



The Call Process

Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area
Sowing and Growing Disciples of Jesus

THE TRANSITION TEAM

A Ministry Team to Help During the Time of Pastoral Vacancy

Change. Many people have a natural and strong reaction to change – any change. They resist it; they get anxious about it; they work hard at stopping it. But change cannot NOT happen when a pastor, or other rostered leader, announces his or her resignation. One chapter in the congregation's life has to end, and another must find a way to begin. It a time of uncertainty, of anticipation, of apprehension, and of hope. Just going through the procedures and tasks associated with the Call Process does not deal with the grief, confusion and emotional issues that will wash over the congregation. The Congregation Council along with the Interim Pastor will do what they can to attend to the pastoral and emotional needs of the congregation, but a **Transition Team** can add depth to the ministry that must be provided to the congregation..

The NT-NL Mission Area recommends that, immediately upon the announcement of resignation, the Congregation Council appoint a Transition Team. A Transition Team is a ministry team. It cares for the experience of change, anxiety and grief in the congregation. It is not a governing body, management group or Call Committee.

The Team consists of four to six trusted and talented members of the congregation, at least one of whom is also a member of the Council. The president of the congregation is an *ex officio* member of the Transition Team. The Team is accountable to Council and makes regular reports to the Council. The Team can make decisions only insofar as it is empowered to do so by the Council. It is encouraged to call on the Conference Dean and Bishop's Office for guidance and support.

The Transition Team has four primary areas of responsibility:

First task: to facilitate the closure activities for the ministry of the departing pastor.

- Help the pastor to end well: plan events, gifts, remembrances and thanksgivings.
- Encourage closure conversations between the pastor and shut-ins, children and various groups.
- Invite pastor's verbal and written observations and concerns about the ministry.
- Determine the unfinished pastoral care responsibilities that the pastor needs to place in the committee's care.
- Ensure that Council and pastor have signed off on the Statements regarding Finances and Parochial Record.

Second task: to determine the congregation's readiness for Call Process.

- Farewell activities are completed and the pastor has left the community.
- Interim pastor is in place, installed and situated to the ministry of the congregation.
- Congregation has stabilized in its organization and pastoral tasks.

- Conflict, grief and financial issues are deemed not to be a barrier to Call Process.
- Initiate a consultation among Council, Bishop, Interim Pastor and Team to determine that it is time to appoint the Call Committee.

Third task: to monitor the needs of the congregation during the interim and advise the Interim Pastor.

- Welcome and help situate the Interim Pastor.
- Attend to grief, loss and pastoral care issues that arise.
- Address ministry tasks that have fallen through the cracks.
- Monitor the general health and needs of the congregation.
- Educate the congregation on transition issues, new styles of pastoral leadership etc.

Fourth task: to facilitate the beginning of the new pastor's ministry.

- Plan welcoming events and the Service of Installation.
- Prepare the *Survival Tool Kit** for the pastor.
- Help the pastor connect with members and with the community.
- Council appoints a Mutual Ministry Committee as the successor group to the Transition Team. The committee begins meeting with the pastor.
- The work of the Transition Team is then complete; it is dissolved with thanks.

***The Survival Tool Kit**

for the new pastor is a collection of things that will ease the way for the pastor and family to get acclimated to this new setting. Like a “Pounding” (gathering up a pound of something for the house from each of the members – flour, canned goods, trash bags, milk, cleaners, snacks etc.), the Took Kit is a welcome kit of items like

- Map of the city, information about stores, coupons.
- Suggestions for a good mechanic, electrician, plumber, barber.
- A year's subscription to the local newspaper.
- Directions to schools, shut-ins, city offices, parks, recreational facilities.
- Membership roster, past newsletters, event calendars.
- Keys to all doors and information about how the property is being managed.
- Briefing on the management of parish records and use of the office equipment.
- Job descriptions, flow charts, committee descriptions.
- Present and past statements of vision, goals, strategic plans and mission statements.
- Summary of information and insights from the Interim Pastor and Transition Team.
- Current constitution and by-laws, policies, procedures.
- Congregational history and the list of those in the congregation who can tell the history.