

Introducing Interim Ministry

A Process of Change for Congregations

February 2010



The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

Introducing Interim Ministry
A Process of Change for Congregations



Copyright © 2010
The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

The content of this resource is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence.



To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include the United Church copyright notice and the Creative Commons licence.

All biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Care has been taken to trace ownership of copyright material contained in this text. The publisher will gratefully accept any information that will enable it to rectify any reference or credit in subsequent printings.

The Human Resources Unit gratefully acknowledges B.C. Conference for creating *Introducing Interim Ministry and Transition Teams: Find Out What Interim Ministry Can Do for Your Congregation* (2008), on which this resource is based.

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, ON
Canada M8X 2Y4
1-800-268-3781
www.united-church.ca



Supported by the
Mission and Service Fund

Design & Layout: Diane Renault-Collicott, Graphics and Print

Contents

Interim Ministry: A Process of Change.....	5
Who Initiates Interim Ministry? Why?.....	5
What Can Interim Ministry Accomplish?.....	5
How Long Does It Take?.....	6
What Does It Cost?.....	6
The Interim Minister	7
The Transition Team	8
Membership	8
Congregational Members.....	8
Presbytery Appointees	9
Transition Teams Responsibilities	9
Other Roles	10
The Congregation.....	10
The Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC)	10
The Joint Search Committee (JSC).....	10
The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee.....	10
The Wider Church	10
Making It Happen	11
Initial Steps	11
Appendixes	
1. Resources	12
2. Glossary	13

This booklet, intended for congregations and presbyteries, provides an overview of Interim Ministry as it is practised in The United Church of Canada.

For a detailed description of each of the tasks of a Transition Team, see *Guidelines for Transition Teams: Roles and Responsibilities during Interim Ministry* (2010), available from UCRD or www.united-church.ca/handbooks.

What Interim Ministers Say About Change...

- ☞ *People must be uncomfortable enough to want to change; but comfortable enough to change.*
- ☞ *Change has a lot to do with identity: if you know who you are, then you can see who you want to be.*
- ☞ *Gossip and rumour are just as influential as the truth. So are secrets. They must all be opened up.*
- ☞ *Wanting to heal is the beginning of change.*
- ☞ *Validate the down-side: accept that it is what it is.*
- ☞ *Use history to open the secrets and free the truth.*
- ☞ *Be a change agent in a joyful way: count blessings and use them.*
- ☞ *Respond to hurt as hurt—not as a problem to be solved.*
- ☞ *Provide people with the language to help them talk about faith things and identity.*
- ☞ *People will change if change leads them where they want to go.*
- ☞ *Change never stops; what stops is making the necessary transitions.*
- ☞ *People don't want to be changed; they want to be blessed.*
- ☞ *The people who lead transitions also need support.*

Interim Ministry: A Process of Change

Interim Ministry is for congregations that see that some change in their congregational life is necessary to meet the challenges they are facing. Congregations that undertake a period of Interim Ministry will, as a community of God's people, end their journey changed in some way.

Interim Ministry is a way for a congregation to take an intentional "time out" to seek renewal and make a significant change in its organizational structure, its mission, or its pastoral life. This booklet outlines the process of Interim Ministry, the role of the Interim Minister, and the work of Transition Teams in helping a congregation move forward as a revitalized community.

Who Initiates Interim Ministry? Why?

Presbytery, in consultation with the official board (or equivalent), decides when an Interim Ministry will take place in a congregation and what issues will be given priority.

The initial interest in an Interim Ministry may come from one of several directions:

- members of the official board (or equivalent) and/or other congregational leaders may recognize that changes in congregational life are necessary
- a Joint Needs Assessment Committee, in its deliberations, may decide that an Interim Ministry is necessary
- the pastoral relations committee of presbytery may see the necessity of congregational self-study

Your congregation might consider a period of Interim Ministry if

- there are major changes in the demographics of the congregation or in its surrounding community
- the congregation is struggling to deal with the loss of a beloved minister
- the congregation's finances are proving inadequate to support congregational life
- disagreements and tension permeate congregational life and block effective decision-making

What Can Interim Ministry Accomplish?

A period of Interim Ministry will bring change. Your congregation may gain

- a renewed sense of itself and the relevance of its mission
- new energy, plus the knowledge and skills to make decisions about its future
- discernment of God's call into new life, and renewed faithfulness and confidence to follow it
- an understanding of the congregation's identity within the wider United Church community

How Long Does It Take?

An Interim Ministry is typically two years long, but it can be shorter or longer. Presbytery decides the length of the Interim Ministry, in consultation with the congregation and its official board (or equivalent).

What Does It Cost?

Interim Ministers have specialized skills, and must make special adjustments to deal with short-term assignments and possible gaps between appointments. Therefore the pastoral charge should expect to pay an Interim Minister 10 percent above the applicable salary category. Presbytery and the Transition Team may also have to consider extra compensation for moving, commuting, or other extraordinary costs. The Transition Team itself will also need a small budget.

The Interim Minister

An Interim Minister will have experience as an Ordained, Diaconal, or Designated Lay Minister. He or she will have been designated as an Interim Minister by one of the Conferences of the United Church.

Interim Ministers are specially trained in

- facilitating and enabling change
- restorative justice: resolving conflicts and healing old issues
- being a listener, a consultant, a teacher

The Interim Minister works in partnership with the congregation, Transition Team, and presbytery to achieve agreed-upon goals during the interim period. By United Church policy, the Interim Minister does not continue to minister to the congregation after the interim period is over.

Interim Ministry is different from Supply Ministry. An Interim Minister has the specific focus of helping a congregation move through a period of change. A Supply Minister, in contrast, carries out the responsibilities of a regular minister to provide continuity when the minister is absent for a period and normally avoids making changes.

The Transition Team

A Transition Team is a group of three to five people from the congregation and up to two people from the presbytery who work with the Interim Minister to help guide the congregation through the period of Interim Ministry. The Transition Team is appointed jointly by the official board (or equivalent) and presbytery, and is separate from the Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee.

Membership

The congregation's official board (or equivalent), in consultation with the presbytery, chooses at least three members of the congregation to be on the Transition Team. Their names are taken to the congregation for approval. Presbytery appoints one or two representatives; ideally, one ministry personnel and one layperson.

Congregational Members

Transition Team members should be chosen carefully, because involvement in a Transition Team will be a time-intensive commitment over the entire period of Interim Ministry. As well, those who serve on a Transition Team will likely participate as leaders in the church community beyond the interim period.

The Transition Team should represent a cross-section of the congregation, understand the challenges ahead, and be excited by them. All must be members of the congregation, and ideally the group will include some of the congregation's key leaders. Members of the M&P Committee may not serve on the Transition Team.

Team members should be willing to

- educate themselves about the process, with the help of presbytery representatives and the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee (or equivalent)
- take account of differing viewpoints and convictions, and accept challenges to their own biases as they seek the best steps for the congregation
- research possibilities and think outside the box when seeking solutions
- persist through times of uncertainty, misgivings, and personal challenge to create a faithful vision
- work as members of a team, i.e., be able to listen well, give and receive feedback, share risks and learn from mistakes, and co-operate to get a job done
- spend the time required to see the work carried to completion

Within the team, the following knowledge and skills are desirable:

- diverse communication and public presentation skills
- ability to facilitate, delegate, and encourage leadership in others
- ability to inspire faith and hope during transition and change
- technical skills, e.g., research, writing, computer, Internet
- knowledge of the local church and its culture
- knowledge of the challenges facing the wider church, and of United Church polity
- understanding of the Christian story as it lives in the present

Presbytery Appointees

Presbytery appointees contribute to the transition process by

- attending each 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
 - Interim Ministry purposes and processes
 - the choice of Interim Minister
 - moving forward in meeting desired goals

Transition Team Responsibilities

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

- select the Interim Minister and prepare for his or her arrival
- with the Interim Minister in place, review the current situation and the original goals set by the official board (or equivalent) and presbytery, and develop specific objectives to achieve the goals during 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 period
- be alert to emerging goals
- liaise and collaborate with the official board (or equivalent) and other relevant groups
- participate in the evaluation of the Interim Minister and Interim Ministry at its conclusion

The Transition Team is dissolved at the end of the Interim Ministry. Its members may remain in other leadership positions for a period of time following the Interim Ministry to assist in integrating changes into ongoing congregational life.

Other Roles

The Congregation

Members of the congregation are involved in the interim process by

- becoming educated about Interim Ministry
- supporting the leadership of the Transition Team
- participating in dialogue, discussion, and activities that further the goals of the Interim Ministry
- continuing to provide leadership in other congregational committees

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC)

If a Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) was in place when the Interim Minister was appointed, that JNAC is dissolved and a Transition Team is formed. Once the Interim Ministry is nearing completion and if new ministerial staff are indicated, the Transition Team recommends to presbytery when a new JNAC may be formed.

The Joint Search Committee (JSC)

A Joint Search Committee is not involved in the selection of an Interim Minister, but will be needed to conduct a search if new ministerial staff are called for.

The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee

The Ministry and Personnel Committee continues to function during the Interim Ministry, although the Transition Team has direct responsibility for the Interim Minister.

The Wider Church

For details on the roles of the congregation's official board (or equivalent), presbytery, Conference, and General Council contribute, see *Guidelines for Transition Teams: Roles and Responsibilities during Interim Ministry* (2009).

Making It Happen

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

- discuss the information in this booklet with members and leaders of the congregation and with the official board (or equivalent)
- discuss the possibilities and options with your presbytery representative and the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee

As Interim Ministry becomes a serious possibility, find out more by asking questions and reading further (see appendix 1, Resources).

Initial Steps

When a decision is made to enter a period of Interim Ministry, the following steps take place:

1. The church's official board (or equivalent) and presbytery set preliminary goals.
2. Presbytery confirms the decision to have a period of Interim Ministry, indicating
 - the preliminary goals of the Interim Ministry period
 - the suggested length of time for the Interim Ministry
3. In consultation with presbytery, the official board (or equivalent) selects members for the Transition Team and presents the team to the congregation.
4. Presbytery identifies its representatives for the Transition Team.
5. The presbytery representative calls the initial meeting of the Transition Team and ensures that each member of the Transition Team has a copy of *Guidelines for Transition Teams*.
6. The Transition Team begins its work.

Appendix 1: Resources

Contacts

- Chair, Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee
or Presbytery Pastoral Relations Minister
c/o the presbytery in which the pastoral charge is located
- Conference Personnel Minister
or Conference Interim Ministry Committee
c/o the Conference in which the pastoral charge is located
- Human Resources Unit
The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4
1-800-268-3781

Publications

These General Council Office publications are available for free download on the United Church website (www.united-church.ca/handbooks) or for a nominal cost from United Church Resource Distribution.

- *Guidelines for Transition Teams: Roles and Responsibilities during Interim Ministry* (2010)
- *Ministry & Personnel Committee Guidelines* (revised 2010)
- *Handbook for Joint Needs Assessment Committees* (revised 2007)
- *Handbook for Joint Search Committees* (revised 2007)
- *Interim Ministry Handbook* (2001, revision in progress in 2010)

Other Useful Reading

- Keith Bayer, *The Tipping Point—A Consultant's Perspective* (www.potentials.ca/publications.html).
- William Bridges, *Transitions and Managing Transition* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing 1991).
- Janet R. Cawley, *Who Is Our Church? Imagining Congregational Identity* (Hernolen, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006).
- Carl S. Dudley and Nancy T. Ammerman, *Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities* (Jossey-Bass, 2002).
- C. Ellis Nelson, *Congregations: Their Power to Form and Transform* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988).
- Roger S. Nicholson, ed., *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry* (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 1998).
- Gilbert Rendle, *Leading Change in Congregations: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 2003).
- Gilbert Rendle and Alice Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 2003).

Appendix 2: Glossary

Congregation: a body of persons that is a part of the United Church and that meets for public worship and is constituted by a presbytery.

Interim Minister: a member of the Order of Ministry* or a Designated Lay Minister* who, based on appropriate training and experience, has been appointed by the presbytery to an Interim Ministry.

Interim Ministry: an intentional, time-limited ministry established by the presbytery, the purpose of which is to work toward specific goals identified by the presbytery and the pastoral charge.

JNAC (Joint Needs Assessment Committee): the group charged with the responsibility of assessing the needs of the pastoral charge at the time of vacancy.

JSC (Joint Search Committee): the group charged with the responsibility of conducting a search and recommending to the pastoral charge the name of one ministry personnel for call or appointment.

Pastoral: having to do with the work of caring for a congregation.

Pastoral Charge: one or more congregations constituted by a presbytery into a pastoral unit according to the polity of the United Church.

Transition Committee: this term is used in *The Manual* to refer to members of the congregation and presbytery representatives who work together to set the goals of the Interim Ministry and recommend the selection of the Interim Minister, and then work in a team with the Interim Minister.

Transition Team: the Transition Committee and the Interim Minister become the Transition Team, who collaborate to lead the congregation through the Interim Ministry.

* Position classifications for ministers of The United Church of Canada

Order of Ministry: diaconal and ordained ministers of the United Church.

Ordained Minister: a member of the Order of Ministry who has been ordained to the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care.

Diaconal Minister: a member of the Order of Ministry who has been commissioned to a ministry of education, service, and pastoral care.

Designated Lay Minister: a lay member of the United Church appointed by a presbytery to serve in paid accountable ministry, in a pastoral charge or other presbytery accountable ministry, in a position designated by the presbytery as accountable to the presbytery.

CH10672
\$2.00 or download from
www.united-church.ca/handbooks



Ministry Personnel Support
The United Church of Canada • L'Église Unie du Canada