

**INTERIM PASTORS**

**I. Policy Statement**

An intentional interim pastor is a minister invited by the session to serve the congregation during the interim period between installed pastors to carry out normal pastoral duties and to attend to specific tasks needed during this period of transition. The Presbytery of San Jose encourages selection of an Interim while a church is seeking a pastor.

**II. Rationale**

The interim period is important in the transition between pastors. This can be a time of problem-solving, corporate renewal, reaffirmation of faith and planning for the future.

**III. Responsibilities**

**A. Committee on Ministry (COM) Responsibilities**

1. Appoints liaison to meet with Interim Pastor Search Committee to
  - a) *assist committee in listing areas of concern during interim period,*
  - b) *determine skills needed to address areas of concern.*
2. Makes sure that a list of appropriate interim candidates is provided.
3. Approves candidate and terms of call after Session approval and after Interim Agreement has been signed.

**B. Interim Pastor Responsibilities**

1. Has the experience, specific preparation or training required.
2. Presents evidence of ability to deal with congregational dynamics, process of transition and evolving demands of the interim period.
3. Performs pastoral duties outlined in the Interim Agreement (attached).
4. Maintains contact with the COM liaison to the church.
5. Prepares the staff and congregation to take those steps which will make it possible to welcome the new called pastor.
6. Participates in the Interim Pastor support group of Presbytery.
7. Clarifies for the church that he/she is not eligible as a candidate.

**C. Session Responsibilities**

1. Reviews the church status and establishes expectations for interim period

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2. Appoints the Interim Selection Committee and maintains contact as the selection process goes on
3. Approves the candidate and terms of call in the Interim Pastor Agreement, making sure that the compensation package remains the same as that of the previous pastor
4. Notifies the congregation that an interim may not be considered for a call to the church being served
5. Establishes the range of responsibilities which the Interim Pastor, staff and related committees will be expected to perform
6. Plans a welcome for the Interim Pastor
7. Evaluates performance and progress at regular intervals
8. Prepares appropriate service of departure when interim period ends.

### **D. Additional Responsibilities/Information**

The beginning and ending of ministry are two extremely vital events. Attention needs to be directed to helping these become appropriate times of celebration and affirmation. A service of welcome can help define the interim period as a time to reflect on the past, evaluate the present and look forward to the future. Likewise, a service of appreciation and departure provides a time to celebrate things that have been learned while looking forward to the future ministry with a newly called pastor.

Attached to this Policy is a copy of the Interim Pastor Agreement used by the Presbytery of San Jose and a page with brief examples of “Words of Welcome” and a “Litany of Departure” that could be adapted, expanded or modified for use in beginning and ending the work of an Interim Pastor.

More extensive information, guidelines and resources are available from

INTERIM MINISTRY NETWORK, INC.  
P. O. Box 21251  
Baltimore, MD 21228-0751  
(410) 719-0777

This policy shall under normal conditions also apply to interim co-pastors and interim associate pastors.

APPENDIX A

INTERIM PASTOR AGREEMENT

The following agreement between the session of \_\_\_\_\_ Church and the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ is for the purpose of providing Interim Pastoral services.

**Elements:**

The Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ will be designated Interim Pastor/Interim Associate Pastor. In that position he/she

- will/will not become (is) a member of the Presbytery of San Jose
- will/will not serve as moderator of the Session and of congregational meetings.
- will/will not plan session and congregational meetings
- will/will not serve as head of staff
- will/will not assist the presbytery consultant in the conduct of the mission study. If so, help will be given in these ways:

- will lead worship \_\_\_\_\_ Sundays per month.
- will/will not do pastoral calling on the sick and shut-in members as time permits
- will/will not officiate at weddings and funerals as requested
- will work with the following boards and committees:

- will/will not train newly elected officers in conjunction with staff and selected members
- will perform other administrative and pastoral duties as listed below

Goals for this ministry shall be:

During the length of this agreement, the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ will be accountable to the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry. At the end of the agreement \_\_\_\_\_ Church agrees to provide a performance review.

The session understands that the former pastor shall abide by the ministerial ethics of the Presbytery concerning contacts with members of the congregation and that any serious concerns in this matter shall be referred to the Presbytery Committee on Ministry.

It is understood that the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ has agreed not to be involved in any way with the Pastor Nominating Committee, except to see that they make adequate reports. Any suggestions the Interim Pastor has are to be submitted to the Committee on Ministry.

It is understood that the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ has agreed not to be a candidate for the pastoral office of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, and in every way will seek to prepare for the coming of an installed pastor.

This agreement is for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ months (not more than 12) from the date below. This agreement may be terminated by the Session upon 60 days written notice, unless the termination is for cause. The Interim Pastor may terminate the agreement with 30 days written notice and forfeiture of any payment beyond that for actual services in the 30 day period. This agreement may be extended in \_\_\_\_\_ month periods.

**TERMS**

The Interim Pastor is employed full-time/part-time \_\_\_\_\_ (1/2, 2/3, etc.), serving approximately \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week, and will be compensated for Interim Pastoral services as follows:

Base Salary \_\_\_\_\_

Housing Allowance \_\_\_\_\_

Pension/Medical \_\_\_\_\_

Auto allowance \_\_\_\_\_

Moving costs to and from the field, up to \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Vacation to be earned at the rate of 1 week per quarter and used as agreed on.

Study leave of two weeks pro-rated annually, including financial assistance according to Presbytery's standards.

\_\_\_\_\_  
INTERIM PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK OF SESSION

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY STATED CLERK

**APPENDIX B**

**INTERIM PASTORS: SERVICES OF WELCOME AND DEPARTURE**

The brief examples provided here are intended to represent a beginning, elements that could be molded into a Service of Welcome or of Departure for an Interim Pastor. Expanding these into celebrations for these two events should be the goal.

For creative ideas please refer to Interim Ministry Resources Network, Inc.,  
PO Box 21251, Baltimore, MD 21228-0751. 410-719-0777.

**SERVICE OF WELCOME**

Leader: *We are pleased to welcome \_\_\_\_\_ who has been chosen to serve as Interim Pastor of our church. We have developed an agreement that our interim will provide continuity in leadership while our church is in transition, help maintain the health of our congregation, and support us as we select a new pastor. Do you agree to assist in this task?*

Interim Pastor: **I do.**

Leader: *Do you further affirm that you are not and will not become a candidate to fill the open office of pastor of this congregation?*

Interim Pastor: **I do.**

Leader: *The session has promised that our congregation will support the Interim Pastor and will assist in carrying out the activities and programs of the church. Do you, the congregation, now promise to support and uphold \_\_\_\_\_ in this Interim Ministry?*

Congregation: **We do.**

Leader: *May the Lord who has brought us together as pastor and congregation give us courage and determination to carry forward in this period of transition. May we love and care for each other, sharing our gifts and talents, that together we may serve Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**LITANY OF DEPARTURE**

Leader: *God of continuity and of change, \_\_\_\_\_ has served our church as an Interim Pastor. For the ministry and accomplishments of this period we offer our thanks and praise.*

People: **We give thanks, O God, for our time together.**

Leader: *We pray that the seeds of hope that you have planted in our church family may continue to grow.*

People: **O God, expand our understanding and our love.**

Leader: *As you leave this place, do you promise to hold us in your prayers and to maintain your commitment to the ministry of our Lord, Jesus Christ, wherever you are led?*

Interim pastor: **I do.**

Leader: *And do we, the members of this congregation, hold \_\_\_\_\_ and his/her work here in our hearts as he/she goes to serve in other locations?*

People: **We will. And may the Blessings of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with \_\_\_\_\_ and with all of us from this day forward and forevermore. Amen.**