

Step Two: The In-Between Time

• Assessing the State of the Church

As the congregation deals with the leaving of a pastor (no matter what the circumstances), there is a distinct tendency to make decisions about the future from a place of emotion and usually, the overarching emotion, is anxiety. When decisions are made from a place of anxiety, they are rarely fruitful.

In partnership with OCMD, there are a variety of things that may need to be assessed.

In partnership, an OCMD staff member and the board will discern together what the assessment might suggest as a way forward for the “in between time.”

Most Probable Options

The OCMD will begin assessing and discussing a support plan with the board as soon as they are notified of an upcoming pastoral transition. The OCMD may support a local church board through a collaborative and responsive process of selecting and appointing a Transitional Pastor. At present, there are 6 appointment options for consideration:

1. **Interim Pastor** (provides stability, manages change dynamics, and does not apply to be settled pastor, except in rare circumstances which would be agreed with the Board at the beginning of their contract.)
2. **Provisional Pastor** (provides stability, manages change dynamics and rebuilding work, will be considered for settled pastor as first option before a Pastoral Search Committee would be formed.)
3. **Gap Pastor** (provides short-term stability, up to 3-months)
4. **Interim Pastoral Leader** (Lay Pastor; provides stability and is usually volunteer or stipendiary. This may be short-term or a longer, more settled period depending on the needs of the church and their capacities.)
5. **Intervention** period followed by an appointment (When a church has experienced crisis, upheaval, or other events)
6. **No appointment.** Moving directly into Pastoral Search (Move to Step 3 - Pastoral Search)

• Transitional Pastor Appointment Process

The OCMD will begin looking for good matches for this church and this situation, and coach the Board through a selection process. Top filters for choice:

1. Right skills, gifts, experience and education
2. Availability and Timing
3. Right fit for this church within its means

➤ When OCMD and Board feel comfortable that the first two things have been found, A visit by the prospective appointee is arranged. The visit is to accomplish:

1. An opportunity for the appointee to meet the congregation in formal and informal environments.
2. An opportunity for the congregation to hear the appointee preach and experience them as a worship leader.
3. An open congregational forum that allows for questions and answers with the appointee.
4. Meeting with the board to discuss compensation.
5. Discern if there is good chemistry between appointee and congregation. There is no election at this point. It is important to note that when it is the appropriate time, depending on the transition plan, the congregation will always elect its next settled Pastor. Part of the wisdom behind Transitional Pastor appointments is not to throw the congregation into a premature election process before they are ready.

➤ Making the Appointment

1. Following the visit, the OCMD and the board VM connect and find out if the general sense was that the appointee was a good fit or not.
2. Following the visit, the OCMD and the candidate connect to find out if they felt the fit was a good one.
3. If everyone says yes to the "fit," then the OCMD will move forward with the appointment.
4. An appointment letter will be sent to the Transitional Pastor and copied to the VM. Once this letter is received, the congregation can be notified unless there are special circumstances that require a delay in making the announcement.
5. The board and Transitional Pastor will begin working on generating the Compensation Contract while the OCMD and Transitional Pastor begin developing on a Work Agreement. All Transitional Pastors will be part of a supported cohort and have an OCMD staff person assigned as their primary coach.