

Rev. Dr. Lou Ventura has been pastor of Franklin Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) since 2013, after a career of over 25 years in the healthcare industry. She received her Master of Divinity at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA, and her Doctor of Ministry at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

She has served on the presbytery’s Commission on Ministry as vice moderator of the Mediation and Reconciliation Subcommittee, and as presbytery moderator and moderator of the presbytery council. Lou was trained as a Lifeforming Leadership Coach in 2007, and in 2015 she received training in mediation and conflict management. Lou has also been trained in interpretation of the Church Assessment Tool (CAT) through HOLY COW! She has completed coach training with Coach Approach Skills Training (CAST) and is working to complete the requirements for the ICF Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential.

Lou has also received Boundary Training for Those in Ministry and in Lives of Service from LeaderWise as well as training in Healthy Congregations, Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches, and Leadership and Anxiety in the Church, from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center.

Lou has a passion for encouraging and supporting individuals who are experiencing new life challenges or transitions, times when it is difficult to remember that, with God and within ourselves, we often have more than enough of everything we need.

In her free time, Lou loves to read, work on family genealogy, and watch “The Big Bang Theory” and “Mom” reruns. She has been married to Ron, an IT manager at Anthem, for 29 years, and they share Ron’s children from his first marriage, Tammy and RJ, and their five grandchildren Brianna, 25, Lexi, 21, Chloe, 18, Caleb, 3, and Naomi, 5 months. Lou and Ron have lived in the Holland area of Suffolk since 1996. You can reach Lou at [revventura@hotmail.com](mailto:revventura@hotmail.com).

**INTERIM/TRANSITIONAL PASTOR**

**FAQ’S**

**Q**. What is an interim pastor, and what is the primary purpose for having an interim/transitional Pastor?

A. An interim pastor is a temporary pastor who leads the congregation through a transitional time. As described by our denomination, the PC-USA, during this time of ministry, a primary emphasis of both the interim pastor and the Session will be to work together on Five Focus Points, which include*:*

1. Heritage and Change—Reviewing how a congregation has been shaped and formed, and how significant/seismic cultural shifts are requiring congregations to adapt.
2. Leadership—Reviewing member needs and the congregation’s ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership. This may include examination of staff positions, job descriptions, policies and procedures, bylaws, and lay leadership.
3. Connections—Includes all the relationships a congregation has outside of itself to include its relationship to Presbytery, financial support of other ministries, partnerships in ministry and missions.
4. Mission—Defining and redefining a sense of purpose and direction. The interim period allows time for the Interim/Transitional Pastor to help guide a congregation in discerning and articulating its mission and ministry purpose and to express it.
5. Future—Preparing the congregation to have a healthy relationship and productive ministry with the next Installed Pastor.

**Q**. Will the congregation vote on the interim pastor and how long will the interim stay?

A. No. The congregation will not vote. As a temporary relationship, the interim pastor is approved by the presbytery and session only, and the position does not carry a formal call or installation. The session carefully discerned of the needs of the congregation and the skills of a candidate and then recommended the individual to the presbytery. The typical interim period is between two and three years. According to our *Book of Order*, the interim pastor is not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor.

**Q.** What are the responsibilities of the interim/transitional pastor?

A. An interim pastor has many responsibilities but is not intended to fill the same role as a permanent, called pastor. The interim responsibilities include:

• Provide spiritual and administrative leadership for the congregation.

• Lead worship, administer the sacraments, and serve as primary preacher

• Officiate at weddings and funerals.

• Provide pastoral care for the congregation and preschool staff and administrators.

• Serve as moderator of the session and head of staff

• Resource the congregation’s boards and committees in their ministry.

• Provide officer training and assist in preparing persons for membership.

• Enable the Session to identify current issues and assist in developing means of resolution.

• In coordination with the COM, serve as primary facilitator for the session/transition team-led congregational mission study.

• Prepare the congregation for electing its Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).

• Attend Presbytery meetings and participate actively in the Presbytery’s life and ministry.

• Participate regularly in PEVA’s Interim/Transitional Pastor gatherings.

• Pray for the church.

The session will continue to share, in various different formats, information about the interrelated roles of the interim, the session and the congregation. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to any session member with questions.