

INTENTIONAL INTERIM MINISTRY PROGRAM

There is little that can cause more upheaval in the life of a church than a pastoral transition. The congregation will have a wide spectrum of anxiety, questions, and concerns. The inclination will be to rush to fill the void in congregational life and bring things as quickly as possible back to normal. How the congregational leadership is committed to working through this transition time will determine how the congregation is poised to step into the future. Do we get an interim to preach and visit and keep us as normal as possible or is this an opportunity for the congregation to grow?

There are major differences between an Interim and an Intentional Interim. An interim is designed to provide a pastor for a congregation to help things stay status quo until the next pastor arrives. An Intentional Interim is someone who will seize the transition and utilize this critical moment in the life of the church to address issues of identity, strengthen relationships, train leaders, assess ministry efforts and direction and prepare the congregation for identifying their next pastor.

The desired result is that the congregation not just maintain until the “next pastor” is hired but is actively working to understand God’s ministry direction for them, serving Him in that direction and seeking the pastor with the skills necessary to help them grow into their ministry endeavors.

INTENTIONAL INTERIM MINISTRY BENCHMARKS

There are five areas that are the goals and focus of an Intentional Interim.

1. Coming to terms with history/restoring relationships.
2. Training Leadership
3. Discovering a new identity
4. Renewing denominational linkages
5. Commitment to new main direction

If there were issues that have been identified, the intentional interim will be working to establish validity and pervasiveness in the congregation.

1. Issue 1
2. Issue 2

1. History and Restoring Relationships

- Understanding the past and connecting to the future.
 - Review of History and understanding of the Journey.
 - Celebration of common accomplishments.
 - Understanding past mission and vision that fed those accomplishments.
 - Listening to current concerns and hearing perceived needs.
1. Listening sessions with the congregation to hear hurts, needs, and understanding the past.
 2. Identify those who need healing from hurt and create reconciliation as possible. Outside help might be necessary.
 3. Written celebration of the church history, celebrating accomplishments and benchmarks in her history. Share with leadership and the congregation.

2. Training Leadership

1. Create ongoing opportunity for leaders to be self or other identified for training.
 2. Create apprenticeship opportunities for existing leaders to train new leaders.
 3. Create regular training to equip people for leadership roles and identify leadership to sustain training.
 4. Create opportunities for people to discover or challenge next step with God.
 5. Create opportunities for people to serve and discover their ministry calling.
- The Intentional Interim is to be training people to do this along the way to work himself out of the process.

3. New Identity: Discovering Mission and Vision

- Create a listening team. Objective is to record and share response of congregation to leadership.
- Intentional Interim is a facilitator.
- The people are the dreamers and primary sharers of the vision.

Involving entire congregation w/listening team

1. Listening sessions with congregation to hear:
 - a. What makes this congregation unique?
 - b. What is this families strengths and weaknesses?
 - c. What ministries are growing and producing results? Which ones are ineffective?
 - d. What are the needs in the community?
 - e. Can or should this congregation be meeting any of those needs?
2. Call everyone to pray for vision to become clear.
3. Listening teams report to leadership and congregation data collected.
4. Create Vision Team to carry on with listening data to formulate Vision. Six-month process (or more) of fasting, praying and dreaming, seeking God's vision.
 - a. Who are we?
 - b. What are we doing? What could we be doing?
 - c. Where are we going?
 - d. Write the vision.
 - e. Speak the vision to Council, Ministry Leaders, and congregation.

5. Vision swell: Vision Team shares with Council, Vision Team and Council share with Ministry Leaders, all three share with Congregation. Each group signs on along the way or it needs reworked.

4. Commitment to a New Main Direction and Getting the Church Ready for a New Pastor

- With History and Vision in place as well as a pipeline for leadership development, it is time to start asking what do we need from the next pastor.
- Call the creation of the search committee. And call the congregation to prayer.
 1. What are the next steps for ministry in our community?
 2. What needs to be accomplished by leadership to achieve the vision?
 3. What competencies are we looking for?
 4. What strengths are necessary?

5. Improving Communications

- Creating opportunities for ministry story telling.
- Directing Ministry leaders to outside resources, including ARC and CGGC staff and commissions.
- Monthly Update to Leaders and congregation
60-day report by Intentional Interim to Pastoral Oversight Commission. Work through separately with elders.

Benchmark Checklist

Phase 1 - Evaluation

- Getting to know the congregation
- Restoring relationships elements 1-3
- Evaluating spiritual needs
- Encouraging and implementing more people in ministry roles
- Begin leadership development with current leadership (Council/Elders)
- Intentional Interim's written assessment for ARC Pastoral Oversight Commission and Church Leadership:
 1. Strengths/Affirmations
 2. Challenges/Weaknesses
 3. Overall systems at work within the congregation
 4. Notes from the listening sessions including key leaders and former pastors.
 5. Personal recommendations of areas of focus and suggested approach to the issues.
 6. Disbursement of report/summary to the congregation.

Phase 2 - Leadership Development

- Elected and non-elected, (steps 1-5).
- Working with leadership to understand core values, mission, and vision, (steps 1-5).
- Relational Awareness Theory (SDI), Spiritual Gifts Inventories, Awareness of personal calling and individual mission.

Phase 3 - Search Committee

- Mission and vision must be clear.
- Clarification of skills necessary for next steps.
- Work with selection committee to find a permanent pastor for renewed congregation.

Church:

Intentional Interim:

Date:

Every 60 days after the assessment has been completed, the intentional interim will submit the following report to the Commission.

In what area(s) would you like help?

[illegible]

Rate the anxiety level of the church and leaders at this point

Low

1

2

3

Average

4

5

Chronic High

6

7

What is the source of the anxiety?

[illegible][illegible]

60 DAY INTERIM REPORT FORM (cont.)

Identify the points of conflict of “stuckness” in the congregation if there are any. What have you done to address these? How have you seen improvement over the past 60 days?

Please state anything else here that is of concern to you or the church leadership the commission should be aware of.

Interim Grief Assessment

Grief is not a completely sequential process, but circle the term(s) that best describe where the congregation is currently.
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Where do you assess the congregation to be currently:

1. Denial
2. Pain and/or Guilt
3. Anger
4. Bargaining
5. Apathy
6. Depression
7. Reflection
8. Upward Turn (become a little calmer and more organized)
9. Reconstruction (develop solutions to go on without previous pastor)
10. Acceptance (seeing healing and growth taking place)