

APPENDIX D — INTERIM PASTOR MODEL LETTER OF AGREEMENT

After the 1983 first edition of this handbook, a demand emerged to adapt the Model Letter of Agreement for use with Interim Pastors. The model below also appears in the author's Choosing to Serve: Resources for the Calling Process, published by The Church Deployment Board of The Episcopal Church. It draws heavily on two Alban Institute publications, Ralph Macy's The Interim Pastor, and Philip Porcher's What You Can Expect from An Interim Pastor.

INTERIM PASTOR LETTER OF AGREEMENT

between

The Wardens and Vestry of

_____ Church

and

The Reverend _____

who has been appointed Interim Pastor with the understanding that this tenure shall continue at least ____ months until shortly before the arrival of the new Rector, unless earlier dissolved by mutual consent or upon sixty days' notice of either party.

Developmental Tasks of the Interim Period

The present interim in settled pastoral leadership is seen as prime time for renewal, reenergizing the parish in its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Vestry and Interim Pastor shall work together to prepare for healthy transition to the next rectorship. Specific tasks to be addressed include:

Coming to terms with the history of this congregation and its relationships with previous clergy.

Discovering the congregation's special identity, what it dreams of being and doing apart from previous clergy leadership.

Dealing with shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively.

Renewing and reworking relationships with the diocese, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to the other.

Building commitment to the leadership of the new rector in order to be prepared to move into the future with openness to new possibilities.

Vestry Responsibilities

All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of the parish and the Interim Pastor. The Vestry shall lead the laity to support and cooperate with the Interim Pastor in pursuit of parish goals and in the performance of the developmental tasks of the interim period.

The Vestry is legal agent for the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the Interim Pastor. The Vestry will see that the Interim Pastor is properly supported, personally and organizationally as well as in the Vestry's financial obligations to the Interim Pastor.

Interim Pastor Responsibilities

The Interim Pastor represents and extends the ministry which is the Bishop's pastoral and canonical responsibility for congregations in leadership transition. The Interim Pastor shall lead _____ Church as pastor, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of this congregation and of the whole church, in communion with our Bishop. The Interim Pastor shall . . .

Work with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain the regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices (weddings, funerals, baptisms), calling upon the sick and shut-in, visiting newcomers, and ongoing administration of the parish.

Supervise all parish staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they shall be accountable to the Interim Pastor.

Function as Chair of the Vestry, and support the Vestry in its responsibilities.

The major goal of the Interim Pastor's ministry is to prepare the congregation for the coming of the next rector. To this end, the Interim Pastor shall . . .

Help the congregation deal with its grief and any other unresolved issues arising from the rector's departure.

Deal with internal conflicts and help heal any divisions within the congregation.

Help the Vestry, lay leaders and staff make such changes as may be needed to align parish life and administration with generally accepted standards in the diocese.

The Interim Pastor shall communicate regularly with any consultant in the calling process, but shall not work with the Calling Committee as they develop the parish profile, and solicit and screen candidates. The Interim Pastor shall not be eligible to be a candidate for Rector.

<p>Possible Addition</p>

<p>This ministry is further described in the Interim Pastor Position Description approved by the Wardens and Vestry on _____, which is hereby acknowledged and made part of this Letter.</p>
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Section A. Times of Work and Leave

- (1) The Interim Pastor's scheduled workweek is five days, which shall include Sunday activities. The Interim Pastor is expected to preserve at least one continuous twenty-four hour period each week solely for personal and family use.
- (2) The Interim Pastor will have the following periods of leave at full compensation:
 - a. National Holidays, to be taken so as not to interfere with worship for major occasions.
 - b. Annual Vacation, at the rate of one month per year, consisting of twenty-three workdays, which shall include five Sundays.
 - c. Professional Development Leave, at the rate of two weeks per year.

Section B. Compensation

- (1) The Interim Pastor's cash salary will be \$_____, monthly, paid on or before the ____ day of the month. It is understood that, upon the Interim Pastor's request, the Vestry will designate a portion of the total amount as "Housing Allowance" under the Federal Internal Revenue Code.
- (2) The Vestry shall pay the following benefits:
 - a. Church Pension Fund Assessment on the Interim Pastor's annual cash salary (including Housing Allowance).

Alternate Wording For Church-Provided Housing

Section B. Compensation (Alternate)

- (1) The Interim Pastor's monthly cash stipend will be \$_____, paid on or before the ____ day of the month. It is understood that, upon the Interim Pastor's request, the Vestry will designate a portion of the annual cash stipend as "Housing Allowance" under the Federal Internal Revenue Code.
- (2) The Interim Pastor shall have full use of the Rectory at _____ as personal residence. No parish activities will be planned at the Rectory without the invitation of the Interim Pastor's household. Expenses connected with the Rectory shall be handled as follows:
 - (a) Utilities shall be contracted for and paid directly by the parish.
 - (b) Use and maintenance of Rectory grounds are at the Interim Pastor's discretion and personal expense, with the exception of major alterations to the basic landscaping plan.

Section B. Compensation (Alternate, continued)

(3) The Vestry shall pay the following benefits:

(a) Church Pension Fund Assessment on the sum of: the Interim Pastor's annual cash stipend; the actual cost of Rectory utilities; and the value of the use of the Rectory according to the Church Pension Fund formula.

(b) Health and Hospital Insurance, equivalent to or better than the group plan provided through the Diocese.

(c) Group Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance, equivalent to or better than the group plan provided through the Diocese.

(d) Workers' Compensation Insurance, as provided by State Law.

Section C. Expenses

The Vestry shall pay the following expenses incurred by the Interim Pastor in fulfilling the duties of office:

(1) Travel expenses, at the rate of \$_____ per mile, plus out-of-pocket costs of parking fees, tolls, bus fares, etc.

(2) The normal expenses of the Church's office operation, such as telephone, postage, office equipment, supplies, secretarial services, etc.

(3) An expense allowance (up to \$_____ annually) for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of professional activities on behalf of _____ Church.

(4) The cost of a telephone in the Interim Pastor's residence. This telephone number shall be published to insure the Interim Pastor's ready accessibility in case of emergencies. The Interim Pastor shall pay the cost of all personal long distance calls.

(5) A Professional Development Allowance of \$_____.

Section D. Discretionary Fund

In accordance with the canons of the General Convention, the Alms/Discretionary Fund, in the absence of a Rector, is under the control of the Parish Almoner. The Senior Warden shall be appointed Parish Almoner, and, together with the Interim Pastor and Junior Warden, shall have access to this fund for the aid of the poor and those in need, and for any other reasonable expense normally attributed to such a canonical Alms/Discretionary Fund.

Section E. Supplementary Compensation

The Interim Pastor shall not charge fees for performing any rites of the Church (for example: baptisms, marriage, funerals) for members of _____ Church. The Interim Pastor may, however, receive income from other sources, such as:

Sacramental services on behalf of persons not in any way related to _____ Church.

Fees and honoraria for professional services performed on personal time for groups unrelated to _____ Church, or for sermons, books or articles published outside the parish.

Section F. Use Of Building

It is understood that the general pattern of building use followed during the last Rectorship shall be maintained, unless there is specific action of the Vestry to the contrary. The Interim Pastor shall have the right to grant use of the buildings to individuals or groups from outside the parish, only under guidelines approved by the Vestry.

Section G. Mutual Ministry Review

There shall be a quarterly discussion and mutual review of the total ministry of the parish, in order to:

Provide the Interim Pastor, Wardens and Vestry opportunity to assess how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and to the ministries they share.

Evaluate progress on the developmental tasks, and establish and adjust goals for the work of the parish during the interim.

Plan healthy closure for the interim ministry and prepare for the coming of the next Rector.

Isolate areas of conflict or disappointment which have not received adequate attention and may be affecting mutual ministry adversely.

Clarify expectations of all parties to help put any future conflicts in manageable form.

A mutually agreed upon third party shall be engaged to facilitate the mutual ministry review process.

Section H. Other Agreements

- (1) All moving and travel expenses incurred in making the move from _____ to _____ shall be paid by _____ Church. _____ Church shall also reimburse the Interim Pastor for all additional Federal and State Income Taxes which may result from such expense reimbursement.

- (2) The moving date shall be in the week of _____. The Interim Pastor shall begin duties in the parish not later than _____, unless delayed by adverse circumstances.

- (3) All pay and benefits shall become effective on _____.

- (4) This Letter of Agreement [*and its related Position Description*] shall be made part of the minutes of the next Vestry meeting following its signing, and copies shall be given to each new Vestry member thereafter.

- (5) If the Interim Pastor and Vestry are in disagreement concerning interpretation of this Letter of Agreement, either party may appeal for mediation to _____, or another mutually agreed upon third party, the Bishop remaining the final arbiter.

Date: _____
_____ *Interim Pastor*

Senior Warden

Reviewed: _____
Archdeacon

Approved: _____
Bishop