



INTERIM MINISTRY PREPARATION INTRODUCTION FROM BISHOP S. JOHN ROTH

Interim pastors are appointed by the bishop with the approval of the Congregation Council(s). Normally, as a pastoral vacancy approaches, I speak with the congregational leadership about interim ministry when we are within a month and a half or two months of the beginning of the vacancy. It is not until we get that close to the vacancy that I have a good idea of which pastors might be available to serve the vacancy. When it is a called pastor who is leaving the congregation or congregations, we do not begin working on the call process until after the called pastor has left. This allows the called pastor and congregation to focus on saying goodbye well.

My practice is to appoint an ordained pastor as a congregation's interim pastor wherever this is possible, even if that ordained pastor is not able to provide regular Sunday morning worship leadership. You see this option reflected in the various interim ministry scenarios I've sketched below.

There are basically three overarching ways to structure an interim ministry: "full-time interim ministry", "part-time interim ministry", and "basic fee for services" interim ministry. Full-time ministry and part-time ministry focus on the number of working days per week. Full-time implies five to six working days per week, including Sundays; part-time generally translates to three or four working days per week, including Sundays.

If your congregation has a parsonage, a full-time interim ministry would include the use of the parsonage as part of the pastor's compensation. A part-time interim ministry and a "fee for services" interim ministry typically would not include the parsonage as part of the pastor's compensation, even if the pastor stays there a couple of nights a week.

The typical interim ministry agreement (full-time or part-time) is written somewhat similar to a call document, with a general statement of ministry expectations and with provision for health coverage and pension benefits. The typical interim ministry agreement (full-time or part-time) would include a larger financial investment in the interim ministry by the congregation than the example I give below; the typical interim ministry agreement (full-time or part-time) also would include a greater investment by the interim pastor in the ministry of the church. There is also another option. Below is an example of what I have used with congregations that are looking for a basic "fee for services" structure for interim ministry.

Interim basic: \$200.00 - \$600.00 per month depending on the responsibilities involved. Responsibilities always include attending monthly Council meetings and may include (a) attending monthly Council meetings (and normally-scheduled joint Council meetings where more than

one congregation is involved), cooperating with the Council to provide pastoral visitation when not providing this visitation himself/herself, assisting the Council to find pulpit supply when not providing pulpit supply himself/herself and producing a written mileage report, and providing an annual pastoral report; (b) up to 16 hours per month for on-call availability for pastoral care, responding to administrative needs, and hospital / nursing home / homebound visitation.

Additional office hours and visitation: \$25/hour
Preaching and leading worship: \$150.00 per service
Classes taught (Confirmation, new member, etc.): \$50.00 per class
Mileage Reimbursed at the IRS rate (currently 56 cents/mile)

There is a variation on the “fee for services” structure of interim ministry in which a neighboring ordained pastor serves as the interim pastor even though this pastor is not present on Sunday mornings. In this case, regular pulpit supply is sought and the compensation for the basic compensation for the interim pastor is adjusted to fit the extent of responsibilities and duties the interim pastor in that circumstance.

I write interim ministry agreements for six months at a time, renewable upon review. In addition, an interim ministry agreement terminates when a called pastor begins at the congregation or with a 30-day written notice by the interim pastor, the Congregation Council, or the bishop.

Currently, our synod is tightly constrained by the question of what pastoral resources are available at any given time. I ask for your patience and for your flexibility as I pursue the best interim ministry arrangement available.

Should you have further questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call the synod office.

[For additional information contact:](#)

Pastor Maureen Stein, Assistant to the Bishop

Toll Free: 1.844.330.2747

Local: 217.753.7915

E-mail: Maureen.Stein@csis-elca.org

Updated: August 25, 2015