

When the Priest Leaves or Retires

When the priest in a congregation retires or leaves, it is important for the Senior Warden to contact the Bishop's Office immediately to establish a time to meet with the Transition Consultant and/or the Bishop.

It is important to say a proper goodbye to the former rector – often the manner in which we say goodbye will say a great deal about how we can welcome the new rector. It is the Vestry's responsibility to organize exit events – parties, socials – and to conduct an exit interview with the departing priest.

After an initial meeting with the Vestry or Bishop's Committee, a determination will be made regarding interim ministry in the congregation – is it necessary, for how long, etc. Once that determination has been made, the Transitions Consultant will act to get an interim OR the vestry will continue with supply clergy. A listing of supply clergy is available elsewhere on the Deployment pages.

The Transitions Consultant works with the vestry to organize a search committee and set a calendar for the search. The committee is commissioned at a Sunday service and it begins its work. An outline of the process can be seen elsewhere in this material (A Map of the Transition Process).

During the interim period, the Vestry takes over more responsibility than usual, relying on the resources from the Bishop's Office.

All search processes in the Diocese of Western Louisiana are formed to fit the situation of the congregation. There is no one process – but variations on a process to help the congregation achieve the goal of calling a priest. Do not expect the same process for a larger congregation as that of a smaller congregation.

The Vestry may serve as the search committee in some cases.

TRANSITION TEAM:

The Vestry should begin to appoint a Transition Team about half way through the search process. The purpose of the Transition Team is to:

1. Prepare to help the rector-elect transition into the community at large
 - a. Schools
 - b. Housing
 - c. Meeting civic leaders
 - d. Meeting area Episcopal Clergy
 - e. Meeting Ecumenical and Interfaith leaders
 - f. Meeting with non-profit para-church and secular agencies that have similar work to that of the Church
2. Prepare to help the rector-elect transition in the life of the congregation
 - a. Lists of shut-ins
 - b. Lists of nursing homes and care centers
 - c. Congregational directory
 - d. Chauffeur to hospitals

- e. Past budgets and annual reports
- f. Histories of the congregation
- g. Staff introduction/social event
- h. Set up meetings with congregational leaders – altar guild, ECW, Church School, Men's group, Youth group, etc.