

Interim Ministry Resources

Chapter 1 Interview

When a Synod Council Previously Agrees to Allow an Interim Pastor to be Available for a Regular Call to the Congregation Served (4)

When a Synod Council Previously Agrees to Allow an Interim Pastor to be Available for a Regular Call to the Congregation Served

Sometimes judicatories face challenges in providing candidates for certain congregations or providing congregations for certain candidates. One option being used is to provide the possibility for a pastor serving between installed pastorates to be available for a regular call to the congregation served. What are considerations to be kept in mind in these situations?

For one thing, the **Model Constitution Congregation 2016** for congregations of the ELCA states

“...an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.”

There are good reasons for this stipulation.

Resources

[PDF]a manual for interim ministry - Amazon AWS

No Candidacy Rationale

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https://macucc.s3.amazonaws.com/C10F917B0BCC4644AC69DF0E6D472288_A%20MANUAL%20FOR%20INTERIM%20MINISTRY.pdf

[Images for No Candidacy Rationale for interim ministry](#)

Call Process Booklet EDITED - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Why Can't We Call Our Interim Pastor?

These are some reasons behind the synod policy for NOT considering the interim pastor as a candidate for a regular call in the congregation they are serving.

1. During the time of transition, the congregation often is uniquely vulnerable and therefore develops a relationship based on their need and insecurity. While this can be useful in leading a congregation to prepare for the incoming pastor, it could make for a very inappropriately skewed decision for a permanent call.
2. Interim ministry is unique, and an interim pastor may often lead in ways that would be acceptable as an interim pastor but would not be acceptable to some in the congregation where they remain as the pastor.
3. The congregation itself may pass up better leadership than it is getting, even with a good interim pastor, if it fails to consider pastors who are open to call.
4. An interim pastor will always have a following but also almost always will have those who are not favorably committed to them. If they were to be called to be the pastor, there would be built in opposition from the very beginning.
5. If the decision is made to consider the interim pastor along with the others being considered and the interim pastor does not get the position, there could be hurt feelings that would jeopardize the remainder of their interim work until the pastor is called.
6. An interim pastor has an advantage over other possible candidates who may be considered for the position because they have more visibility to the congregation. This makes it unfair to others who may be interested in the position but who will not have the same visibility.
7. Other pastors will know of the ministerial ethics involved and will know that those have been broken if an interim pastor is called. The result could be a lack of fellowship and broken relationships with other pastors.
8. A precedent could be set which would result in pastors seeking interim positions with the specific idea in their minds of putting themselves in a better position to be considered and called as the pastor, thus greatly damaging the whole call process.

http://www.nwswi.org/webfiles/fnitoools/documents/call_process_rev11.17.09smaller.pdf

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Call Process Booklet - Yumpu

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/53432941/call-process-booklet>

[Images for Why Can't We Call Our Interim Pastor?](#)

Introduction: Interim Ministry Association

The understanding of Interim Ministry has changed greatly over the past few decades.

Older View of Interim Ministry — Filling a Gap. In an older view, the Interim Pastor is merely a caretaker – someone who provides necessary pastoral coverage for a congregation which is temporarily without a pastor. The purpose is to fill a gap.

Newer View of Interim Ministry — Interim Period as a Positive Opportunity. A newer view, based on research from the past few decades, sees the Interim Period as a very challenging and productive period of time in the life of a congregation. It is a time when the congregation has the opportunity to re-evaluate who it is. Typical questions to be asked are, “What is God calling this congregation to be and to do?” and “What does the congregation need to do to prepare itself for its next pastor?”

Advantage of Interim Pastor with Specialized Training. During this challenging period, the congregation can benefit from the assistance of a pastor with specialized training. A pastor with this specialized training is called an “Intentional Interim Pastor.”

Intentional Interim Ministry is distinguished from other interim ministry primarily because it is *intentional*. Intentional Interim Ministry sees the interim period as a unique opportunity for the congregation to determine who it is and what its mission is. An Intentional Interim Pastor can lead a congregation through a carefully thought-out process that helps the congregation to determine its own mission and identity. This process is designed to lead to the selection of its next regularly-called pastor.

<http://www.imaelca.org/introduction/>

[Images for Introduction: Interim Ministry Association](#)

[PDF] [Manual for Congregations in Transition Interim Ministry](#)

Thoughts from the article, "Why shouldn't we consider our Interim Minister as a candidate for the permanent position?"

Adapted from Interim Ministry, Rhode Island Conference, U.C.C.)

1. God's Spirit has someone more suitable in mind!
2. The Interim has a leading advantage over other persons who might be interested in the vacancy. This raises a question of fairness of all prospective candidates.
3. While the Interim may be favorable to most members—some may have developed some dislikes. This raises the concern about a built in resistance right from the start.
4. If the Interim is considered alongside other candidates and then not chosen, this could cause hurt and also a "Lame Duck" conclusion of the Interim's pastorate.
5. The essential tasks that need to be addressed during an interim period may not get the attention that they really need. For example, calling the Interim might interfere with doing the necessary grief work regarding the loss of a former pastor. Also, an Interim Pastor may need to do some things in the interim period that he/she would not do if anticipating the roles as the "permanent, settled pastor."
6. Such a practice could put into motion the idea that Interim Ministry is just a stepping stone in the call process.
7. Calling a trained interim specialist and his/her acceptance would remove this person from the small pool of people who are trained and able to serve in this capacity as an interim.
8. The Interim Pastor is a member of a network of people who have mutually agreed to this principle. To accept such a call would be perceived as the Interim going against his/her world.

<http://milwaukeeesnynod.org/download/administration/InterimMinistryManual.pdf>

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[Images for Manual for Congregations in Transition Interim Ministry](#)

Mistakes Churches Make During an Interim Ministry – Parish Paper

[Deciding if the interim can be a candidate for permanent pastor.](#) Possibly no other issue proves to be a bigger obstacle. Some denominations prohibit an interim from becoming the regularly called, permanent pastor. Other denominations have loosened the restriction and advise congregations on a case-by-case basis. Regardless, the initial contract or covenant should clearly state whether the interim pastoral position is open for a permanent call or closed to a permanent call.

[The Parish Paper » Mistakes Churches Make During an Interim Ministry](#)

<https://kocucc.org/resources/the-parish-paper/mistakes-churches-make-during-an-interim-ministry/>

[Images for Mistakes Churches Make During an Interim Ministry – Parish Paper Deciding if the interim can be a candidate for permanent pastor.](#)

<https://www.ctucc.org/blogdetail/mistakes-churches-make-during-an-interim-ministry-9639138>

<http://www.wcucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2017-11-Mistakes-churches-make-during-interim-ministry.pdf>

<http://www.wcucc.org/resource-center/church-management/parish-paper/> Mistakes Churches Make During an Interim Ministry – November 2017

<https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/43/19601>

<https://www.theparishpaper.com/free-resources>

<http://www.wisconsinumc.org/connections/conference-news/the-parish-paper>

<http://www.hcucc.org/the-parish-paper>

<https://www.theparishpaper.com/back-issue-index> Back Issue Index | The Parish Paper

[DOC] [Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository](#)

Chapter 9.

ROSTERED MINISTER

*C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, [an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.](#)

<https://www.elca.org/constitution> 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations

<https://download.elca.org> > ELCA Resource Repository > Model Constitution

<http://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>

[Images for Model Constitution for Congregations 2019 - ELCA Resource Repository Chapter 9. ROSTERED MINISTER](#)

Pastoral Leadership Transition Process ~ A Guide for Lay Leaders Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA

Best Practices of Interim Ministry – The Role of the Interim Pastor

6. [Not Available for Call.](#) The interim pastor will never be available for call as the next regularly-called pastor. This protects the ability of the interim pastor to do the tasks of an interim pastor properly, without regard to short-range perceptions. It also protects the integrity of the Call Process. It is unfair to other candidates to be compared to an interim pastor who has a large advantage by virtue of being already in the congregation.

[PDF] [Pastoral Leadership Transition Process-A Guide for Lay Leaders-2nd](#)

<https://ministrylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pastoral-Transition-A-Guide-for-Lay-Leaders-Edition-3.2-7-7-2013.pdf> Page 18

[Images for interim pastor will never be available for call as the next regularly-called pastor](#)

Pastors of transition - Living Lutheran

Interim pastors agree not to remain in the congregation following their service and are expected to urge congregations to make changes quickly rather than over a period of several years.

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/2018/10/pastors-of-transition/>

[https://www.ggdigitalpublishing.com/publication/?i=525634#\(%22issue_id%22:525634,%22page%22:24\)](https://www.ggdigitalpublishing.com/publication/?i=525634#(%22issue_id%22:525634,%22page%22:24))

[Images for Pastors of transition - Living Lutheran](#)

[Images for interim pastors agree not to remain in the congregation](#)

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/author/charles-m-austin/>

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/contact-us/>

[PDF] Rationale for Interim Pastor NOT Becoming Candidate for Call

A question is often raised by a congregation and/or a call committee in words such as: "Why is it not a good idea for a congregation to consider calling its interim pastor to be the next permanent/settled pastor for our congregation?" From the experience of those who have served as interim pastors and those who have studied the issues involved in interim ministry, the following reasons provide the answer:

A. Interim ministry is unique. There are specific tasks to accomplish during the interim that work at rebuilding. An interim pastor often leads in ways that are acceptable during an interim period but may not be as acceptable to some in the congregation were s/he to remain as settled pastor. In fact, interim pastors are appointed for the specific needs of the congregation during transition, and those needs are not necessarily the same when the congregation is ready for a settled pastor.

B. Because the interim pastor has more visibility and has developed relationships in the congregation, an interim pastor has an advantage in access over other possible pastoral candidates who may be more appropriate for the call.

C. An interim pastor will always have a following but will often have those who are not favorably committed to him or her. If the interim pastor were called, there would be built-in opposition from the beginning.

D. If the decision is made to consider the interim pastor along with other pastoral candidates, and the interim pastor is not recommended for the call, there could easily be hurt feelings that could jeopardize either the remainder of the interim work, or the start-up of the settled pastor.

E. The congregation itself may pass up better leadership for that stage of its life if it fails to consider a larger number of candidates who have gifts to bring.

Therefore, the Covenant for Interim Ministry expressly states that the interim pastor will not make him/herself available for call, and that the congregation agrees not to attempt to call the interim pastor. When the interim pastor is introduced to the congregation, it should be made clear that the work of an interim pastor is distinctly different from that of a settled pastor, and the interim pastor is not available for call in that place. Since members may naturally form an attachment to the interim pastor, it is often necessary for both the pastor and congregational leaders to remind members that issuing a call to the interim pastor is not permitted under the interim ministry covenant.

<http://css-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/step-1-rationale-for-interim-pastor-not-becoming-a-candidate.pdf>

[Images for Rationale for Interim Pastor NOT Becoming Candidate for Call](#)

Seven Common Mistakes Churches Make When They Have an Interim Pastor – ThomRainer.com

1. **The church allows the interim pastor to be a candidate for pastor.** I know. I will get some pushback here. But I have seen so many disasters befall a church when the person in the interim pulpit gets favored status. The downside outweighs the benefits.

<http://thomrainer.com/2017/04/seven-common-mistakes-churches-make-interim-pastor/>

[Images for Seven Common Mistakes Churches Make When They Have an Interim Pastor – ThomRainer.com 1. The church allows the interim pastor to be a candidate for pastor.](#)

[PDF] The Interim Period - Cbnw.org

Possible dangers of the Interim Period

Interims can create several potential problems that the leadership must be aware of and avert if at all possible:

1. An interim pastor may win the hearts of a segment of the congregation and there may be pressure to call the Interim as Senior Pastor. It is best to establish a policy that the **interim will not be considered by the Search committee as a candidate.**
2. In most cases, if a staff member is selected as the Interim, he should agree to leave before the new Pastor arrives.
3. The Interim should not attempt to set a new direction for the church ministry, except in coordination with CBNW and the local Church.

<https://www.cbnw.org/resources/placement/docs/interimPeriod.pdf>

[Images for Possible dangers of the Interim Ministry Period](#)

What do you say to an interim pastor who wants the permanent job?

Interim pastors face enough **career danger** as is. At Transition Ministries Group we have a settled policy that an **interim pastor is never a candidate** for the settled position. In fact, it is written into our **contract for employment**.

<https://www.turnaroundpastor.com/what-do-you-say-to-an-interim-pastor-who-wants-the-permanent-job/>

[Images for What do you say to an interim pastor who wants the permanent job?](#)

<https://www.turnaroundpastor.com/9-reasons-why-interim-pastors-shouldnt-become-settled-pastors/>

[Images for reasons-why-interim-pastors-should-not-become-settled-pastors](#)

For a second thing, the **Model Constitution Congregation 2016** for congregations of the ELCA allows

"Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council..."

In other words, the Synod Council must previously agree that an interim pastor is available for a regular call to the congregation served. The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin now makes the following allowance for transitional pastoral leadership:

• Term Call Pastor: A pastor who is called by the congregation for a specific period of time renewable if the congregation, pastor and synod agree. This call can be changed to a regular call at completion of the term.

[PDF] [The Call Process - Amazon S3](#)

Transitional Pastoral Leadership

- Bridge Pastor: A pastor who is contracted on a short-term basis to provide Word and Sacrament ministry (i.e. preaching and worship leadership) and provide pastoral care prior to/or after the work of an interim pastor.
- Interim Pastor: A pastor who is called through the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and has specific training to guide congregations through the transition process due to a pastoral vacancy.
- Redevelopment Pastor: A pastor who is specially trained with a specific set of skills to work with a specific congregation whose direction in mission and focus have changed due to a changing neighborhood or declining membership.
- Term Call Pastor: A pastor who is called by the congregation for a specific period of time renewable if the congregation, pastor and synod agree. This call can be changed to a regular call at completion of the term.

[Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Congregational Vacancies](#) Congregations in Transition: Moving into the Future

<http://nswi.org/congregational-vacancies> CALL PROCESS MANUAL

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/Call_Process_Booklet_2016.pdf

[Images for Congregations in Transition: Moving into the Future](#)

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I can understand how this process might be used to provide a candidate for a setting that might not otherwise attract a slate of candidates. But what about providing a setting for a candidate who is geographically restricted, for instance, or who cannot receive a call otherwise and then including that term call pastor as a part of the slate of candidates? To me, this course of action is fraught with difficulties, many of which are outlined above as to why an interim pastor is not to be available for call. Why would other candidates want to interview if they knew they were going up against a term call pastor in place? Why risk second thoughts either way? Some who want the term call pastor to stay may resent that another candidate was chosen. Some on the Call Committee and in the congregation may want another candidate but feel pressure to select the term call pastor. From my vantage point in these situations it would make more sense to decide up or down on the term call pastor to begin with rather than including the term call pastor as part of the slate of candidates.