

Guiding Principles for Interim Ministry in the Virginia Synod

Thank you for answering the call to serve in interim ministry. Your service is a valuable part of the ministry of our synod.

Since each congregation and each ministry is unique, it is impractical to try and provide a “One Size Fits All How-to Guide to Interim Ministry.” Instead, the Virginia Synod Office of the Bishop offers these guiding principles for interim ministry in the Virginia Synod.

1. **Love God and love God's people.** In a time of transition, having a pastor present in the congregation who shares their love for God and God's love for God's people gives a congregation a sense of comfort in the moment, hope for the people, and excitement for the future. During the interim, be sure to attend to your own prayer and devotional life and be a good shepherd to the congregation.
2. **Proclaim the Gospel.** A key part of any pastor's call is to preach the good news about Jesus. Look for those places where God's story connects with the congregation's story and be bold in proclaiming the Gospel.
3. **Name and claim strengths in the congregation.** God blesses every congregation with gifts, strengths, and competencies. In a time of transition, it is extremely helpful to name and claim those strengths. Naming and claiming strengths invites people to use their gifts for ministry and opens the door to new possibilities and opportunities.
4. **Pick one opportunity to use your gifts to strengthen the congregation's ministry and to have fun doing something creative.** As a new leader in the congregation, you bring a fresh set of eyes to existing ministries. Use your own experiences to suggest new possibilities. As you get to know the ministry of the congregation, look for a spot where your gifts and experience could be of particular help to the congregation. Have fun developing that particular area of ministry. There are many areas where your gifts could be helpful, but start with the one that is the best match between your gifts and the congregation's ministry.
5. **Prepare the way for the next pastor.** By definition, interim ministry is a bridge between what has been and what will be. You will have opportunities to help the congregation grieve what has been, so be prepared to enter into that grief and help provide healing. You will have the opportunity to share your wisdom about what ministry might look like, so be prepared to lead. You will have the opportunity to create a climate of anticipation, hope, and excitement about what comes next, so be prepared to serve as a cheerleader for the next pastor and phase of ministry in this congregation. Your ministry is a critical part of creating the next healthy call.
6. **Return to #1 and Repeat.**

For links to resources on topics like Virginia Synod Policies and Financial Policies, go to: [Virginia Synod Interim Resource Guide](#).

If you need assistance during your interim ministry, your synod staff is available to help. You can call the Synod Office (540.389.1000) for support or email any of the staff.

- Bishop Bob Humphrey: humphrey@vasynod.org
- Pastor Kelly Bayer Derrick (Assistant to the Bishop): bayerderrick@vasynod.org
- Pastor John Wertz, Jr. (Director for Evangelical Mission): wertz@vasynod.org
- Rebecca Walls (Call Process Coordinator): walls@vasynod.org [walls@vasynod.org](https://www.vasynod.org/walls@vasynod.org)

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