

## INTERIM PARISH MINISTRY

To be used as a directive from the Bishop during the interim period when the previous incumbent has departed and before a new incumbent has been appointed.

- 1 The bishop, or designated representative, will be responsible for placement of interim minister(s). The person functioning as interim minister is subject to the discipline and authority of the bishop. Whenever possible the appointment will have a definite term.
- 2 In concert with the wardens, the interim minister will report on a regular basis to the bishop, or to the person whom the bishop appoints, i.e., archdeacon, regional dean or neighbouring parish priest.
- 3 The interim minister is to:
  - a) Maintain the viability of the church or parish in which he/she is to minister. (see: Directive 8.2 The Priest in the Parish and directives under section 1 General Liturgy and Worship).
  - b) Honour the tradition and practice of the parish, maintain and encourage pastoral duties plus the Christian activities of the laity, and continue the programmes already established rather than 'shelving' until the new incumbent is appointed (if unfamiliar with local practice, the interim minister should discuss this with the bishop).
  - c) Ensure that any change of direction in programme, liturgical practice, education materials introduced, schedule and location of services, etc., is:
    - in accord with the directives of the bishop,
    - is really wanted / needed by the congregation, and
    - has grown out of an assessment / evaluation by the congregation and bishop.
  - d) Recognize that a congregation in an interim period is already dealing with change. Even what may appear to the interim minister as "minor" changes may be more than people are able to cope with during the interim. An interim minister's preference for "things" one way or another is not good cause for change. Using the appropriate structures and consulting with the bishop will help legitimize and empower the agreed-to change(s) and proceedings. Likewise, the interim should be careful not to promote systemic changes, such as amalgamation of churches or a new rectory during an interim period.
- 4 All gifts or bequests that will constitute changes to the fabric of a church building, or other parish buildings, during the interim period must only be considered on a tentative basis and will be subject to final approval for implementation by the bishop.
- 5 Removing, adding, or altering church furnishings without the expressed wishes of the congregation and without consultation with the bishop, is to be discouraged.
- 6 The interim minister is to increase the potential for a successful ministry by the next incumbent. Emphasis on fellowship and reconciliation are opportunities which may bring

about needed and helpful congregational healing during the grief, loss, or waiting period. The updating of mailing lists, inventories of church buildings and offices, and review of reporting procedure and other data which would be helpful to the incoming rector are worthwhile projects during an interim ministry. The interim minister shall ensure parish registers are kept up-to-date.

- 7 Where possible, the interim minister should nurture the congregation to become future oriented. The congregation may have experienced hurts from the past, thus becoming inward looking. It is in the best interests of the ongoing ministry of the bishop, and of the congregation, that the interim minister identify and communicate in his/her report to the bishop any information which will enable the bishop to provide appropriate consideration for future appointment.
- 8 The interim minister is not to become involved with the Parish Advisory Committee.

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