

STAGE II: THE PRE-SEARCH PROCESS

Interim Pastor Search Process

WHO: The Session is responsible for the search; it may delegate to a committee. The Session makes a contract with an interim pastor subject to Committee on Ministry approval. The congregation does not call an interim.

WHAT: Interim pastors are called by God to serve in transition times and have received specialized training for this specialized ministry.

- a guide in transition
- a comfort to the congregation during unsettled times
- a source of freedom for the search process for the next installed pastor to take as long as it needs

WHY: Interim pastors help congregations grieve the loss of the former pastor, understand ministry in today's context, look towards the future, and prepare to welcome new installed leadership. The interim pastor may not become the next installed pastor.

HOW: Here's the pathway to an interim pastor

1. COM liaison meets with Session to introduce the process
2. Session decides who (what group) will conduct the search and whether and how far to search beyond the presbytery
3. Search group prepares (with COM liaison help and approval)
 - ministry information form focused on transition
 - job description for interim pastor
 - terms of call to be offered (should be at least at the minimum current terms of call for the Presbytery)
 - Session approves the above documents
4. If search is beyond the presbytery, a complete MIF for the interim is placed on the CLC.
5. Presbytery Leader provides names of possible local interims
6. The search committee conducts interviews.
7. Presbytery leader does the reference checks on any interim who is being seriously considered. Then COM conducts a clearance interview.
8. Search Committee makes choice and presents candidate to the Session where the Covenant Agreement and Terms of Call are approved. See *Covenant Agreement for Interim Pastors*.
9. The signed Covenant Agreement and Terms of Call then go to the COM for their approval.
10. Interim is introduced to congregation and begins work.
11. COM liaison establishes a pattern for building a relationship with the Interim. See *COM Liaison Relationship with Interim*.

FAQ

How many interim names will we get to review?

It depends on the times, sometimes many are looking; other times few. It depends on the salary you are able to offer. It depends on whether you are willing to move an interim into the area from out of state.

When can we start?

As soon as the COM liaison has educated the Session about the process. The search process should begin no sooner than 90 days before the departure of the pastor. The departing pastor does not have to be gone, but is NOT involved in the interim search in any way.

How long will it take to get an interim?

The names you receive from the Presbytery are of interims who are ready for new service. They will be able to be with you fairly quickly. If you drag out the process asking for lots of names, it will take longer. The ideal is to have an interim in place within six weeks of the pastor's departure.

What if the interim is different from the kind of pastor we are used to?

- a. *Remember the interim is for the transition time, not forever.*
- b. *Part of the interim experience is for the congregation to experience a different kind of ministry from that of the former pastor. Different kinds of experience open the congregation up to new ways of ministry. This is especially important if the departing pastor has had a long tenure with the congregation.*
- c. *Experiencing an interim will help the congregation accept a new installed pastor who is neither a clone nor a complete opposite of the departing pastor.*