**Training Guide for**

**Interim Search Committees**

**By Rev. Floretta L Barbee-Watkins**

**RESOURCES:**

1. <http://presbyteryofcincinnati.org/assets/interim---ministry-guidelines-2013.pdf>
2. <http://sanjacintobaptist.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/1.-Simple-Search.pdf>
3. <http://www.nhpresbytery.org/PDF/Forms/CommitteeOnMinistry/GuideMissionStudyInterimTime.pdf>
4. <http://www.northumberlandpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/1ab-MASTER-A-Manual-for-Interim-Ministry.pdf>
5. <http://www.pslpcusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/InterimPastorAgreement.pdf>
6. <http://www.paluxybaptist.org/images/stories/Files/build_your_own_search_committee_complete.pdf>
7. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>

**Agenda**

Opening Prayer

Introductions

Purpose

Ground Rules:

SACRED TRUST- You are here because your congregation has trust in you

1. CONFIDENTIALITY
2. Not here to represent yourself but a segment of your congregation---old/ young/ married/ single/ teen/ conservative/ liberal/ new member/ lifelong member, etc.
3. Trust and respect each other’s opinion—the one holdout may be the right one/ No Bullying
4. This is a spiritual discipline- pray together, discern God’s will
5. Agree to disagree—if you hold back and do not voice your concerns or opinion you are letting down all those you represent
6. Decide upfront if it is a unanimous decision—this is best
7. Don’t get tired or discouraged and SETTLE
8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Expectations of our Time:

**Interim Pastor’s Search Committee Training**

The Interim Pastor or Transitional Pastor is the ideal situation to allow the church to grieve the past and create a dynamic and compelling future.

The interim/transitional pastor, is usually the person who is able to gently and intentionally lead the congregation toward it’s articulated goals and provide resources for spiritual growth and church health.

**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 BIG QUESTION**

There is also another huge issue that congregation, session, and committee needs to sort out before it goes any further. The question needs to be asked, “Can the interim pastor be a candidate for the installed pastor’s position?” **The best practice is a firm and absolute “No!”**

It is best to have an interim who wants to help the church during the interim. Instead of preaching the same set of sermons in the same order as at every other interim church, a called and equipped interim will preach to the needs of the church.

Instead of minding one’s Ps and Qs in order to protect position and relationships, a called and equipped interim pastor will lead the church to address uncomfortable issues that need to be dealt with before calling the next pastor. A good interim will say what needs to be said to help a church.

**A Little Guidance: Take Care of your Dirty Laundry NOW!**

As the **Interim Search Committee**, you are already aware of confronting and uncomfortable issues in your congregation and you have two options:

1. Explain to the interim candidate that the church is going through some serious conflict between the two or more camps (pro interim and con interim) and you need to be as honest with yourselves and transparent with the candidate, and WAIT until you work through these issues or
2. Go ahead and consider the interim pastor right now! Don’t wait. Don’t go through the long search process and consider the interim at the end of the timeline.

I always suggest mapping out a time line based on the intentional times you will have tasks completed. I also recommend sharing this with the congregation so that you can have built in accountability.

**CHURCH POLITY**

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 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 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?

**TASKS OF THE INTERIM SEARCH COMMITTEE**

1. Determine the needs of the congregation, style of leadership needed, and any problems that need to be addressed.
2. Put together a job description for the Interim Pastor position.
3. 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.
4. Compile a short informational sheet about the congregation including what problems exist in the congregation.
5. Gather PIF’s of available candidates for the Interim Position.
6. Determine which candidates they wish to interview.
7. Compile interview questions. Interview candidates and make a recommendation to Session.
8. Work out the contract with the selected candidate and Session

**What can a Congregation Expect from an Interim/Transitional Pastor?**

Like all pastors, Interim/Transitional Pastors offer to the congregations they serve:

* Worship leadership and preaching
* Pastoral care
* Work with the session to provide for the life and ministry of the congregation
* Administrative work including supervision of other staff persons
* Staff support for programs and committees of the congregation

In addition, an Interim/Transitional Pastor leads a congregation during the transition time after an installed pastor has departed, helping the congregation prepare to welcome the leadership of a new installed pastor. Interim/Transitional Pastors understand the dynamics of a congregation in transition, including feelings of grief, loss, and, sometimes, relief or anger.

Interim/Transitional pastors will help the session provide for continuity of essential programs, and may assist the session in assessing needs for changes in programs and ministries of the congregation. Some Interim/Transitional pastors have special skills and experience that can help a congregation recover from a time of conflict or after the disclosure of clergy sexual misconduct or other trauma.

Ordinarily, an Interim/Transitional pastor is not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, or co-pastor, or associate pastor of the congregation (G-2.0504c). The Interim/Transitional pastor may, if the session and the Committee on Ministry approve, work with the session in a mission study or assist the Pastor Nominating Committee in gathering data for the writing of the Ministry Information Form. With those possible exceptions, the Interim/Transitional pastor may not be involved in the work and discernment of the PNC.

A good Interim/Transitional pastor will “hit the ground running," beginning his/her time with the congregation with intensity and energy, and will leave with intentionality, engaging in a “good goodbye” with the congregation and its staff. A good Interim/Transitional pastor is fully present with the congregation from the beginning, and really leaves when she/he leaves.

**YOUR TIMELINE FOR SUCCESS**

**TASKS DONE BY DATE SHARE W/ SESSION & OR**

**CONGREGATION DATE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 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 |  |  |

**APPENDICES**