

CHAPTER VII - INTERIM PASTOR

Interim Pastor Covenant Policy

When a pastor or associate pastor relationship is vacated, the COM shall counsel with the session of the church as to the need for ministry until a new pastor is installed. Ordinarily, the interim pastor will be approved by the presbytery (through its COM), in consultation with the session. The interim pastor may be designated Moderator. The interim pastor shall guide the congregation in ministry, enable clarification of directions, and prepare for the coming of the new pastor, conducting the work of a pastor. The interim has no relationship with the PNC on the selection of a pastor. The interim will work closely with the presbytery to address the needs of the congregation. The interim cannot be considered as a candidate for the pastor position.

To implement the presbytery's policy on interim pastorates, the Presbytery of Grand Canyon requires that all interim pastors endorse the "Interim Pastor Agreement" contract, and agree to abide by the policies and guidelines of the Interim Pastor Covenant document. Moreover, Grand Canyon Presbytery shall establish a cadre of pastors called "The Interim Cadre", who wish to serve in interim capacity. The size of the cadre and its constituency will be determined by the presbytery upon the recommendation of the COM, and in accordance with the "Interim Pastor Covenant" and the stated qualifications of membership.

It is the policy of the presbytery to ordinarily require that an interim pastor be a member of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon and those accepting assignment to an interim pastor position are expected to request transfer of membership and be received into the membership of the presbytery.

INTERIM PASTOR SELECTION GUIDELINES

- Visit with session by COM Liaison and/or Executive Presbyter to:

Determine appropriateness of having an interim pastor

Educate in general terms about the transition time in a congregation

- Session names the group who will search for interim pastor
- Interim pastor search papers are prepared:

Description of the congregation

Job Description

Outline of contract

- Executive Presbyter and COM liaisons identify 2-4 candidates:

Review PIF to assure basic training, understanding of ministry, availability

Perform governing body reference checks

- Interim Pastor Search Committee receives PIFs from Presbytery

• Process of Selection:

1. Review PIFs
2. Telephone Interview by whole committee
3. Check references on PIF
4. Listen/watch tapes of sermons
5. Prioritize
6. Bring #1 for face-face interview
7. Notify COM liaisons so that COM interview can be set up while the person is in town
8. If desired, bring in others – congregation pays for reasonable expenses*
9. Choose person, negotiate contract. COM liaison may be present if you wish.
10. Presbytery provides basic contract. You and person may add or specify details.
11. Present choice to session for approval. Have COM liaison forward all papers to presbytery office

(a) The search committee is the decision making body in the selection of a candidate. However, if a church has more than one pastor the search committee may set up a confidential, informational meeting with the pastor(s) to introduce the candidate prior to presentation to the session for approval.

(b) To ensure confidentiality, Personal Information Forms for the selected candidate should not be distributed outside the search committee without the permission of the candidate, and should be limited to the pastor(s) and members of the session.

(c) Present choice to the session for approval. Have COM liaison forward all papers to the presbytery office.

12. Set starting date.
13. Inform other candidates quickly.
14. Session informs the congregation. Congregation does not vote on candidate. It is a session contract.
15. Prepare for an exciting time of growth during your interim experience.

*Reasonable Interview Expenses:

Coach airfare for candidate. You choose as to whether to pay for spouse.

Overnights in local motel of your choice – you arrange.

Meals during the trip

Mileage to and from home airport

Rental car if needed – distance from airport to your town – you determine

Make arrangements clear before person comes. Prepaying ticket, motel keeps you in budget.

NOTES FOR AN INTERIM PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

What are you doing?

You are searching for a pastor who will serve your congregation for a specific time to do a specific job.

This is very different from the search for a pastor who will stay a long time and help the congregation grow in many ways.

How does this differ from other pastoral searches?

The pastor you seek should be different than a permanent pastor.

- Should have training and skills to lead you through the transition
- Should work with you to identify your future
- Should cherish the congregation's wishes, not impose the pastor's wishes
- Should be up-front that she/he will be leaving at the end of the transition
- Should be able to get out of the way at the conclusion so the installed pastor can "take the stage"

You are looking at a small field of selected candidates, who have cleared governing body reference checks.

You need to work decisively and quickly – Interim pastors need to move quickly and can't risk "unpaid" time. (Installed pastors are in a position that will pay until they move; interim pastors are at the end of a contract.)

Helpful questions to ask a prospective interim pastor:

- How will you help us grieve the loss of our former pastor?
- What is the most important thing you do as an interim pastor?
- Why do you work as an interim where you move frequently, leaving people who grow to like you?
- How do you sort out what to help a congregation maintain and what to change?
- Can you tell us what will be the emotional journey of the congregation during your pastorate? What talents do you bring for working with those emotions?
- How do you handle staff resignations? Volunteer leader resignations?

A checklist of desirable qualities in an interim pastor

- Is able to work with persons in theological positions that are different from her/his own without pressure on the other to change
- Has commitment to stay with the congregation until the next pastor has been called
- Negotiates with you adequate self-care (vacation, protections at the end of the contract)
- Is comfortable with change, conflict, emotional reactions, and new places
- Is different from the pastor who just left (so that the congregation's ideas of "pastor" are broadened)
- Openly desires to work with the presbytery and participate in its life
- Has enough household goods to feel at home, but not break your bank for the move
- Has had interim training and other training in such areas as conflict management, congregational life, planning processes, visioning
- Is flexible, willing to work in the way of the congregation, but knows where to stand firm
- Can choose appropriately when to use "tough love" and when to give-in

POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR TRANSITIONAL PASTOR RELATIONSHIP

Description Of Congregation

Location, size, membership, programs, highlights of congregational life

Description of the Reason for Transition Time in the Congregation

Why and when the former pastor left

Any unusual circumstances around this

Particular needs of the congregation during this transition time, such as, but not limited to:

Issues to be examined

Particular pastoral duties to be emphasized

Goals of the transition period

Mission to the community issues

Anticipated length of transition time

Goals of transition time, such as, but not limited to:

Defining the congregation as it sees itself today and tomorrow

Defining, redefining the congregation's mission to the community around it

Celebrating, healing, and putting into perspective past issues, events

Relationship with Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly

Defining next pastoral relationship

Job Description for the transition pastor

Proposed salary package for transition pastor

Attachments

Current annual budget, with comments as appropriate

Mission map of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Committee on Ministry Page 40 January 2007

**PRESBYTERY OF GRAND CANYON
Interim Pastor Agreement**

At the request of the _____ Church, the Presbytery hereby appoints _____ to be Interim Pastor for a period of _____, beginning _____, 20____, subject to 30 days notice for termination. A description of duties and services expected is attached. It is clearly understood by all parties that the interim pastor and the church subscribe to the policies of the presbytery regarding an interim pastor relationship. Further, it is understood that the interim pastor shall not be a candidate for the position of pastor, associate pastor, or designated pastor and is not eligible to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor.

The _____ Church will provide the following support for the ministry:

Salary _____ Study Leave _____
Housing _____ Moving _____
Travel _____ Vacation _____
Medical/ Other _____
Pension _____

ENDORSEMENT TO THIS AGREEMENT

1. By the session, on _____, 20____
_____, Clerk

2. By the COM, on _____, 20____

3. By the Presbytery, on _____, 20____, Chair

4. By the interim pastor, on _____, 20____, Stated Clerk

EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF AN INTERIM PASTOR GUIDELINES

Purpose: -To examine the work of an interim pastor

- To assist the employing body in the congregation in determining the appropriateness of extending a contract
- To provide information for the governing body about the congregation and the pastor

Timing: This evaluation process is helpful at the time the session needs to determine whether to extend a contract with an interim pastor. It should be used one month before the beginning of a notification specification in the interim pastor's contract.

Methods: Questionnaires to be completed by the interim pastor, working associates, including one from the group that searched for the interim pastor.

After the completion of the questionnaires a task force of the governing body of the congregation summarizes the material. The summation should be compared with the goals agreed upon with the interim pastor in the initial contract, as well as with any modifications of those goals. The results are shared with the interim pastor during an evaluation interview.

The task force then makes recommendation to the appropriate committee of the judicatory and to the congregation's governing body:

The contract is

- a. extended
- b. extended with modifications
- c. concluded with proper notice

Any extension of the contract should include working goals and objectives for the remaining time.

EVALUATION OF INTERIM MINISTRY SERVICE BY THE INTERIM MINISTER

Name: _____

Print Name

Dates for period of service being evaluated: _____

Congregation: _____

What have been your significant accomplishments serving as interim pastor for this congregation?

Please comment on your efforts in helping this congregation work on its developmental tasks. What has gone well? What has been less successful?

Understanding the history of the congregation

Seeking a new expression of their identity

Working with leadership changes

Building positive relationships with the next higher governing body

Preparing to welcome the new installed pastor

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Committee on Ministry Page 43 January 2007

Please comment on your work in the following areas with the congregation.

Preparation for your leaving

Accessibility of the interim pastor

Worship leadership

Preaching

Pastoral Care

Administration of the congregation's organizational life

Management of disagreements or conflict

Ability to understand the culture of the congregation, relate and encourage expression

Communication skills: newsletters, web page, announcements, etc.

Working with committees and groups

Support of congregational mission and ministry work

How would you describe your growing edges at this time?

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Committee on Ministry Page 44 January 2007

Have you any other comments about service with this congregation?

Please sign this document:

Signature

Date

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Committee on Ministry Page 45 January 2007

EVALUATION OF INTERIM MINISTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

by Working Associates

Interim Minister: _____

Date of period of service being evaluated _____

Congregation Served:

Your Position with the Congregation:

Length of Time in this position _____

What are the strengths of the interim pastor in working with a congregation in transition?

How has the interim pastor helped this congregation do the following:

1. Understand its history and build up it for the future?
2. Seek an expression of its current identity?
3. Allow for transition of leadership (retirements of old leaders; emergence of new leaders; leadership training and facilitation)?
4. Build positive relationships with the next high governing body?
5. Prepare for the welcoming of a new installed pastor?

How has the interim made it clear that he/she leaves at the end of the transition time?

Please make any comments you may wish to about the following categories:

Accessibility of the interim pastor

Worship leadership

Preaching

Pastoral Care

Administration of the congregation's organizational life

Management of disagreements or conflict

Ability to understand the culture of the congregation, relate, and encourage expression

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Committee on Ministry Page 47 January 2007

Communication skills: newsletters, web page, announcements, etc.

Working with committees and groups

Support of congregational mission and ministry work

Where are the growing edges of this interim pastor?

Thank-you for your help in this process. Your answers will be held in strictest confidence in the evaluation task force.

Your name: Date:

Signature

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Committee on Ministry Page 48 January 2007