

A CHECKLIST FOR WHEN A PASTOR RESIGNS

1. **RECEIVE RESIGNATION OF THE PASTOR** - The pastor should prepare a letter of resignation that specifies the last day of service and includes appreciation for partnership with the congregation.
2. **CONGREGATION COUNCIL** receives the pastor's resignation at a regular or a called meeting of the congregation council.
3. **CONGREGATION COUNCIL** notifies the congregation. An appropriate action following the council's acceptance of the resignation, would be a letter to all members of the congregation which states that the congregation council has accepted the pastor's letter of resignation and the last date on which the pastor will serve the congregation. Include a copy of the pastor's letter of resignation. A gesture of love and a courtesy would include a statement of thanks to the pastor and family for their partnership with the congregation in Christ's work.
4. **CONTACT THE BISHOP**
 - a) CONGREGATION COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON IMMEDIATELY CONTACTS THE BISHOP officially to communicate the pastor's resignation and the effective date of the resignation. A copy of the pastor's letter of resignation and the council's letter to the congregation should be mailed to the office of the bishop.
 - b) CONGREGATION COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON SCHEDULES MEETING WITH BISHOP'S REPRESENTATIVE TO CONDUCT AN EXIT INTERVIEW and to discuss the call process and congregational responsibilities during the pastoral vacancy.

The bishop or his representative at this meeting will discuss with the congregational council the options regarding: vice-pastor, pulpit supply, stated supply, part-time or full-time interim ministry and a HEALTHY START TRANSITION.
5. **RECEIVE THE PARISH REGISTER FROM THE PASTOR** - The Parish Register of each congregation shall remain the property of the congregation. It is the responsibility of the pastor to maintain these records in proper and up-to-date order. The parish register consists of a record of all baptisms, confirmations, members received, dismissed, or removed from the congregation roll for any reason.
6. **THE SECRETARY OF THE CONGREGATION CHURCH COUNCIL should meet with the CONFERENCE DEAN and PASTOR** prior to his/her departure to review and receive the parochial records. The synodical constitution specifies that the parochial records MUST BE IN GOOD ORDER before a pastor can be considered for another call. A form for use in notifying the bishop of the accomplishment of this directive is sent to the congregation upon notification of the pastor's resignation. Guidelines for reviewing the records and the sample response form are shown in Appendix 1, page 22.

7. **SETTLE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS** - A congregation shall settle financial obligations with the departing pastor before calling a successor. This will include salary as well as all benefits due as of the effective date of resignation. Any debt or other financial obligation incurred by the pastor to the congregation shall likewise be satisfactorily settled. If a departing pastor makes special requests, which extend beyond normal and customary departure procedures, these should be officially acted upon and recorded in the congregation council minutes and shared with the bishop.
8. **HONOR AND THANK THE RESIGNING PASTOR AND FAMILY** - THE CONGREGATION COUNCIL may plan appropriate expressions of appreciation for the resigning pastor and family. Possibilities may include a reception, including invitations to fellow pastors, community leaders, and friends of the congregation; a formal dinner to include those suggested above; and a love gift to the pastor and family as an added expression of thanks. A special committee may be appointed to recommend the type of event and to coordinate all the congregation's expressions of appreciation. A Service of Godspeed would be appropriate to use as a part of the liturgy on the pastor's last Sunday with the congregation. See Appendix 2, page 24, for a suggested order of service.

After the pastor leaves, insert occasionally in the worship bulletin or parish newsletter a message similar to this: "While Pastor _____ is still a pastor, he/she is no longer our called pastor. We love and cherish the friendship we have had, but we should not ask for further pastoral services such as counseling, baptisms, and weddings. Our current vice-pastor/interim pastor is now available for pastoral care and concerns."