

Pastoral Transition Workshop:

Managing the Change of Pastor with Grace, Gratitude, & Hope

Pastoral Transition letter from Bishop Devadhar

Section One - Pastoral Transition Workshop

- ◆ Courage and Faith in Times of Change
- ◆ Cross-Cultural Realities of the Appointment Process
- ◆ Leave-Taking with Grace
- ◆ Entering with Hope: Starting Well

Section Two - Tools for the Transition

- ◆ Exit Interview Process
- ◆ History Sharing Night
- ◆ Transition Team Progress Assessment

Section Three - Policies, Documents, Reminders

- ◆ Ministerial Etiquette
- ◆ Pastor's Moving Checklist
- ◆ Parsonage Guidelines
- ◆ Annual Parsonage Inspection
- ◆ On Leaving and Leaving Well
- ◆ The Right Start
- ◆ Good Ideas for a Move
- ◆ Making the Change
- ◆ Here I Stand: Getting off to a good start
- ◆ The Point of Appointments
- ◆ Some Beatitudes for a Parish Changing Ministers
- ◆ 50 Ways to Welcome your New Pastor
- ◆ 50 Ways to Improve Pastoral Transitions
- ◆ Lessons for Clergy Preparing to Leave
- ◆ Straight from the Pastor's Mouth
- ◆ Announcement of a New Pastor to the Congregation
- ◆ Treasurer's Check List
- ◆ SPRC Guidelines re: Pastoral Compensation
- ◆ Loving Your Old Pastor, Falling In Love with Your New Pastor
- ◆ Preparing to Receive a New Pastor
- ◆ Social Media and Pastoral Moves

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The Exit Interview Process

The Purpose of the Interview

An exit interview is a survey conducted with an individual who is separating from an organization or relationship. An organization can use the information gained from an exit interview to assess what should be improved, changed, or remain intact. For our purposes, the parish can use the results from exit interviews to hopefully lengthen appointments, increase productivity and engagement. Some examples of the value of conducting exit interviews include increasing the fruitfulness of future appointments, making the transition period more effective, improving communication, avoiding mistakes of the past, and creating a healthier environment for ministry.

The exit interview occurs during the current pastor's transition out of the appointment. This is the key time that an exit interview should be administered because the pastor's thoughts regarding his or her departure are fresh in mind. A well coordinated transition process allows both the pastor and congregation to properly close the existing relationship, and ensure that pertinent materials are collected, administrative forms are completed, key information and projects are transferred or documented, feedback and insights are gathered through exit interviews, and any loose ends are resolved.

Who Should Conduct the Exit Interview

The result of the exit interview may contain information that is confidential. If that occurs, that information should only be shared with those groups or individuals who have a need to know. For this reason, the persons conducting the interview should include the Chair of the Transition Team, the Chair of the SPRC (if two different individuals), The Lay Leader, and one other individual from the Transition Team. Only one person should be taking notes during the interview. Other than information that is of a confidential nature, the results of the interview can and should be shared widely so that there is an opportunity for all to learn from the experiences, insights, and concerns of the out-going pastor.

If it is believed that the exit interview may become confrontational, the parish may request that the District Superintendent be present. The Superintendent should be consulted prior to the scheduling of the interview if their presence is going to be requested.

The Format of the Interview

The following topics should be covered during the interview:

1. How do you believe you were received into the parish when you arrived? What could have been done to make your transition into the parish even better?
2. What are the strengths of the congregation at present?
3. What are the challenges of the congregation at present?
4. Are there any items that require immediate attention and awareness, i.e., legal matters , safe sanctuary agreements, financial obligations, etc.
5. Do you believe that you have been the subject of sexual harassment, intimidation, or discrimination? If so, did you report the incident or incidents to your District Superintendent? (If the pastor raises any issues during this portion of the interview, the District Superintendent must be notified immediately).
6. Have you returned all necessary items back to the church, i.e., keys, remotes, documents, etc. Has your name been removed from all accounts or contact sheets?
7. Have all financial matters been reconciled between you and the parish?
8. Are any matters outstanding that you would like to see resolved before your departure?

Completing the Process

The information contained during the interview which could be helpful for the transition of the incoming pastor should be made known to the parish so that the new transition may be as successful as possible. If any information of a confidential nature is obtained, the District Superintendent must be notified within 24 hours.

The notes taken during the interview should become kept in the Transition File, and maintained by the Chair of the Transition Committee. If necessary, a copy will be provided to the District Superintendent. No independent notes or copies of the file should be distributed.

History Sharing Night

Early in the incoming pastor's tenure, schedule a History Sharing Night in which the congregation creates a timeline to share important dates and stories from their history.

The History Sharing Night:

- Gives the congregation a chance to tell the important stories of the church's life and ministry
- Gives the pastor a chance to hear the stories, explore the deeper meanings of the church's past, connect with the congregation
- Gives everyone a chance to move forward together from a common experience.

Arrangements and Details:

- Choose a time of year when most of the congregation can be present.
- Plan about 3 hours.
- Include a meal if at all possible.
- Provide Childcare!
- An outside facilitator allows pastor and laity to participate fully; the District Superintendent can suggest a facilitator.
- Set up the timeline.
 - Put 20 feet of newsprint on a wall
 - Provide markers.
 - Additional flipchart for making notes, if needed.

Create the Timeline:

- Describe the purpose of the experience, encouraging participation.
- Pray together.
- Encourage people to write significant dates, events, people on timeline. These can include significant events in the larger community/world, as well as in the church.

Process the Timeline:

- As a group, talk through the timeline, noting key stories and events.
 - As much as possible, have the person who wrote an event describe it to the group.
- Include both positive and negative events.
- Pay attention to managing emotions as needed, especially around difficult events/stories.
- Finally, ask some general questions:
 - Where have we seen God at work in the life of this church?
 - What have been/are our strengths?
 - What have been/are our challenges?
 - What can be our trajectory into the future? What is God's dream for this church?

Close the History Sharing Night with prayer, song.

Transition Team Progress Assessment

Church _____

Pastor _____

Transition Team chairperson _____

Place the number that appropriately corresponds with your view.
 Ratings - Strongly Agree (1); Agree (2); Disagree (3); Strongly Disagree (4)

	September 30	December 30	March 30	June 30
Understanding and Relationship Building				
Small Group meetings between the pastor and laity are being conducted as recommended in PTP				
Pastor and Key Leaders have met to share, dialogue and vision together.				
A healthy rapport is being developed and nurtured between the congregation and the pastor.				
A History Night has been held with the pastor and congregation (date:)				
Expectations				
Fruitful conversations have taken place between key leaders in the congregation to facilitate the transition process.				
Both the pastor and congregation have expressed their expectations for the transition period.				

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	September 30	December 30	March 30	June 30
Expectations (contd)				
Effective channels of communication have been established, and are being used to share joys and concerns during the transition process.				
12-month goals have been set for the calendar year.				
Evaluations have been completed in a timely manner.				
Fruitfulness				
Worship attendance is growing.				
The number of visitors has increased.				
Small group attendance has increased.				
The number of constituents being served has increased.				
More people are being engaged in community ministry.				
Giving has increased.				

Additional Comments: