**Sample Interim Ministry Covenant-Contract**

Between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of providing interim pastoral leadership during a period of rediscovery and adjustment to change.

It is agreed that the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will begin service as the Interim Pastor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

It is understood that the (leadership body) and the Interim Pastor will review this Covenant-Contract at least every six months. It is agreed that this Covenant-Contract shall be in effect for 12 months or until sixty days following a call being extended to a new pastor, whichever comes first, after which time it can be renegotiated up to the time of the start-up of the new pastor. Twenty-four months shall be considered maximum time for the interim period unless extenuating circumstances require an extension agreeable to both parties in consultation with the (judicatory official) Thirty days’ notice shall be given in writing by either party of intention to decline an extension. Should either the Interim Pastor or the church wish to terminate this agreement, 60 days written notice shall be given.

During the interim time the pastor and congregation will, in covenant with one another and with the help of God, seek to:

* provide worship experiences and the practice of ministry with the congregation and community;
* engage in congregational self-study and goal setting by reviewing the past and planning for the future in such a way as to strengthen and enhance the mission and unity of this church;
* prepare for the ministry of a new pastor who will be duly called by the congregation; and,
* work on the five Focus Points of congregations in the interim period:
  + Heritage
  + Mission
  + Leadership
  + Connections
  + Future
* Work on any other issues and goals necessary during the interim time as discerned by the Transition Team and other leaders of the church.
* The Intentional Interim Minister offers the congregation a rich variety of possibilities to engage these five themes or focus points. Knowing that each situation is unique, the Intentional Interim strives to discern the tools most appropriate for the specific situations that might emerge. Reflecting upon the five themes or focus points helps a congregation to answer three important questions: "Who are we?" (Identity), "Who are our neighbors?" (Mission), and "What is God calling us to do and to be?" (Vision).

It is agreed that under no circumstances may the Interim Minister be a candidate for the position of settled pastor. The Interim Minister will not allow his/her name to be submitted as a candidate nor will members of the congregation ask that this be done. Upon termination and departure as pastor, the Interim Minister will sever his pastoral relations with this congregation, recognizing that all future pastoral functions should be fulfilled by his successor.

It is further agreed that the Interim Minister will not assist the Pastoral Search Committee in the selection of a pastoral candidate. It may be helpful, at times, for the Interim Minister to advise the committee in terms of process, but this may be done only in consultation with and agreement of the Conference staff person resourcing the search process and the chair of the Search Committee.

**OUR SHARED EXPECTATIONS**

The pastoral and professional leadership provided by the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will amount to full time or approximately 40 to 50 hours per week. Occasionally, exigencies, such as funerals, a family crisis, or a congregational emergency, do happen that will require the Interim Minister to exceed this average. In those cases, s/he should be given compensatory time off within a reasonable time after incurring this extra time. Should additional time be needed to provide pastoral services, the matter will be reviewed by the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; and either the members of the church will assist with the pastoral duties or additional compensation will be offered to the Interim Pastor for the additional time.

The Interim Pastor will be responsible to the congregation at large, and specifically to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Pastoral services shall include: [The following are examples of what might be included]

* Leadership of Sunday morning worship and Sunday evening as appropriate, administration of the sacraments including baptism and communion, as well as funeral, weddings and special services as needed.
* Counseling in crisis situations and referral.
* Serving as lead teacher and resource for the Confirmation program.
* Teacher/leader of occasional adult education programs.
* Visitation of hospitalized, ill and other members of the parish needing pastoral care.
* Visit newcomers and provide newcomer classes with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Attending and resourcing meetings of church boards and committees.
* Providing leadership and training for members regarding congregational self-study, future planning, outreach and stewardship.
* Providing administrative oversight for the daily affairs of the church, including being "head of staff," supervising them in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries for which they will be accountable to the Interim Minister.
* Remaining active in the name of this church in the judicatory region, and the national setting of the (denomination).
* Participation on behalf of this church in ecumenical and interfaith activities in this community.

The congregation will support and cooperate with the Interim Minister in every way and will assume responsibility for:

* Regular attendance at worship and meetings.
* Continued financial support for the church and its mission and ministries.
* Support the Interim Minister in the ministry of this church to the community.
* Sustained lay leadership and shared ministry.
* Establishment of an Transition Team of five to nine persons agreed upon by the Interim Pastor and the (Leadership body) whose purpose will be to serve as a confidential support and advising group for the Interim Minister, to monitor the progress of the accomplishment of Interim Focus Points, and to act as a communication link between the Interim Minister and the congregation.
* Participation in the affairs of the (local and regional denominational settings of the denomination).
* Administrative and Secretarial support services, office equipment, supplies, telephone, postage, etc.
* To provide a discretionary fund for pastoral care.
* Keeping the Interim Minister informed of the timing of the transitional leadership, including candidate Sunday and contract termination.
* Participation in a quarterly discussion and mutual review of the total ministry of the congregation, in order to:
  + Provide the Interim Ministers, the (Leadership Team) and the Transition Team opportunity to assess how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and to the ministries they share.
  + Evaluate progress on the focus points and establish and adjust goals for the work of the congregation during the interim time.
  + Isolate any goals, areas of conflict or other matters that have not received adequate attention and may be adversely affecting mutual ministry.
  + Clarify expectations of all parties to help put any differences or future conflicts in manageable form.
  + Plan healthy closure for the interim ministry by having an exit interview and preparing for the coming of the next pastor.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ agrees to provide the following compensation to the interim pastor:

* *Base salary.* (According to denominational) guidelines. Compensation and benefits for interim pastors should be at least equal to that of the settled pastor.)
* *Housing allowance*. (1% per month of median price of a home in the community the pastor lives in. This is negotiable, or the formula your denomination uses)
* *Social Security offset.* (7.65% of cash salary)
* *Health and dental insurance* for pastor and family/partner
* *Annuity payment* (whatever the formula for your denomination)
* *Payment for Oxford Criminal Background Check*
* *Professional Development Fund* for continuing education, books and materials needed for ministry. Unexpended funds may be carried over to the next year. (includes clergy groups, conferences, workshops, books and material needed for ministry)
* *An expense allowance* (up to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ amount annually) for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of professional activities on behalf of the church.

**TOTAL**

The Interim Minister is expected to preserve two days a week solely for personal and family use. The Interim Minister is expected to take the time to develop and maintain a healthy physical and spiritual life, including regular exercise, scheduling personal retreats, reflection days, and weekly and daily time set aside for prayer, scripture study and meditation. The Interim Minister will have the following periods of leave at full compensation:

1. National Holidays, to be taken so as to not interfere with worship or other congregational events.
2. Annual Vacation, at the rate of one month per year, consisting of twenty-three workdays, which shall include five Sundays. Vacation time is accrued at a rate of one week for each three months of service.
3. Vacation and holidays may be postponed and accumulate until the conclusion of this interim period. The (Leadership) shall be regularly informed of the amount of time due.
4. Professional Development Leave at the rate of two weeks a year. This will accrue at one week for every six months of service.
5. Other continuing education events, workshops and training as offered by the denomination, or other ministry related agencies.
6. Sick Days. Paid sick time accumulates at a rate of one day per month up to thirty days.
7. Personal/Compassionate Leave. Five to seven days per year, except where compassion dictates further extension.

In addition, the church will provide a travel allowance in a total amount not to exceed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per calendar year.  This travel allowance is to consist of the following components:

*Commuting Mileage* –will be a flat rate of $\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year. (IRS Publication 463, regarding commuting to temporary work locations for a period of less than one year: <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p463/ch04.html>  It is well documented in many interim ministry handbooks that commuting mileage should be treated like other mileage reimbursements for the first 364 days of his/her contract.  If his/her interim were to last longer than one year, then the commuting mileage would need to be paid as taxable income.

*Business Mileage* – reimbursement at the IRS standard mileage rate for business miles driven for trips between the church location and any other location plus out-of-pocket costs of parking, fees, tolls, etc.

This letter may be revised only by mutual agreement, except that compensation and expenses revision shall be mutually agreed upon in a separate budget process.

If the Interim Minister and the (Leadership) are in disagreement concerning interpretation of this Covenant/Contract, either party may appeal for mediation to the (local judicatory official).

When the Interim Minister's services at the church ends, the Trustees will compensate him/her for any earned but unrealized vacation and leave time. This compensation is to be paid to the Interim Minister in a lump sum check and includes all aspects of the normal compensation paid to the clergy person.

In accepting this agreement, effective\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date), we hereby attach our

signatures, making this Covenant-Contract binding upon us in accordance with the above outlined terms.

Interim Minister\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For the Church\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Office held\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For the Denomination\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Office held\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_