**How a Perceived Healthy Church Can Make Effective Use of the Interim Period\***

“Most churches view the time between the resignation of one pastor and the call of another as unproductive, fallow time. Some feel it is wasted time. Others fear the congregation will lose members or dollars. Still others are in a rush to call a new pastor as quickly as possible so that things can return to normal.

“Significant studies of hundreds of interim congregations over the past twenty years are now showing that the interim between pastors can be an important time in congregational life. R. Neil Chafin, an experienced consultant to congregations, says, ‘The way a congregation chooses to use its interim time will shape congregational growth, identity, and health for years to come. We also know that what is done in the interim time really determines whether the new minister and congregation will form a solid ministry team.’”

Baptist General Convention of Texas Website

Every church would be wise to use the interim period as effectively as possible. A reasonably healthy church might assume it can bypass this experience. However, the "healthy church" will find that an interim period, used wisely, will produce positive benefits. An interim pastor, as an onsite Church Health Consultant, can assist the church in this process.

**How an Interim Pastor Can Help a Perceived Healthy Church During the Interim Period:**

1. Assist the congregation in the process of gaining insight into itself.
2. Evaluate the health of the church through the use of a Church Health Inventory. (IPM recommends that the church utilize Natural Church Development Inventory, or a denominational format) The key to the inventory's effectiveness is in its implementation.
3. Identify potential areas of present and future difficulty by reviewing the Five Transitional Tasks and related issues.
4. Resolve any lingering issues and relationship struggles within the congregation.
5. Enhance the spiritual vitality of the church.
6. Help the church focus on the future God has for them.
7. Encourage new ways of thinking about church and ministry.
8. Help the congregation develop a profile by encouraging a review of the church and its ministries.
9. Clarify the pastoral skills needed for the congregation's next period of ministry.
10. Assist the church to conduct an effective pastoral search process.