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| **WHEN TO CALL A PASTOR**Sometimes people wonder when they should call or contact their pastor. Here are some suggestions as to when to notify a pastor: You can make contact by using your worship registration card, calling the church office or calling the pastor directly. **NOTIFY A PASTOR WHEN……****You're going into the hospital**. Please tell your pastor when you going into the hospital or if a family member is. Your pastor likes to visit people who are in the hospital for a few days or more. **You would like a prayer said for you.** Your pastor is always happy to do this. (Please note: If you would like yourself or a loved one to be included on the Prayer Chain or included in the Prayers of the Church you can fill out a card in the sanctuary pew or notify the office. Sometimes people want things kept confidential, so the pastor typically will not mention anyone by name in church unless he is asked or given the okay to do so.) If you would like the pastor to pray for you prior to surgery, hospitalization or some other important event that can usually be arranged.**You are not able to come to church for more than a month.** If you are sick for a prolonged period of time or recovering from illness or surgery and can't get to church, the pastor can come to you. He can see how you are doing, pray with you, have a short devotion, and even bring you Holy Communion. (Speaking of missing church, copies of the sermon are available in a blue file box at the table on the sun porch.) Over lengthy periods of recovery trained lay visitors and communion visitors might be used to supplement the pastor’s visits. Your pastor and congregation family want you to stay connected to God's Word and the Sacrament. We all constantly need what God gives us when we gather together in God’s holy house even when we cannot physically be there. **You have a question or concern about something at church**. Many church-related questions that people have can be cleared up easily. Likewise, if you have a concern about something at church, let the pastor know and let’s talk about it. Or if you have a suggestion for something that is new or different, let your pastor know. While the congregation may not be able to implement every suggestion, your input does matter!**Call a pastor when you or someone you know needs help**. Most pastors will readily admit that there are few easy answers in life, but pastors also know about resources and options that can help. Contact the pastor when a difficult decision confronts you. Life-changing decisions should not be made alone. Most pastors can help people think through the options that face them in life. Pastors are also available for crisis intervention or short term counseling. While pastors are not professional counselors they can help you focus or perhaps get things on the right track towards greater help and healing.**Your conscience is troubling you and you want assurance of God's grace.** God does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation and guilt. God invites us to confess our sin and receive forgiveness. In strict confidence you can confess your sin to your pastor and receive assurance of God's forgiveness and absolution delivered personally to you. You are welcome to come even if no particular sin is troubling you. It's faith-building to receive God's forgiveness at any time.**You're wrestling with a spiritual issue or have a question about something the Bible says.** Questions often come up when you're talking religion with coworkers and friends. Call the pastor if you have a question about a Bible teaching. If you encounter something in a sermon, Bible study, or in your own personal Bible reading that makes you scratch your head, share it with the pastor. Pastors love to discuss God's Word and to see people grow in their understanding. **Planning a wedding**. If you are planning a wedding be sure to pick up a wedding information packet in the pamphlet holder next to the church office. Fill out the form and submit it to the office. The pastor will be in touch with you about your wedding plans. Pre-marital counseling and wedding planning require time. Too often couples set a date and a location for a wedding without including the pastor in those discussions. The result is that sometimes the pastor is unable to perform the wedding because of other obligations and commitments. If you have questions about the process call the pastor and he can give you further guidance. **Planning a funeral.** Call the pastor before making funeral arrangements. He will be sensitive to helping plan a funeral service that, while faithful, will meet your needs and desires. He will want to visit you and work with you in making the service as meaningful as possible. The pastor will also provide support in a time of grief. When death occurs, the pastor should be among the first notified. The congregation also provides Funeral Service Planning forms for those who desire to pre-plan their funeral services. Call the Church office or speak to the pastor if you would like such a form. The forms are then kept on file in the office. The pastor will be happy schedule a time to work with you on filling out the form if you desire.**Birth of a child.** Call a pastor when a baby is born. Babies are seen as the symbol of new life. Pastors want to rejoice with the new parents and ask God's blessing on the child. He will also want to work with you in planning your new child’s baptism.**Baptism –** If you, someone in your family or an acquaintance desires to be baptized then let the pastor know. The pastor will give you a baptismal form to fill out and return to the office. He will then contact you about setting the date and making necessary preparations. |

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