

# Pastoral Ethics in Moving

*The following draws heavily from Saying Goodbye:  
A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors by Edward A. White,  
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## Changing Roles

When a pastor leaves a congregation, it is extremely difficult to shift roles. The pastor is no longer pastor *and* friend, but is now friend only; members are no longer members *and* friends, but friends only. Relationships must be redefined.

## Making Contact

Prior to a move, it was normal for members to seek and for pastors to give concern, sympathy, visits, cards, letters, hospital calls, sacramental services, taped sermons, and conversation about the congregation's life and future. After the pastor moves, it can be tempting to continue some of these contacts as a means of hanging on to each other and the relationship that was.

However, a member in relationship with a former pastor in such a way may not see how this impedes developing a healthy relationship with the new pastor. The contact usually takes one of the following forms by retired and former pastors:

- Returning to former congregations to perform weddings, funerals, or baptisms.
- Continuing to make pastoral visits on members of the congregation.
- Injecting themselves into the life and problems of former congregations and/or advising members on these issues.
- Criticizing the successor pastor to members of the congregation or becoming the confidant of those who wish to express criticism.

## What about Friendships?

It is a normal and healthy part of pastoral ministry to have friendships that go beyond pastor/parishioner. It is possible for these friendships to continue as long as healthy boundaries are observed. It is incumbent upon the former pastor and family to refrain from discussing the church, changes that are taking place, and other items of church life. This obligation is especially important to guard in informal settings common to conversations among friends.

## When Asked, What Shall I Say?

The request is common and comes from a good place, "Pastor, you baptized our daughter, we think it would be very meaningful if you performed the wedding also."

Care must be taken not to put the current pastor on the spot, i.e. "I'd be delighted to come back and do the wedding if the present pastor agrees." Instead, the pastor's response might more helpfully be, "I am honored that you ask, but it really wouldn't be appropriate for me since I am no longer the pastor of the congregation. Call Pastor —I'm certain that he/she will want to celebrate that day with you as your pastor. And I'll be among your guests that day, celebrating with you too."

Similar responses can be offered in the instances of birth, illness, sympathy, or death. A former pastor can respond as any congregation member would: sending a card, writing a letter to the family, etc.

### **Taking Leave**

At a time of transition, a pastor may be overwhelmed by feelings of eagerness, anger, or confusion. But being publicly elated at being able to leave, or using the occasion to accuse one's accusers or fault the congregation's circumstances, or "leaving in the dead of night" can easily have the effect of feeding rumors, stunting the congregation's emotional processes, or polarizing the congregation. Remember: to give pain to others in order to ease your own pain is not a reflection of Christ's love nor the pastor's vows.

### **Things to keep in mind:**

- Be in touch with your mood: Don't be driven by emotions that are beyond immediate awareness or control
- Be clear about boundaries: Maintain communications, but keep them focused on the day-to-day operations of the congregation. Do not attempt to help them vision for the future while you are leaving.
- Be grateful: Be thankful in an abundant and honest fashion for the love and support of the people. Accept their appreciative comments and gifts graciously. Maintain integrity and authenticity.

# YOU SAY GOODBYE

## ROLE OF THE PASTOR:

The way in which you say goodbye is crucial to both how you will begin your new pastorate and how you will create the environment for your successor. Healthy closure is important for you, your family and congregation. Hopefully, you will experience some grief as you prepare to leave. Sometimes there is also relief (and you do not need to feel guilty about that). It is natural to experience excitement as you anticipate your new appointment. Regardless, these weeks before moving will be hectic, full and stressful. You are encouraged to be kind to yourself, to pace yourself so that you can begin your new pastorate with a sense of freshness and energy.

## LEAVING WELL AND PREPARING THE WAY

*“Great is the art of beginning, but greater the art of ending.”*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The primary goal is the continuing faithful witness of the congregation in which you have invested much energy.

### 1. **Communication**—Give people information, and do it again and again.

**Key Persons**—Who are the people who, because of close personal relationships, extraordinary service, or key current or past roles within the congregation need particular consideration?

- **Seek Closure with Key People:** Some pastors will find it helpful to make a list of persons with whom they need to seek closure. A practical way to do this is to list those you want to visit with, eat with, telephone or to whom you want to write a note. Seek closure before you move.
- **Consulting with Staff/Parish Relations Chair:** Consult fully and frequently with the chair of your Staff/Parish Relations Committee regarding all the concerns pertaining to your leaving. The DS will consult with the chair of your Staff/Parish Relations Committee informing him/her who will follow you. A formal announcement could be made to your congregation, by the chair of your Staff/Parish Relations Committee, at an appropriate time established by your DS. It is also well to include at least the Lay Leader in the “loop of information.”
- **Public and Community Constituents:** Community leaders, community partners and people connected with special projects or initiatives

### 2. **Congregation**

- a. Say “thank you” and tell the congregation how much they have meant to you. Lift up positive things even if there have been unhappy or rocky periods.
- b. Share ownership and responsibility for the move. Affirm or at least acknowledge itinerancy and your ownership of the process.
- c. Do not blame others for the move or use closure to get back at others; be gracious to all.
- d. Clarify in spoken and written communication your new relationship with the congregation. Affirm love, care, and abiding friendship while releasing persons from pastoral relationships. Define what is over and what is not.
- e. Mark the endings.
- f. Rituals, ceremonies, and occasions of celebration and goodbye are essential for all.
- g. **Share Feelings:** Honestly convey to the chair of your current Staff/Parish Relations Committee ways that the congregation can be helpful in the transition. Some pastors/families want help with packing while other pastors/families prefer as much privacy as possible. Share these and other feelings relative to the move.

- h. **Being Sensitive:** Take the time to reflect on and seek to understand how various ones in the congregation feel about your leaving. Listen with your “inner ear.” Some members may tend to be passively aggressive and it is really a reflection of their grief, fear of loss, or sense of betrayal that you are now leaving them. This is a time that calls for your finest pastoral graces.
- i. **Interpret Your Leaving:** Find ways to interpret to the congregation the appointive process through pastoral letters, newsletters, pulpit and various fellowship occasions. Invite the congregation to rejoice with you in your new opportunity for ministry. Help them to understand that you will not encourage return visits for pastoral duties, even though it may be painful to leave.

### 3. Successor Relations is Key

a. **Maintain Good Successor Relations:**

- Prepare the way for the successor with the congregation
- Prepare the way for the congregation with the successor
- Spend quality time with your successor with an agreed upon agenda
- Talk about your successor only in positive terms
- Do not make comparison between yourself and your successor

b. **Provide Good Records and Administrative Wrap-up:**

- Prepare essential lists for your successor and make sure important files are updated
- Make sure church bills are paid through the month you leave
- Make sure apportionments are paid through the month you leave
- Never leave any unpaid personal bills
- Do not take church records with you

c. **Leave the Parsonage and Office Clean and in Order**

You are encouraged to invite the chair of the Parsonage Committee, Staff/Parish Relations Committee and/or Trustees to do a walk-through in the parsonage as soon as possible to ascertain what needs to be done in preparation for your leaving and the incoming pastor/family. This can be a painful and difficult exercise but keep in mind that the same procedure is being followed to prepare for you.

d. **Keep Working:**

- Continue vital ministry and avoid emotional withdrawal
- Settle as many hanging difficulties as possible
- Do not initiate major new programs in the closing months
- Handle hanging staffing difficulties rather than passing them on

e. **No Lane Duck!**

You are the pastor of your present church until you move, and are responsible for what happens on your “watch.”

f. **Pray!**

Pray for patience, sensitivity, understanding and love in working through the transition. God still has a stake in your ministry.



# ON SAYING GOODBYE

## A CHECKLIST FOR PASTORS

This list suggests things to consider as you move. You may have your own checklist that is more useful than this. Nevertheless, please go through this list to be sure all the important items are included on your list.

### A. INITIAL PREPARATIONS

- Contact your District Superintendent related to date and details of “Meet Your Pastor” event. Prepare to have your parsonage open for that event.
- Discuss various aspects of moving with Staff/Parish Relations Chair.
- Consult with your upcoming Staff/Parish Relations Chair, at the time of your “Meet Your Pastor” event, related to making arrangements with a mover.
- Arrange meeting with Parsonage Committee for parsonage review and inventory.
- Check with treasurer to see that at least 1/2 of all apportionments are paid prior to your move. This is ESSENTIAL — contact District Superintendent if there is any shortfall.
- Check with treasurer on paying your full salary through the end of your assignment (typically June 30th.)
- Give definite information to successor as to when you will be out of the parsonage and when he/she should arrange to arrive.
- Send copies of orders of worship, newsletter, pictorial directory, brochures, etc of your church to your successor as soon as possible after “Meet Your Pastor” event.
- Put in writing for your successor all calendar/meetings/weddings/expectations.
- Get change of address cards from Post Office and notify proper persons.
- Leave your new address and phone numbers with Staff/Parish Relations Chair and new pastor.
- Request someone to greet new pastor/family on moving day with food, flowers, etc. as expressions of welcome.
- See that parsonage lawn is cut and yard is attractive.
- Utilities (NOTHING IS TO BE TURNED OFF — DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE ALL UTILITIES ARE ON FOR NEW PASTOR)
  - Phone (retain current number for new pastor)
  - Inform new pastor if he/she is to make contact with telephone company, too
  - Electricity
  - Water
  - Gas
  - Trash pick-up
  - Cable/TV

## **B. SOME FINAL PREPARATIONS**

- Arrange for cleaning of parsonage (see "Checklist for Leaving Parsonage".)
- Leave set of labeled keys for parsonage and church.
- Leave information about mail delivery system.
- Update Parsonage Inventory with current information.
- Leave information on service companies to call.
- Identify fuse box locations and provide information on special items like garage door openers, lawn mowers, washers, dryers, etc.
- List of doctors, dentists, etc., that might be immediately helpful.

## **C. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION**

- List of homebound persons with addresses/phone numbers.
- List of those currently in the hospital and those needing close pastoral care. Explain.
- List of those who have died in past year: date/name/address/phone numbers of remaining families.
- List of members of Staff/Parish Relations Committee with phone numbers.
- List of names/phone numbers for church leaders, Chair of Trustees and Administrative Board/Council, etc.
- Current membership list.
- Up-to-date listing of prospective members (Provide information on follow-up procedures for first-time visitors.)
- List of college students and where.
- List of current candidates for licensed and ordained ministry.
- List of seminary students.
- Up-to-date records on baptisms, membership, marriages, etc.
- Church calendar with all projected dates.
- Information on welcome plans, receptions, etc. Who are contact persons?
- Provide information on traditions that are unique to your congregation.
- When and how is Holy Communion celebrated?
- Information on ecumenical services in which your church shares or participates.

- Information on Charge Conference records, filing system, sources for information, Order of Worship file.
- A history of the church.
- Copies of newsletters for past year.
- Who prepares bulletins and newsletter; information on deadlines.
- Fellowship events celebrated weekly/monthly/yearly.
- Important reports that will be helpful for charge conference and long-range planning.
- Copy of financial reports for past 12 months.
- Copy of current budget.

#### **D. CHURCH BUILDING/GROUNDS**

- Information on who opens/closes building on Sunday and other days.
- List of instructions regarding lights, fuse box, alarm systems, cooling/heating systems and contact persons/companies if problems.
- Information on who maintains the grounds; responsibility for lawn care, etc.
- Who cleans the building and their schedule?
- Pastor's study/office cleaned and proper office furniture in place for successor.

#### **E. PARSONAGE FAMILY**

- Note:** Many of the items concerning the parsonage are addressed under the "Initial" and "Final" preparations section and under Parsonage Information.
- List of nearby neighbors
- List of children/youth in church/neighborhood; (correspondence with children in parsonage family where applicable).
- List of dependable baby sitters, addresses, ages and phone numbers (if childcare is probable).
- Helpful information on lawn care, etc.
- Any traditions in the church involving the parsonage such as annual open house, etc.

**Note:** Feel free to copy this check list. You can assign MANY of these tasks to OTHER persons.

It is helpful to have the information suggested in this check list provided in an orderly fashion in a notebook on the

pastor's desk at the time of his/her arrival.

It requires work to prepare adequately for our successor. AS PROFESSIONALS, we want to prepare well for he/she who follows us. There is therapeutic value in organizing materials for your successor — it helps you to feel good about completing your work and good about giving the new pastor vitally important information.





# 50 Ways to Improve Pastoral Transitions

From the Lewis Center for Church Leadership

## Concluding Ministry in One Setting:

### Maintain good successor relations

- 1. Work with the congregation to prepare the way for your successor.
- 2. Work with your successor to provide good information about the congregation.
- 3. Spend significant time with your successor with an agreed-upon agenda.
- 4. Talk about your successor only in positive terms.
- 5. Avoid making comparisons between yourself and your successor.

### Approach the move with a generous and graceful spirit

- 6. Share ownership for the move, and avoid blaming others.
- 7. Avoid making inappropriate use of closure to address unresolved problems.
- 8. Be gracious to everyone, especially those with whom you have had difficulty.

### Provide good records and administrative wrap-up

- 9. Prepare essential lists for your successor, and be sure important files are up to date.
- 10. Make sure church bills are paid through the month you leave.
- 11. Ensure that denominational giving is up to date.
- 12. Never leave any unpaid personal bills in the community.
- 13. Do not take church records with you.

### Plan for appropriate goodbyes, grief, and closure rituals

- 14. Provide adequate rituals to mark your leaving and the coming of your successor.

- 15. Find appropriate ways to say goodbye and grieve with the congregation.
- 16. Encourage loved ones to grieve the transition, and grieve with them.
- 17. Grant and ask for forgiveness where needed, and tell the people you love them.
- 18. Arrange personal visits and write personal notes where appropriate.

### Clarify your new relationship with the church

- 19. Clarify in spoken and written communication your new relationship with the people.
- 20. Be clear that you will not be returning for pastoral roles.
- 21. Take time to teach the congregation about closure and boundaries.
- 22. Affirm love and friendship while releasing persons from pastoral relationships.

### Keep working

- 23. Continue vital ministry, avoid emotional withdrawal, and do not initiate major new programs in the closing months.
- 24. Settle as many hanging difficulties as possible, including (and especially) staff difficulties.
- 25. Leave the parsonage and office clean and in order.

## Beginning Ministry in a New Ministry Setting:

### Learn about the new church and community

- 26. Allow 6–18 months to get to know the people and community.
- 27. Demonstrate willingness, and make the effort, to learn the history of the congregation.
- 28. Learn the mission and vision of the congregation and their place in the life of the people.

- 29. Study data (worship and financial statistics, community demographics, etc.) to understand the church and community.
- 30. Make careful assessments of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities.

### Spend time with people and build relationships

- 31. Make building relationships your highest priority, visiting as many people as you can.
- 32. Visit people with pastoral needs and also those with key leadership responsibilities.
- 33. Ask everyone you visit to suggest others with whom you should be talking.
- 34. Meet with the pastoral relations/personnel committee early and regularly.
- 35. Pay particular attention to pastoral care and preaching.
- 36. Meet community leaders including other clergy. Be visible in the community.
- 37. Develop a plan to get to know the people, communicate that plan, and stay faithful to it.

### Be cautious about making immediate changes

- 38. Do not change things at first, especially worship.
- 39. Listen and observe with an open mind to discover strengths and needs.
- 40. Earn the right to change things before initiating changes.

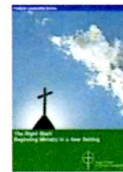
### Build trust

- 41. Express joy in being in your new ministry setting.
- 42. Be authentic, honest, and genuine.
- 43. Let people get to know you, and allow the congregation time to learn to trust you.
- 44. Focus on the congregation and its future, not your agenda.
- 45. If you introduce yourself in writing, have others read what you write to make sure you are not communicating unintended signals.

### Honor your predecessor's ministry.

- 46. Do not criticize the former pastor, even if criticism is warranted.
- 47. Honor the progress and achievements accomplished before you arrived.
- 48. Assure people it is all right to grieve the loss of their former pastor.
- 49. Honor traditions long enough to understand the positive motivation behind them.
- 50. Throughout it all, keep in mind: Avoid talking about your previous congregation. Do not complain, criticize, or make excessive demands. And be patient.

### Learn much more with "The Right Start."



*The Right Start* is a video-based training resource for clergy preparing to begin ministry in a new setting. It includes video instructional segments, resources, planning aids, and supplementary materials. The current version has been revised and

enhanced with new materials on the relational aspect of transition, such as how to handle social media and issues of concern to single clergy and associate pastors. *The Right Start* is available in both Pastor's and Group Training Versions.

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# Good Grief

## Grief Defined

Grief is a process inherent in transition or change. Any pastoral change and move will bring on feelings of grief and loss among the pastor and family, church congregation, and community. Understanding how grief may feel to us and how it may express itself in our lives may help us cope with the emotions we will experience. Grief is always more than sorrow. It is the raw feelings at the center of the whole process that engages the person in adjusting to changed circumstances. Feelings include the deep fears of the mourner, prospects for loneliness, and the obstacles a person must face as she or he finds a new way of living.

## Types of Grief

**Preparatory Grief:** Sometimes also referred to as “anticipatory grief,” i.e., “in anticipation of an event which means loss/separation.” Preparatory grief references the possibility of an event—a move—that is likely to be known early in the process only by the pastor, pastor’s family, Staff Parish Relations Committee, District Superintendent, and Bishop. It is a time of “wondering” if it will happen and if so, what it will be like if and when it does happen.

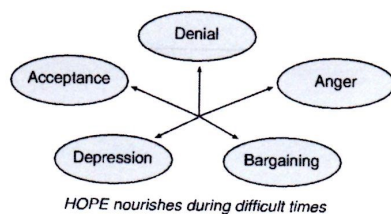
**Intense Grief:** An announcement of the event “expected to happen” has occurred. That means loss/separation begins to occur, and the pastor, pastor’s family, and parishioners’ behavior is affected by event. There may be open expression of thoughts and feelings, which may be positive or negative or of mixed emotions. There may be withdrawal and avoidance as one begins the “grief process” and feelings begin to intensify.

**Acute Grief:** Experienced during the short time before and after the event of loss/separation. Most all experiences are for a last or first time, i.e., the last council on ministries meeting, last baptism, last worship service, or the first worship service, first meetings. This time and experience is unique in that it overlaps the time before and after the move.

**Subsequent Grief:** The experience of “mourning” that follows the event of loss/separation. “Mourning” refers to a process of recovery and adjustment to the loss of significant relationships/experiences in one’s life. “Mourning” is a time of regaining control of and stability in emotions. This is an experience of “bringing to closure,” of letting go of what has been and welcoming what is to be.

**Grief Work:** The “work of grieving” any and all dynamics that inhibit or facilitate those experiences which make for grief resolution. Much has been written about the levels of grief, grief trajectories, stages of grief, grief states, and more; all of which could help explain grief related to moving. For purposes here, grief expert Elisabeth Kubler-Ross’ stages of grief are helpful to provide some understanding of how grief around a pastoral change/move may show up in your own life.<sup>1</sup>

## The Stages of Grief: Our Coping Mechanisms



**Denial:** Characterized by phrases such as, “It’s not true. There must be some mistake!” Even when the pastor has requested the move, some of the dynamic of denial prevails, i.e., “Is this really happening?” “Is this real or a dream (or nightmare!)?”

**Anger:** Characterized by phrases such as, “Why me?” “How could this be happening?” Even when a pastor requests a move, anger is often present in the form of: “How come it had to happen this way?” “Why couldn’t something be done to make it different or better?”

**Bargaining:** Characterized by phrases such as, “Yes, me, but...” This stage involves the attempt to postpone in our mind the inevitable and may include bargaining with God and with each other. There may be “wishful thinking,” i.e., “If only that (some experience of support) could have happened before, this wouldn’t be happening.” Or it might be expressed as, “If only I had...” “If only I had handled this differently or done that another way, we wouldn’t need to move now.”

**Depression:** Characterized by phrases such as, “Yes, me.” “It really is happening,” and strong feelings of sadness, despair, sense of helplessness, i.e., “It’s all going to happen no matter what I do.” This stage is likely to occur even when people are faced with a change that is positive and perhaps even exciting as well as with a change that is sad and brings clear feelings of loss.

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**Acceptance:** Characterized by words such as, “Yes, me. It’s a real part of life.” This is the time when we have come to terms with the reality of our situation—the reality of saying goodbye in order to say hello.

*Although it is not one of the five stages of grief, Kubler-Ross also speaks to the power of*

**Hope:** Characterized by the words “I hope...” and that hope changes as each of the above stages is experienced. At first it may be, “I hope there will not be too much fuss about it,” and, “I hope our last week together can be joyful and we can celebrate.” Hope is the ability to focus on the possibilities of what may be—either for the future or for the present. Hope is what nourishes us in times of stress or when we are unsettled because we do not know precisely what the future may hold for us.

## Coping with Grief

### Reminders about Good Grief:

- The experience is cyclical and goes back and forth, in and out of the various stages.
- It is not a step process in which the grief work is complete when one arrives at acceptance.
- It is worth remembering that family members, parishioners of all ages, and community persons will have similar experiences, and “where three or four are gathered together,” there may well be a mix of feelings, i.e., some people who are angry, others who are depressed, and others yet who are acceptant.
- When we face life-shaking losses, we are graced with the chance to recognize the One who truly is our strength. If we embrace our grief challenges with God’s guidance, God can stretch us to new heights. The ultimate, best, most desirable outcome of grief work is growth.
  - Grief or loss usually connects us to other times in our lives when we experienced loss, and therefore our emotions become intensified. Pay attention to old losses this move may have “kicked up” for you. The losses may be from different parts of your life—everything from disappointments you experienced to family milestones (children leaving for kindergarten, college, or independent living), or divorce and death of loved ones.
  - A significant loss, such as a pastoral move, can bring up feelings—good and bad—from one’s repertoire of previous losses. Think of a chain. Consider the individual links of the chain as representing one’s life losses. A chain of links representing losses that have been processed to healthy resolution can provide strength to the person with that chain of losses. A healthy chain can anchor the person who is grieving in a new storm in life. The chain links can be a reference point of wisdom, hope, and comfort. Conversely, a chain of losses with links of unresolved grief can act as a chain of bondage to past losses, hindering or even preventing healthy grief resolution and transition.
  - It is natural to question God. Doubt, fear, anger, and confusion are very present with loss. God can handle our questions and our emotions, including our anger. God invites our conversation: “*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:6-7).
- How we experience grief can be compared to the waves of the ocean in that we cannot always anticipate how strong or how gentle each wave may be. During this ongoing process of letting go and moving forward, our emotions may be unpredictable to us.
- Remember the value of tears. H. Norman Wright writes in *Recovering from the Losses of Life*: “*Tears are the vehicle with which God has equipped us to express the deepest feelings words cannot express. We summon tears when in our weakness we cannot find words to express the deep emotions that we feel. Tears can express everything from jubilation to devastation. When words fail us, tears step in to help.*”<sup>2</sup>
- When family members don’t share our experience or understand our feelings—because of individual differences—stress in the grieving process can be greatly exacerbated. Appreciate and allow for individual styles and timing as members of our personal family and church family process their own grief. This will prevent additional stress and unnecessary pressure. Be careful not to shame anyone in your family system who may not work through the grief as quickly as others might.

*During this ongoing process of letting go and moving forward, our emotions may be unpredictable to us.*



### Grief Resolution

Grief resolution is the entire experience of grief from the time the pastor, pastor’s family, Staff Parish Relations Committee, District Superintendent, and Bishop know of the possibility of a move until “settling in” and “peaceful acceptance” has been experienced in the new environment.

- Resolution will always occur when openness, honesty, and courage are present.
- Grieving a loss (mourning) is the expression of grief. It is a *process*. Grief work takes time and energy. Do not expect everyone around you to deal with grief as you might. We are all unique in this process.
- The *less* openness, honesty, and courage present, the greater the likelihood of “unresolved grief,” i.e., anger that did not get resolved, some experience that was neglected or ignored.

- The *more* attention given to genuine expression of appropriate thought/feeling concerning the move, the healthier the grief process and the greater likelihood of “healthy closure.”
- The more intentional we are to “grieving well,” the more positive the transition will be for everyone involved, including the new pastor and congregation.
- We should consider a prayerful partnership. Be encouraged by and encourage the prayerful partnership of all involved in the move and the grieving process surrounding the change. Not only are the Bishop, District Superintendent, Staff Parish Relations Committee, congregation, and pastoral family involved in the move, but God is also central in the whole plan, purpose, and process. *“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope”* (Jeremiah 29:11).
- Even when we work to allow resolution, one hundred percent resolution or absolute closure is not likely to happen. We all are likely to have some “unfinished business” due to a circumstance or situation.
- In your grief, recognize your busyness is an attempt to avoid dealing with the loss you feel. Be mindful of your grief.
- Healing from a loss or significant change requires time and compassion. Try to be patient with yourself and those around you. Grief is a normal, appropriate response to loss. It is unique to the person experiencing it. There is no set timetable for its completion.
- No shortcuts exist for working through our feelings of loss. Trust the process of healing.

### Works Cited

- <sup>1</sup>Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying*. New York, NY, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1969.  
<sup>2</sup>Wright, H. Norman. *Recovering from the Losses of Life*. Nashville, TN, Lifeway Press, 1998

### Books to Consider

- Praying Our Goodbyes* by Joyce Rupp. Ivy Books, 1992.  
*On Death and Dying* by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. Touchstone, 1997.  
*The Grief Recovery Handbook* by John W. James and Russell Friedman. Harpercollins, 1998.

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