

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA
CONFERENCE**

of the

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**GUIDELINES FOR INTERIM
PASTORATES**

Guidelines For Interim Pastorates

These Guidelines are recommendations from the Conference based on experience. They are suggested procedures which have been tested and found to be most helpful for the local church.

Much of the information in these Guidelines are from the Church and Ministry Standards and Practices Notebook of Southern California Conference. For additional information contact the Associate Conference Minister who carries responsibility for your association.

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Introduction

So Your Minister is Leaving?

It happens sooner or later to every congregation. It's not an easy experience. Lots of feelings come into play. One of those feelings is a sense of uncertainty, or even panic, at a significant change of church leadership. What's going to become of us?

The Conference is ready to help you. Your congregation is entering a time in its life which we call: "Prime Time for Renewal." The coming months, while your church is searching for a new minister, can be exciting and meaningful months as you undertake the interim journey. Good resources are available to your congregation during this time to help you make the "in-between time" a valuable period in your church.

The primary response you want to avoid is haste. We hope you will try to relax and follow a proven strategy of transition which has helped many congregations to a new future. Here are the steps you need to take and we recommend you take them in sequence.

1. Arrange for the earliest possible consultation with the Associate Conference Minister deployed to your association. Do this as soon as possible after you know your minister is leaving; do it before you appoint a search committee for either an Interim Minister or an installed minister. No need exists to hurry the search process. The purpose of this consultation is to give you an overview of the interim time and the search process. After the consultation, and after you decide what you are looking for in an interim minister, the names of possible candidates for an interim minister will be given to you so that you can select your interim pastoral leadership as early as possible.

Subsequent visits with the Associate Conference Minister will relate to the Search Committee and its work for an installed minister once that committee has been selected.

2. Secure interim leadership before the installed minister search committee is formed. Some churches empower a sub committee of the official board to be the interim minister search committee. The Search Committee should have a clear understanding of its authority. This authority often includes negotiating a compensation package (within budget guidelines established by the official board) and offering a contract. However you select your interim minister, do it before you select a committee to search for the installed minister. The interim minister needs to be established for a few weeks before the Search Committee is chosen. The Interim Minister Search Committee should get the endorsement of their choice for interim minister from the official board if they are not authorized to extend the call. Covenant with the interim minister to take the interim journey.

3. Select a Search Committee to find an installed minister after the interim minister is in place and the congregation has learned about the work of the interim time. Hold a service of covenanting between the Congregation and the Search Committee.
4. Commit yourself to the interim journey as you work in partnership with your interim minister. You will find the interim period a challenge and opportunity for the congregation's spiritual growth.

Getting Interim Leadership In Place

1. What are the Options?

The first decision to be made about an interim minister is to determine if the congregation wants someone who is called to be a specialist in interim ministry. These persons, called Intentional Interim Ministers, are increasingly in demand in churches looking for a trained interim minister and seeking significant decision making during the interim period. The second option is to have an ordained minister who has experience in ministry but is not a specialist in interim ministry.

A. Intentional Interim Ministers

An Intentional Interim Minister is an ordained minister with special training and skills for serving churches during interim times. In addition to providing basic pastoral services, such as worship leadership and pastoral care, the Intentional Interim Minister helps a congregation focus on issues of identity and mission as it moves through the process of searching for and calling a new leader. Additional information about intentional interim ministry is described in further detail elsewhere in this booklet. Interim Ministers may serve in either a full time or part time capacity.

B. Other Ordained Ministers

1. Some retired ministers do interim work. Very often it is on a part time basis.
2. Bi-vocational ministers (e.g., pastoral counselors, chaplains, teachers) sometimes also do interim work, usually on a part-time basis.

Such persons should have awareness of the basic dynamics of churches during interim periods. Both retired ministers and bi-vocational ministers offer good skills and experience to help a congregation in transition.

Any person being considered for an interim ministry position should be familiar with the special dynamics of the interim period in the life of the church.

2. What does an Interim Minister Do?

An Interim Minister is an ordained minister with standing in the United Church of Christ, or, occasionally, an ordained minister of another denomination approved by the U.C.C. He or she is a person with a particular vocational commitment to interim ministry, with specialized training and skills. Training opportunities and continuing education for interim ministers are offered through several interdenominational bodies

and through the Southern California Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The Interim Minister functions within a church in two major ways:

a. She or he provides basic pastoral services for the continuation of the church's ministries, i.e.:

- Leading the worship life of the church;
- Providing pastoral care through visitation, counseling;
- Officiating at weddings and funerals;
- Attending meetings of official church bodies;
- Providing leadership for church programs, as agreed upon, e.g.,
- Confirmation, Adult Education.

b. He or she helps the church focus in specific ways on issues of identity and mission, as it evaluates its past and present plans for its future. This focus centers on what are called "The Five Developmental Tasks of Interim Time."

3. Calling An Interim Minister

The Interim Search Committee will interview several candidates whose names have been suggested by Conference staff. Profiles for candidates are normally available ahead of time for the committee's review. The committee may also wish to experience the worship leadership of prospective candidates and may make appropriate arrangements to do so.

An Agreement/Call for Interim Service then is drafted. The call should be affirmed by the official board of the church if the Search Committee has not been authorized to extend the call. The call is then extended to and accepted by the candidate. The Agreement/Call for Interim Service is signed by the Interim Minister, a representative of the church and a representative of the Conference.

While specific terms of covenant may vary, the covenant should include the Interim Minister's pledge not be a candidate for the position of minister in that church; the congregation also pledges that it will not consider nor call the Interim Minister as its next minister. The issues surrounding this position have to do both with professional ethics and with the effectiveness of the interim process if the Interim Minister should change roles mid-stream and become a candidate for the permanent position.

Ways Of Celebrating An Interim Pastorate

The beginning and ending of an interim pastorate should be recognized in appropriate liturgical ways, as with any other pastorate.

The service of worship for the first Sunday of interim time might include a covenant between minister and people to be faithful to one another and to God in the journey and tasks of the interim period. A representative of the Association and/or Conference may be asked to participate in such a service. It is a prime opportunity to call the church to a new time with a sense of celebration, renewal, and hope.

At the closure of the interim time, several possibilities exist for liturgical celebration. A service of closure' to acknowledge the end of the interim journey is important to helping the congregation let go of the interim minister. The installed minister may begin the following Sunday, or the circumstances may be such that there will be one or more weeks between the departure of the interim minister and the arrival of the installed minister, during which time supply preaching may be needed.

Another possibility is that, following a service of closure for the interim minister, the leadership of a following Sunday morning would be shared by the interim minister and the installed minister, an appropriate way of transferring the pastoral office from one to the other. Experience has shown that such a service can be quite powerful, enabling the interim minister to come to a sense of completion in his or her work, and helping the congregation acknowledge the end of one relationship and celebrate the beginning of another.

Various resources in the United Church of Christ Book of Worship may be adapted for use in these services.

Five Developmental Tasks of Intentional Interim Ministry

Research with many congregations of various kinds has indicated that predictable dynamics happen in churches during times of leadership transition. Five basic areas need addressing.

1. Coming to Terms with History

Following a minister's leaving for whatever reason, a congregation usually needs to resolve its feelings: loss, grief, anger, relief, guilt, panic about the future. "Letting go" of that minister is a critically important task for a congregation as it begins to prepare for a new pastoral leader. In addition, churches sometimes have "old issues" or conflicts which never were fully resolved and which tend to re-surface in unsettled times. A congregation needs to be released from any inappropriate or crippling power of the past, in order to be fully ready for a future with a new leader.

2. Discovering a New Identity

Often congregations have a strong self-image, positive or negative, which may or may not truthfully reflect present realities. As the search for a new minister proceeds, it is essential that both the Search Committee and the congregation have a clear sense of the church's identity, recognizing both strengths and needs. This task, therefore, calls for a careful self-assessment by a congregation, so that it can envision more clearly what it wishes to become.

3. Strengthening Patterns of Lay Leadership

Congregations in an interim time often experience shifts in power of leadership among the laity, depending upon the relationships of individuals to the former minister. This is also a time for considering whether, as a whole, patterns of lay involvement in the church are healthy or unhealthy, empowering or disempowering for most of the congregation. The task is to see that lay leadership develops in positive and creative ways for the good of the whole church.

4. Strengthening Denominational Ties

During the interim period, congregations find themselves working more closely than usual with the denomination, particularly with conference staff and resources. A prime opportunity exists to reinforce and strengthen a local congregation's sense of belonging to the wider church.

5. Preparing for New Leadership

During the search process, two significant tasks are going on simultaneously: the Search Committee, on behalf of the congregation, is fulfilling the necessary concrete steps in the process of finding a new minister; and the congregation as a whole needs to be readying

itself psychologically and spiritually to enter into partnership with a new leader. This task is to strengthen the church's capacity to be a growing, changing, forward-looking body.

Rationale for Interim Minister Not Being a Candidate

A question is often raised by a congregation, Search Committee, or even by an interim minister in words such as the following: "Why is it considered unethical and not normal practice for a congregation to consider calling a person who is serving in the position of an interim minister, as the new installed minister for that congregation?"

From the experience of those persons who have worked closely with the process of ministerial relocation and the special tasks of interim ministry, it is not appropriate for an interim minister to become the installed minister.

Following is listed the rationale for NOT considering the interim minister for the installed position in a local congregation:

1. An interim has an advantage over other possible candidates who may desire to be considered for the position because he/she has more visibility to the congregation.
2. An interim will always have a following but will also almost always have those who are not favorably committed to him/her. If he/she were to be called to the position of ministry, there would be built-in opposition from the very beginning.
3. If the decision is made to consider the interim along with the others being considered, and the interim does not get the position, there could be hurt feelings that would jeopardize the remainder of his/her interim work until a new minister is called.
4. If the interim is considered and he/she does not get the decision, there are already people lined up for and against the interim, and whichever way the decision goes, there will be some of the congregation who will be upset.
5. The church, itself, may pass up better leadership than it is getting, even with a good interim, if it fails to consider a larger number of potential ministerial candidates.
6. Interim ministry is unique, and an interim minister may often lead in ways that would be acceptable as an interim but would not be acceptable to some in the congregation were he/she to remain as permanent installed minister.
7. Other ministers will know of the ministerial ethics involved and will know that those have been broken if an interim is called. The result could be a lack of fellowship and broken relationships with other ministers.

8. A precedent could be set which would result in ministers seeking interim positions with the specific idea in their minds of putting themselves in a better position to be considered and called as the installed minister thus greatly damaging the whole placement process.

Recommended Compensation for Interim Ministers ***Some Suggestions***

1. For a full time interim position, a full-time salary and benefit package should be negotiated based on the church's current budget and on the compensation package of the previous minister. It should be in line with Conference Compensation Guidelines. An interim is a "real" minister doing "real" ministry and should be compensated as would an installed minister.
2. If the interim is half-time, it is easy to figure out what half of a full-time package would be. Benefits should be negotiated as well. If a part-time interim is not covered for pension and health insurance by other employment, the local church needs to pay these benefits in full during an interim period of three months or longer. Remember, the pension will be based on the amount of salary, but the health and dental insurance is a fixed rate.
3. One way of determining a part-time package is to use the unit system.
 - A. A unit is a 3-4 hour block of time during the week (a morning, an afternoon, an evening) and would be compensated on a formula that 12 blocks of time is the equivalent of full time.
 - B. Sunday morning would comprise two units, of which one is for preparation. Obviously, it takes a minister longer than four hours to prepare a sermon and the rest of the worship service for Sunday morning, but this "double time" for Sunday morning recognizes at least a minimum of preparation time.
4. Reimbursement for professional expenses should follow the IRS guidelines of an Accountable Expense Reimbursement Plan. Reimbursement for travel should be based on a monthly voucher of total miles traveled. Because interims often commute a long distance from home, this mileage should be reimbursed, even though commuting miles are not exempt from income tax and should be reported as taxable income. However, if the call is for one day less than one year, IRS considers the work "temporary" and the commuting miles are not considered as taxable income.
5. Other business expenses, including phone calls should also be reimbursed or paid directly as part of an Accountable Expense Reimbursement Plan.
6. Vacation is negotiated on the basis of one paid week of vacation for three months' service.
7. Whether or not housing is provided for the candidate is an option that the church and the interim need to negotiate. Most interims do not live in the church parsonage, but there are exceptions. There are some interims who are happy to do this.

These are suggestions for negotiating a compensation package with your interim. Each church and each interim will need and want to work out the package for their satisfaction. If there are questions, further assistance is available through the conference staff.

Sample Agreement/Call for Interim Service

In keeping with the Guidelines for Ministry in the United Church of Christ, and in order to set forth clearly the agreement for interim service between *INSERT CHURCH NAME* in *INSERT LOCATION* and *INSERT INTERIM MINISTER'S NAME* the following covenant is agreed upon:

That *INSERT INTERIM MINISTER'S NAME* will begin service as an Interim Minister on *INSERT DATE*.

It is agreed the Interim Minister will not meet with the Pastoral Search Committee or assist in the search process. However, persons who have been trained as Intentional Interim Ministers may work with the Search Committee as a local church profile is developed. Exceptions will be made only for consultation with the chairperson of the Search Committee and the responsible conference staff member serving as consultant to the Search Process.

It is understood that under no circumstances shall the Interim Minister be a candidate for called minister. Violations of the Interim Ministry Agreement/Call shall be reported to the Church and Ministry Committee for review.

The Interim Minister agrees to provide pastoral leadership for *INSERT NUMBER* units of time per week. The Interim Minister will be responsible for the following:

- _____ Giving intentional leadership to the Five Developmental Tasks of the interim period.
- _____ Preaching and leading the worship life of the church.
- _____ Officiating at baptisms, weddings, and funerals as requested.
- _____ Leading Confirmation Classes, other Christian education Programs, and any other services mutually agreed upon.
- _____ Visiting the sick and shut-ins and counseling members as requested.
- _____ Attending and resourcing meetings of the boards and committees each month, plus other groups as requested.
- _____ Providing leadership and training for members in the special emphases of the church, including congregational self-study, future planning, membership outreach, and stewardship.
- _____ Participating in evaluation of the Interim Pastorate at the conclusion of the Interim Period.

_____ Other duties:

It is estimated this time will be _____ units as described in the Guidelines for Interim Pastorates.

The local church will support and cooperate with the Interim Minister in every way and will assume responsibility for:

Working on the Five Developmental Tasks of the congregation during the Interim Period.

Attending worship services and meetings.

Continuing financial support for the church and its mission and ministries.

Supporting the minister in the church's ministry to the community.

Sustaining lay leadership and shared ministry. Providing clerical assistance as needed.

Participating in the Southern California Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Keeping the Interim Minister informed of the timing of the transition and at the termination of the Interim Pastorate.

Participating in a support and evaluation process during and at the termination of the Interim Pastorate. The terminal evaluation will typically include the following: an exit interview attended by the Interim Minister and key lay leaders; and completion, by four to six key lay leaders and the Interim Minister, of evaluation forms provided by and returned to the conference.

It is agreed that this Agreement/ Call shall be in effect for three hundred sixty four (364) days,* after which time it may be renewed, and that thirty days notice shall be given by either party of intentions to decline the renewal. Should either the Interim Minister or the church wish to terminate this agreement, thirty days written notice shall be given.

Compensation

_____ The church agrees to pay a cash salary in regular installments to the Interim Minister. The base salary shall be INSERT AMOUNT. per month.

* The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that an employment contract for no more than one day less than one year is temporary employment and mileage to commute from home to the place of employment may be taken as an allowable business expense.

EITHER A OR B BELOW (as appropriate, determined by number of units a week being employed, if local housing is needed for part or full time, etc.):

_____ A. The church will provide and maintain a parsonage for the use of the Interim Minister and will pay the cost of all heat, utilities, repairs and decorating, except for personal telephone toll calls.

_____ B. The church will provide a designated housing allowance adequate to cover actual expenses for the rental or ownership of a home, conforming to Internal Revenue Code Section 107 and Federal Income Tax Regulation 1.107. The monthly housing allowance shall be INSERT AMOUNT.

_____ The church agrees to pay the full annuity fund payment to the Pension Boards, The Annuity Fund, The United Church of Christ, calculated at 14% of salary basis. Salary basis shall mean "the sum of the member's annual cash salary or wage plus housing allowance, if any, or plus the fair rental value of the residence including furnishings and utilities (recommended to be at least 30% of such cash salary or wages) if a residence is furnished free of charge by the employer." This amount is INSERT AMOUNT. per month.

_____ The church agrees to pay the full premium for family coverage of health and dental insurance as provided through the Pension Boards, United Church of Christ.

_____ The church agrees to pay the full premium for the Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan of the Pension Boards, United Church of Christ.

_____ The church agrees to pay the full premium for the Group Life Insurance Plan of the Pension Boards, United Church of Christ.

Professional expenses are church expenses. As such, the Interim Minister will be reimbursed all ordinary and necessary expenses required for the performance of ministry within and on behalf of the church under an Accountable Expense Reimbursement Plan as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. These expenses may be paid by direct billing or by reimbursement after receiving receipts or vouchers. The church will pay for travel expenses by providing a car (including fuel, oil and maintenance) and/or reimbursement. The reimbursement for auto expenses will be based on a contemporaneous log the Interim Minister will maintain for miles driven on behalf of the church and other related travel expenses including tolls, parking and other transportation. Said log will maintain separate listings for personal miles, commuting miles from the residence (parsonage) to and from the church (which are not

reimbursable) and business miles. If the church does not provide a car, the church will reimburse business mileage at the rate approved each year by the Internal Revenue Service which for the current year is _____¢ per mile. If the church is providing a car, personal and commuting miles will be calculated as addition to salary as provided by Internal Revenue Service standards. Other travel expenses may be reimbursed or paid by direct billing. Covered expenses will not exceed the budgeted amount. The church will not reimburse excess expenses through any form of salary reduction. Any portion of the budgeted professional expenses or auto-travel expenses not used may not be paid to the minister as salary, bonus, or any other manner. The amount available per month is INSERT AMOUNT.

Recognizing that all persons need rest and renewal, the church will provide:

_____ One week vacation with full pay for each three months served. The church will provide for supply preachers during vacation time.

_____ In addition, the following regular holidays will be days off unless they fall on a Sunday: New Year's day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and such additional days as may be provided for in the Personnel Policies of the church.

_____ Attendance at conference or association meetings shall not be considered vacation or continuing education but shall be part of the minister's duty to the local church.

_____ In order to encourage and nurture spiritual growth and professional competency, the church will provide time for continuing education. Up to seven days may be taken for each six months service for continuing education which will not count as vacation. These days may accrue to fourteen days per year but may not accrue beyond fourteen days. Approval by the Official Board is required for study leave of more than three consecutive days or to be absent on Sunday.

_____ Leave of absence with full pay (less any fees paid by the court) will be made for jury duty for up to ten (10) days. In the case of the birth or adoption of a child, or the need to attend to an elderly parent or other family member, Family Leave with full pay will be paid on agreement between the INSERT NAME OF OFFICIAL BOARD and the Interim Minister. Other or additional Leave of Absence with or without pay may be negotiated with the INSERT NAME OF OFFICIAL BOARD.

_____ It is expected the Interim Minister will arrange for someone else to handle ministerial emergency calls during any prolonged absence.

Worker's Compensation will be paid as required by law.

Disability

In case of disability because of illness or accident, the church shall be responsible for the minister's full support for the first three months of disability, including base salary, housing and other benefits. Reimbursable expenses, including travel, will be paid if used. This paragraph does not apply to any disability that qualifies under Worker's Compensation.

When the disability occurs, this agreement shall be in effect by mutual consent of INSERT NAME OF OFFICIAL BOARD, the Interim Minister (and family), the Conference Minister and the association Church and Ministry Committee. The disability must be in accordance with the criteria of the Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan of the Pension Boards, United Church of Christ, and a letter from the Interim Minister's doctor confirming the disability is required. After three months, the Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan of the Pension Boards, United Church of Christ, will become effective if the Interim Minister is covered under the plan.

Death

In the case of the Interim Minister's death, the beneficiary whose name shall be on file in the conference office shall receive full salary for the current month plus any vacation time earned, plus one month's salary including any housing allowance. Further provisions may be made upon mutual agreement between the church, the beneficiary, the Conference Minister and the association Church and Ministry Committee.

The local church and the Interim Minister will provide copies of this covenant to: the local church, the Interim Minister, the association Church and Ministry Committee, the conference office.

By signing this agreement, the Interim Minister and the church agree on the following statements made by the Interim Minister.

I HEREBY AGREE THAT WHILE SERVING IN AN INTERIM PASTORATE, I WILL NOT ALLOW MY NAME TO BE SUBMITTED AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE VACANT PULPIT.

I WILL, UPON MY TERMINATION AND DEPARTURE AS INTERIM MINISTER, SEVER MY PASTORAL RELATIONS WITH THIS CONGREGATION, RECOGNIZING THAT ALL FUTURE PASTORAL FUNCTIONS SHOULD BE FULFILLED BY MY SUCCESSOR(S).

For the Congregation _____,
Date_____

Title _____

Interim Minister _____,

Date _____

Conference Staff _____,

Date _____