

Transitional Pastor and Transitional Associate Pastor

Salem Presbytery is committed to a lively partnership with its congregations during the transition time between installed pastors. With appropriate pastoral leadership, this is a particularly fertile time for a congregation to experience and become more aware of the theological significance of its life as community of faith. During this period, when a church is without an installed pastor, the services of a trained Transitional Pastor are highly recommended. It is not the policy of the Commission on Ministry to **require** the services of an appropriate Transitional Pastor; however our experience tells us that this can be a very productive relationship.

1. The Commission on Ministry recognizes that the time between installed pastors presents a congregation with a prime opportunity for renewal. This transition time is most likely to be constructive when the church addresses the following **Five Focus Points**:
 1. **Heritage**: Recognize and name our past history, work through grief/adjustment process that usually follows the loss of a minister, find meaning in this history.
 2. **Mission**: Who are we now? Who are our neighbors now? What is God calling this congregation to do now? Help the congregation to focus on and articulate its guiding identity and mission in the present.
 3. **Connections**: Celebrating, creating, or renewing denominational, geographical, and technological connections.
 4. **Leadership**: Review the membership needs and the membership's way of organizing and developing new and effective leadership within the congregation, seek ways to empower new ideas and leadership to emerge in constructive ways.
 5. **Future**: Naming a possible future for the congregation.

Research has demonstrated that congregations in which particular attention has been given to the transition between installed pastors tend to be healthier than others. The healthier congregations view the transition as a time of focus and renewal, whereas other congregations tend to view it as a time of maintenance. When a congregation in transition takes care of only the basic needs, the larger tasks and deeper questions are left hanging until the arrival of the new pastor. This practice often results in less productive and shorter pastorates for the new pastor. This is especially true in those congregations where the previous pastor had been on the scene for over ten years or there had been conflict in the congregation. A healthy transition is most likely to occur when congregations are served by ministers who are **intentionally** exercising their call as Transitional Pastors and have received special training for this specialized form of ministry.

In order to accomplish the important tasks of ministering to churches between installed pastors, the presbytery strongly encourages churches adhere to the following guidelines:

Requirements:

1. Consult with the COM Task Force on Transitions in Ministry before making any decisions to secure the services of any temporary pastor. This COM Task Force will recommend an appropriate temporary pastoral leadership and will assist the church in obtaining the services of such a pastor. In some cases, a full search through the PCUSA Church Leadership Connection may be the recommended process.
2. Compensate Transitional Pastors in a way that reflects awareness of presbytery minimum standards and the peculiar nature of this type of ministry, i.e. special qualifications, transitory nature of occupation, etc.
 - a) Prior to searching for Transitional Pastor it is recommended that a financial inventory be done to determine sustainability of most recent terms of call. (This is not an opportunity to seek a discount pastor)

3. Obtain the approval of the COM Task Force on Transitions in Ministry of any contract between the Session and a Transitional Pastor, and inform the Task Force of any changes in this contract.

The *Book of Order* At G-2.0504b says that “A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. The Commission on Ministry expects that the first contract with the Transitional Pastor will be for one year. Contracts can be renewed when necessary. The required contract is available for download on Presbytery’s website.

The Commission on Ministry expects that the Transitional Pastor or Transitional Associate Pastor shall:

1. Ordinarily* be a member of Salem Presbytery.
2. Attend quarterly meetings of Salem Presbytery.
3. Transitional Pastors to required to pursue Continuing Education in the field of Transitional Ministry if they have not complete both weeks of Transitional Ministry Training.
4. Attend the monthly Transitional Pastors Network meetings of Salem Presbytery.
5. Submit progress reports of their Transitional work to the COM Task Force on Transitions in Ministry.

***If the COM Task Force on Transitions in Ministry deems that there is sufficiently good reason for the Transitional Pastor not to move their membership to the Presbytery, they may permit him/her to maintain membership in their home Presbytery. However, if that is the case, the Transitional Pastor shall sign the document of compliance which is below.**

To be completed by the minister

I, _____, a member of _____

Presbytery, will maintain my membership in said Presbytery, while I serve as the Transitional Pastor (Transitional Associate Pastor) of _____ Presbyterian Church, located in _____, North Carolina. While I am officially under the jurisdiction of my home presbytery, I will exercise my ministry under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ministry of Salem Presbytery.

Signed: _____

Date: _____