



IM VIEWPOINT: July 2020 *Was John the Baptist an Interim Minister?*
The Ven Dr Andy Jolley, Archdeacon of Bradford, Diocese of Leeds.

Leeds has been engaged in Interim Ministry since 2018 and is actively making IM appointments. Here, Archdeacon Andy Jolley shares more of his approach and understanding of the role of IMs. *This is an edited presentation to an IM Regional networking meeting, hosted by the Diocese of Leeds in May 2019.*

The Guidance under Regulation 29 (7D) of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009 stipulates that: “An interim post should primarily be a response to a particular pastoral need or mission opportunity.”

Which raises the question: was John the Baptist, then, an Interim Minister? IM is a short ministry which is preparing the way. It is about encouraging people to “Think differently!” It is about unsettling the status quo, setting a new vision, addressing powerful groups, and looking to one who will come after.

Interim Ministry is also about coming to terms with the past, losing old fears and finding new hopes, and perhaps discovering a fresh identity. It is a time of opportunity to explore possible future arrangements with other parishes and whether pastoral reorganisation is viable. It is a time to consider future witness, mission and ministry; reassess resources, needs and priorities; and to see where and how change is needed, and work through the inevitable transition. It is a time to make plans for the future and prepare for the next chapter of the church’s life.

Interim Ministry is an option to consider when the future is unclear; when pastoral reorganisation is being considered; or when the past has been difficult. It is an opportunity to enable the parish to equip itself more effectively for mission, and to determine what kind of minister is required in the longer term.

Some of the differences between Interim Ministry and Usual Ministry are that IM is:

- *A fixed duration;*
- *Has specific objectives;*
- *Is future focussed;*
- *It involves ongoing review;*
- *It has a focus on pastoral care;*

Some Typical Objectives for Interim Ministry might include:

- To revitalise ministry and mission in the parish;
- To identify and build up a core leadership team with whom to provide leadership to the congregation and grow their capacity and numbers;
- To re-engage with the local community and community organisations ;
- To establish whether the congregation can grow to a viable level;
- To establish robust financial governance of the PCC and determine whether the parish's finances can be rebuilt to a viable level;
- To agree with the PCC changes needed to enhance the church’s prospects of flourishing, and to implement them (e.g. worship patterns)
- To develop and agree proposals for future pastoral organisation;
- To strengthen relationships with the rest of the Deanery and Diocese;
- To help the parish develop and articulate its identity clearly, setting it up to know the skills and experience to seek in the next Vicar.

An example of an Interim Ministry post might therefore be, to:

- Establish a coherent, attractive and workable pattern of worship across the churches.
- Develop, agree and implement a pastoral scheme.
- Develop and start to implement a sustainable strategy for new ministry and styles of worship to reach out to reach out to children, young people and families.
- Evaluate the needs, opportunities and challenges of the church buildings and develop and agree viable plans for their future.
- Help the parishes develop and articulate their identity, so they know the skills and experience they will seek in a new incumbent.

Contact for further information:

The Ven Dr Andy Jolley, Archdeacon of Bradford

Email: andy.jolley@leeds.anglican.org Tel: 07973 458403, 0113 353 0292