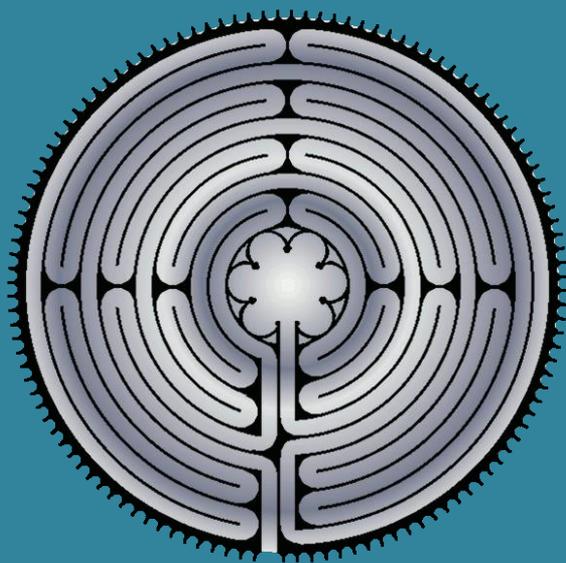


INTRODUCTION TO
INTERIM MINISTRY AND
TRANSITION TEAMS



WHAT INTERIM MINISTRY CAN DO FOR
YOUR CONGREGATION

BC Conference United Church of Canada

2016



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1. The Purpose of This Booklet

This booklet provides an overview of Interim Ministry as it is practiced in The United Church of Canada. It explains for Congregations, processes that take place when a Congregation is faced with making significant change in its organizational structure, its mission, or its pastoral life. It outlines Interim Ministry, the role of the Interim Minister, and the work of the Transition Teams in helping congregations intentionally seek renewal, and move forward as a revitalized community.

2. Interim Ministry Explained

Interim Ministry is for Congregations who see that some change in their congregational life is necessary in order to meet the challenges facing them.

a. Initiating Interim Ministry

Interest for a Congregation to enter into Interim Ministry may come from several different directions.

- Sometimes a member of the congregation will recognize that the congregation will benefit from an Interim Ministry.
- Sometimes the Conference Personnel Minister or Presbytery Conference Minister thinks that the congregation would benefit from an Interim Ministry
- The BC Conference Pastoral Relations Working Group may require that a period of Interim Ministry occur.

In consultation with the Congregations Council/Board the Conference Minister, Presbytery Conference Ministers or the BC Conference Pastoral Relations Working declares when an Interim will take place, and what issues will be given priority.

b. The Reasons for a Perion of Interim Ministry

The basis for suggesting a 'time-out' will vary, depending on what the congregation needs:

- Sometimes, a minister has been present for a long time and change may be unsettling for a congregation.
- Sometimes, the congregation needs a period of reflection before calling a new minister.

- Sometimes, the congregation wants to set a new direction for its minister or ministry.
- Sometimes a population shift in the church neighbourhood is cause for rethinking the purpose and existence of the congregation.
- Sometimes a congregation is experiencing financial instability and needs to consider its stewardship.
- Sometimes a congregation may have disagreements within its membership that need healing and recovery time;
- Sometimes a congregation is not sure *what* it needs.

In any of the above describes your situation, your congregation should consider a period of Interim Ministry.

c. What a Period of Interim Ministry can Accomplish

A period of Interim Ministry for your congregation could bring transformation that results in:

- a new sense of itself;
- a willingness to move ahead with renewed purpose;
- a new energy to follow God's calling;
- an understanding of the congregation's existence within the wider United Church community;
- The knowledge and tools to move forward faithfully in the direction to which God calls it.

Congregations who undertake a period of Interim Ministry will, as a community of God's people, end their journey changed in some way

d. The Length of the Interim Ministry Period

It is increasingly common for an Interim Ministry to be two years long; it can be shorter or longer. The BC Conference Interim Ministry Committee makes the final decision regarding the length of the Interim Ministry, in consultation with the Congregation and its Council/Board.

e. Costs Associated with Interim Ministry

In view of the specialized skills and uncertain nature of employment for Interim Ministers, the Pastoral Charge should

expect to pay an Interim Minister 10% above the Minister's salary category.

Special financial consideration is also required for travel, commuting, moving costs and training.

The Transition Team requires a budget for paper, photocopying, printing, training and space rental (if any meetings or events are to be held outside the church).

Interim Ministry Sabbatical Leave; The Pastoral charge will provide a cheque payable to the Interim Ministry Sabbatical Leave Fund of The United Church of Canada in an amount equivalent to two weeks' comprehensive salary and benefits (or salary plus fair rental value of the Manse as applicable) and the employer's costs. This is to be calculated for each year of interim service, or prorated for service of less than a year. The payment(s) will be remitted to the Financial Assistance Committee of the Ministry and Employment Unit of the General Council no later than January 31 of each year following the year in which the interim ministry appointment began. This agreement must be signed by the governing body of the Pastoral Charge/Congregation.

3. The Interim Minister

An Interim Minister will have experience as an Ordained, Diaconal or Designated Lay Minister. The Interim Minister will have specialized training and will have to be designated as an Interim Minister by one of the Conferences of The United Church of Canada.

- a) **Role of the Interim Minister:** The Interim Minister works in partnership with the Congregation, Transition Team, Presbytery representative and the BC Conference Interim Ministry Committee to achieve agreed upon goals during the period of Interim Ministry.
- b) **Interim Minister vs. Supply Minister:** An **Interim Minister** has specific focus of helping a Congregation move through a period of change.

By contrast, a **Supply Minister** carries out the tasks and responsibilities of a regular minister when that person is absent for period of time. Normally, a Supply Minister avoids making changes and works to provide continuity.

- c) **The Skills of Interim:** Interim Ministers are trained in:
 - i) The process of facilitating and enabling change;
 - ii) Restorative justice: resolving conflicts and healing old issues;
 - iii) Being a listener, a consultant, a teacher.

The United Church of Canada requires that an Interim Minister not continue to minister the same congregation after the Interim Period is over.

4. The Transition Team

The Transition Team is a group of people from the Congregation and two people from Presbytery who work with the Interim Minister to help guide the Congregation through the period of Interim Ministry. The Transition Team is separate from the Ministry and Personnel Committee. A Transition Team is appointed by the Church Board/Council in consultation with the Presbytery Conference Minister and/or the BC Conference Interim Ministry Committee.

- a) **Membership:** A minimum of three members from the Congregation are chosen by the Congregation's Board/Council in consultation with the Presbytery Conference Minister and/or the BC Conference Interim Ministry Committee. The names do not have to be taken to the Congregation for approval.

Presbytery will be asked to appoint two representatives. Ideally, one will be ministry personnel and one will be a lay person.

- b) **Choosing Transition Team Members:** Transition Team members should be chosen carefully, because involvement in a Transition Team will be time-sensitive commitment over the entire period of the Interim.

The Transition Team should represent a cross section of the Congregation, and understand and be excited by the challenges at hand. It is desirable that Team members be willing and able to:

- Educate themselves about the process (the BC Conference Interim Ministry Committee will help);
- Take risks and learn from mistakes;
- Spend the time required to carry the work to completion;
- Be open to change, the need for Congregational change, and joy of transformation;
- Enjoy collaboration and working as a team member;
- Be a good listener;
- Be unbiased and able to identify with the needs of all interest groups;
- Know how to give and receive feedback;
- Be prepared to persist through times of uncertainty, misgivings and personal challenge to create a faithful vision that will revitalize the Congregation.

Not all members will have all qualities. However within the team, the following skills and abilities are desirable:

- Ability to facilitate, delegate and encourage leadership in others;
- Good diverse communications skills;
- A grounding in theology that supports shared leadership;
- Knowledge of the local church and its culture;
- Knowledge of the challenges facing the wider church and of United Church polity;
- A sense of vision and seeing 'outside the box';
- Technical skills (computer; research; writing and documenting).

Be aware that those who serve on a Transition Team will likely participate as leaders in the church community beyond the time of the Interim Ministry.

c) **Contributions of Presbytery Appointments**

Presbytery Appointees contribute to the transition team by:

- Attending each full Transition Team meeting;
- Providing a direct link with the Presbytery;
- Being the voice of the wider church at the table;
- Sharing knowledge, experience, perspective and counsel about:
 - i. Interim Ministry purpose and processes;
 - ii. The choice of Interim Minister;
 - iii. Moving forward in meeting desired goals.

d) **Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of the Transition Team is to lead the congregation through the transition process. Its specific responsibilities are:

- Select and prepare for the arrival of the Interim Minister;
- When the Interim Minister is in place, review the current situation and the goals set by the Council/Board with the BC Conference Interim Ministry Committee, and develop specific goals and objectives for the period of the Interim Ministry;
- Work collaboratively with the Interim Minister and provide leadership during the period of Interim Ministry;
- Monitor and evaluate activities that enable the Congregation to work on the goals established for the Interim Ministry period;
- Be alert for emerging goals;
- Liaise and collaborate with the Council/Board and other relevant groups;
- Participate in the evaluation of the Interim Minister and the Interim Ministry period at its conclusion;
- Remain involved for a period of time after the end of the Interim Ministry to encourage and assist in integrating changes into ongoing Congregational life.

5. Who Else is Involved

a) **The Congregation**

- Members of the Congregation are involved in the process by:
 - i. Becoming educated about Interim Ministry;
 - ii. Supporting the leadership of the Transition Team;
 - iii. Participating in dialogue, discussion and activities which further the goals of the Interim Ministry;
 - iv. Continue to provide leadership in the other communities.

b) **Ministry Profile and Search Handbook for Interim Ministry** is like a roadmap of the Ministry Profile and Search process. All Transition Team members should read it before starting the Ministry Profile and Search Process.

c) **Ministry Profile and Search Process for Completion of Interim Ministers;**

The handbook is only to be used by congregations at the end of their Interim Ministry. The goal of the Ministry Profile and Search Process (MPS) is to make a recommendation about the ministry needs of your pastoral charge, and then hire ministry personnel that meet those needs. This process is in two main parts. It starts with the creation of a report that is a snapshot of the current state of the faith community and ministry needs of the congregation. It finishes with the adjustment (often hiring) of ministry personnel to fit the needs of the congregation. This process replaces the Joint Needs Assessment and Joint Search process.

There is a companion document called the Ministry Profile and Search Resource package. This handbook describes what the process looks like, and has a checklist to make sure no step is forgotten.

d) **The Ministry and Personnel Committee**

The Ministry Personnel Committee continues to function during a period of Interim Ministry.

e) **Involvement in the Wider Church**

For information on how the Church Council/Board, Presbytery, Conference and General Council contribute, see the Transition Team Handbook.

6. Getting Started

If you think that Interim Ministry would be a good fit for the situation of your congregation:

- 🌀 Share the above information with members of your Church Board/Council and Congregation who have views and visions for your church;
- 🌀 Meet with the Board/Council to share ideas and thoughts;
- 🌀 Discuss the possibilities and options with your Presbytery Conference Minister;
- 🌀 As Interim Ministry becomes a serious possibility, find out more information by asking questions and reading further (see Appendix). Especially, obtain a copy of the Transition Team Handbook, and familiarize yourself with the contents.

7. Making it Happen

A tentative decision has been made!
“YES! We think Interim Ministry is a good idea for us.”

When a decision to enter a period of Interim Ministry is made, this is what has to happen:

- 🌀 Preliminary goals are set by the Church Council/Board and the Presbytery Conference Minister.
- 🌀 A Presbytery Conference Minister confirms the decision to have a period of Interim indicating:
 - i. The preliminary goals of the Interim Ministry period;
 - ii. The suggested length of time for the Interim Ministry.
- 🌀 The Council/Board selects tentative members for the Transition Team, advises Presbytery of the Team

Membership, and presents the names chosen to the Congregation.

- Presbytery identifies its representatives for the Transition Team.
- Presbytery representative calls the initial meeting of the Transition Team and ensures that each member of the Transition Team has a copy of the Transition Team Handbook.
- The Conference Interim Ministry Committee will set a time for the Transition Team training.
- The Transition Team begins its work.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Resources

Personnel:

Keep in touch with:

- The Presbytery Conference Minister: (604) 431-0434 or 1 (800) 934-0434

Northern Ministries	Victoria Andrews	vandrews@bc.united-church.ca
Westminster/Fraser	Kathy Davies	kdavies@bc.united-church.ca
Van South/Van-Burrard	Marc Coulombe	mcoulombe@bc.united-church.ca
Kamloops-Okanagan	Allison Rennie	arennie@bc.united-church.ca
Victoria/C-N	Gail Miller	gmiller@bc.united-church.ca
Kootenay	Carol Rogers	crogers@bc.united-church.ca

Conference:

- BC Conference Personnel Minister: Treena Duncan (604) 431-0434 or 1 (800) 934-0434 tduncan@bc.united-church.ca
- BC Conference Interim Ministry Chair: Val Neilson (250) 755-6302 vneilson@shaw.ca
- BC Conference Support Staff/Interim Secretary: Brenda Wolff (604) 431-0434 or 1 (800) 934-0434 bwolff@bc.united-church.ca

United Church Publications

- Transition Team Handbook http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_transition-teams.pdf
- Interim Ministry Committee Policies and Procedure http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_introducing-interim-ministry.pdf
- Ministry and Personnel Committee handbook http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_ministry-personnel-committee.pdf

- Ministry Profile and Search Process Handbook
<http://www.bc.united-church.ca/content/pastoral-relations>

- **Other Useful Reading:**

- i. Roger S. Nicholson, ed. *Temporary Shepherds: A congregational handbook for Interim Ministry*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers | September 1, 1998 |Trade Paperback
- ii. Gilbert R. Rendle and Alice Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*.
- iii. William Bridges, *Transitions and Managing Transition* (Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley Publishing 1991

Websites:

- United Church of Canada: www.united-church.ca
- BC Conference Website: www.bc.united-church.ca
- Amazon.ca



Appendix 2

The Interim Ministry Process:

Process:	Action by:
✓ Declare Interim Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Church Board/Council ✓ Conference Interim Ministry Committee Approval
✓ Call First Meeting of Transition Team	✓ Presbytery Reps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write a position description of Interim Minister ✓ Recruit and settle Interim Minister 	✓ Transition Team and Presbytery Reps
✓ Transition team and Interim Minister training	✓ BC Conference Interim Ministry
✓ Clarify roles and build relationships	✓ Transition Team with Interim Minister
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engage Congregation ✓ History Taking ✓ Naming Identity ✓ Visioning 	✓ Transition Team with Interim Minister
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discern next steps with congregation ✓ Make recommendations 	✓ Transition Team with Interim Minister
✓ Evaluate Interim Ministry	✓ Transition Team
✓ Evaluate Interim Ministry	✓ Transition Team and Church Board/Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write Reports (mid-way and at the end) ✓ Send documentation to BC Conference Interim Ministry Secretary 	✓ Transition Team and Church Board/Council
✓ Ongoing implementation of transition goals	✓ Transition Team members continuing in leadership roles

