

Notes on Interim Ministry

S13.11.01 In the event of a pastoral vacancy in a congregation or multi-congregation parish, the bishop shall appoint an interim pastor, in consultation with the Dean and the Congregation Council.

1. The first meeting with the Council:

Use the *Council Worksheet for Interim Pastor*. This is meant to be a guide to assist you in assessing what the congregation(s) expectations of the Interim will be, as well as how much they are expecting to offer in compensation. You may find your own list to be helpful, or have additional points you wish to ask. Use this conversation and worksheet in identifying who an Interim could be for this context.

2. Finding names for Interim positions:

In finding an Interim, you are acting as an extension of the Bishop's office. All Interim positions are appointments unless they are Intentional Interims (see below). Use names you already know (and respect) in the area you are serving as Dean. Perhaps retired pastors will work with the current setting you are trying to fill. A list of Interims by area is maintained in the synod office. Contact Brenda Rockwell ext 109 for names on this list. If you exhaust all possibilities, contact the Assistant to the Bishop who relates to your conference for additional names.

Once you have identified a name and that person has agreed to serve, please inform the Bishop's office, who will give you the authorization to proceed.

3. Bringing the Interim to the next Council meeting:

Use the Sample Interim Contracts as a guide (see Appendix). Your Interim may have their own agreement that they like to work from. As long as the contract states clearly the duties and responsibilities of the Interim, states a clear start and end date, and contains fair compensation according to the synod guidelines (unless otherwise granted by the Bishop's office), it is a valid contract. Use your judgment: you are authorized to sign off on any Interim appointment the Bishop has approved as long as the contract represents a clear picture of the ministry responsibilities and the fair compensation of the Interim. In some cases, the relating Assistant to the Bishop may be present to assist you with negotiating the contract. Most contracts contain a clause that allows either the Interim or the Congregation to end the agreement with 30 days notice.

4. Finishing the Contract:

The Interim contract is not valid until you have signed it, in the function of the office of the Bishop. Wait until the contract is complete—you may be asked to type it up and send it to all parties—and until the Council President and the Interim has signed it before you sign it also. Then send a copy to the Bishop's office and keep a copy for yourself.

Intentional Interims Note

Intentional Interims are the only Interims that are not considered appointments by the Bishop. They are considered called positions. The call is issued through the Synod Council. As such, they must adhere strictly to the synod guidelines for minimum hours and compensation package.

Intentional Interims are named as such because they have additional training in Interim ministry that other rostered leaders do not. This training helps them better do the work of Interim ministry. They are not sent as “punishment” or other negative reasons to a congregation; rather, they are valuable tools that the Bishop’s office uses when a congregation can readily benefit from their work. Typical reasons include: (1) the end of a long pastorate; (2) the recent purchase of a large property, building, or building project; (3) a desire or need to explore the mission and vision of the congregation for the future; (4) misconduct or other serious incident during the previous pastorate. See the handout *FAQs about Intentional Interim Ministry* for the brief history of its formation and use in synods. Some synods use only Intentional Interims for all Interim positions because their training greatly benefits the congregations they serve. Our synod does not currently have the capacity of Intentional Interims needed to fill all vacancies.

If you are charged with placing an Intentional Interim in a congregation, give the Council copies of the *FAQs about Intentional Interim Ministry* and explain how these pastors are a gift to the church. Ensure that the Interim agreement (still used, though this is a call) meets synod guidelines for compensation, benefits, etc., as well as minimum hours of work (15). See the Appendix for a *Sample Intentional Interim Agreement*.