

ABCORI Pulpit Supply Guidelines

ABCORI's pulpit supply list assists congregations in finding an individual to fill the pulpit for worship services. The list includes ministers, seminarians, and lay leaders who have agreed to preach when a settled pastor or interim/transition pastor is away or unable to preach.

Pulpit supply is intended as a Sunday-by-Sunday temporary relationship. If a congregation intends to invite the same supply preacher for more than three consecutive weeks and/or enter an ongoing relationship with that preacher, the congregation and the preacher are encouraged to consult with ABCORI's Executive Minister.

Guidelines for Congregations

It is the responsibility of a congregation to make arrangements with the pulpit supply preacher as far in advance as possible. While the individual invited to fill your church's pulpit may be an experienced preacher, they may not be familiar with the details of your particular worship service. Therefore, the following information should be communicated to the supply preacher:

- Date and time of worship service(s).
- Location of/directions to the church, including where to park.
- A copy of a recent bulletin (or other appropriate document) that provides an overview of the usual order of service. If the service will be on a Communion Sunday, please send a bulletin that shows that order of worship.
- A clear list of the parts of the service the supply preacher is expected to lead.
- A clear list of the parts of the service the supply preacher should plan and/or select.
- A clear list of the information the supply preacher must submit for the bulletin and the deadline for submission of that information.
- Contact information for the person responsible for bulletin preparation and/or worship coordinator/music director.
- Typical pastor attire (i.e., robe, coat & tie/dress, business casual). Is the sanctuary particularly hot or cold?
- Hymnal and Bible translation used in worship.
- If the church typically follows the Revised Common Lectionary.
- How announcements and prayer requests are handled.
- The version of the Lord's Prayer (i.e., debts, trespasses, sins) that is used.
- The supply preacher's role, if any, during the offering.
- How the Lord's Supper/Communion is served, if the supply preacher is to be present on a Communion Sunday.
- If there is a children's time that the supply preacher is expected to lead.
- Where the pastor greets people after the service (i.e., process to a rear or side door, remain at the front of the sanctuary).

- Contact information, including a cell phone/emergency number, for the member who will be there on the day the preacher is to provide pulpit supply.
- Information about audio/visual equipment or requirements.
- Link(s) to church website, YouTube, and/or Facebook page.
- Anything else to make a visitor feel comfortable in your church.

Pulpit supply involves significant preparation time by the supply preacher. ABCORI recommends an honorarium of at least \$150 for a service.

The accompanying form may be helpful in preparing the information to provide to pulpit-supply preachers.

Guidelines for Preachers

A preacher who is interested in being included on the pulpit supply list must provide to the ABCORI office:

- Contact information, including address, telephone number(s), and email address.
- A brief biographical statement, including education and pastoral experience.
- A signed copy of the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches.
- Permission and information for a background check to be paid for by ABCORI.

What you should expect to provide the congregation ahead of time:

- The information requested from you for the bulletin by the due date.
- Any specific needs or accommodation requests you may have (i.e., if you will require the use of accessible entrances, restrooms, etc.; if you have dietary restrictions that may inhibit your ability to perform or partake of communion with the traditional elements of wheat bread and grape juice, etc.).
- Your name as you would like it to be included in the bulletin and on the compensation check.
- Any clarifying questions you may have about what is expected of you in the worship service and/or your participation in any congregational events before or after worship (i.e., Sunday school, church fellowship dinner, congregational meeting).
- The time at which you plan to arrive before the worship service.
- A way to contact you, should something unexpected occur between your last communication and the date of the service.

What the congregation can expect from you on the date of the worship service:

- A respectful and timely arrival.
- Prepared, authentic worship leadership for each of the portions of the service you have been asked to lead.
- Gracious flexibility for yourself and the congregation as you all embrace the unfamiliar quality inherent in a pulpit supply experience.
- A grateful attitude for the opportunity to be present with and lead worship for the congregation.

Ethical Guidelines

Please be mindful of the authority inherent in your position of leadership, and use it wisely. Careful stewardship of this authority is vital to the health of the congregation and your relationship with ABCORI.

It is inappropriate to do any of the following:

- Use the pulpit supply opportunity to advertise for any businesses, non-profits, or other organizations without prior approval from the congregation's leadership.
- Ask for a special offering from the congregation for any reason or purpose without prior approval from congregation.
- Seek to recruit participation in or help with any event or organization without prior approval of the congregation.

When in doubt, ask ahead of time. The person coordinating with you about providing pulpit supply should be able to answer or forward to the appropriate person any questions you may have.

While it may be appropriate to provide some pastoral care on the date of the worship service, all pastoral concerns should be forwarded to the primary pastoral care provider for the congregation. It is appropriate to hold in prayer those people, concerns, and joys you encounter while providing pulpit supply. It, however, is inappropriate to do any of the following:

- Begin to meet regularly outside of the worship time with a parishioner to provide pastoral counseling or other pastoral support.
- Solicit the opportunity to officiate the wedding, baptism, or funeral/memorial service of a church member and/or friend.
- Offer to refer a church member and/or friend to a professional counselor, therapist, psychiatrist, psychologist, spiritual director, or other mental health or spiritual care provider without first discussing the need for a referral and the proposed referred professional with the primary pastoral care provider.

It is appropriate to follow up with your contact person(s) for a congregation with a thank-you note for the opportunity to provide pulpit supply, if you wish to do so. It, however, is inappropriate to do any of the following:

- Actively solicit pulpit supply opportunities for specific dates.
- Presume that you will be asked again or have a "right of first refusal" arrangement with a particular congregation.
- Actively solicit pulpit supply opportunities from members of the congregation who are not responsible for securing pulpit supply.