

SPECIALIZED TRANSITIONAL MINISTERS CONTRACT TEMPLATE

For the purpose of providing transitional and pastoral leadership during a period of rediscovery and adjustment to change, it is agreed that the Rev. _____ will serve as Specialized Transitional Minister (STM) of the _____ Christian Reformed Church of _____, _____, beginning on _____, 20____, and concluding _____, 20____. A three-month extension can be negotiated at the end of nine months if it appears that an extension would be productive, and subsequent three-month extensions can be negotiated, not to exceed a total contract length of 24 months. It is agreed that this contract can be terminated upon 60 days notice either by the STM and by Thrive staff or by the council of the Church.

During this period of time the STM will, in covenant with the congregation and with the help of God, seek to:

- Provide worship experiences and the practice of ministry with the congregation and community;
- Assist the congregation in self-study, analysis, evaluation, and goal setting by reviewing the past and planning for the future in such a way as to strengthen and enhance the mission and unity of the congregation;
- Prepare the congregation for its relationship with its next pastor, who will be called according to synodical regulations.

I. BASIC UNDERSTANDINGS:

- A. The STM will be directly accountable to the elders and council of the _____ CRC, providing monthly reports of activities. The STM will also be accountable, as appropriate and required, to Thrive and to the _____ CRC of _____, which holds his/her ministerial credentials.
- B. The STM **may not be** a candidate for call to serve this congregation as an installed pastor after the transitional service is completed.

II. TOGETHER WE SHALL:

- A. Begin this transitional ministry with an appropriate welcome and commissioning at a worship service, and an informal gathering of the congregation to meet Rev. _____. Announcement will be made that this is the start of a special, valuable time in the life of this congregation which is different from the beginning of an installed pastorate.
- B. Determine the issues that we need to address during the transitional period and set goals and objectives and timelines for their accomplishment. See the accompanying attachment entitled "PRIORITY IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION PROCESS" for guidance and instructions.
- C. Review and evaluate our progress as set forth in the above-named document.

III. THE CONGREGATION OF _____ CHURCH SHALL:

- A. Support the ministry of the STM with their prayers and wholehearted participation in the transitional ministry process and the on-going ministry of the Church.
- B. Provide compensation as follows:
 - 1. Cash salary of \$ _____ per month. The guideline for full-time salary and benefits will ordinarily be the greater of EITHER 110% of the previous pastor's salary and benefits OR the average of the salaries of area (classis) pastors.
 - 2. Housing allowance of \$ _____ per month OR (if continuous on site presence is agreed upon by the council and STM): Free use of a furnished dwelling as his/her residence while he/she is employed as transitional pastor by the church. The church shall maintain the dwelling and pay all utilities, taxes and other usual expenses relating to the upkeep and maintenance of the property as a place of residence (i.e., yard maintenance, snow removal, cable television, high-speed internet connection, etc.).
 - 3. Accountable business expense of \$ _____ per contract term OR car allowance of \$ _____ per mile or actual expenses as outlined in classis requirements.
 - 4. Provision for cell phone expenses of \$ _____ per contract term.
 - 5. Medical insurance and pension per CRCNA requirements.
 - 6. Social Security reimbursement of \$ _____ per month.
 - 7. Professional development of \$ _____ per contract term and _____ week(s)

IV. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- A. Paid vacation will be accrued at the rate of one week for every twelve weeks of service.
- B. Participation in classical and continuing educational events is expected, but the STM may not normally serve as a delegate to the broader assemblies since he/she is not an officebearer in the congregation.
- C. The STM will be given one Sunday off per quarter (if requested). The STM will be encouraged to attend the annual STM Conference in April, sponsored and funded by Thrive.
- D. At the conclusion of the transitional pastor's term of service, additional weeks of compensated "down time" (2-4 weeks) will be granted to enable the transitional pastor to adjust from one ministry to another. This should be addressed at the time of hire and agreed upon when the circumstances of the departure are known.

The following signatories indicate their understanding and agreement with all of the terms of this contract, with the council president or vice president signing this document on behalf of the council of _____ CRC.

Council President or Vice President

Date

Council Clerk

Date

Specialized Transitional Minister

Date

**PRIORITY IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION PROCESS
FOR THE SPECIALIZED TRANSITIONAL MINISTER
AND CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

A. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The STM and congregational leadership will use this document as a starting point for identifying goals/priorities for their time together. It is advised that the number of goals/priorities be both sustainable *and* effective for gaining greater congregational health. At the intervals described below the progress toward them will be evaluated, and when the contract is completed the totality of the STM work will be evaluated using the goals/priorities.

B. POTENTIAL GOALS/PRIORITIES

1. MAINTAIN THE REGULAR PASTORAL MINISTRY

Goal: Ministry to the members of the congregation, primarily including preaching, shaping and leading worship, and providing pastoral care, will be the main priority.
Process: The preaching of the STM is an effective dimension of helping us through our transitional time. The pastoral care of the STM brings encouragement and healing to members of our congregation.

2. EMPHASIZE FELLOWSHIP AND RECONCILIATION

Goal: The congregation will experience authentic fellowship, and the quality of the relationships within the congregation will be strengthened.
Process: The STM and leadership will utilize methods to foster the congregation's ability to have honest and graceful conversations. Such methods might include council training and the formation of a Transition Team.

3. PREPARE THE WAY FOR FRUITFUL MINISTRY

Goal: The congregation will come to understand its history with grace and clarity.
Process: The STM and leadership will objectively mediate issues in a way that will help the congregation move on and prepare the way for fruitful ministry in the future.

4. CLARIFY THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Goal: The vision for future ministry will be clarified with a deeper understanding of the identity of the congregation.
Process: The STM will employ the skills and training needed to guide the church in discovering or rediscovering its identity and purpose.

5. MAINTAIN THE REGULAR MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

Goal: The ministries and programs already underway will be effectively continued, or revised/re-created, if needed.
Process: The STM and leadership will evaluate existing operations, and if needed, create and implement an organizational structure that will serve us well into the future.

6. RESOLVE FEELINGS OF GRIEF
Goal: The members of the congregation will experience emotional healing.
Process: The STM and leadership will help the congregation move on by exploring and addressing issues of grief and assisting them in resolving any grief which was experienced in their unique circumstances.

7. RESOLVE CONFLICTS INVOLVING PEOPLE OR ISSUES
Goal: Areas of conflict, if identified, will be dealt with in a way that demonstrates effective conflict management and resolution processes.
Process: The STM will work with the leadership to identify concerns in the church, using the STM's training in congregational dynamics.

8. STRENGTHEN THE LEADERSHIP BASE OF THE CONGREGATION
Goal: The leadership base of the congregation will be strengthened.
Process: the STM and leadership encouraged the participation of the people in leadership and service opportunities knowing that the transitional period is a particularly good time to address these priorities.

9. INCREASE THE POTENTIAL FOR THE NEXT PASTOR'S MINISTRY
Goal: The importance of the coming of a new pastor will be recognized and preparations will be made for that time.
Process: The STM and leadership will demonstrate a love for God and his church that will contribute to the health of our congregation going forward.

10. IMPROVE THE CONGREGATION'S COMMUNICATION SYSTEM
Goal: Changes will be made that will positively influence the congregation's communication system in the future.
Process: The STM and leadership listened well and adapted to the needs of the congregation in the areas of structures, processes, and procedures.

11. STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS
Goal: Our connections with other congregations, the classis and the ministries of the denomination will be affirmed and bolstered.
Process: The STM will model a good relationship with such entities and will encourage the congregation in its participation with them.

12. INCREASE THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF THE CONGREGATION
Goal: Our passion and support for vital ministries that will further the work of the congregation will be invigorated.
Process: The STM and leadership will offer and encourage basic stewardship training.

13. INCREASE THE LEADERSHIP'S SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT
Goal: Our capacity to intentionally discern and pursue the Lord's will be enhanced.
Process: The leadership will engage in developing basic spiritual practices for leaders such as described in Ruth Haley Barton's book, *Pursuing God's Will Together*.

14. FOSTER THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Goal: Opportunities for corporate prayer will be expanded and enhanced.

Process: Since prayer for the church's ministry, her community and her next called pastor is vital, the STM will work with the leadership to encourage frequent and regular corporate prayer, both within and apart from worship services.

C. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The staff of Thrive will describe for all parties this identification and evaluation process each time an STM begins a new assignment. Reports are requested from the STM to key Thrive staff, in the context of the following milestones:

1. IDENTIFY: Within the first three months the STM and congregational leaders will identify *together* the goals/priorities to focus on. It is recommended that 3-4 priorities be identified initially (more is fine), with others being added later, if needed. These will be reported to key Thrive staff.
2. EVALUATE: At the 9 month mark, the STM and congregational leaders will review the progress made toward the identified goals/priorities, and make adjustments as needed. For example, some of the original goals/priorities might have been accomplished or set aside and new objectives added. In other words, this process is marked by some degree of fluidity, all in the service of deepening the health of the congregation. It also may be that sufficient progress is noted that the contract can be concluded at the 12-month interval.

At the 12 month mark (and subsequent 3-month intervals, if further contract extensions are agreed upon), the same will happen.
3. REPORT: At the end of the STM's time with the congregation, regardless of how long the contract has been, a final review will be conducted and a full report will be created and sent by congregational leadership to key Thrive staff.
4. Thrive does not maintain a template for churches to follow when it comes time to write the final STM evaluation. It seems important to leave such process decisions to councils themselves. That being said, the following might serve as a possible protocol. A council could:

1. Strike a 2-3 person committee to lead the evaluation process, with a clear mandate.
 - a. To provide the council with a proposed assessment of the STM experience.
 - b. The proposed assessment should include a certain number of voices from the congregation, the voices of the transitional leaders, as well as input from the council members. It would be up to the committee to determine how best to obtain these input items, how to weight the data, and how to summarize it into a coherent report.

- c. The proposed assessment should be given to the STMs as an information item, and the STMs should be given the opportunity to offer comments on the draft.
 - d. The committee could be authorized to determine if the input is to be incorporated into the draft or simply received for information. Council could then adopt or tweak the proposal, and send its final form to Thrive.
- 2. The assessment could describe how well transitional goals/priorities have been met, the level of the STM's capacity to help the church meet its transitional goals, and it could paint a picture of how well the church has responded to the STM's leadership. Finally, it could provide a statement regarding the church's readiness (or lack thereof) to call its next pastor.