

Transition Team Responsibilities

- A. The Transition Team is usually selected by the Session as soon as possible after the Session is informed of the Pastor's intention to leave. It is strongly recommended that the Session select a Transition Team to select a Transitional Minister for Session approval, and on-board and partner with the Transitional Minister to complete the Mission Study for Session approval. This only applies to the Pastor, not the Associate Pastor.
- B. The size of the normal Transition Team is 5 to 7 persons. It usually contains members who are familiar with the Worship and Personnel Committees and with the Church's finances. It is a committee of the Session, therefore does not require the congregation to act to elect.
- C. Transition Team's Financial Responsibilities:
 - 1. If the pastor has been disabled, suggesting financial arrangements for the pastor and family during the 90-day waiting period.
[If the Transition Team is selected in time, they also make:]
 - 2. Recommendations for special honoraria, gifts, etc. to the departing pastor.
 - 3. Recommendations for occasions for the congregation and the pastor to "say good-bye" through formal remembering events and a "closure" worship service.
- D. The Transition Team will make provisions for regular worship services and pastoral care of the congregation during the transition period, and ordinarily serve as the Transitional Pastor Search Committee (see below). It also provides an on-boarding process that includes a formal opportunity to be received and welcomed by the Session and Congregation.
- E. The team will make sure that the congregation, as a whole, is informed that the Transitional Pastor ordinarily **cannot** become the next installed pastor of the congregation, but under extraordinary circumstances may be permitted under provisions of the Book of Order.
- F. The team will provide the communication link with Presbytery to establish the relationship with the Commission on Ministry Transition Responder, Presbytery's appointed Session Moderator and other Presbytery resources until the pastoral search committee is elected (Pastor Nominating Committee – PNC).
- G. The team shall partner with the Transitional Pastor in completing the Mission Study. Session may assign a different group of people to work with the Transitional Pastor on the Mission Study. The Transitional Pastor shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Committee.
- H. The team provides communication with the congregation through
 - 1. Regular information about progress during the Transition 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 Transitional Pastor. Ordinarily this farewell will be (at the latest) two weeks before the new pastor arrives.

The Transitional Pastor

The Commission 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 a Transitional Pastor following the departure of an installed Pastor. The Transitional Pastor is secured by the Session and with the concurrence of the Commission on Ministry. **The Transitional Pastor cannot ordinarily be the next Installed Pastor. However, 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 the next installed pastor.**

The recommended remuneration of a Transitional Pastor is based on several factors: 1) whether the position is full-time or part-time; 2) how much training the Transitional has (Level I, Level II, Certification); 3) how much experience the Transitional has in doing Transitional Ministry, how many interim pastorates s/he has done. As a general rule, a full-time Transitional 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. Transitional contracts are for one year, and must be reviewed and renewed by the Session with the concurrence of the COM Task Force on Transitions in 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 Transitional Pastor

Ordinarily, the Transition Team selected by the Session has as one of its responsibilities the search for the Transitional 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 Transitional Pastor.

Therefore, the following process should be followed:

1. The Transition Team prepares an outline of the skills, training, experience, etc. of the potential Transitional Pastor 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 have been approved by the Session, the Transition Team 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 Team may begin its search.
3. Presbytery Staff will ordinarily present the name(s) of potential Transitional Pastor(s) from among those who are in the nearby geographical area.
4. The Transition Team may, if it wishes to do so, fill out a Ministry Information Form (MIF) for a Transitional Pastor and put it on the General Assembly's website. The only difference with this MIF and a regular MIF 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 MIF and will require Session approval and COM approval before you can put it online. [The process extends the time before you can get a Transitional Pastor, 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. The Transition Team 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."

5. 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. The General Presbyter will also conduct an executive reference check.
 - 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. You must use the presbytery's contract for Transitional Pastors. Blank contracts are available on the Presbytery's website (www.salempresbytery.org.)
 - d.) After the Session approves the contract, have the Transitional Pastor and the Clerk of the Session both sign the contract, and ask your liaison to present it to the COM Task Force on Transitions in 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 Transitional Pastor 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 Task Force on Transitions in Ministry to approve your contract with the pastor.
 - g.) **Immediately** inform all candidates with whom you have had contact that you have selected your Transitional Pastor, and, if appropriate, thank them for their interest in your position