



Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Healthy Leave Taking Agreement

This agreement is to clarify the role of the former pastor in relationship to this congregation. It may be shared in the congregation so that the community will understand these changes in responsibilities and can cooperate together as the congregation and former pastor move into a new season of their respective lives.

This agreement is between Pastor _____ and the Congregation Council of _____ Lutheran Church, _____, Texas/Louisiana.

1. Upon the end of the Pastor's tenure, effective _____, all pastoral and administrative duties in this congregation will cease. The Pastor and family must, by ELCA policy, join another ELCA congregation. This necessity should be prepared for prior to the ending of the pastor's service.
2. This termination of responsibilities includes any interim period before another pastor is called. This space is necessary for the congregation to fully enter into the work of the interim process.
3. The former pastor will not officiate or assist at any baptism, wedding, or funeral in this congregation or for members of the congregation. The pastor may attend such occasions as a worshipper and shall notify the current pastor of their intention. If asked to preside the former pastor will politely decline.
4. The former pastor will not initiate or continue visits to members or former members of the congregation in their homes or health care facility socially or in a pastoral capacity. This prevents former parishioners feeling that the pastor is choosing some and excluding others. Other social engagements should be entered into with great awareness of the potential for undermining healthy leave taking.
5. The former pastor is not to say nor listen to uncomplimentary or critical remarks in social or other gatherings concerning the interim, past, or future pastors or concerning the life and programs of the congregation. This includes use of social media or other electronic communication.
6. The former pastor will not provide pastoral acts (wedding, baptism, funeral, etc.). The only exception is if asked by the current pastor with approval of council. When asked by members of the congregation to perform these acts the former pastor will politely decline.
7. Should the former pastor have role in the life of the community or pastoral service in the community (service as a volunteer, chaplain, coach etc...) that would require them to visit a member of the congregation they will inform the current pastor of this request.
8. The former pastor will not again become a member of the congregation in the future unless specific arrangements have been made between the church council, current pastor, and the office of bishop.

Signatures below make it clear these expectations for Healthy Leave Taking are understood and agreed to...

Pastor: _____; Congregational President: _____

Date: _____

Attested: _____ Date: _____
Bishop Erik K.J. Gronberg, PhD