

# Manual for Interim or Transitional Ministry

## Northumberland Presbytery



Introduction-Definition	1
Expectations of an Interim Pastor	2
Overview of Interim time	3
Compensation Guidelines	4
<b>RESOURCES</b>	
Expectations	5
No Candidacy Rationale	6
Job Description Worksheet	8
The Covenant-Contract	9
Reflecting on the Interim Time (evaluation).	12
Sample Job Description	15

# Introduction: A Manual for Interim or Transitional Ministry

## I. DEFINITION OF INTERIM

Interim/transitional ministry is understood to be the specialized, time-limited pastoral ministry provided to a local congregation or other ecclesiastical setting during the search process for a person to be called to provide installed ministerial leadership in that setting. Within interim ministry there are varieties of leadership that include:

### A. Intentional Interim Minister:

This is an ordained Presbyterian minister with specific and special training for working with churches that are in-between installed ministers. This person will not be a candidate for the position of installed minister in the church being served as interim.

### B. Interim Minister:

This is an ordained Presbyterian minister who has not taken special training for working with churches in transition. He/she will not be a candidate for the position of installed minister in the church being served as interim.

### C. Temporary Supply Minister:

This is a minister, who may be ordained or a lay person, who is available for part time/full time service including worship leadership and emergency pastoral care. This person may or may not be a member in the PCUSA. This is a negotiable position and the minimum standards do not apply including medical and pension benefits.

1. If a church is **not** going to search for a new pastor then the church can contract with an ordained PCUSA minister as a **Stated Supply**. It is understood that a Stated Supply can be compensated at the minimum Presbytery standard including benefits.
2. A Stated Supply can be installed as an installed permanent pastor by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the Presbytery. The session can specify in the temporary contract that the Stated Supply will not be considered for the position of next installed permanent pastor.
3. If the temporary pastor is a PCUSA Elder they will normally be a Certified Lay Pastor and they will be commissioned by the Presbytery for this position, with an annual review of their performance and contract responsibilities by the COM.
4. Note: The Temporary Supply contract is between the Session, the Pastor, and the Committee on Ministry.
5. A Temporary Supply who is **not** a member of the PCUSA can not moderate the session and they can not be installed as a permanent pastor unless they are a part of the Formula of Agreement.<sup>1</sup>
6. If the Temporary Supply is not a member of the PCUSA or a member of a Formula of Agreement church, they must provide a letter of good standing from their governing body, a certificate of ordination, a statement of faith, and be approved by the Committee on Ministry.

---

<sup>1</sup> The partner churches who are in the Formula of Agreement are: Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), The Reformed Church in America (RCA), and the United Church of Christ (UCC).

## II. EXPECTATIONS

The Interim Pastor is expected to function within a church in two major ways:

**A.** She or he provides basic pastoral services for the continuation of the church's mission and ministries through—

1. Leading the worship life of the church;
2. Providing pastoral care through visitation, counseling;
3. Officiating at weddings and funerals;
4. Attending meetings of official church bodies;
5. Providing leadership for church programs, as agreed upon, e.g., confirmation, adult education.

**B.** She or he also helps the church focus on issues of identity and mission in specific and intentional ways, as it evaluates its past and present plans for its future. This is accomplished by giving careful attention to what the Alban Institute has identified as the **FIVE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS** of a congregation in an interim time.

These tasks are:

### **1. Coming to Terms with History**

The congregation needs to complete its closure with the departed pastor, working through its feelings of loss, hurt, anger, guilt, etc. Gaining perspective on its past, both immediate and long range, helps the congregation prepare for the future. This challenge is crucial when there has been a long pastorate, an involuntary departure, or a conflict within the congregation. The resolution of these dynamics strongly enhances the success of the new installed pastor.

### **2. Discovering a New Identity**

Over time congregations change as they respond to various pastoral leaders, changes in their world context, and modifications in their internal circumstances. The interim time provides a unique opportunity for congregational self-study leading to a focusing on the congregation's present reality.

### **3. Allowing Needed Leadership Change**

A change of pastoral leadership often precipitates changes in the lay leadership, as well. Old leaders may take a less active role while new persons become more involved. Many congregations address their internal leadership needs during the interim time.

### **4. Reaffirming Covenant with the Presbyterian Church USA**

A change of pastoral leadership is a time when the local congregation may more clearly understand and experience its relationship with the wider church, often becoming more acquainted with its supportive resources. An opportunity also exists to strengthen the congregation's identity as part of the Presbyterian Church USA.

### **5. Commitment to New Directions in Ministry**

As the interim period progresses the congregation becomes better prepared to move forward under new leadership, furthering a mission which is emerging from its self-study and its understanding of its opportunities for service and witness. The congregation becomes eager to embrace new initiatives in partnership with its new installed pastor.

### III. OUTLINE/OVERVIEW OF INTERIM TIME

In addition to the essential and well-documented developmental tasks of the congregation in its interim period are **THE FIVE PROCESS TASKS** of the interim pastor, which provide an outline overview of the interim transitional period. They are commonly identified as follows:

#### **A. Process Task one—Joining the System**

Effective interim pastors find ways to make quick and significant connections with the congregation they are serving. Such connections may be formed by adopting a few significant local customs. At the same time an interim pastor attaches to the system *emotionally*, the interim pastor must also maintain a detachment. A sense that the interim pastor is simultaneously an “insider” and an “outsider” increases the power of the interim pastor to be of service to the congregation.

#### **B. Process Task two—Analyzing the System**

After an interim pastor has begun to join the system, she or he must then commence a more systematic reflection on the nature of the system. Analysis begins early in the interim’s ministry in a particular church, but it actually never stops. The result of the early analysis becomes an hypothesis, and this hypothesis forms the basis for choice of focus and responsibility in the fourth task.

#### **C. Process Task three—Connecting with the Presbytery**

From the very beginning the interim pastor needs to initiate and maintain strong connections with the Presbytery through the Executive Presbyter and the COM Liaison. This connection is vital to the interim process and serves to support the important developmental task of reaffirming our covenantal and connectional ties to the Presbyterian Church USA.

#### **D. Process Task four—Focusing and Assuming Responsibility**

This very important task is based on several factors including:

1. The leader’s understanding of role and responsibility,
2. The particular skills and experiences of the leader,
3. The indications of relative openness in the system to one or more of the issues identified including the agreement from other responsible leaders in the congregation.
4. The interim’s understanding of God’s call to her or him in this particular situation. In some settings the focus might be on healing from grief or reconciliation following conflict. In another congregation the need to clarify roles and structure might call for leadership. Spiritual renewal is also a frequent priority. In every situation, the focus of the interim leader needs to include self-care and acceptance of limitations of responsibility!

#### **E. Process Task five—Exiting and Evaluating**

Frequently the best gift to a church organization for the interim period is an experience of a healthy farewell! Assisting the congregation in learning from the interim time is included in this task. Interim leaders need to always remember that the exiting process includes the clear break in relationships after the pastorate has ended. Don’t forget the **Exit Interview**. An exit interview with the Executive Presbyter or COM must be arranged prior to the termination date.

## Compensation Guidelines

1. The interim is not a time to consider "saving money" on staffing. If a church needs a full-time installed pastor, the church will need a full-time interim pastor. For a full-time interim position, a full-time salary and benefit package should be negotiated, based on the church's current budget and on the compensation package of the previous pastor and in keeping with compensation guidelines of the Northumberland Presbytery. Refer to the current year's guidelines for recommended compensation.
2. For a part-time interim pastor, calculate the percentage of a full-time package. Benefits should be negotiated as well. If a part-time interim is not covered for pension and health insurance by other employment, the local church needs to pay these benefits during an interim period of three months or longer.
3. Reimbursement for travel should be equivalent to IRS guidelines. The interim pastor should submit a monthly voucher of total miles traveled. Because interim pastors often commute a long distance from home, this mileage is also reimbursed.<sup>2</sup>
4. All business and incidental expenses, such as phone calls, are to be reimbursed.
5. Vacation time is computed at one week for each three months' service. Additional time may be included for education purposes (two weeks for full time).
6. Housing, whether provided by allowance or in a parsonage, needs to be negotiated. If the interim must travel a long distance, overnight accommodations for one or two nights a week may be provided, in addition to a housing allowance.

---

<sup>2</sup> \*NOTE: The Internal Revenue Service considers employment which is expected to last a year or less to be "temporary employment," and persons in this category may be reimbursed for mileage to and from their primary residence at the IRS rate. Chapter 28, page 178, if the IRS Regulations states, in part: *If your assignment or job away from your main place of work is temporary, your tax home does not change. You are considered to be away from home for the whole period and your travel expenses are deductible. Generally, a temporary assignment in a single location is one that is realistically expected to last (and does in fact last) for one year or less.* Many tax advisors interpret this to mean that a straight mileage reimbursement for commuting interim pastors is reimbursable. If you have any question or concern, check with your tax advisor or your local IRS Office.

# RESOURCES

---

## THE CHURCH'S EXPECTATIONS OF ITS INTERIM MINISTERS

### Faith Affirmations

- Understands and affirms the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as found in the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order and has a sense of call to interim ministry.

### Church Loyalty

- Is committed to guiding interim churches through their transition to seek and call a new minister.
- Supports the church's participation in the PCUSA search process while providing interim ministry service to that church and refrains from interfering or becoming involved in the church's search.
- Will not become a candidate for the ministry position in any setting where interim ministry is provided.

### Knowledge and Skills

- Has the knowledge and skills to be a faithful and fruitful Minister of Word and Sacrament.
- Has engaged in a disciplined study of and has acquired considerable knowledge and skill in interim ministry, including but not limited to; understanding and appreciation for the nature of interim ministry; knowledge regarding the developmental tasks of churches in interim transition; and skill for the performance of interim ministry.

### Personal Qualities

- Ability to quickly form and appropriately relinquish relationships.
- Acknowledges and tends to self-care needs amidst the dynamic transitions inherent in interim ministry.
- Possesses the capacity to thrive amidst constant change inherent in life as an interim minister.
- Respects, honors, and adapts to the cultural milieu and traditions of a variety of local churches.
- Integrity and Honesty is expected at all times. Speak the truth in love and be willing to give and take Tough Love.

### Help from others:

**PCUSA.ORG Interim Training is important: you can find dates for Interim Training opportunities by going to: <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/interim.htm#training>**

**Or the Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialist at <http://www.apims.org/>**

## **NO CANDIDACY RATIONALE** by Terry Foland

---

**The Question:** *Why is it not a good practice for interim pastors to be considered as a candidate for the "installed" pastor of the congregation? And how can we keep this from happening?*

The questions were raised by a middle judicatory executive and are representative of an issue faced by everyone who works with the selection processes of calling pastors. The executive who asked that the issue be addressed went on to write, "We desperately need...a rationale which is relevant to the average congregation, specifying why this is not a healthy practice." One other pertinent point was made by this executive, "It does not seem to matter whether or not interim ministers have received specialized education...they seem to be as vulnerable as those who have not received training."

My experience indicates that congregations care very little for policies that prohibit certain practices just because there are policies set by some governing body at some time. Congregational leaders will, however, be reasonable if certain practices do have clear rationale which makes some sense to them. Here are six rationale statements that can perhaps be useful to middle judicatory folk as they deal with this issue.

**Rationale One:** *Interim pastors can enable congregations to deal with their agenda better if they have no vested interest in their own long-range call to that congregation.*

The interim pastor needs to be free to be involved from a perspective or stance of "what is best for this congregation to engage in during the interim period." Interim pastors needs to help congregational leaders identify key agenda needing to be addressed at this time. It is essentially impossible for an interim pastor to be objective when the question becomes, "what must I do to get the call here as the installed pastor?"

**Rationale Two:** *Trust that persons keep their word is essential in covenantal relationships; changing the "rules of the game" may foster distrust in the pastor and the congregational leaders who "changed the rules."*

When an interim pastor becomes a candidate for the open position it changes the conditions/agreements upon which the interim pastor was hired for a specific purpose. Usually there has been no general congregational involvement in a search process and no congregational vote or concurrence to the call issued by the governing board of the congregation for the interim pastor. Some people may feel betrayed, fooled, or taken advantage of, and distrust may then be part of the climate in which a new long-term relationship will begin.

**Rationale Three:** *Consideration of the interim pastor as a candidate will short change the search process.*

When a search/call/nominating committee decides to consider the interim pastor, it will probably Short-change the search process. The focus will likely be on the personality of the interim pastor rather than on an objective definition of what the congregation is wanting to be in the future and the appropriate skills, strengths and abilities needed in the next pastor. When the search/call/nominating committee decides to find a way to "keep the interim" they can no longer be objective in the crucial task they are performing on behalf of the congregation.

**Rationale Four:** *It is risky to call an interim pastor when there may be underlying opposition to that individual by persons in the congregation.*

The interim pastor may be liked by many, but usually there will be some persons who do not like the interim pastor for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the interim pastor has had to push, confront, challenge or strongly discourage certain behavior, actions or policies. This may have angered or alienated the interim pastor from some individuals or groups. The anger or hostility can usually be tolerated knowing the interim pastor will one day (not too far in the future) be leaving, but now if the interim pastor is called for a long-term position there will likely be strong opposition and undermining of the interim pastor's ability to be effective for the long haul.

**Rationale Five:** *It is best to keep clear the contract with the interim pastor as an interim position and not to "muck it up" with considerations of being a candidate for the open pulpit.*

Suppose the interim pastor is considered as a candidate and then is not chosen by the decisions making bodies during the process? It will likely make it extremely difficult for the interim pastor to continue as an effective interim pastor for that congregation. Feelings generated by the interim pastor and those who either supported or opposed him/her for the position cannot be easily discarded after a decision has been made.

**Rationale Six:** *The church needs to be fair to all possible candidates and protect the concept of what an intentional interim ministry program can provide for congregations.*

It is not fair to other persons who want to be considered for the open position. The interim pastor will have a decided advantage in the call process. If interim pastors become the called/installed pastors the trend will build up distrust in the interim program of a conference/region/synod and do irreparable harm to the concept of intentional interim ministry.

Of course there are probably some exceptions where the interim pastor could indeed be the best possible candidate. However, the attitude that "we are an exception" is really a myth predicated on the false assumption that "there is only one person" who is right for us as our pastor now. There will always be many candidates who can serve that congregation. The search/call/nominating committee needs to be free to screen all interested candidates without the undue, though often unintentional, influence of the interim pastor.

**How do you respond to the original question?** In a free call system (which most readers operate in), I know of only one way, and that is to rely on the interim pastor to simply say, "No thank you, I'm not a possible candidate." It is a matter of ethics and trust if the interim pastors do not believe in the six rationales, then those of us in the middle judicatory positions will never "sell them" to congregations.

***Choose the Right Person***

*Choosing an interim pastor is a crucial decision and should be someone who has been a pastor. Candidates should not be someone who will consider accepting the call as full-time pastor. For that reason, the church needs to be very careful about who is asked to supply or be interim pastor. Too often someone is asked to fill the pulpit who may use it as a way to circumvent the normal pastor search process. This is an unfair manipulation and often creates tension. No one can know how God will lead a church to a full-time pastor, and there have been times when the interim has become pastor and all ends well. But it often creates confusion and is generally not in the best interest of the church for an interim to be considered as the full-time pastor.*



## **INTERIM PASTOR JOB DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET**

---

This checklist is to be used *before* you interview candidates. Approximate the number of hours needed each week for each area of responsibility. It is often helpful to ask the person presently in this position to make an estimate of how s/he allocates time in each of the categories.

**Hours per week<sup>3</sup>**

**A. WORSHIP**

Sunday preparation \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday service \_\_\_\_\_

Special services \_\_\_\_\_

**B. PASTORAL CARE**

Hospital/Nursing home visits \_\_\_\_\_

Home visits \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual Care/Counseling in office \_\_\_\_\_

**C. ADMINISTRATION**

General \_\_\_\_\_

Meetings \_\_\_\_\_

Planning and evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

**D. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Adult Education \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Groups \_\_\_\_\_

Church school resourcing \_\_\_\_\_

**E. OUTREACH**

Mission concerns \_\_\_\_\_

Community involvement \_\_\_\_\_

Other involvement \_\_\_\_\_

**F. OTHER EXPECTATIONS**

Denominational \_\_\_\_\_

Community \_\_\_\_\_

**G. CONTINUING EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_**

**AVERAGE OF TOTAL HOURS OF PASTORAL SERVICE PER WEEK: \_\_\_\_\_**

---

<sup>3</sup> Note: The Presbytery of Northumberland work week for full time is 50 hours

# ***Covenant for Intentional Interim Ministry***

---

*Name of Congregation*

*and*

---

*Name of Interim Pastor*

The above named congregation and Interim Pastor have entered into a covenant and contract for intentional interim ministry.

We believe that the period of time between pastors is a time to become good stewards of transition. The transitional period is an opportunity to create a transitional period that helps the congregation to:

- ◆ understand and examine our history
- ◆ renew our congregational identity
- ◆ deal with changes and shifts in our leadership
- ◆ strengthen our connections with denominational governing bodies
- ◆ prepare for new commitments to a pastoral relationship

We believe that as the Session, congregation, Presbytery, and Interim Pastor become partners in our interim ministry we discover new opportunities to live as the people of God, ministering effectively in the world. Together we will seek to say good-bye to the past, resolve any feelings of difference or conflict, and complete any unfinished business that will block our movement into the future. We will work together to renew our lives through openness to the Holy Spirit as we search for direction and clarity of purpose.

1. The Interim Pastor will not be considered as a candidate for the position of the installed pastor of this congregation.
2. The Interim Pastor will be accountable to the Session and the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Northumberland.
3. The Interim Pastor will serve as the pastoral leader who will guide the congregation through the developmental tasks of interim transition (see above) and will provide the normal pastoral and administrative leadership during the interim period.
4. The Interim Pastor will seek to serve the Presbytery and the larger Church in ways that are mutually helpful.
5. The Interim Pastor will be available to assist in the congregation's mission study and search process as requested by the Presbytery.

## Agreement

The Session of the above named congregation, in consultation with the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Northumberland, took action on \_\_\_\_\_, [date of meeting] 20\_\_\_\_, to secure the services of: \_\_\_\_\_, as: [name of Interim pastor]

This position will be:

- full time
- part time [number of Sundays per year: \_\_\_\_\_; number of hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_ ]

The effective tenure of service will be:

Month\_\_\_\_\_ Day\_\_\_\_\_ Year\_\_\_\_\_ to: Month\_\_\_\_\_ Day\_\_\_\_\_ Year\_\_\_\_\_

***This contract may be extended upon review and mutual agreement in consultation with the Interim pastor and the Committee on Ministry, Presbytery of Northumberland.***

## II. Compensation

Cash Salary	\$
Pension Plan?	\$
Utilities Allowance?	\$
Use of Manse?	
Housing Allowance?	\$
Automobile Allowance?	\$
Study Leave Expenses?	\$
Study Leave Time?	
Paid Vacation?	
Other?	
Other?	
Other?	

*If an installed pastor is called before the end of the contract period and the interim pastor must leave before he or she has found another position, there will be a severance package of (negotiated terms or Presbytery's mandated minimum terms):*

*The Session and the Interim Pastor have agreed on the termination of this contract by either party with thirty day's notice should a pastor be called or a change desired by either party, upon consultation with the Committee on Ministry*

_____	_____
Signature of Interim Pastor	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Clerk of Session	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Moderator of Session	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Chairperson of Committee on Ministry	Date

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:**

**The Committee on Ministry  
The Presbytery of Northumberland  
P. O. Bo 334  
Montoursville, Pennsylvania 17754**

**For Committee on Ministry Use Only:**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

# REFLECTING ON OUR INTERIM TIME

(NOTE: THIS IS BEST USED A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE INTERIM MINISTER CONCLUDES SERVICE TO THE CONGREGATION.)

**Introduction:** I appreciate your taking the time to complete this feedback sheet. PLEASE BE HONEST! I will not be "graded" on this. It is for my growth and reflection upon my ministry with your church. Your thoughtful comments will help me as I continue in Interim Ministry here and in another setting.

[signature of Interim Pastor]  
.....

## PART I

Below is a brief description of each major "Developmental Task of a Congregation in its Interim Time" which the Interim Pastor helps the congregation address. Please try to rate the Interim Pastor's effectiveness of leadership through these tasks.

### A. Coming to terms with the HISTORY of the local church

If it is to be free for the future, a congregation with a vacant pastorate needs to work at understanding where it has come from and how it arrived where it is now - not just its chronological history, but how and why it does things as it does. It is important for the congregation to articulate its feelings about previous pastors, be they love or rage or somewhere in between. If this is done, the "ghosts" of former pastors lose inappropriate power over the congregation and become parts of its history. This task releases the congregation from the improper and/or inhibiting influence of the past and allows for the future.

- The Interim Pastor has contributed toward accomplishing this task (circle one):

NOT AT ALL   SO-SO   SATISFACTORILY   SIGNIFICANTLY   GREATLY

- The task could have been accomplished better if the Interim Pastor had/had not done...
- The most significant change in the church, related to the task, has been...

### B. Discovering a NEW IDENTITY within the parish

Congregations tend to build up myths about themselves. Often the myths seem to be self-fulfilling, and sometimes separated from reality. For example, one congregation might say, "We are a growing suburban parish," when actually the church is now composed of mostly the elderly and is within the inner city. In this task, the congregation should discover what myths have put them out of touch with what they have become and with their world. The congregation should begin to develop a realistic sense of who it is and what the community is like. The congregation develops a richer, more helpful myth about itself in this task.

- The Interim Pastor has contributed toward accomplishing this task (circle one):

NOT AT ALL   SO-SO   SATISFACTORILY   SIGNIFICANTLY   GREATLY

- The task could have been accomplished better if the Interim Pastor had/had not done...
- The most significant change in the church, related to the task, has been...

### **C. SHIFTS OF POWER within the church**

Congregations usually look, think, and act in ways consistent with what the former pastor did. His/her style of ministry and leadership attracted leaders who worked well with that style, even in a negative sense. During the Interim period, new centers of power in the congregation form. In this task, shifts of leadership take place, with new leaders emerging and former leaders moving to other/new areas of ministry, in the congregation and elsewhere. This task calls for the emergence of new leadership and consequent shifting of power. (Note: "power" should not necessarily be viewed as negative.)

- The Interim Pastor has contributed toward accomplishing this task (circle one):  
NOT AT ALL   SO-SO   SATISFACTORILY   SIGNIFICANTLY   GREATLY
- The task could have been accomplished better if the Interim Pastor had/had not done...
- The most significant change in the church, related to the task, has been...

### **D. Rethinking DENOMINATIONAL LINKAGES**

The previous pastor's passions or prejudices usually flavor a congregation's relationship with the denomination. With good interim leadership, the congregation sees that the resources of the larger denomination and its staff really have a lot to offer, and the congregation also discovers what its particular gifts and talents are that can be shared with others via the denominational connection. In this task, the congregation re-examines and explores what it means to be related to its particular heritage (denominational structure).

- The Interim Pastor has contributed toward accomplishing this task (circle one):  
NOT AT ALL   SO-SO   SATISFACTORILY   SIGNIFICANTLY   GREATLY
- The task could have been accomplished better if the Interim Pastor had/had not done...
- The most significant change in the church, related to the task, has been...

### **E. Commitment to NEW LEADERSHIP and a NEW FUTURE**

It is one thing to "hire" a new minister. It is another thing to commit oneself to a new pastor with a sense of new tasks and mission. This task should move a congregation toward a sense of its calling and to work together with a new pastor and new lay leadership, as well as excitement about a ministry and mission to be done together.

- The Interim Pastor has contributed toward accomplishing this task (circle one):  
NOT AT ALL   SO-SO   SATISFACTORILY   SIGNIFICANTLY   GREATLY
- The task could have been accomplished better if the Interim Pastor had/had not done...
- The most significant change in the church, related to the task, has been...

## **PART II**

**A.** Rate the Interim Pastor's effectiveness in the following: (poor -1) (good-5)

- Preaching/worship leadership 1 2 3 4 5
- Pastoral Oversight 1 2 3 4 5
- Administration, work with boards and committees 1 2 3 4 5
- Relationship with staff 1 2 3 4 5

**B.** How well did the Interim deal with conflict situations? 1 2 3 4 5

Cite an incident:\*

**C.** Sum up, in your own words, what you feel was the impact of the interim ministry on the life of the church.\*

**D.** This is what I learned about "my" church during the interim period:\*

**E.** In what specific ways could the church have been helped MORE by the Interim Pastor?\*

**F.** What elements/skills/attributes would you like to see the Interim Pastor show in future Ministry settings?\*

**G.** In what areas do you feel the Interim Pastor shows real strength and gifts?\*

**H.** In what areas does the Interim Pastor need to grow and improve?\*

Name of person giving  
evaluation \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**\*For additional space, please attach extra sheets.**

## **BUILDING A JOB DESCRIPTION**

---

### **What Jobs Will the Interim Pastor Perform?<sup>4</sup>**

The primary job of an interim pastor is: prepare the congregation for the changes that will come as they call their next pastor.

This will include processes that build unity, heal hurts, encourage, promote reconciliation, and generate excitement.

It is vital that you understand that *an interim pastor is much more than a preacher that fills the pulpit on Sundays*. He should be a seasoned pastor who understands the dynamics of congregational life. He needs to have special insight into the moods, grief stages, and pastor search needs of a church. You need more than a warm body!

Before you try to write a detailed job description think about the question in general terms: "How deeply involved in our church do we need our Interim to be?"

Use the guidelines listed above to find your answer. Just reword them a little:

- The longer you will go without a pastor, the more involved your interim pastor will need to be.
- The more problems your church encountered during the previous pastor's administration, the more involved your interim will need to be.
- The more control the congregation has over the pastor search process, the more involved your interim pastor will need to be.
- The deeper the emotional bonds were between your former pastor and the congregation, the more involved your interim pastor will need to be.
- The more spiritually immature your congregation, the more involved your interim will need to be.
- The longer your previous pastor was at your church, the more involved your interim pastor will need to be.
- The more independent your church, the more involved your interim pastor will need to be.
- The larger your church, the more involved your interim pastor will need to be.

Now you have a better idea of how detailed you want your interim job description to be. Use the list of typical pastoral duties I've written below to create a list of "jobs" you want your interim pastor to perform. You might want to start the job description something like this:

---

#### <sup>4</sup> ***Choose the Right Person***

Choosing an interim pastor is a crucial decision and should be someone who has been a pastor. Candidates should not be someone who will consider accepting the call as full-time pastor. For that reason, the church needs to be very careful about who is asked to supply or be interim pastor. Too often someone is asked to fill the pulpit who may use it as a way to circumvent the normal pastor search process. This is an unfair manipulation and often creates tension. No one can know how God will lead a church to a full-time pastor, and there have been times when the interim has become pastor and all ends well. But it often creates confusion and is generally not in the best interest of the church for an interim to be considered as the full-time pastor.



# **SAMPLE DOCUMENT**

## **Interim Pastor Job Description**

---

Name: First Presbyterian Church ANYWHERE USA

Date Organized:

Membership: 350 and average attendance is 130

Previous Pastor: Rev. I. B. Good

Pastor Emeritus:

### **Responsibilities of our Interim Pastor:**

To be a strong relational leader of a healthy, biblically faithful, evangelical, church. Our Interim Pastor will be a dynamic preacher who appreciates the congregation's strong emphasis on community outreach, Christian education of all ages. He/she will be the primary preaching pastor with responsibility for continuity in the preaching during the interim period.

### **Relationships**

- Congregation – The Interim Pastor will serve the spiritual needs of this congregation, Session, and Staff by teaching and preaching the Word of God at the worship service. He/she will provide visitation and counseling on a one-to-one basis or in small groups and provide pastoral leadership working with our support staff.
- Session – The Interim Pastor will moderate the Session if Presbyterian and will provide the body with collaborative leadership, godly wisdom, and counsel in their governing of the congregation.
- Committees and Administrative Staff – The Interim Pastor functions as the executive head to all administrative staff and will provide the staff with collaborative leadership, wisdom and counsel in the development of programs as well as encouraging the staff and preparing them for the new pastor.

### **Primary Pastoral Activities**

1. The Word of God will be preached with clarity, urgency and conviction. As the primary preaching pastor, the Interim Pastor will be responsible for selection of scriptures and preparation and preaching of sermons and will challenge the worshippers to live an active and biblical Christian life. As the Leading worshipper, the pastor will foster a vibrant and inspiring worship experience.

2. An emphasis will be placed on the sharing of faith in Christ as personal Lord and Savior. The Interim Pastor will accept an active role of interpreting and teaching the Scriptures from a traditional viewpoint, within a reformed theological framework, emphasizing the mission of the Church as the responsibility of all (The Priesthood of all Believers) through an equipping ministry that will empower the Laity for their ministry in the work of building God's kingdom.
3. The interim pastor will guide our congregation through this transitional period by identifying the five developmental stages of transition.
4. The Interim Pastor will accept appropriate administrative responsibilities as negotiated, in a climate of delegated tasks and shared leadership. He/she will encourage committees and staff to use their ideas and skills. He/she will work with the staff, using their current job descriptions, ensuring accountability and teamwork.
5. The Interim Pastor will be a good communicator and community builder who will encourage the session and committees to accomplish the agreed upon mission goals and vision.

### **Qualifications and Abilities Required**

1. Theological maturity (Master of Divinity degree required).
2. A commitment to preach Christ's word, emphasizing an active and personal relationship with Christ, under the authority of God's divinely inspired Word. He/she will provide counseling for members of the congregation. He/she along with the support staff and volunteers will visit sick members and shut in members of the congregation in either the home or hospital if the need arises.
3. The interim pastor will help the congregation transition and prepare for their our new pastor.
4. Willingness and ability to counsel, plan, and conduct meaningful Christian ceremonies for special seasons of the year and for personal occasions as requested by the session.
6. A personal and professional life that projects a love for and following of Jesus Christ, whose leadership is reflected in a disciplined study and prayer life.
7. An individual who has no history of misconduct and models Christian values.
8. It is desired that the Interim minister have completed phase one of interim training.

### **Accountability & Structure**

The Interim Pastor will be accountable to the Session through the Personnel Committee which will be responsible for evaluations and reviews.

## **Term**

The term of the contract shall be for one year, renewable annually with the consent of the pastor, session and the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Northumberland. This contract may be terminated on 30 days prior written notice by either the session or the pastor.

## **Current Staff**

1. Church Secretary (full time)
2. Church Treasurer (volunteer)
3. Bookkeeper (part time )
4. Church Sexton (janitor) (part time)
5. Church assistant janitor (part time)
6. Church Christian Educator (part time)
7. Choir Director (part time)
8. Church Organist (part time)

**Support Staff: people contracted by the session to provide special pastoral support**