

Interim Tasks and History

The Work of the Congregation: Focus Points

Task #	Original	Updated
1	<p>Coming to Terms With History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives the impression that there is some level of struggle. • Sometimes there is struggle. A congregation does need to make peace with its history 	<p>Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated 'Heritage' denotes that the interim time is to pay attention to the joys and conflicts of a congregation's history. How did this community take shape? • It is important to NOT overlook or quickly go past anything that needs resolution or close attention.
2	<p>Understanding a Congregations Unique Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From an Interim Religious Education Perspective, it is hoped that the interim process does not lose sight of the value of identity. 	<p>Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission includes identity. • Redefining its sense of purpose • The term mission is often confusing. Congregations often take a great deal of time defining exactly what they mean by mission. See Note below.
3	<p>Leadership Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original thought is to be 'ready' and 'non-anxious' about changes in leadership because they are sure to happen. 	<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader task that looks at leadership development, needs, training, assessment, etc... Leadership changes is embedded in this broader task
4	<p>Renewing Denominational Linkages</p>	<p>Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader understanding. Connecting to the denomination as well as to the community, cluster of congregations, all relationships.
5	<p>Commitment to the Future Vitality of the Congregation</p>	<p>Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is in store? • What is our short term and longer-term vision. • What professionals do we need to make this vision a reality?
6	<p>Conducting or overseeing the customary responsibilities and functions of RE program Administration and Leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique task added to interim religious education in 2005. Was removed in 2013. 	

The Work of the Leader. Process Tasks.

While the interim leader guides a congregation through the interim tasks listed above, they should be aware of their own presence and work in the system. The following is the work of the trained interim leader.

Task #	The Work of the Leader: Process Tasks
1	Joining the System. How do you enter a new family system well?
2	Analyzing the System How do you learn about the congregation you are serving?
3	Connecting to the Denomination Gain knowledge and support from the larger community.
4	Exit and Evaluation Saying goodbye in a healthy manner and leaving everything in good order.

Notes:

1. It is interesting to note that the Interim Ministry Network is shifting from language around Mission to language around Core Values. Core Values is easier to define and does not come with so much baggage that needs to be sorted before good purpose work can begin. Helping a congregation/organization identify its core values gets to the heart of its true purpose.
2. The Interim Ministry Network developed five congregational tasks for a congregation going through an interim period. And just like any good organization, they have gone through their own interim period and updated the tasks with the twenty-first century in mind. Below is a chart of the original tasks (created with the IMN in the 1970-1980's) as well as the updated version implanted Spring 2012. The first chart above looks at both the original and updated task. For more information, read Keydel, John. *Focus Points and the Work of the Congregation* in Norman B. Bendroth's *Transitional Ministry Today: Successful Strategies for Churches and Pastors* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).
3. In 1974, a church consulting organization developed under the leadership of Loren Meade, an Episcopal priest who saw a need for church and professional support. For 40 years, the Alban Institute provided congregation's with excellent consultants and written material to meet the growing needs of congregations. The Alban Institute no longer exists as its own entity but has been incorporated into Duke Divinity School.
One of the first identified needs Alban analyzed was for congregations going through professional, program and societal transitions. It was apparent that ministers were not equipped to deal with large issues entangled in these transitions and that trained leadership would be a great benefit. Instead of incorporating this transitional

minister training into the Alban Institute, a separate organization called the Interim Ministry Network was born. For more than forty years, the Interim Ministry Network serves many denominations and faiths by training and offering collegial support to interim professionals. Even though the Alban Institute is under the umbrella of Duke Divinity School, the Interim Ministry Network continues to offer training, publishing, and support for trained interim professionals. www.imnedu.org