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3 **THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE**
4 **POLICY ON TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS**

5 **INTRODUCTION**

6 This policy is to be used by sessions and the presbytery to assist congregations to have effective pastoral
7 services-in the absence of an installed pastor. The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee ordinarily recommends
8 an interim pastor, either full or part time, during the period between regularly installed pastors. This policy has
9 three purposes:

- 10 1. To help sessions of congregations without pastors understand their options for securing pastoral
11 leadership during transitional periods.
12 2. To present a basis and guidelines for establishing an interim pastorate.
13 3. To outline presbytery's active partnership with these congregations.
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15 **I. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT INSTALLED PASTORS**

16 When a congregation is between pastors, the session should obtain the services of a teaching elder in a
17 temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call is issued, and no formal installation takes place. The session
18 has the following options:

- 19 A. Temporary Supply / Stated Supply (*G-2.0504b, c*): A temporary supply may be a teaching elder,
20 candidate, commissioned ruling elder, or ruling elder. Arrangements are made by the session for
21 services as needed, not to exceed twelve (12) months at a time. The session shall seek the counsel of
22 the presbytery through its COM before securing a temporary supply. A temporary supply may not be
23 called as pastor or associate pastor of a church served as temporary supply, except by three-fourths
24 vote of presbytery.
25 B. Interim Pastor: The interim pastor is invited by the session for a specified period of time, not to
26 exceed twelve (12) months at a time, while the church is seeking a pastor. Presbytery approval
27 through the COM is required. The interim pastor is not ordinarily eligible to be called as the next
28 regularly installed pastor, co-pastor, associate pastor (*G-2.0504b*).
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30 The policy concerning former pastors applies to pastors in temporary pastoral relationships.
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32 **II. DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD**

33 When a presbytery and session determine that an interim pastor, interim co-pastor, or interim associate pastor
34 is necessary and helpful, the session shall consult the Committee on Ministry and seek an interim pastor as
35 soon as a date certain for departure has been announced by a pastor or associate pastor planning to leave. This
36 is accomplished by seeking the counsel of presbytery through the Committee on Ministry. The COM shall
37 then:

- 38 A. Initiate meetings with the session to establish directions and methods of acquiring temporary
39 pastoral relationship or interim.
40 B. Support the session in any needs that may arise whether physical, moral, or spiritual.
41 C. Conduct all exit interviews with former pastor and the session.
42 D. The interim, through the COM liaison, shall report on continuing progress of the interim
43 relationship. The COM liaison shall conduct exit interviews with the interim and the session upon
44 termination of the interim contract.
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46 The current pastor cannot be involved in the interim search process.
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III. PRACTICALITIES OF ESTABLISHING AN INTERIM PASTORATE

A. Resources

When a congregation is without a pastor, and in need of the services of an interim pastor, the clerk of session shall contact either the Executive Presbyter, the chair of COM, or the COM liaison for recommendations of potential interims.

B. Contracts

All contracts with interim pastors must be in written form. The contracts must be explicit and detailed in order to avoid any misunderstanding. The contract must be approved by the Committee on Ministry. A sample contract will be provided by the COM. Ordinarily, the interim pastor should already be trained in Interim Ministry or shall take Phase I training during the first year of the interim, then Phase II training during the second year, then Advanced Training. The presbytery expects the interim minister to work toward certification.

Revised by the Committee on Ministry 10 January 2017