



POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR INTERIM MINISTRY

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
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Policy and Procedures for Interim Ministry
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POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR INTERIM MINISTRY

A. PASTORAL LEADERSHIP DURING TIMES OF TRANSITION (DEFINITIONS)

Whenever the pastoral tie between a minister and congregation is dissolved, one major decision to be made is the type of pastoral care and leadership the congregation/pastoral charge will require during the period until a new minister is called. There are three basic types of pastoral leadership for times of transition:

1. Occasional supply refers to various individuals invited by the interim moderator to provide worship leadership Sunday by Sunday.
2. Stated supply refers to the appointment by the presbytery of an ordained minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for a specified period of time not to exceed 12 months. This is a sustaining ministry that ordinarily provides worship leadership and may include other pastoral duties to be determined by the session and the presbytery.
3. When there are circumstances that require more than sustaining ministry, an interim minister may be appointed. Interim ministry refers to the appointment by the presbytery of an ordained and specially qualified minister for a specified period of time not to exceed two years. Such ministry will include a covenant with specified goals and a timeline agreed to by the presbytery and the session. Persons who accept the role of interim minister in a congregation are not eligible to candidate for a call in that congregation.

Each of the three types of pastoral leadership proceeds under the supervision of the interim moderator, who is appointed by the presbytery as its representative in the pastoral charge.

B. RATIONALE FOR INTERIM MINISTRY

Interim ministry is an intentional short-term ministry designed to help a congregation get to a “state of readiness” for the next stage of its ministry. It is deliberately temporary ministry in a time of transition, such as the time between settled ministers.

Interim ministry recognizes that a transition time, with proper leadership, can be a time when a congregation grows significantly in its self-understanding and ability to minister effectively to its community. However it may also be a time of emotional upheaval. For example, in the time between settled ministers, the task of bringing closure to one relationship and preparing to begin a new one requires sufficient directed opportunities to experience the reality of the change that is occurring. Moving too rapidly to the calling of a new minister may short-circuit the congregation’s ability to do the developmental tasks that transitions require. The need is increased where the departing minister has had a long tenure or where there have been serious unresolved conflicts in the congregation. Interim ministry is a mechanism to help a congregation to resolve grief and conflict, to work out problems and to make changes so that it is truly ready to welcome a new minister. It is a mechanism for providing assistance through a temporary minister who, by training and experience, can help a congregation prepare for a new pastoral relationship and open a new chapter in its story of worship, witness and service.

The temporary nature of interim ministry is critical to its effectiveness.¹ Interim ministers are strictly ineligible to be called to the pastoral charge where they are serving as interim ministers. The realization that the interim minister cannot stay keeps the congregation aware that it is in a time of transition. As uncomfortable as the sense of being unsettled may be, that awareness may greatly increase the congregation’s capacity for change above its usual level. Change is an essential part of every interim

ministry. The temporary nature of interim ministry also brings the potential for freedom and objectivity to the interim minister. With no vested interest in a long-term call to the congregation, the interim minister is free to focus on enabling the congregation to make the shifts in understanding, relationships and leadership for which the particular interim ministry has been designed.

C. WHEN IS INTERIM MINISTRY APPROPRIATE?

Interim ministry is appropriate whenever there are specific goals or changes that a congregation needs to accomplish before preparing a congregational profile and searching for a minister to call. When the congregation is in extraordinary circumstances (that may include trauma or elevated levels of conflict) the presbytery and/or the session may deem that interim ministry is essential.

The range of circumstances in which interim ministry may be appropriate includes the following:

1. There has been a long pastorate. Some denominations with interim ministry experience use 10 – 12 years as a guide.
2. The pastoral charge is experiencing considerable grief over the departure of a minister who has been much appreciated.
3. The pastoral charge has experienced the death or long-term disability of their minister.
4. Two amalgamating congregations face the challenge of becoming one worshipping community with common identity and mission.
5. The presbytery and the pastoral charge need to determine whether or not the congregation is viable.
6. The pastoral charge needs to change the functioning of its lay leadership before issuing a call.
7. The pastoral charge has experienced a number of short-term pastorates where the 'fit' seems to have been wrong.
8. There has been significant conflict or polarization.
9. The minister has been deposed from ordained office or removed from the denomination.
10. The minister has been charged and placed on an extended leave of absence during an investigation, or has been found guilty of misconduct of an ethical or moral nature and has left the pastoral charge.
11. The pastoral charge has not yet come to terms with past ethical or moral misconduct on the part of its leaders, clergy or lay.

D. QUALIFICATIONS OF AN INTERIM MINISTER

Interim ministers need skills in healing, conflict resolution, management of change, organizational development, setting short-term objectives, and entering and exiting a situation. Though all interim ministers are to be ordained, not all ordained ministers can serve effectively as interim ministers. They need to be:

1. ordained ministers in good standing of The Presbyterian Church in Canada or ordained ministers with demonstrated good standing in denominations represented in the

Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook, with the approval of the appropriate judicatory in the minister's denomination (BF 213.3).

2. clear about their own identity and being called to this role to facilitate the church's mission.
3. willing to prepare the way for another who is to come.
4. aware of being a significant but limited part of the congregation's history.
5. able to honour the work of others, past and present.
6. a non-anxious presence in the midst of transition, grief and conflict.
7. able to join congregational systems quickly and with ease.
8. able to diagnose a situation accurately and develop action plans quickly.
9. able to provide honest and accurate feedback.
10. able to communicate clearly to the congregation that, as interim ministers, they are ineligible to be considered for a call to that congregation.¹

A significant amount of satisfactory pastoral experience as an ordained minister is essential. Ministers appointed by presbyteries to interim ministry positions will normally provide certification of completion of or participation in interim ministry training.

Presbyteries appoint interim ministers who have demonstrated that they can provide the specialized leadership the congregations require. Careful checking of references and evaluations is an integral part of selecting and approving the best candidate for the particular situation.

To help the Church meet its future needs for interim ministers, presbyteries should encourage ministers with particular gifts for interim ministry to consider this specialized ministry, and provide assistance with the cost of training if possible.

E. PRESBYTERY PROCESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR INTERIM MINISTRY

The presbytery process and accountability for interim ministry is grounded on the Church's understanding that the presbytery has responsibility for the care and good order of the congregations within its bounds (Book of Forms, section 200). This means that decisions about an interim ministry appointment in a particular congregation rest ultimately with the presbytery. Nevertheless the process anticipates the presbytery consulting fully with the session and seeking session concurrence on decisions about the interim ministry, except in rare cases when that is not possible. The session, for its part, consults with the congregation about the plans for an interim ministry, as appropriate. However, an interim ministry appointment is not a call, and the signed agreement of members of the congregation is not required. In all cases and at all levels, good communication about decisions is imperative.

1. The presbytery shall conduct an exit interview with the session and with the departing minister, review presbytery visitation reports, and discuss the selection of an appropriate interim moderator.
2. After discussion with the session about the particular skills needed in an interim moderator, the presbytery shall name an appropriate interim moderator.

3. The session, with the guidance of the interim moderator, shall: i) assess ministry needs, ii) review ministry options, and iii) consider the type of leadership required during the transitional time.
4. When interim ministry is chosen, the session, with the guidance of the interim moderator, shall draft a statement of ministry needs and present it to the presbytery, requesting authorization from the presbytery to seek an interim minister. The presbytery can require a period of interim ministry without session concurrence.
5. The presbytery shall approve a period of interim ministry for the congregation and authorize the session to seek an interim minister.
6. The session, with the guidance of the interim moderator, shall seek and covenant with an appropriate interim minister. The covenant will include interim ministry goals to be achieved. Stipend and allowances must meet all General Assembly or presbytery minimum standards. Consideration should be given to providing the stipend level of the previous minister, when this exceeds the minimum standards.
7. The presbytery shall approve the covenant with the interim minister and appoint the interim minister. Whenever the interim minister belongs to a different presbytery, the appointing presbytery shall take the necessary action to seek concurrence of and transfer from the interim minister's presbytery. Whenever the interim minister belongs to another denomination, before making the appointment the appointing presbytery shall obtain confirmation that the appropriate judicatory of the minister's denomination has approved the interim ministry covenant.
8. The presbytery shall specify the roles of the interim moderator and interim minister, communicate this to the session and congregation, and ensure that the interim moderator and interim minister have established an effective working relationship. The presbytery has the responsibility for the continuing quality of this working relationship, especially to provide a ready point of reference should difficulties arise between the interim moderator and the interim minister.
9. The presbytery shall arrange for a worship service to recognize the beginning of the interim ministry.
10. In the case of ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada: The presbytery shall place the interim minister on the constituent roll of the presbytery, provided they are serving at least half-time. Otherwise, the interim minister is placed on the appendix to the roll.

Ministers of other denominations do not become members of the presbytery. Such ministers are subject to the same restrictions as those serving under ecumenical shared ministry agreements, as outlined in Book of Forms section 200.13.2.
11. The presbytery shall receive reports on the interim ministry from the interim moderator, and, in many cases, also from the interim minister. Regular reports should include ways in which the goals and objectives of the interim ministry are being met and identification of any support required from the presbytery. When the presbytery has delayed the search for a settled minister, the interim moderator shall obtain the approval of the presbytery before the search begins.

12. The presbytery shall encourage the session of the congregation to arrange a worship service to recognize the completion of the interim ministry.
13. The presbytery shall conduct evaluations of the interim minister and of the interim ministry. These evaluations may occur near the end of the period of interim ministry, but in no case should they occur later than one month after the conclusion of the covenant. The presbytery shall receive and consider the report of the evaluations.

F. ROLES AND RELATIONSHIP OF THE INTERIM MODERATOR AND INTERIM MINISTER

When a minister leaves a congregation, the minister's judicial responsibilities are assigned to the interim moderator appointed by the presbytery. This means that, as the executive of the presbytery in that congregation, the interim moderator is responsible for the conduct and content of public worship and for the supply of the pulpit. The interim moderator is also responsible for moderating the session. The interim moderator is accountable to the presbytery for the nature of the transitional ministry, and reports regularly to the presbytery on the progress of the congregation. The interim moderator is responsible for facilitating the search process.

Whenever the presbytery appoints an interim minister, the division of duties between the interim moderator and the interim minister must be clear. The basic underlying principle inherent in these procedures is that the interim moderator is responsible to the presbytery for the interim ministry. There is considerable flexibility in how the two ministers work out their respective roles.

The interim minister is a constituent member of the presbytery, provided they are serving at least half-time. They have voice and vote and can share fully in the life of the presbytery, including opportunities to comment on the progress of the interim ministry.

The interim moderator shall initiate a meeting with the interim minister to agree on their respective roles and to discuss how they can support one another. Thereafter, the interim moderator shall participate in regular open communication with the interim minister.

The interim moderator is responsible for moderating the session; the interim minister shall attend the meetings of session. The tasks of interim ministry, however, often require intensive work on the part of the interim minister with the session. In these and other situations, in consultation with the interim minister, the interim moderator may delegate the moderating of session to the interim minister. In all cases, the interim moderator needs to be kept regularly apprised of the activities of the congregation. Whether the interim moderator attends session meetings moderated by the interim minister shall be worked out between the two ministers.

The interim moderator recommends to the presbytery when the congregation should be permitted to begin its search for a new minister, in those cases when the presbytery has delayed the search process. The presbytery can expect the interim moderator to consult with the interim minister about the state of congregational readiness.

Ordinarily the interim minister is responsible for weekly worship, organizational and pastoral leadership to achieve the goals and objectives of the interim ministry as set by the presbytery and session. The interim minister may have input into congregational self-study as it prepares its congregational profile and may meet with the search committee at the request of the interim moderator at any time prior to consideration of candidates. The interim minister shall withdraw from all involvement in the search process once candidates are being considered.

G. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The stipend and allowances provided for an interim minister should be based on the stipend and allowances of the previous minister and should take into account the special expertise and experience of the interim minister. If the appointment is less than full-time, the terms should be pro-rated accordingly, keeping in mind that the expectations should be similarly decreased. Allowances should include continuing education, vacation, pension contribution and Health and Dental plan premiums. Consideration should also be given to a gift of one month's stipend and allowances at the conclusion of the interim ministry appointment to assist the interim minister during the time between appointments.

In presbyteries where there are set amounts for honoraria to interim moderators, consideration should be given to decreasing that amount for interim moderators of pastoral charges where interim ministers are appointed, as the responsibilities of interim moderators in these situations will be greatly reduced.

Endnotes

¹ The temporary nature of interim ministry is critical to its effectiveness. Interim ministers are ineligible to be considered for calls to the congregations where they are serving as interim ministers. The rationale for the 'no candidacy rule' is as follows:

1. The temporary nature of interim ministry may greatly increase the congregation's capacity for change. The realization that the interim minister cannot stay keeps the congregation aware that it is in a time of transition. As uncomfortable as the sense of being unsettled may be, that awareness may greatly increase the congregation's capacity for change above its usual level. Change is an essential part of every interim ministry.
2. The temporary nature of interim ministry also brings the potential for freedom and objectivity to the interim minister. With no vested interest in a long-term call to the congregation, the interim minister is free to focus on enabling the congregation to make the shifts in understanding, relationships and leadership for which the particular interim ministry has been designed.
3. Consideration of the interim minister as a candidate for the call might short-change the search process. When the possibility of calling the interim minister exists, some in the congregation will likely try to influence the search committee to "stay with what we already know." However, when a search committee decides to consider the interim minister, the natural tendency will be to focus on the personality of the interim minister, rather than on the congregation's goals for the future and the skills, strengths and abilities needed in the next minister. When the search committee decides to find a way "to keep the interim," it can no longer be objective in the crucial task it is performing on behalf of the congregation.
4. The Church needs to be fair to all possible candidates, and to protect the concept of what an intentional interim ministry can provide for congregations. Allowing the interim minister to be considered for the call is unfair to others who might wish to be considered for it. The interim minister will have a decided advantage in the call process. If interim ministers become the called ministers, this trend will engender distrust of interim ministry and do irreparable harm to the concept of intentional interim ministry.
5. It is risky to call an interim minister when there may be underlying opposition to that individual by persons in the congregation. The interim minister may be liked by many, but usually there are some people who do not like the interim minister for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the interim minister has needed to push, confront, challenge or strongly discourage certain behaviour, actions or policies. This may have angered or alienated the interim minister from some individuals or groups. The anger or hostility can usually be tolerated knowing the interim minister will one day (not too far in the future) be leaving. But if the interim minister is called, there will likely be strong opposition and undermining of the interim minister's ability to be effective over the long term.
6. It is best to keep clear the strictly interim nature of the congregation's covenant with the interim minister, and not complicate the relationship with considerations of them being a candidate for the call. Suppose the interim minister is considered as a candidate for the call and then is not chosen by the decision-making bodies during the process? This situation will likely make it extremely difficult for the interim minister to continue as an effective interim minister in that congregation. Feelings experienced by the interim minister and those who either supported or opposed them candidacy cannot be discarded easily after a decision has been made.

7. Trust that persons keep their word is essential in covenantal relationships; changing the “rules of the game” may foster distrust in the minister and the congregational leaders who “changed the rules.” When an interim minister becomes a candidate for the call, it changes the terms of the covenant under which the minister was appointed to the congregation for a specific term and for specific tasks. Interim ministry covenants are signed by the session on behalf of the congregation, with the approval of the presbytery. Usually there has been no general congregational involvement in the process. Therefore if the interim minister is called to the congregation, some people may feel betrayed, fooled or manipulated, and distrust may permeate the climate in which the new long-term relationship will begin.

DEVELOPING AN INTERIM MINISTRY COVENANT

The interim minister serves under a covenant, not a call, by appointment of the presbytery. The covenant must state specifically the names of the congregation and the interim minister, the goals and tasks for ministry in this interim period, the roles and responsibilities of the interim minister, the length and terms of service, and the stipend and allowances to be provided by the congregation. The session (with the possible involvement of the congregation) should have input into the terms of the covenant. Both session and congregation should be made aware of the terms of the covenant before the interim minister arrives.

GOALS AND TASKS FOR INTERIM MINISTRY

These goals and tasks should flow from the statement of ministry needs that was developed by the interim moderator and the session and was presented by the interim moderator to the presbytery as part of the process for authorization of an interim ministry. They reflect areas of concern and/or ministry that are to be the primary focus during the interim period.

In his book *The Interim Pastor's Manual*, Alan Gripe describes five developmental tasks of congregations seeking to “develop greater maturity in self-understanding and greater skill in doing what needs to be done” prior to calling a new minister. These five developmental tasks may provide a useful framework for the development of the goals and tasks of the interim ministry.¹

1. **Coming to Terms with History**

Congregations often need “to come to terms with history, to review it, and to acknowledge it, beauty and blemishes alike. Then, having acknowledged the past, ... (they need to consider) what it means for the present and how it can be understood to help to shape the future productively.”²

2. **Discovering a New Identity**

Following the departure of a minister, some congregations are left wondering who they are and who they will be. The in-between time provides an opportunity for the congregation to assess its current ministry and its potential for ministry in the present and immediate future. It is an opportunity for the congregation to look not only at itself, but also at the challenges of the community it serves.

3. **Allowing and Empowering New Leaders**

Congregations often need to become aware of the various forms and uses of power in the congregation and to ensure effective leadership in the congregation. This frequently involves managing leadership shifts.

4. **Renewing Denominational Linkages**

This task involves the strengthening of communication and the renewal of relationships between the congregation and other bodies in the church, especially the presbytery. The desired outcome is a congregation that is able to acknowledge its sense of pride in its heritage and its membership in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to reaffirm its responsibilities to the denomination.

5. **Committing to New Leadership and a New Future**

Throughout the in-between time, the congregation needs to be working consciously towards its future, a future in which the interim minister will not have a leadership role. As

the first four tasks are completed, the congregation prepares itself to make the commitment its new future will require.

Additional or revised goals and tasks may be established during the term of the covenant by mutual agreement of the session and interim minister and with the approval of the presbytery.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERIM MINISTER

The interim minister is responsible for providing leadership in two key areas:

- the work of the session and congregation on the specific goals and tasks of the interim ministry;
- regular duties associated with pastoral ministry.

It is essential that the particular roles and responsibilities of the interim minister be delineated clearly in the covenant document.

1. The interim minister will become a constituent³ member of the presbytery and serve under its care and discipline.
2. The interim moderator is accountable to the presbytery for the nature of the interim ministry and reports to the presbytery on the activities and progress of the congregation towards the achievement of the goals and tasks of the interim ministry. It is expected that the interim moderator will involve the interim minister in the preparation and presentation of such reports.
3. The division of duties between the interim moderator and the interim minister must be clear and an effective working relationship developed.
4. The interim moderator may delegate the moderating of the session to the interim minister, recognizing that the interim moderator must be kept regularly apprised of the activities of the congregation.
5. The interim moderator is responsible for facilitating the search process. The interim minister may have input into the congregational self-study as it prepares its congregational profile and may meet with the search committee at the request of the interim moderator at any time prior to consideration of candidates. The interim minister must withdraw from all involvement in the search process once candidates are being considered.
6. The presbytery shall conduct evaluations of the interim minister and the interim ministry. These evaluations may occur near the end of the period of interim ministry, but in no case should they occur later than one month after the conclusion of the covenant. The presbytery shall receive and consider the report of the evaluations.

LENGTH AND TERMS OF SERVICE

1. The covenant is always for a specific length of time, not to exceed two years. Flexibility may be built into the covenant so that it can be renewed or shortened if the presbytery, congregation and interim minister agree such action is advisable. Changes in length of term might arise to suit the timing of the new minister's arrival or a redefining of the goals and tasks of the interim ministry.

2. The covenant must state clearly that the interim minister is not eligible for a call to this congregation.
3. Expectations for the number of hours per week and the division of time between office, visitation, and other duties should be clarified.
4. Provision for vacation, study leave, absence due to illness, and other special release time provision should be listed in the covenant.

STIPEND AND ALLOWANCES

The terms of the covenant relating to stipend and allowances should be set by mutual agreement of the session and the interim minister. However, all aspects of the covenant must be approved by the presbytery, as with a call.

The presbytery must ensure that the stipend and allowances are at least at the minimum levels set by the General Assembly (and by the presbytery, when applicable), and preferably at a level commensurate with the qualifications and experience of the interim minister. There should be a reasonable relationship between the level of stipend and allowances given to the interim minister and the level given to the previous incumbent. (The Interim Ministry Network recommends that stipend and allowances given to the interim minister be at least 80% of the stipend and allowances given to the previous inducted minister.)

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The specific goals and tasks of the interim ministry will form the basis for evaluating the interim ministry. To what degree has the congregation made progress toward its goals? To what degree has the interim minister offered effective leadership?

In cases when the interim ministry appointment might be extended for an additional period, these specific goals and tasks will provide the basis for that decision as well.

The evaluation committee should include session representatives, the interim moderator, representatives of the presbytery and the interim minister.

Endnotes

¹ Gripe, Alan G. *The Interim Pastor's Manual*, revised edition. Louisville: Geneva Press, 1997, p. 38-50.

² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³ The minister's name is placed on the constituent roll as long as the position is half-time or more; otherwise the minister's name is placed on the appendix to the roll.

SAMPLE INTERIM MINISTRY AGREEMENT

The Presbyterian Church in Canada Interim Ministry Agreement Presbytery of [name]

This agreement (“Agreement”) is dated the [day] day of [month] ,[year]

Between:

The Congregation of [name] located at [address], [email]
 (“Congregation”)

and:

The Rev. [name] of [address], [email] (“Minister”)

and:

The Presbytery of [name] within The Presbyterian Church in Canada [mailing address], [email]
 (“Presbytery”)

This Agreement outlines the terms for the Presbytery appointment of the Minister to the position of Interim Ministry in the Congregation.

- 1.0 The goals and expectations for this ministry are found at Schedule A, attached.
- 2.0 Qualifications of the Minister are found at Schedule B, attached.
- 3.0 This ministry is full time (or part time based on % of full time 45 hours per week)
- 4.0 This ministry will begin on [date] and end on [date] and may be renewed with the consent of all parties but not beyond a total of 24 months.
- 5.0 The stipend and allowances shall meet or exceed General Assembly and Presbytery requirements and may be prorated in the case of part time.
- 6.0 The Congregation shall pay the following monthly stipend and allowances, less payroll deductions, to the Minister at the beginning of each month:

	Annual	Monthly
Stipend (inclusive of travel allowance)	\$	\$
Housing allowance (fair rental value of appropriate housing or use of manse)	\$	\$
Utilities	\$	\$
Other (specify)	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$

- 7.0 In addition to the above, the Congregation shall provide:
 - *Ministry related travel expenses reimbursed at \$[amount] per kilometer (General Assembly standard is \$0.45/km) up to \$[amount] per month if not included in stipend.
 - Five weeks vacation per year.
 - Pension payments as required by the Pension Plan of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
 - Health and Dental benefits per The Presbyterian Church in Canada plan.
 - Continuing Education allowance according to General Assembly and Presbytery regulations, to be used on approval of the Presbytery.
 - Moving costs of up to \$[amount] if applicable.
 - Cost of pulpit supply during the Minister’s vacation and continuing education leave.
 - [other – specify]

- 8.0 In the case of the Minister’s total disability or extended illness, this Agreement will terminate as of the date the medical leave commences. The Congregation will then continue to provide stipend and all allowances for a period of three months. Housing allowance and cost of utilities only will be continued for a further four months.
- 9.0 An Interim Moderator shall be named by the Presbytery to the Congregation for the term of the ministry.
- 10.0 The Minister shall be accountable to the Presbytery generally through the Interim Moderator.
- 11.0 The Minister shall not be eligible to be called to the Congregation during the term of this Agreement and for [number] years thereafter.
- 12.0 The Presbytery shall arrange for a service of recognition and periodic evaluations of this ministry.
- 13.0 This Agreement can be terminated by the Presbytery on its own or at the request of either the Congregation or the Minister on 60 days written notice. At the date of termination no further payments shall be required. If this Agreement continues to its maximum term of 24 months, it will expire automatically with no further notice or pay in lieu of notice.
- 14.0 This Agreement is in accordance with Interim Ministry Policy and Procedures approved by the General Assembly (presbyterian.ca/resources-ministry) and shall be subject to the laws of the province of [province].
- 15.0 This Agreement may only be amended or modified in writing and with the consent of all parties.

This agreement is approved by the parties as of the date written above.

For the CONGREGATION:

Clerk of Session (print name)

Clerk of Session (signature)

For the PRESBYTERY OF [insert]:

Clerk of Presbytery (print name)

Clerk of Presbytery (signature)

For the MINISTER:

Minister (print name)

Minister (signature)

SCHEDULE A

Interim Ministry Goals and Expectations (Adjust for specific situation)

The goals for this Interim Ministry shall include (see Policy and Procedures for Interim Ministry, p. 8):

- coming to terms with history
- discovering a new identity
- allowing and empowering new leaders
- renewing denominational linkages
- committing to new leadership and a new future
- [other]

The expectations of the Interim Minister shall include:

- work with the Session to develop and implement plans to lead the Congregation in accomplishing the goals of the Interim Ministry
- lead worship and preach, subject to vacation and continuing education
- celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion as determined by the Session
- celebrate the sacrament of baptism as approved by the Session
- provide for a leader of worship on Sundays when the Minister is absent, subject to the Minister ensuring that the leader shall support the Congregation's vision and the polity and doctrine of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- provide pastoral care for sick and shut-in
- officiate at weddings and funerals
- work with boards and committees of the Congregation (other than the search committee) to assist them in carrying out their assigned tasks
- attend meetings of the Session and of the Congregation's committees as required
- at the request of the Interim Moderator, moderate meetings of the Session and of the Congregation
- perform other administrative duties as requested by the Session or Presbytery; (e.g., work with church secretary in preparing bulletins, newsletters, etc., exercise general oversight of church facilities, and represent the church in dealing with outside organizations)
- at the request of the Interim Moderator provide observations and advice about the state of the Congregation's readiness for calling a minister
- attend Presbytery meetings and provide regular reports about the ministry separately or jointly with the Interim Moderator
- report any serious differences or difficulties with any former minister(s) of the Congregation to the Interim Moderator and take no further action with respect to such differences or difficulties without the explicit instruction of the Interim Moderator
- provide the Session, Interim Moderator and Presbytery a written report regarding the Congregation at the end of the Interim Ministry

SCHEDULE B

Interim Minister Qualifications (Adjust for specific situation)

The Minister shall have the following qualifications:

- an ordained minister in good standing of The Presbyterian Church in Canada or an ordained minister with demonstrated good standing in a denomination represented in the Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook, as outlined in the Book of Forms of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, section 213.3.
- identifiable skills in healing, conflict resolution, management of congregational change, organizational development, and setting short-term objectives
- demonstrated ability to join and leave congregational systems quickly and with ease
- demonstrated ability to diagnose a situation accurately and develop action plans quickly
- demonstrated ability to provide honest and accurate feedback
- demonstrated ability to prepare the way for another minister for the Congregation
- demonstrated ability to honour the work of other people in the Congregation, past and present
- demonstrated ability to be a non-anxious presence in the midst of transition, grief and conflict
- congregational pastoral experience as an ordained minister
- attended workshop on the Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment of The Presbyterian Church in Canada within the past [insert] years
- provide a vulnerable sector police records check prepared within the previous two months and demonstrate familiarity with the Leading with Care Policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- specialized training for Interim Ministry

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES FOR AN INTERIM MINISTRY POSITION

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

The candidate interim minister should be provided with the statement of reasons why a period of interim ministry has been chosen for the congregation.

The **interview team** should do the following:

- provide the candidate with the statement of reasons for the particular interim ministry
- review the congregational situation
- review the five developmental tasks of interim ministry
- know the proposed financial arrangements
- design the interview process, including questions that will be asked.

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Congregations are understood to have five developmental tasks during an interim ministry:
 - coming to terms with history
 - discovering a new identity
 - managing leadership shifts
 - renewing denominational links
 - commitment to a new future.

Please comment on each of these tasks, and give us examples of how you have worked in assisting congregations to accomplish these tasks in other interim settings. What results were achieved?

2. Conflict is part of congregational life. Please describe your understanding and experience of conflict in the church, and describe your style of conflict resolution. Please illustrate with specific examples. What did you do? How did it turn out? What would you do the same/differently another time?
3. Interim ministry is a specialized form of ministry, requiring additional skills to those typically required in settled ministry. What are the special gifts, skills, experience and training that you bring to this kind of ministry? Please provide examples that illustrate how you have used these.
4. You will have read the statement of reasons why a period of interim ministry has been chosen for this congregation at this time. What insights and ideas do you have about how the interim ministry might unfold? What strategies would you recommend that the session and congregation consider throughout this interim period?

Further general suggestions for interviewing candidates for ministry positions are found in *Calling a Minister*, Supplement 4.

SAMPLE LITURGY FOR BEGINNING A TIME OF INTERIM MINISTRY

**A service of recognition conducted by the Presbytery of [name]]
installing as interim minister, the Reverend [name]**

Note: Presbytery may conduct a regular service of worship, including the following liturgy during the response part of the service

ACT OF RECOGNITION

Narration of the Steps	Interim Moderator
The Preamble and Questions	Moderator
Prayer	
The Declaration	
The Right Hand of Fellowship	Members of Presbytery
Signing of the Formula	Presbytery Clerk

Suggested Hymns

You are Called to Tell the Story	#583
Called as Partners in Christ's Service	#587
Here I Am Lord	#592

NARRATION OF STEPS

Clerk of Session: The session with the guidance of the presbytery has determined that our congregation will be well served by a time of interim ministry. The elders have committed themselves to undertake the special tasks of leadership that belong to them and to the congregation during this "in-between-time." We have agreed to search for Christ's direction for the future of this congregation, to examine who we are and what our mission is, to support and to pray for the search committee when they are appointed, and to prepare for and to welcome the next inducted minister of this church.

We gather today to welcome and affirm the Rev. [insert interim minister's name] as our interim minister. Our session has carefully selected and enthusiastically invite them to (provide spiritual leadership, pastoral care, and administrative oversight-**note: you may tailor these phrases to specific tasks you've assigned to the interim minister**) to our congregation during this time of transition. They have been blessed with a call from Christ and with particular skills, training and experience in interim ministry. Speaking on behalf of the session of this congregation, I am pleased to present the Rev. [insert interim minister's name] as our interim minister, and now ask the presbytery to install them.

Moderator of Presbytery: As Moderator of the Presbytery of (insert presbytery name), I am pleased to confirm that we have examined the pastoral credentials and experience of the Rev. [insert interim minister's name]. Therefore we affirm your selection of them and encourage you to covenant with them as your interim minister.

The Moderator reads the Preamble and addresses questions to the interim minister and to the congregation, as outlined below.

PREAMBLE TO THE ORDINATION VOWS (see Book of Forms, section 447)

QUESTIONS TO THE INTERIM MINISTER

1. Do you believe in God the Father, made known in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom the Holy Spirit witnesses in the scriptures of the old and new testaments?
2. Do you accept the subordinate standards of this church, promising to uphold its doctrine under the continual illumination and correction of the Holy Spirit speaking in the scriptures?
3. Do you accept the government of this church by sessions, presbyteries, synods and General Assemblies and do you promise to share in and submit yourself to all lawful oversight therein, and to follow no divisive course but to seek the peace and unity of Christ among your people and through the Holy Catholic Church?
4. Do you promise in the strength and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to conduct yourself in your private and public life as becomes his gospel, and do you give yourself diligently and cheerfully to the service of Christ's work, sacraments and discipline, for the furtherance of his reconciling mission in the world?

QUESTIONS TO THE CONGREGATION AND INTERIM MINISTER

Moderator: We come now to specific questions about the interim ministry of [insert congregation name] and its relationship with its interim minister. Would the members and adherents of [insert congregation name] congregation please rise?

Congregation: During this 'in-between time' we have agreed to search for Christ's direction for this church; and to examine who we are and discover our mission. We ask the presbytery to proceed in appointing Rev. [insert interim minister's name] to be our interim minister, and we are ready to promise our support.

Moderator: [Insert interim minister's name], do you, before God and in the presence of these witnesses, commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility as interim minister of [insert congregation name]?

Interim Minister: I do.

Moderator: [Insert interim minister's name], will you serve the people of [insert congregation name] with energy, intelligence, imagination and love, and will you offer them guidance, challenge and encouragement in your journey together?

Interim Minister: I will, and I promise to pray for them and support them as we serve God in this important and changing time in the life of [insert congregation name].

Moderator: Do you, members and adherents of [insert congregation name] acknowledge and welcome the [insert interim minister's name] as your interim minister?

Congregation: We do.

Moderator: Do you agree to undertake the special tasks that will be yours during this "in-between time" and will you regard [insert interim minister's name] as a fellow servant of Christ and work with them in the ministry of this congregation?

Congregation: We do, and we also promise to pray for and honour [insert interim minister's name] and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Jesus Christ.

Clerk of Session: (presents set of keys to interim minister). Please accept these keys to our church, as a sign of your leadership among us. Keep them and use them well as you minister here, until the time comes for you to depart from us.

Members of Presbytery: We are witnesses to the promises you have made as you enter into this "in-between time." We recognize the paths you have travelled in the past and the journey you are embarking upon as you look to the future. Be assured of our prayers and support as you minister together and discover the plans God has for you during this interim time at [insert congregation name]. May God bless you and keep you.

OTHER VOWS THAT MAY BE INSERTED

Interim Minister: I pledge to you as a minister of the gospel among you that I will pray for you, listen to you, assist you in the tasks of this interim period, encouraging and challenging you as we move through this time together.

Congregation: We, the people of [insert congregation name] receive you as a servant of God and pledge our partnership as we continue to use the gifts God has given us, in the many ministries of the gospel in this place: in worship, education, witness, service and stewardship.

SAMPLE LITURGY FOR COMPLETING A TIME OF INTERIM MINISTRY

The interim moderator shall ensure that a worship service to recognize the completion of the interim ministry is arranged.

The following sample liturgy is suggested for use during the response portion of a regular service of worship. This liturgy has been designed for situations in which the congregation has called a new minister. Please note that it would require adjustments to suit other situations, such as the installation of a new interim minister or the dissolution of the congregation.

Suggested Hymns

We Gather Here to Bid Farewell	#614
Go Now in Peace	#620

EXIT LITURGY

Interim Moderator: (could be another presbytery rep, or Clerk of Session): Would those members of the Search Committee please rise? You have worked diligently in searching for a new minister for [insert name of congregation]. It has taken many hours of dedicated work, as well as thoughtful discussion and prayer. You presented the name of the Rev. [insert name of new minister] to the session and congregation and they supported your choice. It is now time to say thanks to you, and to dismiss you from your duties.

Congregation: We offer sincere thanks to the members of the Search Committee for their careful work in selecting a minister for us. We are grateful for the commitment each member was willing to make to the process, and that the committee answered God's call to serve in this way. (Search Committee may be seated)

Clerk of Session: It is with rejoicing and with regret that we come this day to thank [insert name of interim minister] for their faithful service as our interim minister. We rejoice in the work that they have done in this "in-between-time." We offer our thanks for leadership in our worship services, for the pastoral care offered to those in special need. Above all, we offer our thanks for helping us to prepare for new ministry, and to welcome and be ready to work with our new minister, the Rev. [insert name of new minister].

Interim Moderator: A church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born, children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we say farewell to [insert name of interim minister] whose time as our interim minister has come to an end.

Interim Minister: I thank [insert name of congregation], its members and friends for the love, kindness and support shown me these last [insert number of months/years] months (years). I thank you for accepting my leadership. I recall with joy the many things we have been able to accomplish together. While it is difficult to say goodbye, it is an important part of my task as minister to leave and say goodbye at the right time. There can be no new beginning until there has been an ending.

Congregation: We accept that the time has come for you to leave us. Your influence on us will not leave us, even though you depart from us. We express gratitude for your ministry among us.

Interim Moderator: Do you, the members and friends of [insert name of congregation] now release [insert name of interim minister] from the interim ministry covenant between them and this congregation?

Congregation: With the help of God, we do release [insert name of interim minister] from the interim ministry covenant between us. We pledge to let [insert name of interim minister] go and not to seek continued ministry support from them.

Interim Moderator: Do you, [insert name of interim minister], release [insert name of congregation] from turning to you and depending on you?

Interim Minister: With the help of God, I do release [insert congregation name] from the interim ministry covenant between them and me. I pledge to leave them and not to provide continued ministry support to them.

Interim Moderator: As a sign of the completion of this covenant, [insert name of interim minister], will you present the Clerk of Session with your keys to [insert name of congregation]? Go now [insert name of interim minister], surrounded by our love and led by the promises of God, the presence of Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Interim Moderator: to offer prayer.

Thanks and dismissal of search committee, when appropriate.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

TWO PROCESSES

These review and evaluation processes (and the forms that follow) may be adapted to a wide variety of situations. The situation in the individual congregation determines when and how to evaluate. The review of the interim minister should take place at a different meeting from the review of the session's performance. If the elders have had an opportunity ahead of time to complete the review forms, the entire process will be more productive. A review and evaluation take place under the direction of the interim moderator.

EVALUATION OF THE INTERIM MINISTER

The interim minister review and evaluation may take place at one or more of the following intervals: three months, six months, or twelve months. The session will participate in the review under the leadership of the interim moderator. Larger sessions may need to divide up into smaller groups to facilitate discussion. The interim minister is excused from the session room during the review of their performance. The discussion of each category should be limited to about five minutes. Ordinarily, the results of the review are shared with the interim minister at another time and place, in a conversation between the interim minister and the interim moderator.

SELF-EVALUATION OF THE SESSION

When the termination date of the interim minister's service has been set (ordinarily about sixty days before the interim minister's departure) it is advisable for the session to set a date and time for a session meeting to review and evaluate the session's performance during the interim period. Each elder should be encouraged to complete the evaluation form and bring it to the meeting for personal guidance during the discussion. The forms ought not to be collected or preserved. Each is regarded as the personal property of the person who has completed it. The session should record the results of the review, share them with the interim minister, and use them for further reflection and action as desired.

This resource has been adapted from The Interim Pastor's Manual © 1997. Alan G. Gripe. Used by permission of Geneva Press.

INTERIM MINISTER'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW

(To be completed by each elder)

Interim Minister's Name: _____ Date: _____

This form, to be completed by each elder, should be adapted appropriately for each situation. Its objective is to provide the interim minister with performance feedback from the session.

The following questions concerning the performance of the interim minister are to be addressed by the session in each performance category:

1. What was expected of the interim minister in the performance period under review?
2. What strengths has the interim minister exhibited?
3. What are the opportunities for growth and improvement?

Performance Categories <i>(Consult the interim minister's position description)</i>	Meets or Exceeds Expectations	Growth Opportunity
INTENTIONAL INTERIM LEADERSHIP		
Guides the session and other leaders in these tasks:		
Coming to terms with history		
Discovering a new identity		
Allowing and empowering new leaders		
Renewing denominational linkages		
Commitment to new leadership and a new future		
Examples and comments:		
WORSHIP		
Worship services – primary leader and coordinator		
With the session and its worship committee, determines policies relating to the worship services		
Study, preparation, and preaching of sermons		
Administration of the sacraments		
Examples and comments:		

Performance Categories <i>(Consult the interim minister's position description)</i>	Meets or Exceeds Expectations	Growth Opportunity
TEACHING		
Primary responsibility for the confirmation classes		
Coordination and teaching/leading adult Christian education events		
Support of Christian education for children and youth		
Examples and comments:		
PASTORAL CARE		
Prayer with and for the church		
Visitation of the sick, troubled, and grieving		
Officiating at funerals, along with preparatory and follow-up visits with the family		
Weddings: pre-marriage counselling and officiating		
Ministerial care and counselling for troubled church members		
Examples and comments:		
COMMUNITY SERVICE		
Active in the local clergy association, ecumenical groups, and community service organizations		
Examples and comments:		
DENOMINATIONAL SERVICE		
Active in presbytery, synod, and General Assembly as invited and as time allows		
Supportive of the national and worldwide mission of the church		
Examples and comments:		

Performance Categories <i>(Consult the interim minister's position description)</i>	Meets or Exceeds Expectations	Growth Opportunity
STAFF LEADERSHIP		
Coordinator of volunteer and paid church staff		
Examples and comments:		
CHURCH LEADERSHIP		
Equip and encourage the members of the church to develop and use their gifts for ministry		
Moderate session and congregational meetings		
Attend session committee meetings in ex officio capacity		
Work with the session and its committees to develop and envision long-range plans for the congregation		
Primary responsibility for officer training		
Examples and comments:		

ELDER'S PERSONAL REVIEW AND SELF-EVALUATION

(To be completed by each elder)

Elder's Name: _____ Date: _____

This form is to be used by each elder to review their own performance during the interim period, as well as to review the performance of the session as a whole.

The following questions concerning performance are to be considered before completing this form:

1. What was expected of the elder/session during the interim period?
2. What strengths have the elders exhibited?
3. What are the opportunities for growth?

Other categories may be added to this form as indicated by the situation.

The Five Tasks	Individual Elder			Whole Session		
	Well Done	Partially Done	Not Done	Well Done	Partially Done	Not Done
1. Coming to terms with history						
Examples and comments:						
2. Discovering a new identity						
Examples and comments:						
3. Allowing and empowering new leaders						
Examples and comments:						
4. Renewing denominational linkages						
Examples and comments:						
5. Commitment to new leadership and a new future						
Examples and comments:						

Additional Comments:

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INTERIM MINISTRY TRAINING

Several institutions provide training for interim ministry – the Interim Ministry Network (IMN) and various theological seminaries of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The IMN program involves a three-day introductory event followed by a week of training and finally some field work. The PCUSA programs involve one week of training followed by some field work and a final week of training.

Interim Ministry Network

Phone: 410-719-0777
Email: imnedu.org/contact-us
Website: imnedu.org

Transitional Ministry Education Consortium of the PCUSA

Phone: 515-661-9409
Email: transitionalministryeducation.net/contact
Website: transitionalministryeducation.net

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Continuing Education 616 North Highland Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206-2596

Phone: 412-924-1345
Email: ConEd@pts.edu
Website: pts.edu/continuing-education

The Transitional Ministry Basic Education program (The Art of Transitional Ministry) is designed to meet the guidelines of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The training is open to people beyond the PCUSA but they request a signature from an officer in the enrollee's presbytery authorizing the individual for the course.

For other PCUSA sites:

Website: oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/ministers/interim-pastors