



Interim ministry has evolved in the last two decades, like everything else church-related. The five core tasks shared last week still apply, even if the ways they get expressed might be different. But, interim ministry has taken on more of a church redevelopment look. The majority of parishes have been in plateaued mode or have been declining. The interim faces the challenge of staunching decline and beginning to refit the parish for better ministry to its own and for growth. If that refitting work can move forward during the interim period, the new rector can get off to a faster start.

Anthony Robinson published an article with The Alban Institute several years ago entitled “Rethinking Interim Ministry.” (<https://alban.org/archive/rethinking-interim-ministry/>). He enumerated several tasks beyond the five discussed last week. Several of those challenges have been a part of my approach to interim ministry prior to having read his article.

Helping a church with cultural change. Our culture has gone through seismic shifts and many of the old ways of doing things simply don't work. Some of the strategies for moving churches into a different cultural space have come from my work starting a new congregation. Shifting a church from an inward focus on its needs to an outward focus on engagement with the community has been a part of my focus with you.

Doing a congregational assessment. The Holy Conversations have been a central piece of strategy in every congregation. And, I've been a part of the Holy Cow process in more than one church. The harvesting of those assessments then become foundational emphases for the rest of the interim period and, I hope, for the early years of the rector's tenure.

Revisit the mission of the church. I have focused on those texts in preaching and teaching that take us back to the fundamental issues of the mission of the church, or better stated, to God's mission in the world and how the church can be more aware of that mission and join it. As Prayer C puts it in *The Book of Common Prayer*, “Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us.” (BCP, p. 372)

Make tough calls. It is my intent not to leave unsolved problems and unresolved conflicts for the new rector. As an interim, I can help a parish make tough decisions, resolve tough issues, deal with staff challenges, and address current or potential conflict issues. A great deal of that work has taken place behind the scenes and always does.

My hope and prayer always is to leave a parish in a healthier and better place than when I arrived.

God's peace,

David W. Perkins+, Interim Rector