

Diocese of Easton
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Letter of Agreement

between

the Vestry of

and

The Reverend _____

who has been appointed Interim Rector by the Vestry, effective _____, with the understanding that he shall remain in this position until shortly before the arrival of the new Rector. (In the event that either the Vestry, or the Interim Rector, or both, should wish to dissolve this relationship before acceptance of a call by the new Rector, the Bishop shall be notified, and may (a) suggest mediation and/or (b) require that the parties agree on definitions of responsibility and accountability, or (c) allow the relationship to be terminated upon such terms and conditions, including financial settlements, as he shall deem just and compassionate.)

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS OF THE INTERIM PERIOD

The interim period is seen as prime time for renewal and re-energizing the parish in its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Vestry and Interim Rector shall work together to prepare for healthy transition to the next rectorship. Specific tasks to be addressed include:

Coming to an understanding of parish's history and relationship with its previous rectors.

Discovering the parish's identity, what it dreams of being and doing apart from previous clergy leadership.

Embracing shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively.

Renewing and reworking relationships with the diocese, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to the other.

Building commitment to the leadership of the new rector in order to be prepared to move into the future with openness to new possibilities.

VESTRY RESPONSIBILITIES

All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of the parish and the Interim Rector. The vestry shall lead the laity to support and cooperate with the Interim Rector in pursuit of parish goals and in the performance of the developmental tasks of the interim period.

The Vestry is legal agent for the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the Interim Rector. The Vestry will see that the Interim Rector is properly supported, personally and organizationally as well as in the Vestry's financial obligations to the Interim Rector.

INTERIM RECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Interim Rector represents and extends the ministry which is the Bishop's pastoral and canonical responsibility for congregations in leadership transition. The Interim Rector shall lead _____ Church as rector, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of this congregation and of the whole church, in communion with our Bishop. The Interim Rector shall . . .

Work with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain the regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices (weddings, funerals, baptisms), calling upon the sick and shut-in, visiting newcomers, and ongoing administration of the parish.

Supervise all parish staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they shall be accountable to the Interim Rector.

Function as Chair of the Vestry, and support the Vestry in its responsibilities.

The major goal of the Interim Rector's ministry is to prepare the congregation for the coming of the next rector. To this end, the Interim Rector shall . . .

Help the congregation deal with its grief and any other unresolved issues arising from the rector's departure.

Help reconcile internal conflicts and help heal any divisions within the congregation.

Help the Vestry, lay leaders and staff make such changes as may be needed to align parish life and administration with generally accepted standards in the diocese.

Covenants

SECTION A. TIMES OF WORK AND LEAVE

The Interim Rector's scheduled workweek is the equivalent of five days per week which shall include Sunday activities. In general, no more than three evenings of work activities per week are expected. The Interim Rector is expected to preserve at least one continuous twenty-four hour period each week solely for personal and family use.

1. The Interim Rector shall have the following periods of leave at full compensation:
 - a. National Holidays, to be taken on the day set or on a substitute date so as not to interfere with worship or other major Church activities.
 - b. Annual vacation of one month, which shall include up to five Sundays.

- c. Two weeks annually of Professional Development Leave.

SECTION B. COMPENSATION

1. The Interim Rector’s annual cash stipend shall be \$____.____, paid bi-weekly on the 15th and on the last day of each month. This salary shall be reviewed and adjusted annually as provided in the Compensation Guidelines in the Diocese of Easton, with adjustments made based on merit and changes in the Consumer Price Index.
3. The Interim Rector is considered to be “self-employed” for Social Security purposes. _____ Church will pay to the Interim Rector an amount equal to one-half of the Interim Rector’s SECA tax. This cash amount is taxable income to the Interim Rector.
4. The Interim Rector shall have full use of the Rectory including utilities. Expenses for repair and/or remodeling shall be paid by the parish in accordance with an annual plan and budget mutually agreed to by the Interim Rector and Vestry. No parish activities will be planned in such housing without the invitation of the Interim Rector’s household.
5. The Vestry shall pay the Church Pension Fund assessment on the sum of the Interim Rector’s annual remuneration package, in accordance with the formula established by the Church Pension Fund.

SECTION C. BENEFITS

_____ Church shall pay the following benefits:

1. Health insurance coverage for the Interim Rector and his/her family for the group health insurance plan used by the Diocese unless equivalent or better insurance is provided independently through the employment of the Interim Rector’s spouse or partner.
2. Group Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance through the Episcopal Church Medical Trust.
3. Workers’ Compensation insurance, as provided by state law.
4. Short-Term Disability Insurance as available through the Church Insurance Company.

SECTION D. EXPENSES

The Vestry shall pay the following expenses incurred by the Interim Rector in fulfilling the duties of the office:

Travel costs incurred in the conduct of Parish and Diocesan business. Auto cost shall be reimbursed at the GSA published rate (currently .565/mile).

The normal expenses incurred in the conduct of Church business such as telephone, postage, supplies, printing, secretarial services, etc.

An expense allowance (up to \$ _____) for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of professional activities on behalf of and for the parish of _____ Church, reimbursed when receipts are documented to the Church.

A Professional Development Allowance (continuing education) of \$500 per year.

Reasonable moving expenses required to relocate the Interim Rector to City, Maryland.

SECTION E. DISCRETIONARY FUND

In accordance with the canons of the General Convention, the Alms/Discretionary Fund, in the absence of a Rector, is under the control of the Parish Almoner. The Senior Warden shall be appointed Parish Almoner, and, together with the Interim Rector and Junior Warden, shall have access to this fund for the aid of the poor and those in need, and for any other reasonable expense normally attributed to such a canonical Alms/Discretionary Fund.

SECTION F. SUPPLEMENTARY COMPENSATION

The Interim Rector shall not charge fees for performing any rites of the Church (for example: baptisms, marriage, funerals) for members of _____ Church. The Interim Rector may, however, receive from other sources, such as:

Sacramental services on behalf of persons not in any way related to _____ Church.

Fees and honoraria for professional services performed on personal time for groups unrelated to _____ Church, or for sermons, books or articles published outside the parish.

SECTION G. USE OF BUILDING

It is understood that the general pattern of building use followed during the last rectorship shall be maintained, unless there is specific action of the Vestry to the contrary. The Interim Rector shall have the right to grant use of the buildings to individuals or groups from outside the parish, only under guidelines approved by the Vestry.

SECTION I. MUTUAL MINISTRY REVIEW

There shall be a quarterly discussion and mutual review of the total ministry of the parish, in order to:

Provide the Interim Rector, Wardens and Vestry opportunity to assess how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and to the ministry they share.

Evaluate progress on the developmental tasks, and establish and adjust goals for the work of the parish during the interim.

Plan healthy closure for the interim ministry and prepare for the coming of the next Rector.

Isolate areas of conflict or disappointment which have not received adequate attention and may be adversely affecting mutual ministry.

Clarify expectations of all parties to help put any future conflicts in manageable form.

A mutually agreed upon third party shall be engaged to facilitate the mutual ministry review process.

Interim Rector shall begin duties in the parish not later than _____, unless delayed by adverse circumstances.

All pay and benefits shall become effective on _____.

This Letter of Agreement (and its related Position Description) shall be made part of the minutes of the next Vestry meeting following its signing, and copies shall be given to each new Vestry member thereafter.

If the Interim Rector and Vestry are in disagreement concerning interpretation of this Letter of Agreement, either party may appeal for mediation to a mutually agreed upon third party, the Bishop remaining the final arbiter.

Rector

Date

Senior Warden

Date

Bishop

Date

This model is adapted from material found in Called to Work Together: A Manual on Letters of Agreement for Clergy and Congregation by Richard L. Ullman, available from the Church Deployment Office. The model draws on The Interim Pastor by Ralph Macy, and What You Can Expect from an Interim Pastor by Philip Porcher, published by The Alban Institute.