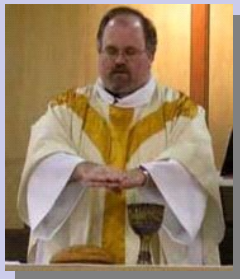


NOTES

Intentional Interim Ministry

The departure of a pastor means change. Things will not be the same as they were during that pastor's ministry to that congregation. Change is the new situation.

Intentional Interim Ministry Specialists are called, trained clergy who bring additional skills to assist congregations in the "in between" times. While providing Word and Sacrament ministry, and a full range of pastoral care, the Intentional Interim Pastor leads the congregation through a process that builds the bridge between "what was" and the "what will be" in the life of the congregation.



Interim Period Experiences of the Congregation

- The period of termination of former pastor
- The period of direction finding
- The period of self study
- The period of search and selection of new pastor
- The period of negotiation and decision
- The period of start-up and installation



In Time of Transition

A Congregational Guide to Intentional Interim Ministry



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A Time Between

The interim period for a congregation is a “time between.” A time between what was and what will be. A time between the resident pastors in the congregation. A time between saying “Goodbye” and saying “Hello.” A time between one chapter in the congregation’s history and a new, yet unwritten, chapter.



It is also a time of uncertainty, a time of anticipation, a time of preparation, a time of apprehension, and a time of hope.

Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide for the care of congregations during the time of pastoral vacancy through the appointment by the bishop of the synod, with the consent of the congregation or Congregational Council, of an Intentional Interim Ministry Specialist to provide pastoral care and other transitional services on an interim basis. These services are then provided on a contract basis between the Interim Minister and the congregation. The Interim Minister agrees that he or she will be ineligible for call to that congregation.

The Benefits of Intentional Interim Ministry

Every congregation in transition can benefit from the leadership of a trained and experienced Intentional Interim Minister. Situations in which this is particularly appropriate include: the transition following a long pastorate, the transition created by new mission opportunities and/or changed context for ministry, a transition following the resignation of a pastor related to disciplinary action, or a transition marked by significant discord or upheaval within a congregation.

Characteristics of the relationship between the congregation and the Intentional Interim include:

- A contract is agreed to describing compensation and specific interim issues to be addressed.
- The intentional Interim is viewed, in part, as a consultant.
- When conflict is present, both value the intentional focus on conflict.
- The Intentional Interim brings a “process” for engagement.
- A recognition of the unique personality and leadership style of the Interim.
- Movement toward a planned closure and termination of this transition ministry as the congregation prepares to receive its new pastoral leader.

An Intentional Interim Minister brings with him/her an ecumenically tried and proven process. This process is designed to assist a congregation to:

1. Come to terms with its history
2. Discover a new identity
3. Facilitate shifts of power
4. Strengthen its denominational relationships
5. Build commitment to new leadership and to a new future.

Intentional Interim Ministry provides the services of a specially trained pastor to meet the needs of the identified transitional issues in a congregation’s life (e.g., conflict, misconduct, or following a long pastoral tenure), while also attending to Word and Sacrament ministry and general pastoral care.

This specialized ministry has been a “calling” for very few pastors and laity in the church. More familiar to congregations are the services of pastors who may provide only general pastoral leadership when called upon, along with Word and Sacrament ministry and pastoral care. Another familiar “in between” service is stated supply ministry, where an active or retired pastor provides pulpit and altar supply, and some limited pastoral care.



Additional information is also available at:

The Interim Ministry Association of the ELCA
www.elca.org/interimministry/
The National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors
www.nalip.net
The Interim Ministry Network
www.imnedu.org

Recommended reading resources:

A Change of Pastors, by Loren B. Mead
Temporary Shepherds, Edited by Roger S. Nicholson