

# **GUIDELINES FOR INTERIM MINISTRY**

## **Presbytery de Cristo**

### **Introduction**

Presbytery de Cristo recognizes and applauds the emergence of Interim Ministry as both viable and valuable in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Good interim ministers have enriched the health and mission of the church. Interim ministry is intentional. It has purpose and recognizable features which distinguish it from other forms of ministry. These are described in philosophy and detail in the *Interim Pastor's Manual*. The Committee on Ministry endorses this manual as normative for interim ministry in our presbytery. We expect interim ministers in our presbytery to accept the spirit of this manual and follow its principles.

### **Training**

We believe that adequate training for interim ministry is essential. Thus, it is a normal requirement of those serving in interim ministry in Presbytery de Cristo that they take part in certified training opportunities as offered by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) . A willingness to pursue adequate training will be cause for the Committee on Ministry to affirm and support the minister's desire in serving in this very special way in the church.

### **Presbytery Membership**

We expect interim ministers serving in Presbytery de Cristo to become members of our presbytery. We believe that membership in the presbytery where the ministry is taking place serves both the presbytery and the interim minister as well.

### **Evaluation**

Interim ministers will be expected to have entrance and exit interviews with the Committee on Ministry. The entrance interview will outline the tasks needing to be accomplished during the interim. The congregation's search committee may be invited to participate in the entrance interview. In any case, the Committee on Ministry, in consultation with the congregation's search committee, will establish the tasks needing to be accomplished.

The exit interview will assess the interim minister's work, but will focus more generally on the ministry of Session during the interim period. The interim minister will be expected to submit a written evaluation of the ministry. Likewise, the Session shall be expected to submit a written evaluation of the ministry.

### **Contract**

Contracting for interim ministry will be done in compliance with the Committee on Ministry. An interim minister may not begin work in the presbytery without the approval of the Committee on Ministry.

Interim ministers will ordinarily be paid on the basis of the terms of call of the former minister. Some flexibility and negotiation will be allowed, but in no case will the interim minister be expected to accept terms of call below our presbytery's minimum terms. Part-time interim ministry should be remunerated on the basis of the percentage of time relative to the terms of call for a full-time position. Churches will be expected to honor the terms of the all for interim ministers as they would for installed pastors.

### **The Search Process**

The role of the interim minister in relation to the Pastoral Nominating Committee is subject to the recommendations of the Committee on Ministry in each particular situation. However, the following are suggestions to be considered:

1. Work with the PNC/Session in the development of a Mission Study.
2. Make sure the PNC understands how the system works.
3. When the PNC is close to the interview stage, and if the interim pastor is comfortable with the task, be willing to be a "practice" interview. This, of course, is done with the clarification from the very beginning that the interim pastor is NOT A CANDIDATE!
4. Make it clear at the outset that the interim pastor is not in the recommendation business. The final choice is that of the PNC, not the interim pastor. If the interim is privy to information that should be known, the interim is to go through the COM not the PNC.
5. The interim should make sure the congregation is regularly informed by the PNC as to their progress (or lack of it) through the newsletter, in worship and in other settings.

### **Concluding the Ministry**

The congregation should plan some sort of "farewell" recognizing the value and contribution of the interim during the ministry. Normally, the interim will leave the congregation following the completion of the ministry. Exceptions to this may only be made by the Committee on Ministry.

### **Terms of Call**

As specified by the *Book of Order*, interim minister contracts are for one year only and may be renewed.

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## DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF INTERIM MINISTRY

### I. COMING TO TERMS WITH HISTORY

*The vacant congregation that would be free for the future needs to work at understanding where it has been coming from and how it got to where it is.*

### II. DISCOVERING A NEW IDENTITY

*A congregation that comes through the vacancy process well emerges with a clearer sense of its own identity – who it is in relationship to its community and what it dreams of being and doing.*

### III. SHIFTS OF POWER

*The time when pastors change is a time when some . . . potential leaders feel a call to take on more active roles.*

### IV. RETHINKING DENOMINATIONAL LINKAGES

*When one pastor leaves, the congregation is open and responsive to denominational resources in a way that has much creativity.*

### V. COMMITMENT TO NEW LEADERSHIP AND A NEW FUTURE

*. . . the congregation has finished its development work only when it is genuinely ready to make a commitment to new leadership and to a new future.*

Loren Mead, *The Developmental Tasks of the Parish in Search of a Pastor*, Alban Institute, 1977.