving expenses. He/she should obtain the IRS publication 521, "Moving Expenses," and consult with his or her tax advisor.

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The **Welcome Team** begins inviting the congregation to help with a Welcome Our New Pastor guidebook. This booklet may include well wishes and prayers written by members of the congregation, a collection of local maps, information on the community, schools, cultural sights, medical professionals, restaurants, etc.

Consider a Welcome Basket of food and goodies to be placed in the parsonage upon arrival of your new pastor. One congregation we know of, chose to stock the refrigerator for the newly arrived pastor. These gestures are important ways to welcome your new pastor and get off to a good start in ministry together.

The **Welcome Team** plans a welcome party for the new pastor, possibly for their first Sunday or another convenient day. The Call Committee continues to meet and serve as a support team for the new pastor, for the first six months.

They are encouraged to meet once a month with the new pastor during this time period. This is to be a supportive committee assisting the pastor as he or she settles into the congregation and community.



Mutual Ministry/Staff Support Committee

It is recommended that a Mutual Ministry Committee, or Staff Support Committee be established within three months of the pastor's arrival. This committee's primary purpose is to strengthen the pastor's ministry through careful listening and sharing, reviewing and reflecting on the shared ministry, and providing an opportunity for fuller communication with the congregation.

It would be beneficial to develop goals for the ministry, and to engage in regular and mutual feedback and evaluation. It is recommended that members of the Call Committee serve in this capacity for the new pastor's first year. An excellent resource for this committee, and for the council, is: Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work (Augsburg Fortress).

After that year, a new Mutual Ministry Committee should be established, with **selections made by the pastor, in consultation with the Council President.**

Service of Installation

The installation service provides an opportunity for the congregation to formally welcome the pastor, introduce the pastor to the wider community, and participate in what may be their first act of public ministry together. **This service takes place within the first three months following the arrival of the pastor.** The date of the service is chosen in consultation with the pastor, parish musician, congregation, and dean of the conference. The dean is usually designated by the Bishop to preside at the installation service, and the pastor invites a preacher of their choosing.

Here are some suggestions as to how to start:

1. **Gather a list of local clergy.** If there is an association, help the pastor find the leader who may have the membership list. Involve that leader in inviting others. The dean will be helpful in providing a Lutheran roster, as well.
2. **The style of worship should reflect the congregation.** Most installations are on Sunday afternoon and is often a communion liturgy (though this is not necessary). Many consider a vesper service is appropriate, not only because of the time of day, but also the length of the service. The installation rite may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Occasional Services for the Assembly*.
3. **Include as many people as possible in the service,** as this is a celebration of this new ministry partnership. Don't forget to include children!
4. **Celebrate with food and fellowship.** A reception usually follows—everything from a catered dinner to finger food can be offered. It is not the food, but the fellowship that makes the difference.
5. **Contact local newspapers** so you can formally announce your pastor's arrival. If a large newspaper is not willing, a local one is often looking for news.
6. **Acknowledge the assistance of the transition pastor at the reception.**



Six Month Follow-up

After the new pastor has been installed in the congregation, and the pastor and congregation have reached the six-month mark, the Conference Dean will conduct separate ministry reviews with the Congregation Council and the pastor. The purpose of the ministry review is to **discuss how the goals set by the congregation in its profile, are being addressed, and how the ministry of the congregation and pastor is progressing.**

[SIX MONTH VISIT GUIDE](#)

[REPORT ON SIX-MONTH VISIT](#)



Visioning: Discerning a New Season of Mission and Ministry

After the new pastor and congregation have been together for six months and have gotten to know each other, the time is ripe to engage in **a process of visioning together**. This is a wonderful time to assess the present ministry of the congregation and to think and pray about where God is leading as the congregation goes forward in ministry with its new pastor. This visioning may take several forms.

Congregations may consider engaging in a visioning process that may include a variety of formats, a series of events, an overnight retreat, or any combination thereof. A consultant or trained visioning professional may be engaged for this process.

Costs are negotiated with the leader, depending on the format and duration of the process. By the end of the process, participants may expect at least a draft of a vision statement to be produced and used later to help shape mission priorities.

The Assistant to the Bishop shall assist with matters related to the transition and be available for support and guidance for the pastor and family. There shall be a visit planned to the Congregation Council toward the end of the first year, to provide an opportunity for conversation and feedback, and to assure the pastor and congregational leadership of the ongoing support and involvement of the Office of the Bishop.