

**POLICY ON INTERIM PASTOR
AND
PREACHING ARRANGEMENT**

I. One Pastor Parish

- A. So that the well-being of a parish may be maintained during a pastoral transition, the synod and the conference cooperate with the Congregation Council to provide continuing ministry. It is the council's responsibility, with the dean, to see that the ministries of the parish are maintained during the transition. An interim pastor shall be appointed by the dean and/or assistant to the bishop to provide the necessary support and oversight.

In certain situations, a pastor specially trained in interim ministry may be recommended to further assist the congregation through this transition time.

There are two aspects of this ministry during a pastoral transition -- the pastoral ministry and the preaching ministry. At the first meeting of the council following an announcement of a pastor's departure, the dean and/or assistant to the bishop shall clarify the responsibilities of and remuneration for an interim pastor. A pastor retiring from the parish is not eligible to be considered for the position.

- B. The duties of an interim pastor are similar to those of a regularly called pastor. It must be kept in mind, however, that the interim pastor may have limited time due to a primary call. It is the interim pastor's duty to oversee the work of the parish and Congregation Council. However, the interim pastor shall not make substantive changes in the congregation's worship practices.

It may be necessary to appoint a bridge pastor at the beginning or end of the interim period to provide ongoing pastoral care and/or worship leadership in the event that the interim pastor is not available.

The interim pastor shall be advised of all meetings, and shall work in consultation with the various committees of the parish. The council shall give assistance to the interim pastor as he/she provides ministry to the sick and shut-ins; administers Holy Communion; does counseling; officiates at weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc.

No pastoral act shall be arranged without the knowledge and consent of the interim pastor. The council, however, shall make the best possible use of lay leadership to see to it that the ministries of the parish are continued with as little dependence upon the interim pastor as possible.

- C. Although the interim pastor is responsible for the pastoral ministry of the parish during its transition, assistance may be requested from others. There even may be cluster coordination of interim pastoral responsibilities, especially in such matters as confirmation and hospital visitation.
- D. The interim pastor may be the pastor of a nearby parish, a retired pastor, or a pastor with non-parish status within the area. The interim pastor and congregation must understand clearly that the interim pastor WILL NOT be a candidate for pastor unless, with the permission of the bishop, it is agreed to in advance and so stipulated on the letter of agreement. It must be kept in mind by all that, except

for retired pastors, interim pastors have primary obligations to the parish or agency of their existing call.

1. Interim pastoral ministry normally will involve a minimum of 10 hours per week, not including preaching. Circumstances will dictate the exact number of hours. Full time is considered 40 hours a week.
2. The synod worksheet compensation provides minimum guidelines. Interim pastors are free to negotiate rates higher than the synod minimums.

Compensation shall be paid directly to the interim pastor. The interim pastor may designate a portion of his/her compensation as housing allowance. Pro-rated vacation and continuing education time are provided using 4 weeks of vacation and 2 weeks for continuing education as the standard for one year of service.
3. Supply preaching (pulpit supply) shall be remunerated at the established synod rate.
4. All mileage for the interim pastor/supply preacher shall be computed based on the IRS rate. Mileage shall be roundtrip and shall be included in the 1099-MISC Form prepared by the congregation if the interim pastor is paid more than \$600.00 in a calendar year.
5. The congregation shall pay all Synod Assembly expenses for their interim pastor.
6. The final decision concerning remuneration shall be made at the meeting of dean and/or assistant to the bishop, interim pastor, and Congregation Council, when all matters pertaining to the interim pastor's ministry shall be clarified. Financial arrangements that do not meet this criteria must be cleared with the office of the bishop. The dean will prepare a letter for the interim pastor and council outlining the financial arrangements and the duties of the interim pastor. The interim pastor and council president/vice president will sign the agreement letter. A signed copy will be sent to the assistant to the bishop.
6. In situations where the interim pastor does not conduct worship services for the congregation, the parish should study the guidelines for preaching arrangements that are available from the dean and/or assistant to the bishop. Congregations are expected to find their own supply preachers. All remunerations shall be clarified before contacts are made with the prospective interim pastors or the preaching ministers.
8. During the pastoral transition contact leaders shall be arranged in the congregation to provide information to the interim pastor about shut-ins, deaths, meetings, etc.

These leaders shall be active members who attend worship services regularly and have telephones and time for this communication process. The information sheet for interim pastors shall be completed and contain the names of leaders responsible for these tasks.

9. When difficulties occur with the interim pastoral ministry, they shall be discussed with the dean and/or assistant to the bishop.
10. Normally, interim pastors are not appointed for a specific term, which means that either the interim pastor or the council may terminate the relationship in consultation with the dean and the assistant to the Bishop. Notice of termination may be less than 30 days when all parties so agree.
11. While interim pastors may provide some guidance to the call committee and/or council about the call process in general, the interim pastor shall not exert influence in the selection or calling of a pastor or other rostered minister.
12. At the conclusion of an interim pastorate the secretary of the congregation/council and the dean shall examine the parochial records of the parish and certify the records. (The exception is when the dean is interim pastor, in which case the bishop shall certify the records).

II. Multiple Staff Parish

- A. When the senior pastor resigns from a multiple staff parish, the Congregation Council, with the dean and/or assistant to the bishop may appoint the associate/assistant pastor to be the interim pastor. In that case, the associate/assistant pastor is not eligible for call as the senior pastor.
- B. Should further pastoral assistance be needed in a parish where the associate/assistant pastor serves as the interim pastor, the council, with the dean and/or assistant to the bishop, may appoint a support pastor to assist the interim.

III. Important Information

- A. **The interim pastor shall not be a candidate for pastor** unless agreed to by the bishop in advance and so stipulated on the letter of agreement.
- B. Congregation Councils are encouraged to devote their energies to the calling of a new pastor rather than to the selection of an interim pastor. The bishop has delegated to deans the selection and appointment of interim pastors. Deans do not present to councils a slate of interim pastor candidates from which to choose.