

WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

Church Guidelines and Resources for Navigating the Transition Between Settled Pastors

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness. Isaiah 43:19*

Provided by the
Interim Ministry Committee
Conference of Baptist Ministers
The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts

What Do We Do Next?
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for Navigating the Transition
Between Settled Pastors

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INTRODUCTION

So you are facing a change in pastoral leadership.

You have recently learned that your pastor is leaving. You may be wondering what you are supposed to do, and if you will be okay through this time of transition. We want to welcome you to your new journey as an American Baptist congregation.

We on the Interim Ministry Committee understand that this is a time of uncertainty and opportunity. There can be sadness and excitement at the same time. There is the anxiety of not knowing what will happen next, coupled with the exhilarating notion that the Holy Spirit may be moving you to new places. All this can be confusing. We offer this resource to help.

What you will find within these pages are guidelines and resources: documents, wisdom and processes that will help you successfully navigate the transition time between the leaving of your pastor and the settling of a new one.

Using this material you will be able to maximize the opportunity before you, releasing energy and creativity for the journey God has put before you.

Please take the time to read this, sharing it with others in your congregation's leadership. Feel free to call on your TABCOM Coordinator or any member of the Interim Ministry Committee for any clarification or further assistance you may require. (See Important Contacts on page 75.)

Blessings brothers and sisters on your journey with God and each other.

Yours in faith, the Interim Ministry Committee:

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PART ONE: GETTING STARTED

Interim Ministry, An Evolving Discipline

Procedure for Securing an Interim Pastor

Issues Surrounding the Calling of the Interim Minister
to the Settled Pastor Position

Compensation

Welcoming Your Interim Minister

INTERIM MINISTRY– AN EVOLVING DISCIPLINE

Gone are the days when the period between pastors was simply a waiting time in the life of a congregation, and the person who stepped into the role of Interim Pastor was just “holding the fort” to make sure things didn’t fall apart.

What has become obvious over the years is that there are particular kinds of pastoral and organizational needs congregations have when pastors depart, and developmental tasks they face and successfully negotiate if they are to be ready to effectively choose a new pastor and settle into a fruitful ministry together. Although exactly which needs and tasks will be most significant will vary according to the circumstances of the Settled Pastor’s departure and the state of the congregation, the work to be done by the Interim Pastor is notably different from that of the Settled Pastor.

Congregations that chose to use the transition time between pastors for intentional work on developing their emerging identity, opportunities and resources, and on healing old wounds and addressing unresolved conflicts, move into the relationship with their newly called pastor in a place of strength, comfort, and readiness to engage in a mutual ministry that answers God’s call with faithfulness and vision.

This resource has been prepared to help you understand the challenges and opportunities we now recognize and celebrate as part of the Interim Period. We have drawn from the experiences of many of our congregations and pastors, and continue, with you, to learn and deepen our understanding of what helps to strengthen those laboring in this very special vineyard. Always we welcome your wisdom, insight and feedback.

Adapted with permission from the *Vine*, March 2007.

PROCEDURE FOR SECURING AN INTERIM PASTOR

Introduction

The period of transition between the resignation of a pastor and the calling of a new Settled Pastor, often called the interim period, is one of the most important times in the life of a congregation. It begins at the very time the pastor announces that s/he is leaving, so it is important that the congregation begin its interim work as soon as possible.

Usually the time period between the announcement of a pastor's leaving and the actual date of departure is 30-90 days. On occasion because of contractual arrangements or retirement plans it may be longer. On rare occasions it may be shorter and sometimes even sudden. Whenever the announcement is made it is time for the congregation to prepare itself for the coming of an Interim Minister.

Other documents will outline some of the activities that are central to the completion of an effective interim period. These will vary depending upon the uniqueness of the congregation, but there are tasks that, if done well, will help make the transition to the calling of a new Settled Pastor a happy and fruitful experience for both the congregation and the new pastor. We have come to understand that this time of transition is filled with opportunities for growth and new understandings. Such a period is best entered into by a congregation that is prepared and with an Interim Minister who has been prepared for such leadership.

The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts (TABCOM) and the Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts have been working together to train pastors for this special calling and to help churches prepare for the calling of an Interim Minister.

The steps are simple, but very important. The initial resource person is your TABCOM Coordinator.*

The Procedure

1. Once the congregation learns that its pastor will be leaving, for whatever reason and in whatever time frame, it should be in touch with TABCOM. Included in this resource is a list of Important Contacts. (See Appendix I, page 75.)
2. The TABCOM Coordinator will set a time to visit with the appropriate persons of the congregation. This may be the coordinating body (often called Church Council or Cabinet), the Deacons or other appropriate body. The TABCOM Coordinator will bring a representative of the Committee on Interim Ministry who will be prepared to lead a discussion about the interim period and the role of the Interim Pastor.

* For the purposes of this resource, the term "TABCOM Coordinator" refers to the TABCOM contact who is responsible for placement or your regional coordinator. These individuals currently assume many of the responsibilities formerly assigned to the Area Minister. Contact the TABCOM office if you are unsure as to who is your contact person.

PROCEDURE FOR SECURING AN INTERIM PASTOR (cont.)

3. An Interim Minister Search Committee will be appointed, or otherwise designated (according to the Church's bylaws) and charged with the task of securing an Interim Minister.
4. In the course of this process the church leadership will be asked to identify some of the areas that they think should be addressed in the transition period.
5. The TABCOM Coordinator, after discussion with the church, will supply a list of available, trained and approved Interim Ministers who will meet some of the needs as expressed by the congregation. It is important to note that these needs may be particular to the interim period and are not necessarily identical to the needs that will be identified for the calling of a Settled Pastor.
6. The Interim Minister Search Committee should then move as quickly as possible to interview those candidates to whom they feel drawn. Those whose names appear on the list of approved Interim Ministers have signed an agreement indicating that they agree not to be a candidate for the position of Settled Pastor. Therefore if the Interim Minister Search Committee sees a name on the list of persons approved for Interim Ministry that might be considered for the settled position they should not ask her/him to be the Interim Pastor. All those whose names appear on the list have agreed not to influence the congregation's selection. They have also agreed not to speak for or against any candidate. Documents that the Interim Minister will have signed can be found in Appendix B, beginning on page 35. (Other options can be discussed with the TABCOM Coordinator.)
7. When an Interim Minister has been selected, an agreement as to responsibilities, time commitment, compensation, benefits, reimbursements, vacation and beginning date should then be entered into as soon as possible with the Interim Minister. See Appendix D, page 55 for a sample contract.
8. The time between the signing of the agreement and the actual starting date can include significant steps that will help the relationship of the Interim Pastor and the congregation get off to a fine start. A list of suggested materials to provide to your Interim Minister can be found in Appendix E, page 57.

Throughout the whole interim period TABCOM stands ready to be of assistance. For this period the TABCOM Coordinator is the key contact person.

An interim period can be an exciting time in the life of a congregation and can help point the way to a bright future.

ISSUES SURROUNDING THE CALLING OF THE INTERIM MINISTER TO THE SETTLED PASTOR POSITION

The Pastoral Leadership Resource Team continues the long standing policy of TABCOM, and most other Free Church judicatories, of recommending against the calling of the Interim Minister to the position of Settled Pastor. Some churches question this policy, believing that the person who is serving as Interim Pastor carries all the requisite qualifications, including availability. Even in recognizing that there may be situations where the Interim Pastor has been called and a successful and productive pastorate has followed, the following reasons for the policy are here given because there are many more instances where the calling of the Interim Pastor to the settled position has produced negative experiences, broken relations and damaged congregations.

1. The task of finding an Interim Minister is typically left to a smaller group than a fully named Pastoral Search Committee, and the seeking of an Interim Minister usually involves less research and more dependence upon references, both denominational and from "the outside." While references should always be checked, they provide only a partial disclosure of true track records and capabilities, and are often skewed by limited knowledge and personal bias. The full search process is more likely to offer a better history, and the larger number of persons doing the research and holding the interviews increases the likelihood of an appropriate candidate with broad congregational appeal.
2. The Interim Minister has very specific and identifiable goals to accomplish with a congregation. One of these goals is to identify needs of the church and problems within the organizational structure and membership. Raising—and dealing with—these issues requires that neither the minister nor the congregation be vested in longevity so that the possibility of permanent settlement does not lead to the avoidance of issues to achieve appearances of harmony and equilibrium.
3. Calling the Interim Minister as the Settled Pastor has often been evidence that the Pastoral Search Committee or the congregation, either or both, has not done due diligence to either the process of discerning the church's needs or the hard work of researching candidates.
4. Calling the Interim Minister as the Settled Pastor may reflect the church's willingness to yield its better judgement to the wishes and prejudices of strong voices in the congregation.
5. An "available" Interim Minister has in the short term been able to show "the best side," perform well in the interim, and please everybody, since the congregation typically has low expectations of new directions and long-term problem solving in what was to have been a limited term pastorate. But if the Interim Minister is doing the job of the interim, then there probably will be issues surfaced and new directions indicated. The congregation then will be able to search for the candidate best suited to work with the issues raised, and lead in the directions identified.

COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

Among the many issues facing a congregation as it enters an interim period is that of compensation. The questions usually emerge as “What will it cost us?”, “What can we expect from an Interim Minister?”

These are legitimate and important questions, but are probably best addressed in reverse order and framed quite differently.

First, a congregation needs to determine what it needs from an Interim Minister: what roles are most important, and what skills are needed to assure that the church is adequately cared for during the time it takes to secure a permanent pastor. In the light of important interim issues to be faced, as discussed in other areas of this resource, the congregation is reminded that the interim period is not one of simply marking time, and reasonable allowance needs to be made for time to surface and deal with matters for which the interim period is ideally suited.

Once the needs are surfaced and prioritized, discussion can be held as to how much time per week that it will take an Interim Minister to perform the ministries required.

Churches approach these issues from more than one stance. Some will say we need a full time Interim Minister, and that informs them as to what the cost will be. It is recommended that the compensation offered be no less than that of the last pastor. Some candidates for the position may be pre-retirement and would likely need salary, housing and standard benefits. Other candidates for a full time position may be retired and need to structure their package differently. In addition to these financial considerations the church and Interim Minister need to address professional expenses such as auto mileage reimbursement (usually the IRS approved rate per mile), continuing education, convention and other denominational events, etc. (For more details see the paragraph "Ministerial/Professional Expenses" on page 51 of this resource.)

It follows that compensation for Interim Ministers hired for part time contracts would have to be negotiated accordingly. As with churches seeking full time interim ministry, it is recommended that part time contracts be minimally consistent with the last pastor's compensation, even if this is to be pro-rated (*i.e.* for a part time Interim following a full-time pastor.)

There is more than one way to determine the hours for which a part time interim is contracted. Some churches, and some Interim Ministers, prefer a simple hourly arrangement. The contract simply states that the minister will work an average of “X” number of hours per week for “Y” number of dollars, with expenses and benefits clearly defined.

Some churches, and some Interim Ministers, prefer to contract for a certain number of “units” for a certain sum of dollars per unit, with expenses and benefits clearly defined. A “unit” is usually a three or four hour block of time – a morning, an afternoon, an evening – which the minister will devote to the work of the congregation. Note that not all units will necessarily be “at the church,” as ministers require time to plan, study, and attend professional meetings that may not take place in the building. Ten units is considered full time.

COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT (cont.)

As an aid in determining what might be considered a fair pay scale, you will find guidelines for compensation adopted by TABCOM in the *Clergy Compensation Booklet*, Appendix C, pages 49-54. For the most up-to-date information see the TABCOM web site: www.tabcom.org.

WELCOMING YOUR INTERIM MINISTER

Once you have called an Interim Minister and agreed on the terms of the interim contract it is time for the congregation to say “Hello.” This is an exciting time in the life of a congregation, as you meet and get to know the person who will be leading you through this time of transition. The Transition Team or other group who will be responsible for the interim period will want to plan several activities to get acquainted with the Interim Pastor, and for the Interim Pastor to get acquainted with you.

It is important that the start of the Interim Pastor’s ministry not begin until the former pastor has left. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding your former pastor’s departure, the interim period is a time of mixed emotions for your congregation. In this welcoming phase it will be especially important to acknowledge the variety of feelings which may be present in the congregation. Some are still deeply grieving the loss of the former pastor, while others are relieved to have that pastorate concluded. Some are hoping that the transitions ahead will return the church to its time of glory in the “good-old-days,” while others are looking forward with anticipation to the changes that a new pastor will bring. It is into this mixture of feelings that the Interim Pastor arrives.

Some welcoming activities will naturally be of a social nature. A special dinner or coffee hour, articles in the newsletter, neighborhood cottage meetings and members inviting the Interim Pastor for lunch are among the usual means of getting to know one another. For these events it is important that every effort be made to intentionally reach out to include persons of all ages and levels of involvement, including those persons in the congregation who may have drifted away or become less active within the recent past. This reaching out as you welcome your Interim Minister may also serve to welcome back those who may have become disaffected during the previous pastorate and perhaps obtain valuable information about conflicts that still need resolution.

Other activities will be of administrative nature. The Interim Pastor will need to meet with staff, members of the governing board and church leaders. Appendix E has a list of items that will be of assistance to any pastor getting to know a congregation and the surrounding community. If you have not already passed these materials along to your Interim Pastor, do so as part of the “hello” phase.

Activities of a spiritual nature have a special role at this time. During worship and other gatherings not only the Pastoral Search Committee but the Interim Pastor, Transition Team and entire congregation will be held up in prayer. A wonderful way to welcome your Interim Pastor is to covenant to pray for her/him and the work of the interim period. The use of a formal ritual of welcome during worship can be not only a welcome to the Interim Pastor, but also a recognition of the vital work which will be done during the interim period. You may also wish to use symbols to ritualize this transition. For example: during the first service of worship a trustee could present the Interim Pastor with a set of keys to the church; if stoles or other vestments are worn, the Interim Pastor might begin the service without them and put them on after covenanting with the congregation. Be creative and use symbols that are meaningful to you and the Interim Pastor. During this “hello” the congregation should covenant to work together with the Interim

WELCOMING YOUR INTERIM MINISTER (cont.)

Pastor in preparing for the Settled Pastor and should acknowledge that the Interim Pastor is not a candidate for the settled position. See Appendix F, page 61 of this resource, and Tool 8, page 183 of *Temporary Shepherds*, for sample welcome litanies.

Saying “Goodbye” to your former pastor and “Hello” to your Interim Pastor is the beginning of a journey that will lead to another “Goodbye” and another “Hello.” For it won’t be many months before you will be saying “Goodbye” to the Interim Pastor who has worked with the congregation to prepare you for saying “Hello” to your new Settled Pastor.

PART TWO: MATERIALS FOR USE BY THE CONGREGATION

Characteristics of the Congregation in the Interim Period

Developmental Tasks

Communication

Your Reading Toolbox

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHURCH IN THE INTERIM PERIOD

In Chapter 2 of *Temporary Shepherds*, Roger Nicholson identifies ten characteristics of congregations in interim situations: grief will be present, conflict may be latent or active, secrets may be coming to light, openness to the denomination may be in question, low self-esteem may prevail, lagging stewardship is being experienced, rebuilding the infrastructure may be needed, developing communication channels is vital, ambivalence about change will be present and mixed emotions will be present. Every situation is, of course unique, and not all of the characteristics will be evident in all settings. However, being aware of the impact of the loss of a pastor will be very helpful to congregations and Interim Pastors, informing them as to certain behaviors, attitudes and issues that may emerge during the interim period. Awareness of these characteristics may also instruct Interim Pastors and their congregations as to some pro-active steps that may be helpful in dealing with latent issues that might not otherwise surface.

Grief Will Be Present: For some, the loss of a pastor is like the loss of a family member, and all the stages of the grieving process may unfold. There will be feelings of sadness, sometimes a sense of abandonment, often bewilderment and uncertainty. The inevitability of change is raised, and this is unsettling for many, even in situations where the pastor was not universally loved.

Conflict May be Latent or Active: Conflict does occur in congregations for many reasons, and often the interim situation itself raises issues due to the leaving of the pastor and surrounding circumstances. But there may be many other long-term issues that have not been dealt with, or not even acknowledged or recognized during the previous pastor's term. Early surfacing of conflict will help the Interim Pastor and congregation face up to realities and offer opportunity for resolution.

Secrets May be Coming to Light: Betrayal of trust, not always known or fully understood by the whole congregation, has been an issue for some churches. Broken trust yields suspicion and disunity, not healthy components for a congregation working towards a new pastoral relationship.

Openness to the Denomination: There are few times in the life of a church when denominational connection means more to a church than during the interim period. The search process will engage the congregation with the denomination in helpful ways, and opens the opportunity to reinforce denominational identity and involvement. There is opportunity to refocus on theological and spiritual traditions shared with other congregations in the denominational family.

Low Self-Esteem May Prevail: Twenty-first century culture has not been kind to many churches. Low attendance, diminishing congregations and shrinking resources have led to a lowering self-esteem in many congregations. The interim period can be a time for the congregation to regroup, reconsider, re-image and rearrange itself toward an improved attitude.

Lagging Stewardship Is Being Experienced: Conflict, boredom, disillusionment can all be contributing factors to lagging finances, and the loss of pastor can signal any or all of these

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHURCH IN THE INTERIM PERIOD (cont.)

possibilities. Prevailing cultural attitudes regarding stewardship are changing and the church is not immune. Congregations in an interim situation need to be pro-active regarding stewardship issues and not presume the new pastor will bring in hoards of money!

Rebuilding the Infrastructure May be Needed: The Interim Congregation may need to work on its infrastructure to improve the way things are done. Sometimes bylaws have fallen by the wayside, sometimes ignored, sometimes hopelessly outdated. Bylaws may need to be revised in order to assure that tasks get done, programs get implemented, responsibilities are shared and ownership is acknowledged. Leadership training, task orientation, job coaching and the like are all appropriate tasks for an Interim Pastor and often much needed.

Developing Communication Channels is Vital: Poor communication is a common indicator of a dysfunctional organization. The loss of a pastor often points up deficiencies that were not evident when communications passed through the pastoral office. Open communication systems are important for every congregation and certainly for the new pastor.

Ambivalence about Change Will be Present: Within the Interim Congregation two agenda are operative. One wants things to continue “As always;” the other recognizes that some things must (and will) change. Change comes hard and there are always issues of what, how much, who, when and course WHY? How change is introduced and effected is a major concern for the Interim Pastor as well as lay leadership.

Mixed Emotions Will Be Present: Regardless of how the previous pastor was valued, there will be some in the congregation happy with the change, some distressed by the change, some unconcerned about the change, and some unaware there was a change. The Interim Pastor and congregation have a unique opportunity to excite and enlist members of all of these categories.

Adapted from *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry* by Roger S. Nicholson, ed., with permission from the Alban Institute. Copyright © 1998 by The Alban Institute, Inc. Herndon, VA. All rights reserved.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD

In addition to carrying out the normal responsibilities of congregational ministry, including worship and pastoral care, it is important during the interim period to focus on the following developmental tasks*:

1. Claiming the congregation's past honoring its strengths and achievements healing its grief and conflicts.
2. Understanding the congregation's unique identity, the resources, the needs and the challenges.
3. Clarifying the multiple dimensions of leadership both ordained and lay, and navigating the shifts in leadership that accompany times of transition.
4. Rebuilding connections with available resources within and beyond the Association, TABCOM and ABCUSA.
5. Renewing vision, strengthening stewardship, preparing for new professional leadership and engaging the future with zest.

* Initial work by Loren Mead, adapted for use in many Interim Ministry programs.

COMMUNICATION DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD

Regular communication during the interim period is important in order to:

- Reduce Anxiety - through information sharing,
- Increase Ownership - through participation in the interim process, and
- Enable a Healthy Transition - by engaging the Developmental Tasks.

Throughout the interim period, the Transition Team or other designated group should communicate frequently and in a variety of ways. Use the church newsletter and Sunday announcements. Post information on the church's web page or listserv. Briefs could also be included in weekly bulletin updates.

Important communications before the interim period begins:

Within a month of the Settled Pastor's resignation announcement:

- outline the steps for obtaining a new pastor,
- identify the groups (eg. Deacons) that will be responsible for obtaining pulpit supply and for calling the Interim Minister (Interim Minister Search Committee),
- publicize the pertinent passage(s) from the Church Covenant or bylaws,
- introduce the TABCOM Coordinator or other denominational representative who will be working with the congregation (and the TABCOM Interim Ministry Committee representative if one will be available).

As soon as possible:

- identify the members Pastoral Search Committee and include such information as length of membership, age group, board or committee, etc., as well as contact information.

Suggestions for Communication during the interim period:

1. Introduce the role and composition of the Transition Team or other group which will perform this function. (See "Transition Committee", page 9, *Beginning Ministry Together*.)
2. Be sure that the congregation understands why the Interim Pastor will not be a candidate for the settled pastorate. (See "Issues..." page 7 of this resource.)
3. Encourage the Pastoral Search Committee to communicate brief updates monthly. This need not be detailed, and confidentiality regarding specifics needs to be maintained. A simple statement such as the following would be appropriate: "The Pastoral Search Committee met twice in November. We are currently reviewing the congregations survey results in order to create our church profile. Pastoral Search Committee members are....."
4. Introduce the Interim Pastor. Invite the congregation to a cottage meeting, coffee, etc. to get to know the Interim Pastor, perhaps through the "Top Ten Things You Always Wanted to Know About Your Interim Pastor." In the communication pose the topics, not the responses, as a "teaser" to attend the meeting. Examples: Favorite Food, Education, Pets, Why I decided to come to this church, etc. (some serious, some fun.) The next communication could give the Interim Pastor's responses.

COMMUNICATION DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD (cont.)

5. Educate the congregation on the typical characteristics of a church in the Interim Period. (See page 15.)
6. Present the Developmental Tasks of the Interim Period. (See page 17.)
7. Review the Church History.
 - Have the church historian or other knowledgeable member create a multiple choice quiz about the church's history. Provide answers the following month or at a special meeting or coffee hour.
 - Provide opportunities for brief reflections by members on topics such as: what I value about this church, a watershed moment in our church's history, what our church has done well, periods of difficulty. Use both long-time and newer members to write the reflections.
 - Create a History Time-line, inviting everyone to add items. Promote any activities that will work on the time-line and celebrate the church's history.
8. Reinforce Denominational Connections.
 - Provide information about TABCOM and the resources available to churches during the interim period.
 - Invite the TABCOM Coordinator or other denominational contact to preach in worship and hold a discussion during coffee hour.
 - Throughout the interim period be sure to publicize information about ABCUSA missions and the four annual Mission Offerings.
9. Revisit the Church's Vision. Provide opportunities to review the church's vision and purpose statements. Invite a long-time member and a newer member to reflect on the church's vision.
10. Highlight Church Structure. Spotlight one church board or committee each month. Give an overview of the work of that committee and invite anyone to attend a special "open house" meeting of that board or committee.
11. Highlight Leadership Positions. Each month also communicate information on the various offices and other leadership positions in the congregation. Include the job description and other information about the position.

Communications after a call has been accepted by a candidate for Settled Pastor:

- Publicize information regarding the arrival of the new Settled Pastor and the first Sunday that the Pastor will lead worship.
- Provide details about activities to welcome the new Settled Pastor.
- Communicate information about closure activities and celebrations to say goodbye to the Interim Pastor.
- Provide information about opportunities to evaluate the Interim Pastor and the interim period, and review the insights gained during this time.

A READING TOOLBOX:

Recommended Bibliography during the Interim Period

Many church leaders and consultants have authored handbooks which give insights and helpful suggestions for churches in transition. You may wish to obtain some of these resources for further reading during the interim period.

Basic, Foundational and Strongly Recommended:

Nicholson, Roger S. *Temporary Shepherds, A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry*, The Alban Institute, 1998.

A basic primer for Interim Pastors and congregations in the interim, with insights about church dynamics in this period, and suggestions of helpful processes in which to engage.

Oswald, Roy, Heath, James, Heath, Ann *Beginning Ministry Together, The Alban Handbook on Clergy Transitions*, The Alban Institute 2003.

This is an accessible, comprehensive book designed to help lay leaders and congregations through the transition period from when they first learn their pastor is leaving, through the interim period and into the settlement of the next pastor. Whether you pick it up when you first learn your pastor is leaving, or later on in the process, you will find it chock full of information, procedures and tips to help make this time as smooth and productive as possible.

Supplemental and Extremely Helpful:

Bridges, William. *Transitions, Making Sense of life's Changes*, Perseus Group Books, reprinted 2004.

An accessible basic book about managing life's transitions, advice and insight which is useful and usable in the interim period.

Farber-Robertson, Anita. *Learning While Leading, Increasing Your Effectiveness in Ministry*, The Alban Institute, 2000.

A good basic book using case studies and real life examples to help clergy and leaders be more effective leaders, which is especially useful in times of change.

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*, Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

Like it or not, the interim period is a time of change. Guiding and managing that change toward creativity and a healthy future is the task of clergy and lay leaders in the time of transition. Kotter's book, while directed toward the business community, identifies essential principles that facilitate real change and are effective in any organization, including the church.

A READING TOOLBOX (cont.)

Mead, Loren. *A Change of Pastors...And How It Affects Change in the Congregation*, Alban Institute, 2005.

Offers a clear description of the processes through which a congregation goes in the interim period. Rich with illustrative anecdotes, it follows the steps of change.

Roy M. Oswald, *Running Through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship With a Parish*, Alban Institute, 1998.

This is an engaging and accessible booklet with the do's and don'ts for a minister leaving a pastorate. Congregations and ministers both can be properly reminded of the importance of good, caring and respectful good-byes. While it is written for settled pastors leaving deep and meaningful long term relationships, much of the wisdom is applicable for interim pastors who are leaving their setting, especially if that interim pastorate had lasted a year and a half or more, as most these days do.

Additionally, this book is very helpful when assessing the needs and current situation for the parish whose service one is entering as an interim. If steps have been missed, or only partially attended to during the leave taking of the settled pastor, the interim may have additional work to do in managing that closure, before the next steps of the interim work can be done.

Vonhof, John, *The Pastoral Search Journey: A Guide to Finding Your Next Pastor*, Alban Institute, 2010.

This new resource, though written primarily for Pastoral Search Committees, includes an excellent chapter on the interim period. Topics covered in other chapters will also be of benefit to congregations during the interim. In addition, many topics are covered which have not been considered in earlier resources, such as ways to utilize the internet in the search process. Also utilized in each chapter is a chart called a "Task Cluster." Each chart shows various tasks needed to accomplish the goals outlined in the chapter and will be of great benefit to members of the search committee as they tackle the sometimes overwhelming tasks of navigating the search process and interim period.

PART THREE:
CONCLUDING THE INTERIM PERIOD

Evaluation

Saying “Goodbye”

EVALUATION OF THE INTERIM PERIOD

When a candidate has accepted the call as Settled Pastor, excitement will build and the congregation will begin planning for this new phase in its life. It will be tempting to shift the focus quickly to the future. However, taking the time now for appropriate process is crucial. A vital part of the closure of the interim period should include a time of evaluation.

Review and evaluation are essential to effective ministry by the congregation that wants to move ahead. In order to go forward, first you must understand where you are and how you got there. You must know your strengths and the ways in which you need to fill in gaps. Without assessment processes that provide healthy and helpful feed-back, it is difficult to effectively move ahead.

Many congregations struggle with evaluations because they feel that they are negative, and they can be if care is not taken. However, an effective evaluation process will give all parties the opportunity to highlight areas of growth, things which might be changed, learnings and disappointments. Not only individuals, but groups should participate.

Appendix G, pages 63-72, outlines two processes which can be used for evaluation of the interim period, pastor and congregation. Process I is adapted from the evaluation suggested in *Temporary Shepherds*. Process II, developed by Anita Farber-Robertson, is relational and interactive and is designed to facilitate groups in which people share and hear others' perspectives. See also Chapter ET8, pages 95-96 of *Beginning Ministry Together*, for additional suggestions for evaluations and a list of questions for reflection.

Reflection on your time together will not only be helpful to the congregation and Interim Pastor, but insights gained can also be shared with the incoming pastor. By taking the time to effectively evaluate the interim period, these insights can be very valuable as the congregation moves ahead into the new phase of its ministry.

SAYING “GOODBYE”

As the date of the coming of the Settled Pastor approaches, it will be time for you and your Interim Pastor to begin the termination process. As with evaluations, many people try to avoid “goodbye’s” and the pain that separation can bring. Avoiding saying “goodbye,” however, disregards feelings and can undercut much of the hard work that will have been accomplished during the interim period. Even as the congregation excitedly prepares for a new pastorate, it is important to bring good closure to the interim period.

In *Running Through The Thistles* Roy Oswald explains 5 termination tasks for a pastor leaving a pastorate. These tasks are equally important for congregations.

1. **Taking Control of the Situation** - be intentional about evaluation and termination activities, rather than just “letting them happen.” Plan ways to involve the various groups within the congregation and include all age groups.
2. **Getting Your Affairs in Order** - An appropriate group or individual should plan to work with the Interim Pastor to identify things which should be accomplished during these last few weeks. However, it is important to remember that no pastorate “finishes” everything that needs to be accomplished. Make a list of information, incomplete tasks, persons needing pastoral care, etc., to pass along to the incoming pastor.
3. **Letting Go of Old Grudges** - Perhaps there were unresolved issues that surfaced during the interim period. If they have been addressed perhaps it is now possible to let them go as the congregation moves into this new phase of it’s life. Are there matters (perhaps something that came up in the evaluation) that could be addressed with the interim Pastor? If so, do so now while there is still time for resolution and reconciliation.
4. **Saying “Thank You”** - Schedule opportunities to thank the Interim Pastor for serving the congregation and for the Interim Pastor to thank the congregation as well.
5. **Being Clear About the Reasons the Interim Pastor is Leaving** - As the congregation says “Goodbye” it should be reminded that it was made clear from the start that the Interim Pastor would not be a candidate for the settled position. The Interim Pastor is leaving, not because of a dislike of the congregation nor because of something that was done or not done, but rather the interim is leaving because the task of helping the congregation prepare for its next pastor is complete.

During the last worship service before the Interim Pastor’s departure, involve the congregation in symbolizing the fact that the Interim Minister is no longer the pastor of the congregation. This could be ritualized in reverse of what was done initially. For example: the pastor could return the keys to the trustees, exit without vestments or other symbols of pastoral leadership, or leave worship carrying a suitcase. Included in Appendix H, page 73, is a sample litany for concluding the interim pastorate. See also “A Ritual for Ending a Pastorate,” page 97 in *Beginning Ministry Together*, for further suggestions.

With “goodbye” said, and the interim period complete, your congregation embarks on a new phase of it’s journey with your next Settled Pastor. It is hoped that by being intentional about the interim process your congregation has become more aware of your strengths, challenges and opportunities, been open to the work of the Holy Spirit in your midst, reviewed your vision, recommitted yourselves to your mission, and you are now better prepared to move into a future celebrating your unique identity.

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

A- Application for the Securing of an Interim Pastor

B - Documents the Interim Pastor Will Have Signed

B-1 - Interim Minister Profile

B-2 - Statement of Consent

B-3 - Background Disclosure Statement

B-4 - Covenant and Code of Ethics

C - Clergy Compensation and Salary Schedule

D - Sample Contract

E - Material to Help with the Coming Aboard of an Interim Pastor

F - A Litany of Welcome and Commitment

G - Evaluation Processes

H - Leave-taking Litany

I - Important Contacts

Appendix A

APPLICATION FOR THE SECURING
of an
INTERIM PASTOR
The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts
The Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts

Church: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **Email address:** _____

Association: _____

Name of Pastor who will be leaving: _____

Introduction

Every American Baptist Church in Massachusetts seeking the help of the denomination to secure the services of an Interim Pastor will get that help. We encourage all churches who are in a period of transition between Settled Pastors to seek the services of an Interim and to work through the denomination. The denomination has a list of persons approved to serve in such positions. They have been through training and have the support of both TABCOM and the Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts.

As a part of their training they have become acquainted with the Tasks of the Interim Pastor. They have explored ways by which their service can be responsive to the needs of the congregation and have worked on relating their gifts to the specific needs a church faces in a period of transition. They have covenanted not be a candidate for the position of Settled Pastor in the church they serve as an Interim and that they will not try to influence the choice the Church will make for their next Settled Pastor.

The information asked for in this application is intended for the purposes of helping the Area Staff, and those interested in the possibility of serving a particular congregation as an Interim Pastor, bring about a strong match of needs, expertise and experience. In addition to the identification information called for at the top of the page the following will be helpful.

Setting: Rural Urban Suburban Inner City

Membership: Below 100 101 – 200 201 – 300 301 – 400 Above 400

Average Attendance at Worship _____ **at Church School** _____ **at Youth Group** _____

Existing Fellowship Groups: __ Women __ Men __ Jr. High __ Sr. High __ Young Adult

Other _____

Organization: __ Single Board __ Multiple Boards (names) _____

Staff (Please name positions and indicate whether full or part time) _____

Please provide brief responses to each of the following:

1. How would you describe the strengths of the church over the last 5- 10 years _____

2. As you look to the period of transition between settled pastors what would you like to see the

Church accomplish _____

3. Knowing that the relationship between an Interim Pastor and a congregation will take on a shape

of its own as the two work together name at least 3 things that you look for in a person called to
serve as your Interim. _____

4. Please add anything you believe would be helpful as the denomination seeks to help you find an Interim Pastor _____

Name of person(s) completing this application: _____

on behalf of ___ Deacons ___ Church Council ___ Other _____

Name and address of Interim Minister Search Committee contact person:

Phone No: _____ Email: _____

Date: _____

Please send to your TABCOM contact person (named below)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Appendix B-1

Received _____
Approved _____

the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts

INTERIM MINISTER PROFILE

Date _____

I. Personal Information

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Fax _____ Cell Phone _____

Ordination by: Denomination _____ Church _____

Date of Ordination _____

Place of Ministerial Standing, Denomination _____

Regional Denominational Office Address _____

_____ Regional Telephone _____

II. Education/Training

Institution	Degree	Year
-------------	--------	------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Additional Training and Experience that might support work in Interim Ministry

Program	Sponsor	Year
---------	---------	------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

III. Professional Record

List Three Recent Interim/Settled Ministries (note if part-time/full-time and dates of service)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

IV. Describe up to three congregations you have served:

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Name of Church	_____	_____	_____
Dates of Service	_____	_____	_____
Your Position	_____	_____	_____
Membership	_____	_____	_____
Worship Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Size of Sunday School	_____	_____	_____
Rural, Suburban, Urban	_____	_____	_____

V. Interim Ministry Skill and Experience

Check if you have training or experience related to each of the following.

	<u>Training</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Date</u>
Church Revitalization	_____	_____	_____
Fiscal Management	_____	_____	_____
Church Closing	_____	_____	_____
Small Group Process	_____	_____	_____
Long-Term Pastorates	_____	_____	_____
Cultural/Social Issues	_____	_____	_____
Pastoral Transition Issues	_____	_____	_____
Conflict and/or Mediation	_____	_____	_____

	Training	Experience	Date
Multi-Staff Issues	_____	_____	_____
Following Pastoral Misconduct	_____	_____	_____
Multicultural/Diversity/ Racial/Ethnic Issues	_____	_____	_____
Death/Illness of Previous Pastor	_____	_____	_____
Worship Style	_____	_____	_____
Presence of Previous Pastor	_____	_____	_____
Lay Leadership Empowerment	_____	_____	_____
Organizational Restructuring	_____	_____	_____
Professional Boundaries	_____	_____	_____
Stewardship Development	_____	_____	_____
Federated Churches	_____	_____	_____
Yoked Congregations	_____	_____	_____
Significant Increase or Decrease in Church Size	_____	_____	_____
Developing and Implementing "Safe Church" Policies	_____	_____	_____
Capital Campaigns	_____	_____	_____
Christian Education	_____	_____	_____
Church Music	_____	_____	_____
Evangelism/Church Growth	_____	_____	_____
Children	_____	_____	_____
Youth	_____	_____	_____
Young Adults	_____	_____	_____
Adults	_____	_____	_____
Seniors	_____	_____	_____
Other (Specify)	_____	_____	_____

VI. What is your understanding of Interim Ministry?

VII. Please attach a statement (about a page long) that summarizes your faith journey, your theology, your understanding of church and pastoral leadership. This may be shared with the church search committee and aid them in having an indication of what it would be like to have you serving as their Interim Minister/Pastor.

VIII. Availability and Position Sought Date Available: _____

Area (s) in which you are willing to consider serving: Eastern Massachusetts ___
Central Massachusetts ___
Western Massachusetts ___

Minimum duration of interim expected _____

I would be willing to consider: (check as many as applicable)

- _____ Relocating _____ Solo _____ Small Church
- _____ Part-time _____ Multiple Staff _____ Medium Church
- _____ Full-time _____ Senior _____ Large Church
- _____ Urban _____ Associate _____ Other
- _____ Rural _____ Suburban

IX. Salary/Benefit Expectations Total Package \$ _____ (OR)

F/T _____ P/T _____

Base Salary _____ Retirement _____

Health/Dental Insurance _____ Housing Allowance _____ or Parsonage ____y ____n

Continuing Education _____ Social Security Offset _____

Mileage _____ Denominational Meetings _____ Professional Expenses _____

Other _____

X. What criteria do you consider when discerning an appropriate setting for you?

XI. References (Include one regional staff person).

Name/Address

Telephone

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

XII. Signature

In signing this form, I agree with the following:

Under no circumstances will I allow my name to be considered as a possible candidate for settled pastor at the church where I am serving as an Interim Minister. I will not attempt to influence the congregation in its decision as to the settled pastor and will not involve myself in the search process.

I understand that a violation of the above may result in the loss of my standing with TABCOM.

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix B-2

American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts

INTERIM MINISTER STATEMENT OF CONSENT

An open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position. Therefore, in that spirit, I authorize the persons and entities to whom I have authorized my Interim Minister Profile to be sent to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my Profile. I also authorize those questioned to respond to inquiries concerning me, and to supply verification of the information provided in my Interim Ministry Profile.

I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding my background and character to those relating to the search process. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice.

The search process in the American Baptist Churches further rests on the sharing of Interim Minister Profiles and related information in consideration and appropriate ways with those involved in the process. Therefore, in that spirit, I authorize the sharing of relevant information.

I attest that the information contained in my Interim Minister Profile is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, an interim minister position.

Name (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

Please return to: **Michael Harvey**
15 Spring Valley Road
Worcester MA 01609

Appendix B-3

**The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts
Interim Minister Background Disclosure Statement**

Date: _____

Background Disclosure *

Use of this portion of the Interim Minister Profile is an essential part of the relationship between the congregation and its called leadership. Interim Ministers are here given an opportunity to make a conscientious assertion about their ministry on behalf of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts (TABCOM). Space is provided for additional information. The information contained herein will be handled with sensitivity and in a responsible manner by the Interim Ministry Team.

Name: _____

1. I have **never** been the subject of official disciplinary review by a region, an association, or any judicatory, local church, or licensing body that resulted in the following:

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. Required Growth program and/or counseling | _____ | True | _____ | False |
| 2. Censure | _____ | True | _____ | False |
| 3. Suspension of standing | _____ | True | _____ | False |
| 4. Termination | _____ | True | _____ | False |

If you have a "false" answer please respond on a separate sheet of paper giving particulars of the review, including what action was taken.

2. No official disciplinary review by a region, an association, or any judicatory, local church or licensing body is pending regarding me at the present time.

_____ True _____ False

Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

3. I have never been the subject of official disciplinary proceedings by any professional association, credentialing body or guild that resulted in disciplinary action.

_____ True _____ False

Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

4. No official disciplinary proceedings by any professional association, credentialing body or guild are pending regarding me at the present time.

_____ True _____ False

Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

**The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts
Interim Minister Background Disclosure Statement (page 2 of 3)**

Date: _____

Name: _____

5. No civil law suit alleging that I attempted or actually engaged in sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, settled out of court, or dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired. _____ True _____ False
Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

6. With respect to my driving record, I have not had my license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance. _____ True _____ Not True
Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

7. With respect to matters not addressed in #6 above, I have never been found guilty or plead guilty or no contest to criminal charges. _____ True _____ Not True
Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

8. I have never been terminated because I attempted or actually engaged in or was accused of :

1. Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct	_____ True _____ False
2. Physical abuse	_____ True _____ False
3. Child abuse	_____ True _____ False
4. Financial misconduct	_____ True _____ False

Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

9. I have never relinquished my employment or professional credentials in order to avoid facing or to avoid being terminated because of charges of actual or attempted:

1. Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct	_____ True _____ False
2. Physical abuse	_____ True _____ False
3. Child abuse	_____ True _____ False
4. Financial misconduct	_____ True _____ False

Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

**The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts
Interim Minister Background Disclosure Statement (page 3 of 3)**

Date: _____

Name: _____

10. In my judgment, there are no facts or circumstances involving me or my background that would warrant further review before my being entrusted with the responsibilities of ministry on behalf of a calling body associated with TABCOM.

_____ True _____ False

Comments (add a page if additional space is needed):

11. I recognize my responsibility to update this background disclosure in a timely manner should there be a change of status in any of the issues named above.
12. In addition to the names used on this form, as an adult, I have been known by the following names during the times indicated.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Received by: _____ Date: _____

return to **Michael Harvey**
15 Spring Valley Road
Worcester MA 01609

*Adapted with permission from the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ



The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church with, the help of the holy spirit, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments: to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.

In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

- I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.
- I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.
- I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.
- I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.
- I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status.
- I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayers and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for ministerial and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.
- I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.
- I will personally and publicly support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.
- I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.
- I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and/or consent.
- I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when, in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.
- I will not use my ministerial status, position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children.
- I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.
- I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.

Signed _____ Date _____

The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts

CLERGY COMPENSATION BOOKLET

Introduction

American Baptist churches are covenanting churches. When the church calls a pastor, it covenants to compensate fairly and the pastor covenants to serve faithfully. As compensation is considered each year, it becomes an annual renewal of the covenant relationship.

We as American Baptists have a responsibility to provide for the financial needs of the pastoral staff to the best of each congregation's ability. Each local church determines its own personnel policies and salaries, and develops a compensation package within the budget approved by the appropriate board of the church.

The church budget for a full-time pastor is the cost of all the expenses related to the position and is not the same as the actual compensation received by the pastor.

The following information is intended to provide guidelines to determine fair or proper compensation for persons serving as full-time solo or senior pastors in the church.

It is hoped that in establishing these guidelines, American Baptist churches will:

- I. Insure that compensation and benefits for clergy will
 - a. allow a reasonable, moderate standard of living according to local and/or regional measures;
 - b. attract, retain and support them to be faithful and fruitful ministers of the Gospel.
- II. Encourage initial salary placement that
 - a. recognizes differences in length and range of experience, and
 - b. takes into account the size, location, and financial resources of the congregation.
- III. Promote salary advancement and benefit improvements that reflect personal growth and experience in role, expanded responsibilities and performance.

The cooperation of the laity and the clergy is greatly enhanced by sensitive compensation policies for all that serve in the local church. An atmosphere of caring and trust fosters an open, healthy relationship between pastor and congregation, which all too often can be shattered by misunderstandings or tension over compensation issues. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that annual salary negotiations be carried out with candor, clarity and in Christian love.

Annual Reviews

It is strongly urged that each church have an active Pastoral Relations Committee to facilitate communication between the pastor and the congregation. One important role for the Pastoral Relations Committee is to conduct an annual review with the pastor to determine effectiveness in reaching goals and objectives in the past period of time, and to mutually agree on the mission and goals in the period ahead.

Such reviews or evaluations should be done in an atmosphere of trust and respect where mutual expectations are openly and candidly discussed. Using such a review for crisis intervention or last-minute problem solving is not intended. To do so would be as much a mistake as omitting performance reviews when things appear to be going well. The role and functions of such a Pastoral Relations Committee are described in a video and booklets listed in the Bibliography of Resources included at the end of this report.

Definition of Terms

Proper Compensation: A moderate standard of living in each community reflects a fair measure of the level of income needed for an average family to maintain a moderate or adequate standard in the community.

Full time: The church is usually the pastor's only source of professional income and the pastor is ministering 40, 50 or sometimes more hours per week. The work schedule of the pastor should be healthy for the church and healthy for the pastor. This requires balancing time spent between needs of the church's ministry and the needs of the pastor for family time, exercise of the body and mind, and care for self.

Total Compensation: This includes *either*:

(A) cash salary, plus fair rental value of the parsonage and utilities allowance

or

(B) cash salary, plus housing allowance; or parsonage allowance (if any).

Total compensation *also includes*:

? Social Security offset (if any), and

? Equity Allowance (if offered)

Cash Salary: The undesignated portion of Total Compensation.

Housing Allowance: When there is no parsonage provided, the church provides a cash amount sufficient to allow a minister to buy, furnish and maintain a median-priced house in the church's community. Such costs would include mortgage payments, taxes, repairs, insurance, furnishings, utilities, etc. For the purpose of determining total compensation, it is suggested that the minimum cash amount for housing allowance should be no less than 1/100 per month of the value of a median-priced home in the community. (e.g., If a median-priced house in a community were \$150,000, the church's minimum housing allowance would be \$1,500 per month or \$18,000 per year.)

Once total compensation has been determined, the housing allowance designated in the church budget may need to be adjusted according to IRS requirements. The pastor should provide his or her actual or projected housing costs to the appropriate board or committee of the church. This board or committee should vote on the portion of the pastor's total compensation that will be designated for the housing allowance. It is excluded from federal income tax. If the pastor is audited by the Internal Revenue Service, it is his or her responsibility to document the actual housing expenses. Any unspent housing allowance must be reported to the IRS by the pastor. Pastors must pay Social Security/Medicare taxes on the housing allowance.

If the church is in the process of calling a pastor, an estimate can be made for the amount to budget for the housing allowance according to the guidelines above. The actual amounts for cash salary and housing allowance can be adjusted once the pastor reports the actual cost of his or her housing to the church. If the amount of the housing allowance is more than what was budgeted, the cash amount can be reduced. Likewise, if the amount of the housing allowance is less than what was budgeted, the cash salary can be increased. In either case, the total compensation provided by the church remains the same.

Utilities Allowance: Monies designated to cover the costs of expenses for utilities incurred by the pastor and family living in a parsonage, such as fuel, electricity, water, telephone.

Social Security/Medicare Offset: Ordained ministers are considered self-employed for the purposes of Social Security and must pay the full Social Security tax. This means pastors must pay the current rate of 15.3% on the cash salary plus housing allowance, *or* on cash salary plus fair rental value of the parsonage plus utilities. Most ABC churches assist ministers with this tax by paying an amount to the pastor equal to 50% of the actual Social Security Tax due.

Equity Allowance: An amount offered to some clergy living in parsonages who are, therefore, unable to build any equity during their tenure. It is given in recognition of the disadvantage to such clergy to accumulate home equity that can eventually be used in a setting that does not provide a parsonage or in retirement. The Equity Allowance is considered a portion of Total Compensation.

Parsonage Allowance: A portion of the Total Compensation designated for furnishings needed for the parsonage. Tax laws for clergy govern this allowance.

Benefits: Life insurance, disability insurance and retirement benefits through the Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board, and health insurance.

Ministerial/Professional Expenses: Includes, but is not limited to, automobile mileage reimbursement, continuing education, convention and other denominational events, books and other resources, and hospitality. The church should establish a plan that allows for reimbursement of ministry related expenses, rather than including them in the pastor's income.

Compensation Package: All of the expenses incurred by a church in supporting the ministry of a pastor. It includes Total Compensation, Benefits and Ministerial/Professional expenses.

Cash Salary Guidelines

The guidelines are offered as a starting point for churches to use when determining the cash salaries offered to pastors who are serving full time. These guidelines will be reviewed each year and are included in this booklet as a separate section that can be updated as changes are approved. A minimum cash salary of \$31,064 is recommended for full-time solo or senior pastor for the year 2008. (*For years following 2008, contact TABCOM or see their website www.TABCOM.com .*)

The range of figures on the guidelines is based on the pastor's experience and the church's average worship attendance. It is hoped that churches will also consider other factors, such as education or training, length of pastoral tenure, significant accomplishments, skills acquired in other occupations, and the cost of living in any given community.

Because the pastor is required to be a highly educated and trained professional, his or her Total Compensation should be comparable to the compensation of other similarly trained professionals in the community or pastors of other comparable churches in the community.

Some clergy may not be compensated at the minimum recommended level. Churches are strongly urged to set goals with timetables for reaching the minimum level. For example, it may be necessary to set the goals each year over a 3- to 5-year period, so that each year incremental steps over and above the regular annual increase will be taken to reach the minimum recommended level.

Churches close to but not quite able to provide the minimum compensation package for a pastor should confer with their Area Minister for assistance in applying for a short-term subsidy. They should also consider exploring one or more of the following options.

Options for Churches Unable to Support a Full-Time Compensation Package

1. Reduction of hours the pastor works
2. Alternative forms of compensation; e.g., extra time off, forgive loan given by church or other creative ways to meet individual circumstances
3. Bi-vocational ministry
4. Sharing pastor with another congregation

Figuring the Costs: Compensation, Fringe Benefits, Reimbursements

The federal tax structure is unique for clergy, and the compensation package should be designed in such a way as to maximize the pastor's income. For information on this, contact the TABCOM office or a tax expert knowledgeable about clergy compensation. The following is for illustrative purposes only.

Examples of a Compensation Package

These examples use recommended minimum cash salary for 2008. See recommended cash salary on following pages.

Example 1: A church without a parsonage

- a) Cash Salary \$31,064
- b) Housing Allowance \$21,600
- c) Social Security Offset \$ 4,029 *(total of lines a + b, times .153, divided by 2, equals the one half Social Security tax typically paid by employers. Note: the off-set does help the minister meet the Social Security tax, but is fully taxable income for the pastor.)*
- d) Total Compensation \$56,693** *(total of lines a, b, c.)*
- e) MMBB Benefits \$ 9071 *(16% of total compensation, including Social Security off-set. Some churches omit the Social Security off-set in computing MMBB benefits.)*
- f) Total \$65,764** *(total of lines d and e)*
- g) Health Insurance \$ _____ *(varies)*

The funds needed by a church without a parsonage for full time pastor at minimum salary would be \$65,764 plus funds for ministerial/professional expenses

Example 2: A church with a parsonage

- a) Cash Salary \$31,064
- b) Utilities Allowance \$ 3,000
- c) (Fair Rental Value \$18,000) *(based on a median priced house of valued at \$180,000)*
- d) Social Security Offset \$ 3983 *(Total of lines a,b,c, times .153, divided by two, equals the one half social security tax typically paid by employers. See note above)*
- e) Equity Allowance \$ _____ *(is social security eligible if the allowance is offered)*
- f) Parsonage Allowance \$ _____ *(if offered)*
- g) Total Compensation \$38,047** *(total of lines a,b,d,e,f. Does not include fair rental value of parsonage)*
- h) MMBB Benefit \$ 8,968 *(total of lines a,b,c,d, times 16%)*
- i) Total \$47,015** *(total of lines g,h)*

The funds needed by a church with a parsonage for a full-time pastor at minimum salary would be \$47,015, plus funds for health insurance, ministerial/professional expenses plus funds for parsonage maintenance.

Suggested Guidelines for Compensation for Part-Time Positions

The compensation for part-time positions should be proportionate to the time required by the congregation in relation to a full-time position, e.g., half-time, three-quarter time. Details for negotiating a compensation and benefits package for a part-time position may be complex, depending on the variables of housing or other factors.

Suggested Guidelines for Compensation in Multiple-Staff Churches

The following information is intended to assist in setting compensation in multiple staff churches.

Wide variations in churches and the scope of their respective programs require that careful thought be applied in determining which level (and at what point in the range) is appropriate to a specific position and the individual person. Also, since living costs vary within Massachusetts, particularly with respect to housing, local variables must be considered.

Each church is urged to consider all of the factors unique to its own situation and to reach a mutually satisfactory salary for its staff members.

Level A: Compensation at 70–85% of Cash Salary of Senior Pastor

This staff person has specific responsibilities for two or three areas of congregational life. Requires minimum supervision and the expectations are that prior experience or at least advanced capability are required.

Level B: Compensation at 65–75% of Cash Salary of Senior Pastor

This staff person has professional entry-level skills. It is assumed that substantial supervision and on-the-job training will be needed. Primary responsibilities are limited to one or two areas.

Bibliography of Resources

The Church's Financial Support of Pastoral Ministry (From M/M Benefit Board)

Compensation Workbook (From Ministers Council ABC/USA)

Another Look at Bi-Vocational Ministry (From Ministers Council ABC/USA)

A Productive Partnership (Video from National Ministers Council ABC/USA)

The Pastoral Relations Committee Adopted by Ministerial Leadership Commission, ABC/USA (*Judson*)

Minister's Parsonage Allowance and Social Security (From M/M Benefit Board)

Tax Guide for Ministers by Richard R. Hammar (From M/ M Benefit Board)

For more information or assistance with questions or concerns, contact

The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts

20 Milton Street, Dedham, MA 02026-2967

Telephone (781) 320-8100 | Fax: (781) 320-8105

E-mail: tabcom@tabcom.org | www.tabcom.org

Recommended Cash Salary for 2010

Annual Supplement to Clergy Compensation Booklet

Suggested Guidelines for Compensation of Full-Time Solo or Senior Pastors

The guidelines or ranges below are offered as a starting point for churches to use when determining the cash salaries offered to pastors who are serving full time. Because the pastor is required to be a highly educated and trained professional, the Total Compensation should be comparable to the compensation of other similarly trained professionals in the community or pastors of other comparable churches in the community.

Cash Salary Ranges for Full Time Solo or Senior Pastors*

Cash Salary does not include housing, benefits, or professional expenses. Also refer to Clergy Compensation Booklet for definitions of Total Compensation and other terms used.

Average Worship Attendance	Years of Experience		
	<u>1-4 years</u>	<u>5-9 years</u>	<u>10+ years</u>
0-50	<i>Pro-rated for part time</i>		
51-100	\$31,996-\$41,338	\$34,796-\$45,284	\$37,510-\$49,360
101-150	\$31,996-\$43,807	\$36,796-\$49,240	\$40,510-\$55,410
151-225	\$31,996-\$45,365	\$40,796-\$54,059	\$43,510-\$61,956
226-325	\$31,996-\$48,162	\$43,796-\$57,757	\$46,510-open

It is important to recognize that these are ranges, not exact dollar requirements, and will vary among clergy to show individual differences in training and education, years of experience, tenure and special skills.

Suggested Guidelines for Compensation of Part-Time Positions

The compensation for part-time positions should be proportionate to the time required by the congregation in relation to a full-time position, e.g., half-time, three-quarter time. Details of negotiating a compensation and benefits package for a part-time position may be complex, depending on the variables of housing or other factors.

Suggested Guidelines for Compensation in Multiple-Staff Churches

The following information is intended to assist in setting compensation in multiple-staff churches. Wide variations in churches and the scope of their respective programs require thoughtful discretion be applied in determining which level (and at what point in the range) is appropriate to a specific position and the individual person. Also since living costs vary within Massachusetts, particularly with respect to housing, local variables must be considered.

Each church is urged to consider all of the factors unique to its own situation, and to reach a mutually satisfactory salary for its staff members.

Level A: Compensation at 70-85% of Cash Salary of Senior Pastor

This staff person has specific responsibilities for two or three areas of congregational life, requires minimum supervision and the expectations are that prior experience or at least advanced capability are required.

Level B: Compensation at 65-75% of Cash Salary of Senior Pastor

This staff person has professional entry-level skills. It is assumed that substantial supervision and on-the-job training will be needed. Primary responsibilities are limited to one or two areas.

For more information or assistance with questions or concerns, contact

The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts
161 Prescott Street, Groton MA 01450 | Telephone (978) 448-1445 | Fax: (781) 320-8105
tabcom@tabcom.org | www.tabcom.org

*For the most current financial recommendations, see www.tabcom.org

Appendix D

A SAMPLE CONTRACT FOR INTERIM MINISTRY

The following is an agreement for interim ministry between

_____ Church

in _____

and _____.

1. The interim ministry will begin on _____ .
2. The Interim Minister agrees to provide pastoral leadership for _____ hours/units per week.
3. A full time Interim Minister will be responsible for the following:
 - Giving leadership to the five Developmental Tasks of the interim period as needed
 - Preaching and leading the worship life of the church
 - Officiating at baptisms, weddings and funerals as requested
 - Leading baptismal classes, other Christian education programs and any services mutually agreed upon, such as overseeing administrative tasks, and newsletters
 - Pastoral care
 - Attending meetings and making periodic reports as agreed
 - Participating in evaluation of the interim pastorate at the conclusion of the interim period
 - Staff supervision/meetings
 - Community work
 - Developing lay leadership
4. The local church will support and cooperate with the Interim Minister and will assume responsibility for:
 - Working on the five Developmental Tasks of congregations during the interim period
 - Participation in worship services/programs and meetings
 - Supporting the Interim Minister in the church's ministry, giving lay leadership as needed
 - Providing administrative support as needed
 - Participation in evaluation during and at the conclusion of the interim ministry
5. The local church agrees to provide the following compensation to the Interim Minister (specify):
 - Compensation:
 - Salary
 - Housing
 - Benefits:
 - Social Security Offset
 - Medical/Dental
 - Pension (MMBB)
 - Vacation (1 week for 3 months' service)
 - Reading and Study Time
 - Travel expenses at IRS rate and miscellaneous expenses upon submission of vouchers.

- 6. The contract will be renewed and revised as needed. The contract relationship can be terminated with 30-90 days notice. At the termination of the interim relationship, the local church and pastor agree to participate in an evaluation of the Interim Period.

Signatures

In signing this form, I agree with the following:

Under no circumstances will I allow my name to be considered as a possible candidate for Settled Pastor at the church where I am serving as an Interim Minister. I will not attempt to influence the congregation in its decision as to the Settled Pastor and will not involve myself in the search process.

I understand that a violation of the above may result in the loss of my standing with TABCOM.

Signed _____ Date _____

As the authorized representative /s of the _____ Church, these signatures mean that we the Church will cooperate with the Interim Minister in preparing ourselves for the future ministry of the Church in the community and the world. If there is disagreement with the Interim Minister or a perceived failure on her/his part, we will deal with it directly and in love.

Signed _____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

Appendix E

MATERIALS TO HELP WITH THE COMING ABOARD OF AN INTERIM PASTOR

Introduction

While extreme care should be taken to avoid any interference with the time of closure between the congregation and its out-going Settled Pastor, the period from the agreement with the person being called to be the Interim Pastor and the actual beginning of this ministry can be a time of gathering materials that will greatly help in your Interim Pastor “coming aboard.”

The materials listed below are suggestions that experience has shown to be very helpful. Some of these may have been addressed during the interviewing process. A given congregation may need to add or subtract from it depending upon its situation.

Materials to be Provided

Those Related to the History of The Church

1. Any histories that have been written about the church
2. Annual reports for the last 2 – 3 years
3. Documentation of any special historical events in the life of the church. (*e.g.* celebrations, special mission and program emphases, special fund drives.)
4. Information about any struggles that took time and energy in the life of the congregation
5. Any major building projects that have been undertaken
6. Church’s newsletters for the last 6 – 12 months

Those Related to the Membership of the Church

1. List of Members (active and inactive, resident and non-resident)
2. List of Friends
3. List of Shut-Ins
4. Data about growth or loss of membership
5. Latest photo directory

Those Related to the Organization of the Church

1. List of all staff members (full and part time, and regular volunteers who perform specific tasks) and job descriptions where they exist
2. Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules
3. Organizational Chart
4. List of Officers, Board and Committee members
5. List of Fellowship groups such as Women, Men, Youth, Young Adult (officers and membership)
6. Schedule of regular meetings of Boards, Committees, etc.

7. Master Calendar for the next 3 months or longer
8. Budget for last 3 years
9. Investment report for last 3 years

Those Related to the Worship Life of the Community

1. Hymnal(s) used by the congregation
2. Usual order of worship
3. Order of worship for Communion Sundays
4. Order of worship for special services such as; Christmas Eve, Baptism, Thanksgiving, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter and Easter Dawn etc.
5. List of any other special services that are normally a part of the life of the congregation
6. Indication of who, besides the pastor and music personnel, usually take part in the service. For instance, do members of the congregation usually read the scripture or take other leadership roles in the service of worship?

Those Related to Work and Life of the Congregation

1. Church Covenant
2. Mission Statement
3. Long Range Planning Document
4. Description of its involvement in Mission, both local and distant
5. Identification of any particular needs that the congregation is trying to address
6. Identification of any particular struggles through which the congregation has gone or is now facing
7. Special brochures prepared to show the life and work of the congregation
8. Information about the church's Web Site and its use of the Internet
9. Behavioral Standards Covenant

Those Related to the Community

1. Map of the community in which the Church is located
2. Maps of the surrounding communities from which the Church draws its members
3. Community profiles of the communities served by the church
4. Identification of groups such as Interfaith Councils, Clergy Groups, Ecumenical Groups
5. List of Hospitals generally used by the members/friends of the congregation
6. List of Nursing and Rehab facilities normally used by members/friends of the Church
7. List of other Churches in the community
8. Identification of community programs in which the Church takes part
9. Identification of any groups hosted by the Church such as Scouts, Senior Citizens, Artist groups etc.
10. Identification of any groups that regularly rent the church such as Day Care, Pre-School
11. Take the Interim Pastor on a tour of the community and introduce her/him to the leaders of the community
12. List of church led programs for the community. (e.g. Pre-School program, feeding ministry)
13. List of community programs supported by the church, but not directly led
14. List of other Faith Communities using the facilities of the church

Supplies/Equipment to be Ready for the Start of the Interim Pastor's Tenure

1. A clean desk
2. Access to an empty file drawer or drawers
3. Access to empty shelving
4. Computer
5. Normal desktop equipment
6. Normal office supplies including up to date stationery
7. Stamps
8. Keys
9. Area Telephone books
10. If a large church with many floors etc., a floor plan would be helpful

Appendix F

A Litany of Welcome and Commitment

A Litany for use in Congregations
Developed by the Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson

Moderator/Chair of the Governing Board:

We at ____ Church are in a special time in our history, a time when God has called us to do a new thing, and provided us with a pastor to help us respond wisely and faithfully to this new call.

Congregation:

Rev. _____ we welcome you here to the ministry at __ Church; a special ministry during this our time of transition and discernment. We are glad to have you walk with us and guide us through these times of uncertainty and opportunity.

Interim Minister:

Brothers and sisters at _____ Church, it is my joy and honor to take up the ministry here with you that together we might do the work God has laid out for us, making the way ready for the one who will come as your settled pastor. To the extent that I am able, I promise to help you through the interim tasks, while preaching, teaching and offering counsel among you, listening to your stories and your dreams, acknowledging your disappointments, honoring our gifts and celebrating God's presence among us through it all.

Congregation:

Rev. ____, with you we take up this ministry of transition, promising to be partners in faithfulness. With you we will ask some hard questions, discover new truths, and dream dreams for tomorrow, seeking to be the faithful people of God.

Interim Minister:

My friends, then let us take up this work together, for the short time we have been given, that we might feel the mighty hand of God, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ working with us and through us.

All:

Today we make this covenant, to be honest and faithful, to share this ministry of transition, to give of ourselves, to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly together with our God and to love one another.

Appendix G

EVALUATION PROCESSES

The following pages contain two evaluation processes and evaluation forms to be used in each.

Process I

The first process is contained on pages 65-70. This is a slight adaptation of the instrument provided in *Temporary Shepherds* (beginning on page 185) which rates the progress on the Developmental Tasks of the Interim Period. It is suggested that this process be done in groups, perhaps at final board and committee meetings or at a special meeting or coffee hour. It is recommended that the Interim Minister and members of the congregation participate together in this evaluation.

In this process, the instrument “Evaluation of the Interim Process” (page 65) should be used first. Hand out the form with the instruction to individually rate each task area on the 1-5 scale, providing comments if desired. After sufficient time has been given, the leader should facilitate a discussion of each task. The following questions (also adapted from *Temporary Shepherds*) can be used to prompt responses:

1. What is the evidence that this task was done (or not done)?
2. What did the Interim Pastor do to help? What else could the Interim Pastor have done to help accomplish this task? What do you wish had been done differently?
3. How did the congregation participate in the process? What else could the congregation have done in this area? (Note: use caution to keep this general and not a finger-pointing of specific individuals) What do you wish you had done differently?

A recorder should make note of points raised. It is not necessary for the group to come to consensus about the rating. Individuals may have different perspectives. If there seems to be agreement, ask if anyone has a different perspective in order to elicit a variety of responses. Continue the evaluation by asking for comments on questions 1-3.

After the discussion of the interim process, hand out the second sheet: “Evaluation of the Interim Pastor.” Ask the participants to fill out this form individually. Point out that it is not necessary for them to sign their names, and that the results will be given to the Interim Pastor. If time, lead a discussion of questions 5-7. Collect both forms at the conclusion of the meeting, thanking those present for their time and feedback.

Process II The second process, found on pages 69-72, was designed by Anita Farber-Robertson. It is a process for reviewing and evaluating the ministry of a church, which has been shown to energize and empower congregations to work together for common goals and interests.

This process uses an interactive model, rather than filling out pieces of paper in isolation, since all ministry is relational and interactive. Questions are answered in focus groups, allowing people to share and hear others’ perceptions. The number of focus groups depends upon the size of a congregation. Standing Committees can function as focus groups, or other groups might be engaged.

Rev. Farber-Robertson is interested in further developing and refining this model and would like to communicate with congregations that are interested in trying this approach to review and evaluation. You may contact her at anitafr@comcast.com.

EVALUATION OF THE INTERIM PROCESS

(adapted from *Temporary Shepherds*)

Rate each of the following interim tasks on a scale of 1-5

- 1 - Not done at all
- 2 - Partially done / done but not well
- 3 - Adequately done
- 4 - More than adequate / we learned things that will help us in the future
- 5 - Done exceedingly well
- 6 - Way beyond my expectations

Task A - Coming to terms with history: acting on the realization that the former pastor has departed; that the relationship can never be the same again; and that a new relationship will be accepted.

Rating _____

Comments:

Task B - Establishing a new identity: claiming a new awareness of the church that is independent of the previous pastor. Rating _____

Comments:

Task C - Shifts in power: constructively allowing alternative or new congregational leadership to develop. Rating _____

Comments:

Task D - Rethinking denominational ties: seeing the denomination as a potential resource and support rather than an adversary. Rating _____

Comments:

Task E - Commitment to new pastoral leadership: wholeheartedly supporting the newly called pastor.

Rating _____

Comments:

On the reverse side of this sheet, comment on the following:

1. Did your expectations of the interim period change during the year, and if so how?
2. Sum up what you feel was the impact of the interim ministry on the life of the church.
3. What have you learned about the interim period of a church's life?

EVALUATION OF THE INTERIM PASTOR

(adapted from *Temporary Shepherds*)

Your name (optional) _____

Your position in the congregation _____

In which of the following do you usually participate?

_____ weekly worship

_____ adult education

_____ boards or committees

_____ volunteer activities

_____ other (*be as specific as you like*) _____

Your contact with the Interim Pastor

On average, other than weekly worship, how often did you have contact with the Interim Pastor?

_____ two to three time a week or more

_____ once a week

_____ two to three time a month

_____ once a month

_____ other (*please specify*) _____

Please give your evaluation of the Interim Pastor by circling one of the numbers on the rating scale for each of the following:

1. How clear was the Interim Pastor in interpreting to the leadership of the church the purpose and tasks of the interim period?

(unclear) 1 2 3 4 5 (clear)

2. How well did the Interim Pastor deal with situations of conflict?

(Very poorly) 1 2 3 4 4 (very well)

3. How well did the Interim Pastor relate to other members of the church staff/leadership?

(Very poorly) 1 2 3 4 4 (very well)

4. Rate the Interim Pastor's performance in the following areas:

a. Preaching and conduct of worship

(poor) 1 2 3 4 4 (excellent)

b. Pastoral oversight

(poor) 1 2 3 4 4 (excellent)

c. Administration (work with boards and committees)

(poor) 1 2 3 4 4 (excellent)

5. What would you have liked more or less from the Interim Pastor?

6. What would you have wanted the Interim Pastor to have done differently?

7. Other comments or suggestions for this Interim Pastor:

UNDERSTANDING OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER

An Evaluation Process for Congregations
Developed by the Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson

PURPOSE

To learn something about yourselves and your relationship with your pastor, including:

- The congregation's strengths; the pastor's strengths
- The congregation's areas of growth; the pastor's areas of growth
- The ways in which the pastor and the congregation function as a ministry team.

AREA OF INTEREST

The area of interest of this particular evaluation is to be determined prior to the selection of the focus groups and the development of the questions to be used.

THE PROCESS

1. Identify the team to oversee the evaluation process. If a Transition Team or Pastoral Relations Committee exists, they are likely to be in a good position to perform this function.
2. The oversight team, in consultation with the governing board, chooses an area of interest for specific reflection within the evaluation. Often that area is one part of a more general evaluation.
3. Choose focus groups to participate in the evaluation process. Smaller congregations can comfortably use two groups. Larger congregations will most likely want three.
 - a) The choice can be made in collaboration with the governing board. If it is determined by the oversight team, that choice should be presented to the governing board for their acceptance or alternative suggestions.
 - i) Focus groups can be existing groups in the church such as standing committees, choir, Sunday School teachers, women's/men's groups, adult discussion or study groups, or they could be generated specifically for the purpose of being a focus group of people with mixed interest. It is suggested that these groups be comprised of people who are actively participating in the congregation and have knowledge of its current life.
4. Develop questions
Keep in mind that these questions will generate conversation. Keep them focused, open ended (not "leading questions") and few enough in number that the conversation of the focus group can be kept within a 2 hour time frame, and will be comparable to the conversation in the other group(s).
(Sample questions are attached)

5. Bring these questions to the governing board for their acceptance or refinement.
6. Meet with the focus groups to explain the process in which you wish them to participate. You can share with them a sheet explaining the general process so that they understand where they fit in.
 - a) If the focus groups are existing committees or groups, a member of the oversight team can ask for a few minutes at their regular meeting to present the process, answer questions and allow them to select a time and date for their meeting.
 - b) If the focus group (or groups) is one convened only for this evaluation, a member of the oversight team can meet with them briefly before or after worship to explain the process and allow them to choose a date and time for their meeting.
7. Each focus group goes through the questions recording the answers on newsprint visible to everyone.
 - a) This is a structured conversation with rules for the discussion that allow each person to be heard and each person's opinion to be recorded.
8. After the discussion the group must come to a consensus on the responses to the questions and record that consensus on an 8 1/2 X 11 sheet of paper to be given to the oversight team.
 - a) It is recommended that this consensus either be created at a separate, follow-up meeting, or be initially constructed by a designated member of the focus group to be reviewed and refined by the focus group.
9. The oversight team collects the consensus reports of the meetings and compiles out of them one coherent report that is presented to the governing board.
 - a) It can be useful to share that report with the focus groups that participated prior to its presentation to the board to insure they feel properly represented.
 - b) The final report to the board may include suggestions for future goals or actions that respond to interests or ideas that have emerged.
10. It is valuable for the oversight team to meet at this point and evaluate the evaluation process, possibly generating refinements for future use.

UNDERSTANDING OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER

Sample Questions for Focus Group Evaluations

- What stands out for you about the ministry of this church?

To what extent does the laity provide leadership, energy, talent, and support?

To what extent does the pastor provide leadership, energy, talent, and support?
- In what ways is this church different from how it was a year ago?

How have the laity contributed to this change?

How has the pastor contributed to this change?
- What about this congregation's ministry is working really well?

How does the laity contribute to that?

How does the pastor contribute to that?
- What about this congregation's ministry could be improved? Are there gaps?

What role should the laity play in addressing those deficiencies?

What role should the pastor play?
- Do lay leadership and pastor work effectively together and support one another's efforts?
Provide examples.

Sample Area of Interest Question:

- Is this interim ministry preparing the church to choose and settle a permanent pastor who is appropriate for the needs and goals of the congregation? Provide examples.

or

- Is this congregation implementing its stated goal of _____ ?
Provide examples.

Appendix H

A LITANY OF LEAVE-TAKING

A Litany for use in Congregations
Developed by the Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson

My Friends, I came here in _____ when the church was seeking its identity and direction. I came here for a short time. We knew it to be so; for I was to help you do the work you needed so that you might choose and call a minister who would be appropriate for you. And now you have done that. My ministry here with you has found completion. You have begun a new journey.

We appreciate what you have done with us, the leadership and guidance you provided, the skills you taught, the patience you encouraged. We are ready to move on.

There were pastoral needs among you: for conversation, counseling, support, comfort and encouragement. There were organizational needs and educational needs as well. There may have been times when I disappointed you, or did not come through in the way you would have liked. Forgive me for my mistakes and for any hurt I may have caused.

We had responsibilities as well; to you and to each other. We had responsibilities to show up, to fulfill the obligations we assumed, to speak directly of our hopes and our concerns, and to complete the tasks to which we had agreed. There may have been times when we disappointed you. We forgive you for your mistakes, and we ask that you forgive us ours.

You welcomed me into this community and created space for my ministry while continuing with the ministries that were yours. For that I thank you, and happily forgive you for errors, real or imagined. I ask now that you extend the same gracious welcome I experienced to _____ who will come to serve and settle among you.

_____, with thanks and appreciation we release you from your ministry to us, and wish you well. We are ready to take the next step and embrace _____ as our minister.

_____ Church, with joy and wonder I release you to your new ministry and partnership. May God bless you on your journey.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

NOTES:

