

Preparing for the Interim

Your pastor has announced his departure and now the leaders are expected to fill the gap. The job can seem overwhelming, but there are ways to prepare. This outline will help with the preparations. (This sheet assumes communication with the pastor continues to be open.)

Collect information:

- Collect information on websites, services and accounts used in association with your church. Also collect the username and password for each account. Some churches have accounts for sermon graphics, sheet music (CCLI account), websites, Twitter and Facebook.
- List contacts for organizing key events like Communion, fundraisers, yearly church events lawn services, snow removal and other services.
- Collect information on ministry leaders and volunteers. Build a list of ministries and leaders with their ministry position, name, phone number and email.
- Collect keys to doors, closets, safety deposit boxes, and padlocks.
- Collect credit/debit cards and church membership/discount cards.
- Consider having the pastor train volunteers on equipment and software in order for ministry to continue.

Prepare for Sunday morning services:

- Ask the pastor to design a list of necessary tasks and volunteer positions to be filled for Sunday services.
- To find pulpit supply, ask your pastor for contacts, call your denominational headquarters or a nearby seminary. If those resources are not available, contact local funeral directors for ideas. Pulpit supply should be scheduled at least 30 days in advance.
- Designate a leader, volunteer or staff member to act as coordinator for all aspects of the Sunday service. Have that person contact all staff and volunteers to ensure resources are in place for Sunday services.
- Designate a leader volunteer or staff member to open and close the church each Sunday.
- If the church does not have a paid administrator, designate someone to collect announcements and create the proper materials.

Prepare for ministries/activities:

- List ministries needing keys or needing the building opened throughout the week.
- List the nursing homes or local retirement centers visitation schedule. What dates/times? Will the church continue to provide this ministry? If not, who needs to be contacted?
- List the scheduled community services you offer to your community like soup kitchens or fundraisers and appoint a leader to organize these services.
- Designate who will visit the sick, hospitalized or shut-in and publicize a contact number

Other considerations:

- List any materials or signs needing to be changed. This includes websites, Facebook, Twitter, newspapers as well as church materials.
- If there are multiple church staff, designate a leader to whom the staff report. How will they communicate and how often?
- Designate a leader to regularly review income, expenses and the checkbook balance in order to ensure the financial health of the church.