



Transition Team Job Description

The purpose of the Transition Team is to help the congregation during the interim, “in-between time of settled pastors,” by assisting the Interim Transitional Pastor and working with them to help the congregation recognize and accept the transition time as a journey where new experiments happen, when changes in the “way we’ve always done” take place, when new pastoral leadership calls for flexibility and adjustment.

THE FUNCTION OF THE TRANSITION TEAM

Who serves on the Transition Team? 3-5 persons, not to exceed 7.

- Those who are respected members of the congregation and are open to the new
- Those who have gifts in listening, keeping confidences, skills in facilitating conversation and fostering relationships
- Ask for congregational input – on an appointed Sunday ask members to write names of three members who have such gifts and skills. The governing body, in collaboration with interim pastor, using such input, appoints the transition team. (staff and their families may not serve on transition or search teams.)

Partnering with the Transitional Minister

- Be the Interim Pastor’s aid and help them with implementation of tasks
- Customize the Interim process, tasks and activities to fit the particular needs of congregation
- Make sure that a liturgy of welcome is included during the Interim Pastor’s first Worship Service

Offering Hospitality

- Welcome the Interim Transitional Pastor to the church, and foster connections
- Clarify to the congregation what the interim time is about and what an Interim Transitional Minister does and does not do
- Be bridge between interim pastor and congregation

Creating conditions for a successful transition

- Navigate potential problems and pitfalls proactively
- Help celebrate early wins, congregation’s cooperation, and openness to the new

Help with populating the church profile – the first steps

- Gather information to populate the church profile, especially the 3 questions (*see next page*)
- Organize Gatherings/Listening Sessions/surveys to discuss the questions in the church profile and gather information from all. Make sure to keep notes.
- Pass on the information to the Search Committee when formed

Help with the exit of the Interim Transitional Pastor

- Plan reception as celebration for Interim pastor's ministry with the congregation
- Include a liturgy of farewell, from Conference, during the interim pastor's last Worship Service.

THE 3 NARRATIVE QUESTIONS OF THE CHURCH PROFILE

Clarity of Mission and Purpose

QUESTION 1: WHO ARE WE TODAY?

- Survey the congregation - create a survey based on the questions in the profile, or use a professional survey company. For examples see:
 - http://hrr.hartsem.edu/leadership/church_inventory.html <https://thejoshua-group.com>
 - https://centerforcongregations.org/sites/default/files/Using_Survey_Assessment_Tools.pdf
 - <http://www.holycowconsulting.com/churches>
- Offer listening Forums/conversation gatherings/house meetings
- Analyze the church's conflict style. Look into church family system.
- Celebrate history day
- Identify strengths and gifts to build upon

Sample questions for congregational Survey for Question 1.

1. In your life that this church, what has been most meaningful to you?
2. In your life at this church, has there been anything that has caused you stress or discomfort? If so, what?
3. What keeps you coming back?
4. What do you think the mission, aim of this church should be?
5. How do you, and the small group of which you are part, board/committee/ministry team uphold this church's mission as you understand it?
6. What are the most effective parts of the congregation's ministries?
7. What are the least effective parts of the congregation's ministries?
8. How might the church better accomplish this mission?
9. What is your greatest hope/desire for this church?
10. How can the church better meet the needs of the youth in the community?
11. Where do you envision this church to be in five years?

QUESTION 2: WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

In answering the "Who is Our Neighbor?" question, it is best to actually connect with neighbors! Having outside eyes on the process is a key element of not simply recreating what you are already doing. Churches that look outside of themselves in a visioning process are more likely to engage the neighbors they meet later in partnership and imagination. Here are some steps and questions that could be used in the process:

- The ARDA – use demographic tools to learn about your neighborhood. Available at The Conference of Religion Date Archives <https://www.thearda.com>
- Understand the changing religious landscape with local and global research
- Meet with community leaders, town and school officials

It is best to get a sample of perspectives from those who have a unique history/connection:

- ✓ Superintendent/Principal/Teachers in the school system, including PTA
- ✓ Town Manager/Mayor/Selectman
- ✓ Chair of Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Police and Fire personnel
- ✓ PTA
- ✓ Council on Aging

It is good practice to contact them, “This is ____, I am a member of ____ church. Our church is looking for ways to be more involved in our community. We would like to talk with you for about 15-30 minutes to hear your perspective on the community and the ways our church might be helpful... Some questions:

- ✓ What are some of the strengths of this community?
 - ✓ What are some key challenges our community is facing or will be facing in the future?
 - ✓ What do you hear about our church around the community?
 - ✓ What are some ways that our church might be helpful to the community?
 - ✓ Are there groups we might partner with to help our community?
- Hold Coffee shop interviews (“you are thinking about moving into the neighborhood”... give strangers an opportunity to tell you what they see)
 - Diversity analysis (see www.prfc-gr.org for an inventory)
 - Do neighborhood walks/windshield tour – pray for your neighbors as you travel!
 - Investigate Global Mission partners

QUESTION 3: WHAT IS GOD CALLING US TO BE AND DO?

- Communal Discernment: What is our unique responsibility, role and possibility in this community to which God is calling us? What will the wider community miss if we were not here?
- Ask people to dream and share their aspirations for the church
- Share the information gathered for the first two question so a context is provided for the 3rd question.
- Utilize wider church vision/mission/purpose programs. Call your Conference for help.
- Examine leadership issues, governance, job descriptions and alignment
- Articulate and commit to vision and mission

A Brief Process to Discern: Vision and Mission for question 3

VISION: Aspiration of what you believe you are called to be. It is your WHY

Aspirational, motivational, inspirational

MISSION: How do you practically walk on the path toward the vision? It is your HOW

Practical, doable, implementable

VALUES: What is important to you? What do you value?

GIFTS AND STRENGTHS: What are the gifts of this community. What does it do well?

STRATEGIC PLAN or everyday activities – list them

- What do you do and how you help, how do you reach out to others?
- What do you value?
- What are your goals?
- What are your Strengths and Gifts and Opportunities
- What is your story? Your story that gives you identity

VISION BOARD: List them

- Who does your church help and reach out to?
- What is the purpose of your church/business?
- How do you want to make the world a more loving place?
- How can you heal pain in the world or what issues can you resolve?
- What's your ultimate aim/purpose for the church?

DISTILL TO THE ESSENTIALS

- From the above lists and the information gathered, discard that which is not core and central to the church
- When you finish this step, you will have the words for your “basic vision” which you’ll have to flesh out

WRITE

- Take the “basic vision” and craft it into a statement
- Use short words and sentences to keep it engaging
- Focus on what the church does for people and how it impacts lives