

Policy #19 – Interim Pastors
Committee on Ministry – Presbytery of Tampa Bay

General Guidelines

1. All pastoral vacancies should be filled by an Interim Pastor (or Interim Associate Pastor) hereinafter referred to as “Interim Pastor.” Ordinarily, all Interim Pastors are required to have completed Phase One of Interim Training, or to do so within six months.
2. The following procedures, accountability, expectations and termination provisions will guide the agreement between the Interim Pastor, the church and the presbytery. See Form F-7 for a sample contract.
3. An associate pastor or parish associate is not permitted to serve as an interim pastor (or defacto interim pastor) in the church currently served.
4. Ordinarily, the compensation for an Interim Pastor is between 80%-110% of that paid to the last incumbent. Compensation for the position of Interim Pastor should parallel that of other clergy in the presbytery. For example, full-time Interim Pastor positions must meet the presbytery minimum compensation guidelines for full-time pastoral positions; half-time Interim Pastor positions must meet presbytery guidelines for half-time pastoral positions, etc. (See Policy #17.)

Short-Term Interim Needs

5. After the pastor leaves and before an Interim Pastor is selected, the session (in consultation with the COM) will provide leadership for worship, preaching and provide pastor care. A list of ministers available to preach on Sundays can be found at www.presbyteryoftampabay.com (click on “Pulpit Supply List”). Pastors in nearby Presbyterian churches could be contacted for emergency pastoral care needs.
6. The Session may choose to engage a “bridge interim” for two to three-month supply while an Interim Pastor is being selected. Ministers who serve as a “bridge interim” are eligible to apply for the interim pastor position.

Interim Pastor Search Process

7. The Interim Pastor Search Committee consists of elders (usually three) elected by the session. The Search Committee, in consultation with the COM Interim Pastor Coordinator and presbytery presbyter, prepares a draft of the Church Information Form (CIF) using a downloaded version from the General Assembly website: go to www.pcusa.org, click on “Ministry and Vocations,” scroll down to “Church Leadership Connection,” click on “Printable PIFs and CIFs,” click on CIF Part I and CIF Part II (use the Microsoft Word format).
8. The Interim Search Committee submits a copy of the CIF to the COM liaison and session for approval. A copy of the CIF (in Word format) is emailed to the presbytery presbyter at gtyer@pbty.com as an attachment.

9. Personal Information Forms (PIFs) from interim pastors are received by the Interim Search Committee. The Search Committee reviews the PIFs, listens to sermons on tape or in person, interviews two or three ministers, and proposes an interim pastor to the session and COM.
10. The COM liaison, COM chair and/or the presbytery presbyter will check presbytery references for the finalist.
11. At least one week prior to meeting with the COM, the following documents must be emailed to the presbytery presbyter at gtyer@pbty.com as an attachment in Word format: the final candidate's PIF, a one-page statement of faith, a one-page biographical statement, Form F-7, and Form F-1 (unsigned).
12. After the COM or its area committee examines and approves the finalist, the candidate is then presented to the session. The session approves the Interim Pastor, and Forms F-1 and F-7 are completed.

Expectations of the Interim Pastor

13. Interim Pastors will hold membership in the Presbytery of Tampa Bay.
14. Interim Pastors will serve as moderator of session and head of staff. Interim Associate Pastors will not serve as moderator or head of staff.
15. Interim Pastors will provide preaching and worship leadership and officiate at weddings, funerals, and the sacraments. They will provide pastoral care for the congregation including hospital, home and crisis visitation, and counseling with individuals and families. They will provide programmatic support for the church as approved by the session.
16. Interim Pastors will provide leadership concerning change and conflict management, healing, grief work, reconciliation, futuring, and other interim specialist skills, including:
 - assisting the church to come to terms with its history,
 - helping the church reassess its identity,
 - assisting the church to cope with changes within the lay leadership,
 - strengthening the church's linkages with the presbytery,
 - preparing the congregation for new pastoral leadership.
17. Interim Pastors will consult with the COM and presbytery presbyter before introducing new programs, major changes, organizational restructuring, or planning processes.
18. Interim Pastors will continue professional training to develop interim pastoral skills by participation in presbytery-sponsored Interim Pastor support groups, and appropriate study events and conferences.
19. Interim Pastors will have no direct relationship with the Pastor Nominating Committee, except to request adequate reporting to the session and congregation. This means that Interim Pastors will not give advice or direction to the Pastor Nominating Committee.
20. Interim Pastors will not (under any circumstances) become the next installed pastor, associate pastor, stated supply, parish associate or on-going minister of the church.
21. The Interim Pastor is accountable to the session (through the Personnel Committee) and the presbytery (through the COM).

Expectations of Session

22. The session will provide spiritual support for the Interim Pastor.
23. The session will review the work of the Interim Pastor (through the Personnel Committee) at three-month intervals.
24. The session will review the interim agreement 90 days prior to the end date of the contract. The original agreement may be extended by mutual consent between the Interim Pastor, the session and the COM.

Expectations of the Presbytery

25. The COM and presbytery presbyter will provide professional support to the Interim Pastor.
26. The COM liaison and presbytery presbyter will provide resources to the Pastor Nominating Committee.
27. The COM and presbytery presbyter will assist the session and the Interim Pastor with emerging needs.

Termination Provisions

28. During the Interim Contract: The agreement between the church and the Interim Pastor may be terminated with the approval of the COM prior to the end of the interim contract. Termination may be initiated by either the session or the Interim Pastor with 30 days written notice. All unused study leave allowance, study leave and vacation leave will be paid on a prorated basis to the Interim Pastor at termination.
29. At the end of the pastoral search: After the Pastor Nominating Committee selects a finalist, the COM chair or the Executive Presbyter will give 60* days notice in writing to the Interim Pastor. *This 60-day notice may in certain unusual circumstances be adjusted to a period of not less than 30 days or more than 90 days. This adjustment must be made at the inception of this contract and must be with full knowledge of financial implications by the Session, Church Treasurer, Chair of Finance Committee, COM Liaison, and Interim Pastor.
30. Personal, Continuing Education, and Vacation Leave: During the notice period, the Interim Pastor is given whatever personal leave is needed to interview for a new position. At the end of the notice period, all unused continuing education leave and allowance is paid to the Interim Pastor. Unless other arrangements are agreed upon by the Interim Pastor, session and COM, vacation must be taken during the contract period and not accrued until the end. Unless the session and COM approve otherwise, all unused vacation leave is lost and cannot be given to the Interim Pastor.
31. With the approval of the COM, the session may choose to keep the Interim Pastor employed until the new pastor arrives. In this case, all unused vacation, study leave, and study leave allowance plus two months of severance will be paid to the Interim Pastor at the end of employment.