

Introduction to a Pastoral Transition

Pastor transitions are a natural part congregational life. A pastoral transition is an opportunity to reflect on where the congregation has been and where the congregation is headed. In this time of discernment and wonderment, rest assured your [conference minister](#) and [MC USA staff in the Church Vitality Office](#) are here to support you.

First, take the time to say a proper goodbye to the former pastor. Give yourself time to grieve the loss and to let go of the former pastor so that you can fully embrace a new pastor. If the pastor is leaving on a negative note, take time to reflect on what went wrong and own up to the congregation's part in the situation. Be willing to ask forgiveness of the former pastor.

Next, assess the health of the congregation. What does the congregation need to work on to prepare for a new pastor? Your area conference minister is an excellent resource for walking with you through this time. Putting the weight on the new pastor to make things better is not healthy for the congregation or for the new pastor.

Work with your conference to assess whether you simply need an interim arrangement or whether you need a transitional pastor to help you work on deeper issues that may interfere with the health of your congregation. Read the [Transitional Ministry](#) document to learn about the differences between an interim pastor and a transitional pastor.

Remember and trust that God is looking after your congregation. God will make clear in due time who your congregation is to call as the next pastor. Pray daily for the congregation and for the search committee you have entrusted the process in finding a pastor.

Blessings to you and your congregation,
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