

WHAT CAN A CONGREGATION EXPECT FROM AN INTERIM PASTOR?

Like all pastors, Interim 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 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 Pastors understand the dynamics of a congregation in transition including feelings of grief, loss, and, sometimes, relief or anger.

Interim 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 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.

After a thorough open search by the PNC and only in exceptional circumstances may An Interim Pastor be a candidate to be called as pastor in the congregation he/she is serving. The *Book of Order* (G.2.0504c) states that an Interim Pastor may be called to be the next Installed pastor only if approved by the COM and 75% vote of the presbytery.

The Interim 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 Church Information Form. With those possible exceptions the Interim Pastor may not be involved in the work and discernment of the PNC.

A good Interim 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 Pastor is fully present with the congregation from the beginning, and departs with no pastoral entanglements.

What should you look for in a good Interim Pastor?

- Training through the Interim Ministry Consortium or the Interim Ministry Network (IMN)
- Participation in the Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists (APIMS) or IMN or both
- Experience as a pastor
- For experienced Interim Pastors, evidence of a good track record with congregations in transition. The best proof of good work by an Interim Pastor is a successful installed pastor.
- Good references from presbytery staff, COM members, and/or members in churches the Interim Pastor has served in the past.
- Participation in continuing education that is not directly connected to Interim Ministry