

## Part II

### Transition Time

## Some Thoughts on Interim Ministry from an Interim Pastor

First, let us define our terms. Interim means both the time of transition between installed persons serving the congregation and the pastoral transition of leadership. Interims, by design, fill space and make space. They fill space by providing a person to serve faithfully in the pastoral office. A primary task of the interim is to reduce possible anxiety in the congregation by continuing to provide pastoral presence and care. This is important because the average call process takes nine to twelve months.

But interims also create space. They provide an intentional transition between what has been and what might be. They provide a structured break. This break provides space and time for grieving . . . and for hoping. Thus, if the interim person entertains the call or is granted it by the synod, they all, by definition, work against the interim task of filling space and making space.

In addition, if the prior pastor returns while the interim is still serving the congregation, that former leader's presence can also work against the interim process. It does this by filling the congregational space with an old emotional field. Unfortunately, this occurs sometimes because the office of the interim is valued less by clergy than a regular call. This, I think, is an oversight by the Church and is slowly changing.

Thus when the interim is understood as a helpful, regular component of congregational life, and when it is empowered through the bishop's office to fill and create space, the congregation can focus in a non-anxious way on blessing both the past and the future as they seek a new called leader.



## Interim Pastor Choices

Upon the resignation/retirement of a pastor, the congregation council will find it useful to consider the kind of interim pastor which will best serve until a new pastor can be called. Interim pastors are appointed by the Bishop after receiving advice from the congregation.

Three options are available, and they are listed here.

### Oversight Interim

Typically an area ELCA pastor already in a call who supervises pastoral services by supply pastors and who meets with the congregation council.

Serves until a new pastor is called. Unavailable to be called as the new pastor.

Monthly stipend for supervision and specified duties (such as meeting with the council), fees for supply pastors, teachers or visitation pastors. Often the least costly option.

### Local Interim

Typically a retired or part-time ELCA pastor who works from 2-6 days a week in the congregation, conducting worship and providing pastoral care.

Serves until a new pastor is called. Unavailable to be called as the new pastor.

Monthly stipend and expenses based upon the extent of duties and time required. Expenses often include transportation from permanent residence and housing while at the congregation. Moderate cost.

### Resident Interim

Typically a pastor who has finished a course of instruction about guiding congregations in transition and serves in residence full time as pastor.

Serves for a contracted period of time, usually a minimum of one year. At the end of the contract period, the new pastor is installed. Unavailable to be called as the new pastor.

Annual contract which includes base salary, housing, social security, health and pension, continuing education, professional expenses, and transportation. Cost is often equal to, or exceeds, pastor under call.

Availability of an interim pastor in any one of these three options cannot be guaranteed. After the bishop and church council decide upon and pursue a preferred option, it may be necessary to be satisfied with one of the other options.



# Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry

In keeping with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Southeastern Iowa Synod, and this congregation, the following agreement for Interim Ministry is made.

\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_,  
congregation town

Iowa, agrees with \_\_\_\_\_, Southeastern Iowa Synod,  
Bishop's name

in appointment of

\_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's name title

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
month, day, year month, day, year

## The Interim Pastor will:

1. Preach and teach the Word of God.
2. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according to the practice of the Lutheran Church.
3. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs.
4. Give pastoral leadership for meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
5. Encourage us to support the total ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
6. Be responsible for maintaining the parish records.
7. Agree under no circumstances to make yourself available for regular call to this congregation.
8. Participate in evaluation of the interim Ministry at the conclusion of the interim period.
9. Please give special attention to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (continued)

### The Congregation will:

1. Commit ourselves to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship.
2. Receive you as our Interim Pastor, uphold you in prayer, and accord you our love, respect and good will.
3. Look to you to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and rites of the church.
4. Agree that we will not consider you for regular call to this congregation.
5. Provide for a review and evaluation at the conclusion of the interim period.
6. Compensate you in the following ways:
  - a. Pay you a monthly salary of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, the payments to be made in equal installments as follows:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Contribute to the Pension and Benefits Plan according to the regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at \_\_\_\_\_%.
  - c. Grant one week vacation for each ten weeks of interim service, not to exceed five weeks.
  - d. During your ministry here, grant you continuing education leave at the rate of one day per month and up to \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day toward study expenses.
7. Reimburse you for expenses related to our common ministry.
  - a. Pay travel allowance of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Reimburse these expenses in the following ways: (describe receipting and limits, if any, for telephone, office, food, and lodging costs)  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Pay expenses, not otherwise provided for, incurred in attending synod assemblies.

This agreement terminates when a new pastor has accepted the call to this parish, or when it is terminated by the congregation or the synod bishop upon 30-day written notice, and forfeiture of any payment beyond that point.



## Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (continued)

We have prayerfully considered all of the above  
and agree with what is written:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interim Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bishop

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please send completed form to: Southeastern Iowa Synod  
P.O. Box 3167  
Iowa City, IA 52244-1367

Upon signature of the bishop, copies will be distributed by the synod office to: Interim Pastor, President of the Congregation, Southeastern Iowa Synod.



# Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (SAMPLE for Trained, Year-Long Interim)

In keeping with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Southeastern Iowa Synod, and this congregation, the following agreement for Interim Ministry is made.

Our Lutheran Church \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
congregation town

Iowa, agrees with \_\_\_\_\_, Southeastern Iowa Synod,  
Bishop's name

in appointment of

John/Jane Doe \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's name title

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
month, day, year month, day, year

### The Interim Pastor will:

1. Preach and teach the Word of God.
2. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according to the practice of the Lutheran Church.
3. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs.
4. Give pastoral leadership for meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
5. Encourage us to support the total ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
6. Be responsible for maintaining the parish records.
7. Agree under no circumstances to make yourself available for regular call to this congregation.
8. Participate in evaluation of the interim Ministry at the conclusion of the interim period.
9. Please give special attention to:

Administrative oversight of all staff with clear mission direction

Advancing Children & Youth Ministry Program

Developing a vision for the future & lead in that same unified direction

## Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (continued) (SAMPLE for Trained, Year-Long Interim)

### The Congregation will:

1. Commit ourselves to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship.
2. Receive you as our Interim Pastor, uphold you in prayer, and accord you our love, respect and good will.
3. Look to you to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and rites of the church.
4. Agree that we will not consider you for regular call to this congregation.
5. Provide for a review and evaluation at the conclusion of the interim period.
6. Compensate you in the following ways:
  - a. Pay you a monthly salary of \$ See Below, the payments to be made in equal installments as follows:  
Salary/Housing of \$4,761.58/mo. & FICA of \$364.25/mo. all payable the end of each month worked  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Contribute to the Pension and Benefits Plan according to the regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at 11 %.
  - c. Grant one week vacation for each ten weeks of interim service, not to exceed five weeks.
  - d. During your ministry here, grant you continuing education leave at the rate of one day per month and up to \$ 28.58 per day toward study expenses.
7. Reimburse you for expenses related to our common ministry.
  - a. Pay travel allowance of \$ up to \$3,500.
  - b. Reimburse these expenses in the following ways: (describe receipting and limits, if any, for telephone, office, food, and lodging costs)  
  
On site housing to be paid by...  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Pay expenses, not otherwise provided for, incurred in attending synod assemblies.

This agreement terminates when a new pastor has accepted the call to this parish, or when it is terminated by the congregation or the synod bishop upon 30-day written notice, and forfeiture of any payment beyond that point.



## Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (continued) (SAMPLE for Trained, Year-Long Interim)

We have prayerfully considered all of the above  
and agree with what is written:

Congregational President

President

00/00/200?

Date

Interim Pastor

Interim Pastor

00/00/200?

Date

Philip Hougren

Bishop

00/00/200?

Date

Please send completed form to:

Southeastern Iowa Synod  
P.O. Box 3167  
Iowa City, IA 52244-1367

Upon signature of the bishop, copies will be distributed by the synod office to: Interim Pastor, President of the Congregation, Southeastern Iowa Synod.



# Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (SAMPLE for Local Interim Using Retired Pastor)

In keeping with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Southeastern Iowa Synod, and this congregation, the following agreement for Interim Ministry is made.

Our Lutheran Church \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_  
congregation town

Iowa, agrees with \_\_\_\_\_, Southeastern Iowa Synod,  
Bishop's name

in appointment of

\_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's name title

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
month, day, year month, day, year

### The Interim Pastor will:

1. Preach and teach the Word of God.
2. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according to the practice of the Lutheran Church.
3. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs.
4. Give pastoral leadership for meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
5. Encourage us to support the total ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
6. Be responsible for maintaining the parish records.
7. Agree under no circumstances to make yourself available for regular call to this congregation.
8. Participate in evaluation of the interim Ministry at the conclusion of the interim period.
9. Please give special attention to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Teach Confirmation, provide leadership in Adult Education,

\_\_\_\_\_ maintain office hours 3 days per week

\_\_\_\_\_

## Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (continued) (SAMPLE for Local Interim Using Retired Pastor)

### The Congregation will:

1. Commit ourselves to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship.
2. Receive you as our Interim Pastor, uphold you in prayer, and accord you our love, respect and good will.
3. Look to you to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and rites of the church.
4. Agree that we will not consider you for regular call to this congregation.
5. Provide for a review and evaluation at the conclusion of the interim period.
6. Compensate you in the following ways:
  - a. Pay you a monthly salary of \$ 1570.00, the payments to be made in equal installments as follows:  
Two equal payments of \$785.00 each month
  - b. Contribute to the Pension and Benefits Plan according to the regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at 0 %.
  - c. Grant one week vacation for each ten weeks of interim service, not to exceed five weeks.
  - d. During your ministry here, grant you continuing education leave at the rate of one day per month and up to \$ 0 per day toward study expenses.
7. Reimburse you for expenses related to our common ministry.
  - a. Pay travel allowance of \$ IRS Rate per Mile.
  - b. Reimburse these expenses in the following ways: (describe receipting and limits, if any, for telephone, office, food, and lodging costs)  
Not Applicable
  - c. Pay expenses, not otherwise provided for, incurred in attending synod assemblies.

This agreement terminates when a new pastor has accepted the call to this parish, or when it is terminated by the congregation or the synod bishop upon 30-day written notice, and forfeiture of any payment beyond that point.



## Letter of Agreement for Interim Ministry (continued) (SAMPLE for Local Interim Using Retired Pastor)

We have prayerfully considered all of the above  
and agree with what is written:

Congregational President

President

00/00/200?

Date

Interim Pastor

Interim Pastor

00/00/200?

Date

Philip Hougén

Bishop

00/00/200?

Date

Please send completed form to:

Southeastern Iowa Synod  
P.O. Box 3167  
Iowa City, IA 52244-1367

Upon signature of the bishop, copies will be distributed by the synod office to: Interim Pastor, President of the Congregation, Southeastern Iowa Synod.



## Selection of the Call Committee

Most Congregational constitutions or bylaws will prescribe the appointment of a call committee including the number. For those congregations that do not have such documents, we recommend a call committee of between five and eight people. It is also recommended that the majority of the members on the call committee be persons currently not serving on the congregation council.

The composition of the call committee should intentionally reflect the makeup of the congregation, assuring that a diversity of gender, age, ethnic/racial identity is represented, as well as representation from various segments of congregational ministries, such as Worship, Youth, Education, Evangelism, and a mixture of new and long time members.

Because of the many demands placed on the chair person of the congregational council, it is recommended that the chair of the council not be the chair person of the call committee. In some congregations, the chair of the council serves as advisory member of the call committee with voice but not vote.

The congregational council needs to give salary, benefits and compensation guidelines to the call committee and authorize funding for its use in carrying out its responsibilities, such as cost of travel, meals, and lodging for invited candidates.

Prayer is an important activity for the call committee and the entire congregation throughout the whole process. Call committee members are encouraged to commit themselves to pray for one another and for the work of the Holy Spirit among them as they seek to discern God's will for their congregation.

## Installation of the Call Committee

*This order follows the Creed, and the people are seated.*

**P** The following persons, having been chosen to be the Call Committee, are asked to come forward as their names are read:

**P** St. Paul writes: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. These are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability for some particular service to everyone. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

You have been appointed to a position of leadership and trust in this congregation. You are to seek the will of God and the mind and spirit of the congregation with regard to our pastoral need.

You will examine the qualifications of prospective pastors, interview those who appear to be suitable candidates, and recommend only one person to the Congregational Council for its approval and recommendation regarding the issuance of a call by the congregation. In all your deliberations, you are to be examples of faith, active in love, seeking to maintain the life, harmony, and ministry of this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I now ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the Call Committee?

**A** We will.

(the committee faces the congregation, which stands)

**P** People of God, I ask you, will you support these, your brothers and sisters in Christ, in their task, and will you undergird their efforts with your prayers?

**C** We will.

**P** I now declare you installed as the Call Committee of this congregation.  
God bless you and your work together in this ministry.

(here follows the prayers and the peace)



# Report of Appointment/Election of Call Committee

The following persons were appointed to serve as the Call Committee of

\_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church, \_\_\_\_\_, Iowa.

**Name**

**Address**

**Phone**

The chairperson is \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Bishop Philip Hougen  
P.O. Box 3167  
Iowa City, IA 52244-3167