

# **INTERIM MINISTRY**

PROVIDING CONTINUING PASTORAL CARE AND LEADERSHIP

IN THE “BETWEEN TIMES”

**Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**2024**

*These Guidelines, established by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly, are provided in order to assist congregations in calling or entering into an agreement with an interim pastor.*

*Excerpts from the Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCA (2019):*

\*C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

\*C9.07. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

\*Required Article in Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCA

### **TYPES OF INTERIM LEADERSHIP**

Pastors who provide continuing Word and Sacrament ministries and leadership to congregations in the “between times” fall into one of five types of interim ministries as described below.

*All interims not under call to a congregation are appointed by the bishop and sign contracts to which the congregation(s), the pastor and the bishop are all parties. The bishop may withdraw the appointment of an interim at any time.*

#### **Local Interim and Worship Supplies**

- Local pastor under call in a neighboring congregation
- Congregation Council and pastor agree upon specific tasks
- Agreement is for an initial three month period
- Once agreement is renewed twice, congregation, pastor, and synod staff discuss future options
- In most settings, the pastor will serve 20 hours per month
- Compensation includes a monthly stipend and reimbursement at the IRS rate for miles driven while working (mileage from any site, including the rostered minister’s home, to and from any ministry site)
- Worship supplies will be assigned by synod and are to be paid according to rates adopted by Synod Assembly

#### **Transitional Interim**

- For congregations that expect to move through the call process as expediently as possible
- Pastor serves for an initial period of three months, renewable according to progress being made in the call process
- Pastor serves for 20 to 40 hours per week
- Pastor is not under call
- Compensation includes a monthly stipend, Social Security Tax allowance, reimbursement at the IRS rate for miles driven while working (mileage from any site, including the rostered minister’s home, to and from any ministry site), continuing education allowance up to \$250 every three months, and one week of paid vacation (including one Sunday) for every three months of service
- Congregations are to provide a proportionate subsidy for health insurance

#### **Intentional Interim**

- Appropriate following a period of conflict, following a long pastorate, or when a congregation is uncertain about its future

- Pastor serves the congregation for at least 12 months
- Pastor serves at least 20 hours per week and up to full time
- Pastor is either retired or called by Synod Council
- When under call, compensation package is based upon SWPA Synod Guidelines, pastor's years of experience, congregation's previous pastoral compensation, and responsibilities of the interim pastor
- When under agreement with Congregation Council, compensation includes a monthly stipend, Social Security Tax contribution, reimbursement at the IRS rate for miles driven while working (mileage from any site, including the rostered minister's home, to and from any ministry site), continuing education reimbursement up to \$250 every three months, and one week of paid vacation (including one Sunday) for every three months of service.
- Congregations are to provide a proportionate subsidy for health insurance.

### **Long Term Interim**

- Appropriate when congregation is unable to call a pastor
- Pastor may be retired; In some circumstances the pastor may be called by the Synod Council at the request of the bishop; request for renewal must come annually from the Congregation Council to the synodical bishop
- When under call, compensation package is based upon SWPA Synod Guidelines, pastor's years of experience, congregation's previous pastoral compensation and responsibilities of the interim pastor
- When under agreement with Congregation Council, compensation includes a monthly stipend, Social Security Tax allowance, reimbursement at the IRS rate for miles driven while working (mileage from any site, including the rostered minister's home, to and from any ministry site), continuing education reimbursement up to \$250 every three months, and one week of paid vacation (including one Sunday) for every three months of service.
- In exceptional circumstances, a congregation may request less than 20 hours per week and compensation will be adjusted accordingly with the approval of the bishop
- Congregations are to provide a proportionate subsidy for health insurance

## **2024 COMPENSATION RATES**

Compensation for pastors serving interims under agreement is based on a \$30/hour calculation. Any hours above the agreement are to be compensated at a minimum of \$30/hour.

**Interims under Call** - at 20 hours or more per week: Compensation based on synod guidelines, including health, dental, disability, survivor, and pension benefits.

**Interims under Agreement with Congregation Council** - at 20 hours per week: \$2,600 monthly stipend plus an allowance for the church's 50% share of the Social Security Tax (.08284 x \$2,600) and provide a proportionate subsidy for health insurance. The \$2,600 figure maintains \$30 per hour for the 13 weeks of any quarter.

**Local Interim** - at 20 hours per month: \$600 monthly stipend.

**Worship Supplies:**

- \$150 for one Sunday service with
  - \$50 added for each additional service on Sunday morning;
  - \$75 additional same-weekend services on Saturday evening or Sunday evening.
- \$150 for Special services, including Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, midweek services, etc.
  - \$50 additional special service (i.e. Christmas Eve)
  - \$75 for additional special services at a non-regular Sunday or non-Sunday worship time (Sunrise & 11:00, etc.).

**Mileage:** Mileage is to be compensated at the IRS mileage rate for 2024. For interims under contract or supply worship leaders, mileage from any site, including the leader’s home, to and from any ministry site.

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Because some Interim pastors serve under call and some serve by agreement with the Congregation Council, compensation standards vary.

- When a call is extended either by a congregation or by the Synod Council, the congregation(s) being served is expected to provide a compensation package that is based upon synodical guidelines and includes benefits. (This may be adjusted according to the hours of service agreed upon.)
- Those congregations served by interim pastors who are not under call are expected to provide at least a monthly stipend and travel reimbursement. The provision of health, dental, disability, survivor, and pension benefits is encouraged under these circumstances as well.
- Social Security Tax allowance, vacation, sick leave, and continuing education benefits are included in all cases except for Local Interim and Worship Supplies.

The selection of an interim pastor and their compensation package will be guided by the synodical bishop, who will strive to balance the requirements and abilities of the congregation with equitable considerations for the pastor.