

Checklist for the Conclusion of a Call

As you prepare to conclude your ministry with your current rostered minister, please attend to the following checklist to help you and the rostered minister finish well.

1. The Rostered Minister Resigns:

- a. The rostered minister should personally inform the Bishop and the Council President of their decision to resign. The rostered minister will work with the Council President to call a Council meeting to inform them and to discuss the transition.
- b. The rostered minister prepares a letter of resignation that specifies the last day of service and includes appreciation for partnership with the congregation. The rostered minister should complete a letter of resignation whether they are retiring or resigning the call to begin a new call.
- c. The rostered minister presents the letter of resignation to the Congregational Council.

2. Congregational Council Receives the Letter or Resignation:

- a. At a regular or a called meeting of the congregational council.
- b. The council prepares a letter to the congregation announcing receipt of the rostered minister's resignation. As a gesture of love and courtesy, this letter should include a statement of thanks to the rostered minister (and family) for their partnership with the congregation in Christ's work.
- c. The rostered minister also prepares a letter to the congregation announcing their resignation. This letter should NOT be sent to the congregation until the Council has been informed and has accepted the letter of resignation.
- d. The council, together with the rostered minister, should plan an appropriate farewell and Godspeed event.

3. Congregational Council Notices the Congregation:

- a. The Council ensures that BOTH the rostered minister's letter of resignation and the Council's letter to the congregation are sent to the congregation.
- b. These letters may be sent via email or postal mail, depending on the congregation's constitution.

4. Contact the Bishop's Office Immediately (This Step is Essential!)

- a. Congregational Council Chairperson immediately contacts the Bishop's Office officially to communicate the rostered minister's resignation and the effective date of the resignation. A copy of the rostered minister's letter of resignation and the council's letter to the congregation should be emailed or mailed to the Office of the Bishop.
- b. Congregational Council Chairperson schedules a meeting with the bishop or bishop's representative to conduct an exit interview/celebration of ministry and to discuss the call process and congregational responsibilities during the pastoral interim.

5. Receive the Parish Register From the Rostered Minister:

- a. The Parish Register of each congregation shall remain the property of the congregation.

- b. Prior to their resignation, the rostered minister must ensure that these records are in proper order and are up-to-date. (The parish register consists of a record of all baptisms, confirmations, members received, dismissed, or removed from the congregational roll for any reason.) A checklist of the steps for the audit of the congregational record is in Appendix 1, page 1.
- c. A Certification of Parochial Records form must be submitted to the Office of the Bishop. The form is available at: <https://www.vasynod.org/resources/call-process/> or Appendix 2, page 3.

6. Settle Financial Accounts:

- a. A congregation shall settle financial obligations with the departing rostered minister before calling a successor. This will include salary as well as all benefits due as of the effective date of resignation.
- b. Any debt or other financial obligation incurred by the rostered minister to the congregation shall likewise be satisfactorily settled. If a departing rostered minister makes special requests, which extend beyond normal and customary departure procedures, these should be officially acted upon and recorded in the congregational council minutes and shared with the bishop.

7. Collecting Important Information:

- a. The rostered minister should compile and share with the Congregational Council a list of the main ministry responsibilities they have on a day-to-day basis.
- b. The rostered minister should also compile and share a list of any homebound individuals and contact information with the Congregational Council.
- c. The rostered minister should write down and transfer all passwords to all computers and online accounts to the appropriate congregational leader.
- d. If the congregation provides benefits through Portico, the Council President (or representative) calls Portico to provide final day of employment for the rostered minister. If the rostered minister is retiring, Portico will provide a form that will need to be completed by the rostered minister and submitted to the Office of the Bishop.
- e. On their final day, the rostered minister returns all building and office keys.

8. Complete an Exit Interview with the Bishop or Bishop's Representative:

- a. The Council President schedules this meeting with the bishop's representative.
- b. The bishop's representative will lead the Council and the rostered minister through a mutual celebration of thanksgiving for shared ministry.
- c. Following this thanksgiving, the rostered minister will leave and the bishop's representative will lead the Council through the steps of the call process.
- d. As part of the call process information, the bishop's representative will discuss with the congregational council the options regarding pastoral care and pastoral leadership during the time of transition.

9. Honor and Thank the Resigning Rostered Minister (And Family)

- a. The congregational council may plan appropriate expressions of appreciation for the resigning rostered minister (and family). Possibilities may include a reception, including invitations to fellow rostered ministers, community leaders, and friends of the congregation; a formal dinner to include those suggested above; and a love gift to the rostered minister 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 Closure or Godspeed would be appropriate to use as a part of the liturgy on the pastor's last Sunday with the congregation. See Appendix 3, page 4, for a suggested order of service.

10. Pastoral Care During the Time of Interim:

- a. Upon resignation of a call, the rostered minister no longer serves that congregation in the Ministry of Word and Sacrament or the Ministry of Word and Service. The rostered minister also will no longer serve the congregation at weddings, funerals, baptisms, or other pastoral care.
- b. The Congregational Council should be sure that the congregation understands this transition. After the rostered minister leaves, the Council may insert occasionally in the worship bulletin or parish newsletter a message similar to this: "While Pastor/Deacon _____ is still a rostered minister in the church, he/she is no longer our called pastor/deacon. We love and cherish the relationship we have had, but we should not ask for further pastoral services such as counseling, baptisms, funerals, and weddings. Our current vice-pastor/interim pastor is now available for pastoral care and concerns."