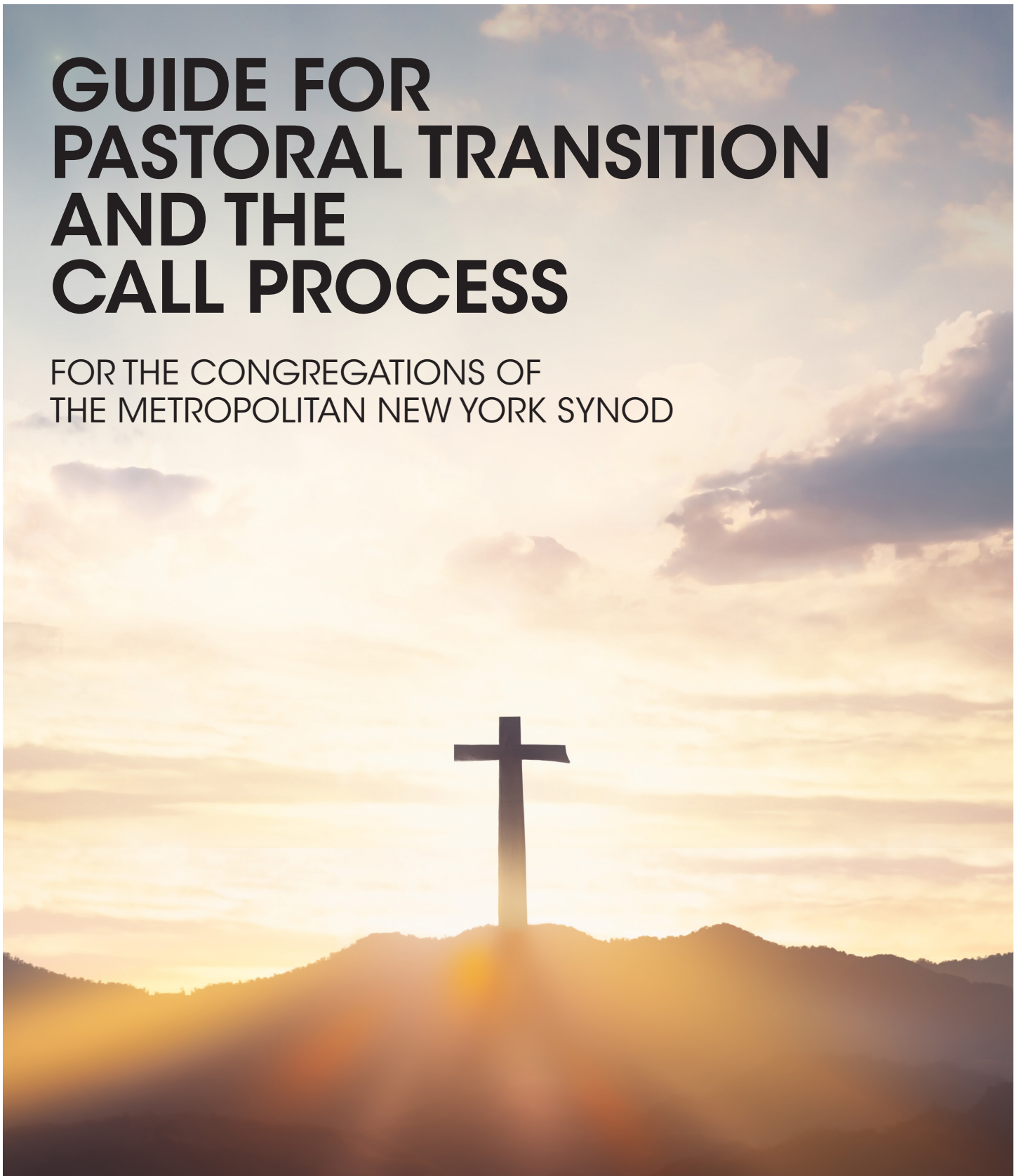


# GUIDE FOR PASTORAL TRANSITION AND THE CALL PROCESS

FOR THE CONGREGATIONS OF  
THE METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD



Metropolitan New York Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# 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.**

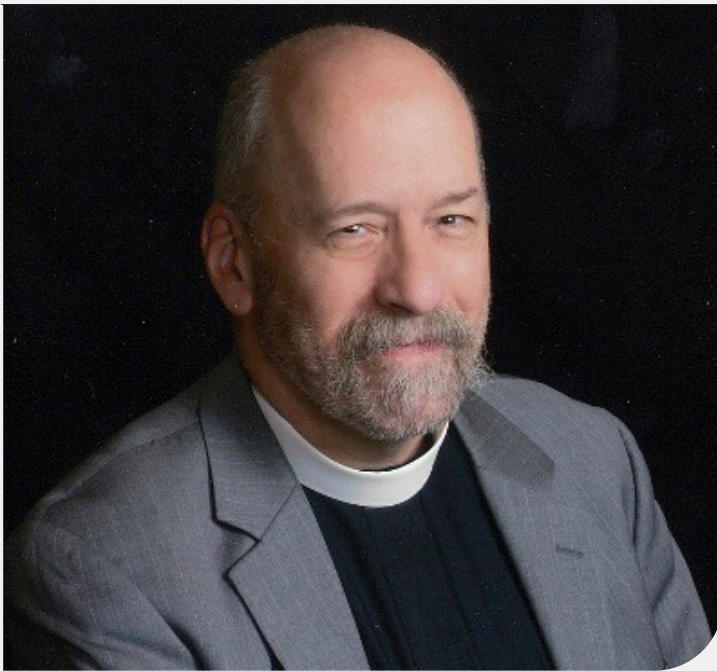
**WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER  
CALLED TO LIVE LIKE CHRIST IN  
OUR COMMUNITIES!**



**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

In the name of ✠ Jesus.

Dear Church,

This is an exciting time in your life as a congregation. Granted, a stressful time and, depending on the circumstances of your former pastor's departure, perhaps a time of grieving. But whatever the circumstances that have brought you to this place in your life as the people of God, there are two points of view I hope you will keep in mind as you read through the **Guide for Pastoral Transition and Call Process**.

1. **If God brings you to it, God will see you through it.** This simple affirmation is one that has sustained me through the many changes I have experienced in life and ministry. As you prepare to move into the next stage of your journey of faith, it is important to reflect on what this congregation has been through and the challenges you have met in order to be here today. It is certainly our central and solid belief as Christians that whatever we face, we do not face it alone.

Jesus reminds us, "I will not leave you orphaned. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you." (John 14) This gracious promise of Jesus reminds us that the process that you undertake must be filled with prayer and mutual discernment, keeping your focus on Jesus' Spirit, who will guide you through this.

2. **As scary as change can be, it is also a time overflowing with exciting possibilities for the future of your discipleship.** Discerning a call to your next spiritual leader is one of the most important and meaningful opportunities to come your way. It holds within it a rediscovery of your blessings, gifts and strengths in the areas of your communal life, where you can be stretched and learn new ways of being "little Christs" (to use Luther's image) in the world.

Not only will you not be left orphaned by Jesus, you will also not be left to find your way without **guidance from me and the wonderful people who work with me in the Office of the Bishop. You are the reason we exist and serve.** Your process of discernment in this time goes beyond your own congregation, to your deployed Assistant to the Bishop and all the staff who work to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians) As you have questions, concerns, confusions and, yes, celebrations and victories, we are here to respond to and share those with you, to walk the road together.

A wise woman of faith (Pastor Kathleen Koran) once said, **"God gives us enough light for the next step."**

*I encourage you  
to step out confidently  
into this future  
God has prepared  
for you.  
We are with you  
on this journey  
of transition.*

**More importantly, God's Holy Spirit is your guide. And that Spirit is equipping you for ministry in courageous, new, and life-giving ways to live like Christ in your community.**

**Let's take that next step...TOGETHER!**

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Paul Egensteiner  
Bishop/Obispo

# PASTORAL TRANSITION AND THE CALL PROCESS OVERVIEW



## CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

- Departing pastor schedule meeting with the Bishop prior to announcement  
*(Upon announcement of pastor's departure)*
- Schedule a meeting with the Assistant to the Bishop assigned to your **conference**
- Review with the Assistant to the Bishop: **A Guide for Pastoral Transition and the Call Process**

## PHASE I: HEALTHY TRANSITIONS

### 1. EXPECTATIONS OF/FOR A DEPARTING PASTOR AND 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
- Review/update constitution
- Review current staff policies (staff reviews, sexual harassment prevention training, Safe Church Policy)
- Review [Clergy Compensation Guidelines](#)
- Conduct a Financial Review in accordance with the synod's minimum guidelines and provide to the Assistant to the Bishop
- Conduct a Property Review/Assessment in accordance with the synod's minimum guidelines and provide to the Assistant to the Bishop
- In consultation with the Assistant to the Bishop schedule the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT)
- 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 AND MINISTRY ASSESSMENT

### 3. CONGREGATION MISSION AND MINISTRY ASSESSMENT

- Plan a congregational history “celebration” event
- Define and research the demographics of the surrounding community with the Assistant to the Bishop via the FaithX Project
- 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, 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(s) to be interviewed by Call Committee
- Interview candidate(s)
- 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
- Request authorization to obtain background check
- Recommendation of candidate to the Congregation Council by the Call Committee
- Congregation Council votes on the candidate
- Council meets with the candidate to discuss compensation package, start date, moving arrangements, and other details related to the call
- Recommendation of candidate to the congregation by the Council

### 7. CALL VOTE BY THE CONGREGATION

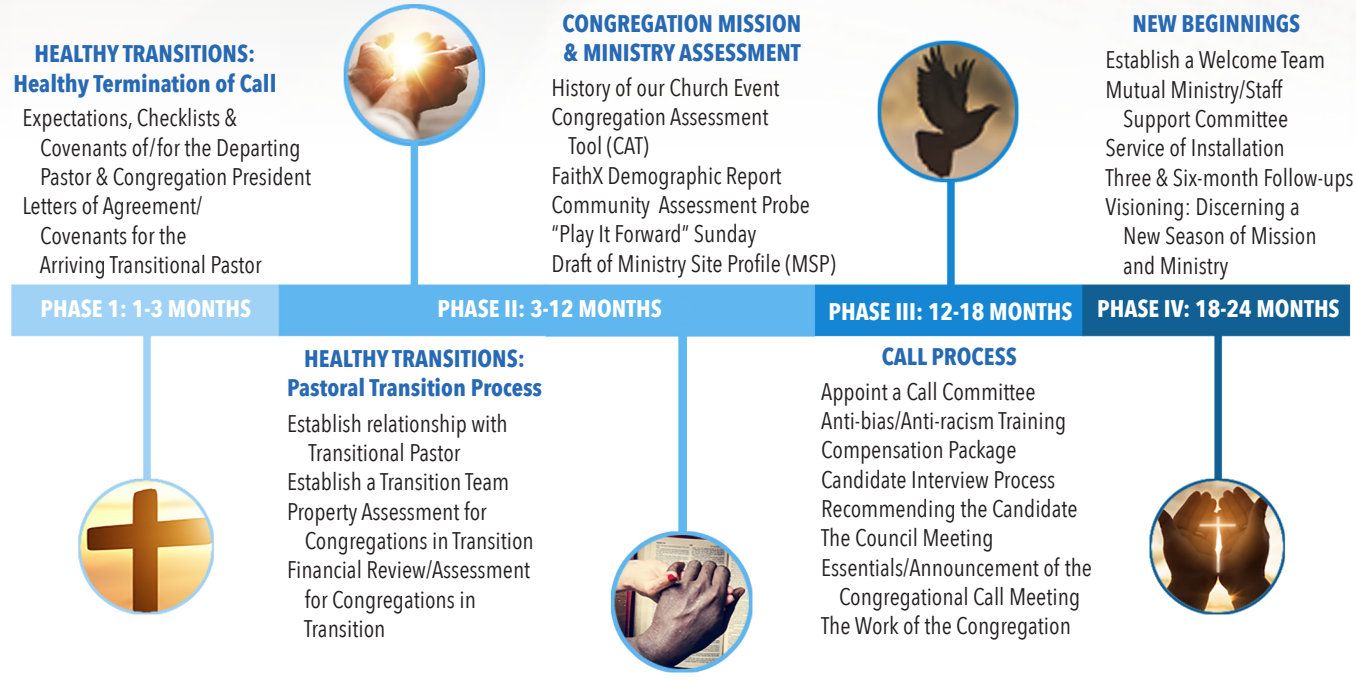
- Contact the Assistant to the Bishop to schedule a date for a congregational call meeting in accordance with constitutional provisions. A date for the call meeting will be determined based on the availability of a synod representative to facilitate the meeting. The congregation president will receive 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)
- 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 the 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 AND CALL PROCESS



## ANTICIPATED COSTS/PRICE SHEET

1. Transitional Pastor.....\$ determined by category
2. Anti-bias/Anti-racism Seminar.....\$ 500 - \$1000
3. Financial Review.....\$ determined if Phase 3 is necessary
4. Property Assessment .....\$ 800 - \$2000 (will vary based on number of buildings and geographic area)
5. Congregation Assesment Tool.....\$ 450 (+ interpretation fee)

*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.*

