

# INTERIM MINISTRY GUIDELINES

Presbytery of Cincinnati

This document is intended to be used when seeking an Interim Pastor  
and / or an Interim Associate Pastor.

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## OUR POLITY

The ***New Form of Government*** instituted in the 2011-2013 **Book of Order** describes Pastoral Relationships in G-2.0504 (*starts on p. 31*). When a congregation faces transition, we recommend careful study and understanding of our Polity regarding ***Installed*** and ***Temporary*** Pastoral Relationships, and the nature of the exceptions described there, beginning by understanding the Pastoral Relationship just concluded:

### ***G-2.0504 Pastoral Relationships*** (*excerpted*)

When teaching elders are called as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation, they are to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commends the gospel to all persons and that communicates its joy and justice. . . . In addition to these pastoral duties, they are responsible for sharing in the ministry of the church in councils higher than the session and in ecumenical relationships.

### ***G-2.0504 a. Installed Pastoral Relationships***

The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A teaching elder may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call. When a congregation determines that its strategy for mission under the Word so requires, the congregation may call additional pastors. Such additional pastors shall be called co-pastors or associate pastors, and the duties of each pastor and the relationship between the pastors of the congregation shall be determined by the session with the approval of the presbytery. When a congregation has two pastors serving as co-pastors, and the relationship of one of them is dissolved, the other remains as pastor. The relationship of

an associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor. An associate pastor is ordinarily not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation.

The **Book of Order** continues, describing what to expect in the interim, before the next installed pastoral relationship begins:

#### **G-2.0504 b. Temporary Pastoral Relationships**

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a teaching elder, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

#### **G-2.0504 c. Exceptions**

A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a teaching elder currently called as an Associate Pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor, or a teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting.

The *Committee on Ministry* of the **Presbytery of Cincinnati** reads the exceptions described in G-2.0504c in light of the last sentence of G-2.0504b, ***“A teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.”***

Earlier in G-2.0504 clear reference is made to *“When a congregation determines that its strategy for mission under the Word so requires . . .”* in the example of possible need for additional pastors. The exceptional question of eligibility of the interim to serve as the next installed pastor follows reference to situations where **presbytery** might *“determine that its mission strategy permits”*. **Presbytery’s mission strategy, and not a congregation’s or a session’s, is the key.**

Examples of exceptions we can imagine would include cases where calling teaching elders to serve in remote areas, where it was difficult to find someone, or calling teaching elders with particular language skills to serve with congregations for whom English/Spanish/Korean was not the first language.

## **WHAT IS AN INTERIM PASTOR?**

- **An interim pastor** is a teaching elder invited by the session of a congregation without an installed pastor to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and fulfill pastoral duties for a specified period not to exceed twelve months at a time, while the church is seeking a pastor. **The interim pastor is expected to work with the congregation on**

**the Five Developmental Tasks. Contract renewals beyond two years must show significant reasons for the extended length.** (definition adopted by the presbytery 9/11/07, revised 9/9/08)

- **An interim associate pastor** is a teaching elder invited by the session of a church to perform the duties as described in her or his job description *for a specified period not to exceed twelve months at a time* while the church is searching for an associate pastor. **The interim associate pastor is not necessarily expected to work with the congregation on the five Developmental Tasks. Contract renewals beyond two years must show significant reasons for the extended length.** (definition adopted by the presbytery 9/11/07)

## THE FIVE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF INTERIM MINISTRY

Here are the **Five Developmental Tasks of an Interim Pastorate** that are taught by the **Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists (APIMS)**.

1. Coming to terms with our history:  
What happened to us back when...?  
Who are we apart from our past ministers?
2. Discovering our new identity as God's people:  
Who were we as a church 15 years ago?  
Who does God want us to be tomorrow?
3. Allowing needed leadership changes:  
Who are our next generation of leaders?  
How can we have smooth transition?
4. Renewing denominational linkages:  
Who are we Presbyterians?  
Why are we a connectional church in Christ?
5. Committing to new directions in ministry:  
What has been the shape of our ministry?  
To what new mission is the Spirit leading us?

## WHEN AN INSTALLED PASTOR ANNOUNCES HIS/HER LEAVING:

### The Initial Process

- A representative from the Presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM) meets with the Session to discuss process, roles and expectations.
- For smaller congregations, it may be necessary to clarify with the session whether they are seeking an Interim Pastor, a Stated Supply, a Designated Pastor or other part-time staff.
- It is expected, that when a Head of Staff or solo Pastor leaves, the congregation will seek an Interim Pastor, unless granted permission otherwise by the COM.
- Session recruits an Interim Search Committee which will recommend to Session a candidate for Interim Pastor. The recommended size of an Interim Search Committee is three to five persons.
- The COM representative meets with the Interim Search Committee to help with process.

### The tasks of the Interim Search Committee:

- Determine the needs of the congregation, style of leadership needed, and any problems that need to be addressed.
- Put together a job description for the Interim Pastor position. List major goals and tasks for which an Interim Pastor must address himself/herself to be used as a basis for continuing monitoring and evaluation.
- Compile a short informational sheet about the congregation including what problems exist in the congregation.
- Gather PIF's of available candidates for the Interim Position .
- Determine which candidates they wish to interview.
- Compile interview questions.
- Interview candidates and make a recommendation to Session.
- Work out the contract with the selected candidate and Session.

### The tasks of the Presbytery Representative to the Interim Search Committee

- Initial meeting to help organize the committee and provide resources.
- Determine how often they will meet – Presbytery representative will attend meetings.
- When they are serious about a candidate – arrange for an entrance interview of candidate by COM before recommendation goes to Session.
- Bring finalized contract to COM for approval.

### Contract

**Q-** What is the standard for compensation in our Presbytery for an Interim Pastor? Should it be the same compensation figure as the last Pastor or somewhere in that range?

**A -** Compensation for the Interim Pastor will be the basic benchmark compensation of the former Pastor with 20% less or 20% more depending on the following factors:

- Housing costs.
- Market factors
- Age and Experience
- Presbytery Compensation Guidelines.

It shall meet or exceed the presbytery's minimum terms of call.

**Q-** Should salary parameters be defined in the contract?

**A-** Salary parameters should include the following:

- Salary range expected to pay.
- Vacation – interpret up front – 4 weeks for 1 year? Vacation is to be taken in the quarter earned and not to exceed two weeks accrued. Interim Pastor should be encouraged to take vacation and not let it accrue.
- Study Leave – usually 2 weeks per year. Study leave may be taken during the time of the contract or at the end of the contract.
- Moving Expenses – providing moving expenses to the site is appropriate but not moving from the site.
- Commuting from other states/areas – work out arrangements.
- Termination – expectations – length of time to pay compensation. It is recommended that the contract provide for compensation to be paid for not more

than 90 days. This 90 days (or the number of days specified in the Contract) will begin on the Session meeting date when the PNC asks for a Congregational meeting date. The Interim Pastor is to be kept apprised of the PNC process and when the Candidate is to be called.

**Q-** Should the contract be negotiated with Interim Search Committee, COM Representative and Interim Pastor all present?

**A-** Yes, the Interim Search Committee, the COM Representative and the Interim Pastor should all be present for contract negotiations.

**Q-** Should your Interim Pastor's salary be equal to or greater than the last Pastor's salary?

**A-** The Interim Pastor's Contract should be consistent with the previously Called Pastor's Compensation Package and include the following:

- Salary and Housing.
- Benefits (Pension, Major Medical, Vacation, Study Leave, etc.)
- Reimbursed Expenses.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

**Q-** What is the appropriate relationship between the PNC and the Interim Pastor?

**A-** The relationship between the PNC and Interim Pastor should be one of communication but not interference.

**Q-** What is the process for the Interim Pastor to give names of potential Candidates to the PNC?

**A-** The Interim Pastor may communicate the names of potential Candidates to the COM Representative or the Chairperson of COM. This information may then be communicated to the PNC.

## **INTERIM SEARCH PROCESS IN THE CONGREGATION**

**Q-** When should COM meet with the congregation?

**A-** The COM Representative should meet first with the Session to provide information on the Interim Ministry process and review the Interim Ministry Guidelines with Session. The Interim Search Committee should be formed and the COM Representative should meet with them and help them plan their process in seeking an Interim Pastor.

**Q-** Should the PNC be formed before the Interim Pastor is on board?

**A-** The Interim Pastor should be in place before the election of the PNC.

## **INTERIM PASTOR'S REPORT TO COM**

**Q-** Should there be a yearly written report to COM by the Interim Pastor? What are the models for the report? What about confidentiality and liability? Who should have access to these written reports?

**A-** There should be a Six-Month, an Annual and an Exit Interview report from the Interim Pastor. The report should include specific issues at the church that need to be addressed. The report should also include expectations of the Job Description. These reports will be considered confidential and will be kept in a confidential file at the Presbytery office. The incoming Pastor and possible Candidates should have access to the file by permission of the Chairperson of COM.

## **COVENANT SERVICE**

**Q-** Is a Covenant Worship Service for the Interim Pastor a good idea?

**A-** A Covenant Worship Service for the Interim Pastor is essential as this gives the congregation a sense of what an Interim is and how Presbytery is involved. The COM Representative and the Session should participate in the Covenant Service. This introduces the Interim Pastor to the congregation and lets them know that this relationship is blessed by both the Presbytery COM and the Session. This Covenant Service is very empowering for the Interim Pastor and his/her leadership role in the church. This Covenant Worship Service is normally a part of the Sunday Worship Service. (A model Covenant Service is available at the Presbytery office.)

## **IN CONCLUSION**

A trained Interim Pastor is a specialist attuned to process issues, and while carrying out the tasks of preaching and teaching, pastoral care, and administration, the Interim Pastor also seeks to attend to the congregation and patterns of organization and behavior, power, relationships, communication, and decision-making that effect the climate of the congregation.

The congregation has particular issues during this interim period that need to be processed in order for the next pastor to be off to a healthy start. The church needs to tell its story, in order to know where it came from, how it got to where it is, and move from the past to the future. Often the congregation discovers a new identity, new gifts, and a new direction or vision for ministry. Committing to new leadership and to a new future comes as part of the challenge of welcoming the newly installed pastor.