

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VERMONT

INTERIM LEADERSHIP

A Brief Overview

An Interim helps lead a congregation during the time between the end of one period of clergy leadership and the start of the next. An *Interim Pastor* exercises an intentional transition ministry, supported by specialized training for Interim Ministry. The person may be lay or ordained.

The Bishop, the Transition Minister, and the Canon for Ministry Development enter into partnership with the Vestry and other congregational leaders to determine how an Interim Pastor will be most helpful to a congregation. Interim leaders extend the Bishop' ministry to a congregation, and their relationship with the congregation needs to be carefully defined and clearly communicated.

Every congregation needs to maintain effective ministry during an interim period and work for a healthy transition. As part of that transition, a professional Interim Pastor helps the congregation to work through five distinct “developmental tasks.”

The Five Developmental Tasks of Interim Ministry

- 1. Coming to Terms with History** ...acting on the realization that the former priest has departed... that the congregation is different now ... acknowledging the past as shaping who the congregation is today while recognizing that history is only a prelude to the present and the future.
- 2. Renewing Denominational Ties** ...seeing the Bishop and Diocesan Ministry Support Team as a potential resource, partner, and support ... using this opportunity to renew and rework diocesan relationships....using this time for formational events and opportunities to explore the theology and ecclesiology of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese.
- 3. Encouraging Needed Leadership Change** ...adjusting to new patterns of leadership that naturally evolve when a key person leaves the organization ...allowing and encouraging new leadership to emerge constructively.
- 4. Discovering a New Identity** ...claiming a new awareness of itself as a congregation independent of the past leaders ...redefining who it is now as a community of God.
- 5. Commitment to New Directions in Ministry** ...preparing to move into the future with openness to possibilities that new leadership brings...wholeheartedly supporting the new leadership model and/or newly-called priest.

These tasks and the methods employed to deal with them have been developed over the past 35 years and are extremely helpful for congregations experiencing transition in leadership. More information is available from the Diocese or from the resources listed below.

Finally, please note:

The role and tasks of an Interim Pastor are separate and distinct from the roles and responsibilities of the Vestry and Ministry Discernment Committee.

The Interim Pastor is a member of the Transition Team.

The Interim Pastor not eligible for the permanent clergy position nor for other positions in the new leadership model.

Discerning What You Need

To determine what you need in an Interim Pastor and how much this will cost, the Vestry needs to answer two questions:

- What Interim presence do you need for the ongoing mission and ministry of your congregation?
- What can your budget support for an Interim Pastor over the next 12 months?

The first pertains to the areas of ministry needing to be done by an Interim. Maybe your former clergyperson did many tasks; do they *all* have to be done by an Interim Pastor? Might some of them be done, and managed well, by *parishioners*? Are there ministries such as pastoral care, for example, that can be performed by parishioners if they are trained and supported?...licensed worship leaders?...healing prayer?...Christian formation for youth and adults?...others? What do you need and from whom? These sorts of questions invite you into a deeper conversation about baptismal ministry in your congregation. The Companion working with you can assist in this conversation about discerning interim tasks.

Further, the Vestry needs to consider the five developmental tasks listed above. Do any of them in particular describe the work needing to be done in your congregation? You will want to consider these as part of the work--and time--for an Interim leader.

Questions like these are worth wrestling with as the Vestry sorts out what you are looking for in an Interim Pastor. The results will offer a clearer picture of what you need, how much time may be involved, leading to...

How Much To Pay

“Work time” for an Interim Pastor is allotted by “units”. A unit is a morning, afternoon, or evening.

Conventionally, *full-time* is considered 12 -- 14 units. This is five days a week with about 2 evening meetings a week. *Half-time* is about 6 to 7 units; *one-third time* is about 4 to 4.5 units.

For example, Sunday “work” for an ordained person is typically 2 or 3 units: sermon preparation, worship service, and time with the congregation. This can be the same amount of time for a lay person serving as Interim Pastor if s/he is participating in worship, preaching, and being with the congregation. If the Interim Pastor is not the preacher every Sunday, if you have licensed preachers in the congregation and make use of them, you can subtract some time. Pastoral care time during a week may be one unit; administration may be another single unit.

The salary scale for Interim Pastors is based on both the number of units you determine for the position and the *Diocesan Mandatory Minimum Clergy Compensation Schedule*, which is adopted annually by Diocesan Convention. This *Schedule* can be found in the *Diocesan Handbook* and on the Diocesan website, where you can also find a description of the components of a benefit package. The Transition Minister is available for assistance in determining a total compensation package.

Resources

Calling Clergy: A Spiritual and Practical Guide Through the Search Process, Elizabeth Rankin Geitz, Church Publishing, May 2007. Highly-recommended; focus on spiritual dimension of discernment work. Copies available from the Diocese; ask your Companion.

Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministers (New from Alban Institute, 2000 (1-800-486-1318, ext 244)). Excellent update and expansion of Mead’s interim book.

Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors, Edward White, Alban Institute.

Pastoral Transitions: From Endings to New Beginnings, Wm. Bud Phillips, Center for Study of Church and Ministry, Vancouver.

New Beginnings: A Pastorate Start Up Workbook, Roy Oswald, Alban Institute.