

## Transition Committee Training

### The Transition Committee

- A. The Transition Committee is usually selected by the Session as soon as possible after the Session is informed of the Pastor's intention to leave. This only applies to the Pastor, not the Associate Pastor.
- B. The size of the normal Transition Committee is 5 to 7 persons. It usually contains someone who is familiar with the Worship Committee and someone who is familiar with the Church's finances. It is a **committee of the Session**, therefore does not require the congregation to act to elect.
- C. Transition Committee's Financial Responsibilities:
  - 1. Make sure the vacancy dues are paid to the Board of Pensions. This is accomplished by making sure that The Board of Pension's ENR-110 is filled out and submitted to the Board within 31 days of the change of service (the minister's official ending date).  
  
Vacancy dues are 12% of the previous minister's effective salary (generally salary plus housing). The dues are paid for a period of 1 year (or until church begins paying Board of Pensions dues on Interim Pastor [whichever comes first]). Vacancy Dues are used by the Board of Pensions to reduce the cost of the Medicare Supplement for Retired Church Workers.
  - 2. If the pastor has been disabled, suggesting financial arrangements for the pastor and family during the 90 day waiting period.  
  
[If the Transition Committee is selected in time, they also make]
    - 3. Recommendations for special honoraria, gifts, etc. to the departing pastor.
    - 4. Recommendations for occasions for the congregation and the pastor to "say good-bye" through formal remembering events and a "closure" worship service.
- D. Make provisions for regular worship services and pastoral care of the congregation during the transition period, and ordinarily serve as the Interim Pastor Search Committee (see below).
- E. Make sure that the congregation, as a whole, is informed that the Interim Pastor **cannot** become the next installed pastor of the congregation.

- F. Provide the communication link with Presbytery to establish the relationship with the Committee on Ministry liaison, Presbytery's appointed Session moderator and other Presbytery resources until the Pastoral Search Committee is elected.
- G. May assist the Interim Pastor in completing the Mission Study.
- H. Communication with the congregation.
  - 1. Regular information about progress during the interim period. [PNC will give updates on Search Process.]
  - 2. Clarification regarding the responsibilities of remaining staff professionals.
- I. Organize and carry out a proper farewell for the Interim Pastor. Ordinarily this farewell will be (at the latest) two weeks before the new pastor arrives

## The Interim Pastor

The Committee on Ministry *strongly* recommends that all congregations where possible and most especially those congregations that average more than 50 persons in worship on a weekly basis should secure an Interim Pastor following the departure of an installed Pastor. The Interim Pastor is secured by the Session and with the concurrence of the Committee on Ministry. *The Interim Pastor cannot ordinarily be the next Installed Pastor. A recent change to the Book of Order allows, under extraordinary conditions and with a 3/4 approval vote of the Presbytery, for a pastor in a Temporary Position (such as Interim) to be considered for the installed position.*

The recommended remuneration of an Interim Pastor is based on several factors: 1) whether the position is full-time or part-time; 2) how much training the Interim has (Level I, Level II, Certification); 3) how much experience the Interim has in doing Interim Ministry, how many interim pastorates s/he has done. As a general rule, a full-time Interim Pastor with Level II (or more) training and who has done 2 or more interim pastorates should receive the same remuneration as the pastor who just left. Less than full-time, less training, and/or less experience would, of course, mean a lower remuneration. However, under no circumstances should the package be less than Presbytery's Minimum Compensation. Interim contracts are for one year, and must be reviewed and renewed by the Session with the concurrence of the Committee on Ministry [After the first year of the contract, subsequent contracts may be for less than one year. But under no circumstances can a contract be for *more than* one year.]

## The Search for the Interim

Ordinarily, the Transition Committee selected by the Session has as one of its responsibilities the search for the Interim Pastor, and the recommending of that candidate to the Session along with the compensation package for the Session's approval in securing the candidate as the Interim Pastor.

Therefore, the following process should be followed:

1. The Transition Committee prepares an outline of the skills, training, experience, etc. of the potential Interim and gets the Session to approve the description of the position and the requirements of potential candidates for the position.
2. When the position description and requirements has been approved by the Session, the Transition Committee prepares a salary range package for the approved job description. This proposed salary range package is presented to the Session for its approval. When the salary range package is approved by the Session, the Transition Committee may begin its search.
3. Presbytery Staff will ordinarily present the name(s) of potential Interim Pastor(s) from among those who are in the nearby geographical area.

4. The Transition Committee may, if it wishes to do so, fill out a Church Information Form (CIF) for an Interim Pastor and put it on the General Assembly's website. The only difference with this CIF and a regular CIF is that in (Part II) Step 3 of 7; you **do not** need to fill out the three narrative questions. Otherwise, it is just like a normal CIF and will require Session approval and COM approval before you can put it on line. [The process extends the time before you can get an Interim, something you might want to consider before you undertake the task.]

Because of the long lead-time for publishing in such publications as *The Presbyterian Outlook*, *Presbyterians Today*, and the like, it is **not recommended** to use these as a way of advertising the opening for an Interim Pastor. Presbytery Staff also has access to the **APIMS** (Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists) website for advertising the opening. Contact the Staff for help with this.

5. The Transition Committee will probably receive self-referrals from others who have heard of the opening and who would like to be considered. **PLEASE NOTE:** respond to all self-referrals indicating that you have received that person's PIF (Personal Information Form) or resume. Moreover, tell them what they might expect from your search process. That is, tell them that you are currently receiving PIF's/resumes and that you expect to begin reading and sorting them soon and **that they will hear from you in no more than two weeks**. Interim Pastors generally are moving quickly to find another position, so keep in communication with all these folks every two weeks, indicating where you are in the process and what they might expect from you. Continue to do this until you have told them that they are no longer under consideration.

It is important to remember to communicate with all of the applicants that are still under consideration, keeping them abreast of the process. **DO NOT** go more than two weeks without communicating with those still under consideration, even if all you say is "we have been deluged by applicants, and haven't been able to keep to our time-table. You will hear from us again in no more than two weeks."

6. By this time in the process you should have received your COM appointed liaison. S/he will help shepherd the rest of the process through the Committee on Ministry. If you have gotten this far and still don't have a liaison, please contact the Presbytery Staff person immediately.
7. When you have settled on your candidate, **before** you present her/him to your Session:
  - a.) Check with the Presbytery Staff person to do a background check on your candidate.
  - b.) Make sure that the Session has already approved the salary package that you are going to offer to your candidate. If what you intend to offer is greater than what the Session has previously

- approved, get the package approved by the Session before you present your candidate to the Session.
- c.) When you have the package approved, and the background check done by Presbytery staff, ask the Liaison to assist you in filling out the contract. Blank contracts are available on the Presbytery's website ([www.salempresbytery.org](http://www.salempresbytery.org).)
  - d.) After the Session approves the contract, have the Interim Pastor and the Clerk of the Session both sign the contract, and ask your liaison to present it to the Committee on Ministry at its next meeting.
  - e.) No other group but the Session needs to sign off on the person. Your church's Personnel Committee ***DOES NOT HAVE TO APPROVE*** the candidate before you present her/him to the Session.
  - f.) If your Interim is a member of another Presbytery, s/he will ordinarily have to be examined and received by our Presbytery. This will normally be done by the Examination Committee and the COM on the day the COM meets to approve your contract with the Interim.
  - g.) ***Immediately*** inform all candidates with who you have had contact that you have selected your Interim Pastor, and, if appropriate, thank them for their interest in your position