

Disciples Interims “Interim Ministry Basics”

Detailed Syllabus*



Dates: Mondays, October 9 through November 20, 2023 – via Zoom – 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Central Time. Cost for the course is \$500.

Application Deadline: Thursday, August 31, 2023

Contact: For application and other questions contact: Rev. Rebecca Kirby, Disciples Interims Administrator, DisciplesInterims@gmail.com

The “textbook” for the course is *Interim Ministry in Action – A Handbook for Churches in Transition* by Norman Bendroth, 2018 Rowman and Littlefield.

Unit 1 (October 9) -- What is the purpose of interim ministry?

- What does it look like today?
- A brief history of Interim Ministry
- Case studies to encourage conversation
- What is our context in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?
- The world is changing, the church is changing. Churches need specialized leadership in these transitional times: interim ministers.
- How is interim ministry different from settled ministry?
- Self-assessment tool

Unit 2 (October 16) -- Interim Ministry Basics

- Creating a roadmap for the interim time
 - getting acquainted
 - forming a transition team
 - setting goals
 - doing the work in the interim time tailored to the congregation
 - sharing information with the search committee
- Creating a covenant/contact with the congregation
- First steps as an interim

Unit 3 (October 23) – “Five Focus Points” to guide the congregation during the interim time.

- Heritage
 - reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed
- Leadership
 - reviewing the needs of the church and its ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership
- Mission
 - defining (redefining) sense of purpose and direction
- Connections
 - discovering all the relationships a faith community builds outside of itself
- Future
 - presenting ideas and processes to help the congregation discover who they are and where they are headed; creating congregational and pastoral profiles.
- The five focus points help the congregation answer the questions:
 - Who are we?
 - Who are our neighbors?
 - What is God calling us to do?

Unit 4 (October 30) – Visioning -- Helping the congregation understand its context and calling: in light of who we are and who is our neighbor, what is God calling us to do?

- Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry
- Three questions for visioning
 - Who are we?
 - What is our context?
 - What is God calling us to do?
- Discussion of future story and ministry plan process
- Introduction to Asset Mapping
- Conversations around:
 - Stewardship
 - Spiritual gifts

Unit 5 (November 6) – Navigating the System of the Local Congregation

- Introduction to Family Systems Theory (Bowen Theory)
 - Scriptural basis and discussion
 - Resources
 - Role of interim in the system
- Eight concepts of Bowen theory
- Case studies on systems
- Video from Healthy Congregations
- Communication and leadership

Unit 6 (November 13) – Change Theory, Conflict Transformation and My Role as an Interim Minister

- Overview of change theory
 - *Leading Change in the Congregation* by Rendle
 - *Managing Transitions* by Bridges
 - Technical vs adaptive change
 - Processes to help bring about change (Mead, Bridges, Rendle)
- Introduction to Conflict Transformation
 - Built on the teaching of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center
 - Key steps
 - *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love* resource
 - Techniques and tools

Unit 7 (November 20) – Constant Retooling – Learning tools and techniques in interim ministry—finding the resources that help in your local context: where to find them, when to use them. Assessing our growing edges as interim ministers and committing to being life-long learners in our field of ministry.

- Ideas and resources for your tool-belt
 - Self-Assessment
 - History Wall exercise
 - Life Cycle of Congregations (Bullard)
 - Asset Mapping
 - World Café model for conversation
 - Holy conversations
 - Spiritual Gifts inventories
 - By-Law and policy revisioning
 - Financial policies and stewardship resources
- Life as an interim minister
 - Contracts
 - Ministerial Code of Ethics
 - Self-Care
 - Evaluation

**Note: These are living, breathing classes which are subject to change based on the whims and desires of the instructors, a.k.a., “pastoral prerogative.”*