

Policy: Intentional Interim Ministry Program
(Adopted 11/15/95, Revised 04/06/2006)

Purpose

The requirements and responsibilities of an interim pastor are distinctly different from those of the installed pastor. An interim ministry requires unique skills, and pastors engaged in this ministry are specifically trained to help congregations during this period of transition. This time in the life of a congregation provides an opportunity for critical, guided change. It is an occasion for the hearts and the minds of the congregation to be newly-sensitized to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is an opportunity to prepare the way for new life in the congregation; a time for growth, new visions, revitalization, and self-understanding.

The challenge of the interim ministry is to develop, through a well-managed, spirit-led process, a strong congregation with a clear sense of purpose, direction, and goals. This is achieved by focusing on five developmental tasks:

1. Exploring and affirming the history of the church and the congregation, including their feelings
2. Discovering a new identity
3. Facilitating changes in leadership
4. Confirming denominational connections
5. Committing to new leadership and a new future.

Such a process will result in:

1. A published statement of mission and goals of the congregation
2. A better match of the congregation and new pastor
3. A strengthening of the bonds between the Presbytery and the congregation

Such a process shall include the use of a mission study process approved by the Committee on Ministry.

Process

1. Committees from the congregation, as well as the Session and the Executive Presbyter, work to help make the interim process flow smoothly. However, there are three areas where the primary responsibilities for a successful interim ministry are located:
 - a. Committee on Ministry (COM) representing the authority of the Presbytery
 - b. COM liaison designated to work with the church in transition
 - c. Interim Minister
2. Committee on Ministry Responsibilities:
 - a. Provide education for Sessions, pastors, and congregations regarding a change in leadership.
 - b. Train COM members in the interim ministry philosophy and procedures, developing skills necessary to accomplish the tasks required of them.
 - c. Designate a COM liaison to work with the church in transition.

- d. Monitor and assist the COM liaison to fulfill his/her responsibilities.
 - e. Provide a reasonable selection of qualified candidates available to serve as an interim minister.
 - f. Ensure an entrance interview and briefing for the interim minister.
 - g. Authorize the contract between the church, the interim minister, and the Presbytery for one year (renewable).
 - h. Ensure exit interviews for the former pastor and for the interim minister at the completion of his/her service. Copies of these interviews will be filed with the Presbytery office and COM.
 - i. Monitor the interim ministry program, making reports and recommendations to the Presbytery as appropriate.
3. COM Liaison Responsibilities:
- a. Along with the Executive Presbyter or the COM moderator, meet with the Session of the church in-transition, as soon as they learn of the need for interim ministry.
 - b. Explain the process for establishing the Interim Ministry Team, and the duties involved in locating an interim minister.
 - c. Give guidance to the Nominating Committee of Session regarding selection of members for the Interim Ministry Team.
 - d. After their election by the congregation, convene the first meeting of the Interim Ministry Team.
 - e. Regularly serve as consultant and trainer for the Interim Ministry Team and the congregation.
 - f. Report to COM regularly on the progress of the Interim Ministry Team.
 - g. Assist the Session in negotiating a contract with the interim minister, with the guidance and approval of COM and the Presbytery.
 - h. Help provide support, encouragement, and critique to the interim minister.
 - i. Help implement a congregational mission study and monitor the progress, giving assistance as the church committees, Session, and the interim minister require.
 - j. Report to COM regularly on the progress of the mission study and recommend when it is timely for the Pastor Nominating Committee to be formed.
 - k. Review the interim process at its completion and make recommendations to COM for improvements in the interim ministry policy and procedures.
4. Interim Minister Responsibilities:
- a. Maintain close contact with the E. P., the COM moderator, and the COM liaison.
 - b. Work closely with the Interim Ministry Team and Session to set and achieve goals for the interim period, especially as they relate to the five developmental tasks listed above.
 - c. Make sure the congregation and all committees understand that the interim minister cannot be a candidate as a pastor to be installed in that church.
5. Interim Minister Training
- a. North Puget Sound Presbytery requires that the interim minister shall have completed Phase I of the three-phase basic training program for interim ministers prior to beginning

interim work with a congregation. Phases II and III are normally completed while a person is engaged in interim ministry.

- b. Basic interim training is defined as that which is recognized by the Interim Ministry Network, the Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists (APIMS), and the office of Church Professional Development of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Characteristic Elements of Mission Study

Mission Studies should include the following characteristic parts:

- Demographic information about the church and its community.
- Biblical study and reflection on the church, its mission, and its setting.
- A written summary document, which expresses both a vision and the plans to implement that vision.

Resources for Mission Studies:

Demographic Information: PERCEPT 1-800-442-6277

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) 1-888-728-7228 #5 126

Visions — Decisions: A Web based resource for churches and ministries. Web address: www.visions-decisions.com or info@visions-decisions.com; toll-free number: 800-524-1445; fax: 404-351-6380; address: PO Box, 94144, Atlanta, GA 30377

Local County Planning Office, Economic Development District, PUDs

Congregational Demographic Information may be obtained from the General Assembly Web site (www.pcusa.org); this includes Reported Attendance, Membership, and Giving for the past ten years.

Additional Congregational Information may be obtained by survey if desired. Biblical Study and Reflection

Natural Church Development (available at the Presbytery Office). E-mail address: churchsmart@compuserve.com; toll-free number: 800-253-4276.

Redevelopment Notebook. Office of the General Assembly (available at the Presbytery Office)

Discerning Your Congregation's Future, Oswald / Friedrich (available at the Presbytery Office)

"God's Visions for God's People," Two Part Article, Net Results, July and August 2000 Issues, (available at the Presbytery Office)

A Guide to Missions Studies, Presbytery of the Cascades (available at the Presbytery Office)

The Cottage lake model, based on, Discerning Your Congregation's Future, Oswald / Friedrich, Developed and used summer of 2000. (available at the Presbytery Office)

Smaller Church Mission Study Guide, Hank Blunk (a classic study not limited to small congregations) (available at the Presbytery Office)

Congregation Mission Studies, Office of the General Assembly, DMS 305-91-901 (available at the Presbytery Office)

Handbook for Congregational Studies, Carrol, Dudley, McKinney (available at the Presbytery Office)

Revision, PERCEPT Inc. 1-800-442-6277

The Church Growth Handbook, William M. Easum (available at the Presbytery Office)

Written Vision Statements, and Work Plans

Most of the reflection and study materials will lead into a written report, plan, or mission statement. Some will use retreats, or special meetings to refine these documents. The key elements of every report are the following:

A Common understanding of VISION:

What are we here for?

Where are we going?

A statement of MISSION: What do we do to accomplish our Vision

A PLAN for mission:

When will we do what?

Who will do it?

How do we evaluate it?

What will our next steps be?

Mission Structure and Design Considerations

The Mission Study process is not complete unless there are means designed to implement the plan. The church's structure, organization, and staffing need to be examined in order to determine any needs for change to implement the plan.

As a church more fully catches its vision, and begins to see what its new mission looks like, plans, structure, organization and staffing may need to be changed. Evaluation becomes crucial.