



INTERIM MINISTRY GUIDELINES

Congregations periodically experience transitions in pastoral leadership. Synods provide for the care of congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy through the appointment of an ordained minister to provide pastoral care on an interim basis. An interim pastor is appointed by the synod bishop in consultation with the Congregational Council. Pastoral care is then provided on a contract basis through a letter of appointment. This is done for a designated term. An interim appointment can be open-ended but must be reviewed every two years.

The following policy describes the guidelines by which interim ministry is provided to congregations in the Eastern Synod.

A. Congregations in Transition

1. Because of the importance of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, the Eastern Synod seeks to ensure appropriate pastoral leadership for congregations during a time of pastoral vacancy. Interim ministry is provided by the synod during the time of transition following the completion of service by the congregation's former pastor and prior to the calling of a new pastor. The interim period is thus a time in which pastoral care is provided a congregation by the synod as the congregation moves through a process of study, reflection, and change toward new pastoral leadership.
2. A congregation facing the normal range of congregational concerns related to a pastoral transition may be served by an interim pastor without formal training in interim ministry. The Bishop or the Bishop's representative arranges for the congregation to receive Word and Sacrament leadership during the period prior to the regular calling of a pastor through the appointment of an interim pastor.
3. Some congregations in a situation of pastoral transition will benefit from the leadership of an experienced and trained interim pastor. Situations in which this is particularly appropriate include following a long pastorate, a congregation facing new mission opportunities and/or changed context of ministry, a transition following the resignation of a pastor related to disciplinary action by the synod, or a transition marked by distress, discord, or upheaval within a congregation.
4. Sometimes the geographic location of a congregation may limit the choices available for interim ministry.

B. Guidelines for Appointed Interim Ministry

1. An appointed interim pastor assumes the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor as outlined in the Model Constitution For Congregations.
2. An appointed interim pastor shall provide a ministry to the congregation with compensation in accordance with synod guidelines and consistent with the Eastern Synod Compensation Schedule.
3. All interim ministry relationships with an individual congregation can be terminated on 30 days written notice by the interim pastor, the Bishop, or the Congregational Council.
4. The interim pastor normally serves the congregation by covenanted agreement. It is expected that the Congregational Council and the interim pastor will negotiate the expected duties and the anticipated number of hours. Duties will include attendance at Congregational Council meeting, pastoral acts, and crisis response. They may also include hospital and shut-in visitation, confirmation instruction, and other duties as negotiated. Pulpit supply is to be compensated according to the Eastern Synod Compensation Schedule. A monthly log of hours worked is to be submitted for appropriate remuneration and as required.
5. Ordinarily, interim pastors cannot be considered for call by the congregation where they are the appointed interim pastor. An interim pastor may only be considered for call after consultation with the Bishop's office and may not be considered for call at the same time as other candidates.
6. Interim pastors shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor as outlined in the Model Constitution For Congregations.
7. Priests in good standing with our ELCIC full communion partners, the Anglican Church of Canada, may serve as interim pastors but only with the permission of the Eastern Synod Bishop, with the agreement of the appropriate Anglican Diocesan Bishop, and in consultation with the Congregational Council. They shall normally be compensated in accordance with the Eastern Synod Compensation Schedule.

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