



La Crosse Area Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Gods work. Our Hands.

Rev. Jim Arends, Bishop

Rev. Elizabeth (Libby) Howe, Assistant to the Bishop

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May Jesus Christ bless and keep you as you walk together with him through this time of transition in your parish.

“Interim Ministry” is ministry between the resignation of one pastor and the beginning date of the next pastor. Those pastors who serve during this transition period are called “interim pastors.” We are blessed to have several interim pastors serving in our synod. Most of them have received special training for the task of interim ministry and some have simply served competently in other church settings or as parish pastors.

An interim pastor helps bridge the gap between your former pastor and the new pastor that your congregation will call. In addition to providing pastoral ministry, the interim pastor can also assist in the healing process for congregations in conflict or crisis.

Here are the steps to follow in securing an interim pastor:

1. In consultation with synod office, your congregational leaders will determine what level of service (full-time or part-time) and what particular skills are needed in an interim pastor.
2. Given the needs of the parish and availability of interims, I will nominate a pastor who can serve your congregation.
3. Synod staff will contact your church council president with my nomination of an interim pastor. The interim will furnish references from previous congregations served.
4. When your congregation’s council has interviewed the prospective interim pastor, the council and interim pastor together should fill out the “Interim Pastor’s Covenant” and return it to the synod office for my signature.

In Christ,

Bishop Jim Arends

La Crosse Area Synod



Interim Pastor Covenant

(congregation(s))

with prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to do God's will,

hereby enters into a covenant with

Pastor(s) _____

to serve as Interim (circle - Solo, Senior, or Associate Pastor(s) for the period

from _____ to call of a new Pastor.

As Interim Pastor you will be expected to provide pastoral ministry in accordance with the practice and expectations of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), including:

- A. Preach and teach the word of God.
- B. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments.
- C. Provide pastoral care and counseling to the members of the parish as needed, providing a phone number to the parish where the pastor can be reached in emergencies.
- D. Provide pastoral leadership for the meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation.
- E. Encourage the congregation to support the total ministry of the ELCA, including giving Mission Support on a firstfruits basis..
- F. Agree not to make your self available for regular call in this congregation. This includes no involvement in the call process unless requested by the Bishop.
- G. Regularly attend meetings of the synod and conference.
- H. For the purpose of being in relationship and ministry together in Jesus Christ, a full-time interim pastor will normally spend five days a week (an average of at least 40 hours/week) in contact hours with people (including worship services, visitation, new members, emergencies, visitation of the hospitalized and shut-ins, parish meetings, confirmation, funeral and their preparations, weddings and their preparations, administration, correspondence, telephoning, counseling, office hours, preparation

for meetings, travel between meetings and visitation, text study, monthly conference meetings, required synod meetings, and certain community functions), plus another day at home or at the church in preparation for sermons, classes, etc. (about another 10 hours/week) Note: the ELCA determines full-time ministry to be about 50 hours/week.

(Note: when the pastor is commuting great distances, the pastor will probably need to spend four long days/weeks in contact hours in the parish.)

Additional responsibilities and expectations:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

During this interim we will together:

- A. Work through the transitional issues which follow the departure of a pastor.
- B. Subscribe to the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA, the La Crosse Area Synod, and the congregation(s).
- C. Examine and strengthen the congregation's relationship with the ELCA, the La Crosse Area Synod, including the congregation's support to the mission of the wider church.
- D. Prepare for the arrival of a new pastor.
- E. Conduct an evaluation two or three months after the beginning of this interim ministry, and a final evaluation at the conclusion of the interim ministry, both of which will be shared with the bishop.
- F. Identify any specific issues facing the congregation(s) and develop ways of dealing with them, including but not limited to:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

We, the congregation(s) will:

- A. Receive you as our Interim Pastor, uphold you in our prayers, and accord you our love, respect, and good will.
- B. Look to you to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, marriages and funerals.
- C. Agree that we will not consider you for regular call to this congregation.

D. Provide a church secretary.

E. The congregation(s) will provide the following compensation, benefits, and expenses:

	<u>MONTHLY</u>
Compensation Salary (based on synod guidelines)	_____ (1)
Housing Allowance	_____
Social Security	_____
Health Insurance	_____ (3)
Supplemental Health Insurance	_____
Pension	_____ (3)
<u>ADDITIONAL EXPENSES</u>	
Automobile	_____ (2)
Professional Expense/Books and etc.	_____
Continuing Education Money (\$50/month)	_____
<u>TIME AWAY</u>	
Continuing Education Time	_____
2 wks (including 2 Sundays) as needed	
Vacation	_____
4 wks min. (including 4 Sundays)	

(1) Normally an interim pastor is paid according to their years of parish experience or paid the salary and benefit package of the former pastor. This may be prorated if service is less than full-time.

(2) The congregation will compensate a synodically called interim pastor for mileage to and from the Synod Office. Because most interim pastors will be staying in the parsonage you may choose to use the "cost utilities" to help offset some of the cost of commuting. Cost of commuting mileage is based on federal guidelines.

(3) Interim pastors receive the same ELCA pension and medical benefits as a regularly called pastor.

This covenant terminates when a new pastor has accepted a call and begins ministry in the congregation. It may also be terminated by the congregation, the Interim Pastor, or the Bishop. When any of the parties wish to terminate the covenant, a one month notice of such intent shall be given.

Interim Pastor(s) _____

Congregational President(s) _____

Synod Bishop _____

Date _____