

INTERIM PASTORS

I. Policy Statement

The transition period between pastors is an important time in the life of a congregation. An Interim Pastor can guide the congregation in problem-solving, corporate renewal, reaffirmation of faith and planning for the future. This policy shall also apply to interim co-pastors and interim associate pastors.

II. Rationale

An Interim Pastor is a minister invited by the session to serve the congregation during the interim period between installed pastors. He or she carries out normal pastoral duties and attends to specific tasks needed during the period of transition.

III. Responsibilities

A. Session Responsibilities

1. Reviews the church status and establishes expectations for interim period.
2. Appoints an Interim Pastor Selection Committee and maintains contact with the Committee as the selection process goes on.
3. Approves the selected Interim Pastor and the Interim Pastor Agreement, making sure that the compensation package in the Interim Pastor Agreement meets the Presbytery minimum (PS-1, PT-6) and, where appropriate, remains the same as that of the previous pastor.
4. Establishes the responsibilities to be performed by the Interim Pastor, staff and related committees.
5. Plans a welcome for the Interim Pastor.
6. Evaluates performance and progress at regular intervals.
7. Prepares a service of departure when interim pastor leaves.

B. Committee on Ministry (COM) Responsibilities

1. Makes sure that a list of appropriate interim candidates is provided to the Interim Selection Committee by the presbytery.

2. Approves the selected Interim Pastor and Interim Pastor Agreement after Session approval and after the Interim Pastor Agreement has been signed.

C. Interim Pastor Responsibilities

The title Interim Pastor may only be used for individuals who have completed, at a minimum, Interim Training Level 1.

1. The Interim Pastor should present evidence of experience and ability to deal with congregational dynamics, process of transition and evolving demands of the interim period.
2. Guides the session and the congregation through the time of transition.
3. Performs pastoral duties outlined in the Interim Pastor Agreement (attached).
4. Maintains contact with the COM liaison to the church.
5. Prepares the staff and congregation to take those steps that will make it possible to welcome the new called pastor.

D. Additional Responsibilities/Information

The beginning and ending of ministry are two extremely vital and vulnerable events for a congregation and the pastors involved. Attention needs to be directed to helping these become appropriate times of celebration and affirmation. A service of welcome can help define the interim period as a time to reflect on the past, evaluate the present and look forward to the future. Likewise, a service of appreciation and departure provides a time to celebrate things that have been learned while looking forward to the future ministry with a newly called pastor.

In the Policies section of the Web site for the Presbytery of San Jose (<http://sanjosepby.org/policies/>) is a copy of the Interim Pastor Agreement used by the Presbytery of San Jose and a page with brief examples of “Words of Welcome” and a “Litany of Departure” that could be adapted, expanded or modified for use in beginning and ending the work of an Interim Pastor.

More extensive information, guidelines and resources are available from <http://imnedu.org/>. Mailing address:

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