



INTERIM MINISTRY DESCRIPTION

for the
Central / Southern Illinois Synod
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A required Congregational Constitution provisions for interim pastors reads as follows:

- *C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.
- *C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

The synod constitution reads as follows:

- +S14.17. During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any ordained ministers who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

For all types of interim ministry situations, the congregation may suggest names of potential interim minister to the synod office; but the bishop retains the constitutionally-mandated responsibility to make the appointment of the interim pastor. The appointment is always subject to the approval of the Congregation or Parish Council. The bishop's goal at all times is to provide the best available interim ministry for the congregation.

Interim ministers are not to involve themselves in the call process. If the interim minister has a suggestion or concern regarding the call process, the interim should bring that to the bishop. Congregational committees and individuals can help the interim pastor in this regard by refraining from asking the interim minister for the interim minister's opinion of a nominee or of what the call committee should look for in a nominee or of any matter relating to a nominee.

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

Types of Interim Ministry:

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 the pastor. Full time implies 5 to 6 working days per week, including Sundays; part time generally translates to 3 or 4 working days per week, including Sundays. However, the part time number of days may vary.

A full-time interim ministry would include the use of the parsonage, when there is a 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 in the parsonage a couple of nights a week. Often, a congregation will provide modest rental accommodations for a pastor when that pastor is part-time, though those accommodations are not compensation to the pastor.

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 “basic fee for services” sketch 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.

The third option is the “basic fee for services” option. Below is a sketch of what I have used with congregations that are looking for a basic “fee for services” structure for interim ministry.

Interim basic: \$200.00 - \$900.00 per month depending on the responsibilities involved. Responsibilities always include attending monthly Congregation Council meetings and may include (a) attending 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 herself/himself, assisting the Council to find pulpit supply when not providing pulpit supply himself/herself, producing a written mileage report, and providing an annual pastoral report; (b) up to at least between 6 and 16 hours per month for on-call availability (for pastoral care, responding to administrative needs, and hospital / nursing home / homebound visitation) depending on the responsibilities agreed to.

Additional office hours and visitation: \$35/hour

Preaching and leading worship: \$175.00 per service

Classes taught (Confirmation, new member, etc.): \$60.00 per class

Mileage Reimbursed at the IRS rate

One 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. Regular pulpit supply by someone other than the interim pastor 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.