

## Appendix 1A: The Exit Interview

These suggestions for an exit interview are intended for use by a congregation when its pastor or deacon (hereafter designated as “rostered minister”) has submitted a resignation (usually based on the acceptance of a new call.) Not all the questions apply to someone who has announced retirement, but many may still be helpful.

The exit interview should be a relaxed conversation between rostered minister and key lay people, after the announcement of resignation, before leaving the community. Its purpose is to provide helpful insights to the congregation as they begin the call process, and to benefit the rostered minister who receives thoughtful reflection from parishioners on their years together.

Who may participate?

- Members of the congregation council
- Members of the congregation’s mutual ministry committee
- The resigning rostered minister.
- (It’s unlikely that a call committee will be formed until after the departure of the rostered minister. Someone at the exit interview should be responsible for sharing key insights from the exit interview with the call committee after it is constituted.)

Through the eyes of the outgoing rostered minister, lay people can catch a glimpse of the congregation as the rostered minister sees it. It can be to the benefit of the leaders to understand such things as:

- What led you to accept our call?
- What have been the high points of our congregational life during your tenure here?
- Can you talk about what led you to consider and accept this new call?
- Highlight our strengths and weaknesses from your perspective.
- What is your sense of where the new rostered minister’s focus should be initially?
- In your ministry here, did you feel that you found what you anticipated?
- What has been most fulfilling for you here? Most frustrating?
- How might we offer support to your successor? Where do you think we should take a look at ourselves in order that we might break through some of our barriers?
- Is there anything we can do to assist you [and your family] as this transition takes place?

The conversation should center on the future of the congregation and how you can learn from the past towards building a better future. This is a time for you to listen actively as you seek the rostered minister’s knowledge and impressions. It’s to your benefit to learn this perspective if you don’t already know it.

The rostered minister has a responsibility to help the congregation get the most comprehensive picture of itself. Objectivity is most important. He/she may not wish to tell

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all, but should not withhold information that might help the congregation as it looks forward to its future as a healthy part of the Body of Christ.

Someone in the group should be designated as recorder and take notes in outline form.

Let these words set the tone:

*Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

*Ephesians 4:15-16*