

### **Five Focus Points of Interim Ministry**

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#### ***What is the purpose of interim ministry?***

The interim period following the end of one relationship and preceding the beginning of another provides the breathing space during which a congregation can review its goals, assess its programs, consider the quality of its life in common, and “tune up” for a new era. The one- to two-year period it usually takes for a congregation to grow into and own its identity, independent of both positive and negative feelings about the ministry that has come to an end, can be exciting, even transformative, when devoted to self-examination and institutional renewal. A palate cleanser, one might say.

#### ***What does an interim minister do?***

In addition to carrying out customary ministerial duties, an interim minister assists a congregation in these **five Focus Points**:

1. Claiming and honoring its past and engaging and honoring its griefs and conflicts
2. Recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges
3. Clarifying the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition
4. Making appropriate use of local, regional, and national UUA, and other outside resources
5. Proudly coming into possession of a renewed vision and strong stewardship, prepared for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.

Because interim ministers are “pre-fired,” they are well-positioned to shine light on uncomfortable truths and effect difficult changes that can move a congregation toward greater health and readiness for a new ministry.

#### **REFLECTIONS:**

**Think on previous interim ministries or other transitioning processes you have gone through. What are your experiences, memories, feelings, etc.?**

**How is each focus point ‘landing’ with you? How do the focus points align with your understanding of interim ministry? How might you imagine yourself contributing to any of the change processes outlined by the Focus Points?**