

TOWN HALL MEETING, SUNDAY, NOV. 3
OPTIONS FOR MINISTERS TO CONSIDER

CONTRACT MINISTER

Contract ministry is simply a congregation and minister making certain basic agreements for ministerial service. Most often, it is seen in part-time congregations. Any ministry of less than 75% (3/4 time) is considered a contract ministry by the UUA Transitions Office. Contract ministries are almost always for a 1-year (or less) time agreement. They may be renewed. There should be no expectations by the congregation or the minister that the ministry will last longer than a year when the contract is agreed upon by both. The process for finding a contract minister is simpler, though it often takes longer. Most contract ministries have a smaller scope of search.

It is possible for a contract minister to become a permanent minister with a congregation.

DEVELOPMENTAL MINISTER

Developmental ministry is a program for congregations knowing that they have specific longer term transitional work to do before being ready for a settled minister. Usually a developmental ministry lasts 4-7 years, with 4-5 being optimal.

Congregations with a traumatic history of unresolved conflict, boundary violations, clergy (or other staff or leaders) sexual misconduct, repeated and rapid ministerial turnover, abusive leadership are good candidates. So are congregations with longtime struggles over a historic and beloved building, and those where their community has changed, most often facing a decline, when the congregation may need to reinvent itself and its purpose.

Congregational leaders are unified that this work needs to occur, can readily identify areas of work needed, and realize that they must do this work with help from a minister (and, not have the minister do the work for them). They have found a way to ensure buy-in from the larger congregation. New leaders are oriented and supportive of the program when current leaders shift out of leadership positions.

The congregation must work with regional staff to be approved for developmental ministry and should contact regional staff before contacting the Transitions Office.

What developmental ministry is not:

- A way for a minister to do the work of the congregation
- A quick fix
- An audition. Developmental ministers may not be called.

INTERIM MINISTER

- The search for an interim minister takes place in April and May of each year for a July or August start.
- Congregations may request the Transitions Office initiate a search for an interim minister in the MinistrySearch system as of February 1 for the year in search. Such requests should be submitted

through email (transitions@uua.org). Congregations seeking a minister at less than 75% are instructed to use the contract ministry search process.

- The selection is made in a very short time period so the interim search committee should be prepared to make this search a priority for the several weeks it normally takes to conduct it.
- The name of every minister who expresses an interest in your congregation will be released to you, up to 8 names.
- You may request to have a single interim minister recommended to you.
- You may choose to limit the number of names you receive (2-7 names)
- If your congregation had a difficult interim experience in the past, please arrange to speak with your regional staff or the Director of the Transitions Office. This should not deter you from searching for an interim minister, but it can shape how you search for your next, different interim minister.
- What ministers look for when reviewing an application is fair compensation and authenticity. They are most interested in a congregation which honestly expresses its challenges, successes, and needs. They want an opportunity to do real work with a congregation looking to get ready for its next settled ministry.
- All interim search committees (on behalf of their congregation) and all interim ministers must fill out the covenant to agree with each other and the Transitions Office to follow the rules of interim search. (See next page)
- Congregations engaging at least a 24-month interim ministry period have a much greater success rate (90%) at calling a minister following their interim period than congregations doing only a single year of interim ministry (56%).
- The UUA recommends a two-year interim for most congregations. Our mantra is “Doing it well beats doing it quickly.” Don’t be afraid to take the time you need. Over 90% of congregations do at least 24 months of interim ministry.
- Search committees have more time and seem to be more discerning and open when elected after the interim minister has arrived than during the ending of the settled ministry. Search committees need a full year to do their work well. Search committees selected after an interim minister has arrived tend to be able to look forward and are more likely to see future needs. Search committees selected while a settled minister is still serving the congregation tend to gaze backwards and are more reactive (either positively or negatively, often overly so) and less open to a new and different minister and ministry.
- It is highly recommended that congregations doing two years of interim ministry do so with the provision that the contract is one year with the option to renew for another year. Doing so allows for the possibility of a graceful exit if the interim and congregation do not match well. Additionally, some congregations are just better served by two different interims.

Covenant for Congregations Seeking Interim Ministry

1. We agree to follow the rules and timelines within the Transitional Ministry Handbook and Transitions Office Website.
2. We agree to honor a minister’s needs to follow the Guidelines for the UUMA (regardless of membership).

3. We agree to not to ask the interim to be a candidate for a congregation's settled position and understand that that the interim may not apply to a position with our congregation that starts within 3 years of their last day as interim minister.
4. We agree to inform and work with the Transitions Office, Regional Staff, and regional transitions coaches throughout the transitional process.
5. We agree to complete interim progress appraisals, as required.
6. We agree to fund the training cost of the interim minister.
7. We understand that an interim minister must have a mentor (all except Accredited Interim Ministers) or collegial support system (AIMS only) during the interim ministry.
8. We understand the need for fairness throughout the search and interim period. We agree to abide by the interim search rules as well as to support interim ministry in our congregation throughout the interim period.

Covenant for Ministers Seeking to Do Interim Ministry

1. I agree to follow the rules and timelines within the Transitional Ministry Handbook and Transitions Office Website.
2. I agree to abide by the Guidelines for the UUMA (regardless of membership).
3. I agree to not be a candidate for a congregation's settled position and will not apply to a position that starts within 3 years of my last day as interim minister.
4. I agree to inform and work with the Transitions Office, Regional Staff, and regional transitions coaches to support the congregation through the transitional process.
5. I agree to complete interim progress appraisals, as required.
6. I agree to complete the initial training of interim ministers' if I have not already done so.
7. I agree to have a mentor (all except Accredited Interim Ministers) or collegial support system (AIMS only) during the interim ministry.
8. I agree to support my interim ministry colleagues throughout the search and interim period.