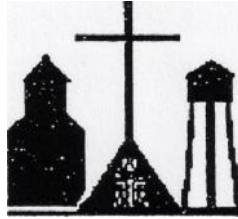


# **Congregational and Pastoral Care Manual**



**Presbytery of South Dakota**  
**Synod of Lakes and Prairies      Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**JUNE 30, 2015**



# Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PREFACE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL .....	9
<b>1. UNDERSTANDING THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY .....</b>	<b>11</b>
HEALTHY MINISTRIES: THE GOAL OF COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY WORK .....	11
WHAT IS HEALTHY MINISTRY? .....	11
CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY MINISTRY .....	11
WHAT IS THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY (COM)? .....	13
DOES EVERY PRESBYTERY HAVE A COM? .....	13
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COM .....	13
HOW DOES THE COM DEAL WITH CONFIDENTIALITY? .....	14
WHAT ARE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE COM? .....	15
COMMITTEE EXPECTATIONS .....	16
WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE COM? .....	16
GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS .....	18
<b>2. REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK OF THE COM .....</b>	<b>35</b>
SOME THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK OF THE COM .....	35
THE "GREATER" CHURCH .....	35
THE PARTICULAR CHURCH .....	36
CALL AND LEADERSHIP .....	36
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE WORK OF THE COM .....	37
GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT .....	37
MINISTERS AND CONGREGATIONS .....	39
MINISTERS AS MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY .....	41
THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF THE WORK OF THE COM .....	42
<b>3. THE COM AND CONGREGATIONS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONGREGATIONS .....	43
COM LIAISON .....	43
WAYS FOR THE CONGREGATION TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS .....	44
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COM .....	44
THE COM AND CONGREGATIONS IN TRANSITION .....	45
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY .....	46
LIFE CYCLE ISSUES .....	46

THE COM AND NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT	47
THE COM AND SMALL CONGREGATIONS	47
SHARED MINISTRY AND LARGER PARISHES	49
THE COM AND IMMIGRANT MINISTRIES	50
CONFLICT	51
EMPHASIZING CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH	51
WORK ON PREVENTION RATHER THAN INTERVENTION	52
EQUIP YOUR COM	52
LEVELS OF CONFLICT INTENSITY	53
INTERVENE EFFECTIVELY WHEN TROUBLE ARISES	54
STEPS FOR CONFLICT UTILIZATION	55
PASTORAL CARE DURING A CONFLICT	57
RACIAL ETHNIC AND MULTICULTURAL CONGREGATIONS	58
COM AND RACIAL ETHNIC PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS	58
THE TRIENNIAL VISIT	59
THE PURPOSES OF A TRIENNIAL VISIT ARE:	60
PLANNING FOR TRIENNIAL VISITS	61
PROCEDURES FOR TRIENNIAL VISITS	62
CONVERSATION STARTERS	64
CONGREGATIONAL STRATEGY	65
COM SESSION MODERATORS	66
RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN REPRESENTING COM	66
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONGREGATION	66
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COM	66
<b>4. RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONGREGATIONS SEARCHING FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP .....</b>	<b>69</b>
GENERAL COMMENTS	69
A HEALTHY “GOODBYE”	69
EXIT INTERVIEWS	70
EXIT INTERVIEW MODELS	71
ETHICS FOR DEPARTING PASTORS	72
SEPARATION ETHICS IN POSD	72
A. SAYING GOODBYE	73
B. RESPONSIBILITIES IN SAYING GOODBYE	74
SUMMARY	80
FINDING TEMPORARY LEADERSHIP	81
OPTIONS FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP	81
ORDERLY EXCHANGE WITH FORMULA PARTNER CHURCHES	82
YOKED CONGREGATIONS	84
WHY DO CONGREGATIONS YOKE?	84
ESTABLISHING A NEW YOKE	84
AN OUTLINE FOR CALLING A NEW PASTOR	94
<b>5. PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS.....</b>	<b>95</b>
MEMBERSHIP IN PRESBYTERY AND VALIDATED MINISTRIES	95

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP	95
IF NOT VALIDATED MINISTRY, WHAT OTHER OPTIONS?	96
INSTALLED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS	96
DESIGNATED PASTOR	96
TENTMAKING PASTORS	98
TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONS	98
TYPES OF TEMPORARY PASTORS	98
AUTHORITY FOR TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS	98
COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER	99
TEMPORARY SUPPLY PASTOR	100
TRANSITIONAL PASTOR	100
RETIRED SUPPLY	102
ORGANIZING PASTOR	102
PARISH ASSOCIATE RELATIONSHIP	102
MINISTERS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS	103
FINDING TEMPORARY LEADERSHIP	103
MINISTERS SERVING IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES	105
ENDORSEMENT FOR SPECIALIZED MINISTRY	105
MILITARY CHAPLAINS	105
MILITARY CHAPLAINS AND USERRA	106
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION CHAPLAINS	106
PASTORAL COUNSELORS AND OTHER TYPES OF CHAPLAINS	107
TERMINOLOGY AND PROCESSES	107
IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING PERSONS IN SPECIALIZED PASTORAL MINISTRIES	108
PROCESS OF ENDORSEMENT	109
RESOURCES	111
<b>6. PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>113</b>
IS IT TIME TO MOVE?	113
TERMINATION OF CALL PROCESS	116
PROCESS	116
TERMINATION AGREEMENT	118
PRESBYTERY ACTION	119
POSD SEVERANCE POLICY	120
DEFINITIONS	120
GENERAL	120
PASTORAL SERVICE DURING TRANSITION	121
ELECTION OF A PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE	122
PLANNING PASTORAL SERVICES FOR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD	122
ELECTING THE PNC	122
ORIENTING AND ORGANIZING THE PNC	123
DEVELOPING AND COMPLETING MINISTRY INFORMATION FORM (MIF)	123
COLLECTING AND SCREENING PIFS	124
CHECKING REFERENCES	124
BACKGROUND CHECKS	126
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT STATEMENT	126
INTERVIEWING POTENTIAL PASTORS	127

INTERVIEW PROCESS	128
HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS	130
CHOOSING THE NOMINEE	131
POLICY ON VOTES TO CALL A PASTOR	131
DOCKET FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO ELECT A PASTOR	132
PRESBYTERY INSTALLS THE PASTOR	134
TOOLS TO ASSIST THE SEARCH	134
<b>ELECTION OF A DPNC</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>TENTMAKING MINISTERS</b>	<b>135</b>
TERMS OF CALL FOR TENTMAKERS	136
PREPARING A MIF FOR TENTMAKING POSITIONS	136
<b>TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>137</b>
ARRANGING FOR TEMPORARY RELATIONSHIPS:	137
TERMS OF TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP	137
<b>COORDINATING WITH CPM FOR FIRST CALL CANDIDATES</b>	<b>139</b>
THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS	139
<b>TRANSITIONAL (INTERIM) MINISTERS</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN TRANSITIONAL MINISTERS ARE DESIRABLE</b>	<b>141</b>
APPROPRIATE GOALS FOR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD	142
PROCESS FOR SECURING A TRANSITIONAL MINISTER	143
<b>TERMS OF CALL</b>	<b>144</b>
TERMS OF CALL IN POSD	144
PARENTAL LEAVE	145
UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVE SALARY	147
CALLING A NEW PASTOR	149
<b>MODEL LETTERS.....</b>	<b>151</b>
LETTER TO SECURE APPROVAL OF A SECONDARY REFERENCE	151
FORM FOR CANDIDATE TO APPROVE SECONDARY REFERENCES	152
NO LONGER UNDER CONSIDERATION	153
FOR A NON-YOKED CHURCH	153
FOR A YOKED PARISH	155
FOR SERIOUS OR CONTINUED CONSIDERATION	156
SELECTION TO "SHORT LIST"	157
<b>COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS.....</b>	<b>160</b>
APPLICATION AND SCREENING OF POTENTIAL CRES	160
SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF CRES	160
WHAT IF A CRE MOVES?	161
(SAMPLE) COVENANT WITH A COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER	162
<b>7. CARE OF CHURCH PROFESSIONALS.....</b>	<b>163</b>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	163
COM CAN HELP TEACHING ELDERS GROW BY:	165
RESOURCES:	166
PASTORAL CARE OF PASTORS AND THEIR FAMILIES	166
VISITATION	166

SOME APPROACHES TO CARE AND SUPPORT RESOURCES	167 167
RECOGNITION OF PROBLEM AREAS	168
POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS	169
COM MENTORS	169
RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN REPRESENTING COM	169
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR	170
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COM	170
WORKING WITH RETIRED TEACHING ELDERS	171
RESOURCES:	173
CONCERNS AT THE TIME OF DEATH IN PRESBYTERY	174
LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES	174
PRESBYTERY OFFICE STAFF	174
ANNUAL REVIEW OF MINISTRY	174
QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:	175
RESOURCES:	175
COMPENSATION FOR TEACHING ELDERS	175
COMPENSATION REVIEW	176
RESOURCES:	176
COMPENSATION COMPONENTS	177
ACCOUNTABLE REIMBURSEMENT	177
CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS	179
RESOURCES	181
<b>8. RESOURCES FOR COM MODERATOR.....</b>	<b>183</b>
THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF THE WORK OF THE COM	183
EQUIP YOUR COM	184
RESOURCES	184
INTERVENE EFFECTIVELY WHEN TROUBLE ARISES	184
FOUR CHANGES THAT CAN LEAD TO CONFLICT IN CONGREGATIONS	184
STEPS FOR CONFLICT ASSESSMENT	186
COM ACTION IN CONFLICT	187
MODERATING MEETINGS	188
TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF THE COM	189
CHAPTER 1. UNDERSTANDING THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY	190
CONGREGATIONAL STRATEGY	190
HEALTHY MINISTRIES BEGIN WITH NURTURING A HEALTHY COM	190
ORGANIZING FOR SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY WITHIN PRESBYTERY	191
IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE COM MODERATOR	192
CHAPTER 2. REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK OF THE COM	195
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE WORK OF THE COM	195
GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT	196
CHAPTER 3. COM AND CONGREGATIONS	197
THINKING SYSTEMICALLY ABOUT CONGREGATIONAL LIFE	197
CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE IMMIGRANT MINISTRY	198
THE COM AND LARGE CONGREGATIONS	200
CONGREGATIONAL MISSION STUDIES	201

TIPS ABOUT MISSION STUDIES:	202
RESOURCES FOR MISSION STUDIES	202
EMPHASIZING CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH	203
WORK ON PREVENTION RATHER THAN INTERVENTION	204
CHURCH CONFLICT	205
BOARD OF PENSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)	205
<b>CHAPTER 4. WORKING WITH CONGREGATIONS SEEKING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>207</b>
STRUCTURING THE COM FOR HEALTHY MINISTRY	207
EMPOWERING THE COM TO SAY "NO"	210
CONTACT INFORMATION	211
SESSION WORKSHOP	212
PNC WORKSHOP	216
<b>CHAPTER 5. PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>216</b>
ORDINATION	216
CONTINUING MEMBERS	217
VALIDATED MINISTRY	218
EXAMINING TEACHING ELDERS FOR MEMBERSHIP	219
<b>CHAPTER 6. PROCEDURES</b>	<b>221</b>
MINISTERIAL MISCONDUCT ISSUES	221
CARING FOR THE CONGREGATION AFTER MISCONDUCT	224
CARING FOR THE MINISTER	226
ABOUT PREVENTION	227
OTHER CAUSES OF TERMINATION	229
MINISTERS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS	231
IMMIGRANT MINISTERS	232
SAMPLE SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY	233
THE COM AND THE AAEEO POLICY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	237
REVIEW OF CONFLICT UTILIZATION TECHNIQUES	238
<b>ADMINISTRATION .....</b>	<b>240</b>
CONTENTS OF PERMANENT FILES OF TEACHING ELDERS	240
PROCEDURES FOR PERMANENT FILES OF TEACHING ELDERS	242
<b>9. COPIER-READY FORMS.....</b>	<b>245</b>
EVALUATION OF TRIENNIAL VISIT	246
SAMPLE COVENANT FOR SHARED MINISTRY	246
YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT, SAMPLE 1, PAGE 1	248
YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT, SAMPLE 1, PAGE 2	249
YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT, SAMPLE 2, PAGE 1	251
YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT, SAMPLE 2, PAGE 2	252
COVENANT FOR SHARED MINISTRY	253
SAMPLE PASTORAL JOB DESCRIPTION	254
DOCKET FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING	256
<b>CALL FORMS.....</b>	<b>257</b>



PNC REFERENCE CHECK	257
SUMMARY OF PASTORAL SEARCH PROCESS	258
SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	260
PASTOR'S DATA SHEET	261
COMPENSATION INCLUDED IN EFFECTIVE SALARY	262
DOCKET FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO ELECT PASTOR	263
PASTORAL CALL FORM, PAGE 1	265
PASTORAL CALL FORM, PAGE 2 – CERTIFICATION OF CALL	266
2011 PASTORAL CALL FORM	267
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE PASTORAL CALL FORM	269
SUPPLEMENTAL COVENANT WITH A TENTMAKING MINISTER	270
PASTORAL AGREEMENT FOR A TRANSITIONAL MINISTER	272
COVENANT FOR INTENTIONAL TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY	275
SAMPLE COVENANT WITH A TRANSITIONAL MINISTER	278
SAMPLE COVENANT FOR TEMPORARY PASTOR	280
CONTRACT FOR TEMPORARY PASTORAL SERVICES	281
SAMPLE COVENANT WITH A CRE	283
AGREEMENT FOR TERMINATION AND SEPARATION	284
COMMISSION FOR ORDINATION/INSTALLATION	286
REPORT ON ORDINATION/INSTALLATION	287
<b>REPORT AND REVIEW FORMS.....</b>	<b>288</b>
EEO IN MINISTRY	288
REPORT ON TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP	289
REVIEW OF TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP	290
SESSION REVIEW OF A TEMPORARY OR SUPPLY MINISTER	291
REVIEW BY A TEMPORARY OR STATED SUPPLY MINISTER	292
ANNUAL REPORT TO PRESBYTERY BY TEACHING ELDERS IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES	293
ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER	295
EXIT INTERVIEW FOR PASTOR	298
EXIT INTERVIEW FOR SESSION	300
<b>MISSION STUDY .....</b>	<b>302</b>

CONGREGATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT	302
CONGREGATIONAL MISSION STUDY	304
REPORT FORM FOR NON-PARISH TEACHING ELDERS	305
DISBURSEMENT VOUCHER	307
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>309</b>
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY	309
P3-4.S.2.1.3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT:	309
B7-2.6. RESPONSE COORDINATION TEAM	314
<b>INDEX .....</b>	<b>315</b>

# PREFACE

The 2012 manual was prepared by Don Barbalace during his first year on COM beginning with the 2007 *COM Handbook*, which provided the basic structure and majority of the content, deleting portions of the *Handbook* that were intended as instructions to presbyteries preparing their own COM Manual, and integrating material from the June 2000 version of the POSD COM Manual that contain additional information or POSD policies and procedures. Later, the 2011 Advisory Handbook became available and those topics were examined and integrated into the earlier work. Topics of all versions were compared side-by-side to facilitate their inclusion in appropriate parts of the manual.

The resulting POSD manual was totally edited and reformatted for ease of reading and visual appeal, and to permit inclusion of an automated Table of Contents. Important words and phrases were marked for inclusion in an automated Index.

The 2015 Manual represents an incremental change over the 2012 version through inclusion of accumulated policy changes, revised procedures, and decisions gleaned from the COM minutes on 2012-2014 plus relevant actions taken by POSD. Again, the editor was Rev. Don Barbalace.

## How to Use This Manual

1. The best way is to read the entire manual and remember it. Then, when the next version comes out, forget this one and read the next one.
2. Since that isn't going to happen, study the Table of Contents, find the Index, and read the topics that interest you. Later, use the TOC and Index to find more information as it is needed.
3. Copy and print those portions you need to prepare for current work or for future planning.



# 1. Understanding the Committee on Ministry

## Healthy Ministries: the goal of Committee on Ministry work

Pastors and congregations come into relationship with expectations and assumptions, but little knowledge of one another. The effectiveness of their ministry together depends a great deal on how well they build a relationship of understanding, appreciation, and trust.

The Committee on Ministry's primary responsibility is to serve as pastor and counselor to the teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (CREs), and certified Christian educators of the presbytery, to facilitate the relationships among those individuals and groups and with the presbytery, and to settle difficulties on behalf of presbytery when possible and expedient (paraphrased from G-3.0307). The responsibilities of the COM are best fulfilled by fostering healthy ministries in the congregations of the presbytery.

## What is Healthy Ministry?

One of the ways presbytery's role as pastor, counselor and advisor is best fulfilled is by developing and maintaining mechanisms and processes that cultivate both healthy congregations and healthy leaders who together are able to devote their best energies to fulfilling God's call to "become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness."

Health, wellness, wholeness, and well-being: all these English words come from a common root word that connects to the Hebrew word *shalom*. Shalom is variously translated as a greeting akin to "hello," as peace, and as wholeness, health and well-being. God's will for the shalom, the peace and health, of God's people is a theme found in every part of the Bible.

Yet, health in congregational life is not so easily defined as health in a human body. The shape of congregational life varies from one place to another. Not every congregation can or should engage in precisely the same forms of worship, Christian education, congregational fellowship, or service to the world beyond the church building. We might be tempted to say that healthy congregations, like beauty, are in the eye of the beholder. The marvelous diversity of healthy congregations might even encourage us to conclude that healthy congregations can only be known when we see them. However, there are some shared characteristics that are discernable in most healthy congregations.

## Characteristics of healthy ministry

Healthy congregations can be found in inner city settings, on the square in county

seat towns, and nestled into suburban developments. Yet in all the variety of healthy expressions of ministry, healthy congregations are alike in sharing many of these norms and behaviors:

- Vibrant faith in God is expressed in lively, faithful worship and in a commitment to engage in ministries of justice and compassion.
- Caring response to the needs of people outside the church is as important as fostering relationships of friendship and caring within the congregation.
- Following God's intentions for the congregation is more important than maintaining buildings or merely balancing the budget.
- Respect for tradition and the past is balanced by flexibility and creativity.
- People of all ages are growing in wisdom and knowledge.
- Relationships of friendship and mutual accountability provide the context for inclusive hospitality and respectful evangelism.
- Respect, accountability and trust rather than control, individualism and secrecy characterize relationships within the congregation.
- Clear structures of authority and decision-making are coupled with open access to those structures by the entire congregation.
- Transparency and openness in regard to communication, information sharing and decision-making are balanced by appropriate and respectful treatment of confidential information.
- Respect for the authority of called and elected leaders is coupled with the awareness that leaders are only part of a very complex organism.
- Congregational self-confidence is balanced by appropriate humility.

Congregations, like the people who are part of them, are gifted and flawed, faulty and faithful, often messy and always thoroughly human. Few congregations may ever fully live up to the ideal of being "communities of faith, hope, love, and witness." However, when congregations and their leaders are healthy, they are better able to faithfully answer God's call and to respond to the claims of God on the people of God.

In the language of another era, the Preliminary Principles of the *Book of Order* tells us what the church is called to do.

The great ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. (F-1.0304)

Committees on Ministry that are healthy devote their best energies to helping the ministries of the presbytery to be healthy. As they do, they partner with God in bringing to reality the Great Ends of the Church.

## What is the Committee on Ministry (COM)?

Each presbytery is charged by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as follows:

... develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient. (G-3.0307)

Presbytery may delegate to committees the authority

To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception and oversight of teaching elder members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and teaching elders... (G-3.0307)

The Committee on Ministry is responsible for the health of ministry in the presbytery, attending to the well-being of congregations and their faithfulness in responding to God's call to them as well as the nurture, support and professional development of church professionals, including teaching elders, certified Christian educators, and, in some presbyteries, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, now commonly called Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE) (formerly called Commissioned Lay Pastors, or CLP).

## Does every presbytery have a COM?

Not necessarily. The *Book of Order* now permits each presbytery to create its own committee structure so long as the assigned responsibilities are performed. The Presbytery of South Dakota (POSD) has continued to use the COM as it has under the previous form of government.

## Responsibilities of the COM

As was the case with the previous form of government, The Committee on Ministry is to serve as pastor and counselor to ministers; to facilitate relations among congregations, ministers, and the presbytery; and to settle difficulties on behalf of presbytery.

The POSD has defined the COM areas of responsibility, as under the previous

form of government, as follows:

- It shall visit regularly and consult with each teaching elder in the presbytery; report to presbytery the type of work in which each minister of the presbytery is engaged; require an annual report of each teaching elder performing work that is not under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or a higher council of the church.
- Make recommendations to presbytery regarding calls for the services of its teaching elders.
- Visit with each session of the presbytery at least once every three years.
- Counsel with congregations and their Pastor Nominating Committees regarding calls for permanent pastoral relations.
- Counsel with congregations regarding the advisability of calling a designated pastor.
- Counsel with congregations regarding temporary and called pastors, providing lists of available pastors, commissioned ruling elders, and qualified ordained and laypersons who have been trained and certified by presbytery to supply vacant pulpits.
- Provide for the implementation of equal employment opportunity for teaching elders and candidates, and report to presbytery the steps taken by each calling group to implement equal employment opportunity.
- If authorized by presbytery, find in order calls issued by congregations, approve and present calls, approve examination of teaching elders transferring from other presbyteries, dissolve pastoral relationships in certain situations, grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of presbytery, and dismiss teaching elders to other presbyteries.
- Promote the peace and harmony of the congregations.
- Counsel with session regarding difficulties in the congregation, act as mediator in conflict situations, and/or act to correct difficulties in a conflict situation when asked to do so by the parties involved or when authorized by presbytery to do so.
- The Committee on Ministry appoints liaisons to the congregations and urges congregations to keep a mission design current in order to facilitate the search process for a new pastor when a pastor leaves.

Additional responsibilities of the Committee on Ministry include work with teaching elders joining another denomination or ministers transferring to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from other denominations or from other presbyteries, work with teaching elders seeking release from the exercise of ordained office, and dissolution of pastoral relationships, if authorized to do so by presbytery. In the POSD, the COM also has responsibility for working with commissioned ruling elders.

### How does the COM deal with Confidentiality?

Confidentiality about the work of the COM is crucial to the integrity of the Committee and the level of trust the members of a presbytery will place in it. Matters



before the COM are sensitive and should be held in confidence unless the welfare of a congregation or the safety of an individual is in question. Even then, the COM must be extremely cautious about sharing information except with those who have a clearly identified need to know. Information learned through the COM should never, under any circumstances, be the subject of casual conversation, especially not with persons who are unaffiliated with the COM.

It is wise for the COM to have a policy that requires members of the COM to excuse themselves from any discussion of the congregation with which they work or of which they are members. A similar policy of excusing oneself when a discussion concerns a church professional who is a close friend will help avoid any appearance of favoritism.

Members of the COM hold an important position of trust and responsibility in the presbytery, a position that carries with it a significant degree of power, although sometimes the COM may be perceived as having more power than it actually does. Members of the COM must be mindful of both their actual power and their perceived power and strive to be above reproach in their dealing with confidential matters.

### What are significant relationships for the COM?

The Committee on Ministry's responsibility to provide for healthy ministry means that members focus on building relationships of mutual trust and care within the committee, with congregations and with ministry professionals. Those relationships become the foundation on which all the other work of the committee is built.

The Committee members rely on each other as colleagues and partners in ministry. Their relationships with one another are characterized by the same mutual trust and care that is the goal of their work with congregations and church professionals.

The Committee on Ministry will work closely with a number of other people and committees in the presbytery and in the larger church. Those relationships include:

- The Executive/General Presbyter and/or other presbytery staff to coordinate the work of the COM and to respond to emerging needs
- The Stated Clerk of the presbytery who can advise and assist the committee
- The moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, especially in matters related to the ordination of candidates for ministry
- The Nominating Committee of the presbytery in finding new members of COM
- The Committee on Representation of the presbytery
- All committees of the presbytery as they relate to congregations
- Committees on Ministry and Committees on Preparation for Ministry in other presbyteries, especially in accepting or dismissing clergy and candidates
- Synod and General Assembly staff who relate to Committees on Ministry and provide resources and support for COM

## Committee Expectations

Attendance at meeting is expected. (Please notify the moderator if you will not be able to attend.)

Members will share rides to meetings.

Material to be considered by the committee should, if possible, be sent to the moderator two weeks prior to the meeting at which it will be considered. This would include items such as:

- Report of Triennial Visit
- Review of Stated Supply
- Terms of Call
- Committee Report/Recommendations
- Report of Exit Interview
- Revised Yoked Agreements
- Installation Arrangements Request

An agenda and materials to be considered by the committee will be sent to members a week in advance of each meeting.

In addition to committee business matters, meetings will include: shared worship and prayer; growth/training experience; appropriate breaks; and time for sharing of personal/church concerns.

Ordinarily, Committee on Ministry business is confidential.

Committee members expect to use inclusive language.

Meetings will be adjourned by docketed time.

Minutes of meetings will be mailed out as soon as possible following meetings.

## What resources are available for the COM?

Tools you will need:

- The Bible
- The Book of Order - (The Annotated Edition may be especially helpful for the COM Moderator)
- On Calling a Pastor: a Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors  
PDS#72214-05-004
- Resources from the PC(USA) website, especially those for the use of the COM – [www.pcusa.org/ministers](http://www.pcusa.org/ministers)
- Church Leadership Connection website – [www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc)
- Your Presbytery's handbook or guidelines for your committee
- Guidelines for Session Personnel Committees [www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc) "Resources"
- Benefits Administrative Handbook for presbyteries, synods, etc. (from Board of Pensions)
- Standards for Ethical Conduct -- published by Office of the GA
- Sexual misconduct policy of your presbytery

- Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures -- published by the Office of the GA.
- List of churches, teaching elders, Certified Christian Educators and Commissioned Ruling Elders in the presbytery, with annually updated address, telephone, e-mail
- Name, address, phone, and e-mail of frequently used resources such as:
  - Your Synod staff person who resources the COM
  - Office of Vocation - 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202-1396, 1-888-728-7228 – ext. 5503 , [www.pcusa.org/ministers](http://www.pcusa.org/ministers)
  - Church Leadership Connection – [www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc)
  - Board of Pensions - 1-800-773-7752 or [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org)
  - Presbyterian Distribution Service - 1-800-524-2612 or [www.pcusa.org/marketplace](http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace)

Regarding Christian Educators:

- [www.pcusa.org/christianeducators](http://www.pcusa.org/christianeducators)
- *[Calling to Educational Ministry, online at www.pcusa.org/christianeducators](http://www.pcusa.org/christianeducators)*

## Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

Prepared and Shared by Dr. Diana Barber, Associate Executive, Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Updated by Doska Ross (2007) and enhanced by the Advisory Handbook (2011). Content and BOO references updated by Rev. Don Barbalace.

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order Reference</b>
AA/EOE or EEO	Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer or Equal Employment Opportunity. <i>The church and each governing body have a policy re: AA/EOE, which must be followed during any search process.</i>	F-1.0403, G-3.0110
Annual Consultation	The annual conversation between a CPM and each of its Inquirers and Candidates to assess the progress of their preparation for ministry.	<u>No longer mentioned in BOO.</u> G-2.06
Assistant Pastor	The position of Assistant Pastor is no longer approved (since December 31, 1985) and there are no longer any persons serving as Assistant Pastors.	The wording has been edited out of the Book of Order
Associate Pastor	A member of the pastoral staff of a congregation elected by the congregation and called and installed with the approval of presbytery (upon recommendation of COM). This is one of the permanent installed pastoral offices.	G-2.0504
At-Large Member	See "Member At Large"	G-2.0503b
Bi-Vocational Pastor	A clergyperson who maintains a job in addition to part-time pastoral ministry, usually to enable the person to serve a congregation that could not provide full time compensation or work. Also called a Tentmaker.	
Book of Confessions	The part of the <i>Constitution</i> that includes the historic creeds and confessions adopted by the denomination as containing the essential tenets of the Reformed tradition.	
Book of Order (BOO)	The part of the <i>Constitution</i> that defines the rules that govern our corporate lives as members and governing bodies. The 3 parts are the Form of Government, the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline.	

<b>Terms/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order Reference</b>
Boundaries	Geographically, the bounds of a governing body--the counties included in a presbytery, the presbyteries included in a synod, etc. Interpersonally, the limits of personal and professional space. Often referred to in relation to pastor-parishioner and intra-staff relationships.	
Call	Theologically, the sense that God has chosen one to engage in ministry as a layperson or clergy. Also referred to as "vocation." Also the term applied to the covenant between the congregation and pastor wherein the pastor responds to the "call" of the congregation in response to a larger vocation to ministry. This term also applies to the specifics of the contract or covenant established between the pastor and congregation including compensation, etc.	G-2.01 G-2.08
Candidate	The status in the preparation for ministry process following Inquirer. Movement to candidacy requires approval of the session and presbytery of care. "Candidate" also is used to refer to the persons being considered during the search to fill a particular ministerial position.	G-2.0601- 2.0602, 2.0604
Candidate Assessment	Part of the preparation for ministry ordinarily required of all those entering the process, during which their psychological fitness for ministry and their sense of vocation is examined by a psychologist or other professional counselor.	
Candidating	Term frequently applied to the final step preceding nomination for election to the pastorate in a congregation. Ordinarily refers to the day on which the candidate for the position preaches to the congregation and is presented during the congregational meeting.	

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Career Development Center	A term applied to the centers which provide career counseling services for church professionals. There are centers across the country.	
Certification	The process of authorizing a person as qualified for a particular form of service or ready for movement within a process. For example, the denomination certifies Christian Educators. Other organizations certify persons serving in some specialized ministries. (Administrative Personnel Association, Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM), Presbyterian Church Business Administrators Association, etc.) A presbytery can certify a candidate "ready for examination for ordination" or prepared to be commissioned as a lay pastor.	G-2.11 G-2.10 G-2.0607
Certified Christian Educator	A person serving in educational ministry who has completed the educational and examination requirements specified in the Book of Order for the status of Certified Christian Educator with "access" to the Committee on Ministry.	G-2.1103
Chaplain	A form of Specialized Ministry usually performed within an institutional setting (hospital, school, military, etc.) Such a position must be validated by presbytery.	G-3.0306
CIF	Church Information Form. The "dossier" or resume prepared by a congregation that is seeking a new pastor. This is now called "Ministry Information Form" (MIF)	
CLC	Church Leadership Connection	
Clerk of Session	The elder elected to serve as secretary and keeper of records and rolls for a session. May or may not be a member of session.	G-1.0505 G-3.0104
Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)	An education program to learn pastoral care in a institutional chaplaincy setting. Often candidates engage in CPE to further discern their vocation and gifts for ministry.	
CLP	See Commissioned Lay Pastor	
COGA	Committee on the Office of the General Assembly -- oversees and supports the ministry of the Office of the General Assembly and partner with OGA in carrying out work assigned by the General Assembly.	

<b>Terms/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order Reference</b>
COM	Committee on Ministry	G-3.0307
Commission	The church establishes commissions to perform tasks and carry out responsibilities on behalf of the whole establishing body. Presbyteries establish commissions to install pastors, ordain ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and to carry out other administrative functions. A Permanent Judicial Commission is required to prosecute judicial cases brought before the governing body.	G-3.0109, G-3.0109a, b D-5.0000
Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE)  (formerly called Commissioned Lay Pastor)	An elder of the PC(USA) who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service; valid only in one or more designated congregations. The Book of Order defines necessary instruction and the process for examination. The commission to a particular lay pastor should include the specific functions that the person is authorized to perform.	G-2.1001-2.1003 G-4.0301
Continuing Members	All teaching elder members of presbytery who serve in parish ministry or another "validated" ministry or are honorably retired or are members-at-large or inactive.	G-2.0503 G-3.0306
Cooperative Committee	Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates. This committee prepares the required ordination examinations and facilitates their grading.	G-2.0607d
Co-Pastor	Pastors who are called and installed with shared responsibility for pastoral ministry in a particular church.	G-2.0504 G-3.0104
In Correspondence	The status of formal relationship with and recognition of another denomination and the PC(USA) We are "in correspondence" with another denomination if we have had historical relations with it outside the US, are members of the ecumenical bodies in which the PC(USA) holds membership, or if we are in full communion with them by ecumenical agreements approved by the General Assembly. Pending meeting the constitutional requirements, the ordination of minister members of a denomination in	G-5.0201 G-2.0505- 2.0506 G-3.0501

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
	correspondence with the PC(USA) will be recognized by the PCUSA.	
Council	The generic or collective word for the governing bodies of the PC(USA). Includes sessions, presbyteries, synods and General Assembly. Replaces the previous term "governing body."	G-3.0
Covenant Relationship	The relationship established between the presbytery and inquirers and candidates which defines their mutual responsibilities.	G-2.0606
Covenant Relationship	The relationship established between the CPM and Inquirers and Candidates which defines their mutual responsibilities.	G-2.06
CPE	Clinical Pastoral Education. A special in-service opportunity, ordinarily for candidates, spent in an institutional setting under supervision. The purpose is to practice and hone one's pastoral counseling skills.	
CPM	Committee on Preparation for Ministry charged with guiding the preparation of those to be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament	G-2.04
CPM of Call	The CPM of the presbytery to which a candidate is being called to a first ministry position.	
CPM of Care	The CPM of the presbytery under whose care a particular candidate or inquirer is enrolled.	
CRE	Commissioned Ruling Elder (formerly CLP)	
Deacon	The ordered ministry of those ordained to the ministry of compassion, witness and service.	G-2.02
Designated Pastor	An installed pastoral position approved by the presbytery for a designated term. Term is no longer used in the Book of Order. The BOO no longer specifies a limit on the years of service. Still in use in POSD.	G-2.0504 G-2.0805
Developmental Counseling	The program of a career development center that provides pastors with an opportunity to assess their ministries, examine their sense of vocation, and plan for their future ministry. The pastor is considered to be the "client."	
Directory for Worship	The part of the Book of Order that provides the guidelines for worship within the Reformed tradition and the liturgical and sacramental requirements for appropriate worship.	



<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Dissolution	The process of concluding relationship. A pastor's relationship to a congregation is dissolved when he or she leaves the position. A church is dissolved when it is closed.	G-2.09, G-2.0507 G-3.0301 G-4.0205 G-2.0406-2.0407
Ecumenical Shared Ministry	Term applied to any one of several forms of pastoral ministries involving more than one denomination. This may be an ecumenical yoke or other form of cooperative ministry.	
Elder	The ordained office of the church with responsibility for the spiritual oversight and governance of a congregation. Ruling elders are currently serving on the session of a congregation.	G-2.0301 G-2.04
Pastor Emerita or Emeritus	An honorary status which may be awarded to someone honorably retired from a particular position by election of the congregation and upon approval of the presbytery. This status may include an honorarium but assumes no pastoral authority or duty.	<u>Terminology no longer included in BOO.</u>
Examination of Ministers	The process a presbytery uses to determine whether a minister will be accepted for membership in that presbytery. These are often conducted by the COM but may (also) be conducted on the floor of presbytery.	G-2.0505 G-2.0607 G-3.0306
EP or GP	Executive Presbyter or General Presbyter. The chief administrative staff person for a presbytery.	G-3.0110 Gen Presbyter is not used in BOO.
Exception	When a usual requirement for ordination is waived by a three-fourths vote of the presbytery or when a candidate is given permission to meet the standard examinations requirement through an alternate means.	G-2.0610
Evaluating Counseling	The program of a career development center which provides a COM or Personnel Committee with feedback regarding the emotional and psychological health of a pastor and their current fitness for ministry. In this case, the "client" is the COM or Personnel Committee and they will receive a report if requested.	
Examination Services	The office in the Office of the General Assembly, which resources the Cooperative Committee and CPMs related to ordination examinations.	

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Extraordinary	The term applied to circumstances during which the normal requirements for ordination are waived. This may include educational requirements, examinations, and time.	G-2.0610
Federated Church	A formal ecumenical relationship established between a Presbyterian congregation and one or more congregations of another denomination in which the merged membership functions as one congregation but members ordinarily maintain their separate denominational identity and separate rolls may be kept. In all cases, there shall be a plan of agreement which defines the nature of their federation.	G-3.0109b(4) G-5.05
Field Education	That part of the preparation for ministry process in which candidates participate as a student in ministry under the supervision of a pastor or other staff leader and ordinarily as part of their seminary education. This is sometimes called Supervised Practice of Ministry. The placement of students in field positions is normally the responsibility of the seminary, but should be done in consultation with the CPM and, where appropriate, the COM of the presbytery where the placement will occur.	Terminology no longer included in BOO.
Final Assessment	The examination of a candidate during the final year of theological education or when all other requirements for preparation are completed to determine the person's readiness to begin ministry. A successful final assessment results in the CPM certifying a candidate "ready for examination for ordination pending a call."	G-2.0607
Five Part Form	The form which a Stated Clerk must fill out in order to complete the transfer of a teaching elder from one presbytery to another or to record reception of a newly ordained minister	
Form of Government	Form of Government	G-portion of the BOO

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
GAC	General Assembly Council (Obsolete term) that agency of GA that dealt with financial matters.	(May have a new name)
Formula of Agreement	The agreement between the PC(USA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the Reformed Church in America (RCA) which provides for mutual recognition of ordination of clergy. See also "Full Communion."	Book of Order, Appendix C
Foundations of Presbyterian Polity	The part of the Book of Order that provides the theological and historical foundation for the other sections of the Book of Order.	
Full Communion	An official relationship between the PC(USA) and those churches recognized by the General Assembly. Full communion includes the mutual recognition of baptism and the orderly exchange of ministers, as defined by ecumenical agreement.	G-5.0202
General Assembly	The council of the whole denomination, representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the PC(USA). It consists of equal numbers of ruling elders and teaching elders elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds	G-3.05
General Assembly Mission Council	The General Assembly Mission Council is the ministry and mission agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Six ministry areas carry out our mission work: Compassion, Peace and Justice; Evangelism and Church Growth; Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women; Theology, Worship and Education; Vocation; and World Mission.	
General Presbyter, GP	A term used for the chief administrative staff person for a presbytery.	Term no longer included in BOO.

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Head of Staff	The pastor of a congregation who is the supervisor of other pastoral staff.	
Honorably Retired HR	The status which may be granted to a minister in good standing at the time of their retirement from active ministry.	G-2.0503c
Immigrant Fellowship/Bible Study Group or congregation	An international group of Christian people who are accepted by a Presbytery as part of their evangelistic outreach ministry. They maintain their language and cultural expressions in their worshiping experiences. Usually, their membership is not yet PC(USA). Also can be called Ethnic Specific Models.	G-2.0505a(1) G-3.0109b(4) G-3.0403c
Inactive Member	A minister-member of presbytery or a member of a congregation who has ceased to participate fully in the fellowship of the congregation or governing body may be placed on the Inactive Role if the governing body is unable to contact the person or if the minister has been absent for one year and has failed to report to the presbytery during that time. A person on the inactive role may not be elected to any position in the governing body.	Terminology no longer included in BOO. Retained by COM in POSD April 16, 2012.
Inquirer	A person enrolled in the Inquiry Phase of preparation for ministry. (see Inquiry below.)	G-2.0601-2.0603
Inquiry	The initial phase of preparation for ministry, the purpose of which is to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to Ministry of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together to determine together one's suitability for that ministry.	G-2.0603
Installation	The act of the council which completes the call of a person to service in the church. Ruling elders and deacons are installed by the congregation. Teaching elders are installed by the presbytery. A call is not complete until the person is installed.	W-4.4000 G-2.0403 G-2.0805
Installed Pastoral Relationship	Installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A teaching elder may be installed for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery.	G-2.0504a
Interim Pastor	A temporary pastor trained to serve churches in the midst of pastoral transitions. Now called Transitional Minister	G-2.0504b, c

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Interim	Applies to the time between the dissolution of the pastoral relationship of one pastor and the installation of the next. May also refer to the pastor <u>serving</u> during that time.	
Intern	A candidate for ministry may choose to extend his or her formal educational preparation by seeking a placement in a congregation or other ministry setting as an intern. Such positions vary from a few months (e.g., summer intern) to year-long. They are ordinarily compensated and are often negotiated or arranged through the seminary. This is an optional component of the preparation for ministry process.	
Investigating Committee	The committee, appointed by a council, whose task is to determine whether or not there is justification for a charge to be formally made and a disciplinary procedure to be initiated.	D-10.0200 D-10.0201
Joint Congregational Witness	When a PC(USA) congregation partners with one or more congregations of another denomination through federation, union, or some other plan for cooperative witness approved by the presbytery.	G-5.05
Laboring Outside/Inside the Bounds	Permission which is granted by a presbytery for a teaching elder to minister (work) outside the bounds of presbytery of membership. All validated work of a teaching elder must be authorized by a presbytery.	No longer mentioned or required by the BOO.
Larger Parish	Two or more churches who wish to cooperate in ministry may be established as a larger parish. They may call a pastor(s) together, coordinate ministry through a parish council, coordinate finances, etc. See also yoke.	
Liaison	One who connects one group or person with another. Most often used when presbyteries assign a liaison to a pastor nominating committee seeking a new pastor, to the session of an inquirer or candidate, or to a particular inquirer or candidate. In POSD, it refers to a COM member assigned as liaison between COM and a congregation.	

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order Reference</b>
Member-at-Large	A teaching elder who has previously been admitted to the presbytery or another presbytery as an active member, and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G-2.0503a. A Member At Large may serve as a Parish Associate to maintain a relationship to a particular church.	G-2.0503b
Mentor	One who teaches or serves as a role model and confidant. A COM may assign a mentor to a newly ordained teaching elder to help them transition from seminary to the parish, and must assign a mentor to a CRE.	G-2.1004
Minister of The Word and Sacrament	Formerly the official title of the ordained office for clergy in the PC(USA) now called Teaching Elder. Another name for teaching elder.	G-2.0501
Ministry Development Centers	Centers that provide career counseling services for those serving or seeking to serve in church vocations. (See <a href="http://www.ministrydevelopment.org">www.ministrydevelopment.org</a> )	
MIF	Ministry Information Form. The "dossier" or resume prepared by a congregation that is seeking a new pastor. Formerly called the CIF (Church Information Form).	
Mission Study	An in-depth study carried out at times during the life of a congregation to evaluate a congregation's present and assess its future mission and ministry goals. Sometimes done during a pastoral vacancy.	
Moderator	One of the two required officers (with the Clerk) of a governing body, the moderator convenes and adjourns the meetings of the body.	G-3.0104
Negotiation for Service	Approval granted by a presbytery to a candidate under its care to negotiate for positions that will require ordination as a teaching elder. See "Certified Ready for Examination for Ordination"	G-2.0607
Neutral Pulpit	The church in which a pastor being considered by a PNC preaches prior to candidating as one of the final steps in the selection process.	
NCD	New Church Development	
nFOG	New Form of Government, beginning 2011.	
Nominating Committee	See "Pastor Nominating Committee" (PNC)	

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
OGA	Office of the General Assembly (Stated Clerk's office.)	
Ordered Ministry	The term applied to deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders in the PC(USA). Ordered ministries "order" the life of the church "so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish."	G-2.0102-2.0105
Ordination	Ordination is the act by which the church sets apart persons to ordered ministry as teaching elders, ruling elders or deacons.	G-2.01 W-4.4000
Ords	See Ordination Exams.	
Ordination Exams	Standardized examinations required of all candidates in the areas of Bible Content, Biblical Exegesis, Polity, Theology, and Worship and Sacraments.	G-2.0607d
Organizing Pastor	An organizing pastor is a minister or commissioned ruling elder appointed by the presbytery to serve as a pastor to a group of people who are in the process of organizing a new Presbyterian congregation.	G-1.02 G-3.0109
Parish	A congregation or group of congregations involved in a cooperative ministry.	
Parish Associate	A minister who serves in some validated ministry other than the local parish, or is a member at large, or is retired, who wishes to define and maintain a relationship with a particular church.	Terminology no longer included in BOO, but used in POSD.
Parish Council	The coordinating body of a larger or cooperative parish, usually composed of representatives of each congregation in the parish. The council may have responsibility for calling the pastor(s) and carrying out personnel functions.	
Pastor	The name given to a teaching elder called to serve a congregation.	G-2.0504 G-3.0307
Pastor Nominating Committee	This term applied to the search committee for a pastor or associate pastor. Known as PNC.	G-2.0802
Personnel Committee	The committee of a governing body (session, presbytery, synod, GA) with responsibility for the oversight of its staff and implementation of its personnel policies.	G-3.0103

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
PCC	Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates. See "Ordination Exams."	G-2.0607d
Personal Information Form	The resume prepared by a teaching elder or other church worker. Abbreviated "PIF."	
PIF	Personal Information Form. The dossier or resume of a pastor or other church professional.	
PNC	Pastor Nominating Committee.	G-2.0802
Polity	Term applied to the government of the church.	
Preparation Consultation	The conversation between a presbytery and each of its inquirers and candidates to assess the progress of their preparation for ministry.	
Presbytery	The council composed of all congregations and teaching elders within its district.	G-3.03
Presbytery of Call	The presbytery to which a candidate is being called.	
Presbytery of Care	The presbytery under whose care a particular inquirer or candidate is enrolled.	
Psychological Assessment	Part of the preparation process ordinarily required of all those entering the process during which their psychological fitness for ministry and their sense of vocation is examined by a psychologist or other professional counselor.	
Pulpit Supply	The person who preaches for a congregation on a one-time or very short-term basis. A list of qualified persons is to be maintained by the presbytery and provided to vacant churches to ensure the quality of proclamation.	Terminology no longer included in BOO.



<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Readiness	The determination of one's preparedness to proceed to the next step in the preparation for ministry process.	
Reading Group	Persons elected by presbyteries to read and evaluate ordination exams.	
Reformed Tradition	The theological tradition of the Presbyterian and other Reformed churches.	F-1.0 F-2.0
Release from Exercise of Ordained Office	When a person ordained to ordered ministry (ruling elder, teaching elder, or deacon) is removed from office, either by their request or through disciplinary action of the council. If the release has occurred without prejudice, a person may seek to be restored to the office.	G-2.0405-2.0407 G-2.0507
Renunciation of Jurisdiction	When a person ordained to ordered ministry communicates in writing their intention to renounce the jurisdiction of this church. In other words, leaves the church and refuses to be bound by its authority.	G-2.0407 G-2.0509
Restoration	When a presbytery or congregation takes action to restore one previously released from ordered ministry.	G-2.0406 G-2.0507 D-12
Rules of Discipline	The part of the Book of Order which outlines the procedures and processes by which the church responds to individuals and governing bodies who violate the constitution.	D-1.0000 – D14.0000
Ruling Elder	The ordered ministry of those ordained for the spiritual oversight and governance of a congregation.	G-2.0301
Ruling Elder Commissioned to Particular Pastoral Service  CRE	A ruling elder, authorized by the presbytery, to provide limited pastoral service in one or more designated congregations or in a validated ministry of the presbytery. This position had previously been called "Commissioned Lay Pastor."	G-2.10
Second Career	A term applied to inquirers and candidates who have pursued one or more careers, other than being a student prior to coming under care.	

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Session	The council for the congregation responsible “for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness.”	G-3.0101 G-3.02
Severance	All compensation consistent with the pastor's previous terms of call, used when a congregation requests dissolution of a pastoral relationship.	
Sexual Misconduct	When a person violates the appropriate professional interpersonal boundaries with a subordinate or parishioner. Definition and disciplinary procedures are delineated in a governing body's Sexual Misconduct policy.	D-10.0401
Sexual Misconduct Response Team	The group elected by a governing body and trained to respond to an allegation of sexual misconduct during and after the investigation of allegations and, if appropriate, the prosecution of a disciplinary case.	
Solo Pastor	A minister serving a pastorate without associates.	
Specialized Ministry	Validated forms of ministry other than parish ministry. These are defined by presbyteries and may include pastoral counseling, chaplaincy, campus ministry, council staff, etc.	G-3.0306
SPM	Supervised Practice of Ministry. See also Field Education.	
Stated Clerk	One of the two required officers of a council (presbytery, synod, or GA), the clerk is responsible for maintaining the minutes, records, and rolls of the council. May also be the clerk of the permanent judicial commission.	G-3.0305 G-3.0104 G-1.0505
Stated Supply	One kind of temporary pastoral relationship of a Teaching Elder provided to a congregation that is not seeking an installed pastor and who is appointed by the presbytery. The relationship is established by the presbytery and shall extend for a period not to exceed 12 months at a time.	G-2.0504b Terminology no longer included in BOO.

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Student Pastor	A candidate who is serving in a temporary supply position as an intern, or during field education.	
Supervised Practice of Ministry	See "Field Education."	
Synod	The intermediate council (between presbytery and GA) serving as a corporate expression of the church throughout its regions. "Synod is responsible for the life and mission of the church throughout its region and for supporting the ministry and mission of its presbyteries..."	G-3.04
Teaching Elder	The ordered ministry of those ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament in the PC(USA). "Teaching elders shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry."	G-3.04
Temporary Supply	One type of temporary pastoral relationship secured by the session with counsel from the presbytery to conduct services when there is no pastor or the pastor is unable to perform pastoral duties. A temporary supply may be a teaching elder or a commissioned ruling elder.	G-2.0504b
Temporary Membership	A minister of another Christian denomination, serving temporarily in a validated ministry of the PC(USA) or in an installed relationship under the provision of the Formula of Agreement, who is enrolled by a presbytery for a period of service.	G-2.0506
Temporary Pastoral Relationship	A pastor approved by the presbytery to serve in a position that does not carry a formal call or installation. Titles and terms of service are determined by the presbytery, but may not exceed twelve months though it can be renewed.	G-2.0504b
Tentmaker	See Bi-vocational pastor.	
Terms of Call	The specifics of the pastoral relationship extended by the congregation and approved by the presbytery which includes the nature of the ministry to be carried out and terms of compensation. A presbytery must approve any changes in the terms of call and may determine minimum levels of compensation.	G-2.0804

<b>Term/Initials</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Book of Order References</b>
Transfer	The process of transferring a ruling elder from one presbytery to another, the membership of a minister of another Christian denomination into the PC(USA), the care of a candidate or inquirer from one presbytery to another, or a member from one congregation to another.	G-3.0104 G-2.0608 G-2.0502 G-1.0303b
Triennial Visit	This phrase is no longer used in the Book of Order. It referred to the required presbytery visit with each congregation every three years. Presbyteries still have a responsibility to maintain relationships with their congregations and to be open to communication regarding the life and ministry of congregations.	G-3.0303 G-3.0307
Union Church	When a Presbyterian Church unites with one or more particular churches which are members of other Reformed churches or of other Christian bodies. The union is accomplished under a plan of union.	G-5.05 G-3.0109b(4)
Validated Ministry	A ministry in which a teaching elder is engaged that meets the requirements of the Book of Order and presbytery's criteria to be considered "validated."	G-2.0503a G-3.0306
Vocation	See "call."	
Waiver	When a presbytery, on recommendation of the CPM, decides not to require a candidate to complete one or more of the ordinary requirements for ordination. <u>See "Exception."</u>	G-2.0610
Yoke	When two or more churches are served by one pastor they are said to be yoked.	

The Glossary in the 2011 Advisory Handbook is a resource originally compiled by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and Updated by Office of Vocation 10/05/11.

## 2. Reflections on the work of the COM

### Some theological reflections on the work of the COM

#### The “greater” church

The COM has responsibility for the ministry of the presbytery to its congregations and church professionals. However, that care can never be limited merely to issues of wages, hours, and work rules or to consideration of the needs of the individual person or congregation unrelated to the needs and mission of the rest of the church. It involves concern for *personal and corporate* integrity, for matching personal leadership skills and commitments with the needs of the Church of Jesus Christ, and for applying the values and norms of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to particular persons and situations. This is the heart of Presbyterian “connectionalism,” for which the *Book of Order* provides as follows:

...the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, called emphatically the Church; that a larger part of the Church, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein . . . (F-3.02 footnote);

The bodies that govern the church are identified in G-3.0101 as the session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly, and collectively are called *councils*. Further,

All governing bodies of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The governing bodies are separate and independent, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate governing body. (BOO Appendix, page C-8)

Thus, the responsibilities given the COM are all “theological” responsibilities in the most basic and practical sense: they require a COM to engage constantly in reflection, judgment, and discernment of how God is present and what God’s will is for ministers and congregations not only in particular situations but also in light of the work and will of the greater church.

## The particular church

The Task Force on the Theology and Practice of Ordination to Office presented to the 208th General Assembly (1996) a report titled “A Ministry of Service,” which it identified as a guide to theological understanding of the church and its leadership. In what follows, elements drawn from the guide provide a checklist of the theological issues that are present, acknowledged or not, in the issues and situations that present themselves to a COM every time it meets.

- The Church as Divine Gift and Human Institution
- The church is a covenant community called into being by God, with Christ at its head, and is appropriately called the “body of Christ.” Just as Jesus Christ is human as well as divine, so is Christ’s body, the Church, both a divine gift from God and a human institution. Thus the church seeks to order its life not only by Scripture, but also by the best understandings of human institutions.
- The Church as a Fellowship of Believers and as a Missionary Community
- The Church exists not only for the growth and maturity in Christ of its members, but also has a mission to bear witness to the gospel and to God’s Reign through its proclamation and through its deeds of compassion and reconciliation.
- The Church as Being and Doing
- The Church must be clear first about what it is over against the demands of the culture, but it must also be clear about its responsibilities to engage in service to and for God.
- The Church as Local Congregation and as Presence of the Church Catholic
- The congregation is the primary form of the Church, where members worship, are nurtured, and receive pastoral care; however, the church in a particular congregation is also part of the church universal, or the church catholic. Similarly, those ordained are ordained “in the Church of Jesus Christ,” even though they function within the context of a particular congregation.
- The Church as a Present Reality and as a Foretaste and Sign of the Kingdom
- We may be conscious of the church’s past, and we are most often occupied by the Church in the present, but the Church is also the present sign of the coming rule of God.

## Call and leadership

The “Final Report of the Advisory Group for the Call System” presented to the 209th General Assembly (1997) provides the church with theological convictions about both the call to serve in positions of leadership and about the nature of leadership itself.

## In Regard to the Call

...God calls the Church into being. God calls certain people to leadership roles within the Church...Calls result in leadership within particular contexts. Calls to church professions are calls to leadership in calling bodies...Calls demand high expectations and accountability..."

## In Regard to Leadership

...God gives specific leadership facilities and styles to particular individuals...Leadership in the church is a particular kind of relating and communicating. Leaders of the church find their model for leading in the person of Jesus, who came 'not to be served but to serve' (Matthew 20:38).

## Ethical considerations in the work of the COM

Since the Committee on Ministry is charged with the responsibility to provide pastoral care for church professionals and nurture and counsel for congregations, it is critical that the COM exhibit high ethical standards. In 1998 the General Assembly approved *Standards of Ethical Conduct* for all members of the Presbyterian Church (*published by the Office of the General Assembly and available at 1-800-524-2612*). Numerous publication on ethical conduct are available on the PC(USA) web site [www.pcusa.org/oga/](http://www.pcusa.org/oga/). Use the search function to find particular publications.

COM in the Presbytery of South Dakota adopted the following Guidelines dated June 1996.

## Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

### Introduction

Central to the vocation of Teaching Elder and Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is leadership of the people of God in a peculiarly Christian lifestyle which has at its core the embodiment of Jesus' words in John 15:12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

These ethical guidelines are an attempt, not at setting legalistic limitations, but rather, in aiding us all to show the kind of love for each other that Christ has shown for us. Thus, it is the goal of this paper to remind Teaching Elders that they are to live in such a manner as to promote the health and growth of the church and to give glory to God in Jesus Christ.

The purpose of these guidelines is twofold: to serve as a guide as to what is professionally expected of those who are employed as teaching elders in the Presbytery of South Dakota, and to inform the members as to what they can expect of teaching elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders (hereafter referred to as "ministers").

These guidelines do not presume to speak to all areas of ministers' lives. They are minimum expectations. Ministers must also be guided by scripture, personal

conscience, Christian tradition, and peer advice. They assume basic honesty and integrity in conduct. They are meant to supplement the ethical expectations of ministers presented in the *Book of Order* and the sexual harassment policies adopted by the Presbytery of South Dakota.

Expectations of ministers and styles of behavior change. The ethical behavior of ministers is a topic which should be regularly considered, discussed, and mutually agreed upon by members of the presbytery. These guidelines articulate customs and practices that are accepted within the profession of ministry. They are subject to regular review.

## Some Fundamental Principles

Section G-2.0104 of the *Book of Order* states:

In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and the world.

In light of this, some fundamental principles regarding ethical conduct can be given:

1. In personal as well as professional relationships, ministers are to demonstrate honest and sincere motives, upholding the peace, unity, and purity of the church and sharing faith, hope, and love with all people.
2. In all professional matters, ministers are to maintain practices that give glory to Christ; advance the goals of the church; and nurture, challenge, and protect the welfare of church members, parishioners, clients, and the public.
3. Ministers are to act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honor, integrity, morality, and dignity of the profession.
4. Ministers are to limit their ministries to those positions and responsibilities for which they are qualified.
5. Ministers will conduct all professional matters in a manner that assures confidentiality and avoids conflicts of interest.
6. Ministers will demonstrate respect, honesty and fairness when interacting with clergy colleagues and persons in related professions.
7. Ministers will seek to maintain professional competency throughout their careers.

## Expectations

In considering the ethics particular to ordained ministry, ministers are expected to live in the same manner of faithfulness, forgiveness, and obedience as are all members of Christ's church. While all who follow Christ are subject to the same human weaknesses, those who are called to ordination and ministers are set apart with particular expectations. People expect high standards of ministers. To deny or ignore this is unrealistic and



irresponsible. Therefore, it is vital that ministers show sensible regard for the moral, social, and spiritual standards of the Christian community and larger community, realizing that any violation on their part may be damaging to their congregants, to colleagues in ministry, to their profession, and to the whole body of Jesus Christ.

Standards for ministerial conduct grow out of a vision of the Christian life and a sense of calling to a particular service. Like other Christians, ministers experience sin, grace, alienation, and forgiveness. Along with other Christians, they are expected by the Christian community to witness to the renewal of humanity in Christ by demonstrating in their daily lives love, compassion and respect for other persons; fidelity in marriage; responsibility in parenthood; joy in service; and integrity and trustworthiness in their dealings with others.

### Family Crises

Ministers can and do experience the pain of separation and divorce, failure in parenting, and can be party to abusive behavior. No less than anyone else do ministers suffer the pain of illness, the loss of loved ones to death, and other crises. When such situations occur, ministers are expected to contact immediately the Committee on Ministry so that these persons can provide tangible help and support for them, their families, and the congregations they serve. In situations of serious family conflict or personal crisis ministers are expected to seek out and use the services of professionals, such as qualified counselors, as soon as possible.

### Personal Care

Because ministry is a demanding profession, ministers need pastoral care. Stress, depression, and burnout are occupational hazards. Therefore, ministers should take the initiative to care for themselves holistically, paying attention to the nurture of their minds, bodies, and spiritual lives. Ministers are expected to make time for rest, renewal, and growth. This means taking full vacation time and regularly taking advantage of continuing education opportunities. Ministers should also take the initiative in establishing relationships with other ministers, with the presbytery executive (if any), and with the Committee on Ministry to provide support through difficult times, caring concern, encouragement for Christian growth, and sharing successes and failures. They should avoid behavior that is destructive to themselves and others, such as overwork, substance abuse, or not spending time with their families.

### Freedom and Discipline

Though the Reformed tradition emphasizes the freedom of individual conscience in matters involving personal and public life, ministers are still subject to the discipline of the church (see *Book of Order*, G-2.0105, F-3.010, G-1.0302, G-3.0306).

## Ministers and Congregations

### Confidentiality

Ministers shall not disclose confidences to anyone except when:

1. Required to do so by law.
2. The person communicating confidences consents to disclosure. Such consent is normally given in writing, but may be inferred from the circumstances, such as the presence of a third party.
3. Disclosure is necessary to prevent harm to that person or others. Harmful behavior is that which is in violation of the law or poses a threat to physical well-being of the self or others.
4. Disclosure is necessary to defend a minister against claims made by a person who asserts that particular communications related to the claim were made in confidence.

### Special Privileges

Ministers, as servants of the Servant of God, need to be sensitive to the danger of using the authority of the pastoral office for personal benefit. Boundaries should be set, in consultation between the minister and the session, to determine how much and in what manner a minister may promote among the members of the congregation any of the minister's private business endeavors, tours, or products.

### Finance

The minister's integrity in personal business and financial dealings is also an ethical concern. Ministers are expected to conduct their financial affairs with the utmost integrity.

### Language and Behavior

Ministers shall not treat persons arbitrarily based on their gender; race, nationality, age, physical, emotional, or mental condition, sexual orientation, or economic condition.

Ministers shall avoid discriminatory or harassing treatment of any person or group. In particular, the following behavior must be avoided:

- Slurs or conduct, verbal or otherwise, relating to gender, race, etc., which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or sexual harassment including, but not limited to, verbal or non-verbal behavior such as sexist remarks, demeaning statements relating to gender, pressure for sexual activity and threats of punishment or promises of rewards for sexual behavior.

### Fees, Honoraria, and Discounts

Ministers should ordinarily not require or solicit fees for pastoral services to families or individuals within the congregation. Such services include performing baptisms, marriages, funerals, and counseling. In those cases where an unsolicited gift is given, ministers may use their own best judgment as to what to do with the gift. All ministers stand ready to render services to individuals and communities in crisis without regard to financial remuneration. While fees for the use of church facilities are, or may

be, set by the session, honoraria or fees for the minister's services to non-members can be set by the minister in consultation with the session. The minister must be aware of and responsible to civil authorities regarding the possible tax consequences of receipt of honoraria, gifts, etc.

Ministers are not to solicit clergy discounts for merchandise or services rendered them.

**Honoraria for pulpit supply should be at least \$100 for the first service, \$50 for each additional service the same day, plus mileage at the current IRS rate. Honoraria for moderating session and for congregational meetings should be at least \$50 plus mileage at the current IRS rate. Session may negotiate higher amounts.<sup>1</sup>**

### Non-Parish Activities

Though ministers are expected to participate in presbytery, ecumenical and other activities beyond the particular church, it is wise for the minister to discuss the time involved in such activities with the session. ("Discussion" does not mean "seek permission," as pastors are expected to participate in the councils of the church by virtue of the ordination vows G-2.0502, W-4.4003i(1).)

If any honoraria are received for duties outside the particular church (such as speaking, lecturing, or teaching) and these duties are carried on during the time that would otherwise be understood as available to the congregation, a common understanding between the minister and the session should be established as to the disposition of such honoraria. This presupposes agreement between the minister and session concerning the limits of the congregation's claim on the minister's time. Conversation between ministers and their sessions should arrive at mutual concurrence as to expectations regarding the minister's work time and free time.

### Relationship With The Session

The minister shall honor a diversity of opinions and seek to lead the session in an open and responsible manner always recognizing that the session is the decision-making body of the congregation. The minister is accountable to the session for his/her time and activities. Her/his leadership is to be that of a servant empowering the members for the work and ministry of Jesus Christ.

## Ministers as Members of Presbytery and the Larger Community

### Presbytery Responsibility and Accountability

It is expected that ministers will be honest and open in their communication with their colleagues in the presbytery and with Committee on Ministry members. It is also expected that ministers will be active participants in the functions of the presbytery in accordance with their ordination vows, G-2.0502, W-4.4003i(1).

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<sup>1</sup> Approval by POSD February 27, 2015.

## Relationships With Colleagues

Whenever a colleague's conduct is believed to be harmful to any individual or group, including that person himself or herself, the concerned person should speak directly to that colleague or consult the presbytery executive or the Committee on Ministry moderator. Anyone registering a concern with regard to the behavior of a colleague will be encouraged to make his/her identity known.

## Relationships With Non-Members

Ministers are sometimes called upon to officiate at weddings and funerals for persons who are not members of the congregation. It is appropriate in such situations to ascertain to what particular church these persons belong and to suggest that they procure the services of their own minister.

## Relationships With Other Churches

Ordinarily ministers should not knowingly call upon members of another church in the community to administer pastoral care unless the initiative and interest shown by such a person requires it as a courtesy. If such a visitation occurs, it is a helpful courtesy, after obtaining the parishioner's permission, to inform the colleague to whose congregation the person belongs. Marriages, funerals, and baptisms are not to be accepted by ministers unless an invitation has been extended by the pastor of the church involved.

## The spiritual dimensions of the work of the COM

The COM is charged with a long list of very important responsibilities on behalf of the presbytery and for the sake of Christ's church. The COM does not and cannot work in isolation from other groups and persons in the presbytery or in the church at large. This means that COM members, no matter how wise, talented, faithful, experienced or energetic they may be, are called to be partners. They partner with one another, with the church professionals and congregations they serve, with presbytery staff and with other committees of the presbytery, with synod and General Assembly, and, most especially, with God.

The work of the Committee on Ministry will be done best, most faithfully and most creatively when it is done in a context of prayer, discernment, and worship. The most important preparation for any encounter between a member of the COM and a church professional or a congregation is prayer for the individual, the congregation, the relationship and the coming meeting.

As partners in ministry, COM members enter into relationships with an attitude of respect and appreciation for the congregations and individuals they encounter. COM members bring significant authority and substantial resources to meetings with those people. Their authority and their assistance are most likely to be accepted if they are offered in a spirit of collegiality and in a context of ongoing relationships of trust and care.

### 3. The COM and Congregations<sup>2</sup>

#### Nurturing relationships with congregations

COMs are so often caught up in responding to the urgent needs of congregations and ministry professionals in transition, in crisis, or in conflict that it can be easy to lose sight of the important responsibilities to serve as pastor and counselor to church professionals, and to facilitate relations among them, congregations, and the presbytery, but the COM that devotes a significant portion of its time, energy, and wisdom to building and nurturing relationships will find that when there is a transition, a crisis or a conflict, its presence will be more quickly welcomed and its offers of help will be more readily accepted. Nothing that the COM does is more important than nurturing good relationships with congregations and church professionals.

One of the most effective ways of building those relationships is through the COM Liaison.

#### COM Liaison<sup>3</sup>

The COM liaison is a member of COM appointed to a church for the purpose building relationships between COM and that church. He or she represents COM and its concern for building up the ministry and mission of each church. COM seeks to serve congregations with care, support, and resources for the wellbeing of each church. In order to achieve its responsibility COM, of necessity, needs to build working, positive relationships with each church and pastor. This relationship requires voluntary cooperation among all the parties concerned: the session, the pastor, and the liaison. The COM Liaison can build relationships in several ways including:

- Visits, conversations at presbytery meetings/functions
- Worshipping with congregation when possible
- Access to newsletters, annual reports, mission statements
- Session minutes soon after the meeting (This will enhance understanding of church's ministry/mission.)
- Occasional attendance at meetings of session
- Report to COM on the health and well-being of the congregation at the regular meetings of COM.

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<sup>2</sup> Mostly copied from the 2007 COM Handbook and supplemented from the 2011 Advisory Handbook.

<sup>3</sup> This topic was approved by COM on October 2, 2014.

## Rationale

By being well informed on the activities and concerns of session and the congregation, the liaison will be able to represent those concerns to COM, and help COM to gain better understanding of that church and the issues it faces. At the same time, a well-informed liaison can help the church better understand the concerns of COM, interpreting the actions and policies of COM and the presbytery for the session.

## Ways for the Congregation to Build Relationships

It is important for the congregation, the session, and the pastor to cooperate with the liaison and make use of his or her abilities as they would any other resource. The liaison is, after all, a resource for the church in providing advice, counsel, and information on administrative procedures of the presbytery. To foster that relationship, the following is suggested as much as practical:

- The Commissioner to presbytery should visit with the liaison (or COM moderator) at presbytery meetings/functions.
- Session or pastor should occasionally invite the liaison to worship with the congregation, particularly on special occasions.
- Session should keep the liaison on the mailing and email distribution lists for newsletters, bulletins and session minutes.
- Session should send the liaison copies of mission statements and annual reports whenever they are produced or modified.

## Rationale

Communication is a 2-way exercise. Just as the liaison bears some responsibility to learn about the church, so the church, through the session, bears some responsibility to keep the liaison informed about their activities and concerns. The purpose is always to promote closer ties between the church and COM and to strengthen the ministry of the church.

## Responsibilities of the COM

The liaison is an extension of the work and ministry of the COM. As such, he or she needs and deserves the support of COM. Such support should include:

- Mileage for attendance at congregational events, including at least two meetings of session each year
- Training in the duties and responsibilities of the liaison
- Training in the policies and procedures of COM and the presbytery
- Provide the liaison with a copy of the COM manual

## Rationale

The liaison is a volunteer, whether a teaching elder or a ruling elder, and is volunteering his or her time in service to COM and to the church to which he or she is the liaison. There must be mileage support to offset this significant out-of-pocket expense. The COM also has a responsibility to provide training necessary for the liaison to properly carry out his or her duties as liaison.

## The COM and congregations in transition

Like individuals, congregations tend to be more open to assistance at transition times. At such times the Committee on Ministry has an opportunity to be helpful in ways that nurture relationship and build capital for the future. The departure of a pastor is an obvious time when the COM's help is essential. The COM shepherds a congregation through the complex process of saying goodbye to one pastor, securing temporary pastoral leadership, and preparing to welcome a new pastor. (See Chapter 4)

But there are other occasions of transition when timely assistance from the COM and/or other presbytery committees can be welcome and extremely valuable. Among those occasions are:

- When the congregation considers adding a fulltime staff person or cutting back on staff support.
- When the pastor or a close family member is seriously ill.
- When a new building or addition to the building is planned or completed.
- When a significant new program of community outreach is begun.
- When a small town becomes part of metro-sprawl with the resulting influx of newcomers, new opportunities for mission, new members, and, sometimes, new problems.
- When a factory that once employed many workers in a community is closed.
- When the congregation has suffered trauma connected with sexual misconduct, violence, or the destruction of a building by fire or natural disaster.

Special care needs to be taken for congregations that are living with the aftermath of accusations of pastoral misconduct, especially when sexual misconduct has been alleged. Whether or not COM is involved in the disciplinary process, the COM has a continuing responsibility to provide pastoral care for other church professionals, if any, in the congregation, and for the congregation as a whole. If such a situation arises, the COM moderator will need to work closely with the presbytery staff to provide assistance to the congregation.

Severance may be a concern here. See Index for severance policy.

The transition process will be covered in detail in the next Chapter.

## Appreciative Inquiry

Developed for use in business leadership and increasingly a tool that is used in congregational life, the basic ideas of Appreciative Inquiry are deceptively simple.

Appreciative Inquiry begins by creating interview questions that:

- encourage participants to remember the best of the past,
- encourage participants to have hope for the future,
- nurture community spirit, and
- encourage expression of feelings as well as recital of facts.

Appreciative Inquiry methodology could appropriately be used in a variety of settings, with groups of various sizes, for varying purposes. It is, however, especially helpful in the context of:

- congregational mission studies
- congregations recovering from conflict or other trauma
- a newly called pastor getting acquainted with a new congregation.

The great value of Appreciative Inquiry is that it focuses on what is good, right, and healthy, rather than on what is difficult, painful, or broken in congregational life. By focusing on the positive aspects of congregational life, Appreciative Inquiry strengthens what is healthy and whole.

Appreciative Inquiry is not a substitute for a clear-eyed evaluation of conflict or of the challenges a congregation faces. A congregation whose membership has declined from 500 in the 1950's to 75 in 2005 will still be dealing with the challenges posed by limited financial resources, a building that was intended for a much larger congregation, and, in all probability, a membership that includes a sizeable percentage of members past the age of 80. Appreciative Inquiry can, however, help the members be more creative in the use of their present resources and more hopeful in seeking God's call to them as a congregation.

Mark Lau Branson's book, *Memories, Hopes, and Dreams: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* (Alban, 2004) is a useful resource for those wishing to read further.

## Life cycle issues

Just as human beings tend to behave differently at different stages in their lives, so congregations are likely to have different characteristics according to the stage of their lives. Like size-related characteristics, these are not sufficient by themselves to fully understand a congregation. But familiarity with the generalities of life cycle issues will be of significant help to a COM in working with a congregation and making initial hypotheses about what is likely to be of the most help.

In 1986 Martin Saarinen's book *The Life Cycle of a Congregation* was published. He described the life cycle of a congregation as moving from birth to formation through stability and, often, on to decline, and sometimes to death.

What may be most important for COM members is to recognize that once at or beyond the point of stability, congregations will need encouragement to engage in the processes of ongoing renewal and renegotiation of mission. If a congregation enters into the process of decline, revitalization or redevelopment (Presbyterians now call it



transformation) is certainly possible, but will require a greater investment of time, energy and resources of all kinds than does ongoing renewal. Prevention is easier and often more effective than intervention!

An excellent description of life cycle issues is in the first chapter of Alice Mann's book *Can Our Church Live?* (Alban, 1999)

## The COM and New Church Development

The primary responsibility for new church developments (NCD) is not lodged with the COM. However, the COM should provide support and care for the pastoral leadership serving in NCD work, just as they do for other church professionals.

Some NCD congregations may need extra support in moving through the very significant transition times of chartering and the end of financial support from the denomination.

### Calling pastors for new worshiping communities

The presbytery or particular congregation will be helped by a careful assessment to discern whether or not the person being considered to lead a new church exhibits the skill-set and aptitude for the work of starting a new church. This may include a pre-screening assessment (available through the Office of Church Growth) as well as a more in depth assessment of skills.

Immigrant pastors will require special care regarding recognition of ordination from partner churches worldwide and transfer of membership to the PC(USA) and/or visa/immigration issues. (G-2.0505)

Will the organizing pastor/evangelist be considered to be the first installed pastor? These expectations should be clarified at the beginning of the relationship.

A commissioned ruling elder (CRE) may also be called to lead a new church.

## The COM and small congregations

Small congregations (usually defined as those with 100 members or less) have significant strengths. They are specialists in relationship: with each other, with God, with their pastor, with their community.

### Characteristics of A Small Church

**David R. Ray from *The Big Small Church Book*, The Pilgrim Press 1992 (pp. 35-42):<sup>4</sup>**

1. A small church is the common expectations of its members.
2. Everyone knows everyone or almost everyone else.
3. Beyond knowing one another there is a sense of "family."
4. In a small church almost everyone feels and is important and needed.
5. Organizational functioning is simple rather than complex.
6. Communication is rapid.

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<sup>4</sup> This is a quote. Some terminology may differ from current PC(USA) usage.

7. Small churches are known by their distinctive personalities more than by their programs.
8. It is likely to be rooted in history and nervous about its future.
9. A small church's theology is relational, horizontal, and historical.
10. Small churches understand mission in immediate and personal terms.
11. A small church wants its minister to be a pastor, friend, and generalist, not a specialist, administrator, or CEO.
12. The small church model is the biblical model.
13. Small churches are people oriented.
14. Small churches are more likely to laugh and cry than larger ones.
15. Worship is their primary activity.
16. Small churches are more story than treatise, more mythology than methodology.
17. They operate on fluid, "people" time.
18. Most small church people would rather give what is needed, when needed, and give it privately.
19. Lay people are more important than the pastor.
20. Small churches are often hard to get into and harder to get out of.
21. Small churches are tough.
22. Small churches would rather do it "our way."
23. They're more effective than efficient.
24. Small churches are better at events than programs.
25. They're better at meeting immediate needs than long-range planning.
26. Small churches are locally owned and operated.

Pastors and COM members who have only experienced larger churches with several staff members and many programs often have difficulty relating to small church folks. Because of the special needs of smaller congregations and their pastors, small churches are sometimes perceived as a "problem" for presbyteries to solve rather than a unique form of congregational life with both strengths and weaknesses.

Committees on Ministry can be helpful to small congregations in several very significant ways:

- By helping them as they seek caring, competent pastoral leadership. Sometimes, smaller congregations will need to be encouraged to consider new or unfamiliar possibilities: a pastor of a different cultural background, a woman pastor where one has never served before, a commissioned ruling elder (CRE), or a tentmaking (bi-vocational) pastor.
- By working with small church pastors to stay with small church ministry, despite the pressures of debts incurred in seminary education and the expenses of family life. Research by Alban Institute indicates that congregations of all sizes do best with longer-tenured pastors.
- By recruiting a pool of people in the presbytery who have special skills they are willing to share with congregations other than their own. Accounting skills to assist small congregations with the annual financial review required by the *Book of Order* is one example of the kind of help needed by many smaller congregations.

- By lifting up their strengths and celebrating their successes, and recognizing the variety of forms of ministry in small congregations. COMs are especially encouraged to focus not only on anniversaries and tradition, but also on innovative, creative, healthy ministry in small congregations.

## Shared ministry and larger parishes

A larger parish (sometimes referred to as yoked churches) is one that shares a pastoral leader with one or more other congregations. The most common reason for forming larger parishes is that one or all of the churches can no longer afford to pay a full-time pastor. In some situations the yoke has a long historic tie. In others the churches choose to work together, not only to share leadership, but also to share in ministry to their communities and to share in programs such as a joint youth group or Bible study. A shared ministry may also provide economies of scale, operating more efficiently by sharing resources to reduce overall costs.

Sometimes the presbytery approaches one or several churches to suggest a larger parish as an option for obtaining pastoral leadership. In other situations, members of one congregation initiate discussions with another and then invite presbytery to help them work out the details. Before seeking a pastor, the sessions of the congregations work out a formal partnership agreement as to how they will share in ministry. A written covenant signed by the two or more clerks of session, the shared pastor, and the presbytery COM moderator is recommended so that the agreements are clear.

In considering the formation of a larger parish the following issues need to be considered:

- What are the needs of each congregation for the time and talents of a pastor? What will the pastor be expected to do with each congregation in a normal week or month?
- What proportion of full-time service will be expected by each congregation?
- Where will the pastor live?
- What assumptions are there about involvement of the pastor and family (if any) in the congregations and communities? (It is not fair to expect spouses to attend two worship services or to expect pastors to attend football games in both communities each weekend.)
- When will worship services be held in each congregation? (This decision must take into account not only the preferences of each congregation, but also the need for the pastor to build significant relationships with the people of each congregation as well as practicalities such as the amount of time needed to travel from one church building to another.)
- How will planning be coordinated?
  - Three or four joint session meetings per year can be very valuable - one before Lent, one in late summer, one before Advent, one at annual review and budget time

- This keeps communication strong and allows the sessions to share ideas and concerns without relying on the pastor as the go-between.

What will the total cost of shared ministry be?

- Cash salary
- Housing allowance or manse maintenance
- Utilities
- Medical and pension dues
- Continuing education allowance
- Reimbursed professional expenses (travel, etc.)
- Pastor Search expenses - (travel, lodging, meals, photocopying, telephone, and postage)
- Moving expenses
- Pulpit supply for six weeks per year (vacation and continuing education)
- Shared administrative expenses (bulletins, newsletter, postage, etc.)
- Costs of joint programming
- Will the costs be shared in the same proportion as the time-sharing?
- Will the costs be shared in proportion to membership?
- How much funding will each congregation provide each year or month?

In addition, congregations planning for a larger parish or for shared ministry should consider these questions:

- How will expenses be handled? Will there be a parish treasurer?
- What are our commitments to each other as partners in ministry?
- How will our shared ministry be evaluated?
- How will we proceed if one congregation is dissatisfied with the arrangement?
- How will we proceed if the minister wants to leave one congregation but not the other?

It is usually helpful to discuss these matters in a joint session gathering with the moderator of session and Committee on Ministry representatives to help process the discussion and share information that may be constructive. An initial draft "Covenant for Shared Ministry" (See the end of this section for a model) might be drawn up from this discussion, and then shared with all participants for review, amendment, and adoption. It is very wise to share the document with the congregations (for information) as well and have a well-informed elder respond to questions so that the relationship gets off to a good start. The congregation needs to understand the nature and limitations of the sharing.

## The COM and immigrant ministries

Suggestions for the COM in dealing with new immigrant ministries:

Committees on Ministry must be sensitive to the cultural differences related to ethnicity, nationality, and native language. This will include an awareness that even their own best efforts to be inclusive may not be as effective as they wish them to be.

Working with members and leaders of Immigrant Fellowships requires care, attention, and sensitivity.

The COM may find it helpful to:

- Take Cultural Proficiency training. Sensitivity to welcoming strangers is a matter of attitude and intentional deeds.
- Be in contact with and look for advice from the Congregational Enhancement and New Immigrants offices of the Justice and Compassion area (National Ministries Division) when issues related to racial-ethnic constituents are being considered.
- Help the resource centers in presbyteries to add materials supporting this specialized ministry.

It is crucial for the presbytery to be accurately informed about immigration law as the law applies to leaders of new immigrant fellowships. Questions concerning immigration law may be directed to Manager, Immigration Issues at 888-728-7228, extension 5372.

## Conflict

### Emphasizing Congregational Health

The Committee on Ministry has responsibility for promoting the peace and harmony of the congregation and to assist congregations in the prevention or utilization of destructive conflict.

People who are trained, skilled, and experienced in dealing with conflict should always be the ones chosen to lead conflict interventions. Some Committees on Ministry recruit a team of conflict interventionists who are accountable to the COM but are not necessarily members of the COM. This frees the COM to focus on building healthy ministry rather than expending much of its time and energy on dealing with conflict. If the COM chooses to deal directly with conflicts in congregations, an understanding of systems theory applied to congregational life and thorough training in conflict intervention are essential. **COM members who become involved in working to resolve a conflict in a congregation must do so only with the knowledge and consent of the COM, as part of an intervention team, and after training in conflict intervention.**

Although congregation members and leaders are often disturbed by conflict, especially in congregations, conflict is a universal experience and can be both normal and healthy. In fact, the ability to disagree openly and engage in creative conflict is one of the indicators of a healthy organization. Whenever there are disagreements, wherever opinions are divided, wherever a congregation wrestles with alternatives in mission, conflict will be present. It is healthy as long as its energy is focused on issues rather than personalities; on equitable solutions rather than "winning;" on seeking what God is calling the congregation to be and do rather than what is desired for an individual, organization or program.

## Work on prevention rather than intervention

As in healthcare for individuals and communities, prevention of problems is far preferable to intervention, requiring less energy in the long run and freeing congregations and the presbytery to focus on mission and ministry.

Committees on Ministry that wish to focus on fostering healthy ministry should:

- Assist both pastor and congregation to a “good goodbye” when a pastoral relationship is dissolved.
- Assist both departing pastors and the congregations they are leaving to be clear about the new boundaries on their relationships.
- Encourage and support the use of well-qualified intentional Transitional ministers, especially with congregations that have experienced conflict or are saying goodbye to a long-term pastor.
- Provide excellent support to Pastor Nominating Committees through the deployment of well-trained COM liaisons to the PNC.
- Be attentive to the need for reference checking in the pastoral search process and assist PNCs to be effective in their own reference checking.
- Offer the same services to pastors seeking calls, especially candidates seeking their first call.
- Establish and support healthy pastoral relationships.
- Assist congregations and pastors to be clear about role and task expectations.
- Provide good pastoral care for all ministry professionals.
- Encourage pastors to take their full vacation time and study leave annually.
- Support the provision of sabbaticals for ministry professionals.
- Use the opportunity of the Triennial Visit to create a climate of trust and pick up early warning signs of conflict.
- Be alert to the times when congregations and pastors are likely to be open to assistance from the COM.
- Be intentional in following up with pastors and congregations at key points in the life of a pastoral relationship. Alban Institute research about pastoral authentication would suggest that key points are entry, 1 year - 18 months, then again at the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 10th years.

## Equip your COM

When conflict becomes destructive, enormous energy is expended that is taken away from the goals and mission of the congregation. Then conflict becomes divisive and injurious to the peace and harmony of the congregation. The COM needs to be prepared and equipped to intervene effectively so that conflict does not become destructive.

Conflict Utilization Training and Consultants are available through Alban Institute (1-800-486-1318 or [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)) and the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center ([www.lmpeacecenter.org](http://www.lmpeacecenter.org)). Some presbyteries bring conflict management trainers into

the presbytery to train COM and other interested persons. Others provide scholarships for COM members to go to a conflict management training event.

## Resources

Augsburger, David. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*.

Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

Cosgrove, Charles H. & Dennis D. Hatfield, *Church Conflicts The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*, Abingdon, 1994.

Lott, David B., ed., *Conflict Management in Congregations*, Alban, 2001.

Richardson, Ronald W., *Creating a Healthier Church, Family Systems Theory, Leadership, and Congregational Life*, Fortress Press, 1996.

Steinke, Peter, *How Your Church Family Works; Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, Alban 1993.

Thompson, George B., *How To Get Along With Your Church, Creating Cultural Capital for Doing Ministry*, Pilgrim Press, 2001.

## Levels of Conflict Intensity

### Level One: A Problem to Solve

At this level of intensity there is real disagreement as well as conflicting goals, values and needs. Anger is short-lived. Parties begin to be uncomfortable in each other's presence. Conflict is problem rather than person oriented. There is open sharing of information. Language is clear and specific. The goal is to solve the problem and to move toward unanimous agreement using a collaborative style. A win/win solution is still possible.

### Level Two: Disagreement

Real disagreement is found at this level, but issues and personalities begin to mix. Distrust leads to hesitancy to mix with the other side. Shrewdness and calculation begin. Selective information is held back. Language becomes more general; humor is often barbed or hostile. While a win/win solution is still possible, face-saving becomes important.

### Level Three: Contest

Win/lose dynamics begin at this level of intensity. There is resistance to peace overtures and the conflict is personalized. While a worthy opponent is recognized, most will not operate in the presence of "the enemy." Sides begin to form. Information may be distorted. There are over-generalizations and diabolic intent is attributed to "the enemy." The objective shifts from self-protecting to winning. Mediation, compromise and voting will work, but it is possible that some will leave the organization at this point.

### Level Four: Fight or Flight

Winning is not as important as getting rid of the other person/faction. People will not speak to the other side and a cold, self-righteous attitude pervades. Factions are

solidified with clearly defined leadership. People will not hear contrary information. Language solidifies into ideology. There is a high probability of a split in the organization with a significant number of members leaving.

#### Level Five: Intractable

The issue is no longer clear. Personalities have become the issue. Conflict is now unmanageable. Behavior is vindictive. Objectivity has been lost and people cannot control their emotions. The “enemy” is now seen as harmful to the larger society in general, not just to the particular organization. Information is skewed to accomplish the objectives at any cost. The outcome will be highly destructive. Outside “force” is necessary to maintain the peace – Administrative or Judicial Commissions.

#### Intervene effectively when trouble arises

There are many potential sources of conflict in a congregation. Conflicts often arise within ministerial staff, among members of a session, between individuals with positions of responsibility and between the pastor and member(s) of a congregation. The changing role of the congregation in mission, changes in the community in which the congregation is located, disagreements over worship style, or the presence of disruptive personalities may also trigger conflict. Almost any situation where choice and decision are involved has the potential of escalating into destructive conflict.

#### Four Changes that Can Lead to Conflict in Congregations

From Edwin Friedman, *Generation to Generation*, The Guilford Press, 1985, pp.203-204.

1. Changes in the family of the spiritual leaders, either clergy or lay, such as a birth, death, illness, divorce, change of address, marital problems or acting out of a child, or problems in the extended family of the pastor or the pastor’s spouse.
2. Changes in the professional life of the clergy or lay leaders such as personal advancement, achievement of a degree or involvement in a civic project.
3. Changes in the long-term constituency of the parish, or the size of the congregation.
4. Changes in the staff of the congregation, such as the hiring, firing, or resignation of key staff leaders.

A COM may become aware of a conflict or potential conflict in a congregation through one or more sources. The pastor, a member of session, or a presbytery staff person may alert the COM. The *Book of Order* provides helpful guidance about the use of that information:

The COM should exercise wise discretion in determining when to take cognizance of information concerning difficulties within a congregation and act “to settle difficulties on behalf of presbytery where possible and expedient” (G-3.0307). COM



may

- take the initiative to bring the information which has come to it to the attention of the session of the congregation involved, counseling with the session as to the appropriate actions to be taken in correcting the reported difficulties.
- offer its help as a mediator in case the session either finds itself unable to settle the problems peaceably or takes no steps toward settlement.
- act to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the parties concerned, or if this authority is granted by the presbytery for the specific case. When so doing, the committee shall always hold hearings which afford procedural safeguards as in cases of process, following the procedures outlined in the Rules of Discipline.

The COM may take the initiative in bringing to the attention of the session of the congregation involved any information that has come to it regarding difficulties and may offer its help as mediator where appropriate. In all conflict interventions by the COM, there should be at least two members of the COM or the Intervention Team participating. **Conflict interventions should never be undertaken by one person working alone.**

## Steps for Conflict Utilization

### 1. Taking Cognizance:

The COM may hear about difficulties in a congregation through any of several channels:

- From annual consultations with teaching elder members of the presbytery
- From triennial visits with congregations
- From communication from teaching elders, sessions, elders who are members of sessions, or Certified Christian Educators from the presbytery
- From other presbytery staff members or committees that are working with congregations.

The COM discerns when and whether to “take cognizance” of such information based on its understanding of the needs and resources of a congregation, taking care not to act too hastily and also avoiding undue delay.

The initial contact is likely to be with the Moderator of COM and may be a carefully crafted letter from session, or may be any form of communication from an individual (pastor or member). Contacts from individuals often are unclear and require clarification. The moderator should talk informally with the individual to clarify the person’s concerns before presenting it to COM in the interest of having a report that is clear and more complete.

When the COM decides to become involved in a conflicted situation, a team is assigned to the task and the authority and accountability of that team is reviewed.

### 2. Initial assessment:

An initial assessment is necessary in order to identify both the presenting issues in the conflict and possibly deeper systemic concerns behind the conflict. The initial

assessment also identifies the extent to which the parties to the conflict are able and willing to enter into constructive conversations. Conversations with the key identified parties in the conflict are important in this initial assessment to avoid skewed perceptions. The COM has particular responsibility toward the ministers or educators involved and the sessions of congregations.

NOTE: The COM must be especially careful to avoid unhealthy “triangling” in this initial assessment.

### 3. Communication:

Prior to any intervention, the parties involved should be notified in writing of the response of the COM to the request or complaint and meetings with the parties involved confirmed with date, time and place clearly designated. Agreements regarding initial interventions should be spelled out, but need not be publicized beyond those immediately affected by the intervention, e.g., the session, the pastor, the session member. Copies of all communication should be kept in the confidential files of the COM

### 4. Looking, listening and learning

The conflict team next engages in careful observation and collection of information about the congregation’s situation with particular attention to the systemic nature of the congregation.

- The team will assume a posture of partnership and learning with the parties in the conflict, assuring fairness and even-handedness, and also holding a clear sense of its role as representing the COM as counselors, mediators, and/or interveners.
- The team will lay out a plan for meeting with pastors, educators, elders, a personnel committee, and the session to look at the way the congregation has organized itself around the conflict, to listen to the stories people tell about the congregation’s situation, and to learn from the symptoms that are evident.
- If the team deems them helpful, meetings or interviews with other groups or individuals may proceed after the initial meetings with the core leadership of the congregation.
- Often the observation period can also serve as a “cooling off” period for the congregation. If the conflict escalates during this time, that becomes another piece of information about the reasons for the difficulty.

### 5. Provisional Hypothesis

With information about the congregation and the parties in the conflict, the team creates a provisional hypothesis about the nature of the conflict. The hypothesis frames the conflict in terms of the way the congregation as a system functions and the role the conflict plays in the changes it is experiencing. The hypothesis also raises the question of the presence of God in the situation.

### 6. Action plan, and report

Based on the hypothesis, the team devises an action plan designed to strengthen

the healthy functioning of the congregation and channel the energy from the conflict to a constructive response to the difficulties and changes in the congregation's life. The action plan may offer specific resources, suggestions for action by the congregation's leaders to move toward constructive and healthy functioning, or interventions by the team, by outside resource persons, or by an administrative commission.

Depending on the original mandate for the team, a report is made to the COM and another report is made to the session, either for information, for approval, or for action.

Action by the COM might take one of two forms:

#### **Advisory Interventions**

The Committee on Ministry may respond to a request by a session, session member, pastor, or church educator to be a resource for a potentially destructive conflict. The purpose of an advisory intervention is to assist the session or governing body to reduce the intensity and destructive effects of conflict. An advisory intervention assumes a voluntary relationship between COM and the session and is ordinarily applied where the hypothesis is relatively simple and there is good cooperation from the parties involved.

#### **Authoritative Interventions**

The action may require work by the team given authority by the session or the presbytery for specific interventions. The team may act as negotiator, mediator or arbitrator in a conflict when invited to do so by the parties involved. Provisions of the Book of Discipline for due process shall be followed wherever appropriate in all cases of authoritative intervention and appropriate records will be kept of all actions and recommendations arising from the intervention

### **7. Evaluation and follow-up:**

An evaluation of the process followed, along with recommendations for further work should be included as part of the COM's continuing responsibility. This evaluation, along with recommendations for future action(s) should be included in the permanent record of the COM with the responsibility for follow-up assigned to a person or sub-committee of COM

### **Pastoral care during a conflict**

When there is conflict in a congregation, the COM is encouraged to remember its charge to provide pastoral care for congregations and church professionals, and to approach their work with a pastoral attitude. Care for all parties in the conflict is essential: the session, the pastor and other congregation staff, and members.

If the pastor has a family, they may well be among those who suffer most acutely from the conflict, but with little ability to affect the outcome. Attention to the needs of the family of the church professional or other congregation staff is always appropriate. It is especially important if there is a conflict in the congregation. Some COMs call on members of the presbytery who are not serving on the COM to provide that pastoral care.

## Racial Ethnic and Multicultural Congregations<sup>5</sup>

Every congregation has its own unique identity. Increasing numbers of congregations may continue to be thought of as constituted of a single culture or single ethnicity, but that former “truth” may no longer be true.

Presbytery will honor and work in partnership with congregations that differ from the presbytery majority, but also will help congregations themselves begin to deal with the diversity of their own membership in culturally sensitive ways.

The particular history and cultural setting in the congregation’s early formation shaped the patterns and traditions of congregations, often in ways beyond their own self-knowledge. Sessions are challenged to think beyond the way ‘things have always been’; presbyteries grapple with working towards healthy relationships with a variety of congregations and their leaders, learning the dynamics of differing patterns of authority and expectations.

Congregations of apparent racial ethnic and cultural similarity may often differ from one another in significant ways.

Our denomination is currently 7% non-White. While there have been increasing efforts to be more inclusive, our processes still reflect our predominantly White denomination. This section raises questions and offers resources to you as you work with non-White pastors and congregations.<sup>6</sup>

### COM and racial ethnic pastors and congregations

#### Racial/ethnic pastors seeking calls

Many racial ethnic pastors are open to serving a congregation that is different from their own cultural background. Presbyteries need to be supportive by enforcing EEO guidelines, use of racial/ethnic pastors in all types of positions (temporary, designated, etc.).

#### Congregations seeking pastors

While completing a Ministry Information Form (MIF) can be a wonderful tool, this form does not work well within our call system for some racial ethnic congregations, particularly the non-English speaking congregations seeking pastors who speak a non-English language.

There are few racial ethnic pastors in our call referral system. Congregations seeking racial ethnic pastors may need to rely upon existing informal and formal networks outside the matching system.

Racial ethnic pastors are sometimes interviewed by congregations who are only interested in fulfilling their EEO requirements. PNCs should only pursue racial ethnic candidates if they are serious about hiring them, not merely to fulfill requirements.

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<sup>5</sup> From the 2011 Advisory Handbook

<sup>6</sup> This paragraph and the remainder of the topic are from the 2007 Advisory Handbook.

## Congregation conflict

- The COM will need to consider alternate ways of dealing with conflict in a racial/ethnic congregation. Two thirds of the world does not place a high value on direct, face-to-face confrontation to solve a conflict. The preservation of smooth, interpersonal relationships, maintaining harmony, and minimizing conflict are important.
- In some racial/ethnic congregations much of the conflict is not just between individuals, but involves whole family units.
- It is important to utilize resources and resource people who are familiar with that congregation's particular dynamics and history.

There are many resources available to help those who seek to enlarge and strengthen their multi-cultural awareness. Among those that a COM may find helpful are:

Augsburger, David. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*.

Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

Curtiss, Victoria. *Discernment and Decision Making*

Dresser, Norine. *Multicultural Manners*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1996.

Fong, Kenneth. *Insights for Growing Asian American Ministries*. Rosemead, California: EverGrowing Publications, 1990.

Law, Eric. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*. St. Louis, Mo. Chalice Press, 1993.

Matsuoka, Fumitaka. *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches*. Ohio: United Church Press, 1995.

Sawyer, Mary R. *The Church on the Margins: Living Christian Community*.

Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2003.

Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Black and Presbyterian*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Yancey, George. *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

## The Triennial Visit<sup>7</sup>

The triennial visit, required by G-11.0502c in the former FOG, is no longer required on a scheduled basis. That is, there is no corresponding paragraph in the nFOG. However, the triennial visit remains among the best opportunities for building relationships with congregations. This is essentially a pastoral visit by the presbytery to its congregations. In the POSD, COM has chosen to continue triennial visits.

It is *imperative* to remember that this is a *pastoral visit*, not an inspection. The purpose is to strengthen relationships, showing care and concern. Incidental to the visit, the team may find and help resolve issues in the session or in the pastoral relation, but it is not there to inspect for compliance. The team must work to build trust between the session and the presbytery.

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<sup>7</sup> This topic was decided in principal at the COM meeting of 10/2/2014 and then approved in detail at the 12/2/2014 meeting.

In discussion within our COM, there was a consensus that it would be desirable to have a “Triennial Visit” (regardless of time elapsed) within six months of calling a new pastor, and about a year after that. This will affirm the interest of COM and COM’s readiness to support the new pastor and the session.

When triennial visits are most helpful to everyone involved, it is likely to be because the COM goes to the visit with prayerful preparation, and a respectful, appreciative attitude to the mission and ministry of each congregation. Visitors to congregations who expect to find evidences of faithful ministry and mission are more likely to find them than those who go with a predisposition to be disappointed. Every congregation is doing something that is important, valuable to its members, and pleasing to God!

If the Triennial Visit is to be received by sessions as more than a checking off of a *Book of Order* requirement, or an unpleasant intrusion by the presbytery, it will be because the COM takes the initiative to make the visit an occasion for pastoral affirmation and appreciation. When there are issues to be addressed or concerns to be responded to, it will be in a context in which some trust has been built.

If these visits are truly to strengthen connections, then the conversation must flow two ways. Congregation leaders will want an opportunity to say what they need from presbytery and offer suggestions for strengthening the ministry of presbytery. Visitors must be good listeners!

The tools of appreciative inquiry found in this section are particularly useful for triennial visits.

### The purposes of a Triennial Visit are:

- to affirm and support the good ministry being accomplished in the name of Christ
- to connect the session with the resources of the presbytery, the synod and the General Assembly
- to ask questions and share information that will raise the vision of congregation leaders
- to encourage them as they seek to respond to God’s call
- to help them deal with any problems which may exist

Triennial visits can serve to strengthen the connection between the congregation and other councils of the denomination, while helping the congregation to consider its ministry and mission not only within the local community but also throughout the world. Three specific areas to be considered by the COM in triennial visits are:

- the mission and ministry of the particular congregation
- full participation in the life and work of the presbytery
- the quality of and standards for worship, and the fruit it is bearing in the life of God’s people (W-1.4002)

Triennial Visits may be structured in a variety of ways -- including visiting with sessions more often than every three years! Each Committee on Ministry will determine

for itself the approach for triennial visitation it will use. While most presbyteries have a general framework for each visit, adaptations must be made with regard to the size and geographical location of the congregation, the present circumstances of the congregation, and its present attitude toward presbytery. Some committees have found it helpful to focus on different aspects of ministry with each successive triennial visit.

## Planning for triennial visits

**Purpose:** The visit will be most constructive when the visitors and the congregation leaders are clear about the purpose of the visit. This should be communicated in writing to the pastor and session prior to the visit so that the congregation leaders are invited to prepare in an appropriate way for the visit. It may be helpful to communicate one or more of the following purposes for your time together:

- Celebration of the ministry of this congregation
- Faith sharing
- Two-way information sharing: presbytery learning about the congregation, its ministry, challenges, and concerns, and the session hearing about presbytery, its activities, resources, and challenges
- Dealing with special issues of concern
- Mutual ministry assessment process
- Invitation to participate more fully in the life and ministry of presbytery
- Inspiration and encouragement to reach out to a changing community
- Interpretation of the mission of the larger Church
- Information gathering for presbytery planning
- Invitation to strategic planning for future ministry in their area
- Strengthening the pastoral relationship
- Follow-up interventions at significant points in a pastorate

One way of communicating the purpose of the triennial visit would be for COM to prepare a type of form letter or simple brochure explaining the visit and then send it to the pastor and clerk of session early in the year in which they are to be visited. This will allow session members time to discuss the matter in a regular meeting and then prepare themselves by reflecting on matters that they want to discuss during the visit. This is different than a letter giving notice of a visit. Actual scheduling and arrangements for the visit can be done informally as indicated below.

## Scheduling and Arrangements

This can be done effectively and informally through phone calls and emails between the team leader and the church point of contact, usually the pastor or clerk of session.

- The normal time for the visit is about an hour, or two hours at most.
- The visit is with session, but it may be a special meeting of session if the regular session meeting date does not work.

- Session may elect to serve refreshments or even a meal, especially if long distances are involved.
- The team usually meets with the pastor (or pastor and spouse) about a half hour before meeting with session. This is an important opportunity to get acquainted, and gives the pastor a chance to alert the team to his or her concerns.
- The team may elect to take the pastor and spouse out to dinner, particularly if the travel required places hungry visitors in the town at supper time. COM will pay up to \$50 toward a meal for the pastor, spouse, and visitation team. (This policy, originally approved 12/1/2012, was affirmed by consensus on 12/2/2014.)
- At least two persons should be assigned to the visitation team.

## Procedures for Triennial Visits

### What paperwork needs to be created?

This is a situation where less is better. Triennial Visits can be arranged casually by phone and email contacts between the team leader and the session moderator or clerk, explaining the purpose of the visit. Writing a letter for this purpose not only creates extra work, but puts the session on the defensive and delays the visit while session deliberates the letter at a regular meeting.

- A document to explain the triennial visit to the congregation and pastor
- The team members should be provided with a list of some conversation starters
- General information about presbytery activities and resources should be provided to the team in a form that they can leave with the session.
- The team should bring standardized report and feedback forms so the session can evaluate the visit.
- A follow-up letter to the pastor and the session should include a copy of the team's report that the session and pastor can review before it is forwarded to COM.

### Meeting with Pastor

Before the meeting with session, meet with the pastor to assess his/her situation.

- How the individual [or couple] feel they are being treated by the congregation
- What they like about their church community
- With what they have difficulties within their church community
- How they are treated within the community at large
- Are there issues and, if so, what might they be?



If this visit produces issues that need further conversation, the team can meet again with the pastor/spouse after the meeting with session.

### After the Meeting with Session

**Report:** Teams members must produce a written report for COM. This has no particular format, and is generally prepared in letter format. The report must include:

- The church that was visited
- The date of the visit
- Names of the team members
- A narrative description of the team's observations
- A narrative description of any concerns or issues raised by the session or pastor
- Are there any early indications of problems between pastor and session or congregation?

Some teams meet for coffee immediately after the triennial visit to collect their thoughts and to put together the report that will be made to the COM. Others share their notes with a designated report writer.

The visitation team will complete their report and share it with the clerk of session and the moderator of the church visited, asking them to respond right away and not wait until the next session meeting. If no response is received from them after 14 days, or if appropriate changes have been made, the report will then be sent to the COM Moderator. COM minutes June 18, 2012, revised 12/2/2014).

**Refer.** Referrals must be handled faithfully. If a session, for example, asks for presbytery's help with their stewardship efforts, it is essential that the referral is made promptly and help given.

### Encountering resistance

It is not unusual for some sessions or pastors to be reluctant to have the Committee on Ministry visit. They may feel such visits are a waste of time or they may resent or be fearful of the possibility of outside intervention. Usually a competent caring visitation team can dispel such feelings and build trust. If congregations have had bad experiences with presbytery intervention in the past, it may be helpful to acknowledge their feelings about that experience (without judging previous encounters) and move on with a good experience.

Starting with a simple conversation to warm up the session and having them become comfortable and not defensive leads to the questions that need to be asked in a non-threatening manner. Once the session knows that we are there as a friend and not to "check on them" they open up and visit, and the experience becomes truly enjoyable. Common sense leads to good questions and great honest answers.

Some visiting teams have been met by stony silence. Wise teams will not rush in to fill the silence with small talk, nor will they leave early. They may ask. "What's going on here? We feel like you don't want to talk about something. Is there something you want to say to us that you are reluctant to say or have difficulty expressing?"

Sometimes a member of a visitation team will receive a phone call after the visit when an elder wants to share that which was left unsaid in the meeting. Information gathered this way should be considered carefully. There may be inappropriate secret-keeping or it may be that one unhealthy person wishes to cause trouble. Presbytery visitors should encourage open conversation among individuals in disagreement rather than reward triangular conversation among parties using the COM to get at each other! See the section above under Conflict, “Taking Cognizance,” or consult the Index.

## Conversation Starters

Also called “ice breakers,” these suggested questions may help to start a conversation. They are not intended as an examination of the session or pastor, but just as some help to start a conversation. Some can be follow-up questions used later in the meeting.

### If the church has a new pastor

- Tell us about yourself / family / education / interests / hobbies / experience
- Do you have a manse? Are there problems with the manse?
- Is your housing adequate?
- What is covered by your housing allowance?
- Do you have problems or issues with a previous pastor (separation ethics)

### For a long-term pastor

- Are you considering retirement?
- What are your plans? Where will you live? (You may need to discuss separation ethics. If so, send that information to the pastor.)

### For session

- Have there been changes in church membership?
- Do you have new members on session?
- Have you heard from your previous pastor?
- What is the staffing situation of the church?
- Describe your mission outreach.
- What types of programs/activities do you have? Describe. Success?
- Would it make a difference in your community [or congregation] if you were to close your church doors? Why or why not?
- What kind of mission is your church doing?
- What is God calling you to do?

### For a Session when church is in danger of closing

- What are the strengths of your church?
- Is there something presbytery can do to help?

### Awareness of Presbytery

- Are you (or your congregation) aware of the:
  - Responsibilities of the presbytery?
  - Actions of the presbytery?
  - Involvement of elders and pastors within the presbytery?
  - Care and interest that the members of the presbytery have for you and your congregation?
  - Are reports given, orally or in writing, to the congregation following presbytery meetings?
  - Offerings of the presbytery to the pastor and congregation/ “How Can We Help?”

### Congregational strategy

Working with congregations and, where appropriate, with other presbytery committees is another significant opportunity for the COM to build relationships of trust, care, and mutual accountability.

The Committee on Ministry may interface with a number of other presbytery committees. One of the most significant relationships is with the presbytery committee charged with congregational strategy.

The COM is intensively involved when a congregation is without a pastor. This is also an opportune time for congregational transformation issues to be raised and the expertise of the appropriate committee to be solicited. Many presbyteries find it helpful to utilize a team approach where one COM member and one Congregational Transformation Committee member go together to work with a congregation.

Other occasions for collaboration with other presbytery committees may be to follow up from a triennial visit or to deal with congregational strategy after a conflict. These are times when communication between the two committees is critical.

There are other times when Committee on Ministry and Congregational Transformation/Development Committee responsibilities overlap and where combined resources and personnel can be very constructive:

- when small congregations are stretched to financially support a full-time pastor
- when the presbytery is beginning a New Church Development
- when a congregation is considering the addition of staff
- when the community is changing and the congregation is declining or growing
- when a congregation seeks transformation following a serious conflict
- when a congregation is calling a designated pastor to work with them on transformation.

There are offices of the General Assembly Council dedicated to providing consultation resources and training related to New Church Development, Congregational Transformation, Small Church Ministry, Racial Ethnic and Multicultural Church Development. Consult [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) and/or call 800-872-3283.

## COM Session Moderators<sup>8</sup>

### Responsibilities When Representing COM

When a member of COM is appointed to be moderator of a session, it is important to understand the role beyond leading the meetings.

He/she moderates the decision making of the session or congregation, addressing the concerns of the session and the concerns of the larger church, with scripture and with the BOO. Moderators are essential to keeping the connectional system in place for each session and congregation. Moderators need to be attending and participating members of presbytery and keep the session connected and informed with the ministry and mission of presbytery. The moderator needs to be well informed with and by the BOO. If the moderator is not a member of COM, the liaison needs to be in close contact with the moderator.

A moderator should report to COM on the health and well-being of the congregation at the regular meetings of COM. Appointed moderators who are not members of COM may report in writing instead of attending the meeting.

### Responsibilities of the Congregation

The relationship between the moderator and session/congregation is a partnership in which the moderator provides a vital link to COM and the presbytery. This relationship requires voluntary cooperation among all the parties concerned: the session, the pastor, and the moderator. This partnership requires that the session:

- Pay the moderator a fee of at least \$50.00 plus mileage at the current IRS rate.
- Discuss with the moderator any concerns the session or congregation may have concerning COM, the presbytery, or other congregations.
- Keep an open mind to suggestions and guidance provided by the moderator.

### Responsibilities of the COM

The moderator is an extension of the work and ministry of the COM. As such, he

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<sup>8</sup> Approved by COM October 2, 2014.

or she needs and deserves the support of COM. Such support should include:

- Training in the duties and responsibilities of the session moderator.
- Training in the policies and procedures of COM and the presbytery.
- Provide the moderator with a copy of the COM manual.



## 4. Relationships with congregations searching for pastoral leadership

### General comments

“On Calling A Pastor – A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors,” [www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc), is the primary resource for congregations during a pastoral vacancy. (Search *On Calling a Pastor*. Word and other versions are available.) Each session member and PNC member will find this a helpful resource. It is available also in Spanish and Korean.

Congregations entering the transition time when one pastor has left and before another has been called are likely to be experiencing grief, anger, relief, confusion, anxiety, or a combination of some or all of those feelings. A COM liaison will be most effective in working with the congregation when she or he is:

- knowledgeable about the process of moving from the dissolution of one pastoral relationship to the initiation of a new one.
- able to be a “calm non-anxious presence” (Edwin Friedman’s phrase).
- spiritually mature and respectful of the congregation with which he or she is working.

COM liaisons are a key part of the connection between congregation and presbytery and an important part of creating healthy ministry in a congregation and in the presbytery as a whole. Check the Index for complete information on COM Liaisons.

Each COM has its own variations on the process of assisting congregations in the transition time. The outline included later in this section is a model that you may vary according to the needs of your presbytery. Other models are certainly possible.

### A healthy “goodbye”

A good beginning with a new pastor begins with a healthy good-bye to the departing one. A celebration of the pastor’s time with the congregation helps both pastor and congregation to say goodbye. Appreciative sharing of good memories as well as honest recognition of difficulties will contribute to the significance of the closing weeks they share. It is helpful to create public opportunities for such sharing and recognition in board and committee meetings, worship services, wherever the faith community is gathered. Whatever the circumstances of the pastor’s departure, she or he, his or her family, other staff persons, and the congregation as a whole will benefit in very significant ways from opportunities to say honest and respectful thanks and goodbye.

The pastor's farewell messages to the congregation should include clear statements of the ethical standards to which she or he adheres. Such messages must include recognition that the pastoral relationship is ending and that, as a former pastor, she or he will no longer perform pastoral services for members of the congregation.

If the departure of the pastor comes at the end of a time of difficulty and conflict, it is even more important for pastor and congregation to honestly, fairly and lovingly assess the relationship that is ending. It may be necessary in such cases for the COM liaison and/or presbytery staff to work with the pastor and the session to set guidelines for "telling the truth in love."

## Exit interviews

Exit interviews with the departing church professional and with the session are extremely helpful. These interviews help all parties begin to disengage and begin the process of moving forward into the future. This is true whether the person leaving the congregation is a temporary pastor who has served the congregation for a year or so, or a long-term installed pastor who is leaving after many years of service.

Sometimes COMs or sessions decide that an exit interview "isn't really necessary" or that "we know what the departing pastor will say." However, exit interviews are almost always helpful for the departing church professional, the congregation, and the COM. In fact, COMs might want to consider encouraging a session to have an exit interview with any departing staff person.

Exit interviews with pastors and sessions are arranged by the Committee on Ministry liaison and conducted by a team of 2-3 people, with at least one a current member of the Committee on Ministry.

The forms provided in this manual are designed to facilitate the interviews. After the exit interviews are completed, they are a basis for the team's report to the Committee on Ministry.

## Purpose of Exit Interviews

1. to reflect on the ministry just ended;
2. to close the pastoral relationship; and,
3. to facilitate update of the congregation's mission study and Ministry Information Form (MIF).

## Use of Information Gathered

The information gathered during the exit interviews may be used:

1. by the congregation in writing its mission study;
2. by the Pastor Nominating Committee in its work;
3. by the Committee on Ministry, and its representatives in guiding the congregation through the process of calling a pastor;
4. by the Transitional pastor, stated supply pastor, or incoming pastor to guide them in their ministry.



## Confidentiality

It is understood that the interviewees may request that specific information provided in the interview be considered confidential and that the Congregational Transformation/Development Ministry and the Committee on Ministry will honor such requests.

## Availability

The exit interview information may be requested from the moderator of the Committee on Ministry. Exit interviews of pastor and session are exchanged except for any confidential information. That is, each side (pastor and congregation) should receive a copy of the other side's interview.

## Exit interview models

### With the departing pastor or departing Transitional minister

The liaison or team of persons from the COM should conduct an exit interview with the departing pastor soon after the pastor announces his/her departure. The exit interview helps provide closure for the pastor and family. It also provides information that may be helpful to the COM as it works with the congregation during its search.

1. Ask the pastor to talk about things she/he feels good about their work with the congregation.
2. Ask about barriers to effective ministry. These barriers might be in the congregation, or community, or the pastor.
3. Ask about the relationship between the pastor and session.
4. Ask about advice they might give to the next pastor.
5. Talk about appropriate and inappropriate contact with the congregation after the pastor, associate pastor or other staff person has left. This is important. It is especially important if the pastor is staying in town or moving to a nearby location. Former pastors, associate pastors, and ministers may officiate at services for members of the congregation, or at services within its properties, only upon invitation from the moderator of the session (G-2.0905 Officiate by Invitation Only).

### Exit interview with the session

1. It is best to conduct the exit interview with the session after the pastoral relationship has been dissolved. The interview helps the congregation begin to disengage from the pastor. The Moderator of session appointed by presbytery should be present for this interview.
2. Discuss positive growth in the life of the congregation during the pastor's time with the congregation.
3. Discuss any difficulties there might have been in the relationship between the pastor and session/congregation.
4. Discuss ways the session might build a strong relationship with the next pastor.

5. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate contact with the congregation after the pastor has left. This is important. See (5) above.
6. Plan ways the session might lead the congregation to disengage with the former pastor, associate or other staff person.
7. Give a brief overview of the call process.
8. Begin discussion about maintaining regular worship and congregational life during the transition and search for new pastoral leadership.
9. Discuss the benefits of the session appointing a transition team consisting of session members and significant members of the congregation.

### Ethics for departing pastors

With the session and COM representative, the pastor should prepare a carefully worded announcement for the congregation. The statement should draw a clear distinction between honoring the friendships that will continue beyond the end of the pastoral relationship, and performing official pastoral functions or being involved in the future ministerial life of the congregation.

The departing pastor bears the primary responsibility for helping members of the congregation he or she formerly served understand that it is no longer appropriate for the former pastor to officiate at services for them. It is especially important and helpful for the departing pastor to take the responsibility for saying a clear and loving “no” to such invitations without putting the responsibility for the decision on the Transitional pastor or the new pastor serving the congregation.

A former pastor and his or her family should seek a new congregation in which to worship, even if they are staying in the same community in retirement or as the pastor begins another kind of service. This is essential during the transition time between installed pastors. Former pastors should be cautious about assuming that they can return to the former congregation as soon as a new pastor is called. In order to support the formation of a strong bond between the new pastor and the congregation, a former pastor should wait an appropriate amount of time before re-entering the congregation formerly served, and then only after a careful conversation with the new pastor about her or his wishes in this matter.

A former pastor of a congregation is wise to avoid conversations about what has happened in the congregation after her or his departure. Under no circumstances should the former pastor indicate to members disapproval or disappointment about the decisions or leadership of the temporary pastor or the new installed pastor. The former pastor will inevitably have only partial information about any event or decision within the congregation he or she used to serve. In any case, for the former pastor to comment negatively about the current leadership of the congregation is unhelpful and inappropriate. The greatest tribute to the leadership of the former pastor is a congregation that continues to thrive with a new pastor.

### Separation Ethics in POSD

(When pastor and congregation say goodbye.)

The following policy was adopted by Committee on Ministry, Presbytery of South Dakota, August 30, 1999.

## A. Saying Goodbye

The need to say goodbye to a congregation occurs for one of several reasons. A pastor may receive a call to another parish. A pastor may decide to retire. A pastor may decide to leave the pastoral ministry and enter another area of service. The Presbytery may, for cause, take the initiative to dissolve the relationship. This break can be a difficult time for both the pastor and the congregation. Whatever the cause, it becomes the occasion when pastor and congregation find they must say goodbye.

### 1. Saying Goodbye to Accept a Call a Distance Away

When a pastor accepts a call to a ministry a distance from the congregation which she or he is leaving, the opportunity for contact with members of the former congregation is quite limited, often nonexistent. However, there frequently arise certain circumstances which pose questions for the departing pastor as to what is appropriate and what can be most helpful to the congregation and the Transitional and following pastors. **It is always incumbent upon the departing pastor to make sure that parishioners know that her or his relationship with the congregation will come to an end. It is important that parishioners understand that this change of relationship is necessary in order that the congregation be free, in all respects, to make the adjustments necessary for changes of leadership, Transitional and permanent, without the departing pastor's influence.** (See B, "Responsibilities in Saying Goodbye," below.)

### 2. Saying Goodbye but Remaining a Neighbor

When a pastor says goodbye and remains nearby, there are particularly sensitive aspects of separation which require careful attention on the part of the departing pastor.

The experience of pastors and congregations over the years has led many to believe that when a pastor ends a ministry with a congregation, it is best for the pastor to move out of the community. However, this is not always possible or advisable. **Thus, it is particularly important when a departing pastor remains in the community and in proximity to the former congregation, that he/she, with care and forethought, pay particular attention to what is said with reference to a departing pastor's responsibilities to the congregation, individual members of the congregation, and to the temporary and subsequent installed pastors.** (See B "Responsibilities in Saying Goodbye.")

The departing pastor should not be a part of the worshipping or fellowship life of the congregation except upon the initiative and invitation of the installed pastor and session. If such an invitation is extended, normally, it should not occur until the installed pastor has had an opportunity to establish relationships with the congregation.

A retiring pastor who remains in the proximity of the congregation from which he/she has retired, will need to give careful consideration to the responsibilities outlined in B, "Responsibilities in saying Goodbye.")

### 3. When One is Elected Pastor Emeritus

When a pastor retires, the congregation may bestow upon him or her the title of **Pastor Emeritus**. The provision for this is no longer found in the Book of Order, but the previous FOG provided as follows:

When any pastor or associate pastor retires, and the congregation is moved by affection and gratitude to continue an association in an honorary relationship, it may, at a regularly called congregational meeting, elect him or her as pastor emeritus or emerita, with or without honorarium, but *with no pastoral authority or duty*. This action shall be subject to the approval of presbytery, and may take effect upon the formal dissolution of the pastoral or associate pastoral relationship or any time thereafter. (1999-2000 *Book of Order*, G-14.0605. Emphasis added.)

To elect one as pastor or associate pastor emeritus:

- is evidence of a long and loving, mutually caring pastoral relationship;
- is a congregation's way of saying to the church-at-large and to the world that they love this person and are thankful for his or her time with them; and
- is a gift to the retired pastor that says something special to him or her.

**However, the *pastoral* relationship has been dissolved. The relationship of *pastor* to people has ended and there is no expectation of the person to be present with the congregation because of the election.**

All expectations related to the former pastor of a congregation apply to a pastor emeritus. (See B below.)

### B. Responsibilities in Saying Goodbye

This paper speaks of "Separation Ethics." The use of the term *ethics* implies certain values which are important to consider during this often highly charged experience of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Such values include:

- effective leadership;
- congregational health and stability;
- the growth of pastor and members in dealing with the pain, the problems, and the possibilities of separation; and
- the ability of the session and congregation to move positively and effectively toward the next phase of their life together.

These values instruct the conduct and responsibilities of both the pastor and the congregation regarding their separation.

The material which follows is addressed to pastor, session, and congregation as appropriate, and finally, the Committee on Ministry of the presbytery. However, **the pastor is the one in the professional leadership role and, therefore, the one who has**

**the responsibility for making sure that the separation that occurs is anticipated and carried through with foresight and effectiveness.**

## **1. Responsibilities of the Departing Pastor**

Because of the sensitivity of the pastoral relationship, it is important that the departing pastor, in any dissolution, assume certain responsibilities to the former congregation, to the remaining staff and personnel of the congregation, to individual members of that congregation, and to the temporary and next installed pastors.

### **a. To the Congregation**

When the date has been set for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, the departing pastor must take the lead in beginning to prepare the congregation for their separation. Certain things will need to be communicated clearly to the congregation in order to avoid confusion on the part of members in the days ahead.

It is always incumbent upon the departing pastor to make sure that parishioners know that her/his relationship with the congregation will come to an end. It is important that parishioners understand that this change of relationship is necessary in order that the congregation be free, in all respects, to make the adjustments necessary for changes of leadership, temporary and permanent, without the departing pastor's influence.

This communication can be accomplished in several ways. A letter should be addressed to the members of the congregation spelling out clearly the matters below which are part of the separation and the time that follows.<sup>9</sup> A sermon might contain references to the approaching separation and speak to these matters. In casual conversation one-on-one or in groups, in public presence, in newsletters, in all contacts with people of the congregation, it is important that these matters be communicated and every effort made to have them understood. These matters are:

- 1) that all pastoral and professional relationships and responsibilities of the pastor with the congregation will end as of the effective date of the dissolution;
- 2) that the pastor will not be involved in any way in the selection process of either the temporary pastor or the next installed pastor. Neither will he/she be involved in any way with the selection of any search team or pastor nominating committee;
- 3) that the pastor, after leaving, will not become engaged in conversations with members or staff which, in any way, offer opinions or criticism about the life of the congregation or the performance of the temporary or any subsequent installed pastors;
- 4) that any desire on the part of members of the congregation for the departing pastor to participate in congregational life or services should be discussed not with the departing pastor, but with the temporary pastor or subsequent installed pastor;
- 5) that the departing pastor may participate in a wedding, a funeral, or a baptism of the congregation, after the date of dissolution, only by invitation of the

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<sup>9</sup> "Leaving the Pastorate: Staying in Town" by Rod Reinecke, in *Saying Goodbye. A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors*, an Alban Institute Publication by Edward A. White.  
Presbytery of South Dakota - 75 - 4. Searching for Pastoral Leadership  
COM Manual

session and moderator, who shall be the officiant.

**b. To Individual Members of the Congregation**

It is important that, with particular friends, it be made clear that the pastoral relationship will come to an end. This does not mean that friendships must come to an end. Friendships are priceless and are to be preserved, but there is a special responsibility on the part of the departing pastor to prevent friendships from becoming confused with the pastoral relationship. The pastoral functions of counseling, calling, conducting weddings, funerals, or baptisms are not appropriate, unless asked to do so by the session and moderator of session. Neither is the rendering of opinions about the ministry of the former congregation or its pastor.<sup>10</sup> It is the departing pastor's responsibility to see that this really happens.

If the former pastor receives a request to return to the congregation for a particular occasion, it is important for her/him to remind those making the request that the present pastor is the one to whom the request should be made.

In any social context, where the former pastor is with friends or other members of the former congregation, it is the responsibility of the former pastor to be sure that he/she voices no criticism or evaluative comments about the new leadership of the congregation. It is not appropriate for the former pastor to comment on the "state of the congregation" or to be involved in any way in the selection of a successor, once she/he has departed.

**c. To the Remaining Staff and Personnel of the Congregation**

The former pastor has a responsibility to the remaining staff and personnel of the congregation at least in the following ways:

1. to prepare them for the separation that will occur;
2. to encourage them to receive and welcome the temporary pastor and next installed pastor, and be prepared to alter working patterns and relationships as may be needed; and
3. to make clear that he/she will not be available for counsel or advice regarding the life and work of the congregation.

**d. To the Temporary and Subsequent Installed Pastors**

The former pastor has a responsibility to the temporary pastor and to subsequent installed pastors to make sure that any requests that come to him/her for services in the former congregation be redirected by the requesters to the temporary pastor or installed pastor.

The former pastor should make every effort to be supportive of his/her successor. Pastors should encourage persons who might contact them with concerns about their successor to address them to their new pastor or the Session or the Committee on Ministry. Pastors should not draw conclusions about their successor or interpret their behavior and words. They should encourage openness and opportunities for growth.

It is important that, when any request comes to the former pastor, she/he be in

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<sup>10</sup> "My Friend, the Former Pastor" by Joan Mabon, in *Saying Goodbye: A time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors*, an Alban Institute Publication by Edward A. White

touch with the current pastor to let it be known what contacts have been made with him/her and that the request was redirected to the current pastor. This is a courtesy which is important to be extended to the current pastor. There should be no pastoral functions of any kind performed by the former pastor without the prior invitation or request of the current pastor and session.

## **2. Responsibilities of the Session**

### **a. To the Departing Pastor**

Following the pastor's decision to request dissolution of the pastoral relationship, the session can give support and encouragement to the pastor in the implementation of the decision. This can be done by assisting the pastor in interpreting the meaning of the end of the pastoral relationship to the congregation and, if need be, to the wider community.

As a caring expression of closure, it is appropriate for the session to arrange for an occasion when the congregation and pastor may formally say goodbye.

### **b. To the Congregation**

The session will want to be sensitive to the feeling of loss experienced by members of the congregation while demonstrating through their actions the meaning of the end of the pastoral relationship.

Additional session leadership may be needed in the transition period so that worship, congregational life, and fellowship may continue.

The session can help the members of the congregation by encouraging them to see this time as an opportunity for growth and change. It can be a time for listening to individuals and groups in the congregation. It can be a time for examining present life, ministry, and service, and to be open to new possibilities. It is important that the congregation be prepared for change and for new pastoral leadership.

With the help of the Committee on Ministry, the session should interpret the role of the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery during the transition period. This will involve the naming of a session moderator, the process of obtaining an temporary pastor, and the process of calling an installed pastor.

## **3. Responsibilities of the Committee on Ministry**

### **a. To the Departing Pastor**

Upon learning of the pastor's intention to retire or resign, a representative of the Committee on Ministry shall meet with the pastor to discuss these guidelines.

### **b. To the Session and Congregation**

If possible, a Committee on Ministry representative(s) should be present at the meeting of the session when the pastor announces his or her resignation so the session can be helped to understand the next important steps in the process (COM minutes October 22, 2012). The meeting shall include informing the session fully of these guidelines and orienting the session to the process of seeking pastoral leadership following the departure of the present pastor. (See the Index for "PNC Workshop" since this meeting is also the first meeting of that process.)

A representative of the Committee on Ministry shall be present at the meeting of the congregation when the pastor requests concurrence in her/his plans to leave, to inform the congregation of the process for obtaining subsequent pastoral leadership.

When a congregation plans to elect a retiring pastor as Pastor Emeritus, material concerning the meaning of “Pastor Emeritus,” will be sent to the congregation and a representative of the Committee on Ministry will be offered to interpret the statement if that is desired.

**c. To the Temporary and Next Installed Pastors**

It will be important for the Committee on Ministry to review these guidelines with the temporary pastor and the next installed pastor and to be available for counsel should any difficulties arise regarding relationships with the former pastor.

**C. Guidelines for Pastors Resigning their Position**

**1. WHEN SHOULD I ANNOUNCE MY RESIGNATION?**

Resignation occurs when a pastor is moving his/her ministry to another location or a different form of ministry. Under normal conditions for leaving a parish, four to six weeks’ notice is adequate. This will allow sufficient time for tying up loose ends and for saying goodbye.

Giving notice of more than six weeks can make for an inordinately long period for everyone concerned having to hold onto grief feelings prior to the final termination, not unlike a prolonged period between a death and the funeral or memorial service. However, too short a time between the announcement and the departure is unfair to all affected, but especially to the congregation. The time after a pastor has announced her/his intention to move is a period of extremely important pastoral care: that which is extended by the departing pastor to the congregation and its members, and that which is extended by the congregation to the departing pastor and family.

A minister anticipating a move would do well to read the Alban Institute monograph, *Running Through the Thistles* by Roy Oswald.

**2. WHOM SHOULD I TELL, WHEN, AND IN WHAT ORDER?**

1. You shall promptly notify the Stated Clerk or Executive Presbyter of Presbytery and the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry of your intention to resign. They shall maintain confidentiality and will assist/advise in whatever ways are needed.
2. Share the news with your Session before sharing it with others in your congregation or community. Ask them to call a Congregational Meeting to concur with your resignation
3. The pastor should announce his/her resignation officially and personally at a public worship service. Be positive and open in your announcement.
4. The pastor must receive concurrence from the Committee on Ministry before moving from the parish.
5. It is the pastor’s responsibility to see that his/her congregation understands that he/she will no longer be their pastor. He/She needs to make it very



clear to them that he/she is no longer available to preach or perform any pastoral tasks for them.

6. The pastor who is leaving needs to be supportive of the Presbytery's pastor search process and encourage the congregation to work closely with the Presbytery during its search for a new pastor. As soon as possible, the Committee on Ministry will appoint one of its members to be a liaison to the congregation during the vacancy, as well as designating another teaching elder or CRE (G-2.1001) as moderator of the Session. If possible, the Sunday after your last Sunday in the pulpit, a representative of Presbytery will be present to declare the pulpit vacant, preach, and read the brief statement on separation ethics. (See the topic "Ethics for Departing Pastors" above, and *Ethics* in the Index.)
7. All files and records of the congregation should be put in order and left intact so that the successor may easily find necessary records and equipment.
8. When a pastor leaves a parish where he/she has served, he/she should affirm the good that has been accomplished. **DO NOT LEAVE ON A NEGATIVE NOTE.**

#### D. Guidelines for Retiring Pastors

The Board of Pensions suggests that the process of retiring begin six to nine months before the anticipated date of retirement, and so six months' notice to the congregation would be appropriate.

Ministers anticipating retirement should request the booklet, "Information for Members Planning to Retire," from the Board of Pensions. Up to five years before retirement, you should send a request for a pension quote to the Board of Pensions, as well as a request for Social Security benefits quote to the local Social Security office.

Presbytery must certify retirement to the Board of Pensions, taking such action at one of the stated meetings. Prior to Presbytery action, the Committee on Ministry will consider the application for retirement. Allow enough time to assure the application can be acted on in a timely manner. The Board of Pensions suggests requesting a retirement application at least ninety days prior to retirement, but a longer time may be wiser. Also, if you elect one of the joint survivor options, the appropriate form must be submitted to the Board at least three months prior to the retirement date.

Six to nine months before the anticipated retirement date, you should contact the local Social Security office to begin the application process for benefits.

#### E. GUIDELINES FOR RETIRING PASTORS AND SPOUSES WHO REMAIN IN THE AREA AFTER LEAVING A PASTORATE

1. A former pastor who chooses to remain in or return to the area in which he/she has served as pastor needs to deal realistically with his/her own needs for fellowship and church life apart from the former congregation.
2. You and your spouse can be most helpful to your successor and family being accepted in their new situation. You and your family can also be the

most difficult problem your successor and family must face. Be sensitive to them, help them any way you can.

3. A former pastor should refrain from pastoral functions and not accept any position of leadership in his/her former congregation, nor attend meetings of the Session, Deacons, or Trustees unless invited by the Session and moderator of Session.
4. A former pastor should not officiate at any sacraments, weddings, funerals, or other functions involving members of his/her former congregation, or within its properties, unless invited by the Session and moderator of Session.
5. An invitation to officiate or perform pastoral functions in a former parish is an opportunity to demonstrate your support and loyalty to your successor. Offer to assist rather than officiate. Avoid any functions or requests which will isolate or exclude your successor from the people God has called him/her to serve.
6. A former pastor should avoid formal or informal participation in or comment on the work of the Pastor Nominating Committee.
7. If there are options for church membership and participation in another congregation, it is recommended that the former pastor and his/her family become active in the work and worship of another congregation. Remaining in the same congregation can lead to tensions and difficulties, which no one intends, but which may not be avoidable.
8. To facilitate the transition, by the date of dissolution, the pastor should remove all of his/her personal items from the church and manse (if one is provided). This includes books, apparel, and papers/files. Any keys to the church or property should be given to the person/committee designated by the Session to handle church property.
9. Arrangements for payment of any monies due to the pastor (salary, annuities, expenses, etc.) or repayment of any monies owed the church by the pastor shall be made by the effective date of dissolution.
10. The new pastor can do much to prevent difficulties arising because of the presence of a former pastor. The new pastor should remember that the ties that bind the members of a congregation to a former pastor have been forged through the unique experience of the pastorate. The new pastor should recognize that the congregation's affection for the former pastor as an individual does not prevent the development of bonds with the new pastor. The new pastor should refrain from any criticism of the former pastor. This is a time for the possibility of new life and vitality in the congregation.

## Summary

These guidelines are intended to serve as a help to pastors and congregations as they go through difficult times of adjustment. They are provided as an attempt to avoid having a long and devoted pastoral relationship between a pastor and congregation

become a source of dissension within a congregation and a source of pain for a succeeding pastor and family. The Committee on Ministry is available to counsel pastors, their families, and congregations regarding these guidelines as needed in their particular situations. If you have questions, please contact the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry.

The Committee on Ministry always stands ready to talk with pastors and/or their spouses during and after the retirement process. Sympathetic and helpful assistance will be provided as the newly retired make adjustments to new life experiences, new goals, friendships and opportunities for service. It is important that all pastors and clerks of sessions be aware of this policy. As there may be changes in the make-up of the Presbytery, we recommend the policy be sent out annually.

### Finding Temporary Leadership

The session is responsible for providing regular worship and other services for the congregation. During the time between the departure of the installed pastor and the arrival of the temporary pastor, if one is used, the session will take a much more active part in every aspect of the leadership of the congregation. Among other responsibilities, the session finds guest preachers and pastors able to provide emergency pastoral care. Most presbyteries maintain a pulpit supply list of ministers and Commissioned Ruling Elders willing to conduct worship services and provide pastoral care on a temporary basis.

This is an especially good time for a Committee on Ministry to encourage congregations to consider women and/or racial-ethnic pastors as preachers or for a temporary pastoral relationship. Congregations that have not experienced the gifts of women or racial ethnic ministers may discover that they have a greater spirit of inclusiveness and openness than they have previously known. The COM may also want to appoint women and racial ethnic ministers to serve as moderators of sessions, and add the names of women and racial ethnic ministers and candidates to the pulpit supply list for the presbytery.

### Options for pastoral leadership

Congregations, with the advice and consent of the COM, have a variety of options that they may consider for pastoral leadership. Their decisions will be based upon their needs and resources as well as their vision for future mission and ministry. (Details, definitions, and procedures for the various pastoral options are found in the next chapter, Pastoral Relations.)

Some sessions will decide with the consent of the COM that their congregations are ready to proceed to call a teaching elder as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Those congregations should be encouraged to covenant with an intentional Transitional pastor who can provide pastoral services and specialized leadership for the transition time between called pastors.

Other congregations may not be ready to proceed to a full search. They may, with the assistance of the COM, opt to seek a designated pastor. During the time of the search

for a designated pastor, they would benefit from the services of a Transitional pastor.

When a congregation is unable to provide the compensation for a full-time teaching elder, a tentmaking (bi-vocational) pastor or a commissioned ruling elder (CRE) may provide pastoral leadership.

With the advice of the Committee on Ministry, still other congregations may opt for a stated supply pastor, temporary supply pastor, or student supply pastor. In some circumstances, with the consent of the COM, a session may choose to covenant with a minister of another denomination for temporary services.

Sessions in congregations that have an installed pastor may invite a teaching elder who is not serving a congregation to become a parish associate, with or without remuneration. The BOO no longer mentions parish associates, but POSD continues to use this concept and position.

*New Times, New Call, A Manual of Pastoral Options for Small Churches*, PC(USA) 2003, is a helpful resource. It is available from the PC(USA) store at <http://store.pcusa.org/7231203001> (PDS # 7231203001.)

## Orderly Exchange with Formula Partner Churches

The “Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament” process was implemented by the Formula of Agreement churches in 1997. These churches are the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ.**

Through adoption of *A Formula of Agreement*, our four denominations have been able to provide for the exchange of ordained ministers so that our common ministry and mission are enhanced and strengthened. Within each of our denominations, congregations have been able to utilize the gifts that ordained ministers from other full-communion partner churches.

Orderly exchange (provisions for availability) of ordained ministers is for the sake of participation by the four denominations in the mission of God, and can be an important sign of our unity in Christ. This particular provision of full communion seeks to allow and encourage the more effective use and deployment of our denominations’ ordained leaders in order to enhance our shared ministry mission. It encourages those in our denominations who are responsible for the deployment of ordained ministers to draw on the available ministers of the other participating denominations to meet mission needs.

### Highlights of the Agreement and Orderly Exchange Process:

- The orderly exchange process begins with the identification of a ministry need by the appropriate regional body of the “inviting” denomination and the identification of an ordained minister from a Formula of Agreement partner denomination who may serve in that ministry setting.
- The judicatory of the “inviting” denomination initiates the process of the orderly exchange between the congregation to be served and the ordained minister. The ordained minister does not initiate the process of exchange.

- The “inviting” denomination then should consult with the appropriate regional body of the ordained minister to determine the suitability of the potential service and to receive the concurrence of the “sending” body – presbytery, classis, conference and association or synod. The ordained minister remains accountable to the sending denomination for continuation of ministerial status.
- A ministry in a congregation of another denomination is not intended for a “first call” candidate; experience in and knowledge of one’s own tradition is seen as necessary before serving in a different tradition.
- This agreement applies only to persons who are ordained teaching elders and does not apply to persons who are locally trained and authorized ministers – commissioned pastors (RCA), commissioned ruling elders (PCUSA), licensed ministers (UCC), or synodically authorized ministers (ELCA).
- These ministries are intended for a designated, extended period of time. Should an ordained minister of one denomination intend to serve permanently in another denomination, then the process of the transfer of ministerial status should be followed.
- Should a disciplinary process be necessary, the ordained minister remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as necessary.

The complete policy and process document, “A Formula of Agreement – The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament,” is available on the Web at: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/ministers/orderly-exchange-formula-partner-churches/> and from <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/ecumenical-formula-agreement/>.

### Ministers Ordained by Other Denominations

Ministers ordained by other denominations may, at the discretion of the presbytery, serve in temporary pastoral relationships with congregations. Except for ministers of Formula Partner denominations, ministers of other denominations may not be installed in PC(USA) congregations. Presbyteries have no obligation to allow ministers of other denominations to serve in their congregations. Thorough reference checking, examination, and mentoring are essential before beginning a relationship between a congregation and a minister ordained in another denomination. (G-2.0506, G-5.0202)

## Yoked Congregations

A yoked congregation is one that shares a pastoral leader with one or more other congregations.

### Why do congregations yoke?

The most common reason for yoking is that one or all of the congregations can no longer afford to pay a full-time pastor. In other situations the yoke is a long historic tie. In some cases, the congregations choose to work together, not only to share leadership, but to share in ministry to their community and to share in programs such as a joint youth group or Bible study. When the cooperation is extensive and involves many congregations and pastoral leaders, it is a Cooperative Parish or Cooperative Ministry. See Carl Geores, *Cooperative Parish Manual* and *Building Your Own Model for Cooperative Ministry* (PDS 800-524-2612). Another model is called a larger parish in which congregations share pastors and staff, obtaining economies of scale and administrative efficiency.

### Establishing a new Yoke

Sometimes the presbytery approaches one or both congregations to suggest a yoke as an option for obtaining pastoral leadership. In other situations, members of one congregation initiate discussions with another and then invite presbytery to help them work out the details. Before seeking a pastor, the sessions of the congregations work out a formal partnership agreement as to how they will share in ministry. A written covenant signed by the two Clerks of Session, the new, shared pastor, and the presbytery COM moderator is recommended so that the agreements are clear.

### Things to consider in forming a new yoked ministry:

- What are the needs of each congregation for the time and talent of a pastor? What will the pastor be expected to do with each congregation in a normal week or month?
- What proportion of full-time service will be expected by each congregation?
  - ...50% and 50%?
  - ...60% and 40%
  - In proportion to membership?
  - 100% and 100% is **not** a realistic expectation!
- Will the pastor live ...near one church? ...between the two?
  - ...in a manse? ...a rented home? Buy a house?
  - Since the pastor cannot live in both communities (unless the congregations are in the same town), s/he will have to divide his or her time between the communities. Don't expect this to be 50/50

since shared tasks like sermon preparation will be done in only one place.

- What assumptions are there about involvement of the pastor and family (if any) in the congregations and communities? (It is not fair to expect spouses to attend 2 worship services or to expect pastors to attend football games in both communities each weekend.)
- How will planning be coordinated?
  - 3 - 4 joint session meetings per year can be very valuable - 1 before Lent, 1 in late summer, 1 before Advent, 1 at annual review and budget time. Another model is to use a Parish Council.
  - This keeps communication strong and allows the sessions to share ideas and concerns without relying on the pastor as the go-between.
- What will the total cost of shared ministry be?
  - Be sure to include:
    - Cash salary
    - Housing allowance or manse maintenance
    - Utilities
    - Medical and pension dues
    - Continuing education allowance
    - Reimbursed professional expenses (travel, etc.)
- Pastor Search expenses - (travel, lodging, meals, photocopying, telephone, and postage), Moving expenses
- Other things to consider -
  - Pulpit supply for 6 weeks per year (vacation and continuing education)
  - Shared administrative expenses (bulletins, newsletter, postage, etc.)
  - Costs of joint programming
- Will the costs be shared in the same proportion as the time sharing?
- How much funding will each congregation provide each year? ...each month?
- How will expenses be handled? Will there be a parish treasurer?
- What are our commitments to each other as partners in ministry?
- How will our shared ministry be evaluated?
- Who will represent the parish at meetings of Presbytery? COM voted June 18, 2012 that one member of the council should be designated to attend meetings of presbytery and have a vote as the commissioner to presbytery.

How will we proceed if one congregation is dissatisfied with the arrangement?

It is usually helpful to discuss these matters in a joint session gathering with the moderator of session and Committee on Ministry representatives to help process the discussion and share information that may be constructive. An initial draft "Covenant for

Shared Ministry” (*see below for an example*) might be drawn up from this discussion, then shared with all participants for review, amendment, and adoption. It is very wise to share the document with the congregations as well (for information, not for approval at this time) and have a well-informed elder respond to questions so that the relationship gets off to a good start. Congregational approval may be necessary later when the agreement is perfected. Joint fellowship and worship celebrations should be encouraged among partner congregations. Small congregation members love to see their pews filled and gather around good food!

Some sample forms appear on the following pages. Printer (or copier) ready versions are included in Chapter 8.

### Sample Forms

(Next page.)



**SAMPLE 1** [This is a sample only. Each agreement should be made to fit the needs of the congregations involved.]

### **YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT**

We, the

\_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota

agree to be participants in a YOKED MINISTRY for the following purpose:

To provide strength and support to one another, spiritually and financially, so that both congregations may more effectively serve the Lord in their respective communities.

To fulfill this purpose we agree to work together, sharing a pastoral ministry and related financial obligations as follows:

**A. Sharing Pastoral Ministry**

1. We will seek and call a pastor to provide pastoral leadership and ministry in accordance with the attached job description.
2. The pastor shall be expected to attempt to distribute pastoral duties and functions between the two congregations on a basis proportionate to membership and need.

**B. Sharing Financial Responsibility**

We will share responsibility for the following financial obligations: [This will vary with each agreement.]

**Pastor's Compensation** [cash salary; continuing education; professional/travel expense; pension/medical insurance; use of manse or housing allowance; manse utilities allowance]

**Pulpit Supply Expense** [cash remuneration; travel expense; social security/Medicare tax]

**Office and Administrative Expense** [office supplies; equipment and repair; telephone; secretarial help]

**Manse Repairs** [arrangements for regular maintenance]

The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ will provide \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or) \_\_\_\_\_ % of these shared obligations per \_\_\_\_\_ (time). The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ will provide \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or) \_\_\_\_\_ % of these shared obligations per \_\_\_\_\_ (time).

The session of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ shall be responsible for the annual review of the adequacy of the pastor's compensation and preparation of the budget for the shared obligations. [This may be a joint responsibility.]

### C. Worship Times

Worship times shall be determined by consultation among the sessions and the pastor.

### D. Joint Session Meetings

To facilitate communication, cooperation and fellowship between the two congregations, the session shall meet together at least once during the year and shall confer regularly throughout the year. [Some sessions may want to meet together more often.]

### **Review and Amendment**

This agreement shall be reviewed annually by both sessions. Amendments may be made to this agreement by consultation among the sessions, the pastor, and Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.

### **Termination of the Yoked Agreement**

This yoked ministry agreement may be terminated (a) only after one year has elapsed from the time when either congregation votes to terminate the agreement or (b) at a time mutually agreed upon by the congregations.

_____ Clerk of Session	_____ Date	_____ Clerk of Session	_____ Date
_____ [Church Name]	_____ [Church City]	_____ [Church Name]	_____ [Church City]
_____ Moderator of Sessions	_____ Date	_____ Presbytery's Committee on Ministry Moderator	_____ Date

### **Other Possible Items for a Yoked Ministry Agreement**

Parish Council	Joint Christian Education Program
Joint Personnel Committee	Joint Youth Program
Joint Use of a Building	Joint Accounting Arrangement

**SAMPLE 2** [This is a sample only. Each agreement should be made to fit the needs of the congregations involved.]

## **YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT**

We, the

\_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota

agree to be participants in a YOKED MINISTRY for the following purpose:

To provide strength and support to one another, spiritually and financially, so that both congregations may more effectively serve the Lord in their respective communities.

To fulfill this purpose we agree to work together, sharing a pastoral ministry and related financial obligations as follows:

### **I. Pastoral Relationships**

#### **A. Pastor's Responsibilities to the congregations:**

1. To conduct worship services in both congregations.
2. To hold office hours at the non-resident church for a minimum of two half-days per week.
3. To attempt to distribute pastoral duties and functions on a 50/50 basis.

#### **B. Congregations' Responsibilities to the Pastor**

[List Terms of Call.]

The financial obligations shall be divided between the congregations as follows:

### **II. Worship**

- #### **A. Worship times shall be determined by consultation among the congregations and the pastor.**

### **III. Parish Council**

Purpose: To provide and foster good communication and cooperation and establishment of good relations between the two congregations and the pastor.

- A. The parish council shall consist of one active ruling elder and two members-at-large from each congregation.
- B. The members of the parish council shall be elected by their respective congregations.

- C. Each parish council member shall serve one term of no more than three years unless one year has elapsed since the last term of service.
- D. The parish council shall meet a minimum of three times per year.
- E. The parish council may be called to meet by the two ruling elder members, either session, the session moderator, or by the parish council moderator.
- F. One ruling elder from each congregation and one member-at-large from each congregation shall constitute a quorum in a parish council meeting.
- G. The parish council shall serve as an advisory committee to the sessions. It shall not have any policy-making authority or responsibility.
- H. The parish council shall be responsible for electing its own officers from among its membership.
  - 1. The moderator shall be responsible for chairing each meeting.
  - 2. The secretary shall be responsible for taking, recording and reporting minutes of each meeting.
  - 3. These officers shall serve for a period of one year, and may be eligible for re-election. The election of these officers shall be conducted by the immediate past moderator.
- J. The parish council shall report on a regular basis to each session through the ruling elder representative.

#### **IV. Termination of the Yoked Agreement**

This agreement may be terminated only after one year has elapsed from the time when either congregation votes to terminate the agreement or by mutual agreement.

#### **V. Review and Amendment**

- A. The sessions of each congregation shall review this agreement annually.
- B. Amendments may be made to this agreement by the session of each congregation in consultation with each congregation and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.

Clerk of Session	Date	Clerk of Session	Date
[Church Name]	[Church City]	[Church Name]	[Church City]

Moderator of Sessions	Date
-----------------------	------

Presbytery's Committee on Ministry Moderator	Date
---	------

**SAMPLE 3** [This is a sample only. Each agreement should be made to fit the needs of the congregations involved.]

**Sample Covenant for Shared Ministry**

**PASTOR.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE CALL EFFECTIVE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONGREGATIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_

**PASTORAL ACTIVITIES:** (indicate activities for each congregation)

**We understand this shared ministry to be approximately**

\_\_\_\_\_ % for \_\_\_\_\_ Church

**and** \_\_\_\_\_ % for \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

**COMPENSATION:**

Cash salary

**Housing**

Utilities

Medical and Pension dues

Travel reimbursement @ \$0.\_\_\_\_\_ per mile

Other ministry cost reimbursement (telephone calls, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Continuing education or book allowance \_\_\_\_\_

Vacation time \_\_\_\_\_ Continuing education time \_\_\_\_\_

Moving expenses \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER SHARED MINISTRY EXPENSES:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF EACH PARTNER CHURCH:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHURCH**  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE YEAR 20\_\_\_\_, \$\_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHURCH**  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE YEAR 20\_\_\_\_, \$\_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO SHARE IN MINISTRY, WITNESSING TOGETHER TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN A MINISTRY TO OUR COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER AS WE LIVE AND GROW AS CHRISTIANS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Pastor**  
**date of session action:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Clerk of Session**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Presbytery COM Moderator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Moderator of Session**

**SAMPLE** [This is a sample only. Each pastoral job description should be made to fit the needs of the congregations involved.]

## **PASTORAL JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Qualities Desired**

Abilities and desire to become an active part of a farm/ranch community, with a sincere interest in common people. Someone who will provide spiritual leadership.

### **Purpose**

To provide ministry to people of varying types and backgrounds in a community where there are great human needs.

### **Accountability**

Accountable to Presbytery and the session in accordance with the *Book of Order*. Performance evaluation will be completed annually by the session based on job description responsibilities.

### **Responsibilities**

1. To preach and to lead in worship and celebration; providing a Biblically-based ministry which will result in the spiritual growth of the congregation and community each Sunday in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. To serve communion in both churches the first Sunday of the month.
3. To lead services at the nursing home with members of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ churches the first two Sundays of the month, including serving communion on the first Sunday of the month.
4. To lead the congregation in providing pastoral care to members through visitation and help in crisis.
5. Hospital visitation and visitation of the elderly is a priority.
6. To counsel with those to be married, those seeking baptism, those planning funerals, and in other situations as necessary.
7. To work with the deacons in the church's outreach to the local community and mission to the world community.
8. To equip the session with skills in planning and development of the activities of the congregation.

9. To assist the church school, Presbyterian women, choir, and young people's groups in the effective accomplishment of their activities.
10. To provide a teaching ministry in areas of mission, stewardship, and adult Bible study.
11. To provide for new member and confirmation class education.
12. To plan leadership development activities for congregation officers.
13. To have bulletins prepared.
14. To direct the work of the church secretary, if necessary.
15. To work with community leaders as well as the clergy council.
16. To serve on presbytery committees as called.

## An Outline for Calling a New Pastor

Detailed Procedure and appropriate forms for calling a pastor are in the next chapter, Pastoral Relationships, but the entire process is outlined as follows:

1. Dissolving the present pastoral relationship
2. Planning the transition
3. Engaging the congregation in a mission study
4. Assessing the congregation's finances
5. Electing the pastor nominating committee (PNC)
6. Orienting and organizing the pastor nominating committee
7. Writing and submitting the Ministry Information Form (MIF)
8. Collecting and screening Personal Information Forms (PIF)
9. Interviewing potential pastors
10. Choosing the nominee
11. Making official decisions
12. Installing the new pastor
13. Follow up with support after installation

See Chapter 5 for detailed procedures for use in the call process.



## 5. Pastoral Relationships

### Membership in Presbytery and Validated Ministries

Each presbytery must have a policy to guide its decisions about what constitutes a validated ministry (G-2.0502).

#### Categories of Membership

The term *active member* (G-11.0406a in the previous form of government) is a term no longer used in the current Book of Order in reference to teaching elders, but the concept now is that all teaching elders who have been admitted to the presbytery in accordance with G-3.0306 shall be engaged in a validated ministry that complies with all of the criteria in G-2.0503a without exception. A Teaching Elder may be engaged in

- a validated ministry within congregations of the church
- in a validated ministry in other service of the church
- in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of this church
- or may be honorably retired (G-0503c).

An active member is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office.

A **member-at-large** (G-2.0503b) is a teaching elder who has previously been admitted to the presbytery or another presbytery as an active member (i.e., engaged in a validated ministry), and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G-2.0502 and G-0503. A teaching elder may be designated a member-at-large because he or she is limited in his or her ability to engage in a ministry fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry because of family responsibilities or other individual circumstances that presbytery recognizes as important. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503 as possible and shall be encouraged to become a parish associate in a congregation.

A member-at-large is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office. The status of each member-at-large may be granted by the presbytery upon the minister's application and shall be reviewed annually. (G-2.0503b)

The term *inactive member* (G-11.0406c in the previous form of government) is no longer used in the Book of Order, but denotes a teaching elder who previously was admitted to the presbytery or another presbytery, but who now no longer is engaged in a

validated ministry (G-2.0508). Such persons “shall not have voice or vote in meetings of the presbytery except when the matter under consideration pertains to his or her relationship to the presbytery” (G-2.0508). The names of persons who fail to engage in a validated ministry “shall be reported annually to the presbytery by the stated clerk. If after three years the teaching elder does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, the presbytery may delete that person’s name from the roll of membership and, upon request of a session, dismiss that person to a congregation” (G-2.0508). See also G-2.0407, Release from Ministry as a Teaching elder. The POSD Committee on Ministry decided to retain the roll of inactive teaching elders.

### If not validated ministry, what other options?

If one or more of the criteria cannot be met, the continuing member should ask to be designated either a member-at-large (G-2.0503b) or an inactive member of presbytery. If presbytery is unwilling to grant this, the continuing member should seek release from the exercise of ordained office (G-2.0508) until he or she receives a call to ministry that fulfills all the criteria.

Restoration to the exercise of the office is possible without re-ordination by:

- Application to and approval of the presbytery that granted release,
- Reaffirmation of ordination vows, and
- Resumption of a ministry that qualifies for continuing active membership in presbytery.

These steps provide for ease in movement and are in no way judgmental. They are permissive in that re-ordination is not necessary. People should be encouraged to use them.

## Installed Pastoral Relationships

Called pastoral relationships are Pastor, Co-Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Designated Pastor. Called pastors have membership in the Presbytery (G-2.0502), are formally installed, are members of session, and serve as moderators of session. The call is ordinarily permanent or at least for an indefinite period, except in the case of a Designated Pastor (G-2.0504). There is no requirement to be fulltime.

### Designated Pastor

With the adoption of the New Form of Government, the term “Designated Pastor” is no longer defined in the Book of Order. G-2.0504 indicates that presbyteries and congregations may work together to call and install a pastor for a designated term. The specific process by which they do that and the length of the term is to be determined.

A designated pastoral relationship, full or part-time, is a call to a Teaching Elder or a candidate certified ready for a call, established by the presbytery for a term of not less than two nor more than four years. By vote, the POSD COM has limited the number of extensions of the designated pastor’s term of call to one extension of one or more years, not to exceed six

years total (COM Minutes April 16, 2012). The congregation and the minister must both have agreed to be considered for a designated relationship. The congregation's pastoral nominating committee shall nominate to the congregation for its consideration and vote, only from among those ministers designated to it by the presbytery's committee on ministry. The minister is installed by the presbytery and is a member of the session.

The call approved by the presbytery is renewable anytime during the last six months of the term, and cannot be changed or dissolved except by consent of the presbytery, which may come at the request of the pastor or by action of the congregation, when the presbytery, after consultation with the teaching elder and the congregation, finds that the congregation's mission under the Word imperatively demands it, or when the term specified in the call expires without action having been taken to renew the call. The presbytery may designate and the congregation may call more than one teaching elder to serve as designated pastors, sharing duties within the congregation as agreed upon by the session and approved by the presbytery. When there is more than one pastor, they and the session shall agree on a schedule for sharing the times each will moderate.

Upon the concurrence of the committee on ministry, the designated pastor, and the session, acting in place of the pastor nominating committee for the single purpose of calling the designated pastor as pastor, a congregational meeting may be held to call the designated pastor as pastor. Alternatively, the session, with the concurrence of the committee on ministry, may call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee to conduct a full pastoral search or to prosecute the call to the designated pastor to become pastor. The action of the congregation shall be reported to the presbytery. If the congregational action is affirmative, the presbytery, after voting to approve the new pastoral relationship, shall install the designated pastor as pastor.

At the end of the first term of a designated pastor, the congregation has just three options. The congregation may:

1. Extend the contract of the designated pastor,
2. Call the designated pastor as a pastor (without term limit), or
3. Allow the contract to expire, thus ending the pastoral relationship.

At the end of any extension of the designated pastor term, only options 2 and 3 remain.

### **Congregations that might benefit from having a designated pastor**

Congregations go through life cycles and critical events much as people do. When a congregation is experiencing a significant opportunity for new direction, a major trauma or unusually difficult transition, a designated pastor may be able to provide the kind of leadership needed. Among the times when a COM might suggest a designated pastor are:

- When a congregation is engaged in transformation
- When a congregation has been wounded by conflict or by a "revolving door" in the pastor's office through which a number of pastors have come and gone in a relatively few years
- When congregations are considering engaging in shared ministry
- When a congregation can benefit from a different pastoral leadership style
- During a transition time, as when a founding pastor has left a new church development

- When attempts at working the call system have been unsuccessful

## Tentmaking Pastors

Also called bi-vocational ministers, a tentmaker is a teaching elder who is also engaged in a secular occupation or who is semi-retired. Either or both of the vocations may be part-time, and the teaching elder may be in any called or temporary standing, installed or not installed.

A congregation that cannot support a teaching elder full-time may seek a tentmaker, but in doing so must consider employment opportunities in the community. It may not be realistic to expect a teaching elder who needs full-time income to find a second job in some communities. On the other hand, a semi-retired or financially independent teaching elder, or one who is a caregiver for a family member, may be seeking a congregation that does not need his or her services on a full-time basis.

For more information, contact the Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers at <http://www.pcusatentmakers.org/> and *The Tentmakers Manual* Available through Presbyterian Distribution Service, (800) 524-2612 (PDS #305-92-9500)

## Temporary Pastoral Relations

### Types of Temporary Pastors

There are several types of temporary pastors described in editions of the *Book of Order* (BOO) prior to 2011, some of which were dropped from the BOO. Even so, The Presbytery of South Dakota (POSD) has determined that these various types of temporary pastoral relationships are needed in some of our churches because of the mission concerns in this state. Retention or creation of such pastoral relationships is permitted under the BOO of 2011 and following at the discretion of the presbytery.

Temporary pastors are not ordinarily eligible to serve as the next installed pastor of the congregation they are serving, and are not members of session.

### Authority for Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Authority for Temporary Pastoral Relationships is found in the BOO as follows:

#### G-2.0504 Pastoral Relationships

##### b. Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery may obtain the services of a teaching elder, candidate, or ruling elder in

a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

#### c. Exceptions

A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits ... a teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting.

We have borrowed heavily from prior editions of the BOO in providing the following descriptions of the temporary pastoral relationships recognized and permitted in the POSD.

All temporary relationships of a teaching elder, full-time or part-time, are established by the session or commission of the presbytery with the approval of the presbytery through its Committee on Ministry. These temporary relationships have titles appropriate to the ministerial tasks to which the minister is called, such as stated supply, temporary supply, organizing pastor, Transitional pastor, and others. A minister serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is called for a specified period not to exceed twelve months, which is renewable with the approval of the committee on ministry. A written agreement, covenant, or terms of call signed by the minister, the clerk of session or presbytery commission, and a representative of the committee on ministry shall specify the pastoral functions, compensation, and any special skills or training required for the ministry.

### Commissioned Ruling Elder

The particular role of commissioned ruling elder (CRE, formerly called Commissioned Lay Pastor or CLP) is an extension of the office of ruling elder, which is an ordained office of the church. The role was created in the mid-1980s in response to the mission needs of presbyteries which did not have enough teaching elders to adequately serve their congregations. At first it was “Commissioned Lay Preacher.” A decade later, the role was expanded to give presbyteries the option for authorizing a CLP to administer the sacraments and other pastoral functions and the name was changed to “Commissioned Lay Pastor.” In a recent revision of the Form of Government, the role’s title was changed to “ruling elder commissioned to particular pastoral service” to provide clarity about its place within the ordered ministries (G-2.1001).

CREs are examined on personal faith, motives, and areas of instruction, and then are Commissioned in a service of worship during which they respond to constitutional questions. Their role is limited in time and place of service, and they must work under the supervision and mentoring of a teaching elder. Their term is specified up to 3 years, and is renewable, but must be reviewed annually.

CREs serve in validated ministries, may moderate session if appointed by COM, may administer the sacraments, and may officiate at marriages if permitted by law (and it is permitted in South Dakota) if authorized by the Presbytery of South Dakota.

Application and screening of CREs shall be through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

### Extent of Commission

A CRE may be commissioned to the Presbytery of South Dakota rather than to a particular church. CREs will be coordinated by an administrator appointed by COM. (Change approved by COM on May 12, 2015 and implemented by POSD on June 26, 2015.)

### Temporary Supply Pastor

A temporary supply pastor (TSP) is not installed and is not a member of the session. The presbytery shall appoint a moderator of the session who may be the temporary pastor. The TSP relationship is essentially a contract between the minister and the session, approved by COM, and lasting for a specified period of time, not to exceed 12 months, but which may be renewed with approval of COM. A TSP may be a candidate for ministry, a candidate certified ready for a call, a ruling elder, or a teaching elder. In the case of a candidate certified ready for a call, presbytery, by two-thirds vote, may decide to examine and ordain the candidate.

A TSP, with approval of Presbytery by three-fourths vote of the members present and voting, may be called by the congregation he or she has been serving as TSP.

### Transitional Pastor

Teaching Elders and candidates certified ready for a call who have had training to be a transitional pastor may be available to serve as a temporary pastor. Often these teaching elders have had special training for the unique ministry of serving churches in the midst of pastoral transition. Some have special skills and experience in helping congregations recover from a time of conflict or after the disclosure of a pastor's sexual misconduct or other trauma.

When a presbytery and session determine that a Transitional pastor, Transitional co-pastor, or Transitional associate pastor is necessary and helpful, the session may consult the committee on ministry and seek a Transitional minister as soon as a date certain for departure has been announced by a pastor or associate pastor planning to leave. A Transitional pastor, Transitional co-pastor, or Transitional associate pastor is not ordinarily eligible to serve that church as the next permanent or designated pastor. As a temporary pastoral relationship, a Transitional pastor may, with approval of Presbytery by three-fourths vote of the members present and voting,

be called by the congregation he or she has been serving as a Transitional pastor. (G-2.0504c)

#### Assessment and Evaluation:

The Committee on Ministry will want to consult on a regular basis with the Transitional Pastor and the Session. The goals and objectives for the Transitional period will need to be monitored on some continuing basis and attention given to a mid-term assessment. If any modification or extension in a Transitional contract is needed, the Committee on Ministry would play an integral role in negotiating any changes that might be appropriate. An exit interview is also suggested to provide a basis for the Session's and Committee's continued working relationship with the new pastor and the Session.

#### Support systems and networking:

Given the level of stress that often accompanies Transitional ministry, personal support for Transitional pastors becomes even more important on a group and/or individual basis. It is helpful for the Committee on Ministry or related staff to facilitate both formal and informal support systems for Transitional pastors; this could apply to their families as well.

Some Transitional pastors might appropriately be used in other transitional situations within a presbytery, thus benefiting the presbytery and providing some stability to the pastors' lives.

#### Continuing education:

It is important for Transitional Pastors to continue their skill development. The Transitional groups that provide basic Transitional training also offer advanced seminars in such areas as conflict management, organizational dynamics, systems theory, nourishing spirituality, stress management, grief therapy, and leadership styles.

#### The importance of Transitional ministry

A skilled Transitional pastor not only serves in all pastoral capacities during the transition time, but also helps the congregation deal with the feelings that accompany the departure of a pastor, such as grief, relief, confusion, and anxiety. A Transitional pastor helps the congregation think carefully about its ministry in the past, present, and future. A Transitional pastor helps a congregation deal with problems before a new pastor is called so that the new pastor can have as happy and healthy a start as possible. Most importantly, a Transitional pastor understands that her or his most important responsibility is to help the congregation prepare to welcome the new pastor so that both the congregation and the new pastor can thrive as they serve together in ministry.

Sometimes multiple staff churches consider assigning head of staff responsibilities to an associate pastor. Sessions making such decisions should be advised that doing so creates role confusion within the congregation and for the associate. It almost inevitably creates difficulties within the staff and congregation upon arrival of the new head of staff.

Some sessions may see the transition time as an opportunity to save money by not using a Transitional pastor. There may be occasions when it is impossible for a congregation to afford to pay a Transitional pastor. However, those are congregations

that should be encouraged to examine their finances very carefully to be certain that they have the financial resources to call a pastor.

There are congregations who cannot find a suitable Transitional pastor. In such cases the COM will need to provide extra assistance to the congregation as they move through the transition time toward calling a new pastor.

## Retired Supply

Any honorably retired teaching elder may be invited by the session of a congregation, with approval of COM, to serve in a temporary position. During such service, the retired supply shall be a member of session and moderator of session.

## Organizing Pastor

An organizing pastor is a teaching elder, designated pastor, or commissioned ruling elder (CRE) employed by the presbytery to serve as pastor to a group of people who are in the process of organizing a new Presbyterian congregation. This relationship as organizing pastor shall terminate when the new congregation is chartered by the presbytery. At that time, the new congregation may, with the approval of the committee on ministry and the presbytery, call the organizing pastor to be its pastor without being required to elect a pastor nominating committee and conduct a pastoral search, or it may choose to elect a pastor nominating committee and conduct a full pastoral search as provided in the *Book of Order*.

## Parish Associate Relationship

Parish Associate is a terminology no longer found in the *Book of Order* (BOO), but we will always have among us teaching elders whose circumstances meet the traditional concept of “parish associate.” Hence, it is useful to include this category among our various pastoral relationships.

A parish associate is a Teaching Elder who serves in some validated ministry other than the local parish, or is a member-at-large or retired, but who wishes to maintain a relationship with a particular church or churches in keeping with ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Such persons, already qualified as continuing members of presbytery, may serve as parish associates. The relationship shall be established upon nomination by the pastor, between the parish associate, the session, and the presbytery. The parish associate shall be responsible to the pastor, as head of staff, on an “as needed, as available” basis with or without remuneration, and

- shall be under the supervision of the COM
- shall not involve a formal call;
- shall be terminated upon due notice by the session when the call to the pastor is dissolved
- may not be called to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor unless at least six months have elapsed
- shall be reviewed annually



- changes in the relationship must be approved by presbytery

## Ministers of Other Denominations

Ministers of other denominations regularly serve Presbyterian congregations in temporary positions. Approval is at the discretion of the presbytery. It is essential that the Committee on Ministry meet with each non-Presbyterian minister to assess theology and practice of ministry, understandings of Presbyterian government, and their intentions as well as to explain the presbytery's goals for the congregation and resources available to the minister. It is wise for COM to be involved early in a relationship between a congregation and a non-Presbyterian pastor rather than be faced with the unpleasant task of telling a congregation they cannot be served by the pastor with whom they have built a relationship.

On occasion presbyteries may consider contracting with ministers of other Christian denominations to serve as temporary pastors within the presbytery. Presbytery may temporarily enroll a minister of another Christian denomination to serve as a temporary pastor under G-2.0506 upon recommendation of COM.

Presbyterians are ecumenical and, as such, are involved with members of other denominations in ministry and mission. Christ's mission is furthered by such cooperation. In some places there are not enough PC(USA) teaching elders to lead PC(USA) congregations and ministers of other denominations are available to serve. In other areas, special mission needs are met by ministers of other denominations, particularly in the case of united churches and yoked parishes with churches of different denominations. Such relationships offer great possibilities and some pitfalls.

- Presbyteries have no obligation to allow ministers of other denominations to serve in their congregations.
- Pastoral service in PC(USA) congregations is open to teaching elder equivalents, not "lay pastors."

To be called as an installed pastor, a minister of another denomination may by transfer of membership become a PC(USA) teaching elder (G-2.0505), or must be approved by COM and the Presbytery. He/she does not need to be a member of the PC(USA) if his/her membership is in one of the denominations with whom we are in full communion.

## Finding Temporary Leadership

The session is responsible for providing regular worship and other services for the congregation. During the time between the departure of the installed pastor and the arrival of the temporary pastor, if one is used, the session will take a much more active part in every aspect of the leadership of the congregation. Among other responsibilities, the session finds guest preachers and pastors able to provide emergency pastoral care. Most presbyteries maintain a pulpit supply list of teaching elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders willing to conduct worship services and provide pastoral care on a temporary basis.

This is an especially good time for the Committee on Ministry to encourage congregations to consider women and/or racial-ethnic pastors as preachers or for a temporary pastoral relationship. Congregations that have not experienced the gifts of women or racial ethnic ministers may discover that they have a greater spirit of inclusiveness and openness than they have previously known. The COM may also want to appoint women and racial ethnic teaching elders to serve as moderators of sessions, and add the names of women and racial ethnic teaching elders and candidates to the pulpit supply list for the presbytery.

### Ministers Ordained by Other Denominations

Ministers ordained by other denominations may, at the discretion of the presbytery, serve in temporary pastoral relationships with congregations. Except for ministers of Formula Partner churches, ministers of other denominations may not be installed in PC(USA) congregations. Presbyteries have no obligation to allow ministers of other denominations to serve in their congregations. Thorough reference checking, examination, and mentoring are essential before beginning a relationship between a congregation and a minister ordained in another denomination. (G-2.0506, G-5.0202)

### Transfer of membership to PC(USA)

Ministers of other denominations who are interested in becoming a Teaching Elder in the PC(USA) should begin the process of inquiry by consulting with the COM in their area to determine whether or not there might be the possibility of a call for them in a PC(USA) congregation within the presbytery. In order to become a PC(USA) minister, a minister of another denomination (including Formula Partners) must:

- Be an ordained minister and provide evidence of being in good standing;
- Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university;
- Have a theological degree from an institution acceptable to the presbytery of call; and,
- Pass PC(USA) standard ordination exams (see G-2.0505.a(2) for exception).
- It is only at this point that the minister of another denomination may enter a Personal Information Form online in CLC for referral.
- If a call to appropriate work within the PC(USA) is extended, the minister of another denomination must then
  - Be examined and approved by the presbytery of call on his/her Christian faith, their knowledge of theology, the system of government of the PC(USA), and, at the discretion of the presbytery, in other subjects
  - Answer the ordination questions (W-4.4003) in the affirmative;
  - Furnish evidence that they have been officially removed from the rolls of the other denomination.

Under certain circumstances, the requirements listed above may be waived, but only the presbytery of call can grant waivers to the requirements listed in the Book of

Order. See the BOO for waiver requirements. Ministers of other Reformed denominations (such as Reformed Church in America) may be exempted from taking standard ordination exams if they have been ordained for five or more years and if the presbytery approves by a 2/3 vote as above.

## Ministers serving in Specialized Ministries<sup>11</sup>

### Endorsement for Specialized Ministry<sup>12</sup>

The presbytery has the responsibility to serve as pastor and counselor to all teaching elders, including those who are serving as chaplains or in other specialized ministries. Chaplains in hospitals and care centers, in the military, and pastoral counselors, as well as teaching elders serving in other validated ministries need and deserve pastoral care and expressions of interest in and appreciation for the important service they provide. All are accountable to the presbytery for their ministry, but it may be difficult for them to participate in the same ways as pastors of congregations, especially for military chaplains who may be deployed overseas. Presbyteries that actively reach out to utilize the gifts of its specialized teaching elders are enriched by their gifts and perspective.

Most chaplains and pastoral counselors go through an extensive process of training and professional preparation in order to become certified. Military chaplains have a separate process for ecclesiastical endorsement and training. Ordinarily they are expected to have experience as pastors before serving as chaplains in a military setting.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is an official declaration by the presbytery of membership/care that a person seeking certification as a chaplain or pastoral counselor has the gifts of ministry for this special calling. It is not a statement of competency. Endorsement is the responsibility of the religious body, while certification is the work of the professional organization. The following information is intended as a resource. Additional information is available from the professional organizations or from certified chaplains and pastoral counselors serving in each presbytery.

### Military Chaplains

Those who offer themselves to serve as military chaplains need to work closely with their presbytery under the guidance of The Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP). Information about this ministry, the qualifications for military chaplaincy and the process for ecclesiastical endorsement are outlined on their website. The PCCMP has been authorized as the endorsing agent on behalf of the PC(USA). They do that in collaboration with presbytery ministry committees. Their Director should be contacted in any matter related to the service of teaching elders serving as military chaplains (active duty or reserve) or being considered for such service.

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<sup>11</sup> From the 2007 COM Handbook, pages 5-19 to 5-26.

<sup>12</sup> From 2011-2013 Advisory Handbook for Ministry Committees/Commissions.

Endorsement is given and may be withdrawn by the PCCMP in consultation with the presbytery.

The chaplain to the military is a teaching elder in uniform, "on loan" by the Church to the Army, Air Force, or Navy -- which also provides chaplains for the Marines and Coast Guard. Endorsement for military chaplains and VA chaplains is provided by the PCCMP with the assistance of the presbytery of membership.

Military chaplains may be:

- An officer in the Reserve or National Guard with a commitment of two days each month, and two weeks of annual training;
- An officer with an initial three years of active service. Chaplains on active duty may later apply for an indefinite extension serving up to 30 years if promoted.
- A Chaplain Candidate. This program allows individuals to explore the military ministry option while attending the seminary.
- A volunteer Civil Air Patrol Chaplain (CAP). CAP requires its chaplains to meet the same standards as chaplains in active service in the USAF.

## Military Chaplains and USERRA

Through the Board of Pensions, the PC(USA) has agreed to the terms of USERRA (the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act). They include, when the individual returns to service in a PC(USA) entity (not necessarily the one he/she departed):

- The continued accrual of seniority and the pay thereof for PC(USA) teaching elders (or laity) serving in the military for up to five years,
- The accrual of pension benefits for the same service,
- The guarantee of reemployment upon release from military service.
- Payments to the Board of Pensions are due after the individuals return from military service. The liability falls upon the sending congregation. This places a burden upon congregations and presbyteries to find appropriate service opportunities after return from the military.

For more information about USERRA, see the Board of Pensions website.

## Veterans Administration Chaplains

Presbyteries coordinate with the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP) to provide endorsement for clergy seeking chaplaincies in the military and VA. The endorsements are sent to the Department of Defense (DoD) or Veterans Affairs (VA) after the PCCMP endorsement process is successfully completed. Part of that process is approval from the teaching elder's presbytery.

Veterans Affairs Chaplains (serving as spiritual counselors in moral and religious problems) are concerned primarily with providing for the religious needs of hospitalized veterans. The chaplain provides a pastoral, sacramental, and instructional ministry to patients and, when necessary, to their families.

Appointments to the VA Chaplain Service are made under the authority of the

Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with Civil Service regulations. VA chaplain ministry is ordinarily within the bounds of a presbytery.

Most of the PCCMP endorsement information is posted on the web page: [www.pccmp.org](http://www.pccmp.org) You can contact the PCCMP at [info@pccmp.org](mailto:info@pccmp.org), Phone: 202-244-4177 FAX: 202-237-0983.

### Pensions for Chaplains who do not earn military or VA pensions

PC(USA) active duty military and full-time VA chaplains are protected by the Chaplains Deposit Fund. The fund is commingled with the BOP investments and guarantees payment of pension dues at the median salary level for PC(USA) clergy who do not vest in the military or VA pension plans. This benefit has been provided since the Vietnam War to minimize the risk to a chaplain's pension from any acts or words which cause him/her to be forced from the military.

### Pastoral Counselors and Other Types of Chaplains

What follows is information for the presbytery in the process of ecclesiastical endorsement that is a required part of the certification process for pastoral counselors and other types of chaplains.

Teaching elders and others serving in specialized pastoral ministries are required to provide to their respective professional organizations, evidence of endorsement and validation of their ministries by their faith group. Endorsement and validation of the ministry by the faith group is a requirement for certification and for continuing membership in the professional organization.

The Leadership Team of the Presbyterian Association of Specialized Pastoral Ministries (PASPM), a network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA), in conjunction with the Office of Vocation, has prepared this information to assist both those persons who are seeking endorsement, certification, and/or validation of a ministry of pastoral care and those presbytery committees that have responsibility for endorsing persons and/or validating ministries of pastoral care.

This information will clarify terminology, summarize standards of the professional certifying bodies, incorporate recent statements of agreements between the professional organizations and the religious endorsing bodies, and encourage support for persons in specialized pastoral ministries.

### Terminology and Processes

**Validation of ministry** - An official declaration by the presbytery, that a particular ministry complies with all of the criteria enumerated in G-2.0503.

**Endorsement** - An official declaration by the presbytery, that a person has met its criteria to serve in a ministry of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education. Endorsement is the work of the faith group; therefore, the professional certifying organizations encourage presbyteries to establish a process for endorsement of persons seeking to enter, and/or persons serving in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education seeking certification. The professional organizations also encourage

these persons to initiate a relationship with their presbytery early in their training so that the presbytery, through its committees, can provide guidance, discernment, and support. The declaration of endorsement addresses the following criteria through a process that might include written papers, interviews, and mutual discernment:

- Personal history
- Statement of faith
- Theological and clinical training
- Letters of reference
- Requirements for ministry
- Good standing and accountability within the faith community
- Ability to work collegially in diverse and pluralistic environments
- Willingness to adhere to a code of ethics prescribed by the institutions served, and by the certifying bodies

A letter of endorsement from the presbytery to the certifying body is continuous unless:

- The applicant has failed to successfully complete the membership or certification process
- There is a change in membership status or level in the professional organization
- There is a change in faith group affiliation, jurisdiction or standing
- The certifying body requests a new letter

(In the case of military chaplains, the PCCMP and presbytery may withdraw endorsement.)

**Certification** - The process whereby professional certifying agencies such as APC (Association of Professional Chaplains), AAPC (American Association of Pastoral Counselors), ACPE (Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.), or CPSP (College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy), declare a person to be in compliance with professional standards as delineated by that professional organization. Certification ordinarily addresses such core standards as:

- Clearly articulated professional standards
- Defined admission standards
- Articulated training standards
- Clinical supervisory responsibility and accountability
- Articulated certification steps and standards
- Code of ethics
- Clearly published fees
- Sustained training and ongoing certification
- Defined disciplinary process
- Continuing professional formation and peer review

### Ideas for supporting persons in specialized pastoral ministries

- Supporting healthy and well-prepared persons for such service.

- Recognize them at Presbytery meetings (and in the minutes) with special attention to the beginnings of service, transitions in ministry, and retirements.
- Communicate often and, if possible, visit the place of ministry.
- Ask for regular reports of their work.
- Encourage specialized teaching elders to serve in local congregations as appropriate and possible.
- Involve persons in specialized pastoral ministries in colleague groups and other learning opportunities.
- Nominate chaplains and counselors to sit on presbytery ministry committees
- Provide an annual review of ministry
- Install persons in specialized ministries as is done with ministers in congregational settings
- Provide friendship/support/peer-group for persons in specialized pastoral ministries

## Process of Endorsement

Applicants for endorsement by the PCCMP can find application forms on the website: [www.pccmp.org](http://www.pccmp.org). When those applications, with transcripts and other required attachments are received, the staff sends out letter of reference requests and requests for presbytery approval. When these are returned, the individuals are scheduled for interviews.

The focus of PCCMP interviews is not on theological competence but on aptitude and adaptability for ministry in a military or VA setting. Presbyteries are the only organizations that can set theological requirements and ordain.

When a presbytery votes to allow a teaching elder to serve as a military chaplain it normally also approves labor outside of the bounds of presbytery.

Some applicants look toward military chaplaincy as an ordaining call. When that is the case, the PCCMP can endorse them pending ordination. The PCCMP seeks to work closely with presbyteries in such cases. The PCCMP is most concerned in such cases to have the individual demonstrate a history of ministry before ordination.

When an endorsement is made by the PCCMP, copies go to the military branch or VA chaplains' office, to the presbytery, and to the individual.

The COM can support chaplains and the endorsement process by:

- encouraging teaching elder members to apply for endorsement with the PCCMP while applying for reserve or active duty chaplaincy in the service
- supporting applications for military and VA chaplaincy only of well trained and prepared teaching elders. Under normal circumstances, the teaching elder should serve at least two years in an installed position after

- ordination before being considered for chaplaincy.
- sending regular communications to chaplains serving outside of your bounds. Chaplains often feel abandoned by their presbyteries.
- being aware that chaplains are also asked by the PCCMP to provide quarterly updates to the Presbytery and PCCMP on their ministry
- considering chaplains as commissioners to Synod and GA
- asking chaplains what special training they have. Many have extensive training in working with adolescents, suicide prevention, critical incident stress management (CISM), and conflict resolution.
- being in touch with chaplains as they approach military retirement. They may be willing to serve congregations in the presbytery. Most military chaplains retire from the military with 10-20 years of pastoral service still available
- noting that military chaplains serve in leadership of congregations and have administrative skills and the ability to work cooperatively with other faith groups

The PCCMP can support COMs by:

- keeping in touch with military and VA chaplain recruiters and discussing with the COM the standards they expect of the chaplains
- letting you know what pay and benefits come to military and VA chaplains so you can assess whether their terms of call are sufficient
- helping you contact your military members or those from any of your congregations
- informing the presbytery if/when chaplains face military discipline. This helps the COM in your oversight of their ministries
- making visits to military chaplains at least every second year, and to most chaplains every year. The PCCMP can carry your concern to them
- assisting your congregations and presbyteries in understanding military life, the strains of deployment and separation, and support of military families. This may be especially important as we currently have reserve and National Guard military members deploying from most of our presbyteries.
- assisting you in locating your member chaplains and in identifying chaplains of other presbyteries who may be laboring in your bounds. You can then utilize such chaplains in supply preaching, moderating sessions, and the like.
- assisting your pastors with military funeral honors

In addition, the PCCMP director is in Washington DC and will gladly make visits to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Bethesda National Naval Medical Center, and Arlington National Cemetery in support of your clergy and families, and all presbyteries are on the mailing list for the twice per year “Frontlines” newsletter. The PCCMP will gladly add to the mailing list those who request copies.



## Resources

The following documents, found on the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) Web site can be helpful as presbyteries consider the endorsement process:

- Common Code of Professional Ethics
- Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy
- Professional Chaplaincy: Its Role and Importance in Healthcare.

The following professional organizations will provide information about their certification requirements:

### **American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)**

**Fairfax Virginia**

703-385-6967

[www.aapc.org](http://www.aapc.org)

### **Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE)**

Decatur Georgia

404-320-1472

[www.acpe.edu](http://www.acpe.edu)

### **Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)**

**Schaumburg Illinois**

847-240-1014

[www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org)

### **College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy (CPSP)**

New York New York

212-307-1537

[www.cpsp.org](http://www.cpsp.org)

### **National Institute of Business & Industrial Chaplains (NIBIC)**

**Houston Texas**

713-266-2456

[www.nibic.com](http://www.nibic.com)



## 6. Procedures

**For instances where the congregation is seeking dissolution of a pastoral relationship, see the Index for *Severance Policy*.**

**Please refer to Chapter 9 for all forms. To save space, they have not been duplicated in this chapter.**

### Is It Time to Move?

#### **Pastoral Transitions: Due Diligence**

**John R. Cionca, Ph.D.**

Ten months ago an east coast pastor asked his board if he were still the right person to lead their flock. He had been serving the congregation for 19 years, but they'd been struggling over the past three years. The board went away on a two-day retreat to pray for their minister and the church. They returned and informed the pastor that they sensed the Spirit was saying that it was time for new leadership in the church. On the surface he handled the news well, but internally he was shocked. At age 61 he questioned: "What will I do; where will I go?"

Over the following months all the stages of grief and loss were experienced by pastor and spouse. And while intellectually he recognized the need to move on, emotionally he, and especially his wife, felt abandoned. Nevertheless, while some pastoral tenures end in an ugly fashion, both church and minister handled this exit with class. An evening for celebration, a card shower (with gifts encouraged) and a more than generous transitions gift (severance package) were provided. The board even provided several months of professional counseling and career guidance.

A consultant friend of mine believes "the average pastor stays two years too long." By the time the minister figures out that he or she has lost their effectiveness, a turn-around under their leadership is unlikely. I remember sitting in the living room with a clergy couple hearing the minister lament: "John, I don't know what I can do the next five years that I haven't tried the past five years." This minister followed a founding pastor who had loved and served that congregation for twenty-five years—and had remained in the congregation (a topic for another article). Several hundred people had left the church under this new pastor's leadership. My response to his confession was: "Ted, perhaps you need to release the church to someone else who may be able to move it forward." Unfortunately, unlike the story above, this pastor left grudgingly, and years later still has a bitter spirit over his forced exit.

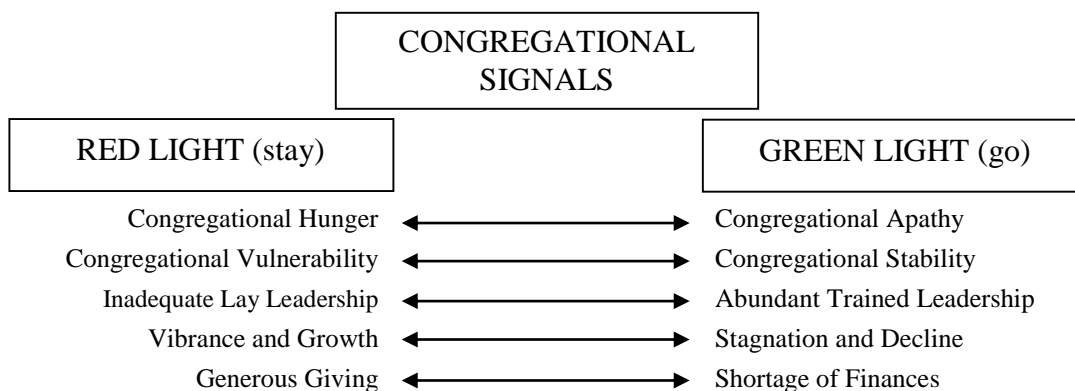
On a more positive note let me relate the story of another pastor who seems to transition at just the right time. He served for fifteen years in New England, then 15

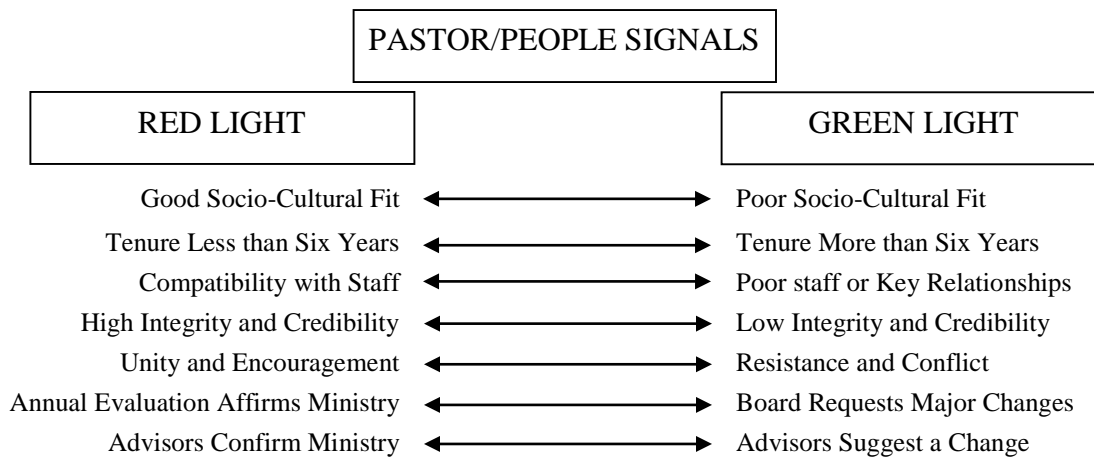
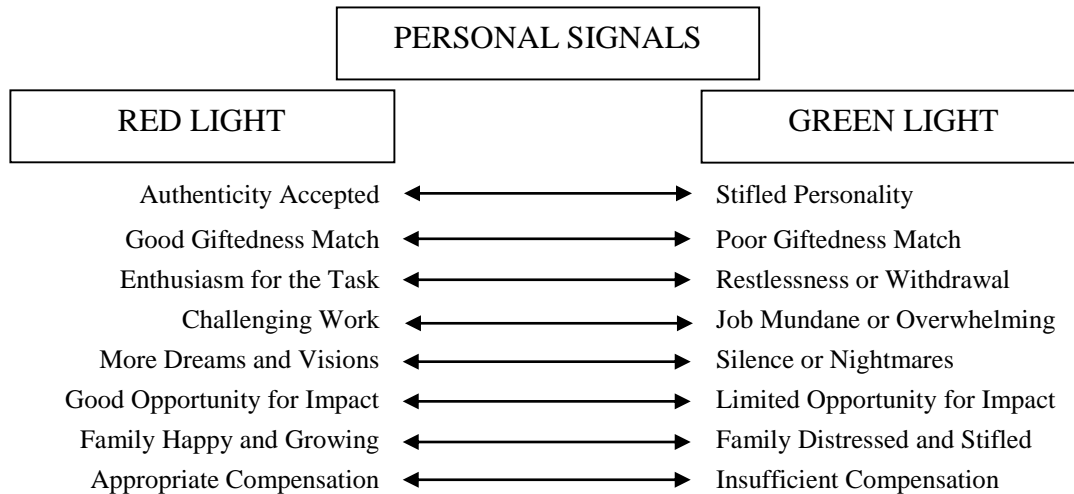
years in the mid-west. Even though his ministry was flourishing in a suburb of Chicago, at age 52 he realized that he either had to remain at his present church until retirement, or he had to transition now. He figured, “I can put in 15 years in another church if I move now, but if I wait a few more years, the window may close. No one is looking for a 55+ year senior pastor.” He accepted a call from a church in California, and is enjoying another fruitful season of service. Perhaps, not just in comedy, but also in ministry, “timing is everything!”

Sometimes I think we make the Christian life overly mystical. Sure, the Bible speaks of mystery, but it also illustrates simplicity. Although it affirms “the Lord determines [a person’s] steps” (Proverbs 16:9 TNIV), it also assumes a sound decision-making process. Jesus said, “For which of you, intending to build a tower does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? . . . Or what king going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down and consider first whether he is able with 10,000 to oppose the one who comes against him with 20,000?” (Luke 14:28, 31 NRSV).

Just as rationality is part of the *Imago Dei*, making choices is as naturally human as breathing. People (including ministers) make decisions about what to wear, what type of car to drive, where to live and with whom to spend time. Among the weightiest decisions a pastor must make is whether to seek a new place of ministry.

So let me share with you twenty signals worth consideration by pastors who are wrestling with “should I stay or should I leave?” The closer the rankings to the “Red Light” side of the scale, the more reason to remain in one’s present congregation. The closer the responses cluster toward the “Green Light” side of the scale, the more evidence a change may be in order. Where a pastor places himself or herself on each continuum, and how much weight each factor is given, will shed light on the wisdom of a transition. None of the factors are a mandate to move. But they can bring insight into what is happening within the church and the pastor. They can serve as discussion points for good decision-making.





I wish I had time to unpack these signals for you, and I wish we had space to detail the scriptures that support them and the clergy examples that illustrate them. But for now, my hope is that pastors perform their due diligence in transitions. Yes, God sovereignly leads, but he also holds us accountable for decisions. The Apostle Paul acknowledged, “I labor, with his energy” (Colossians 1:29). So let’s serve with all our hearts, in the harvest fields that are whitest for the wiring and resources that God has specifically entrusted to each of us.

*Dr. John Cionca, who is professor of ministry leadership at Bethel Seminary, wrote this article on behalf of North Central Ministry Development Center. His book is **Before You Move: A Guide to Making Transitions in Ministry, Revised Edition**, available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)*

*For additional information about programs, workshops, and retreats related to pastoral transitions, please contact Dr. Mark Sundby, North Central Ministry Development Center, at 651-636-5120 or [ncmdc@comcast.net](mailto:ncmdc@comcast.net)*

## Termination of Call Process<sup>13</sup>

→ See Moderator Resources (Chapter 8) topic “About Prevention” for additional guidance on prevention of call termination and “Other Causes of Termination.”

General assembly has advised presbyteries that it is imperative that a presbytery have a process and plan for dealing with terminations, particularly in cases involving conflict or involuntary termination of a call. Without a process that is followed and documented, the presbytery and the congregation could experience legal difficulties and incur unnecessary costs for all of the parties involved in the termination.

Each presbytery needs to determine those items that are negotiable and state those up front with all parties.

Under the best of conditions, it is difficult to end a relationship, a ministry or a mission. Dissolution of the pastoral relationship is an occasion when COM members and presbytery staff may experience the most pain, hurt and potential for destructive behavior. In the PC(USA) we are experiencing a growing number of terminations of pastoral and support staff relationships. Terminations involve separation and severance agreements that often are the result of intense conflicts, a change in ministry, or direction of mission. It is important for your presbytery to have a procedure for dealing with such terminations and separations.

### G-2.0901

An installed pastoral relationship may be dissolved only by the presbytery. Whether the teaching elder, the congregation, or the presbytery initiates proceedings for dissolution of the relationship, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation to consider the matter and to consent, or decline to consent, to dissolution.

## Process

1. Where conflict is not involved (such as retirement, new call, etc.)
  - Session and/or pastor contacts COM to advise COM of the impending change. (G-2.0902)
  - COM advises on process and procedure.
    - Session calls special congregational meeting to concur with dissolution.
    - The congregational meeting may be moderated by the installed pastor,

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<sup>13</sup> This topic was extensively revised from the 2011 Manual after extensive discussion 10/2/2014 and approval in detail on 12/2/2014 and again on 2/10/2015.

or COM may appoint someone to moderate the congregational meeting and to report the outcome to COM.

- Clerk of Session notifies COM moderator and liaison of outcome of meeting.
- The session, pastor and COM negotiate, approve and sign a written severance agreement if applicable. (See the severance policy below.)<sup>14</sup>

2. The termination process includes the following steps in cases involving conflict:

The congregation may request the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Such a request is often due to difficulties between the congregation and the teaching elder and the teaching elder may or may not be in agreement with the request of the congregation.

- The session or pastor communicates in writing to COM the need for assistance in resolving a conflict, dissatisfaction, or evaluating an unsatisfactory performance review.
- COM will respond with the appropriate resource persons and the liaison to meet with all parties to bring about resolution and inform all of the parties of the presbytery's policy on termination and separation.
  - At the request of the congregation, the session shall call a congregational meeting and request that the presbytery to appoint a moderator for the meeting (G-1.0504, G-2.0903).
  - COM appoints someone to moderate the congregational meeting and to report the outcome to COM.
  - Clerk of Session notifies COM moderator of outcome of meeting.
- The session, pastor and COM negotiate, approve and sign a written severance agreement. (See the severance policy below.)
- COM approves the written severance agreement.<sup>15</sup>

3. In both instances:

- Copies of the written severance agreement (if applicable) are made available to members of the congregation no later than the date of the first call for the congregational meeting at which the dissolution of the call and the written severance are to be considered.
- The congregation votes on the dissolution of the call and the written severance agreement. This is most easily done in two separate motions. This meeting of the congregation is to be moderated by a member of the presbytery appointed by COM.
- Action at the meeting of the congregation should be sure to include the effective date of dissolution and any agreed upon final terms of compensation or severance if applicable.

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<sup>14</sup> See below under Presbytery Action for procedure if the congregation does not concur is the dissolution of call.

<sup>15</sup> See below under Presbytery Action for procedure if the pastor does not concur is the dissolution of call.

- While a congregation may consent or decline to consent to the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, an installed pastoral relationship is dissolved only by the presbytery (G-2.0901).
- The Presbytery approves the dissolution and the written severance agreement (if any). The agreement is not effective until the Presbytery has voted to approve the agreement.

## Termination Agreement

The termination agreement should contain the following items where applicable (others may be added depending upon the situation and any specific state laws that may apply):

- identification of the parties (name of pastor, church and presbytery)
- The specific reason(s) for separation / termination
- The dates for:
  - end of ministry responsibilities
  - termination of call
  - final compensation and benefit payments
  - vacating of office/manse
- All financial agreements including but not limited to:
  - salary continuation,
  - benefits continuation,
  - loan repayment or shared equity arrangement (where applicable),
  - manse use (where applicable)
  - compensation for unused earned annual leave (vacation),
  - provision for use of office, equipment, etc.
  - terms and time limits on physical presence
- The agreement shall specify compensation adjustment in case of other employment as provided in the severance policy below. \*
- A clause that releases each party from legal action unless the agreement is not fulfilled, and then only through the Courts of the PC(USA). \*
- A statement regarding the limited liability of the presbytery. For example, whether the presbytery will participate in the agreement and to what extent. \*
- A statement of the specific amounts to be paid if a lump sum payment is to be made.



- Date and signature of all 3 parties: the session (on behalf of the congregation), the pastor and the presbytery.

\* This would not be applicable in instances of retirement or a new call.

If it is wise to prevent unnecessary contact between the former pastor and the church, financial arrangements be conducted through the Presbytery office after the pastor's departure from the church.

The statement is to be put in the presbytery minutes, the pastor's file and the church's file. The pastor also receives a signed copy.

## Presbytery Action

The presbytery may, on occasion, look into reported difficulties within a congregation. In the course of such an inquiry and after consultation with the minister, the session, and the congregation, the presbytery may find that the church's mission under the Word "imperatively demands" the dissolution of the pastoral relationship and take steps toward dissolution (G-2.0904).

Presbyteries are encouraged to consider and plan for particular ways to be pastor and counselor to affected parties and to facilitate relationships during and following any contested dissolution.

No matter who initiates proceedings for dissolution of the pastoral relationship, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation to consider the matter. At that meeting the congregation may act to consent or decline to consent to the dissolution (G-2.0901).

As with the congregation, presbytery action on the dissolution of the pastoral relationship should also include the effective date of dissolution and any agreed upon final terms of compensation or severance. Presbytery should also ensure that appropriate action regarding the teaching elder's presbytery membership be taken. This might include:

- Any change in presbytery membership (validated ministry, member-at-large, honorably retired),
- Transfer to another presbytery,
- Exclusion or release from ordered ministry if there has been disciplinary action, or
- Any other appropriate actions.

If the congregation does not concur with the pastor's request to dissolve the relationship, the presbytery shall hear from the congregation, through its elected commissioners, the reasons why the presbytery should not dissolve the pastoral relationship. If the congregation fails to appear, or if its reasons for retaining the relationship are judged insufficient, the request may be granted and the pastoral relationship dissolved (G-2.0902).

If the pastor does not concur in the congregation's request to dissolve the pastoral relationship, the presbytery shall hear from him or her the reasons why the presbytery

should not dissolve the relationship. If the pastor fails to appear or the reasons given for maintaining the relationship are judged insufficient, presbytery may vote to dissolve the relationship. (G-2.0903)

## POSD Severance Policy<sup>16</sup>

Congregations that request dissolution of a pastoral relationship are expected to negotiate severance for pastors. Severance is not recommended when pastors leave a church voluntarily, or when there has been misconduct.

### Definitions

For the purposed of this document, *severance* means all compensation consistent with the pastor's previous terms of call, plus any unused vacation time, pro-rated, up to a maximum of four weeks. Unused Continuing education and book or professional expenses are not included.

For the purposes of this policy, *misconduct* means a provable and serious violation of some objective standard – BOO, law, or similar – and not merely an oversight or trivial infraction. Misconduct does not include ineptness, inexperience, mistakes, or personality clashes.

### General

1. Recommended severance is full salary, housing, medical, and pension payments of one (1) month for every year of service to the particular church, paid monthly, with a minimum of 3 months and maximum of 12 months.
2. Severance payments should end when new employment is found that includes compensation equivalent to or greater than the former position. If the compensation for new employment is less than the severance payment, the church should pay the difference for the remaining length of the severance agreement.
3. Reimbursement for unused vacation time up to 1 month may be part of the severance package.
4. Severance agreements must be approved by the congregation at the time of the congregational meeting to dissolve the relationship and must be reported to the presbytery through the COM.
5. Consideration should be given to outplacement services through an approved career development or personal counseling, typically for the length of the severance. The presbytery can be used to escrow payments for use by the pastor with unused funds to be returned to the church.

### Consultation with COM

If the Session is unable to resolve difficulties in the church between a congregation and a pastor, it shall consult with COM, which will attempt to mediate the

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<sup>16</sup> Approved by COM February 10, 2015. Approved by POSD February 27, 2015.

matter as provided by the *Book of Order* (G-3.0303d).

If the Session and the pastor are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution, then COM will evaluate the situation and make recommendations, such as the following:

- To request that Presbytery appoint an administrative commission to replace the Session, as provided by the *Book of Order* (G-3.0303e).
- To recommend the dissolution of the pastoral relationship.
- To recommend a severance package to Presbytery.
- Send a written statement of alleged misconduct to the Stated Clerk (D-10.0100).

### Pastoral Service During Transition

During this time of pastoral change in the life of the congregation, the presbytery (through the COM) has the responsibility to oversee this transition by serving as pastor, counselor, and advisor to teaching elders and congregations (G-3.0301 & G-3.0307).

There are a number of issues COM may wish to address and plan for to assist in a smooth transition for congregations and teaching elders. These may include:

- Ethics for departing pastors
- Exit interviews
- Temporary pastoral leadership, including pulpit supply and session moderator
- Calling of the next installed pastor

All matters regarding pastoral search and contracting with teaching elders, whether called or temporary, must have the approval of the presbytery's committee on ministry (COM). The process of pastoral search begins when the pastoral position becomes vacant and continues as follows:

1. Session must decide on a direction, whether to begin a formal search for a called pastor or seek a temporary relationship.
2. Session will then communicate its directional decision to COM and request permission to proceed. If the chosen direction eventually proves unfruitful, COM may approve a change in direction.
  - a. To search for a called pastor, COM must approve the formation of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). This is ordinarily done in response to a request from session upon completion of a mission study.
  - b. To search for a designated pastor, COM must approve the formation of a Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC).
  - c. To search for a temporary pastor, see the topic *Temporary Ministers* below.

## Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee<sup>17</sup>

In the PC(USA) call process, the congregation gives authority to search for a pastor to a pastor nominating committee (PNC). The PNC, representative of the whole congregation and elected by the congregation (not by session), has the responsibility for nominating a pastor to the congregation for election.

The presbytery has a responsibility to work with the PNC and to advise them on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call. The presbytery is authorized by the Book of Order to be one of the decision-making partners in all pastoral calls.

The presbytery has a responsibility to work with a session to determine when and in what manner the election of a PNC will take place and to give a congregation permission to elect a PNC. Election of a PNC can happen as soon as presbytery approves the effective date of dissolution of the current pastoral relationship.<sup>18</sup> (G-2.0801)

COM may want to take into consideration several factors in working with the session to determine whether and when to elect a PNC:

- the congregation's ability to meet pastoral terms of call responsibilities,
- whether a congregational mission study is necessary before calling a pastor,
- the type of pastoral relationship a congregation will be seeking,
- the length of time the call process may take, and
- whether there will be an intentional interim time with a Transitional pastor in place.

## Planning Pastoral Services for Transitional Period

*(1st meeting with COM liaison—see Session Workshop)*

1. COM liaison meets with Session to discuss findings from the Exit interview, decide upon appropriate temporary pastoral relationship, and discuss process for Mission Study. Dates and times are set for Mission Study, if needed.
2. The Congregation is engaged in Mission Study.
3. Session submits Mission Study to COM.

*(2nd meeting with COM liaison).*

4. COM liaison meets with Session to discuss options/plans for the future.

## Electing the PNC

1. Session sets date and time for congregational meeting to elect PNC.
2. Session suggests size of PNC, based upon size of congregation. Five to nine members is recommended.

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<sup>17</sup> Discussion is from the 2011 Advisory Handbook.

<sup>18</sup> Approved by COM February 10, 2015 and by POSD on June 26, 2015.

3. Church nominating committee prepares a slate of nominees who are representative of the congregation as a whole and *who can be counted upon to be present and participating in the PNC process*.
4. Congregational meeting is held to elect the PNC. (COM liaison is present to attest to the action and may moderate if requested by COM appointed moderator). COM may appoint a moderator (G-1.0504).

## Orienting and Organizing the PNC

1. PNC meets immediately following the congregational meeting to elect its chair or moderator and set a date for its first meeting. The first PNC training session (about 30 minutes) should be held at this time since (usually) this is immediately following the congregational meeting and all parties are present. (See the PNC Workshop.)
2. The COM liaison will meet with PNC to explain the entire process, and particularly go over how to complete the MIF.
3. The PNC and Session develop timeline, including dates and times for Congregational Mission Study (if needed), and a Target Date for a draft Ministry Information Form (MIF) to come to session.
4. PNC works alone to prepare a draft the MIF.
5. PNC arranges to meet with the Liaison for its second (or third) training session, which includes how to file MIF online and how to conduct a search.
6. When PNC is ready and is receiving PIFs from pastors, another training session may include how to narrow the selection.

## Developing and Completing Ministry Information Form (MIF)

1. PNC chair downloads the MIF from <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/>
2. The PNC meets as often and as many times as it needs to prepare a draft of the MIF.
3. PNC submits a copy of the MIF based on the Mission Study to session for approval.
4. After approval by session, COM moderator reviews the MIF. If it is in proper form (COM does not approve content), the COM moderator will give the PNC moderator the password to upload the MIF to CLC.
5. The PNC chair uploads the approved MIF to Church Leadership Connection (CLC).
6. COM moderator gives security code to Session Clerk to certify MIF.
7. COM moderator and Session Clerk certify the MIF.

## Collecting and Screening PIFs

(COM liaison advises PNC as they develop criteria for screening PIFs, answers to Supplemental Questions, questions to ask references, and interview questions for candidates. Liaison outlines process of matching, selecting, interviewing, etc.

1. Louisville (CLC) matches MIFs and PIFs according to several criteria.
2. PNC Chair reviews matches and PIFs online; downloads desired PIFs.
3. PNC sends selected candidates Supplemental Questions (*optional*), Secondary References Release, and form for Background Check.
4. Candidates return Supplemental Questions (*if sent*), Secondary References Release and form for Background Check.
5. PNC selects candidates to pursue based on previously developed criteria.
6. PNC contacts selected candidates to assure they are still interested and available.
7. PNC sends copy of MIF to selected candidates who are still interested and available.
8. PNC selects 1-3 individuals to interview.
9. PNC contacts COM Moderator to check with candidate's COM Chair and EP.
10. Presbytery performs a background check.
11. COM Moderator replies to PNC Chair regarding reference checks.
12. PNC calls Primary References and, if release is signed, the Secondary References. (Form in Chapter 8)

## Checking references

### COM's or PNC's basis to screen out candidates

Employment as a Presbyterian teaching elder is not a right. Courts have established that the ministries of the Church of Jesus Christ belong to the Church and tasks are assigned to particular persons for the service of its members and the world. The Church must make such assignment responsibly.

The Committee on Ministry serves the presbytery in the following ways:

- It counsels with churches regarding calls for permanent pastoral relations, visiting and counseling with every committee elected to nominate a pastor or associate pastor.
- It advises the committee regarding the merits, availability, and suitability of any candidate or teaching elder whose name is contemplated for nomination to the congregation, and has the privilege of suggesting names to the committee.

No call to a permanent pastoral relationship shall be in order for consideration by the presbytery unless the congregation has received and considered the committee's counsel before action is taken to issue a call. (G-3.0307)

### Are there prohibited questions?

Neither civil nor church law mandates prohibited questions. Many Presbyterians

who serve on PNCs are familiar with secular employment practices where it is illegal to ask certain questions of a prospective employee. Because the ministries of the Church belong to the Church, the rules are different for search committees considering church professionals.

However, as Paul wrote, while all things are possible, not all things are wise. Interview and reference questions should focus on ministry effectiveness only. The PNC wants to know if the person would be appropriate for the position being filled. The COM wants to know if this person would be acceptable in the presbytery. Remember that the person being questioned is forming an opinion about you, the questioner. Think about the impression you want the person to have about your congregation and the presbytery as you decide which questions to ask. It is not unusual for a pastor to close conversation with a congregation as a result of inappropriate questions about non-ministry subjects.

### What questions should a pastor nominating committee ask of a reference?

It is appropriate and important to ask questions related to the candidate's skills and experience that relate to the position being filled. Such questions might be:

- Tell me about \_\_\_\_\_'s worship leadership.
- How does \_\_\_\_\_ deal with conflict?
- What are some of \_\_\_\_\_'s strengths and weaknesses?
- Would you go to \_\_\_\_\_ seeking pastoral care?
- Is there anything else about \_\_\_\_\_ that you would like to share?

It is important to ask references to respond only on the basis of first-hand knowledge. It is usually helpful to tell the reference a bit about the congregation, community, and position for which the candidate is being considered. *On Calling a Pastor* (free -- [www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc), Search *On Calling a Pastor*. Word and other versions are available.) contains additional information about interviewing prospective pastors.

### Are there other questions that COM should ask?

This reference check is about membership in presbytery (if the prospective pastor is not already a member) and about ministry capabilities in the specific location. The COM might ask:

- Why is \_\_\_\_\_ leaving her/his present position?
- Is there anything about \_\_\_\_\_ that negatively affects his/her ability to do ministry?
- Would you welcome \_\_\_\_\_ to serve in a similar position in your presbytery?
- Do you know anything about \_\_\_\_\_ that would be embarrassing to the congregation and presbytery if it became public knowledge?

If you receive a PIF that does not contain the sexual misconduct sign-off section or Stated Clerk's attestation, ask the candidate for a complete PIF or do not consider them further.

### What are secondary references?

These are persons who are not listed by the candidate, but are suggested by others

or contacted because they are thought to have knowledge of the candidate. Executive Presbyters, Stated Clerks, COM Moderators, and CPM Moderators do NOT fall in this category. They are automatically used as references because of their roles and no authorization is needed from the candidate to consult with them.

Under what circumstances is it appropriate for PNC members to contact secondary references?

Secondary references should only be contacted when the candidate has given permission. Under no circumstances should a PNC contact members of a pastor's present congregation without her or his permission to do so.

When a presbytery check reveals negative information, what should COM or staff share with a PNC about a negative reference? If the information leads the COM Moderator or staff to have serious doubts about the candidate's ability to do effective ministry in the particular calling church, they should share those concerns as a consultant, giving specific areas of ministry where they see potential difficulty.

If reliable information is of such a serious nature that the candidate should not be considered further, the COM must determine whether they are willing to permit the PNC to continue consideration of the candidate. The COM should inform the PNC of its decision quickly.

## Background checks

Background checks are additional assessments of a candidate's character and fitness for employment. *If this position will involve work with children*, your state may require you or your presbytery to do a background check on the person you call. Check your state law.

POSD requires a background check of all incoming teaching elders. Churches often do background checks of all persons working with children. Now seminaries are considering background checks of persons entering seminary and CPMs are considering it as a step in the process of coming under care.

POSD does these background checks: criminal, financial, motor vehicle, and credit. Criminal is the most common, but the others produce information that church organizations may find helpful. This information is confidential and only the COM moderator or POSD staff will have access to it.

A background check MUST be completed before a potential pastor has a face-to-face interview with a PNC.

## Sexual Misconduct Statement

The PIF contains the following choice for the candidate:

\_\_\_\_\_ I certify by the signature below that no civil, criminal, ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained\* or is pending\* against me for sexual misconduct; and that I have never resigned



or been terminated from a position for reasons related to sexual misconduct.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to make the above certification. I offer, instead, the following description of the complaint, termination, or the outcome of the situation with explanatory comments.

If the candidate is unable to affirm the first statement,

- **For PNCs** - Turn this matter over to your COM Moderator and trust their advice.
- **For EPs and COM Moderators**, talk to the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and/or the COM Chair in the presbyteries where the person has served. If the person has undergone counseling related to this issue, ask for a release and obtain a copy of a report from the counselor. Weigh all of this information carefully and prayerfully before responding to the PNC.

### Interviewing Potential Pastors

The interview process is outlined as follows:

1. PNC decides whether to interview face-to-face or by telephone.
2. Interview date established.
3. PNC finalizes interview questions.
4. PNC conducts interviews.
5. PNC selects final nominee and contacts COM.
6. PNC sends "Summary of Pastoral Search Process" to COM Moderator.
7. COM interviews nominee (at least 2 COM members, others co-opted as deemed necessary)
8. COM approves nominee.
9. PNC may arrange for neutral pulpit, if thought necessary.

### Some Questions You Might Ask During an Interview:

- Tell us about your faith journey.
- What are the things you feel best about in your present ministry?
- What have been the challenges there?
- What makes you think you may be called to leave there now?
- What interests you about this position?
- What do you bring to our ministry?
- What are your greatest strengths in ministry? ...your greatest weaknesses?
- One of our goals is to strengthen our \_\_\_\_\_. How would you envision doing that?
- Describe a typical week in your ministry.
- Share your perspective on the Presbyterian Church (USA).

- One of the issues our session has debated in the past few years is \_\_\_\_\_. Tell us how you might address that topic.
- If we selected you as our pastor (or other role), when could you start and what would be your start-up plan?
- How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?
- What will you need from us, the members of this congregation, in order to be effective as our pastor?
- What questions or concerns do you have?

You will also want to develop questions related to the specific candidate. These will come out of things you read in the PIF and things you hear from references.

Is there anything else you need to know that will impact this person's performance of ministry?

## Interview Process

Pastor Nominating Committees can use interviews in several ways to get to know the semifinalists or finalists in the selection process:

- Telephone interviews by individuals on the Pastor Nominating Committee
- Telephone interviews by the entire Pastor Nominating Committee--using a speaker telephone or a conference telephone call, or Skype.
- Face-to-face interviews before or after hearing a pastor preach at a neutral site.
- Face-to-face interviews in the community.

Interviews should help the Pastor Nominating Committee and pastors (also spouses and families when they are included) communicate clearly and openly with one another their expectations, their understandings of priorities, and their mutual visions for the ministry of the church.

The following sections are designed to assist the PNC in planning, conducting and evaluating interviews. They have been prepared primarily for face-to-face interviews so they will need to be modified for telephone interviews.

### I. Planning the Interview

A. Decide who will be certain that all members of the Pastor Nominating Committee are clear about and reminded of the time and place of the interview.

B. Decide who will communicate plans for the interview to the Committee on Ministry representative.

C. Decide about physical arrangements for the interview.

- If the interviewee is coming to the community, who is going to greet him/her?
- Is a meal appropriate prior to the interview? Would snacks at the meeting be preferable?
- What will be the seating arrangement? The interviewee should be

seated by plan in a position among the interviewers so he/she can see everyone close-up. This can be done effectively around a table.

D. Decide who will moderate the interview.

E. Decide what questions or subjects are to be raised. Individual members may be designated to ask particular questions. (See possible interview subjects/questions above.)

## II. During the Interview

The interview process must be flexible to allow for unanticipated situations to develop.

A. The PNC moderator welcomes the interviewee warmly and introduces her/him to the committee.

B. The moderator may invite the committee members to shake hands and have a brief, informal chat with the interviewee.

C. The moderator invites the interviewee to be seated in the prearranged location.

D. The moderator may ask the committee members to briefly tell the interviewee something about themselves, such as the work they have done in the church.

E. The moderator may brief the interviewee on the procedure to be followed. This may be merely that the committee has selected certain questions and subjects for discussion and that time will be saved for the interviewee to raise any questions that he/she may have.

F. The moderator should mention the method of recording that has been decided upon and point out the person who will be doing the recording. Others, of course, may take notes for their own purposes.

G. The moderator may ask for questions or comments about the procedure.

H. The moderator may offer prayer or ask anyone else, including the interviewee.

I. The moderator may lead off with the first interview subject or questions to be raised. During the interview there is some guarantee of thoroughness when a well-planned checklist of interview topics is followed. However, any committee member should break in whenever needed to ask for further elaboration or more clarity on a point of interest. Do not let debate develop among committee members or between members and the interviewee.

## III. Closing the Interview

A. The moderator may ask something like, "Do you feel sufficiently wrung-out to draw this to a close?"

B. The moderator may ask if the interviewee and family, if present, are comfortable in the arrangements made for them and if there is anything that can be done to make their stay more helpful.

C. The moderator may rise, express appreciation, shake hands and give the other committee members opportunity to do the same.

#### IV. Evaluating the Interview

A. After the interviewee has departed, and perhaps after a short break, the moderator reconvenes the committee.

B. Go over the major questions of the interview, comparing reactions to each response and recording them in the minutes of the interview.

- Consider how the congregation's and the candidate's expectations compare.
- What is the primary appeal of this candidate?
- What, if any concerns do you have about her/his ministry?

(If this has been an interview conducted by one member or a subcommittee, plan for reporting to the entire committee.)

C. Seek a consensus about the candidacy of the interviewee – whether to continue or discontinue consideration.

D. Determine what the next steps of the committee will be and plan for them. (These will differ according to where the Pastor Nominating Committee is in the search process.)

#### Housing Considerations

The following is list of issues related to housing for pastors, specifically for congregations that provide a manse for their pastor. These are issues that PNCs may want to consider as they negotiate with candidates and that sessions may want to consider as they do their Annual Reviews.

##### Utilities

Who will pay for utilities?

What will be included with utilities -- telephone? Cable TV? Internet?

How will utilities be paid? If reimbursed, will there be a maximum amount allowable for reimbursement?

Will the bills be sent to the pastor? To the church?

##### Maintenance

(This should all be in a policy developed by the session, approved by the congregation, and applicable every time a pastor is called.)

Will there be an annual budget for routine maintenance?

If repairs are necessary, who should be contacted? Who will complete minor repairs?

Who is responsible for lawn care and snow removal?

Will there be a special deposit if there are pets?

Will there be a damage deposit?

Will there be routine carbon monoxide/radon checks?

Is there a fire extinguisher and smoke alarms? If not, who will add?

What are the provisions for updating decor? Who will choose how decor is updated?

## **Insurance**

What kind of liability insurance will be available?

What about tenant's insurance and/or personal property insurance?

Is there an allowance for furnishings or appurtenances?

Would the congregation consider providing an annuity in lieu of home equity?

Would the congregation consider setting up a pre-tax cafeteria-type plan, e.g. medical escrow, social security offset, etc.

## **Choosing the Nominee**

1. PNC invites final nominee to candidate for the position.
2. Nominee preaches and/or is examined by congregation at a special congregational meeting.
3. Congregation votes (with COM Liaison present to attest to the action and moderated by a Presbytery appointed moderator).
4. Nominee agrees.
5. PNC submits results of vote, Terms of Call, and EEO report on Search Process to COM.
6. COM/Presbytery approves Terms of Call and appoints Installation Commission.

## **Suggestions for the congregational meeting to call a pastor**

Once the PNC has decided on its candidate of choice and the nominee and the COM have agreed, the PNC should notify the session to call a congregational meeting. Public notice of the meeting must be given on two successive Sundays. The moderator of the session may preside, or COM may appoint another moderator (G-1.0504). In some presbyteries the candidate will preach during the worship service before the congregational meeting.

At the meeting the PNC will present its nominee and the terms of call; these usually come in one motion. It is recommended that the vote for calling the pastor be by written ballot.

## **Policy on Votes to Call a Pastor**

When there is a substantial percentage of votes against the call, pursuit of the call does a disservice to both the church and the candidate. Normally, the number of negative votes is less than 5% of the total. When the number of negative votes exceeds 10%, the call should not be pursued. If it is, there is sure to be a substantial undercurrent of obstruction in the congregation, with the pastor not knowing who is undermining the ministry, and generally is powerless to overcome it. The result will be a short pastorate that may end with hard feelings on both sides.

In On Calling A Pastor: Guide and Resources (a POSD resource prepared for the Committee on Ministry in 2008), Section 11.41 "Agenda--Congregational Meeting to Elect the Pastor," the NOTE following deals with this issue. The last paragraph says:

The Presbytery of South Dakota requires a certain majority vote of 95% to proceed with the call. If the minority vote is 5% or greater, the moderator may ask if the minority will concur in the call (this is not the same as asking for a unanimous consent). If the vote is nearly unanimous or if the majority insists on moving forward with the call, the moderator should send the call to the presbytery with the number voting for and against and any other facts of importance. The nominee should also be informed by the moderator or the PNC of the nature and circumstances of the decision. If both congregation and candidate desire to pursue the call, in spite of the unwilling minority, the congregation will choose two or three individuals to prosecute the call before COM and/or the Presbytery.

This reflects earlier action taken by COM as shown in the minutes of the August 27, 2006 meeting of COM. The wisdom of this policy was demonstrated several years later when a call was pursued in spite of excessive negative votes and ended disastrously two years later.

### Docket for Congregational Meeting to Elect a Pastor

The moderator of the session, or some other minister of the same presbytery appointed by COM or the moderator of the session, shall preside. The clerk of session or substitute elected at the time by the congregation shall act as secretary. (A printer or copier ready version is in Chapter 9.)

1. Call to order.
2. Open with prayer.
3. Declare the meeting to be in order, if (a) it has been properly called; and (b) a quorum is present.
4. State purpose: "To decide whether or not a call should be extended to \_\_\_\_\_ to become the \_\_\_\_\_ (pastor, co-pastor, associate pastor) of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Introduce the moderator of the Pastor Nominating Committee who in turn will (a) recognize the other members of the committee; and, (b) give a resume of the candidate.
6. Some personal statements by the candidate (if present) and his/her spouse would be appropriate at this time.

7. If there are any outstanding references or recommendations, it would be appropriate for them to be read or mentioned at this time (if confidentiality permits).
8. The terms of call shall be read.
9. A summary of the agreed upon job description should be given.
10. Information concerning the candidate's availability should be given (when he or she could arrive on the field of service, when his/her responsibilities would begin, etc.).
11. Plans for ordination and/or installation should be mentioned or discussed. (Moderator should make clear that installation is a presbytery event. See "Ordination-Installation Service Information Sheet." This should have been discussed in the Session Workshop, but the Committee on Ministry representative may need to be certain the moderator has this information.)
12. Excuse the candidate (if present) and his/her spouse from the meeting.
13. State motion:
  - Is there a motion that the congregation of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_ call \_\_\_\_\_ to be their pastor according to the terms of call and summary job description as stated at this meeting?"
  - Does someone second this motion?
  - Is there any discussion or questions?
14. (When this above discussion/questions has concluded) Vote by secret ballot.
  - Moderator appoints tellers.
  - Ballots are distributed to active members only (of any age).
15. Collect and count ballots and report the count to the congregation:
  - Number of votes in concurrence \_\_\_\_\_
  - Number of votes in non-concurrence \_\_\_\_\_
16. Invite the candidate to hear the report (if present).
17. Ask the candidate to state his/her acceptance (if present and ready).
18. Receive and act on a motion to authorize persons to sign the call then present and prosecute the call before the presbytery. (The signed call is to be sent to the Committee on Ministry with a request for concurrence.)

19. Receive and act on a motion that the Pastor Nominating Committee be discharged of their duties after the installation of the new pastor.
20. Close with prayer.
21. A benediction shall be pronounced.

### Presbytery Installs the Pastor

Pastor, Session and Presbytery agree upon date for Installation, which will be within 90 days (COM minutes August 20, 2012) of the new pastor beginning his/her ministry in the congregation.

NEW PASTOR IS WELCOMED INTO PRESBYTERY'S LIFE AND MINISTRY.

***(Reminder: Either the church treasurer or the called pastor needs to submit the Change of Call form to the Board of Pensions. Forms are available online at [www.pcusa.pensions.org](http://www.pcusa.pensions.org).***

### Tools to assist the search

- The Office of Vocation (1-888-728-7228 ext 8550) offers two helpful resources for use by PNCs and COMs as they assist congregations during the search for new leadership.
- On Calling A Pastor contains specific directions and information for a PNC during the process. It also contains step-by-step instructions and information about the new computer system and how to use it effectively. Obtain a copy for each member of the PNC you are assisting. It is available for purchase or free download at [www.pcusa.org/clc](http://www.pcusa.org/clc)
- On Calling a Pastor Video. This ten-minute video is a companion piece to "On Calling a Pastor." Order from Presbyterian Distribution Services.(1-800-524-2612)
- Research Services can provide statistics about the church in transition and its community. Membership trends and other information, based on the Stated Clerk's annual report are available on the PC(USA) web site at <http://www.pcusa.org/research/index.htm>.

### Election of a DPNC

The process of searching for a designated pastor is quicker than the PNC search process for a called pastor and may be of interest to congregations that have found that the PNC process either did not work for them or was taking too long. The DPNC procedures are identical to the PNC procedures with the following exceptions:

1. Instead of reviewing PIFs obtained through CLC, the DPNC will review



- only those submitted to it by the COM.
2. The successful candidate can be called only for a period of two to four years.
  3. If the call is approved by COM, the congregation, and the pastor, the DPNC will automatically cease to exist, its task having been completed.
  4. During designated term, COM provides ongoing committee liaison for duration of the designated term.
  5. At least six months before the end of the term of call, the session must act to do one of the following:
    - (a) Extend the designated pastor agreement for another term normally of two to four years for a total maximum of six (6) years (COM minutes April 16, 2012). Only one extension is permitted.
    - (b) Call the teaching elder
    - (c) Let the agreement expire
  6. The decision of session in #5 must then be referred to a regular or special meeting of the congregation for approval with the COM liaison present.
  7. COM must review and approve the pastoral relationship and decision about extending the term, calling the pastor or terminating the call.
  8. If the call is to be extended and pastor agrees, COM approves the call.
  9. If the call is not to be extended,
    - o COM provides support for the teaching elder and the congregation.
    - o Session calls a congregational meeting and elects another PNC or DPNC to conduct a pastoral search

Terms of the designated pastor agreement may not be changed without approval of COM.

### Tentmaking Ministers

Procedures for calling or otherwise engaging a tentmaker (bi-vocational pastor) are generally the same as those for any minister in the same standing, but some new considerations are introduced as follows:

The COM may need to consider such issues as:

- Shall we ordain a candidate to a tentmaking position?
- Shall we ordain to a position where service is defined as less than 20 hours a week?

These and other important questions are discussed in the *Tentmakers Manual* (pages 34-36).

The COM liaison who works with a congregation considering tentmaking ministry should be thoroughly familiar with tentmaking ministry. *The Tentmaker's Manual* will be helpful. Presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry may have persons under care who come to ministry as a second career and who might continue to use that first career as a tentmaking pastor.

The COM should be sure that the following matters have been considered before approving a tentmaking call:

- that the tentmaker is not over-extended.

- that there will be satisfaction in each position the tentmaker holds.
- that the congregation will find the secular position acceptable.
- that the needs of the congregation can be met by this ministry.
- that there is a plan for the regular review of the ministry.

Some presbyteries use tentmakers as Designated Pastors (term limited), Stated Supply and Temporary Supply Pastors. **A Tentmaking Minister and a Commissioned Ruling Elder are not the same thing.** The former is, or can be, an ordained Teaching Elder who is permitted to earn a portion of his/her income from other (usually secular) sources. The latter is a ruling elder commissioned to several functions specified in the *Book of Order*.

## Terms of Call for Tentmakers

The combined compensation, that is, the compensation from both the ministry and the other position should be adequate to meet the minimum salary requirements of the presbytery and the needs of the tentmaker. A carefully written covenant (contract) is important. A sample covenant form is available in the *Tentmakers Manual* (pages 42-43). At least one member of the COM should assist in the covenant-making.

This covenant should include:

- number of hours or work units that will be expected of the pastor for the congregation
- the pastoral activities that must have priority
- the commitment(s) of congregational leaders in the ministry of the congregation
- the length of service if not an installed position
- the financial terms of call.\*
- vacation and study leave time.\*\*

\*Such matters as the number of hours, the financial terms and benefits should be clearly spelled out. There are tax and benefit issues that are unique for tentmaking pastors. The Board of Pensions regional representative and the Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers can offer helpful guidance in these matters.

\*\*Every teaching elder must be given at least four weeks of vacation, whether full or less-than-full-time. It is not fair to expect a part-time minister to lead worship more Sundays than one who serves full-time. The proportionality of compensation for part-time ministers is applied through the salary, not through vacation.

## Preparing a MIF for Tentmaking Positions

PNCs should address these questions as they prepare the Ministry Information Form (MIF) and prepare to interview potential tentmakers:

1. What is the general employment picture for your area? What is the current unemployment figure? What is the trend? Are there major economic development projects in the planning stages such as a new manufacturing plant, software manufacturer

or theme park? Are there needs for employees with specific kinds of skills (such as nurses or math teachers) that are in short supply?

2. If there are few employment opportunities, so the pastor must provide his/her own “tent” or vocation, how far is the nearest airport? Does the community have good Internet access and other telecommunications support? What state or local incentives and assistance is there for small business development? What is the tax structure for small businesses?

3. What provisions can your congregation and presbytery offer to assist the tentmaker in finding a position? Can an extra stipend be provided for a transition period to allow the tentmaker to find work or establish a business? Are there any “guaranteed positions” for a person with the right skills (such as a part-time chaplain position in the local hospital)?

4. What is the cost of living in your area? How does it compare to the national average, and to other parts of the country? What are the income levels of other professionals in your area (such as teachers with a master’s degree)?

5. What compensation and benefits can you offer a tentmaker? Such matters as the number of hours, the financial terms, and the benefits should be clearly spelled out.

6. Describe the attitude of the congregation toward tentmaking. Has the congregation had a tentmaking pastor before? If not, what intentional planning has been done to create a truly shared ministry? What are the tasks of ministry that are expected of the pastor? What gifts for ministry are there in the congregation and what tasks of ministry will others assume?

## Temporary Pastoral Relationships

### Arranging for Temporary Relationships:

Any arrangements for longer periods of time (more than week by week) should be carefully worked out with the assistance of the Committee on Ministry. *Week by week pulpit supply may not utilize the same individual for more than six consecutive Sundays without approval from COM.*

The work and contracts for those in longer temporary pastoral relationships are to be reviewed/renewed at least annually.

The session should be made aware of the presbytery recommended honorarium and mileage payments for supplying the pulpit and for moderating session/congregational meetings. (See Presbytery’s Manual of Administrative Operations.) Temporary pastors will not serve as session moderator unless appointed by COM for that purpose.

### Terms of Temporary Pastoral Relationship

Before a temporary pastoral relationship begins, the terms of the relationship should be clarified. The COM liaison and the presbytery-appointed moderator facilitate this process. The list below includes possible items to be considered in drawing up an agreement for a temporary pastoral relationship.

### Services To Be Rendered by Temporary Supply/Pastor

- Leading Sunday worship -- how often?
- Leading other worship -- funerals, seasonal special services?
- Visitation -- in hospitals, homes?
- Leading a study group?
- Teaching confirmation classes?
- Preparation of worship bulletins, newsletters, other communications. (If the congregation has secretarial services, the extent and availability should be discussed.)

### Amount of time the person is expected to spend performing the services

- Is this to be a half-time position? One-third time? Other?
- Will the person be expected to be in the community a certain number of days? Specific days?
- Will the person be expected to be in the church office at particular times?

### How will the person be compensated for the services?

- A flat amount by the week? Month?
- A specific rate for various services?
  - An amount for Sunday morning worship leadership
  - An amount for visitation
  - An amount for other services
- Are there pension considerations involved?
- Is there to be a housing allowance?
- What professional expenses will be paid by the congregation? (All should be vouchered.)
  - Mileage--the IRS rate is suggested--for what travel?
  - Meals, lodging when doing church work?
  - Books and other materials?
  - If telephone is not provided, will there be reimbursement for calls made in performing the agreed-upon services?

### When does the relationship agreement become effective? When does it end?

Review is required annually; extension is possible at that time.

*If the temporary supply/pastor is not a Presbyterian teaching elder or other ordained minister, arrangements will need to be made for administering the sacraments for the congregation. The COM liaison and appointed moderator assist in making these arrangements.*

## Coordinating with CPM for first call candidates

Adapted from A Handbook for Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderators, 2003, Office of Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202

### The preparation for ministry process

When a PNC indicates their wish to extend a call to a candidate for ministry who has been certified ready to receive a call, the COM and the CPM will coordinate the interviewing process.

If the candidate is from another presbytery, The *Book of Order* (G-2.0702) states that:

- It is ordinarily the responsibility of the presbytery of call to conduct the examination for ordination, ordain, and install.
- Ordinarily, it is the presbytery of call that ordains a candidate. However, the candidate may request his/her presbytery of call to permit the ordination service to take place within the presbytery of care, and that presbytery may grant such permission when requested by the presbytery of care. In these matters, coordination between presbyteries is critical.

These are steps for a candidate from this presbytery to follow when seeking a call in this presbytery:

- Complete a successful final assessment;
- Receive permission to circulate the PIF from the CPM;
- Go online to <http://www.pcusa.org/clc> and download a copy of a blank PIF;
- Submit completed PIF online to CLC and notify CPM moderator;
- Initiate conversation with the COM moderator;
- Make contact with the Pastor Nominating Committee through the COM;
- Review the process leading to a call with the COM moderator;
- Obtain a call or intent to call from a congregation in this presbytery
- Prepare for examination by presbytery;
- The presbytery examines for ordination;
- Select and present to presbytery names for the ordination and installation commission who will ordain and install the candidate.

If the CPM is presenting a candidate for examination for ordination, and the COM is going to present the same person as a candidate for a position within your presbytery, be sure that the stated clerk puts the CPM on the docket BEFORE the COM. Otherwise, the CPM presentation is a moot point, the decision to ordain and install already having been made.

These are steps when a candidate under the care of another presbytery is seeking a call in the Presbytery of South Dakota:

- COM should establish *in advance* policies that deal with a candidate from another presbytery. You will need to have conversations with the candidate, the CPM in the candidate's presbytery, and the calling congregation;
- Evaluate the candidate's readiness for ordination before a visit to a congregation is made if at all possible. The candidate's readiness is determined by the CPM of care and the calling Presbytery's COM is notified of the candidate's readiness.
- Review the policies of this presbytery and make certain she or he meets all the requirements of POSD;
- Review key time schedules;
- Before any commitments are made to the PNC or the candidate, initiate a conversation with the CPM of care to ensure the candidate's readiness and suitability for the call for which she or he is under consideration;
- Representatives of both the COM and CPM should be involved in interviewing the candidate.
- The candidate will be examined by Presbytery.

Be clear who will bring the candidate to the floor of presbytery. The CPM of care will determine the candidate's readiness to be examined for ordination and will inform the POSD. COM determines suitability for a particular call. The candidate will be expected to present a statement of faith on the floor of Presbytery and will be examined. The candidate may also be asked to preach at the Presbytery meeting.

**Caution: Policies should be established jointly between CPM and COM and communicated to congregations in order to prevent congregations and candidates from developing unworkable expectations. Look especially carefully at the necessary time components. It is the candidate who suffers when communications between presbytery committees break down.**

### Transitional (Interim) Ministers<sup>19</sup>

*Transitional ministry* (formerly called Interim Ministry) involves a deliberate and systematic effort to guide a congregation through the grief of losing their pastor, the transitions associated with new directions in their ministry, and possibly a re-defining of their ministry due to changes in size or circumstances. Transitional pastors can also help a congregation heal from the trauma of pastoral misconduct or serious divisions in the congregation leading to loss of their minister.

We need to get away from the idea that a Transitional is just a fill-in until they get a "real" minister. That misconception is why congregations resist the idea of a Transitional minister – they see it as a delay and waste of money. When a church loses a long-time minister for any reason, or when they have a bad experience with a minister, the next minister is going to be "Transitional" whether they realize it or not. A called minister in such a situation is very, very likely to be a short-termer simply because they

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<sup>19</sup> This topic and its sub-topics (through page 143) were approved by POSD on June 26, 2015.

have not healed and adjusted to the change that was forced on them. An intentional Transitional is the best way to heal and adjust to the changes. Then the next called minister will have a much better chance of succeeding and of staying more than a few years.

Transitional ministry is about *change*. The congregation has lost a minister. That is a change. Now they have a new minister – another change. They may need to reexamine their mission or role in the community or in the presbytery – more changes. They may be dealing with conflict in the congregation requiring some form of change to move forward. A trained transitional minister knows what to look for and can be intentional about leading the congregation through their various changes and adjustments.

When a presbytery and session determine that a Transitional pastor, Transitional co-pastor, or Transitional associate pastor is necessary and helpful, the session may consult the committee on ministry and seek a Transitional minister as soon as a date certain for departure has been announced by a pastor or associate pastor planning to leave. A Transitional pastor, Transitional co-pastor, or Transitional associate pastor is not ordinarily eligible to serve that church as the next permanent or designated pastor. A Transitional pastor may, with approval of Presbytery, be called by the congregation he or she has been serving as a Transitional pastor. (G-2.0504c)

### Not for beginners

Transitional ministry is difficult and more stressful than normal pastoral calls. It is not a job for beginners. Only experienced, *trained* teaching elders should be considered. The training is two weeks. Week 1 is the entry-level training. Week 2 is accomplished after a period of service in a Transitional position.

## Circumstances When Transitional Ministers Are Desirable

There are a number of special conditions when a Transitional pastor's services may be advisable. They would include the following:

1. When a pastor or staff member resigns, retires, or dies, is on an extended disability leave, or is in some other way incapacitated, and the congregation needs guidance and support in its time of grief.
2. To supplement the present staff when a congregation is declining or needs special expertise or new life.
3. When the leaders of a congregation or presbytery want to expand the vision of a particular congregation.
4. When presbytery has removed a pastor and there is conflict within that congregation and hostility toward the presbytery or the Committee on Ministry.
5. When there have been long-standing feuds or any kind of unusual crisis in a congregation's life and healing is needed.
6. At the time of a pulpit vacancy, when there is a sudden change in the character of the neighborhood, or when an unusual mission opportunity arises.

7. When a congregation needs preparation for a new style of ministry, especially after a particularly long pastorate. (When this is the case, the next minister is likely to be a Transitional (or short term pastor) whether intentionally or unintentionally.)
8. When continuity of pastoral and administrative leadership and qualitative and quantitative improvements are desired during a pulpit vacancy.
9. When there is an installed pastor and there is a gap in the program of the church that needs attention but does not require additional permanent staff.
10. When there is an installed pastor and that pastor and session wish to test an experimental ministry for a specific task and for a limited time.

*[This and the following page are from Alan Gripe, The Interim Pastor's Manual, Geneva Press, 1987, pp 16-17. Used as a training manual by the Synod of Mid-America.]*

## Appropriate Goals for Transitional Period

### 1. **To Maintain the Viability of the Church**

The ongoing vital program that is expected of a live congregation consists of pastoral duties plus the Christian activities of the members. Continuing the needed programs already underway and efforts to help make them more meaningful are the responsibilities of a Transitional leader.

### 2. **To Resolve Feelings of Grief**

Pastoral visitation involves personal direct contact with individuals. Intentional expression of interest in their feelings, more often than not, will provide healing catharsis.

### 3. **To Reinforce the Ministry of the Congregational Members**

Encouragement of participation and leadership by members is vital. The Transitional period is a particularly apt time to develop congregational leadership. A member may accompany the pastor when home communion is administered. Many responsibilities in the congregation may be carried out by laypersons rather than by a pastor.

### 4. **To Clarify the Mission of the Church**

Congregations need to be reminded that Christians are here to serve, not only to be served. The Transitional may be the voice of the larger Christian community at a time when the congregation is turned inward to its own needs. The minister teaches by example, by preaching, and by formal teaching.

### 5. **To Deal With Special Needs of the Congregation**

Every congregation is different. As a result of diagnosis, the Transitional will learn of specific problems in the congregation. Through knowledge of techniques in conflict management and tactful suggestions by the "outsider" (the disinterested person, the Transitional pastor) beneficial changes may be effected.



**6. To Emphasize Fellowship and Reconciliation**

Opportunities for encouraging Christian fellowship are many. For example, arranging for a coffee hour before or after worship services is helpful. The incorporation of "Congregational concerns" during a worship service can become a time of really sharing.

**7. To Strengthen Denominational Ties**

The Transitional pastor personally maintains a good relationship with the denomination and encourages the local church to participate in denomination-wide activities and programs.

**8. To Increase the Potential for a Successful Ministry by the Next Regular Pastor**

The Transitional pastor is future-oriented. The Transitional pastor is concerned with the coming of a new pastor and is helping to prepare the congregation for the arrival. In addition, he/she communicates with the new pastor any information that might be helpful.

**Process for Securing a Transitional Minister**

1. Committee on Ministry Liaison orients session about steps to secure a Transitional and to the concept of Transitional ministry and its purposes.
2. Session decides to secure a Transitional Minister.
  - a.) Session appoints someone to work with the COM.
  - b.) Session agrees on qualities sought in a Transitional Minister (considers Session/COM perspectives.)
3. The session-appointed person and COM Moderator work together to identify, screen and provide names for the session to consider (one at a time). All names which come to session are to be cleared by the Committee on Ministry.
4. Names are presented to the session for its review of PIFs/references. One choice presented to session.
5. Session reviews recommended name, considers PIF/background, and decides whether to pursue.
6. Session conducts interview with Transitional candidate. May develop a contract. (Liaison or Committee on Ministry Representative needs to be present).
7. Contract established for Transitional agreement. Session approval is obtained.
8. Committee on Ministry acts on contract and reports to the Presbytery.
9. Transitional relationship established.

## Terms of Call<sup>20</sup>

(Note the special considerations listed above for terms of call for tentmakers.)

At the installation of a new pastor, the congregation is asked, “Do we promise to pay him (her) fairly and provide for his (her) welfare as he (she) works among us...?” Unfortunately, determining what constitutes paying a pastor “fairly” is often not always easy to do. While the Book of Order has an expectation that Presbytery will have established minimum terms of call that must be met for pastoral positions, terms of call that exceed the presbytery minimum are often more difficult to determine. As the search for a new pastor begins and at the time of the annual review of a pastor’s terms of call, sessions often seek guidance from presbytery in helping to determine the terms of call.

The phrase “terms of call” usually refers to more than salary, housing and participation in the Board of Pensions. Terms of call also includes additional items that a presbytery has identified as part of the minimum terms. This may include items such as: deferred compensation, dental insurance, SECA supplement, professional expenses including study leave, vacation and study time away, and sabbatical leave. The Board of Pensions publication “Understanding Effective Salary” can provide more detailed information about various parts of a compensation package.

## Terms of Call in POSD

The POSD Administrative Manual provides the following Minimum Terms for pastoral calls:<sup>21</sup>

**A call to a full-time teaching elder shall provide the following minimum terms:**

A. Effective Salary:

1. The Presbytery of South Dakota’s minimum cash salary, some portion of which may be redirected by the pastor with the agreement of the congregation and the presbytery to provide additional funding for other aspects of effective salary.

2. A suitable house with utilities or adequate housing allowance to provide for the Teaching Elder’s specific requirements. Housing allowance for those living in a manse shall be not less than 30% of the minimum effective salary, effective January 1, 2007. (10/27/06)

B. Expenses reimbursed by voucher:

1. Adequate travel compensation in the form of vouchered mileage payment at the recommended IRS rate of reimbursement, a leased car, or such compensation as will meet the specific parish requirements;

2. An allowance for professional expenses such as office expense, books, and study leave.

C. Other:

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<sup>20</sup> Terms of Call discussion was copied from the 2011 Advisory Handbook for Ministry Committees/Commissions.

<sup>21</sup> P3-S.2.10. Manual of Administrative Operations.

1. Requisite percent pension dues payment on the teaching elder's effective cash salary as required by the Board of Pensions, including insurance coverage for the teaching elder's family<sup>22</sup> unless waived by the Board of Pensions;
2. At least four weeks' vacation per year;
3. At least two weeks study leave (Continuing Education) per year, cumulative up to six weeks;
4. An annual review of the effectiveness of teaching elder and adequacy of remuneration. (This review shall also be made in cases where a minister is called within the preceding year.)

Committee on Ministry (COM) shall recommend the minimum salary for the next year at each June Presbytery meeting.

A description of the Presbytery of South Dakota's plan for the integration of the teaching elder into the life and work of the Presbytery of South Dakota (*Book of Order* G-3.0301a and G-3.0303c) is being developed.

#### P3-5.2.11. Part-Time Teaching Elders

Salary for part-time teaching elders of the Presbytery of South Dakota shall be proportionate to that of full-time on the basis of time employed.

#### P3-5.2.12. Non-Presbyterians Serving Presbyterian Churches

Non-Presbyterian clergy/student pastors and ruling elder commissioners from the congregations being served shall be expected to participate regularly in the Presbytery of South Dakota meetings as a condition of their employment.

### Parental Leave

At its February 10, 2015 meeting, COM approved this motion: **"All terms of call will include a parental leave policy by January 1, 2016."** This policy was approved by POSD on June 26, 2015 together with the following *suggested* policy that may be adopted or altered to suit the needs of the congregation:

#### Suggested POSD Policy

Maternity leave for teaching elders and CREs should be eight (8) weeks with full pay and benefits upon birth or adoption of a child. During that time, in churches with multiple TEs and/or CREs, the teaching elder or CRE on maternity leave shall be freed of all pastoral duties, including funerals, weddings, moderating session, and congregational meetings. In churches with a solo pastor, the teaching elder or CRE still may be called upon for funerals, weddings, and meetings. However, the session will provide suitable child care during those times.

Paternity leave for teaching elders and CREs whose spouse gives birth, or upon adoption of a child, should be four (4) weeks with full pay and benefits. During that time, in churches with multiple TEs and/or CREs, the teaching elder or CRE whose

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<sup>22</sup> Approved by the COM conference call on 11/2/2014, affirmed at the COM meeting of 12/2/2014.

spouse is on maternity leave shall be freed of all pastoral duties, including funerals, weddings, moderating session, and congregational meetings. In churches with a solo pastor, the teaching elder or CRE still may be called upon for funerals, weddings, and meetings.

During parental leave, session shall be responsible for providing pulpit supply.

Additional parental leave may be negotiated as unpaid leave or vacation time, but study leave will not be reduced for this purpose.

## Background and Rationale

Parental leave is of two types, maternity leave, and paternity leave.

**Maternity leave** is well established and widely understood. Time is needed to recover from child birth, and weeks or months are needed to bond with the child and adjust to the family upheaval that accompanied the arrival of a child whether by birth or by adoption. Infants require frequent feeding around the clock, and new mothers must arise two or more times during the night to tend to the needs of a baby. Then, the sleep-deprived mother still needs to look after the rest of the family during the day while still giving almost constant attention to the baby.

No mother of an infant can be expected to function well on a job of any sort soon after child birth or adoption. Even adoption of an older child necessitates an inordinate amount of attention for pre-school placement, school-related activities and transportation, finding a pediatrician, and visits to medical providers, not to mention shopping for all manner of unexpected but urgent needs.

**Paternity leave** is the time a father takes off work at the birth or adoption of a child. This kind of leave is rarely paid. A few companies offer new dads paid time off ranging from a few days to a few weeks. And in 2004, California became the first state to offer paid family leave. (In that state, you may be able to take up to six weeks at partial pay to care for your new baby.)

Washington and New Jersey have also passed paid family leave laws, and other states have considered similar bills. In the meantime, though, most fathers take vacation time or sick days when their children are born, and a growing number of new dads are taking unpaid family leave from their jobs to spend more time with their newborns.<sup>23</sup>

**The Problem** for new fathers is that their sleep is disrupted night after night by the new child. Most fathers feel a need to alternate the nighttime duties with the wife so neither has to get up more than once or twice, but when either gets up, it awakens the other. During this period, the cranky and sleep-deprived father is unable to function well at work.

## The Law<sup>24</sup>

[The Family and Medical Leave Act](#) ("FMLA") provides certain employees with up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave a year, and requires group health benefits to be maintained during the leave as if employees continued to work instead of

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.babycenter.com/0\\_paternity-leave-what-are-the-options-for-dads\\_8258.bc](http://www.babycenter.com/0_paternity-leave-what-are-the-options-for-dads_8258.bc)

<sup>24</sup> From <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/1421.htm>

taking leave. This **Compliance Guide** summarizes the FMLA provisions and regulations, and provides answers to the most frequently asked questions. More detail on the FMLA may be found in the regulations ([29 CFR Part 825](#)).

The FMLA became effective August 5, 1993, for most employers and employees. (For those covered by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in effect on that date, the FMLA became effective on the expiration of the CBA or February 5, 1994, whichever was earlier.)

This law covers only certain employers; affects only those employees eligible for the protections of the law; involves entitlement to leave, maintenance of health benefits during leave, and job restoration after leave; sets requirements for notice and certification of the need for FMLA leave; and protects employees who request or take FMLA leave.

Employers covered by FMLA have at least 50 employees, and non-profit organizations are not covered by FMLA.

Virtually all state and federal government employees are covered by the FMLA or a corresponding state law.

### PC(USA)

The current Book of Order (2013-2015) is silent on the matter of parental leave, leaving the matter to be decided by each presbytery. Generally, church-related employees are not covered by any state or federal law on the subject.

Three presbyteries in this Synod provide for paternity leave as well as maternity leave. POSD has no policy on parental leave. At present, it may be negotiated between session (or PNC) and the pastor or candidate, but there are no unifying policies or principles at play in the matter.

### Understanding Effective Salary

**Reference:** Board of Pensions booklet PLN-103 (3/11), “Understanding Effective Salary.” This is available on request from the Board of Pensions, 2000 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19103-3298 (phone 800-773-7752) or from the Board of Pensions Regional Representative.

Calculation of effective salary is potentially one of the most confusing matters with which pastors and churches must deal on a regular basis, but there is a simple unifying criterion for determining whether something is part of effective salary or not, and that criterion is *whether it is taxable*. If the item is taxable to the pastor, it is part of effective salary. If not, then it is not part of effective salary (with an exception below).

The Board of Pensions booklet referenced above includes a 5-page table as a help in determining whether something is part of effective salary or not, but every “yes” item is something on which the pastor must pay federal income tax. The “no” items are not taxable, usually because they are *employer expenses* rather than personal expenses.

For example, suppose the congregation estimates that the pastor will spend about \$2000 on automobile expenses related to church business and pays that amount to the pastor without requiring an exact accounting. That amount would be taxable income to the pastor and part of the effective salary. On the other hand, if the congregation simply budgets that amount as a mileage allowance and pays it to the pastor on the basis of

*vouchered* mileage (at the IRS rate), it becomes an *employer* expense and is not taxable to the pastor.

The same is true of the book allowance. If it is paid to the pastor regularly, it is taxable, but not if the congregation pays the vendor directly or pays the pastor for *vouchered* expenditures.

It is very simple: If it is...

- Taxable, it is part of effective salary.
- Not taxable, not part of effective salary.
- **Exception:** Contributions to a 403(b) plan are included in the basis for Pension dues and are not taxable for Federal Self-Employment Tax or Income Tax purposes (although withdrawals are taxable for Income tax purposes)

**Tax tip:** The pastor's money will go further if more expenses are paid directly by the church (employer) rather than by the pastor. Anything paid by the employer is something the employer accepts as an *employer* expense. If the money is paid to the pastor (even if it is for the purpose of paying that particular expense), it becomes taxable income for the pastor, and subject also to the SECA (self-employment) tax. The pastor's "purchasing power" can be extended by as much as 30% with *no* increased expense to the church at all if the church pays certain expenses directly.

#### **Housing expense**

Housing is a taxable personal expense added into the effective salary. The Board of Pensions requires that it be valued at 30% of the total of all other effective salary items for persons living in housing provided by the employer (manse or parsonage). The congregation can pay all the utility costs directly (non-taxable for income tax), or can let the pastor pay the utilities, which would be taxable, even if the congregation provides an allowance for that purpose. All housing expenses are subject to self-employment tax.

If the pastor buys or rents housing, the Board of Pensions will compute a value of housing for pension plan purposes, using 30% of the cash payments.

The Board of Pensions booklet provides the following helpful table for use in calculating effective salary.

#### **Compensation Included in Effective Salary**

1. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Annual cash salary (including employee contributions to 403(b)(9)) plans, tax-sheltered annuity plans, and salary reduction contributions to flexible health reimbursement accounts and cafeteria plans).
2. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Housing, utility, and furnishings allowances.
3. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Employing organization contributions to 403(b)(9) plans, tax-sheltered annuity plans, and equity allowances.
4. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Bonuses, overtime pay, unvouchered professional expense allowances, gifts from employing organization, and manse equity allowances (unless contributed to a qualified deferred compensation program). Include year-end or other bonuses, unvouchered allowances (such as expenses that are not paid through an accountable reimbursement plan), down payment grants for purchase of a home, savings from

interest-free or interest-reduced loans (not loan principal), and gifts paid by the employing organization. (Gifts received directly from private donors or honoraria are *not* included.)

5. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Any allowance provided to reimburse Self-Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligations in excess of 50% of the minister's SECA tax obligation.
6. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other allowances, including all forms of compensation not otherwise covered on Lines 1-5, such as medical deductible and medical expense reimbursement allowances not paid through a group benefit plan, insurance premiums for additional insurance coverage provided for individual employees (premiums for group plan coverage are not included), and others.
7. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Manse amount (must be at least 30% of Lines 1-6 for members residing in employer-provided housing).
8. \$\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Effective Salary (Sum of Lines 1-7).** Board of Pensions Dues are computed and benefits are determined on this amount.

## Calling a New Pastor

When a congregation begins the process of seeking a new pastor, an understanding of the possible terms of call needs to be reached by the session. (See *Terms of Call* in the Index.) The salary range of the effective salary that will be used to seek a new pastor will be entered on the congregation's Ministry Information Form (MIF). A couple of resources that may assist in determining possible salary ranges for position types can be found in the Salary Studies on the Board of Pensions Website and on other MIFs.

**Extending the Call.** While a salary range will be necessary to search for a pastor, once a call is extended the specific terms of call will need to be negotiated between the pastor and the PNC, usually within the parameters of the salary range listed on the MIF, including any presbytery required terms of call. The pastor, PNC and COM will all need to agree upon the terms of call.

**Voting on the Call.** When a congregation votes to extend a call to a new pastor, the congregation will be asked to vote on the agreed upon terms of call for the new pastor. Presbytery must also approve the call and the terms of call.

## Annual Review

Once a pastor is in place, sessions have a responsibility to annually review the teaching elder's terms of call and to propose any changes to the congregation for their approval. The expectation is that any changes to the terms of call will continue to meet the presbytery's minimum requirements.

Any changes to the terms of call must be reported to the presbytery through the COM for approval since no pastoral relationship may be established, changed, or

dissolved without the approval of the presbytery.

Please see Chapter 8 for all of the Call Forms.



# Model Letters

## Letter to Secure Approval of a Secondary Reference

(On Church Letterhead)

Dear (Candidate):

Your name is being considered by our committee for the position of \_\_\_\_\_. In accordance with the policy of our presbytery, we are asking if we may contact persons other than those you have named in your Personal Information Form as suitable references. Ordinarily such additional references will include the executive presbyter, associate executives, and the chair or other designated member of the Committee on Ministry of your presbytery of membership. We have selected these specific persons as we believe they are in a position to have accurate knowledge about your professional career in relation to the presbytery.

(List proposed secondary references.)

We may also contact secondary references who are suggested in conversations with your primary references.

Please respond to us as soon as possible by completing the enclosed form.

Very truly yours,

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Secretary / Chair  
Search Committee

## Form for Candidate to Approve Secondary References

Date\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the Search Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ may be contacting secondary references not listed on my Personal Information Form.

You have my permission to:

A. Contact any and all references as you see fit and think necessary.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Please initial.)

B. Contact only the following secondary references (list names addresses on back).  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Please initial.)

C. Contact any and all references except the following (list names addresses or groups on the back). \_\_\_\_\_ (Please initial.)

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:  
(Secretary/Chair, Search Committee)

## No Longer Under Consideration

### Guideline for Model Letter #1

*This is a suggested form letter to prospective pastors who are no longer under consideration. Use stationery with church letterhead if available. Otherwise give church name and address.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State and Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Rev. \_\_\_\_\_

We are writing on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota. The Pastor Nominating Committee is presently reading PIFs of ministers interested in relocating.

Your PIF is one that the committee read and considered.

*Commend (in general language) the person's qualifications and express appreciation. Note that your congregation, like every congregation, needs a pastor with specific qualifications (do not identify them). Unfortunately, your qualifications do not match the present needs of this congregation and you are no longer being considered.*

Express hope for God's guidance and for blessing on the ministry of the addressee, wherever....

Sincerely,

(signature)  
(Name), Secretary  
Pastor Nominating Committee

cc: Presbytery of South Dakota Committee on Ministry Representative

## For a Non-yoked Church

### Guideline for Model Letter #2

*This is a suggested form letter to prospective pastors whose candidacy you would like to keep active while you select the persons to whom you will send Letter #3. Use*

*stationery with church letterhead if available. Otherwise give church name and address.*

Date

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Rev. \_\_\_\_\_

We are writing on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota. The Pastor Nominating Committee is presently reading PIFs of ministers interested in relocating.

Your PIF is one that the committee read and considered.

*Commend (in general language) the person's qualifications and express appreciation. Note that your congregation, like every congregation, needs a pastor with specific qualifications (do not identify them).*

*Explain that the addressee is among those being considered as you put together a small list of persons whose qualifications most closely match your congregation's needs. Explain that you plan to complete the list by \_\_\_\_\_ date and at that time the persons on the list will be notified in writing. If the addressee does not receive such notification by a named date, it should be understood that he/she is then no longer being considered. (The Pastor Nominating Committee should see that anyone who is likely to get later consideration is among the group to whom Letter #3 will be sent. This could become important in the event several preferred prospects should become unavailable or disqualified.)*

*Express hope for God's guidance and for blessing on the ministry of the addressee, wherever....*

Sincerely,

(signature)  
(Name), Secretary  
Pastor Nominating Committee

cc:     Presbytery of South Dakota Committee on Ministry Representative

For a Yoked Parish

**Model Letter #2**

*Use stationery with church letterhead if available. Otherwise give church name and address.*

Date

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Rev. \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota, and \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota in the Presbytery of South Dakota. We are in the process of reading the Personal Information Forms of ministers who are interested in relocation.

Your Personal Information Form has been sent to us and our Pastor Nominating Committee has finished reading it.

We wish to commend you for your excellent qualifications and to express appreciation for the opportunity to review them. Our churches, like all churches, need a pastor with certain qualifications, and you are among those being considered as we put together a small list of prospects whose qualifications seem to match our needs most closely.

We plan to complete this list and to notify those whose names appear on it by \_\_\_\_\_. If you do not receive this notification by \_\_\_\_\_, it should be understood that you are then no longer being considered.

We want to express hope that you be led to the right place in your search and that God's rich blessing be on your ministry wherever that may be.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

(Name), Secretary  
Pastor Nominating Committee

cc:     Presbytery of South Dakota Committee on Ministry Representative  
        Presbytery of South Dakota Executive Presbyter

## For Serious or Continued Consideration

### **Guidelines for Model Letter #3**

*This is a suggested Suggestion for a form letter to prospective pastors who are among the group you select for serious consideration. The letter you write should, if possible, appear to the reader as an individual, personal letter. Use stationery with church letterhead if available. Otherwise give church name and address.*

Date

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Rev. \_\_\_\_\_

We are writing on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota. You are one of the persons receiving continued consideration as of the date of this letter.

*Explain that he/she is being asked to respond in a signed statement by a named date to certain questions asked in this letter. Indicate that if no answer is received by the date, the person will not be considered further. (The way the person responds or does not respond to this helps you make your evaluation.)*

*One of the questions would ask for permission to contact secondary references--any not named in the PIF. Take care to give assurance that you understand the need for confidentiality in his/her present position and that if permission to use secondary references is given, you will do everything you can to avoid a leak.*

*Then make sure that you do not contact anyone in the prospect's present congregation who is not named as a reference in the PIF or in writing by the prospect.*

*Give the target date for calling a minister. You might ask if the person, in so far as known now, would be available at approximately that time if the position should be offered and the prospect should be interested in accepting it.*

*Add any other questions the Pastor Nominating Committee may have. If desired, a recorded sermon could be requested.*

*In the interest of “fair play” you might give information which interested pastors always like about where they stand. You can do this by giving the intermediate target dates in your search process. These could include:*

- *the date you plan to notify persons of selection for semifinal consideration (explain that everyone responding to this letter will be notified by telephone, if available, on that day whether selected as a semifinalist or not);*
- *the date by which you plan to conclude hearing and interviewing semifinalists (explain that the interviewing will be done both by your Pastor Nominating Committee and the Presbytery of South Dakota’s Committee on Ministry);*
- *the date you plan to select and notify your first choice for the pastoral nomination (explain that the other semifinalists will also be notified by telephone that a nominee has been selected and that you will keep their candidacy before you until the congregation elects a pastor);*
- *the approximate date of the congregational meeting after which all semifinalists will be notified as soon as possible by telephone of the result.*

*Thank the person. Express hope/faith that at the end of the process God’s call will be established.*

Sincerely,

(signature)

(Name), Secretary  
Pastor Nominating Committee

cc: Presbytery of South Dakota Committee on Ministry Representative

The Committee on Ministry moderator will make reference checks with their counterparts and confer with you about them as needed.

Selection to “Short List”

### **Alternative Model Letter #3**

*Use stationery with church letterhead if available. Otherwise give church name and address.*

Date

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Rev. \_\_\_\_\_

With a sense of satisfaction the Pastor Nominating Committee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota, (and \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota) in the Presbytery of South Dakota has now selected \_\_\_\_\_ prospects for further consideration. You are one of them. The information we are requesting will suggest to you something about the form our future consideration will take.

Please respond in a signed statement by \_\_\_\_\_ to the questions below. If your response is not received by the above date you will not be considered further.

1. Are you still interested in being considered?
2. Our target date for a congregational meeting to vote on a nominee is between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. As of now, would you be available to begin your new work soon after if the position should be offered to you and if you are interested in accepting it?
3. Will you give permission for communication with secondary references? By secondary references we mean any persons not named as references in your PIF. We understand the need for confidentiality in your present congregation and, if you authorize us to use secondary references, we will not knowingly contact anyone there who is not named as a reference in your PIF or in some other writing signed by you. In other words, we will do everything we can to avoid a leak in your church.
4. Will you send us a recording of at least one of your sermons recently preached?

We are providing information below about some target dates that we are using in our calling process. They will help you understand where we are at all times and where you stand as the process continues.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the day we plan to notify persons of our selection for semifinal consideration. Everyone responding to this letter will be notified by telephone, if available, on that day whether selected as a semifinalist or not.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the day we plan to conclude interviewing and hearing the semifinalists preach. The interviewing will be done by our Pastor Nominating Committee and the Presbytery of South Dakota's Committee on Ministry.



\_\_\_\_\_ is the approximate date of the Congregational Meeting. After that meeting, we plan to select and notify our first choice for the nomination. The other semifinalists will also be notified that day by telephone that a nominee has been selected and that we will keep their candidacy before us until the congregation elects a person for the position.

The approximate date of the congregational meeting is in question two above. After that meeting, all semifinalists will be notified by telephone of the result.

We thank you wholeheartedly for participating with us in the search. Let us hope in faith that through the process God's call will be established.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

(Name), Secretary  
Pastor Nominating Committee

cc:     Presbytery of South Dakota Committee on Ministry Representative

# Commissioned Ruling Elders<sup>25</sup>

## Application and Screening of Potential CREs

To be eligible to become a CRE, a person must be a PC(USA) elder in good standing with gifts and graces for pastoral ministry. Since CREs will be serving congregations in the pastoral role, it is as important to screen CREs as it is pastors, youth workers, or others who have access to persons in vulnerable life situations. Information should be sought from a pastor and others who know the CRE applicant well and background checks are recommended. It is important to examine the motives of the applicant. If the person is seeking personal status from the new role or full-time employment, that is not the intent of the program.

The presbytery commissions a CRE for a limited period of time for service in a particular church or to the presbytery itself.<sup>26</sup> Based on the needs of that congregation(s), the presbytery may authorize the CRE to administer one or both of the sacraments, moderate the session, perform weddings (if the state allows, and it is allowed in South Dakota), and vote at presbytery (G-2.1001). These authorizations are not automatic and may be granted to some CREs in a presbytery and not to others based on the ministry context.

The CRE commission may be for up to three years, is renewable, and must be reviewed at least annually (G-2.1001).

It is advisable to have a written covenant of expectations between the CRE, the congregation served, and the presbytery. A sample covenant appears at the end of this topic.

A presbytery service of commissioning is held, using the materials in W-4.4000. There is a special question at W-4.4003. A sample service of worship is available on the website. Many presbyteries also have a service of celebration in the congregation to be served. This is a joyous occasion that gives visibility to the presbytery and starts the ministry off well.

## Supervision and Support of CREs

The CRE is accountable to the presbytery through the teaching elder assigned as mentor and supervisor for the CRE (G-2.1004). It is important that a mentor be chosen who will work closely with the CRE in a supportive way. Since CREs are often expected to carry out pastoral functions without the benefit of a full theological education, they benefit from teaching elders who have had the added education and experience. CREs often are knowledgeable about the culture of the region and are able to share wisdom with the teaching elders with whom they work. Some of the most exciting ministries include CREs and teaching elders working together as a team, sharing their gifts.

When CREs are commissioned to the presbytery, their assignment and work is

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<sup>25</sup> From the 2007 COM Handbook, pages 5-33 to 5-35 updated to reflect changes in 2015.

<sup>26</sup> On May 12, 2015, COM approved commissioning to the presbytery itself. That change was then accepted and implemented by POSD on June 26, 2015.

coordinated by an administrator appointed by COM. This is part of the COM action approved on May 12, 2015.

Just as all pastors are strongly encouraged to be involved in lifelong learning, so it is important for CREs to continue their education. Many choose to enroll in degree program through a PC(USA) seminary.

It is common for CREs to throw themselves into their ministry with great enthusiasm. Many of them have other employment as well. The potential for burnout is great. The presbytery should provide support and be alert to help the CRE keep his or her life in balance.

While CREs can be appointed to moderate the session of the congregations to which they are commissioned (G-2.1001), some may decline that part of the commission, or presbytery may decide not to include it. In either case, COM will need to appoint a moderator for the session.

### What if a CRE Moves?

It should be carefully noted that the commissioning of a ruling elder is “local,” that is, for service in one or more congregations or other validated ministry unless commissioned to the presbytery, and is valid for up to three years. If the CRE ceases to serve a particular congregation, the commission may no longer be valid. Because the use, training, supervision, and nurture of CREs are determined individually by each presbytery, CREs are not eligible to use the PC(USA) call system, Church Leadership Connection. The commission they have been granted is by one presbytery and is not transferable to another presbytery. Some neighboring presbyteries have established agreements for shared training and commissioning to serve across a presbytery boundary. If a CRE relocates outside the presbytery and joins a PC(USA) congregation in their new area, the CRE must contact the presbytery to see if there is a need for CRE services. If so, reference checks should be done and the new presbytery would determine whether the previous training meets their requirements.

(Sample) *Covenant with a Commissioned Ruling Elder*

**NAME OF CHURCH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF Commissioned Ruling Elder:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Term of service:**

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF CRE**

- Lead worship and preach \_\_\_\_\_ times each month

(Presbytery determines which are authorized)

- Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
- Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
- Moderate session meetings under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery.
- Perform marriages (state law must allow)
- Have voice at presbytery meetings
- Have vote at presbytery meetings
- Other duties:
- Attend presbytery meetings

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**TIME EXPECTATIONS** (per week) \_\_\_\_\_

**COMPENSATION** as applicable:

**Cash salary:** \_\_\_\_\_ /week, month (circle)

**Medical and pension benefits**

**Continuing education and/or book allowance** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vacation time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Continuing education time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry costs to be reimbursed with documentation:**

**Travel reimbursement** @ \$0.\_\_\_\_ per mile

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presbytery COM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator of Session

\_\_\_\_\_  
CRE

**Date of session action** \_\_\_\_\_

Review of this covenant prior to renewal or termination will be by the session and the Committee on Ministry. This relationship may be terminated prior to expiration with \_\_\_\_\_ days notice by either party and the concurrence of the Committee on Ministry.

## 7. Care of Church Professionals

Committees on Ministry are well aware of stresses of ministry and the ways those stresses are visible in church professionals and in the congregations they serve. Board of Pensions statistics about teaching elders who suffer from stress-related illnesses are one proof of a reality that COMs know because of their work with individual teaching elders and congregations. Stress in ministry has multiple causes, some the result of changes in the larger culture, some stemming from an individual's own unique life experiences. A Committee on Ministry will not be able to address all causes of stress!

However, Committees on Ministry have the power and the responsibility to address one of the commonest causes of stress: a sense of isolation. Providing pastoral care for church professionals is not a luxury to be enjoyed if there is time when everything else is done; it is an essential component of the Committee on Ministry's goal of nurturing and supporting healthy ministry in the presbytery.

### Professional Development<sup>27</sup>

The ministry has always been characterized as a "learned profession." Teaching elders have a responsibility to grow in their ability to exercise their ministry as well as in their own spiritual faith.

The Teaching Elder normally moves through five well-defined stages, each of which has its own unique needs for professional development. These stages provide a framework as COMs guide teaching elders in their professional development. (It needs to be noted that this research was done on teaching elders who entered ministry at age 24-25 and retired at age 65. Also, the research was done on male teaching elders. Some possible corrections will be noted later on how these concepts must be modified for those who entered the ministry at a later age and/or are female.) These stages and some of the needs are:

#### **PREPARATION**

This is the time of preparation prior to ordination. The main actor in the presbytery at this stage is the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. In addition to the

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<sup>27</sup> Pages 71-74 from Committee on Ministry Handbook. 1999 Edition. Churchwide Personnel Services, Office of Resourcing Committees on Ministry, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *This article drawn from the work of The Advisory Committee on Professional Development.* Details were updated from later COM handbooks.

normal seminary courses, persons at this stage need to be aware of the call system, how to get a job, financial assistance and in general need the support of the presbytery.

#### ***COMING-ON-BOARD***, first 5 years

This is the time of transition from seminary to first parish. **Here the beginning minister is learning the "craft" of ministry.** Presbyteries are key in focusing on the first five years of ministry and helping the beginning minister become a practicing minister.

Tasks during this period are: developing support systems, continuing spiritual growth, unique challenges of being on a multi-staff or a small isolated church. Developing sermon series and long range sermon planning, as well as sharpening pastoral and administrative skills, are all critical issues of this period.

For some teaching elders, who decide that they have made a wrong vocational choice, there is a need for help in making a dignified and appropriate exit from ministry. Some research and experience indicates that for female teaching elders this period is often foreshortened to as little as two years. Many female teaching elders experience a crisis of wondering if they have made a wrong vocational choice in as little as two years.

#### ***MATURATION*** years 5-20

This period is a time of continuing growth and development. **The teaching elder has begun to solidify her or his occupational identity and to feel more comfortable with the ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament.** Normally there is a move to a second and third call during this period. Most people who enter D.Min. programs do so at this stage. A D.Min. program is one of the most popular professional development activities of this stage.

The presbytery can help its experienced pastors assess their strengths and weaknesses and by picking appropriate experiences to enhance their skills. The Leadership Effectiveness Analysis (LEA) is a very helpful tool for this.

#### ***MID-CAREER*** - years 25-35

Teaching elders at this stage are capable of being good mentors to younger teaching elders and their wisdom should be used with beginning teaching elders

This period is often a period of **reassessment of ministry.** The question often asked is: "Is ministry what I want to do for the next twenty or so years, or do I want to do something else with my life." Many pastors have been in long-term pastorates and need time to reflect and retool.

This is the period when a **sabbatical** is most helpful. Long Term pastorate workshops (Alban Institute) are often helpful at this time.

For some teaching elders, the **decision is to leave the ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament** and they need helpful exit services.

#### ***PRE-RETIREMENT AND RETIREMENT***

After about thirty-five years of ministry or within five years of retirement, thoughts turn to retirement as a major stage of growth. Retirement Planning Seminars, provided by the Board of Pensions, are a major resource for this period. COMs should see that all teaching elders in this stage are invited to these seminars.

Other needs are to bring closure to ministry, and to pass along their accumulated

wisdom to those who are younger.

Committees on Ministry have a responsibility for the professional development of all the teaching elders under their care. There are several strategies for presbytery COMs to use in this area. Many presbyteries have annual retreats for all the teaching elders and sometimes teaching elders' spouses of the presbytery. These often feature an outstanding leader, time for rest and relaxation as well as time for visiting. Often these retreats are held in a retreat center with the presbytery paying for much or the entire event. Other presbyteries cooperate with local colleges or seminaries in sponsoring various professional development events. Others publicize regional events.

With the cost of professional development experiences continuing to rise, many teaching elders find that the professional development allowance in their calls is insufficient. An important role for the presbytery is to make supplemental scholarship funds available.

### COM can help teaching elders grow by:

1. Ensuring that all calls contain both time and funds for professional development.
2. Holding up in front of Sessions and teaching elders the need and expectations for all teaching elders to engage in regular professional development.
3. Monitoring the use of time and funds for professional development. Some COMs require a yearly report from all teaching elders as to their use of professional development time and funds. They then counsel with those who are not growing professionally, as well as sharing with the presbytery the use of this time and these funds.
4. Promoting the use of Sabbatical leaves. As pastorates grow longer, it is increasingly important to have a Sabbatical leave built into calls. Some presbyteries are insisting that teaching elders, after seven years of service, receive a Sabbatical leave. Research is showing that these sabbatical leaves are important for long pastorates. A publication by the Alban Institute (Sabbatical Planning: For Clergy and Congregations, A. Richard Bullock,) considers some of the concerns of those preparing for sabbaticals:
  - Financing a sabbatical including temporary leadership for the congregation(s). Some calls include a provision for a certain amount of money to be set aside yearly and saved for this purpose.
  - Developing a plan for the sabbatical. It takes about a year to plan a sabbatical.
  - Securing pastoral leadership for the congregation(s).
  - Planning for re-entry following the sabbatical.
5. Providing professional development events to meet the needs of teaching elders as they move through the developmental continuum. It is important to work with providers of services to coordinate these services.
6. Encouraging teaching elders and their spouses to attend seminars

sponsored by the Board of Pensions.

## Resources:

Alban Institute (Sabbatical Planning: For Clergy and Congregations, A. Richard Bullock,)

Sabbatical Leave: Suggestions for Local Churches and Their Pastors, Office for Church Life and Leadership, United Church of Christ. Order at 800-325-7061

See resources on Sabbatical Leave, Clergy Colleague Groups, and much more at <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/ministers/ministry-development-and-support/>

See resources from The Presbytery Pastoral Care Network at <http://www.pastoralcarenetwork.org/>

See sample Presbytery Policies on MGB Connect Publications from Alban Institute

## Sabbatical Leave

– Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning by Richard Bullock and Richard J. Brueshoff, Alban Institute, 2000.

– Journeying Toward Renewal: A Spiritual Companion for Pastoral Sabbaticals by Melissa Bane Sever, Alban Institute, 2002.

## Professional Development

– Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others by Donald R. Hands and Wayne Fehr, Alban Institute, 1993.

– Becoming the Pastor You Hope to Be: Four Practices for Improving Ministry by Barbara Blodgett, Alban Institute, 2011.

– A Lifelong Call to Learn: Continuing Education for Religious Leaders by Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, Alban Institute, 2010.

North Central Career Development Center  
516 Mission House Lane, NW  
New Brighton, MN 55112  
651-636-5120

## Pastoral Care of Pastors and Their Families<sup>28</sup>

## Visitation

Every minister member of presbytery, not being a member of a congregation but

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<sup>28</sup> Pages 68-70 from Committee on Ministry Handbook. 1999 Edition. Churchwide Personnel Services, Office of Resourcing Committees on Ministry, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), updated from the 2007 COM Handbook.



of Presbytery itself, therefore looks to presbytery for pastoral care. The Committee on Ministry needs to be visibly and explicitly concerned for the care and support of these teaching elders as well as all other church professionals within its bounds and their families. The Committee on Ministry is to visit teaching elders regularly. While COM takes this regular pastoral contact with teaching elders very seriously, other pressing responsibilities often push to the forefront. The COM must plan for a systematic way to provide regular contact with all minister members of the presbytery and special support for those who are new in ministry or under special stress.

Key questions that must be asked in developing strategy for visitation would be: What has been our practice to date? How do we define the word "visit" and the word "regular"? Do all visits have to be face to face? Can some be made on the telephone? Who and how many persons will be involved with each visitation? Who will develop the assignment schedule? Will there be a report back? If so, what form will this report take? How will we protect confidentiality?

### Some Approaches to Care and Support

***New Pastor Seminars*** are programs for newly ordained teaching elders. These are continuing education events focused on such issues as transitions, pastoral identity, understanding congregations, and balancing ministry and personal life. The new pastors gather periodically during their first years of ministry and, in so doing, develop peer support and make valuable connections with experienced mentor/pastors.

***The Synod*** of Lakes and Prairies sponsors seminars for new pastors at its Synod School each summer.

***Mentors:*** COM selects one or more experienced members of presbytery to act as an advisor or mentor to new teaching elders. Consultation with the minister as well as the Session Personnel Committee is recommended. The mentor relationship may last for one or two years. Some remuneration and/or reimbursed expenses are allowed in some presbyteries for the mentors. (Heartland and Santa Fe Presbyteries)

### Resources

The Presbyterian Health Network (PHEWA), *The Presbyterian Whole Health Catalogue*, Presbyterian Distribution Services, DMS # 257-91-046.

Synods COM Video Resource Coalition, *Support of Pastors*, (Video), Synod of Lakes and Prairies, 8012 Cedar Ave. South, Bloomington, MN 55425. \$35.00.

Fox, Susan E. and Kurtis C. Hess, *Here I am, Lord, Now What?; Transition and Survival in the First Parish*, TAS<sup>2</sup>TE of Ministry, Pby of WV - 304-744-7634.

Rediger, Lloyd, *Clergy Killers; Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack*, Westminster/John Knox 1997

Available from Alban Institute:

Gilbert, Barbara, *Who Ministers to Ministers? A Study of Support Systems for Clergy and Spouses*, AL 124, \$10.95.

Hands, Donald R. and Wayne Fehr, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others*, AL 139, \$12.95.

Harbaugh, Gary L. *Caring for the Caregiver: Growth Models for Professional Leaders and Congregations*, AL 138, \$12.95.

Oswald, Roy, *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry*, AL 125, \$17.95.

### Recognition of Problem Areas

#### A. Feeling of Isolation

1. Lack of a confidant with whom teaching elder can share feelings.
  - a. Confidentialities cannot be shared with members of the congregation, nor even outside the congregation in a small community.
  - b. Fear of sharing innermost feelings with other clergy in same denomination because there is present a certain amount of competition and the feeling that it may be detrimental in case there would be a desire for relocation.
2. Spouse's feeling of neglect because the clergy person cannot share many problems.
3. Lack of close friendships. Feelings of resentment can arise in congregations when clergy and spouse form close friendships (favoritism).

#### B. Problems Arising Out of Sense of "Call"

1. While clergy person feels "called," spouse might not have the same commitment. The spouse might even feel resentment concerning clergy person's "call".
2. The spouse is many times overlooked for leadership roles, but expected to always be there to help, not lead. The congregation may need to be reminded that your spouse is not on staff.
3. The spouse can easily resent being considered the appendage and not looked upon as a separate individual. Employment of a wife can be resented as not presenting the proper image. Male spouses are regarded differently than a female spouse as to what is expected with regard to their "image".

#### C. Clergy person's Inability To Make And Take Time Off For Self And Family

1. Feeling too important to take time off.
2. Too absorbed with problems even on days off.

D. Burn-Out from any or all of the above.

## Possible Solution to Problems

A. Seeking Out Spiritual Advisor

1. Nuns have proven to be very valuable in this regard.
2. Pastor from another denomination.

B. Interdenominational get-togethers for spouses.

C. Presbytery Employed Pastoral Counselor can meet periodically with clergy person. Contact other denominations to ascertain if qualified counselors would be available also if needed.

D. Plan Retreats during the week for Clergy and Spouses. Have cluster groups giving comfort and assistance to one another.

E. Attend Marriage Enrichment courses where available. There seem to be a number presented by Catholics. Richarton Abbey often has such programs which have been highly recommended.

F. Stress Importance of at least one day off each week, and of taking one's full vacation and study leave time. Make arrangements for someone to handle emergencies even on days off so time can be given to family.

## COM Mentors<sup>29</sup>

### Responsibilities When Representing COM

In order to build effective pastoral relationships with ministers of the presbytery, COM begins by providing a mentor for ministers when called to serve in this presbytery. This is especially important for newly ordained ministers, but would have importance for every minister. A mentor could be helpful with newly ordained ministers by building working partnerships with their ministry situations, understanding the situation and churches, and identifying resources for ministry in the area. This relationship requires voluntary cooperation among all the parties concerned: the session, the pastor, and the mentor.

The mentor can build a relationship with the new minister through:

- Any available workable means of communication
- Maintaining confidentiality between the new pastor and the mentor

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<sup>29</sup> Approved by COM on October 2, 2014.

- Spending a day or two with the new minister in his/her ministry situation
- Conversation at presbytery meetings
- Informing the minister of presbytery functions
- Being available for advice and counsel as needed
- Report to COM on the health and well-being of the congregation at the regular meetings of COM. Mentors who are not members of COM may report in writing instead of attending the meeting.

COM anticipates that the need for a mentor will diminish as the new pastor grows in ability and confidence and may not be needed beyond the first year of ministry. At that point, the relationship as mentor and new minister can be ended by mutual agreement, with the mentor reporting that fact to the COM.

## Responsibilities of the Pastor

It is important for the pastor and the session to cooperate with the mentor and make use of his or her abilities as they would any other resource. The mentor is, after all, a resource for the church in providing advice and counsel and access to procedural information. The pastor may foster that relationship by:

- Encouraging the Commissioner to presbytery to visit with the mentor at presbytery meetings/functions.
- Invite the mentor to worship with the congregation, particularly on special occasions.
- Seeing that the mentor is on the mailing and email distribution lists for newsletters, bulletins and session minutes.
- Sending the mentor copies of mission statements and annual reports whenever they are produced.

## Rationale

By being well informed on the activities and concerns of session and the congregation, the mentor will be better able to advise the pastor, to represent those concerns to COM, and to help COM to gain better understanding of that church and the issues it faces. At the same time, a well-informed mentor can help the pastor better understand the concerns of COM, interpreting the actions and policies of COM and the presbytery.

## Responsibilities of the COM

The mentor is an extension of the work and ministry of the COM and should be appointed by COM as soon as COM approves the call. As an extension of COM, he or she needs and deserves the support of COM. Hence, COM should provide:

- Mileage for attendance at congregational events, including
  - At least two meetings of session each year.
  - A monthly meeting with the pastor
- Training in the duties and responsibilities of the mentor
- Training in the policies and procedures of COM and the presbytery
- Provide the mentor with a copy of the COM manual
- Provide the mentor and new pastor with copies of the presbytery's Manual of Administrative Operations

### Rationale

The mentor is a volunteer, whether a teaching elder or a ruling elder, and is volunteering his or her time in service to COM and to the pastor to which he or she is the liaison. There must be mileage support to offset this significant out-of-pocket expense. The COM also has a responsibility to provide the training necessary for the mentor to properly carry out his or her duties.

### Working With Retired Teaching Elders<sup>30</sup>

According to the statistical information provided by the Research Services of the Presbyterian Church (USA), **over 31% of the Presbyterian clergy are retired**, almost one in three.

With medical advances and retirees living longer lives, the concept of retirement is being rethought today. Retirement, considered by some as re-engagement, has become a positive, planned for, and creative time in life in which increased free time and better health enable retirees to do things that had not been possible before.<sup>31</sup> **Therefore, it becomes an important stewardship concern that the creative use of the skills and experience of retired teaching elders be facilitated in the Church.**

### Services of Retired Teaching elders

The call to the ministry is a life-long one and does not cease with retirement. Ways of fulfilling the call will probably vary in the retirement years. Some of the best Transitional Pastors and Governing Body Staff in the Church are honorably retired teaching elders. Retirees may also choose to serve as parish associates or teach in a variety of places. More creativity needs to be used in determining how the accumulated talents and skills of retired teaching elders, their spouses and survivors may be used by

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<sup>30</sup> Pages 101-102 from *Committee on Ministry Handbook*. 1999 Edition. Churchwide Personnel Services, Office of Resourcing Committees on Ministry, Presbyterian Church (USA).

<sup>31</sup> Excerpted from the Report of the Task Force on the Study of Present and Future Needs of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses, and Their Survivors, 1993 Minutes of the General Assembly, Part I, page 569. Copies are available by calling John Rhea in the Office of Older Adult Ministry (502) 569-5486.

the congregations with which they worship, the presbytery in which they reside, and in the Church as a whole.

### Respecting the Need for Well-Deserved Rest and Freedom

While retired teaching elders are valuable assets to any congregation and presbytery, it must also be recognized that after serving the church for many years, many retirees and their spouses cherish the freedom to travel, to visit grandchildren, and not to be “tied down” to regular Sunday commitments. Most COMs have a number of churches without pastors and too few Transitional Pastors, so it is tempting to pressure retirees into serving “just one more time.” While this may meet the need of the COM and a congregation, it is not fair to the retiree and his or her family. Post-retirement service opportunities should be offered and retirees contacted regularly to see about their welfare and their interest in service with the clear covenant to accept “no” graciously.

### Presbytery Membership

Honorably retired teaching elders are encouraged to transfer their membership to the presbytery in which they live and the presbytery is encouraged to receive them. If they are active in presbytery, additional elders may be elected to keep a proper balance between teaching elders and ruling elders at the presbytery meetings. Presbyteries should encourage honorably retired teaching elders to use their experience and skills in creative and meaningful ways. Those who are able and willing to re-engage in ministry and service to others should relate to a particular church or presbytery. For those who do not or cannot, the presbytery should provide nurture and support.

### Ministry of Support and Nurture

Retirees need consistent support by their presbytery. They need special care at the time just prior to retirement, during the first year of adjustment to retirement, and during critical life changes (such as death of a spouse, serious decline in health and mobility, move to retirement or nursing facility). The Board of Pensions provides excellent resources to assist COMs with both the emotional and financial support of retirees. Sometimes retired teaching elders move to a presbytery following retirement, but retain membership elsewhere, and so are unknown to the presbytery in which they live. The Board of Pensions is glad to provide a presbytery with a list of retirees living within its bounds.

Services of retirement – both at a presbytery meeting and in the local congregation – are as significant as services of installation and should receive careful attention from presbytery. Many presbyteries have annual recognition events for retirees and their spouses. Some have regular gatherings for retirees to help them remain connected with other teaching elders and remain active in the life of the presbytery. This is especially important for retirees who have relocated upon retirement.

### National Organization of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses, and Survivors

In 1993, the General Assembly adopted the recommendation of the Task Force that a national organization of retirees be created. The **National Organization of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses, and Survivors** was established to provide

fellowship, be a forum for sharing ideas and experiences and a place to discuss new ideas for the creative use of the additional time that retirement provides. It provides a connection through which retirees can share ideas concerning retirement experiences and the problems faced in retirement. Each year the organization sponsors a convention and it publishes a newsletter regularly. For information about these resources contact John Rhea in the Office of Older Adult Ministry - 1-502-569-5486.

### Boundaries and Etiquette

(See *Separation Ethics* in the Index.)

In the Church we frequently talk about the relationship between pastor and people as one of “family” and, especially when pastoral relationships are long, the bonds of affection run deep between a congregation and the pastor who has been with them during times of crisis and of joy. It is especially difficult for congregation members to understand that the relationship must change significantly when a pastor retires and that they must share their faith journey with another pastor whom God has called to fill that role. It is also difficult for the retiring pastor who has devoted so much of his or her life to ministry. As retirement is a challenging transition for all working people, it is more so in a profession where work and identity are so closely bound.

As pastors and congregations struggle with this adjustment, sometimes problems of boundaries arise and the Committee on Ministry is asked for help, usually by the new pastor. Some sensitivity is required in handling this matter.

Some suggestions:

- Assume good intentions unless evidence shows otherwise.
- Affirm both the retiree and the new pastor.
- Offer support and guidance to the new pastor as he or she takes the initiative to establish a mutually supportive relationship.
- Help the retiree to find new appropriate uses for his/her gifts and energy.
- Establish a presbytery understanding about boundaries
- Educate congregations about appropriate boundaries *before* the retirement occurs.
- Affirm the legacy of the past and the leadership of the present in congregational celebrations in which the retired pastor is included.

(See the topic, “A Healthy Goodbye,” in Chapter 4 of this manual.)

### Resources:

Publications from Alban Institute [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)

– *Called for Life: Finding Meaning in Retirement* by Paul C. Clayton, Alban Institute, 2008.

– *Clergy, Retirement, and Wholeness: Looking Forward to the Third Age* by Gwen Wagstrom Halaas, Alban Institute, 2005.

## Concerns at the Time of Death in Presbytery

In the event of the death of an active member of presbytery:

### Liaison Responsibilities

A. Make certain that someone is relating as a pastor to the immediate family of the deceased.

B. When appropriate, help with the notification of out-of-town members of the immediate family, possibly by having a pastor near them (Presbyterian or otherwise) make a pastoral contact.

C. Obtain accurate information about the circumstances related to the death and funeral arrangements. Check personnel file for biographical and family information.

D. Make certain the following persons know the information in C.

1. The staff and/or clerk of session of the congregation where the deceased was a pastor/member.
2. Every pastor, or moderator or clerk of session of every congregation within our presbytery.
3. Every minister not serving a local congregation in our presbytery.
4. All persons not on our rolls who knew the deceased well through presbytery-related activities.

### Presbytery Office Staff

A. Are arrangements made for flowers to be given on behalf of the presbytery?

B. Has the presbytery demonstrated its concern for the family by having one minister member relate in an "official" capacity to the family? Has this been made known so that every pastor in our presbytery does not feel obligated to personally "rush in" to console and comfort the family and thereby overwhelming them?

C. Consider canceling all presbytery activities on the day of the funeral out of respect for the family and the deceased.

D. The Stated Clerk will initiate appropriate changes in records of the general assembly, the synod, the presbytery and the local congregation.

## Annual Review of Ministry<sup>32</sup>

Partnering and supporting pastors and congregations, presbyteries can encourage sessions and personnel committees to schedule regular or annual reviews of ministry. This is not a review focused solely on a pastor's performance. Rather, it is a ministry review that broadly includes the work of the entire congregation and its leadership.

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<sup>32</sup> From the 2011 COM Advisory Handbook.



## Questions for consideration:

1. What ongoing resources and encouragement can presbytery provide congregations to help them regularly review their mission and ministry? How can presbytery help congregations learn to use the review process to contribute to the planning cycle for the future ministry of the congregation?
2. What training could presbytery offer to congregational leaders to assist them in planning their annual ministry review?
3. While regular annual reviews could be part of the cycle of the congregation's life, what resources and encouragement could presbytery provide congregations to discern God's call for the next a three to five years of the congregation's ministry?

## Resources:

– *Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations* by Jill M. Hudson, The Alban Institute, 1992.

Grounding evaluation in the theological and organizational context of mission (everyone a minister), Hudson describes case studies of four successful evaluation models that include the whole church. She suggests how “whole church” reviews might result in stronger pastoral ministry and new directions for mission. This is an important resource that will help clergy and laity explore mutual ministry, judicatory executives strengthen congregations, and new pastors get through their first congregational evaluation.

– *When Better Isn't Enough, Evaluation Tools for the 21st Century Church* by Jill M. Hudson, The Alban Institute, 2004.

We must identify new criteria for success, and perhaps even for faithfulness, and hold ourselves accountable to them.” Approaching the postmodern era as a tremendous opportunity, Hudson identifies 12 characteristics by which we can measure effective ministry for the early 21st century. Based on those 12 criteria, Hudson has created evaluation tools, “an early measuring stick” to help congregations evaluate their work in this new era. Not everything of the past is ineffective and best discarded, she says, nor will everything we try in the future be successful. But by faithfully listening for God's guidance and carefully evaluating progress using Hudson's tools, looking at the ministry of the whole people of God as well as that of the professional staff, congregations can improve their ministry, help members and staff grow in effectiveness, deepen a sense of partnership, and add new richness to the dialogue about the congregation's future.

– *The Clergy Wellness Commission* website has Guidelines for Mutual Ministry Review.

## Compensation for Teaching Elders

(See “Terms of Call” in Chapter 6.)

## Compensation review

Each session is required to review the adequacy of a pastor's personal compensation and to establish full reimbursement of their professional business related expenses each year.

### Factors to consider in compensation:

- During the pastor's installation service, Presbyterian churches promise to pay their pastors fairly and to provide for their welfare as they work among the people of the congregation. This varies according to geographic location.
- A merit percentage increase should be added to the cost of living to reflect the increased level of competence demonstrated in the pastor's job performance, years of experience in the ministry, years in the current pastorate, advanced degrees, special skills, and exceptional service.
- A pastor's compensation should compare favorably to other professionals in the community and throughout the larger church.
- In parts of the country where housing costs are exceptionally high, it may be necessary for the congregation to enter into a shared equity agreement with the pastor to allow her or him to purchase a suitable home.

Previous compensation plans generally accepted by the Presbyterian Church suggest that pastors have similar qualifications and work expectations to a high school principal, most members of the legal profession, and many middle management positions.

In its concern and advocacy for adequate compensation for teaching elders, the Committee on Ministry should also consider the adequacy of compensation for other staff as well. The ministry of Christ's Church is not well served when serious inequities exist. The Committee on Ministry has the responsibility (G-3.0303c) to establish guidelines for compensation and benefits for pastors and Certified Christian Educators employed by the churches of the presbytery. The session of a congregation has the responsibility to provide for adequate compensation.

### Housing arrangements

Teaching Elders are one of the few groups for whom the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows a housing exclusion. This means that the portion of the minister's income that is used for housing expenses and/or a manse is not taxable income, but it is not exempt from social security Self Employment tax (SECA). The amount of money allocated as Housing Allowance may not exceed the fair rental value of the housing including furnishings and utilities.

### Resources:

*Tax Guide for Ministers and Churches, Richard R. Hammar*  
*Federal Reporting Requirements for Churches, Richard R. Hammar*  
*Benefits Administrative Handbook*  
*Understanding Effective Salary*

Available from: The Board of Pensions (PC(USA))  
<http://www.pensions.org/Pages/default.aspx> or 1-800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN).

## Compensation components

Compensation for pastors should ordinarily include:

- Cash salary
- Manse value, if provided
- Housing and/or utility allowance
- Full medical, pension, disability and death benefits through the Board of Pensions
- Professional reimbursable expenses
  - Travel expenses
  - Continuing Education expenses
  - Other expenses
- Paid continuing education leave of 2 weeks annually, cumulative to 6 weeks
- Moving expenses, if the pastor is newly called to a position
- At least 4 weeks of paid vacation.

Compensation for pastors may also include:

- Deferred Compensation (403b, section 125 plan)
- Social Security Offset
- Other benefits

## Accountable Reimbursement<sup>33</sup>

Some pastors have been receiving book allowances or automobile allowances in total, rather than being paid by voucher. While this may be or seem easier, it increases the pastor's tax liability.

For example, if a pastor received a car allowance of \$2000 per year, s/he would have to keep receipts accounting for *every penny* s/he spent on the car for church expenses, up to the amount received. If s/he were audited, s/he would have to prove that all monies were used as intended, which could mean keeping receipts for up to seven years. If at the time of an audit, the pastor cannot prove those expenses, s/he will owe taxes on all of that money, even though it *should have been* tax-free.

If, however, the expense is vouchered, the pastor can report the amount spent at each session meeting; the money would come directly to the pastor from the church in the form of a check, and there would be no tax liability on the part of the pastor, and s/he would never be asked to prove those expenses happened, because they would be entered into official session minutes on the part of the church, what IRS calls an "employer

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<sup>33</sup> This topic and the accompanying letter were approved by POSD on June 26, 2015.

expense.” It really saves everyone a lot of legal headache, and reduces the pastor’s tax liability.

Accountable reimbursement, or “vouchered expenses” are those items entered into a church budget which represent purchases made by the pastor, but reimbursed by church funds. Doing so is helpful in reducing the pastor’s tax liability. Expenses can be budgeted, and when they are reimbursed, these reimbursements should be entered into the session’s minutes.

No church is required to use a voucher system for any expenses; however, if your church allots funds to the pastor for expenses, please consider using a voucher system. Some things which can be (and often are) vouchered include:

- Transportation expenses (mileage)
- Books
- Continuing education
- Office Expenditures (photocopying, ink, pens, paper, staples, etc.)
- Periodical Subscriptions

#### Accountable Reimbursement Letter

COM approved the following letter 5/12/2015 for annual use in advising pastors and congregations concerning Accountable Reimbursement:

#### Important Tax Information for You and Your Pastor

Greetings pastors, clerks of session, and treasurers!

We write to you on behalf of an issue we have discovered within our Presbytery regarding pastor compensation: vouchered expenses (also called “accountable reimbursement”).

It has come to our attention that some pastors currently receive book allowances or automobile allowances which they receive in total, rather than being paid by voucher. While this may be or seem easier, it puts pastors in a serious position for tax liability.

For example, if a pastor received a car allowance of \$2000 per year, s/he would have to keep receipts accounting for *every penny* s/he spent on the car for church expenses, up to the amount received. If s/he were to be audited, s/he would have to prove that all monies were used as intended, which could mean keeping receipts for up to seven years. If at the time of an audit, the pastor cannot prove those expenses, s/he will owe taxes on all of that money, even though it *should have been* tax-free.

If, however, the expense had been vouchered, the pastor can report the amount spent at each session meeting; the money would come directly to the pastor from the church in the form of a check, and there would be no tax liability on the part of the pastor, and s/he would never be asked to prove those expenses happened, because they would be entered into official session

minutes on the part of the church, what IRS calls an “employer expense.” It really saves everyone a lot of legal headache, and reduces the pastor’s tax liability.

No church is required to voucher any expenses; however, if your church allots funds to the pastor for any expenses, please consider vouchering as an alternative to other practices, as it greatly reduces the pastor’s tax burden without any increase in costs to the church. Some things which can be or often are vouchered include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Transportation expenses
- Books
- Continuing education
- Office expenditures (photocopying, ink purchases, etc.)
- Periodical subscriptions

Thank you so much! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your COM liaison. If you’re not sure who that is, get in touch with COM moderator ... phone (605) ...) and he will direct you to the correct liaison.

God bless you, and may your ministries continue to reflect the glory of Christ to all the world!

Sincerely,

The Presbytery of South Dakota Committee on Ministry

### Christian Educators<sup>34</sup>

#### G-2.1103a Certified Ministry

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Presbyterian Church has historically advocated and supported education and educational ministry in churches, communities, and our nation. Our Christian Educators are, in many congregations, second only to parents in influencing Christian education for children and young people.

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<sup>34</sup> From the 2007 COM Handbook, pages 5-30 to 5-32.

The Book of Order (G-2.11) describes a presbytery's role in working with Christian Educators. The presbytery relationship with Christian educators is generally assigned to the Committee on Ministry.

The General Assembly, through the Educator Certification Council has established an accrediting process that gives educators the chance to be fully prepared for educational work in the church no matter what their academic background.

G-2.1103b

The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

- a. The presbytery supports the certification process by:
  1. Encouraging educators to seek certification;
  2. Providing guidance through the Educator Certification Advisor;
  3. Encouraging sessions to make continuing education funds and time available to educators seeking certification.
- b. The presbytery provides the following support to the Certified Christian Educator:
  1. Service of recognition
  2. Guidelines for compensation and benefits;
  3. Access to the Committee on Ministry.
- c. The presbytery grants:
  1. The privilege of the floor to the Certified Christian Educator at all its meetings with voice.
  2. Voice and vote to certified Christian educators who are ordained ruling elders

These particular references in the Book of Order speak specifically to the place of the Certified Christian Educator in the structure of the church. Many educators are not certified. They also need care and encouragement. In addition to implementing G-2.1103, presbyteries can:

- Encourage and support all persons called to serve as educators in the churches within the bounds of presbytery.
  - Determine a structure to provide for the care and nurture of educators.
  - Provide access to COM for educators upon entry into employment and for consultation if needed in regard to grievances.
  - Receive and process requests for scholarships for theological education from candidates for both ordained and non-ordained

- service.
  - Maintain an on-going relationship with all candidates in theological education including those pursuing calls to educational ministry.
  - Maintain, publish, and distribute a roll of educators residing within the bounds of the presbytery.
  - Encourage use of employment contracts, and make contract models available.
  - Provide and promote educational opportunities that include educators.
- Encourage and support participants in the process of becoming Certified Christian Educators [www.pcusa.org/christianeducators](http://www.pcusa.org/christianeducators)
  - Include responsibility for enlistment and care of candidates for certifiable vocations in CPM.
  - Provide financial aid for continuing education for all educators in the process towards certification and beyond.
  - Maintain an Educator Certification Advisor's Notebook in the presbytery office and have it available for reference.
  - Designate Certification Advisor(s) and connect them to the presbytery in an appropriate way.
  - Hold service of recognition at each level of certification: Enrolled Educational Assistant, Certified Associate Educator, Certified Christian Educator, during stated presbytery meetings.
  - Sponsor colleague groups for educators working toward certification.
- Involve educators in presbytery meetings and committees
  - Provide a registration process for presbytery meetings that includes church educators as an identifiable group.
  - Include educators in all mailings and packets in advance of each stated meeting of presbytery.
  - Receive and disseminate information to educators from and to other governing bodies.
  - Consider naming an eligible educator to the COM and/or CPM.
  - Visit with educators in the triennial visits to sessions.

## Resources

The following resources are available to help you in your work with educators. They are available at [www.pcusa.org/christianeducators](http://www.pcusa.org/christianeducators). Contact Certification and Christian Vocation office at 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, Kentucky, 40202-1396. Call toll-free at 1-888-728-7228 ext #5751.

- *Educator Certification Advisors Handbook*. This includes requirements for Certification and a page on the Role of Governing Bodies in the Certification process.
- *Educator Certification: Why? How? When? What?* Introductory Brochure for

Educator Certification. Outlines requirements and levels of certification.

- “Proposed Compensation Guidelines” and “Advertised Salaries for Christian Educators”.
- Recognition Service for Certified Educators.
- *Calling to Educational Ministry*. Provides guidance to congregations and educators for their separate and mutual journeys toward providing the best leadership for the important task of Christian education.

Presbyteries have chosen different ways to include educators in their structure. These models may give ideas to other presbyteries that are just beginning this process. If your presbytery has included educators in its structure, the Certification office would be glad to receive a copy of your model to share with others. The resources include “Suggested Compensation Guidelines,” “Sample Salary and Benefits Contract,” and “Sample Christian Educators Position Description.”



## 8. Resources for COM Moderator<sup>35</sup>

### **Thank you!**

Thank you for accepting the very important, very demanding, and very difficult – and very rewarding – role of Moderator of the Committee on Ministry!

You are probably already familiar with the scope of the work of the Committee on Ministry. The resources compiled in this section are intended to help assist you as you build relationships of trust with your colleagues on the COM and in the presbytery, structure the COM for its work, do on-going training with the COM, and enhance sensitivity to cross-cultural issues. Your role as moderator is primarily to help the COM nurture and support healthy ministries in the presbytery.

The material in this chapter is arranged according to the previous chapter topics.

(Editor's note: In many instances in this chapter, such as the section on sexual misconduct, source material used the term *ministry* or *minister* in a collective sense to include ruling elders and teaching elders as well as program staff. Because such collective use appears intentional, that usage was left unchanged.)

### **The spiritual dimensions of the work of the COM**

The COM is charged with a long list of very important responsibilities on behalf of the presbytery and for the sake of Christ's church. The COM does not and cannot work in isolation from other groups and persons in the presbytery or in the church at large. This means that COM members, no matter how wise, talented, faithful, experienced or energetic they may be, are called to be partners. They partner with one another, with the church professionals and congregations they serve, with presbytery staff and with other committees of the presbytery, with synod and General Assembly, and, most especially, with God.

The work of the Committee on Ministry will be done best, most faithfully and most creatively when it is done in a context of prayer, discernment, and worship. The most important preparation for any encounter between a member of the COM and a church professional or a congregation is prayer for the individual, the congregation, the relationship and the coming meeting.

As partners in ministry, COM members enter into relationships with an attitude of respect and appreciation for the congregations and individuals they encounter. COM members bring significant authority and substantial resources to meetings with those people. Their authority and their assistance are most likely to be accepted if they are offered in a spirit of collegiality and in a context of ongoing relationships of trust and

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<sup>35</sup> Copied from the 2007 COM Advisory Handbook, supplemented from the 2011 Advisory Handbook.

care.

## Equip your COM

When conflict becomes destructive, enormous energy is expended that is taken away from the goals and mission of the church. Then conflict becomes divisive and injurious to the peace and harmony of the church. The COM needs to be prepared and equipped to intervene effectively so that conflict does not become destructive.

Conflict Utilization Training and Consultants are available through Alban Institute (1-800-486-1318 or [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)) and the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center ([www.lmpeacecenter.org](http://www.lmpeacecenter.org)). Some presbyteries bring conflict management trainers into the presbytery to train COM and other interested persons. Others provide scholarships for COM members to go to a conflict management training event.

## Resources

Augsburger, David. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

Cosgrove, Charles H. & Dennis D. Hatfield, *Church Conflicts The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*, Abingdon, 1994.

Lott, David B., ed., *Conflict Management in Congregations*, Alban, 2001.

Richardson, Ronald W., *Creating a Healthier Church, Family Systems Theory, Leadership, and Congregational Life*, Fortress Press, 1996.

Steinke, Peter, *How Your Church Family Works; Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, Alban 1993.

Thompson, George B., *How To Get Along With Your Church, Creating Cultural Capital for Doing Ministry*, Pilgrim Press, 2001.

## Intervene effectively when trouble arises

There are many potential sources of conflict in a congregation. Conflicts often arise within ministerial staff, among members of a session, between individuals with positions of responsibility and between the pastor and member(s) of a congregation. The changing role of the church in mission, changes in the community in which the congregation is located, disagreements over worship style, or the presence of disruptive personalities may also trigger conflict. Almost any situation where choice and decision are involved has the potential of escalating into destructive conflict.

## Four Changes that Can Lead to Conflict in Congregations

from Edwin Friedman, *Generation to Generation*, The Guilford Press, 1985, pp.203-204.

1. Changes in the family of the spiritual leaders, either clergy or lay, such as a birth, death, illness, divorce, change of address, marital problems or

acting out of a child, or problems in the extended family of the pastor or the pastor's spouse.

2. Changes in the professional life of the clergy or lay leaders such as personal advancement, achievement of a degree or involvement in a civic project.
3. Changes in the long-term constituency of the parish, or the size of the congregation.
4. Changes in the staff of the congregation, such as the hiring, firing, or resignation of key staff leaders.

A COM may become aware of a conflict or potential conflict in a congregation through one or more sources. The pastor, a member of session, or a presbytery staff person may alert the COM. The *Book of Order* provides helpful guidance about the use of that information:

#### G-3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Teaching Elders and Congregations

Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture and oversee the process of preparing to become a teaching elder.

To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception and oversight of teaching elder members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and teaching elders, it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. Such entities shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting.

The COM may take the initiative in bringing to the attention of the session of the congregation involved any information that has come to it regarding difficulties and may

offer its help as mediator where appropriate. In all conflict interventions by the COM, there should be at least two members of the COM or the Intervention Team participating. **Conflict interventions should never be undertaken by one person working alone.**

## Steps for Conflict Assessment

### 1. Taking cognizance:

The COM may hear about difficulties in a congregation through any of several channels:

- From annual consultations with minister members of the presbytery
- From triennial visits with congregations
- From communication from any teaching elders, sessions, elders who are members of sessions, or Certified Christian Educators from the presbytery
- From other presbytery staff members or committees that are working with congregations.

The COM discerns when and whether to “take cognizance” of such information based on its understanding of the needs and resources of a congregation, taking care not to act too hastily and also avoiding undue delay.

When the COM decides to become involved in a conflicted situation, a team is assigned to the task and the authority and accountability of that team is reviewed (see paragraph 2 above).

### 2. Initial assessment:

An initial assessment is necessary in order to identify both the presenting issues in the conflict and possible deeper systemic concerns behind the conflict. The initial assessment also identifies the extent to which the parties to the conflict are able and willing to enter into constructive conversations. Conversations with the key identified parties in the conflict are important in this initial assessment to avoid skewed perceptions. The COM has particular responsibility toward the teaching elders or educators involved and the sessions of congregations.

**NOTE: The COM must take especial care to avoid unhealthy “triangling” in this initial assessment.**

### 3. Communication:

Prior to any intervention, the parties involved should be notified in writing of the response of the COM to the request or complaint. Meetings with the parties involved should be confirmed with date, time and place clearly designated. Agreements regarding initial interventions should be spelled out, but need not be publicized beyond those immediately affected by the intervention, e.g. the session, the pastor, the session member. Copies of all communication should be kept in the confidential files of the COM.

#### 4. Looking, listening and learning

The conflict team next engages in careful observation and collection of information about the church's situation with particular attention to the systemic nature of the congregation.

- The team will assume a posture of partnership and learning with the parties in the conflict, assuring fairness and even-handedness, and also holding a clear sense of its role as representing the COM as counselors, mediators, and/or interveners.
- The team will lay out a plan for meeting with pastors, educators, elders, a personnel committee, and the session to look at the way the congregation has organized itself around the conflict, to listen to the stories people tell about the congregation's situation, and to learn from the symptoms that are evident.
- If the team deems them helpful, meetings or interviews with other groups or individuals may proceed after the initial meetings with the core leadership of the congregation.
- Often the observation period can also serve as a "cooling off" period for the congregation. If the conflict escalates during this time, that becomes another piece of information about the reasons for the difficulty.

#### 5. Provisional hypothesis

With information about the congregation and the parties in the conflict, the team creates a provisional hypothesis about the nature of the conflict. The hypothesis frames the conflict in terms of the way the congregation as a system functions and the role the conflict plays in the changes it is experiencing. The hypothesis also raises the question of the presence of God in the situation.

#### 6. Action plan, and report

Based on the hypothesis, the team devises an action plan designed to strengthen the healthy functioning of the congregation and channel the energy from the conflict to a constructive response to the difficulties and changes in the congregation's life. The action plan may offer specific resources, suggestions for action by the congregation's leaders to move toward constructive and healthy functioning, or interventions by the team, by outside resource persons, or by an administrative commission.

Depending on the original mandate for the team, a report is made to the COM and another report is made to the session, either for information, for approval, or for action.

#### COM Action in Conflict

Action by the COM might take one of two forms:

## 1. Advisory interventions

The Committee on Ministry may respond to a request by a session member, pastor, session or church educator to be a resource for a potentially destructive conflict. The purpose of an advisory intervention is to assist the session or governing body to reduce the intensity and destructive effects of conflict. An advisory intervention assumes a voluntary relationship between COM and the session. It is ordinarily applied where the hypothesis is relatively simple and there is good cooperation from the parties involved.

## 2. Authoritative interventions

The action may require work by the team given authority by the session or the presbytery for specific interventions. The team may act as negotiator, mediator or arbitrator in a conflict when invited to do so by the parties involved. Provisions of the Book of Discipline for due process shall be followed wherever appropriate in all cases of authoritative intervention and appropriate records will be kept of all actions and recommendations arising from the intervention.

### Evaluation and follow-up:

An evaluation of the process followed, along with recommendations for further work, should be included as part of the COM's continuing responsibility. This evaluation, along with recommendations for future action(s), should be included in the permanent record of the COM with the responsibility for follow-up assigned to a person or sub-committee of COM.

## Moderating meetings

It is important for the moderator to prepare and mail or email the agenda and other information to COM members at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. Agendas should include time for spiritual nurture, educational modules and time for relationship building as well as "action items." It is wise to put issues that will require the COM's best energy and attention early in the meeting rather than at the end when members are tired and attention may wander.

### The agenda should include:

- Opening Worship/Devotional for which Committee members rotate responsibility.
- Prayer for the congregations and church professionals in the presbytery and for members of the COM.
- A group-building exercise or time of personal sharing to help the committee members and staff know each other more deeply.

### As you moderate meetings be alert to opportunities to:

- Articulate the vision of supporting healthy ministries.
- Tend to relationships within the committee.

- Foster communication, discernment, and deliberation.
- Be alert to issues that require cross-cultural sensitivity.
  - Assure that all issues are fully discussed before a vote is taken. Be open to deferring a decision until members are satisfied that the decision is ready to be made.
  - Guide decision-making by keeping the discussion on task. Although a certain amount of free discussion is good for COM morale, continued detours into subjects not related to the matter before the Committee will have a demoralizing effect on the members.

In addition, it is helpful for the moderator to:

- Exercise care in expressing her or his own opinion on a matter under discussion. Moderators often choose to invite others to express their opinion on matters before inserting their own.
- Devote time at retreats and at every meeting to building relationships of trust and care among the members of COM. Make it a goal to ensure that all members feel that they are respected, invited to participate and have important work to do for the sake of Christ's church.
- Monitor assignments and business between meetings.
  - Make certain actions and people are connected.
  - Contact persons responsible for actions to discuss progress or difficulties, and emerging needs for assistance.

### Training for members of the COM

- Many COMs begin their meeting with a 30-minute training experience. These experiences can be rotated with group-building experiences during meetings.
- Training in particular portions of the COM's work is often included in the annual retreat.
- Synod sponsored leadership-training events, where they are available, often provide excellent opportunities for a COM to learn together.

The Office of Vocation welcomes opportunities to assist your COM with education and regularly provides leadership for regional COM training events. They nurture a cadre of persons with COM experience and skills available to work with you. We also sponsor a biennial conference for CPMs, COMs, and seminary staff. Please call us at 1-888-728-7228 ext 5503 to let them know how they can support you in your important ministry.

## Chapter 1. Understanding the Committee on Ministry

### Congregational strategy

Working with congregations and, where appropriate, with other presbytery committees is another significant opportunity for the COM to build relationships of trust, care, and mutual accountability.

The Committee on Ministry may interface with a number of other presbytery committees. One of the most significant relationships is with the presbytery committee charged with congregational strategy. This may be a sub-committee of COM, a Congregational Transformation Committee, or an Evangelism Committee. Whatever its name, the people of that committee are essential partners for the COM as it cares for congregations and offers assistance to them.

The COM is intensively involved when a congregation is without a pastor. This is also an opportune time for church transformation issues to be raised and the expertise of the appropriate committee to be solicited. Many presbyteries find it helpful to utilize a team approach where one COM member and one Congregational Transformation Committee member go together to work with a congregation.

Other occasions for collaboration with other presbytery committees may be to follow up from a triennial visit or to deal with congregational strategy after a conflict. These are times when communication between the two committees is critical.

There are other times when Committee on Ministry and Congregational Transformation Committee responsibilities overlap and where combined resources and personnel can be very constructive:

- when small churches are stretched to financially support a full-time pastor
- when the presbytery is beginning a New Church Development
- when a congregation is considering the addition of staff
- when the community is changing and the congregation is declining or growing
- when a congregation seeks transformation following a serious conflict
- when a congregation is calling a designated pastor to work with them on transformation.

There are offices of the General Assembly dedicated to providing consultation resources and training related to New Church Development, Congregational Transformation, Small Church Ministry, Racial Ethnic and Multicultural Church Development. Consult [www.PC\(USA\).org](http://www.PC(USA).org) and/or call 800-872-3283, or [info@pcusa.org](mailto:info@pcusa.org), or 800-728-7228.

Pages 51-52 from *Committee on Ministry Handbook*. 1999 Edition. Churchwide Personnel Services,  
Office of Resourcing Committees on Ministry, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

### Healthy ministries begin with nurturing a healthy COM

Building a healthy Committee on Ministry happens as moderators and committee members depend upon God for their strength and direction. With a huge list of tasks to



do, many committees fall into the trap of solving problems. A first step in engaging the mission of a Committee on Ministry is to center the work and energy in spiritual practices. Times of worship, reflection on scripture, prayer and retreats build a foundation that allows us to address the question, “What does God want to have happen here?”

The actions of those who serve the church as members of a Committee on Ministry are prayerful and grow out of a desire to serve God. The traps and entanglements are many, but we need to understand we are not called to defend the Presbytery or the church. We are called to listen and tell the truth. It is not our responsibility to solve problems; the best we can do is hold up a mirror that others may see themselves and their part in creating and continuing dysfunctional behavior. We bring to churches and pastors the resources of procedures and processes to enable them to do their ministry.

What matters most is keeping our focus on the larger purpose of “serving God with all our hearts and minds and strength and loving our neighbor.” When we lose this perspective we may discover that we have become the enemy and not the resource for ministry. The reality is, “When people in leadership positions begin to serve a vision infused with a larger purpose, their work shifts naturally from producing results to encouraging the growth of people who produce results.” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, *Presence, Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*, Currency Doubleday, 2004, p.141)

Healthy Committees on Ministry do not happen because the right people are elected to serve, but because we have a vision which is compelling and inspiring and they take seriously their ministry of resourcing congregations and church leaders.

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose you consider a mighty one, the being a force of nature, rather than a feverish, selfish clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. (George Bernard Shaw, “Dedicatory Epistle,” *Man and Superman*. New York: Penguin 1950)

## Organizing for successful ministry within presbytery

### Suggestions for the COM Moderator

As a beginning point, consider the following:

- Familiarize yourself with chapters 2 and 3 of the *Book of Order*.
- Ask the Executive/General Presbyter or Stated Clerk what authorities the Presbytery has delegated to the COM. (In POSD, this information is in the Manual of Administrative Operations.)
- Plan an annual orientation and planning retreat for the entire COM.
- Develop a COM mission statement, the goals and evaluation entity (council, bylaws) of presbytery and members of the COM. The Mission

Statement will inform the structure of the COM and guide the organizational structure for accomplishing its mission. The mission statement will help the COM prioritize its work and know when to say “yes” and “no.” This is especially important in a climate of increased demands, external pressures and limited time.

- Work with the members of the committee and presbytery staff who regularly meet with the committee to develop norms and standards for the committee’s work.
- Become cross-culturally proficient.
- Develop a COM leadership team. If you use a sub-committee structure, the chairpersons of the sub-committees of the COM can be the leadership team.
- Work closely with other Presbytery Leaders (i.e., CPM chair, presbytery moderator).
- Seek out continuing education for yourself to enhance your skills and knowledge of COM-related topics.

## Important relationships for the COM moderator

### With other presbytery staff

Setting the Meeting Agenda. Decide together what issues must be discussed and what decisions must be made during the meeting. These may include:

- a. Responding to correspondence or other communications received by either party that need COM attention.
- b. Sharing information about congregations and church professionals
- c. Hearing reports from subcommittees or persons assigned to work with certain church professionals or congregations.

### With the Stated Clerk

1. Consulting regarding correspondence received for COM action that will require Book of Order interpretation.
2. Consulting for assistance in wording motions so that actions comply with the Constitution.
3. Seeking advice about whether an action being considered is constitutional or is questionable constitutionally – or when an action being considered might be possible but not wise (based on her/his experience).
4. If the Stated Clerk does not meet with the COM, reporting actions taken that require the attention of the Stated Clerk.
5. Coordinating with the Stated Clerk to provide pastoral care for

congregations dealing with allegations or charges against the pastor or other professional staff. The COM has pastoral responsibility for the congregation and would be involved in dissolution of a pastoral relationship. The COM is NOT involved in an investigative or judicial procedure.

#### With the chairpersons of the COM sub-committees

1. Before each meeting, inform each chairperson of new items their group will need to consider and provide available information they will need.
2. Between meetings check with each chairperson about the status of actions approved during the previous Committee meeting.

#### With the CPM moderator

1. Coordination on receiving first call candidates/pastors into the Presbytery.
2. Determine which Committee will examine the candidate.
3. Determine which Committee will request the candidate's file from the presbytery of care when appropriate.
4. Coordinating of ordaining first call pastors who will be installed in other presbyteries.

#### With the presbytery nominating committee

1. Building healthy committees begins with the nominating process.
2. Give the nominating committee information about what your committee does, when it meets and where.
3. Suggest the names of persons who may serve well on the COM.
4. Give this information to the nominating committee

#### What skills are needed by your committee?

##### *Some examples...*

Interpersonal skills	Strong faith and ability to articulate it
Conflict management	Ability to nurture and mentor others
Spiritual discernment	Collaborative leadership style
Analysis and strategy	Human Resources experience
Counseling or chaplaincy experience	

#### What other personal qualities are required?

- Ability to maintain strict confidentiality
- Strong understanding of Reformed theology
- Ability to be a “non-anxious presence” under fire

- Willingness to devote time to the work of the COM

#### What diversity is needed?

The COM, like all committees in the presbytery must be balanced in terms of :

- gender
- elder or minister
- race, ethnicity

Other factors should also be considered:

- age
- geographical location
- size of congregation
- theological diversity that is reflective of the presbytery

Recruiting elders and pastors who reflect the diversity present in the presbytery to work on the COM is an important witness to our shared commitment to be a fully inclusive denomination and an opportunity for the gifts and skills of all the people of the presbytery to be used for the sake of Christ's church.

#### What activities are expected outside of meetings?

Some examples:

- driving at night as part of a team of 2 to consult with sessions or candidates
- keeping regular contact with assigned churches, pastors, candidates
- regular phone or e-mail consultation about pending issues
- attending annual Synod or multi-presbytery training
- annual committee retreat
- participation in specialized training in mentoring, conflict management, etc.
- How much time is expected per month?
- When and where are meetings usually held?
- Is there enough flexibility to include new people on the committee?

Employed ruling elders (especially non-exempt employees), bi-vocational pastors, and commissioned lay pastors usually cannot participate in daytime meetings without great sacrifice. CPMs and COMs often benefit greatly from the insights of psychologists and social workers. In order to include more diversity of age, ethnicity, experience or skills, you may find it valuable to consider whether meetings can be held in the evenings or weekends or whether there are ways that persons who cannot serve on a standing committee could be involved in supporting your work

## With the Synod and General Assembly

- Become familiar with online resources  
([http://www.PC\(USA\).org/ministers/com/index.htm](http://www.PC(USA).org/ministers/com/index.htm) )
- Become familiar with PDS resources for Committees on Ministry
- Get to know Synod Staff and other COM Moderators in your Synod
- Call on the Office of Ministry Support at the Presbyterian Center: 1-888-728-7228 extensions 5503 or 5381

## Chapter 2. Reflections on the work of the COM

### Ethical considerations in the work of the COM

Since the Committee on Ministry is charged with the responsibility to provide pastoral care for church professionals, and nurture and counsel for congregations, it is critical that the COM exhibit high ethical standards. In 1998 the General Assembly approved *Standards of Ethical Conduct* for all members of the Presbyterian Church (published by the Office of the General Assembly and available at 1-800-524-2612, and is also available on the PC(USA) web site.

Many presbyteries have established a code of ethics for all their committees, or a COM may have established its own. COM members should covenant with each other to adopt a set of ethical standards that govern how they conduct their assigned responsibilities.

In considering what standards to adopt, it may be helpful to keep the following questions in mind:

- How is God honored by the code we produce and the behavior we envision?
- What is God's will and how is that will made known?
- Are the interests of Christ being served and, if so, how are they being served?

While each committee will identify areas that are important and appropriate to its effective ethical conduct of business, the following list of possible considerations can provide a starting point for discussion:

- How will information be handled with respect for confidentiality?
- How will committee members participate in decisions in which they have personal involvement such as dealing with minister friends or former congregations or the congregation of which they are members?
- How will fair and equal treatment of all teaching elders and congregations be maintained?
- What defines faithful committee service and involvement?

- How can committee members exhibit loyalty to and support of the wisdom of the majority when decisions are made that are contrary to the individual's judgment?

COM in the Presbytery of South Dakota adopted the following Guidelines dated June 1996. Terminology has been updated and minor edits applied.

## Guidelines for Ethical Conduct

### Introduction

Central to the vocation of teaching elder is leadership of the people of God in a peculiarly Christian lifestyle that has at its core the embodiment of Jesus' words in John 15:12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

These ethical guidelines are an attempt, not at setting legalistic limitations, but rather, in aiding us all to show the kind of love for each other that Christ has shown for us. Thus, it is the goal of this paper to remind teaching elders that they are to live in such a manner as to promote the health and growth of the church and to give glory to God in Jesus Christ.

The purpose of these guidelines is twofold: to serve as a guide as to what is professionally expected of those who are employed as teaching elders in the Presbytery of South Dakota, and to inform the membership as to what they can expect of teaching elders and CREs (hereafter referred to as "ministers").

These guidelines do not presume to speak to all areas of minister's lives. They are minimum expectations. Ministers must also be guided by scripture, personal conscience, Christian tradition, and peer advice. They assume basic honesty and integrity in conduct. They are meant to supplement the ethical expectations of ministers presented in the *Book of Order* and the sexual harassment policies adopted by the Presbytery of South Dakota.

Expectations of ministers and styles of behavior change. The ethical behavior of ministers is a topic which should be regularly considered, discussed, and mutually agreed upon by members of the presbytery. These guidelines articulate customs and practices that are accepted within the profession of ministry. They are subject to regular review.

### Some Fundamental Principles

Section G-2.0104 of the *Book of Order* states:

In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and the world.

In light of this, some fundamental principles regarding ethical conduct can be given:

1. In personal as well as professional relationships, ministers are to demonstrate honest and sincere motives, upholding the peace, unity, and purity of the church and sharing faith, hope, and love with all people.
2. In all professional matters, ministers are to maintain practices that give glory to Christ; advance the goals of the church; and nurture, challenge, and protect the welfare of church members, parishioners, clients, and the public.
3. Ministers are to act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honor, integrity, morality, and dignity of the profession.
4. Ministers are to limit their ministries to those positions and responsibilities for which they are qualified.
5. Ministers will conduct all professional matters in a manner that assures confidentiality and avoids conflicts of interest.
6. Ministers will demonstrate respect, honesty and fairness when interacting with clergy colleagues and persons in related professions.
7. Ministers will seek to maintain professional competency throughout their careers.

### Chapter 3. COM and Congregations

#### Thinking Systemically about congregational life

Since the publication of Edwin Friedman's book, *Generation to Generation, Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (Guildford Press, 1985) church leaders have increasingly used the insights of systems thinking to help them understand congregations more fully. Systems thinking encourages church leaders to let go of their Lone Ranger notions and Superman/Superwoman fantasies and recognize that congregations (and presbyteries!) are complex interlocking webs of connections.

Systemic thinking knows that there is no such thing as an isolated cause or agent for anything in a congregation's life. Praising the pastor when things go well may unhelpfully inflate the pastor's ego. Blaming the pastor when things go badly will be likely to make the pastor either defensive or depressed. Neither tactic is useful, and neither is based on accurate assumptions. When things go well, as they do more often than not, it is because many different groups within the congregation are functioning together as a (more or less) healthy system. When things don't go well or when conflict erupts, it is usually because the congregation as a whole needs to find its way or be helped to rediscover a point of new balance where God's creative power can be unleashed. In neither case is any single individual solely responsible or solely able to "fix things."

Systemic thinking is useful in individual's lives and in church life at every level. It is extremely helpful in dealing with congregational conflict (See "conflict" and "church conflict" in the Index.).

Ronald W. Richardson's book, *Creating a Healthier Church, Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life* (Fortress, 1996) and the companion volume, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor, Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family* (Augsburg Fortress, 2004), are among a number of helpful introductions to systems thinking and congregational life and leadership.

#### Resources:

**How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems** by Peter L. Steinke

**Creating a Healthier Church, Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life** (Fortress, 1996) by Ronald W. Richardson

**Becoming a Healthier Pastor, Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family** (Augsburg Fortress, 2004) by Ronald W. Richardson

These three are particularly helpful regarding change in congregations:

**Our Iceberg Is Melting** by John Kotter, St. Martin's Press (New York), 2005.

**A Door Set Open** by Peter L. Steinke, Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

**The Art of Possibility** by Rosamund and Benjamin Zander, Penguin Books, 2002.

More resources are available through the Congregational Resource Guide

#### Conditions that Enable Immigrant Ministry

- Existence of a New Immigrant Fellowship and/or Congregation,
- Presbytery strategy for mission with the Fellowship and/or Congregation,
- The minister must be in good standing in a denomination in correspondence with the General Assembly
- Presbytery shall evaluate the minister's understanding of and proficiency in:
  - Bible,
  - Reformed Theology,
  - Sacraments,
  - Presbyterian Polity,
  - Preaching,
  - Leading worship,
  - Pastoral care, and
  - Teaching.
- Presbytery should determine the pastor's immigration status. If the pastor is a citizen, an appropriate document to determine status is a U.S. birth certificate, U.S. passport, or Naturalization certificate. If the pastor is a permanent resident, a resident alien card ("green card") should be available. If the pastor is a non-immigrant, a copy of an I-94 arrival/departure record should show which non-immigrant category the



pastor had upon entering the U.S.

### Enabling actions

1. The receiving presbytery confirms membership status of the minister via communication with the denomination of membership.
2. The minister furnishes transcripts and other requested information to the receiving presbytery.
3. The receiving presbytery does background and reference checks on the minister.
4. The presbytery approves the recognition of the minister's ordination by  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of those present at that meeting.
5. If the immigrant pastor does not have an enabling work document, efforts can be made by the congregation or presbytery to sponsor the pastor for an immigration benefit allowing the pastor to work and receive a salary.

### NOTES

- Recognition of ordination ties the action to the time and location of service in that particular fellowship or congregation (G-2.0506).
- The minister may be enrolled as a member of presbytery and temporarily may be given the rights and privileges of membership for that period of service (G-2.0506).
- Recognition of ordination in a corresponding denomination is not equivalent to transfer into the PC(USA) as Minister of Word and Sacrament.
- Questions regarding immigration may be directed to the Manager of Immigration Issues, Offices of the General Assembly at 888-728-7228, ext. 7372 or [Julia.Thorne@PC\(USA\).org](mailto:Julia.Thorne@PC(USA).org).

The presbytery is committing to provide that minister with educational opportunities that are necessary and prudent for that minister's successful ministry within the bounds of that presbytery. To fulfill that responsibility the presbytery may use the following strategies:

- Assign mentor(s).
- Use the services of tutors in areas of deficiency (a rabbi for Hebrew, for example).
- Require enrollment in CRE training courses or in appropriate seminary education programs.
- Use experiential learning, such as attending session meetings in nearby congregations and presbytery committee meetings

## The COM and large congregations

Corporate-size congregations are relatively rare. In 2004 only 215 congregations in the PC(USA) (about 2%) had 1,200 members or more, and only 15 PC(USA) congregations had 4,000 members or more. However, it is important for the COM and presbytery staff and the staff and leaders of large congregations to work well together and for COM members to have some clarity about how very large congregations are different from congregations of other sizes. Although large congregations differ from one another as much as congregations in general, they will tend to have a number of things in common.

### Characteristics of corporate-size churches

- There is a major emphasis on shaping and preparing for Sunday-morning worship. The style of worship may be formal or informal, innovative or traditional, but excellent music and preaching are important and very highly valued.
- Except for the inner circle of congregational leadership, most members do not know the pastor well, although many may relate to an associate pastor or other staff person.
- The church offers a wide variety of specialized programmatic offerings.
- Many very large congregations invest considerable energy in small group ministries to create opportunities for intimacy within the larger community of faith.
- More than in smaller congregations, the pastor is likely to be a public person in the community, and the congregation will be closely identified with her or him. The pastor is the one who casts a vision and sets a tone for the entire congregation and for the staff.
- In most large congregations, the staff has considerable formal and informal power.
- Alban Institute suggests that the success of the large congregation depends in large measure on the ability of the staff to work together collegially and effectively.

### Factors in staff searches for larger churches

- Associate pastors are typically called to specialized ministries and will need to be comfortable in trading frequent preaching and visibility within the congregation for working deeply in a more narrowly defined set of responsibilities and with a particular constituency within the congregation.
- Many large congregations have found it helpful to use the services of a Ministry Development Center to work with PNCs to do an assessment of the final candidates to be called as pastor or associate pastor. Such assessments can help to ensure that the candidates to be called have the

skills and personal attributes they will need to serve the congregation and work harmoniously and effectively with other members of the staff team.

- Because of the size of the staff, many large congregations are almost always searching for at least one key staff person.
- The pastor of a large congregation, especially if she or he has just been called from a smaller congregation, may need to acquire more administrative and personnel skills, particularly in working with clergy colleagues. For many who assume such responsibilities for the first time, continuing education is essential, and they may also benefit from working with a consultant for the first years of their ministry in a large congregation.

#### Administrative/policy considerations

- Well-written job descriptions with clearly articulated lines of accountability and authority are especially important in large congregations.
- Carefully designed administrative policies are essential to guide the work of the session and the staff.

#### Resources and vulnerability

- Large congregations have significant resources that may be employed in the presbytery and for mission and outreach. Some presbyteries partner with large congregations in supporting mission projects and encourage partnerships with smaller congregations. Most large churches have retired members with skills that can be shared to support the ministry of smaller congregations.
- Although they often possess very substantial financial and people-resources, very large congregations can be surprisingly vulnerable if there is a conflict or other crisis within the congregation. Here, as in all congregations, prevention is far preferable to responding to crisis.

#### Congregational Mission Studies

Mission studies are especially appropriate:

- When the congregation does not reflect community changes.
- When there has been a congregational power shift or conflict.
- When membership has grown or declined significantly.
- When the congregation needs to consider a new strategy for pastoral leadership (such as a cooperative ministry).
- When a congregation is seeking a new pastor or when a new pastor has

recently been called.

- When pastor and congregation want new direction.
- At transition times in longer pastorates, every five to seven years.

The best mission studies involve everyone who wishes to be involved and ask these or similar questions:

- What are we doing as a congregation? What is God calling us to do in the next phase of our ministry?
- What are the needs of our community? What is God calling us to do to meet those needs?
- What specifically will we do to strengthen our congregational and community ministry in the next year?
- What must pastor and lay leaders do to help that to happen?

#### Tips about mission studies:

- Anxious or conflicted churches don't produce good mission studies. Deal with the problem first.
- Focus on what the congregation is doing well and faithfully. Use the techniques of appreciative inquiry. (See Chapter 3 for appreciative inquiry.)
- Get participation and ownership by key leaders.
- Design and lead the study with lay leaders, adapting resource material to be appropriate for the particular congregation.
- Be respectful of the time of congregational members. Allow enough time to complete a mission study without making the process too long.
- Involve the whole congregation including children and youth (with an age-appropriate "track").
- Make it fun! Include music, Bible study, and food. (If you want the men to come, bring food.)
- Display a public time line and share highlights at worship.
- Share results with session for approval. Keep congregation informed of action.
- Keep for future use and pass on to the next pastor.

#### Resources for mission studies

One of the best resources for congregational mission studies is available through PC(USA) Research Services, [http://www.PC\(USA\).org/research/help](http://www.PC(USA).org/research/help). A list of

simple, inexpensive tools for congregational self-study and mission study is available at [http://www.PC\(USA\).org/research/help4.htm](http://www.PC(USA).org/research/help4.htm). These resources can be downloaded at no cost.

In addition to demographic information about neighborhoods, congregations can purchase a complete report of Ten-Year Trends for a modest price. A short version of the Ten-Year Trends can be downloaded free. Congregations may want to consider contracting with Research Services to conduct a survey for them, as well.

There are a number of helpful books for planning mission studies. Among them are these:

Ammerman, Nancy T, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinley, *Studying Congregations, A New Handbook*, Abingdon Press, 1998.

Dudley, Carl S. and Nancy Ammerman, *Congregations in Transition, A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities*, Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Mann, Alice, *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline*, Alban Institute, 1999.

Oswald, Roy M. and Robert E. Friedrich, Jr., *Discerning Your Congregation's Future, A Strategic and Spiritual Approach*, Alban Institute, 1996.

Rendle, Gil, *Leading Change in the Congregation, Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*, Alban Institute, 1998.

Rendle, Gil and Alice Mann, *Holy Conversations, Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, Alban Institute, 2003.

#### ***Resources for Congregational Mission Studies:***

Blunk, Henry A., *Smaller Church Mission Study Guide*, Geneva Press, Philadelphia, 1978 (out-of-print; see your Presbytery Resource Center).

Carroll, Jackson, Carl Dudley, William McKinney ed. *Handbook for Congregational Studies*, Abingdon

*Congregational Mission Studies*; Cushman, James, Henry Snedeker-Meier, Bruce Tischler, David Wasserman (PDS, Louisville)

## **Emphasizing Congregational Health**

The Committee on Ministry is given the responsibility for promoting the peace and harmony of the church and assisting congregations in the prevention or utilization of destructive conflict.

People who are trained, skilled, and experienced in dealing with church conflict should always be the ones chosen to lead conflict interventions. Some Committees on Ministry recruit a team of conflict interventionists who are accountable to the COM but are not necessarily all members of the COM. This frees the COM to focus on building healthy ministry rather than expending much of its time and energy on dealing with conflict. If the COM chooses to deal directly with conflicts in congregations, an understanding of systems theory applied to congregational life and thorough training in conflict intervention are essential. **COM members who become involved in working to resolve a conflict in a congregation must do so only with the knowledge and**

**consent of the COM, as part of an intervention team, and after training in conflict intervention.**

Although church members and leaders are often disturbed by conflict, especially in congregations, conflict is a universal experience and can be both normal and healthy. In fact, the ability to disagree openly and engage in creative conflict is one of the indicators of a healthy organization. Whenever there are disagreements, wherever opinions are divided, wherever a congregation wrestles with alternatives in mission, conflict will be present. It is healthy as long as its energy is focused on issues rather than personalities; on equitable solutions rather than “winning”; on seeking what God is calling the congregation to be and do rather than what is desired for an individual, organization or program.

### Work on prevention rather than intervention

As in healthcare for individuals and communities, prevention of problems is far preferable to intervention, requiring less energy in the long run and freeing churches and the presbytery to focus on mission and ministry.

Committees on Ministry that wish to focus on fostering healthy ministry should:

- Assist both pastor and congregation to a “good goodbye” when a pastoral relationship is dissolved.
- Assist both departing pastors and the congregations they are leaving to be clear about the new boundaries on their relationships.
- Encourage and support the use of well-qualified intentional Transitional pastors, especially with congregations that have experienced conflict or are saying goodbye to a long-term pastor.
- Provide excellent support to Pastor Nominating Committees through the deployment of well-trained COM liaisons to the PNC.
- Be attentive to the need for reference checking in the pastoral search process and assist PNCs to be effective in their own reference checking.
- Offer the same services to pastors seeking calls, especially candidates seeking their first call.
- Establish and support healthy pastoral relationships.
- Assist congregations and pastors to be clear about role and task expectations.
- Provide good pastoral care for all ministry professionals.
- Encourage pastors to take their full vacation time and study leave annually.
- Support the provision of sabbaticals for ministry professionals.
- Use the opportunity of the Triennial Visit to create a climate of trust and pick up early warning signs of conflict.

- Be alert to the times when congregations and pastors are likely to be open to assistance from the COM.
- Be intentional in following up with pastors and congregations at key points in the life of a pastoral relationship. Alban Institute research about pastoral authentication would suggest that key points are entry, 1 year - 18 months, then again at the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 10th years.

## Church conflict

- The COM will need to consider alternate ways of dealing with conflict in a racial/ethnic congregation. Two thirds of the world does not place a high value on direct, face-to-face confrontation to solve a conflict. The preservation of smooth, interpersonal relationships, maintaining harmony, and minimizing conflict are important.
- In some racial/ethnic churches much of the conflict is not just between individuals, but involves whole family units.
- It is important to utilize resources and resource people who are familiar with that congregation's particular dynamics and history.

There are many resources available to help those who seek to enlarge and strengthen their multi-cultural awareness. Among those that a COM may find helpful are:

Augsburger, David. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

Curtiss, Victoria *Discernment and Decision Making*

Dresser, Norine. *Multicultural Manners*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1996.

Fong, Kenneth. *Insights for Growing Asian American Ministries*. Rosemead, California: EverGrowing Publications, 1990.

Law, Eric. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*. St. Louis, Mo. Chalice Press, 1993.

Matsuoka, Fumitaka. *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches*. Ohio: United Church Press, 1995.

Sawyer, Mary R. *The Church on the Margins: Living Christian Community*. Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2003.

Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Black and Presbyterian*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Yancey, George. *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

## Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

*Thanks to the Board of Pensions, which prepared the following for inclusion in this Handbook.*

## A supportive resource to committees on ministry

Because the Board's mission is to provide benefits and financial assistance to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pastors, employees and their families, it can help the COM in its role as the steward of pastoral relationships. Both the Board and the COM are among those called to serve in times of transition or crisis when sickness, disability or death alters life's pattern for church workers.

You can help the Board by being sure that the Board receives appropriate information on time and that people know the services available to them. For example, you can

- assure that new pastors and their families are enrolled in the Benefits Plan,
- help family members receive death benefits when they need them,
- remind pastors in need that mental health counseling resources are available,
- share information with churches about Vacancy Dues that help support the Medicare Supplement for retired church workers, and
- alert church treasurers to the resources for them on the Board Web site.

The Board of Pensions administers pension, medical, disability, and death benefits as well as optional benefits such as dental, additional death benefits, 403(b)(9) investment opportunities, long-term care insurance, and more. Members may use the employee assistance program, enroll in health and wellness programs, and attend educational programs including seminars on financial issues and planning for younger members and pre-retirement planning for members and spouses 50 years and older.

In addition, the Board's Assistance Program helps individuals cope with financial difficulties and pastors better serve their ministry. This program is funded entirely by gifts, legacies, endowment income and half of the Christmas Joy Offering.

The Board continues to design and test programs that support pastors and church workers in their ministry. The *Report on Clergy Recruitment and Retention* identified some issues that are of particular concern to the Board.

You are invited to use the resources of the Board:

- visit the Web site at [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org)
- call the Board at 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN), and
- call your Regional Representative as listed in the Presbyterian Planning Calendar.

The Board also has many publications you may want to request or download from [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org) including

- Understanding Effective Salary
- Information for Members Planning to Retire
- Social Security and the Benefits Plan for Ministers and Churches



- Tax Guide for Ministers and Churches, Richard R. Hammar, an annual publication
- Federal Reporting Requirements for Churches, Richard R. Hammar, an annual publication

## Chapter 4. Working with congregations seeking pastoral leadership

A 2001 survey of COM Moderators indicated that, on average, a COM spends about 24% of its time assisting congregations during their search for new pastoral leadership. Close contact with congregations seeking new leadership is important. Helping congregations locate good leadership that matches well with a congregation not only helps congregations serve more effectively, it also reduces the time and energy that the COM spends responding to conflict in congregations. (In most presbyteries, at least one-fourth of COM time is spent later dealing with congregational conflict.)

Most COMs use a trained liaison who is assigned to a congregation seeking pastoral leadership. This person is the primary contact between the congregation and the COM and should be involved as soon as the COM knows that a pastoral relationship will be dissolved. The liaison begins work by conducting exit interviews with the person(s) leaving and the session. They shepherd the congregation through the search process, and conduct a six to twelve month, and a three-year check-up of the new relationship that the Presbytery has established.

### Structuring the COM for healthy ministry

Many COMs spend so much time dealing with crises and conflicts that they have little time or energy left for nurturing relationships with church professionals and congregations. If COMs are going to support, nurture and encourage healthy ministries they will need to adjust the amount of time they spend on each of their responsibilities so that the COM can include a focus on knowing congregations and their leaders and caring for church professionals. When they do, COMs may begin to think of themselves as planning commissions rather than fire departments. To do that it will be helpful to aim for one-quarter of COM resources going to each of these areas:

1. Caring for pastors, minister members of presbytery, and Certified Christian educators and congregations
2. Assisting with finding pastoral leadership for congregations
3. Managing conflicts in pastoral relationships
4. Acquiring the skills to do the first three

### Structuring the COM to care for teaching elders, CREs, and Certified Christian Educators

- Create a COM Pastoral Care Team to
  - provide welcome and hospitality when church professionals arrive

in the presbytery

- assign mentors from similar congregations and the same geographic area
  - encourage Bible study, book study, social groups
  - encourage first call pastors to participate in conferences offered for them
  - provide on-going care for all church professionals
- Create opportunities for church professionals to gather at COM or presbytery sponsored lunches or dinners for people in the same area or with similar needs and interests or in similar work. You might consider offering:
  - educational evenings, conferences, pre-presbytery events, continuing education events
  - family picnics, gatherings at presbytery/synod camp
  - annual clergy and spouse retreat
- Encourage all church professionals to be part of a covenanting peer group
- Establish an Annual Reports Coordinator to
  - receive reports from clergy in validated ministries, members at large, and retired pastors
  - monitor end of term dates for Transitional pastors, temporary pastors, designated pastors, and parish associates
- Recruit a Certified Christian Educators coordinator who will be responsible for knowing and communicating with the Certified Christian Educators and where they are in ministry. This person will share Educator concerns of COMs or create a sub-committee to offer services.
- If possible add a Pastoral Caregiver to the Presbytery Staff
- Create a Training Team to offer opportunities for training
  - Ethics Training in a three-year cycle addressing sexual, money, and power issues
  - Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training mandated for all church professionals
- Create Presbytery Policies, such as
  - sabbatical leave policy
  - parental leave policy
  - ethical standards for ministry professionals
  - policy for dealing with ministerial misconduct

- severance policy
- separation ethics for pastors and congregations they have served
- expectations after retirement for church professionals

### Facilitating the relationships among congregations, pastors, Certified Christian Educators, and the presbytery

Recruit a Triennial Visits Coordinator who will organize Triennial Visits in which all members of COM will participate. Focus the Triennial Visits on mission and consider using appreciative inquiry as a model for forming questions and topics for discussion. (Resources for Triennial Visits and appreciative inquiry are found in Chapter 3.)

Establish a COM Transition Team that

- Is knowledgeable about the process of dissolving a pastoral relationship, pulpit supply, Transitional ministry, AAEEEO requirements, and PNC resources.
- will conduct a follow-up review six to twelve months after the pastor is in the congregation, and another follow-up interview at the three-year point.

Have a Presbytery Membership Team to interview candidates and teaching elders regarding their suitability to serve in the positions to which they are being invited.

Develop a Mission Studies Team to coordinate mission studies for congregations in transition. Consider recruiting knowledgeable teaching elders and elders who are not currently serving on the COM for this responsibility.

Ask each member of COM to become more knowledgeable about a certain number of congregations and to resource those sessions. Ask those people to be part of the records review for “their” churches and to receive and read the newsletters of those churches.

### Settling difficulties on behalf of presbytery when possible and expedient.

- Consider recruiting a Conflict Utilization Team to deal with the more difficult and destructive conflicts. Use the skills of pastoral counselors, and wise, experienced elders and pastors in a team of specialists not serving on the COM. These people should be knowledgeable about systems theory as it applies to congregational life and should embody calm, non-anxious presence.
- Have a cadre of COM members who have a working knowledge of systems theory and conflict management in a variety of cultural contexts, the ability to communicate clearly, and the capacity to remain calm in the midst of conflict. Deploy them for the less intense congregational conflicts.

### Learning skills to do the first three

- Highlight examples of healthy ministries at each meeting
- Make training a priority

- 20-30 minutes per meeting
- All-day retreat once a year
- Use case studies
- Pair first-year members with more experienced members for on the job training.
- Provide conflict utilization training for a few members and interested others or provide scholarships for training events held by organizations such as Alban Institute or the Lombard Mennonite Peace Institute.

## Empowering the COM to say “No”

In the interests of building relationships with congregations and church professionals, members of COM are often reluctant to say *no*, especially to a PNC presenting its chosen candidate to be called as pastor. However, there are times when the COM may need to say *no* about:

- The suitability of a pastoral call because of concerns regarding “goodness of fit” or because of issues that have been uncovered in an executive reference check.
- Membership in the presbytery for a minister who has a record of difficulties in another presbytery or for other reasons.
- Validation of ministry. Not every possible form of employment of a minister can be considered a validated ministry.
- Ministers of other denominations may not be good members of presbytery because of theological convictions that are at odds with Reformed faith or because of lack of education and preparation for ministry.
- Potential Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs) may not always have the necessary gifts for pastoral ministry. The presbytery may not include congregations enough for everyone who wishes to serve as a CRE. (COMs should remember that the commissioning of a CRE is based on the mission of the presbytery, is specific, and is not automatically transferable to another congregation.)
- Terms of Call must be sufficient to enable a potential pastor to live in dignity and reasonable comfort in a particular area. COMs are wise to inquire about educational debt as they consider the Terms of Call for newly ordained pastors.
- Congregational viability is sometimes not sufficient to permit a congregation to call a full-time pastor. Such congregations should be counseled early in the vacancy process, and when appropriate, encouraged to consider a tentmaking (bi-vocational) pastor, a part-time pastor, or a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

While saying *no* is seldom easy, and hearing *no* is never welcome, a “no” will be better received when the COM:

- Has a strong positive relationship with the parties involved in order to make a sound decision and have credibility in that decision. Continuing connection after the “no” and a sense of being partners in ministry will mitigate the initial pain of the negative response.
- Makes a decision that is based on complete information, is fair and just, and that grows out of Christian principles, including telling the truth in love.
- Can say “no” but then offer another option.
- Is consistent, treating decisions carefully and prayerfully for all congregations, no matter how large or how small, and for all teaching elders, even those perceived as being “difficult.”

## Contact Information

A variety of resources are available to assist individuals, committees, sessions and PNCs explore all the issues surrounding pastoral transitions. The resources presented in this manual represent just a few that are available. The following contact information is for those resources and entities mentioned in this manual.

### **The Alban Institute**

Phone: (800) 486-1318, ext. 244

Fax: (866) 448-4391

Web site: [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)

### **The Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists (APIMS)**

Web site: [www.apims.org](http://www.apims.org)

### **Association of Presbyterian Tentmakers (APT)**

### **The Board of Pensions PC(USA)**

Phone: (800) 773-7752

Web site: [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org)

### **Church Leadership Connection (CLC)**

Phone: (888)728-7228, extension 8550

Fax: (502) 569-5870

E-mail: [clcstaff@PC\(USA\).org](mailto:clcstaff@PC(USA).org)

Web site: [www.PC\(USA\).org/clc](http://www.PC(USA).org/clc)

### **Cost of Living Calculator**

Web site: [www.bankrate.com/brm/movecalc.asp](http://www.bankrate.com/brm/movecalc.asp)

## Presbyterian Distribution Service

### (Presbyterian Marketplace)

Phone: (800) 524-2612

Web site: [www.PC\(USA\).org/marketplace](http://www.PC(USA).org/marketplace)

### Presbygrow.net

Web site: [www.presbygrow.net](http://www.presbygrow.net)

### Research Services PC(USA)

Phone: (800) 728-7228 extension 5161

Web site: [http://gamc.PC\(USA\).org/ministries/research/](http://gamc.PC(USA).org/ministries/research/)

## Session Workshop

The session workshop, with leadership provided by the Committee on Ministry, is the first step in helping the session to understand more fully the part it plays in the process of supplying the pulpit temporarily and in searching for a full-time pastor. It is a time for discussion, questions and planning. The material here is used in conjunction with other materials for aiding congregations during the vacancy transition.

Research indicates that a key element in the stability of the local congregation's life and the maturing of her members in the faith is a long-term pastorate of at least seven to ten years. Rapid turnover of pastors hurts the congregation, and while there is no method to guarantee a pastor will stay for such a length of time, there are things which can be done to enhance the possibilities of a long term pastorate both before and after the new pastor is called.

## Components of the Workshop

### A. Opening

Introductions and open with prayer.

Who are the people from the presbytery who will help the congregation during this transition period? (Put names to the faces and titles.) What will be each one's role?

- Committee on Ministry
  - Committee on Ministry Vacancy Person
  - Committee on Ministry Liaison
- Presbytery-Appointed Moderator
- Executive Presbyter

### B. Filling Empty Pulpit During Search

It is important that the pulpit be filled as soon as possible with a temporary pastor. Doing so, will prevent pressure on the Pastor Nominating Committee to take short cuts or to settle too quickly on the first interested candidate. (See *Options for Pastoral Leadership* in Chapter 4 for information to assist in this responsibility.)

The session should be aware that there are advantages and disadvantages for each type of temporary pastoral relationship:

**Stated Supply** - appointed by the presbytery in consultation with the session. May serve up to twelve months at a time and renewal must be approved by the Committee on

Ministry. May serve as moderator if a member of the presbytery. May not become the called pastor of the congregation.

**Transitional Pastor** - appointed by the session after consultation with the Committee on Ministry. May serve as moderator if a member of the presbytery. May have special training and skills as a Transitional. Serves for up to 12 months (renewable). Ordinarily will not be a candidate for called pastor.

**Temporary Supply** - may be a pastor, seminary student, trained lay preacher or ruling elder secured by the session. May not moderate (unless he/she is a teaching elder or CRE appointed by Committee on Ministry to do so). Even if a teaching elder, *ordinarily* (G-2.0504b) cannot be a candidate for called pastor. Temporary supply is often a part-time position and is often filled by someone who is not able to assist the congregation in maintaining full activities. A Temporary Supply may or may not have much knowledge of Presbyterian theology and polity and providing for administration of the Sacraments may be a problem.

**Pulpit Supply** - person secured by session to lead worship on Sunday morning – often a lay person. If so, may or may not have Presbyterian connection; may or may not have much training in Bible; will not offer pastoral care; cannot moderate session or perform sacraments. If an ordained pastor, may be able to perform sacraments. Having various pulpit supply people provides little continuity for the life of the congregation.

## C. The Search Process

### 1. Steps in the Process - (See topic *Procedures* in Chapter 5)

- Note particularly the session responsibilities.
- Clarify the terminology and acronyms.
- Clarify Equal Opportunity and Confidentiality considerations.

### 2. Costs/Pastor Nominating Committee Budget

While the session cannot do the actual search for the next pastor, it does set the budget and the limits for the Pastor Nominating Committee. Thus, when the session sets the budget for the Pastor Nominating Committee, they should take into consideration the following:

**a. Cost of the Search**--How much can be spent on Pastor Nominating Committee's expenses. These expenses would include the cost of correspondence, telephone, travel expenses for the Pastor Nominating Committee or representatives, etc. An inadequate budget will limit the search process and the number of candidates who may be considered.

**b. Cost of Bringing Candidates to the Church**--No candidate should be considered who has not seen the church and community with his/her spouse firsthand. An unhappy family is a primary reason why teaching elders leave and it is better to have all concerned aware of the physical arrangements (i.e., housing), the community and the opportunities before a call is given. The amount set aside for this will determine the number of candidates who may be seriously considered and, quite possibly, the range of the search (i.e., how far the Pastor Nominating Committee may search for a candidate).

**c. Moving Expenses**--While this is not a function of the PNC, it very clearly is a factor in determining how far away the PNC can look for a pastor and/or the age and family situation of the candidate. A young pastor without

children or an older pastor whose family is grown are likely to have less to be moved than a pastor with a number of children.

#### **D. Planning to Encourage the Called Pastor to Stay**

According to research conducted by the Yokefellow Institute, there are at least six things a congregation can do to enhance the likelihood of a long-term pastorate:

##### ***1. Let the Pastor Know You Want and Expect a Long-Term Pastorate***

Many small congregations, especially in the rural community, have a low expectation of long-term pastorates. The assumptions that the pastor will not stay longer than two to four years can become a self-fulfilling prophecy as that expectation is demonstrated in a variety of ways. A failure to look long term in planning by the session is one. The constant well-meant compliment, “Oh, you’re too good a pastor to stay here,” is another. Tell a pastor long enough that he or she won’t be around long and you will probably be right. On the other hand, regularly giving the expectation of long-term ministry by the pastor can work the other way as well. After all, who says all self-fulfilling prophecy has to be negative?

##### ***2. Consider the Needs of the Pastor’s Family***

Studies have shown that an unhappy spouse or children are a common cause of pastoral discontent. When candidates are being considered, it is vital that the needs of the spouse and children are considered as well. What are the things important to them? How do they feel about the community, the schools, the opportunities for employment, etc? No matter how well a pastor and congregation may be matched, if the pastor’s family is not happy, the union is not likely to be a long one.

##### ***3. Take a Careful Look at the Living and Working Conditions Offered***

A pastor’s study that doubles as a storage room, for example, indicates a low interest in the pastor or his/her ministry. It does not have to be fancy, but it does have to be adequate. Have a neighboring pastor come in and look at it, and listen to her/his suggestions if they feel it is not what it could or should be. The same is true of the housing arrangements. If a manse is provided, it should be in good shape and be, at least, as good a home as the majority of the congregation has. If a housing allowance is offered, take a tour with a local realtor and see what is available at the amount you will be offering the pastor. As in the manse, ask yourself, “Would my family and I be happy living here for ten years or more?” If not, chances are your pastor would not either.

##### ***4. Be Prepared to Share in Your Pastor’s Ministry***

Long-term pastorates are more likely to occur when it is perceived as a team effort ministry. Lyle Schaller indicates that pastors are more likely to remain where they share the vision with their boards and jointly set goals, and jointly take responsibility for carrying them out. Few pastors stay long in a community where, as one rural pastor put it, “the coal train is the only thing that moves without my having to push it.” Congregations and sessions that expect the pastor to fix everything for them usually have a history of short-term pastorates.



### ***5. Express Your Appreciation to the Pastor***

Long-term pastors tend to be ones who feel good about their work because they feel supported and appreciated by their congregation. The session can lead the way in this by supporting the pastor's new ideas if they are good ones, cooperating in their execution, and expressing appreciation for work well done. Few people can maintain the level of creativity, dedication, and work load the ministry requires if they feel it goes unnoticed, or is unappreciated.

### ***6. Regularly Review and Raise the Pastor's Salary***

Money is often a touchy subject within the church and many pastors are reluctant to aggressively seek higher compensation though they feel they deserve and need it. It is important to be realistic when considering the pastor's package each year. (Don't say there isn't any money for a raise when there is no problem finding extra funds to fix the roof or repave the parking lot whenever it is needed.) Remember, many pastors report that the only way they got a raise in the rural ministry was by moving to another congregation that was willing to pay a little more.

## **E. Planning for the Future**

1. Sharing information for better communication of parties involved in the transition processes. (Names, addresses, telephone numbers, schedules for meetings, financial arrangements, etc.)

2. Appointing the Mission Study Committee. (This process may have taken place earlier, or the congregation's mission study may already be up-to-date.)

- Consider what that committee's task will be.
  - Update a fairly current study?
  - Begin with a self-evaluation/survey of needs of the congregation?
- Clarifying how Committee on Ministry Liaison will work with Mission Study Committee.
- Setting some target dates for completion of work.

## **F. arranging for temporary pastoral services.**

(Sometimes called "supplying the pulpit".

## **G. Planning for congregational meeting to elect PNC**

A current, valid Mission Study should be completed before the Pastor Nominating Committee begins to interview pastors to fill a vacancy. A mission study may be begun at any time. (Sessions are encouraged to keep their congregation's mission statement updated. The questions used in the triennial visit are the major component of the mission study.)

If the Mission Study has not already been completed before the Pastor Nominating Committee begins its work, the Pastor Nominating Committee will need to use information from the Mission Study in process.

A Pastor Nominating Committee may not be elected until after the effective date of the dissolution of a pastoral relationship.

## PNC Workshop

The Pastor Nominating Committee workshop is the opening step in the committee's work. It provides information about the process and techniques the committee will need to employ in doing its work. The material provided here is to be used in conjunction with other material in a PNC packet developed by the Presbytery of South Dakota.

The workshop will be led by the person appointed as Committee on Ministry representative (usually the COM Liaison) – the individual who will work with the PNC and session throughout the search process.

Pastor Nominating Committees are often frustrated in the calling process because they have not been prepared for the amount of work or time the call usually takes to pursue from start to finish. What seems like an easy and fun job often becomes hard and tedious work.

## Chapter 5. Pastoral Relationships

### Ordination

#### *- Joseph D. Small – Office of Theology and Worship*

The church's ministry and mission are the calling of the whole people of God. In the Reformed tradition, ministry is not the domain of a particular group of people called "clergy," who lead a larger group called "laity." This un-Reformed clergy/lay distinction obscures the reality that all specific ministries of the church are particular expressions of the ministry of the whole body of Christ. All Christians are gifted for ministry, and there is a real sense in which all are ordained to ministry in their baptisms.

Within the ministry of the whole people of God, persons may be called to perform specific functions that are important to the life of particular communities of faith. However, some functions are considered to be necessary to the spiritual health and faithful life of *every* Christian community. The church gives order to these necessary functions by regularizing their shape, their duties, their qualifications, and their approval. These "ordered ministries," and the persons who are called to them, are established in ordination – the whole church's act of setting apart for particular service.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), following the development of Reformed ecclesiology, ordains persons to three ordered ministries: Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders, and Deacons. These three ministries represent two ecclesial functions: ministries of the Word performed by presbyters (pastors and elders) and ministries of service performed by deacons

Ministers, traditionally called "teaching elders," and elders, traditionally called "ruling elders" are both "presbyters." Identifying ministers by their teaching role emphasizes the primacy of the Word and the centrality of the "teaching church." The designation *ruling* elder is easily misunderstood, however. The historic understanding of the "ruling" exercised by elders has less to do with managerial governance than with *ruling out* or *measuring* the work of ministry, the fidelity of communal and personal lives, and the progress of the gospel in the church. The service of deacons is to lead the

church in its ministries of compassion (distributing aid, caring directly for the poor, the sick, refugees, and prisoners), and justice (working for equity in society).

Ordination to one of the church's ordered ministries is not the simple recognition that a person possesses "gifts for ministry," or that an office suits a person's abilities. It does not follow naturally from a person's "sense of call." Ordination is certainly not about access to position, influence, and power in the church. Ordination is the church's act of recognizing the movement of the Holy Spirit in the interactions among the whole church's ordering of ministries, its standards for these ministries, and its current needs, together with prayerful discernment by persons, congregations, and presbyteries.

Ordination is a gift, not a right. The "spiritual welfare of the church" depends, in large measure, upon its recovery of an understanding of the ministry of the whole people of God, the ordered ministries of the church, and the gift of ordination.

### Ordination to other than installed positions

Probably most candidates are ordained to the ordered ministry of the Word and Sacrament to an installed position as pastor in a congregation. But a presbytery may choose to ordain a person to a temporary pastoral position or to another type of validated ministry. Ultimately the decision should be based on what will advance the presbytery's mission and ministry. The call should be for service to a congregation or other work in the mission of the church that is acceptable to the candidate and the presbytery.

### Continuing Members

The term *continuing member* is no longer in the G- portion of the Book of Order, but the concept denotes those teaching elders who continue to be engaged in validated ministries. The presbytery has the authority to decide its members. In making this determination the presbytery shall be guided by written criteria developed by the presbytery for validation of ministries within its bounds. Each presbytery (appropriately with involvement by Committee on Ministry) must develop criteria to guide decisions about membership. The process of developing criteria can be enriching to those involved as they grapple with theological and practical issues about ministry. These criteria shall be based upon the description of the nature of ordained office found in G-2.01 and G-2.05 and the standards of G-2.0502 and G-2.0503.

Continuing members of presbytery are engaged in:

- Ministry within its congregations;
- Mission projects and other forms of ministry that the presbytery believes it should address, for example, schools, day-care projects, chaplaincies and pastoral care, pastoral counseling and pastoral education services and health care facilities and services;
- Ministries in other service of this denomination that are related by organization, accountability, or structure to councils, agencies, mission and ministry units or seminaries, and to interdenominational organizations such as councils of churches, CROP, and the Heifer Project;

- Ministries beyond the jurisdiction of this denomination such as nondenominational or other service, for instance organizations dealing with housing programs, the farm crisis, drug and alcohol addiction or marriage and family problems.

## Validated Ministry

The criteria for validated ministry in G-2.0502 and G-2.0503 imply that the work being validated is oriented toward serving people and enabling them to serve other people. Conversely, it implies that a validated ministry is not primarily concerned with profit-making activities. This does not suggest that a person in a profit-making position cannot perform ministry; many laypersons do. Nor does it imply that the minister cannot be employed in a profit-making enterprise. The primary functions of one's work, however, should relate to the service of people rather than to the production of goods or of profits. In this way the special gifts and training of a teaching elder provide a theological perspective.

A distinction should be made between validated ministry and the secular work that a Tentmaking minister might do. In the case of many tentmakers, a part-time ministry is validated, but secular work (such as being a farmer or teacher) is not.

Presbytery needs to determine where theologically informed skills are needed to carry out its mission. This implies that work to which a continuing member is called makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination. Normally this means that such work should provide opportunities to articulate the Christian faith. If a proposed calling does not provide such opportunity, questions should be raised as to whether it can be a validated ministry.

Committees on Ministry and Committees on Preparation for Ministry need to evaluate the relationship between the Master of Divinity degree and the meaning of "theological fidelity." This should be done on the basis of the requirements of the ministry to be performed, and not on the basis of the individual under consideration. Being theologically informed and faithful to the theology need not be equated with possessing the M.Div. degree.

Accountability here implies that a member of presbytery is answerable to the presbytery for agreed-upon end results. It is clearly inadequate for a presbytery to exercise its accountability relationship solely by collecting and reviewing annual report forms. At the very least, accountability to presbytery should involve a face-to-face review of the ministry of every continuing member not less than once every three years.

Presbytery should provide support that enables the person to carry out the ministry with maximum effectiveness. (For teaching elders in congregations this support is provided in part through triennial visits to sessions and regular visits with teaching elders by the COM.) Persons serving in validated ministries might be given periodic opportunity to interpret their ministries to the presbytery so as to enlarge the presbytery's horizons. They should be included in the COM's pastoral care for all teaching elders.

The presbytery should also decide whether it would validate ministries for which there is no compensation. While neither the amount of time spent in the particular ministry nor the amount of compensation should be prime considerations in applying the criteria for validation, it must be noted that lack of compensation and large time demands

can be a means of misusing people and abusing the system of validation.

Some minimum standards should be established by presbytery for attendance at presbytery meetings. One who is never present at meetings can hardly be described as an "active" member. Attending a committee meeting or working on a task force of the presbytery is sometimes seen as an adequate substitute for attending a stated meeting of the presbytery itself. The working hours of some specialized teaching elders do not permit them to attend presbytery meetings. Some may lose money when they are not at work. These factors must be considered when requirements for presbytery attendance are decided.

Worship and service in a congregation also needs to be considered. Does this mean a congregation of this presbytery? Would work and worship in a church of another denomination qualify? Most presbyteries assume that a Presbyterian minister's participation should be in a Presbyterian (U.S.A.) congregation. Fair judgments about a minister's accountability and participation in the life of the church and the presbytery require establishing some standards by which to make these decisions. Our Form of Government properly leaves such matters to the presbytery itself.

## Examining teaching elders for membership

The *Book of Order* is flexible in its approach, allowing an "appropriate committee" to do the examination.

### Who does the examination?

In most presbyteries the COM or a sub-committee of COM does the examination. In some cases the Committee on Preparation for Ministry is given the responsibility because of its expertise in the examination of candidates. In other cases a separate Examination Committee carries this responsibility.

### What different types of interviews are possible?

- The most common type of interview COMs face is **teaching elders from other presbyteries** who have or expect to have a call to a congregation within the bounds of the presbytery.
- A second common type of examination is that of a **candidate** who has or expects to have a call from a congregation within the bounds of the presbytery.
- **Ministers from other denominations**
- **Honorably retired** pastors may seek membership in another presbytery. Presbyteries differ on principles for handling the examinations of honorably retired teaching elders. Some reason that a more "relaxed" examination should be in order for the honorably retired. Others believe the examination should be consistent with examinations of other teaching elders since the honorably retired may later seek to serve as a Transitional, parish associate or other position within a congregation of the presbytery.

Presbyteries may not discriminate against receiving honorably retired teaching elders as a class because they have too many trying to locate within their bounds.

- **At-large and inactive members of presbytery** may apply for membership in another presbytery if circumstances (position or residence) require it. Both sending and receiving presbyteries must approve the change (G-3.0306, G-2.0503b). It is wise to examine these teaching elders as you would any other member of presbytery. In addition, for the care and wellbeing of these teaching elders, the Committee on Ministry should ask about the circumstances leading to their at-large or inactive status and help them to set goals for working toward active status. The COM should give special attention to their emotional and spiritual needs and is wise to assign a "friend" or "mentor" to work with them and to monitor their progress toward their goals. Care should be exercised to see that the examination before the COM or on the floor of presbytery does not become negative in its impact on their progress toward their goals.
- **Persons who have previously laid aside ordination** are required to re-enter through the same presbytery that granted release (G-2.0507). It is wise for the COM or other appropriate committee to hold a preliminary interview with the person, diligently search the record to objectively ascertain the circumstances leading up to the minister's release from office, and having satisfied itself that everything is in order, give that person permission and assistance in filling out a Personal Information Form and permission to circulate that form in search of a call.

#### When does the examination occur?

The examination usually takes place after the PNC has chosen a candidate who has responded affirmatively and a few weeks prior to the congregational vote upon the call. The call is not complete until the COM has approved the minister for membership in the presbytery.

#### How shall we determine what questions to ask?

The usual categories for questions are Christian faith, views of theology, sacraments and the government of the church. To consider more specific issues, the COM may wish to design a process for reaching agreement about what specific questions will be asked and how to proceed.

#### Think together about the interview process

Who will sit where? Who will ask what? What additional written materials will be required of the applicant beforehand? Consider a core group of questions that may be asked of every minister. Consider some optional questions that may be asked in certain circumstances but not in all circumstances (such as of specialized teaching elders). Consider the advisability of allowing redirect questions and questions created by the specific situation.

In no case should members of the COM or other examining committee allow their egos to get in the way. Heated debate with an applicant is not called for. If there will be an interview on the floor of presbytery, counsel the applicant if you believe there are omissions in their statement of faith or phrases used that may trigger high intensity reactions from members of presbytery. The applicant may choose to do nothing about your warning, but at least you have shown them that you are concerned and helpful.

#### What additional papers might be required?

- Personal Information Form
- A Statement of Faith – usually one page.
- A Statement of Faith Journey – usually one page.
- Views on Sacraments and/or polity – sometimes this is required as part of the Statement of Faith.

#### A postscript about care in the examination process

Some teaching elders share “war stories” about bad personal experiences. Sometimes these experiences happen because of racism, sexism, theological exclusivity and numerous other reasons. Some men and women have misused the examination process as a means of advancing their own theological or social views or by asking some persons to prove their qualifications beyond what would be expected of others.

Be courteous, kind, thoughtful and fair in your dealings with examinations for presbytery membership, remembering that the person you are talking with is likely to become a presbytery colleague.

#### Resources:

Important information and sample policies on website at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/sampling-presbytery-processes-examining-candidates/>

GAPJC decisions, “Advisory Opinions”, and “Constitutional Musings” available from Constitutional Services at <http://oga.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/>

## Chapter 6. Procedures

### Ministerial Misconduct Issues

When teaching elders engage in misconduct it is extremely damaging to everyone involved. It is far preferable for the COM to work at preventing misconduct by promoting and supporting healthy behaviors by church professionals and in congregations. Dealing with the aftermath of ministerial misconduct is inevitably difficult, painful, and time-consuming.

Misconduct is behavior that is unethical and damaging to the ministry and the

congregation. It usually falls into one or more of these categories:

- sexual misconduct
- drug and alcohol abuse
- misuse or misappropriation of church funds
- misuse of power, role, or position

Refer to your presbytery's policies on clergy misconduct and see also *Standards for Ethical Conduct*, available from Office of General Assembly.

Misconduct issues are not new. It may seem that there is more malfeasance today, but there are no statistics that bear this out. What is known, however, is that sexual misconduct and other malfeasance issues are being reported more often today than ever before. Since 1985, churches have suffered numerous lawsuits related to various types of misconduct and numerous teaching elders have been removed or furloughed from their positions. While sexual misconduct gets the most attention, abuse of office related to financial matters also does great damage to Christ's church.

If the Rules of Discipline must be invoked, everyone involved will do well to remember the purpose of church discipline (D-1.0101). A harsh punitive attitude is not appropriate. Care for those who have been harmed is essential, as is a commitment "to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved." It is helpful to recall that:

The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his Church, a power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved, that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ. (D-1.0102)

### Understanding misconduct

Most church professionals have very significant role power. Some people see them as interpreters of right and wrong and of God's will. The trust of other people is a sacred responsibility given to church professionals who are subject to temptations and self-centered behavior just as are all human beings. These temptations may become harder for some church professionals to resist if they have not been attentive to appropriate self-care including taking time for vacations and study leave as well as a regular time off from work every week.

When misconduct occurs, COMs and others find themselves in the position of having responsibility both for the congregation that is deeply wounded as a result of the misconduct and for the church professional suffering shame and loss, and for her or his family, as well.

### What is Sexual Misconduct?

From the General Assembly Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures:

"Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy and its procedures to include:



- Child sexual abuse, as defined in the Policy, “includes but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. No upper age limit for child sexual abuse has been given in this policy because the age of adulthood varies from state to state. The upper age limit is intended to be that recognized in the state in which the act was committed.” (p. 12)
- Sexual harassment, as defined in the Policy, is as follows:
- “Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when
  - submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a condition or an individual’s employment or their continued status in an institution;
  - submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
  - such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.” (p. 13)
- Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation;
- Sexual conduct (such as offensive, obscene or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling) that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another;
- Sexual malfeasance defined as sexual conduct within a ministerial (e.g., clergy with a member of the congregation) or professional relationship (e.g., counselor with a client, lay employee with a church member, presbytery executive with a committee member who may be a layperson, a minister, or an elder). Sexual conduct includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition is not meant to cover relationships between spouses, nor is it meant to restrict church professionals from having normal, social, intimate, or marital relationships;
- Sexual abuse as found in *Book of Order* D-10.0401.”

D-10.0401c. **Sexual abuse** of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to

- any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or
- any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of **ordered ministry** or position.

## The Role of the COM in dealing with misconduct

When there has been misconduct or malfeasance, the COM has two responsibilities:

- to deal with immediate situations of misconduct as they arise, and
- to help church professionals and congregations develop as healthy individuals in healthy relationships.

These are demanding and difficult tasks, but there are some resources and resource people available to help.

- Pastoral Counseling Centers are a source of pastoral care guidance.
- The Office of the General Assembly Constitutional Services staff is available by telephone and e-mail to respond to inquiries about intervention and judicial process. Contact Laurie Griffith, [Laurie.Griffith@PC\(USA\).org](mailto:Laurie.Griffith@PC(USA).org) or 1-888-728-7228, ext. 5432.

Some recommendations to help your COM deal with ministerial misconduct

- Become familiar with the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures of your presbytery. If your presbytery does not have such a policy, see that one is developed using models from other presbyteries or use the General Assembly Policy.
- Recognize that Sexual Misconduct Response Teams (usually established by presbytery misconduct policies) and The Rules of Discipline were created to provide a system for dealing with this outside the work of the COM.
- Once formal allegations are made, you have no choice about the response that must be made. The COM has no formal role at this point in the judicial process.
- Work out agreements ahead of time with the Permanent Judicial Commission of your presbytery about the role of the COM—particularly when it will re-enter a church or work with the pastor. When permissible, keep open lines of communication between the two bodies.
- Check the presbytery's insurance coverage to be sure that it includes adequate liability insurance that covers officers and volunteers.
- When an outside attorney is going to be present in discussion, be certain that an attorney representing the presbytery is present.

## Caring for the congregation after misconduct

For years, Committees on Ministry would wonder why some churches acted so strangely. They witnessed the termination of one minister after another for minor or inconsequential reasons. They saw churches with a long history of conflict. The sides in the conflicts seemed to remain fixed even when the issues changed.

Research done by Nancy Myer Hopkins and the Parish Consultation Service and published in an Alban Institute Research Report (*The Congregation Is Also a Victim: Sexual Abuse and the Violation of Pastoral Trust*, 1992) sheds light on some of this observed behavior. Here is a list of behaviors that emerged frequently in churches where there had been malfeasance (sexual or other) on the part of a previous pastor:

- Some group members isolating and withdrawing from the group. (It is usually the healthy members who withdraw.)
- Blaming and distortions of responsibility for the event.
- Seeking a quick fix without thoughtful reflection.
- Division within the group.
- Anger displaced onto unrelated issues or out of proportion.
- A loss of energy, a feeling of paralysis.
- Despair about the group's future.
- Distrust of leadership often projected onto future leadership.
- A conspiracy of silence about the traumatic event.
- Difficulty in making the decisions that are normal and necessary.

Although these symptoms may have their origins in situations other than malfeasance, when seen, they should elicit concern and response from the COM. Ministering to congregations following the removal of a pastor for reasons of malfeasance must be a high priority.

Wherever possible the congregation should be informed about the nature of the perpetrator's misconduct (especially in cases of pedophiles) and the legal and ecclesiastical ramifications. Members should be given the opportunity to ask questions and expect the presbytery to help by providing opportunities for promoting healing. Someone representing the presbytery should meet with them and listen to their concerns and questions. This will aid the healing process.

### Working with "afterpastors"

Because of damage done to congregations when a pastor or a key staff person is guilty of sexual misconduct or other malfeasance, and because sometimes congregations have patterns of pastoral misconduct that extends back for several generations, the reality of the congregation's life after the pastor leaves is likely to be complex, difficult, and chaotic.

**"Afterpastor"** is a term often used to describe pastors who are called following pastors found guilty of malfeasance. About fifty percent of these "afterpastors" seem to be able to cope with the extra stresses that come with the experience. Others resign the call, or are involuntarily terminated. Many leave with their self-esteem badly damaged. For these pastors, therapy, pastoral counseling, a support network and even career counseling may be helpful options.

For those whose call to the congregation did not survive the experience of being

an afterpastor, it is wise to provide as many of these resources as possible before they transfer to another presbytery.

For those whose call appears to have survived, some of these same options or resources may be advisable, if they have not already been utilized. In any case, the COM should continue to monitor the situation and keep lines of communication open with the pastor as well as the congregation.

### Transitional pastors who are intentional “afterpastors”

A second group of teaching elders who call themselves “Afterpastors” are experienced intentional Transitional pastors who have had specialized training in dealing with congregations after misconduct or malfeasance. They can be very helpful to congregations recovering from significant trauma, including the trauma of pastoral sexual misconduct. The Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists (APIMS, [www.apims.org](http://www.apims.org)) can provide COMs and presbytery staff with the names of such Transitional pastors.

### **What can a COM do when it realizes that they have passed on without comment a pastor who has been guilty of malfeasance in a church or other professional setting?**

If years have passed, there may be little a COM may do. There may no longer be any members of presbytery who know all of the facts of the situation. You may only be able to deal with the symptoms. There are no easy answers.

The legal issues have become very clear as a result of court cases. Any governing body that passes along an individual who has been guilty of malfeasance in their employ and fails to comment may have to face charges in a court of law. Any governing body that accepts an employee without proper reference checking may have to answer for their negligence in a court of law at some future time. In addition, that negligence may be costly to other governing bodies as well.

### Caring for the Minister

An intervention with a minister caught in the spiral of malfeasance is essential. In the case of someone new to ministry, involved in misconduct for the first time, or one who is confused about the issues and ethics involved, competent counseling and an explanation of the professional ethics involved may be sufficient. In some cases, however, by the time the situation comes to light, an addictive process has taken control of the individual. Then specialized counseling and participation in a twelve-step group are the minimum of what will be necessary for healing to occur.

Until there has been healing and repentance, the person found guilty of misconduct must not be passed along to another situation where the person may continue to engage in misconduct, abuse of others, or malfeasance. When the presbytery’s Permanent Judicial Commission has become involved, their decision on how to deal with the person accused and/or found guilty of misconduct will determine when or if the person may return to the exercise of ordained office.

## About prevention

### Helping church professionals have healthy personal lives

Misconduct usually, although not inevitably, occurs when church professionals neglect self-care. Misconduct is more likely to occur when family relationships are unhealthy, when stress in ministry is overwhelming, when spiritual connections are neglected, when self-esteem is low, and when overwork is a pattern. Most church professionals see themselves as ethical people and believe “It won’t happen to me.” The Bible tells us that even Jesus was tempted. Clergy malfeasance is a reality. It does happen with tragic consequences for the minister, the minister’s family, and for the congregation.

Awareness is part of the prevention. Many presbyteries offer orientation seminars for pastors new to the presbytery. This is an opportune time to talk about self-care. COMs can help create a presbytery climate where self-care is encouraged and expected.

### Dealing with stress and burnout

Regular contact with church professionals is critical. COM members can be on the alert, watching for early signs of neglected self-care and connect the church professional with resources to help.

### Workshops on boundaries and ethical issues

Such workshops are required in most presbyteries and church-related institutions. They are helpful in raising consciousness and presenting clear expectations of ethical behavior. They will not eradicate clergy misconduct.

### Termination of Call – Prevention

The presbytery should have a program for developing the health and well-being of pastoral relationships. It should include:

- ***Solid financial support*** for new pastoral positions. Too many positions are created on the optimistic assumption that “the right pastor will bring in new people who will help to pay the bills.” A careful and realistic evaluation of financial resources of a congregation must be done during the vacancy process before a Ministry Information Form is developed. This is also important for presbyteries planning to call New Church Development Pastors.
- ***Clarity of role and task expectations*** is essential at all points in the relationship between pastor and congregation, but is particularly important as a potential pastor and a PNC are in conversation. Every congregation has a number of informal and usually unspoken and unexamined expectations of their pastor. To the extent possible, those expectations should be surfaced, explored, and acknowledged. Some will need to be challenged; others simply need to be made clear to all parties. The personnel committee, the session, and the pastor must agree on role and task expectations. They should be clearly communicated to the

congregation.

- ***Intentional interventions*** in the life of a pastoral relationship at key points can be very helpful. Alban Institute research about pastoral authentication would suggest key points are entry, 1 year - 18 months, then again at 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 10th years.

### When a relationship must be dissolved

It is helpful if at the beginning of negotiations that there is a clear understanding of the part that each player has in the process. COM is responsible for making sure that the conditions for separation are compatible with the *Book of Order* and the termination policy of the presbytery. (See *Severance* in the Index.) COM may play a variety of roles during this process. COM needs to pay special attention to the care of the pastor, the pastor's family, and the congregation while being a voice for justice, fairness and healing for all parties.

There are at least three parties in each severance agreement: the presbytery, the pastor and the session/congregation. The COM assists the pastor and the session as a severance agreement is negotiated. The congregation and the presbytery must approve the severance agreement.

### Principles for dissolution

See Chapter 6, topic "Dissolving Pastoral Relationships.

The following are some principles that you may wish to use as they apply to your presbytery.

- All conditions for separation shall be compatible with the provisions of the *Book of Order* and the termination policy of the presbytery.
- All matters regarding separation of a pastor shall be documented in writing by the Session with copies to the Committee on Ministry. In addition all costs (including benefits) need to be cited. (See an example of a Termination agreement at the end of this section,)
- The separation process shall be considered incomplete until the congregation and the presbytery vote on the dissolution of the call and any severance terms.
- All separation agreements will be preceded by an appropriate process of review, evaluation, or conflict resolution. The process of review can be initiated in writing to the Moderator of COM or Stated Clerk by either the pastor or the Session.
- All costs related to the termination and separation process need to be decided at the beginning of the process or be spelled out in the policy. Options to be considered could include the presbytery paying the expense, having the session be responsible, or sharing in the costs.
- Once the presbytery has taken its action, all agreements are final. The presbytery will be responsible for monitoring the completion of the

agreements made. No further negotiations, changes in the agreement or alterations may be made after the vote of presbytery unless the presbytery approves them.

- The termination policy and agreement are to be written so that the parties involved will waive any further right to sue or take legal action related to the severance agreement unless the agreement is not fulfilled, and then such action shall take place only before the appropriate judicial commission. (See model at end of this section.)

Each presbytery will have its own principles and policy for the dissolution of pastoral relationships. Care for the individuals, congregation and presbytery needs to be expressed not only in the technical sense but also in ways that will demonstrate mutual respect and trust for each other.

## Other Causes of Termination

### Reduction in work force

Separation because of the elimination of a position, retrenchment in budget, or for other circumstances arising out of no fault of the pastor, is at the discretion of the Session and the congregation with the approval of the Presbytery. Written notice will come to COM from the Session after consultation with the Pastor. Six months' notice or pay in lieu of notice is usually given. The Pastor will also be paid the cash equivalent of any unused earned annual leave.

In such cases the Session and COM in consultation with the pastor need to be sensitive to issues of placement, housing and the physical needs of the minister and family. This may call for other items to be included in the settlement such as the use of the manse. COM is encouraged to check with state law to make sure that the agreement meets the standards for such cases in that state.

### Separation for cause

Separation for cause shall include, but is not limited to:

- unsatisfactory performance
- abuse or misconduct
- insubordination
- neglect in the care and use of church property or funds
- conduct inconsistent with Presbytery standards or ordination vows

Causes for separation may include:

- When requested by a congregation and approved by the presbytery (G-2.0903).

- Forced termination may lead to a minister asking for release from ordained office (G-2.0506-2.0507); when no inquiry has been initiated D-7.0200, 7.0800).
- Separation for cause may lead to or be caused by a call to another denomination.
- Dissolution of a relationship in other service of this church shall be reported to the presbytery.
- If a new call is not forthcoming, a minister may become inactive and even be removed from the roll of presbytery.

When the minister is involved in a judicial process, the minister may be temporarily or permanently excluded from office or membership. This results in the dissolution of the call. (D-12.0104, D-12.0105)

When the minister is involved in a judicial process, the minister may renounce jurisdiction (D-5.0300, G-2.0509). This rules out possibility of appeals and terminates the existing call.

Separation for cause must be clearly documented and thoroughly substantiated. It is extremely important that the presbytery has a clear policy for separation with cause and that the policy is followed in a consistent manner. All meetings, conversations and agreements in this process need to be documented in a written form and kept at the presbytery office.

### Dealing with Unsatisfactory Performance

Issues regarding the performance of clergy and staff shall be addressed by the personnel committee or the Session in the annual performance review. This review is to be conducted each year at the same time and the results are to be communicated in writing to the pastor or staff person.

If the session needs assistance in developing and implementing a process for evaluation and review they can contact the COM. COM is also available for consultation and counsel in conflict situations. Only after reasonable attempts at resolution have failed should termination negotiations begin.

### Process and plan

It is imperative that a presbytery have a process and plan for dealing with terminations. Without a process that is followed and documented, the presbytery and the congregation could experience legal difficulties and incur unnecessary costs for all of the parties involved in the termination.

Each presbytery needs to determine those items that are negotiable and state those up front with all parties.

Each presbytery needs to identify the length of time for which severance pay is given. As a general rule in most cases for unsatisfactory performance it is two to six months and is terminated if the minister finds other employment.

The POSD process for termination of call is in Chapter 6, Procedures.



## Ministers of other denominations

### Formula partners

Denominations that are party to the Formula of Agreement are:

- the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
- the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA))
- the Reformed Church in America (RCA)
- the United Church of Christ (UCC)

These churches are in full communion with one another, which means, in part, that they recognize the ordination of the other partners and provide for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers among their congregations. The full agreement is in the Book of Order Appendix C. (See Chapter 4 for more on Formula Partners.)

### Transfer of membership to PC(USA)

Ministers of other denominations who are interested in becoming a teaching elder in the PC(USA) should begin the process of inquiry by consulting with the COM in their area to determine whether or not there might be the possibility of a call for them in a PC(USA) congregation within the presbytery. In order to become a PC(USA) teaching elder, a minister of another denomination (including Formula Partners) must:

- Be an ordained minister and provide evidence of being in good standing;
- Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university;
- Have a theological degree from an institution acceptable to the presbytery of call; and,
- Pass PC(USA) standard ordination exams (see G-2.0505a(2) for exception).
- It is only at this point that the minister of another denomination may enter a Personal Information Form online in CLC for referral.
- If a call to appropriate work within the PC(USA) is extended, the minister of another denomination must then
  - Be examined and approved by the presbytery of call on their Christian faith, their knowledge of theology, and the system of government of the PC(USA), and, at the discretion of the presbytery, in other subjects;
  - Answer the ordination questions (W-4.4003) in the affirmative;
  - Furnish evidence that they have been officially removed from the rolls of the other denomination.

Under certain circumstances, the requirements listed above may be waived. But only the presbytery of call can grant waivers to the requirements listed in the Book of Order. For Waiver of requirements, see G-2.0610 G-2.0505a(2).

- The presbytery shall not waive any of the foregoing requirements except in extraordinary cases.
- It shall make an exception only by 3/4 vote of the members of the presbytery present.
- Ministers of other Formula Partner denominations may be exempted from taking standard ordination exams if they have been ordained for five or more years and if the presbytery approves by a 2/3 vote as above.

#### REMEMBER:

1. Each Presbytery decides the circumstances for receiving ministers of other denominations.
2. A Presbytery is under no obligation to permit ministers of other denominations to serve within its bounds.
3. The information below refers **ONLY** to ministers ordained in other denominations. A process to exempt candidates from passing ordination examinations may be utilized as described above.
4. Recognizing the previous ordination of a minister of another Christian denomination is referenced in G-2.0505.

### Immigrant Ministers

The increasing diversity of our nation means that many more presbyteries will be working with immigrant fellowships and their leaders. It is important that COMs are sensitive to the cultural differences related to ethnicity, nationality, and native language.

It is also important for the presbytery to be accurately informed about current immigration law. Knowing ahead of time that the potential pastor/leader has the necessary work documents can avoid heartache later.

Presbytery should determine the pastor's immigration status. If the pastor is a citizen, an appropriate document to determine status is a U.S. birth certificate, U.S. passport or Naturalization certificate. If the pastor is a permanent resident, a resident alien card ("green card") should be available. If the pastor is a non-immigrant, a copy of an I-94 arrival/departure record should show which non-immigrant category the pastor had upon entering the U.S. If the immigrant pastor does not have an enabling work document, efforts can be made by the congregation or presbytery to sponsor the pastor for an immigration benefit allowing the pastor to work and receive a salary.

Questions regarding immigration may be directed to the Manager of Immigration Issues, Office of the General Assembly at 888-728-7228, extension 5372 or [Julia.thorne@PC\(USA\).org](mailto:Julia.thorne@PC(USA).org). Information about working with New Immigrant Ministries is found in Section 3.

## Sample Sabbatical Leave Policy

### Rationale for Sabbatical Leave

Someone has compared the life of a minister with that of a taxi leaving an airport. It is so loaded down with passengers and suitcases and the other items that the car has a hard time even moving and is strained to the point breaking, yet the taxi may be only a few years old. So it is with clergy. They bear the burdens, the anguish, the pain, and hurt of their parishioners 24-7. That is 24 hours, seven days a week. As a result, many, if not all, experience to one degree or another symptoms of emotional collapse, stress related illnesses, and “burnout” adversely affecting the minister’s personal, family, and parish life, and greatly diminishing his or her effectiveness and well-being. For too long, this situation has been accepted, even tolerated as an inevitable part of the job.

A viable solution to the peculiar stresses and strains the clergy encounter is the Sabbath Leave, sometimes referred to as a Sabbatical. This solution has its roots in Scripture and in church tradition.

Given this rationale for sabbatical leave, the primary reason for the sabbatical may be recovery from exhaustion rather than professional development. Hence, approval should allow for mental health reasons and not be limited to the “intensive enhancement for ministry and mission” indicated below.

### Definitions

Sabbatical Leave for pastors and church educators is a planned time of intensive enhancement for ministry and mission. Sabbatical Leave follows precedents in the academic community and among a growing number of private sector groups. This “extended time” is qualitatively different from “vacation” or “days off.” It is an opportunity for the individual to strategically disengage from regular and normal tasks so that ministry and mission may be viewed from a new perspective because of a planned time of focus.

Sabbatical Leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year for renewal. It is both an act of faith that God will sustain us through a period of reflection and changed activity and an occasion for recovery and renewal of vital energies.

Sabbatical Leave is recommended for all full-time pastors and educators serving churches, who have served in their present position for six (6) continuous years. The recommended length of the Sabbatical Leave is three (3) months. Accrued vacation time and study leave may be attached to the Sabbatical Leave. It is further recommended that this Sabbatical Leave be built into the Call Process. Upon completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the incumbent pastor/educator would normally continue serving the same congregation for a period of at least four times the length of the Sabbatical Leave plus accrued vacation time. In addition, Congregations may limit Sabbatical Leave to one staff person per year in multiple staff situations.

### Planning for Sabbath Leave

To be eligible for a Sabbatical Leave, the pastor/educator shall present, in writing, to the session for their approval, a program (“The Plan”) of activity for the Sabbatical

Leave at least six (6) months prior to the proposed beginning of the Sabbatical Leave. This program of activity and meditation shall include a detailed description of the plan, the goals to be achieved and the expected end product(s), together with a personal statement as to why this Sabbatical Leave would be valuable for both the pastor/educator and the church.

Upon approval by the Session prior to the Sabbatical Leave, the Plan shall be forwarded to the Committee on Ministry for their review and recommendation. Included in this Plan will be the congregation's plan for pastoral/educator services during the period of the Sabbatical Leave.

At the completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the pastor/educator should present to the next regular meeting of the session, a written report of activities and findings. This report also will be sent to the Committee on Ministry immediately following the Session meeting when it is presented.

### Funding

The employing church will continue the pastor/educator salaries, pension/major medical benefits, book allowance, and, at the direction of the session, auto and continuing education allowances at the same level as those in effect at the time of the Sabbatical Leave.

The employing church will also contract for substitute pastor/educator services during the period of the Sabbatical Leave. Although on the face of it, the Sabbatical Leave may seem like yet another financial burden for the local congregation to bear, it is crucial for session and congregation to recognize the long-term benefits they as a congregation will reap from granting Sabbaticals. For example, teaching elders/educators who have the opportunity to examine issues of professional growth and development as pastors within an existing pastorate are more likely to stay more years in a particular call. The sabbatical provision conveys a sense of support and caring on the part of the calling congregation. It also offers an incentive to both teaching elders and educators to commit to and think in terms of longer years of service in a particular church.

Clergy, churches, and presbytery are encouraged to set aside funds each year so that resources will be available during the time of Sabbatical Leave. Those churches that would have financial problems in providing for the Sabbatical Leave could consult with their Presbytery. In addition, those churches that could not secure lay leadership within their own congregations might consider using CREs who might be willing to preach one Sunday with or without honorarium.

NOTE: The Louisville Institute, a Lilly Endowment Program housed at Louisville Seminary, provides study grants for pastoral leaders.

### Re-Entry

Upon re-entry, it is strongly suggested that the clergy share with the entire congregation the details of the leave as well as reflections on its value and benefit. The re-entry process provides a great opportunity to reflect upon the benefits that resulted from the Sabbath Leave. Such expected benefits as:

- Discovering the strength of lay leadership heretofore underutilized
- New understandings of the concepts of mission between clergy and

congregation

- Reaffirmation of calling to ministry on part of clergy and congregation with both being reinvigorated and rededicated to the work of God's people.

The ideal result would be for the congregation to see this period of time not just as the clergy's Sabbath Leave but also as the congregation's Sabbath Leave.

# **SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY FOR PASTORS AND EDUCATORS IN THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

## **Policy Statement**

The Presbytery of South Dakota recommends to the sessions of its churches that teaching elders and Church Educators be granted a compensated sabbatical of at least three (3) months after six (6) years of service to an individual congregation.

## **Rationale**

A sabbatical will enable the minister/educator to be renewed through the vital pursuit of continuing education, extended time spent in spiritual formation, and fresh mentoring by respected teachers. A sabbatical enables a minister/educator to return to the responsibilities of the parish with new energy, spiritual vision and effectiveness.

## **Committee on Ministry Responsibilities**

1. Review the sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted by the minister.
2. Serve as mediator in any concerns of session, educator or minister relative to the sabbatical.
3. Determine who will moderate the session in the minister's absence.

## **Minister or Educator Responsibilities**

1. Bring the sabbatical proposal before the session – at least in outline form – a minimum of six months before the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Secure the approval of the session for the sabbatical proposal and work out the necessary coverage of pastoral and pulpit responsibilities.
3. Assure the session of continued service to the congregation for at least one full year from the conclusion of the sabbatical.
4. Bring up to date all pending responsibilities as determined in consultation with the session before departing on a sabbatical.
5. Submit to the Committee on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of plans.
6. Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience to the session and the Committee on Ministry.

## **Session Responsibilities**

1. Receive for approval the minister's proposal for a sabbatical, at least six (6) months in advance of the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Continue terms of call commitments to the minister during sabbatical leave.
3. Communicate to the congregation the importance and values to the church of a sabbatical.
4. Request a written overview of the sabbatical from the minister upon return.

### **Additional Responsibilities/Information**

If agreed upon by session and the minister, the sabbatical might be combined with study leave for extended graduate study.

## **A SABBATH LEAVE POLICY FOR THE EXEMPT STAFF OF THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**Policy:** The Presbytery may grant Sabbatical Leave to the General or Executive Presbyter and Full-time Associate Presbyters. Sabbaticals shall be for no more than three months with pay, but vacation time may be added if necessary for the Sabbath leave designed. The leave will be for professional development and related to the life of the Presbytery. Only one presbytery program staff person may be on sabbatical leave at any given time.

**Eligibility:** The General/Executive Presbyter and full-time Associate Presbyters must have been employed with the Presbytery for a minimum of six (6) consecutive years and not interrupted by prolonged personal paid leave or leave of absence. A report on learning in relation to agreed goals must be reviewed with the Personnel Function Group and General Presbyter (when applicable, as with the Associate Presbyters) within one month after the completion of the leave,

**Study Plan:** A detailed written plan of study with clearly identified goals and expected end products must be approved by the committee on Ministry and the Personnel Function Group long enough in advance so that budget and staffing needs may be met during the time the Exempt Staff is on Sabbatical Leave.

### **Sample Recommendations to Presbytery:**

- That Presbytery of South Dakota approve the Sabbatical Policy outline for teaching elders and educators serving churches in the Presbytery of South Dakota and strongly encourage member churches to adopt it for their teaching elders and educators.
- That the Sabbatical Leave Policy be presented to all Pastor Nominating Committees and commended to them for inclusion in the Terms of Call.
- That the Presbytery of South Dakota approve the Sabbatical Leave Policy outlined for Exempt Staff of the Presbytery of South Dakota.

### **The COM and the AAEEEO Policy of the General Assembly**

*One of the major responsibilities of the Committee on Ministry is to insure the implementation of equal employment opportunity for ministers and candidates.*

consideration of candidates to be called as pastor. Consider connecting them with the Associate for Administration and Racial Ethnic Referral in the Leadership and Vocation Goal Area. (888-728-7228, ext. 5748). Encourage them to consider racial ethnic persons as potential pastors and help them to remember that pastoral excellence is not determined by or limited by racial ethnic background. It may be also be helpful to encourage a PNC to consider women as candidates to be called as pastor.

## Review of Conflict Utilization Techniques

This handbook does not include simple how-to-do-it steps for initiating the conflict utilization method. It assumes an acquaintance with the roles of leadership on the part of the reader. Of course in a conflict situation, a leader sometimes gets pulled into the emotions and has temporary amnesia about good processes of interpersonal and group life. The following list is a review for the leader in a difficult conflict situation.

- Leaders need to make a choice on whether to intervene in a formal or informal way.
- Before acting, however, leaders reflect and pray about their own motivation in taking a lead. They ask if they feel responsible to fix or to save the church from its conflict. If so, further prayer is needed. On the other hand, if leaders are willing to guide and assist a group or a congregation in finding its inner wisdom, without taking responsibility for what is truly the congregation's own responsibility as a whole, then one has the right heart for the work.
- An early strategy is to invite people to a conversation about the difficulties in their congregation with the hope that everyone can learn more about what the conflict is about and what it means. If the conflict partners are not willing to have a conversation, either separately or together, there will be little a leader can do to directly manage the conflict.
- Leaders seeking to find hope in the midst of a congregational conflict need to follow basic good communication methods such as using "I messages" and "active listening."
- It will be important for the conflict utilization leader to encourage everyone involved in the situation to commit to giving each other a fair chance to give their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment.
- Refusing to take sides in the conflict is of course essential. However, in cases of clear injustice or oppression, leaders may be helped by remembering Desmond Tutu's comment that if the elephant has its foot on the tail of the mouse, the mouse will not particularly appreciate a friendly observer's neutrality. But fairness and carefulness are always appreciated, even in the toughest of conflict situations.
- **Some initial ground-rules are important to the task of finding hope in an apparently hopeless situation. It may be helpful to adopt rules for**



**keeping the conflict “clean” and fair such as those below from Sawyer, *Work of the Church*, 1986, pp 95 ff.**

- a. *Listen to each other and “say it back.”* Before parties can rebut an opponent’s statements, they must first repeat the statement in their own words.
  - b. *Stick to the issues and stay away from personalities.*
  - c. *Stick to the present; do not bring up past conflicts.*
  - d. *The best offense is a good defense.* State clearly your own position rather than attack an opposing position.
  - e. *If your position prevails, thank God. If your position is defeated, accept the majority decision and be patient.*
  - f. *Remember that it is Christ’s church, not yours or mine, and we are seeking God’s will first.*
- One way of helping a group move to a constructive look at their congregation is to talk about finite and infinite games. This concept comes from the work of philosopher James Carse in his book, *Finite and Infinite Games* (Ballantine Books, 1987). Games are played to either win or lose. In the most serious of finite games, the winners have final power over the lives of the losers. Frequently church members take on the competitiveness of finite games strategy, assuming that it is all-important for them to win and for their opponents to lose. Carse teaches that infinite games are played for the purpose of continuing a relationship. Openness, fairness, and diminishing competition are ways to play at church difficulties in infinite ways, in order to maintain the relationships among the people on every side of an issue or argument.

# Administration

## Contents of Permanent Files of Teaching Elders

	<b>Document</b>	<b>Received?</b>	<b>Retention</b>
1	5-part form (official transmittal by Stated Clerk)	At time of call	Permanent
2	Personal Information Form (or other corresponding document)	At time of Call	Retained for duration of Call; purged and shredded at time of transfer
3	Statement of Faith	At Entrance Interview	Current form retained; purged and shredded at time of transfer
4	Annual Continuing Education Report	Annually	For a period of time consistent with policy for accrual of continuing education time; purged and shredded at time of transfer.
5	Copy of original call and annual changes in terms of call	At time of Call; annual update	Information regarding terms of call retained for three years; purged and shredded after three years.
6	Sustained Disciplinary Charges	Official Record of Presbytery action.	Notation of Presbytery Action (per minutes) place in permanent record.
7	Current Disciplinary Process	As needed	Factual statement and results placed in permanent record.
8	Vindication	Official Record of Presbytery action.	Notation of Presbytery Action (per minutes) placed in permanent record.
9	Background/Reference Check	Prior to Call	Factual statement indicating results placed in permanent record. Other notes shredded.

10	Current records regarding matters under investigation by Committee on Ministry	At discretion of C.O.M. Chair, EP, or Stated Clerk	Factual statement and results placed in permanent record.
11	Request for release from ordained ministry	Official Record of Presbytery action	Notation of Presbytery Action (per minutes) placed in permanent record.
12	Removal from office or renunciation of jurisdiction	Official Record of Presbytery action	Notation of Presbytery Action (per minutes) placed in permanent record.
13	Reports of assessments by career development centers, counseling centers, psychotherapists	As received	Permanent (including any written authorizations to release information contained therein)
	<b>May be Added to Minister's File:</b>		
	Correspondence to/from Minister	Stated Clerk or EP discretion	Stated Clerk determines what is purged and shredded at time of transfer and what is retained.
	Newspaper/Magazine Articles	Stated Clerk or EP discretion	Purged and shredded at time of transfer
	Records regarding service within the Presbytery or broader church	Stated Clerk or EP discretion	Purged and shredded at time of transfer

## Procedures for Permanent Files of Teaching Elders

- All confidential files for current teaching elder members of the Presbytery shall be kept in a secured (locked) cabinet in the office of the Presbytery. The key for the secured cabinet shall be under the control of the Stated Clerk and the COM Moderator (or an administrative staff person under their immediate direction and supervision).

- Files are accessible to the Stated Clerk or the COM Moderator and may be reviewed under their supervision by the Committee on Ministry. (Note: Reports of assessments by career development centers, counseling centers, psychotherapists, etc. can only be reviewed with a written release by the minister him/herself. Those reports shall be clearly marked as confidential, with indication of appropriate releases.)

- Each teaching elder of Presbytery shall have access to review his/her own file under the supervision of the Stated Clerk or COM Moderator. Disputes regarding information retained within the minister member's file shall be decided by the Stated Clerk.

- Information permanently removed from a teaching elder file ordinarily shall be shredded. On request, it may be returned to that minister.

- Permanent files shall be retained for minister members who are dismissed to the jurisdiction of another Presbytery/denomination or who are released from the exercise of ordained office.

- Permanent files shall be retained on all minister members who are removed from the exercise of ordained office and/or membership. Such files will include a copy of any PJC decisions, terms of restoration (if any), and documentation of progress toward rehabilitation. The Stated Clerk shall keep a current list of all (former) teaching elder members of the Presbytery who have been removed from the exercise of ordained office and/or membership.

- Permanent files shall be retained on all teaching elders who renounce the jurisdiction of the church. The Stated Clerk shall keep a current list of all (former) teaching elders of the Presbytery who have renounced the jurisdiction of the church

- If teaching elder member renounces the jurisdiction of the church and (a) a Committee on Ministry investigation is under way, (b) an investigating and/or prosecuting committee has been formed, and/or (c) charges have been forwarded to the PJC but a trial has not been completed, then a one page summary will be placed in the (former) member's file. Records from such investigating and/or prosecuting committees will be preserved by the Stated Clerk.

- Permanent files shall be retained for 25 years after the death of a (former) teaching elder member of the Presbytery. At that time, the Stated Clerk shall insure that all appropriate rolls of the Presbytery are updated and, if the Presbytery is unaware of any civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical actions pertaining to the deceased minister member, the files shall be shredded.

- An Investigating Committee within the Presbytery may request the Executive Presbyter or Stated Clerk to disclose material within a teaching elder member's permanent file, when they deem that it may be pertinent to the allegations they are investigating. When so requested, it is the responsibility of the Executive Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk to disclose those materials.

- Information maintained in separate files by the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, or the Committee on Ministry shall be deemed part of the teaching elder member's

permanent file and are under the guidelines/restrictions that pertain thereunto.

- Any treatment of materials within, or related to, a teaching elder member's permanent file in a manner other than prescribed in the current guidelines/restrictions shall be noted in that minister member's permanent file.

- Any review of a teaching elder member's file (e.g., by COM, investigating and/or prosecuting committee, PJC), including review by the minister him/herself, shall be noted in the file.

- When the minister ceases being a member of the Presbytery, their permanent file shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk. It shall be the responsibility of the Stated Clerk to maintain all permanent files.



## 9. Copier-Ready Forms

Some of these forms are found scattered throughout the manual, but those presented on the following pages have no header or footer. They will print “cleanly” on white paper with no extraneous notations. The “trick” in being able to create the list shown in the Table of Contents is that each form has a hidden title (shown in the TOC) with a font color of white.

Some of these forms can be used as-is (just fill in the blanks), but congregations and committees are encouraged to modify the forms as needed for their particular situation.

Installing hyperlinks on this page was not successful. To navigate directly to the form you want, please go to the Table of Contents. Hold the ctrl key and click on the form you want and it will appear.

## EVALUATION OF TRIENNIAL VISIT

All members of session, including the pastor, should complete this evaluation and return it to the individual indicated below. Pastors are encouraged to include “Evaluation of Triennial Visit” in the agenda for the session meeting following the visit to assure that people have responded.

Church Name:

Date of visit:

1. What was the most beneficial aspect of the triennial visit?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What aspect of the congregation or pastorate was not covered or was lightly touched upon which you believe needs more attention?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Any other remarks that would help Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry strengthen the connection between Presbytery and the local congregation.

Please return your comments to:

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## Sample Covenant for Shared Ministry

PASTOR.: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE CALL EFFECTIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHURCHES: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

PASTORAL ACTIVITIES: (indicate activities for each congregation)

We understand this shared ministry to be approximately

\_\_\_\_\_ % for \_\_\_\_\_ Church

and \_\_\_\_\_ % for \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

### COMPENSATION:

Cash salary

#### Housing

Utilities

Medical and Pension dues

Travel reimbursement @ \$0.\_\_\_\_\_ per mile

Other ministry cost reimbursement (telephone calls, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Continuing education or book allowance \_\_\_\_\_

Vacation time \_\_\_\_\_ Continuing education time \_\_\_\_\_

Moving expenses \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### OTHER SHARED MINISTRY EXPENSES:

### CONTRIBUTIONS OF EACH PARTNER CHURCH:

\_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE YEAR 20\_\_\_\_, \$\_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH

\_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE YEAR 20\_\_\_\_, \$\_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO SHARE IN MINISTRY, WITNESSING TOGETHER TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN A MINISTRY TO OUR COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER AS WE LIVE AND GROW AS CHRISTIANS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor  
date of session action: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presbytery COM Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator of Session

## YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT, Sample 1

We, the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
\_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota

agree to be participants in a YOKED MINISTRY for the following purpose:

To provide strength and support to one another, spiritually and financially, so that both churches may more effectively serve the Lord in their respective communities.

To fulfill this purpose we agree to work together, sharing a pastoral ministry and related financial obligations as follows:

### A. Sharing Pastoral Ministry

1. We will seek and call a pastor to provide pastoral leadership and ministry in accordance with the attached job description.
2. The pastor shall be expected to attempt to distribute pastoral duties and functions between the two congregations on a basis proportionate to membership and need.

### B. Sharing Financial Responsibility

We will share responsibility for the following financial obligations: [This will vary with each agreement.]

**Pastor's Compensation** [cash salary; continuing education; professional/travel expense; pension/medical insurance; use of manse or housing allowance; manse utilities allowance]

**Pulpit Supply Expense** [cash remuneration; travel expense; social security/Medicare tax]

**Office and Administrative Expense** [office supplies; equipment and repair; telephone; secretarial help]

**Manse Repairs** [arrangements for regular maintenance]

The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ will provide \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (or) \_\_\_\_\_ % of these shared obligations per \_\_\_\_\_ (time). The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ will provide \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (or) \_\_\_\_\_ % of these shared obligations per \_\_\_\_\_ (time).

The session of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ shall be responsible for the annual review of the adequacy of the pastor's compensation and preparation of the budget for the shared obligations. [This may be a joint responsibility.]

**C. Worship Times**

Worship times shall be determined by consultation among the sessions and the pastor.

**D. Joint Session Meetings**

To facilitate communication, cooperation and fellowship between the two churches, the session shall meet together at least once during the year and shall confer regularly throughout the year. [Some sessions may want to meet together more often.]

**Review and Amendment**

This agreement shall be reviewed annually by both sessions. Amendments may be made to this agreement by consultation among the sessions, the pastor, and Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.

**Termination of the Yoked Agreement**

This yoked ministry agreement may be terminated (a) only after one year has elapsed from the time when either congregation votes to terminate the agreement or (b) at a time mutually agreed upon by the churches.

_____ Clerk of Session	_____ Date	_____ Clerk of Session	_____ Date
_____ [Church Name]	_____ [Church City]	_____ [Church Name]	_____ [Church City]
_____ Moderator of Sessions	_____ Date	_____ Presbytery's Committee on Ministry Moderator	_____ Date

**Other Possible Items for a Yoked Ministry Agreement**

Parish Council  
Joint Personnel Committee  
Joint Use of a Building

Joint Christian Education Program  
Joint Youth Program  
Joint Accounting Arrangement

## **YOKED MINISTRY AGREEMENT, Sample 2**

We, the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
and  
\_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota

agree to be participants in a YOKED MINISTRY for the following purpose:

To provide strength and support to one another, spiritually and financially, so that both churches may more effectively serve the Lord in their respective communities.

To fulfill this purpose we agree to work together, sharing a pastoral ministry and related financial obligations as follows:

### **I. Pastoral Relationships**

#### **A. Pastor's Responsibilities to the Congregations**

1. To conduct worship services in both churches.
2. To hold office hours at the non-resident church for a minimum of two half-days per week.
3. To attempt to distribute pastoral duties and functions on a 50/50 basis.

#### **B. Congregations' Responsibilities to the Pastor [List Terms of Call.]**

The financial obligations shall be divided between the churches as follows:

### **II. Worship**

- #### **A. Worship times shall be determined by consultation among the churches and the pastor.**

### **III. Parish Council**

Purpose: To provide and foster good communication and cooperation and establishment of good relations between the two congregations and the pastor.

- A. The parish council shall consist of one active elder and two members-at-large from each congregation.
- B. The members of the parish council shall be elected by their respective congregations.

- C. Each parish council member shall serve one term of no more than three years unless one year has elapsed since the last term of service.
- D. The parish council shall meet a minimum of three times per year.
- E. The parish council may be called to meet by the two elder members, either session, the session moderator, or by the parish council moderator.
- F. One ruling elder from each congregation and one member-at-large from each congregation shall constitute a quorum in a parish council meeting.
- G. The parish council shall serve as an advisory committee to the sessions. It shall not have any policy-making authority or responsibility.
- H. The parish council shall be responsible for electing its own officers from among its membership.
  - 1. The moderator shall be responsible for chairing each meeting.
  - 2. The secretary shall be responsible for taking, recording and reporting minutes of each meeting.
  - 3. These officers shall serve for a period of one year, and may be eligible for re-election. The election of these officers shall be conducted by the immediate past moderator.
- J. The parish council shall report on a regular basis to each session through the elder representative.

#### **IV. Termination of the Yoked Agreement**

This agreement may be terminated only after one year has elapsed from the time when either congregation votes to terminate the agreement or by mutual agreement.

#### **V. Review and Amendment**

- A. The sessions of each congregation shall review this agreement annually.
- B. Amendments may be made to this agreement by the session of each congregation in consultation with each congregation and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.

Clerk of Session	Date	Clerk of Session	Date
[Church Name]	[Church City]	[Church Name]	[Church City]

Moderator of Sessions	Date

Presbytery's Committee on Ministry Moderator	Date

## Covenant for Shared Ministry

**PASTOR.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE CALL EFFECTIVE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHURCHES:** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_

**PASTORAL ACTIVITIES:** (indicate activities for each congregation)

**We understand this shared ministry to be approximately**

\_\_\_\_\_ % for \_\_\_\_\_ Church

**and** \_\_\_\_\_ % for \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

**COMPENSATION:**

Cash salary

**Housing**

Utilities

Medical and Pension dues

Travel reimbursement @ \$0.\_\_\_\_\_ per mile

Other ministry cost reimbursement (telephone calls, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Continuing education or book allowance \_\_\_\_\_

Vacation time \_\_\_\_\_ Continuing education time \_\_\_\_\_

Moving expenses \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER SHARED MINISTRY EXPENSES:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF EACH PARTNER CHURCH:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHURCH**  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE YEAR 20\_\_\_\_, \$\_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHURCH**  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE YEAR 20\_\_\_\_, \$\_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO SHARE IN MINISTRY, WITNESSING TOGETHER TO  
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN A MINISTRY TO OUR COMMUNITY AND  
SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER AS WE LIVE AND GROW AS CHRISTIANS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Pastor**  
date of session action: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Clerk of Session**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Presbytery COM Moderator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Moderator of Session**

## **PASTORAL JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Qualities Desired**

Abilities and desire to become an active part of a farm/ranch community, with a sincere interest in common people. Someone who will provide spiritual leadership.

### **Purpose**

To provide ministry to people of varying types and backgrounds in a community where there are great human needs.

### **Accountability**

Accountable to Presbytery and the session in accordance with the *Book of Order*. Performance evaluation will be completed annually by the session based on job description responsibilities.

### **Responsibilities**

1. To preach and to lead in worship and celebration; providing a Biblically-based ministry which will result in the spiritual growth of the congregation and community each Sunday in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. To serve communion in both congregations the first Sunday of the month.
3. To lead services at the nursing home with members of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ churches the first two Sundays of the month, including serving communion on the first Sunday of the month.
4. To lead the congregation in providing pastoral care to members through visitation and help in crisis.
5. Hospital visitation and visitation of the elderly is a priority.
6. To counsel with those to be married, those seeking baptism, those planning funerals, and in other situations as necessary.
7. To work with the deacons in the congregation's outreach to the local community and mission to the world community.
8. To equip the session with skills in planning and development of the activities of the congregation.



9. To assist the church school, Presbyterian women, choir, and young people's groups in the effective accomplishment of their activities.
10. To provide a teaching ministry in areas of mission, stewardship, and adult Bible study.
11. To provide for new member and confirmation class education.
12. To plan leadership development activities for church officers.
13. To have bulletins prepared.
14. To direct the work of the administrative assistant, if necessary.
15. To work with community leaders as well as the ministerial association.
16. To serve on presbytery committees as called.

## Docket for Congregational Meeting

The moderator of the session, or some other person of the same presbytery appointed by the moderator of the session or by COM, shall preside. The clerk of session or substitute elected at the time by the congregation shall act as secretary.

22. Call to order.

23. Open with prayer.

24. Appoint a Clerk or Secretary *pro tem* if needed.

25. Declare the meeting to be in order, if (a) it has been properly called; and (b) a quorum is present.

26. State purpose:

27. Answer questions from the congregation, if there are any questions.

28. State motion:

- Is there a motion from the congregation to that effect?
- Does someone second this motion?
- Is there any discussion or any questions?

29. (When this above discussion/questions has concluded) Vote by secret ballot.

- Moderator appoints tellers.
- Ballots are distributed to active members only (of any age).

30. Collect and count ballots and report the count to the congregation:

- Number of votes in concurrence \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of votes in non-concurrence \_\_\_\_\_

31. Close with prayer.

32. Close with a benediction.

**PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
REFERENCE CHECKS**

Date called: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain who you are and why you are calling.

1. How do you know this person?  
long? \_\_\_\_\_

How

2. What are his/her strengths?

3. In what areas might this person grow?

4. Describe his/her leadership style.

5. Is there anything else you would like to share with us? Anything we should know?

6. Could you give us the name of one other reference we might call? (Tell them the candidate has given permission to ask for secondary references.)

7. Thank you for your time.

### **SUMMARY OF PASTORAL SEARCH PROCESS**

Two copies of this summary should be filled out by the chairperson of the Pastor Nominating Committee after the committee has agreed upon a candidate. Keep one copy for the Pastor Nominating Committee's files and return one copy to the Committee on Ministry.

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

Title of staff position being  
filled \_\_\_\_\_

Date first  
advertised \_\_\_\_\_

Date of final  
recommendation \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Candidate Recruitment**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Total Number of Dossiers Received  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Women Candidates  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Minority Candidates  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Over Age 55
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Total Number of Candidates Interviewed in Person
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Total Number of Candidate Interviewed by Conference Telephone Call
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Total Number of Candidates Interviewed  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Women  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Minority

#### **Pastor Nominating Committee Information**

1. Were the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee briefed on the presbytery's Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity policy and procedures before the process began?   Yes   or   No

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Persons on the Pastor Nominating Committee  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Men  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Women

\_\_\_\_\_ Youth  
\_\_\_\_\_ Minority

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor Nominating Committee Chairperson

## **Suggested Interview Questions**

The following are questions you might ask during an interview of any potential pastor:

1. Tell us about your faith journey.
2. What are the things you feel best about in your present ministry?
3. What have been the challenges there?
4. What makes you think you may be called to leave there now?
5. What interests you about this position?
6. What do you bring to our ministry?
7. What are your greatest strengths in ministry? ... your greatest weaknesses?
8. One of our goals is to strengthen our \_\_\_\_\_. How would you do that?
9. Describe a typical week in your ministry.
10. Share your perspective on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
11. One of the issues our session has debated in the past few years is \_\_\_\_\_.

Tell us how you might address that topic?

12. If we selected you as our pastor (or other role), when could you start and what would be your start-up plan?
13. How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?
14. What will you need from the members of this congregation in order to be effective as our pastor?
15. What questions or concerns do you have?

You will also want to develop questions related to the specific candidate. These will come out of things you read in the PIF and things you hear from references.

### **Conducting the Interview**

Decide which PNC member should begin the interview. Your committee may want to start by giving a statement regarding the nature of your church and the position to be filled, followed by questions the committee has framed in advance. Each member should take notes and be prepared to ask questions that arise from the initial conversation. Allow adequate opportunity for the candidate to ask questions. These may sometimes be difficult and penetrating, but they indicate interest on the part of the minister. Face the problems and weaknesses as well as the strengths and opportunities of your situation directly and openly.

**Presbytery of South Dakota  
Committee on Ministry**

**PASTOR'S DATA SHEET**

To be completed following the  
Committee on Ministry interview  
with the prospective candidate .

To candidate:

The following information will be used by the Committee on Ministry and Stated Clerk as your call is processed and the record of your membership in the Presbytery of South Dakota is opened. Please return the completed form to the Committee on Ministry representative.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First MI Last

Current  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Ordination \_\_\_\_\_

Ordaining Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a Doctoral Degree? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, when was it received? \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery from which you will be transferring \_\_\_\_\_

**CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF MATERIALS:**

I have received a copy of the Presbytery of South Dakota's Policy Regarding Sexual Misconduct.

I have received a copy of the Ethical Guidelines adopted by the Presbytery of South Dakota's Committee on Ministry.

I have received a copy of the Separation Ethics adopted by the Presbytery of South Dakota's Committee on Ministry.

Pastor's  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Compensation Included in Effective Salary**

1. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Annual cash salary (including employee contributions to 403(b)(9)) plans, tax-sheltered annuity plans, and salary reduction contributions to flexible health reimbursement accounts and cafeteria plans).
2. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Housing, utility, and furnishings allowances.
3. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Employing organization contributions to 403(b)(9) plans, tax-sheltered annuity plans, and equity allowances.
4. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Bonuses, overtime pay, unvouchered professional expense allowances, gifts from employing organization, and manse equity allowances (unless contributed to a qualified deferred compensation program). Include year-end or other bonuses, unvouchered allowances (such as expenses that are not paid through an accountable reimbursement plan), down payment grants for purchase of a home, savings from interest-free or interest-reduced loans (not loan principal), and gifts paid by the employing organization. (Gifts received directly from private donors or honoraria are not included.)
5. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Any allowance provided to reimburse Self-Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligations in excess of 50% of the minister's SECA tax obligation.
6. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other allowances, including all forms of compensation not otherwise covered on Lines 1-5, such as medical deductible and medical expense reimbursement allowances not paid through a group benefit plan, insurance premiums for additional insurance coverage provided for individual employees (premiums for group plan coverage are not included), and others.
7. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Manse amount (must be at least 30% of Lines 1-6 for members residing in employer-provided housing).
8. \$\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Effective Salary** (Sum of Lines 1-7). Dues are computed and benefits are determined on this amount.



## **Docket for Congregational Meeting to Elect Pastor**

The moderator of the session, or some other minister of the same presbytery appointed by the moderator of the session or by COM, shall preside. The clerk of session or substitute elected at the time by the congregation shall act as secretary.

1. Call to order.
2. Open with prayer.
3. Declare the meeting to be in order, if (a) it has been properly called; and (b) a quorum is present.
4. State purpose: "To decide whether or not a call should be extended to \_\_\_\_\_ to become the \_\_\_\_\_ (pastor, co-pastor, associate pastor) of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_."
5. Introduce the moderator of the Pastor Nominating Committee who in turn will (a) recognize the other members of the committee; and, (b) give a resume of the candidate.
6. Some personal statements by the candidate (if present) and his/her spouse would be appropriate at this time.
7. If there are any outstanding references or recommendations, it would be appropriate for them to be read or mentioned at this time (if confidentiality permits).
8. The terms of call shall be read.
9. A summary of the agreed upon job description should be given.
10. Information concerning the candidate's availability should be given (when he or she could arrive on the field of service, when his/her responsibilities would begin, etc...).
11. Plans for ordination and/or installation should be mentioned or discussed. (Moderator should make clear that installation is a presbytery event. See "Ordination-Installation Service Information Sheet." This should have been discussed in the Session Workshop, but the Committee on Ministry representative may need to be certain the moderator has this information.)
12. Excuse the candidate (if present) and his/her spouse from the meeting.

13. State motion:

- Is there a motion that the congregation of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_ call \_\_\_\_\_ to be their pastor according to the terms of call and summary job description as stated at this meeting?"
- Does someone second this motion?
- Is there any discussion or questions?

14. (When this above discussion/questions has concluded) Vote by secret ballot.

- Moderator appoints tellers.
- Ballots are distributed to active members only (of any age).

15. Collect and count ballots and report the count to the congregation:

- Number of votes in concurrence \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of votes in non-concurrence \_\_\_\_\_

16. Invite the candidate to hear the report (if present).

17. Ask the candidate to state his/her acceptance (if present and ready).

18. Receive and act on a motion to authorize persons to sign the call then present and prosecute the call before the presbytery. (The signed call is to be sent to the Committee on Ministry with a request for concurrence. See Form A-13 in Appendix.)

19. Receive and act on a motion that the Pastor Nominating Committee be discharged of their duties after the installation of the new pastor.

20. Close with prayer.

21. Close with a benediction.

**Pastoral Call Form**  
**Presbytery of South Dakota, Presbyterian Church (USA)**

The \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church of \_\_\_\_\_ (City/State),  
being well satisfied with your qualification for ministry and confident that we have been led to you by  
the Holy Spirit as one whose service will be profitable to the spiritual interests of our church and  
fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord, earnestly and solemnly calls you,

\_\_\_\_\_ to undertake the

office of \_\_\_\_\_ (Pastor, Associate Pastor) of this congregation, beginning \_\_\_\_\_  
promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and allegiance in the  
Lord.

That you may be free to devote full-time (part-time) to ministry of the Word among us, we promise  
and obligate ourselves to pay you the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ a year in regular monthly payments. Further,  
we promise and obligate ourselves to provide you the following annually:

Cash Salary	\$ _____
Supplement for Social Security Tax	\$ _____
Foregone interest on below-market loan	\$ _____

TOTAL income reported to IRS	\$ _____
------------------------------	----------

Housing—(manse and/or amt. of housing allowance)	\$ _____
--	----------

Utilities Allowance	\$ _____
---------------------	----------

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions

Other benefits:

Deferred compensation	\$ _____
-----------------------	----------

Medical/Dental Reimbursement Allowance	\$ _____
--	----------

Paid vacation leave of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks annually

Paid continuing education leave of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks annually (cumulative up to \_\_\_\_\_ weeks)

Moving Expenses

It is understood that the following expenses of ministry will be reimbursed through an accountable  
plan:

Travel expense at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per mile (IRS allowable rate is recommended)

We promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. \_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call for ministerial services, I do  
certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the Form of  
Government, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of  
the Congregation.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_, Moderator of the Congregational Meeting

(over)

## CERTIFICATION OF THE CALL

### By Presbytery of Call

This call has been reviewed by the Committee on Ministry. The Committee recommends that Presbytery approve this call.

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_ COM Moderator

This call was approved by the Presbytery of South Dakota, through action taken by its Committee as authorized by G-3.0307.

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_ Stated Clerk

### By Presbytery of Care or Present Call

This call has been reviewed by the Committee on (Ministry or Preparation for Ministry). The Committee recommends that the presbytery find it expedient to release \_\_\_\_\_ to accept this call.

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_ Committee Moderator

The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ hereby finds it expedient to release ) \_\_\_\_\_ to accept this call and therefore has placed this call in the minister's/candidate's hands.

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_ Stated Clerk

### By Candidate

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of Acceptance \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Complete and sign four original copies. When all parties have signed, an original copy goes to 1) the minister, 2) the calling church, 3) the presbytery of call and 4) the minister's presbytery of membership/care.*

## Pastoral Call

(for Pastor, Co-Pastor, Associate Pastor)

The \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church of \_\_\_\_\_  
belonging to \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery, being well satisfied with your qualification for  
ministry and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one whose service will be profitable  
to the spiritual interests of our church and fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord, earnestly and solemnly calls  
you,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name)

to undertake the office of \_\_\_\_\_

of this congregation, beginning \_\_\_\_\_, promising you in the discharge of your duty all  
proper support encouragement and allegiance in the Lord.

That you may be free to devote full-time (part-time) to the ministry of Word and Sacrament among us, we  
promise and obligate ourselves to pay you in regular monthly payments the following effective salary and  
following vouchered expenses (fill in those which are agreed to):

### Effective salary

Cash Salary	\$ _____
Fair rental value of manse	\$ _____
Housing Allowance	\$ _____
Utilities Allowance	\$ _____
Deferred Compensation	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____
<b>Total</b>	\$ _____

### Reimbursable expenses (by voucher)

Automobile expense (____ per mile)	\$ _____
Business/professional expenses	\$ _____
SECA Supplement (up to 50%)	\$ _____
Continuing Education	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____
Moving Costs (up to)	\$ _____

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions

Paid Vacation \_\_\_\_\_

Paid Continuing Education \_\_\_\_\_

We further promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation.

In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave,  
continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having moderated the congregational meeting which extended this call for ministerial services, I do certify  
that the call has been made in all respect according to the presbytery policy and the Form of Government,  
and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

Vote of the congregation at the meeting was \_\_\_\_\_ in favor of the candidate and \_\_\_\_\_ opposed.

(signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
moderator of the meeting

## Certification of Call

### A. Action by Presbytery of Call

1. The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ has reviewed and approved this call.

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Stated Clerk or Authorized Signer

### B. Action by the Minister's/Candidate's Presbytery

1. The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ finds it expedient (not expedient) to release  
\_\_\_\_\_ to accept this call.

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Stated Clerk or Authorized Signer

### C. Acceptance of the Call

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Minister

*Complete and sign four original copies. When all parties have signed, an original copy goes to  
1) the minister, 2) the calling church, 3) the presbytery of call and 4) the minister's presbytery of  
membership/care.*

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE FORM, "PASTORAL CALL"**

1. Complete four forms.
2. State terms of call in detail.
3. All four forms must be signed by:
  - a. Representatives of the congregation
  - b. Moderator of the congregational meeting
4. Return all copies to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery.
5. Stated Clerk transmits all copies to Stated Clerk of pastor-elect's presbytery.
6. Call forms are referred to Committee on Ministry of pastor-elect's presbytery for recommendation to presbytery.
- 7 Upon approval:
  - a. Present one call form to pastor-elect
  - b. Send two copies to presbytery of call
  - c. Retain one copy for presbytery files
8. Stated Clerk in presbytery of call shall:
  - a. Forward one copy to clerk of session of calling congregation
  - b. Retain one copy for presbytery files
9. Final distribution shall then be:
  - a. Pastor-elect (one copy)
  - b. Presbytery of membership (one copy)
  - c. Presbytery of call (one copy)
  - d. Congregation of call (one copy)

**NOTE: If the call is refused, all copies are to be returned to congregation of call through the Stated Clerk of the presbytery of call.**

## Supplemental Covenant with a Bi-Vocational Pastor

The Session of \_\_\_\_\_ Church and the

Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ hereby covenant together for the purpose of supplying pastoral services for this congregation.

The Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ will serve as

\_\_\_\_\_ of this congregation.  
(Installed Pastor, Stated Supply, etc)

Pastor and session hereby covenant together to share the ministry of this congregation according to the following plans.

### The Pastor's Share

The Pastor will serve this church for \_\_\_\_\_ units (hours) per week to be divided as stated below.

#### Pastoral Activities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
5. Service to presbytery
6. etc.

(Activities selected from part 4 of the Ministry Information Form are listed in order of priority and units or hours for each are assigned above as agreed by pastor and session.)

### Congregational Officers' and Members' Share

Congregational officers and members of the congregation will share fully in this ministry according to the following plans.

Church Activity	Person(s) Responsible
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.



Congregational activities may be selected from Part 4 of the MIF but may also include work on specific committees or programs, secretarial or other kinds of support services in the church office or in building and grounds as well as pastoral support of the pastor and the pastor's family if any.)

### **Frequency of Review**

The pastor and the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee of the Session will meet \_\_\_\_\_ times per year to evaluate the performance of each party to this covenant and to suggest adjustments and revisions as desired.

### **Annual Review of the Covenant**

a. The \_\_\_\_\_ Committee of Session, in consultation with representatives(s) of COM will meet at least annually to review the terms of the covenant. This review will focus on both the satisfaction of the pastor and the congregation or session with this covenant agreement.

b. At each such review the interrelation between the pastor's work in the church and the secular work of the pastor shall be evaluated and any appropriate adjustments made.

C/ This covenant becomes effective on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Signed: Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk of Session: \_\_\_\_\_

COM Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*The call form should also be completed for Tentmakers who are called to their positions.*

## **Pastoral Agreement Form for a Transitional Minister**

The session of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Presbytery of South Dakota, being satisfied with your qualifications and trusting that your ministry in the Gospel will be to our spiritual benefit, invites you \_\_\_\_\_, to the office of Transitional Pastor. This agreement will begin on \_\_\_\_\_ and end on \_\_\_\_\_. This agreement may be terminated before the designated time upon thirty days notice from either you or the session, after consultation with the Presbytery of South Dakota through its Committee on Ministry.

You, \_\_\_\_\_, will provide full-time pastoral leadership which will include:

A. Basic tasks of Transitional ministry

- Getting in touch with history--working out grief.
- Discovering a new identity--who are we now that the pastor's gone?
- Facilitating shifts in leadership--new leaders emerge, others back off.
- Denominational relations--are we connectional? How can the presbytery help?
- Commitment to new leadership and the future. Building support of a new pastor and program.

B. Basic pastoral duties and responsibilities:

- Preaching and teaching the Word.
- Presiding in worship and administering the sacraments in accordance with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) practices.
- Providing pastoral care to members.
- Providing leadership at meetings, organizations and activities.
- Encouraging the total ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

C. Other duties as contracted with the session and/or the Committee on Ministry as follows:

D. In addition, regular quarterly reports will be provided to the Committee on Ministry from you and the session regarding the ongoing interim ministry.

*(Continued)*

**Pastoral Agreement Form for a Transitional Minister**  
**Page 2**

That you may be free to devote yourself \_\_\_\_\_ (full-time or part-time) to the ministry of the Word among us, we promise, on behalf of the congregation, to obligate ourselves to provide you the following:

Annual Cash Salary:   \$\_\_\_\_\_ in regular monthly payments

Use of Manse:           \$\_\_\_\_\_ Book Allowance:           \$\_\_\_\_\_

Housing Allowance:   \$\_\_\_\_\_ Medical Insurance:       \$\_\_\_\_\_

Utilities Allowance:   \$\_\_\_\_\_ Moving Costs:           \$\_\_\_\_\_

Automobile Allowance: \$\_\_\_\_\_ Study Leave Allowance: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Expense Allowance:   \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify):           \$\_\_\_\_\_

Vacation of (time period): \_\_\_\_\_ Study Leave of (time period): \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, we will pay regularly in advance to the Board of Pensions a sum equal to that requisite percent of your salary that may be fixed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for participation in its pension plan, during the time of your being and continuing in the pastoral relationship set forth in this call to this congregation.

We further promise to observe the provisions under the direction of the Presbytery of South Dakota through its Committee on Ministry for a Transitional pastoral relationship as prescribed in the *Book of Order*, G-2.0504b.

Having moderated the meeting of the session that extended the invitation to \_\_\_\_\_ for ministerial services, I do certify that the agreement has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the *Book of Order*, Form of Government.

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator of the Session

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session

(Continued on Next Page)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Pastoral Agreement Form for a Transitional Minister**  
**Page 3**

**ENDORSEMENT AND APPROVAL:**

The above invitation and agreement extended to \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_ has been reviewed and approved by the Presbytery of South Dakota's Committee on Ministry and the Presbytery of South Dakota as directed in the *Book of Order*, G-2.0504b.

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee on Ministry Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk for the Presbytery of South Dakota

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the agreement as stated above to the position as Transitional pastor.

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Transitional Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Signed copies to be given to: 1) the minister, 2) the clerk of session, 3) the presbytery and 4) the minister's presbytery of membership/care (if other than the presbytery of this congregation).*

## **Covenant for Intentional Transitional Ministry**

This covenant agreement among the session of the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, South Dakota and the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ and the presbytery of South Dakota for the purpose of providing intentional Transitional ministry to the church. The period of Transitional service will begin \_\_\_\_\_ and will continue for \_\_\_\_\_.

The session, the Transitional pastor, and the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of South Dakota covenant to work on developmental tasks of the Transitional period as follows:

- Help the congregation and the session come to terms with history, including understanding and valuing where the congregation has been;
- Help the congregation and the session discover a new identity, congruent with, but not only defined by, the past;
- Facilitate shifts of power, authorizing persons and processes in ways appropriate to this new situation;
- Help the congregation understand denominational relationships as a part of the congregation's identity and mission;
- Help the congregation build commitment to new leadership and to a new future, developing a shared vision and working relationships with each other and with new pastors; and,
- Assist the congregation in developing processes by which to bring about healing through honesty, reconciliation, communication, and unity in an open environment.

During this Transitional period the Transitional pastor

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ will not request membership in the Presbytery of South Dakota
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ will not serve as moderator of the session.
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ will not serve as head of staff
- d) \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ will not assist in preparation of the annual Ministry Information Forms
- e) \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ not seek to become a candidate for call as installed pastor of this church.

The Transitional pastor will continue to develop Transitional ministry skills, which include:

listening, conflict management, healing, reconciliation and others as appropriate. The Transitional pastor will work with the session to develop goals and objectives and will work with the pastor nominating committee for administrative purposes only.

**This is the covenant agreement among the session  
of \_\_\_\_\_**

Compensation agreement:

- Annual \_\_\_\_\_ or: \_\_\_\_\_ 12 months per year.
- Full time \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of full time.
- Salary \_\_\_\_\_
- Housing/manse \_\_\_\_\_
- Medical/pension \_\_\_\_\_
- Travel expense \_\_\_\_\_
- **Continuing education expenses** \_\_\_\_\_
- Professional Expenses \_\_\_\_\_
- Dental/medical supplement \_\_\_\_\_
- Social security self-employment allowance \_\_\_\_\_
- Four weeks vacation (annually) \_\_\_\_\_
- Two weeks study leave (annually) \_\_\_\_\_

There will be a joint review by the session and the Transitional pastor regarding progress on developmental goals every three months or more often at the request of any one of the covenanters.

During this time of service \_\_\_\_\_ will be accountable to the session of the \_\_\_\_\_ South Dakota, and to the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of South Dakota.

This Covenant may be terminated by the session or by the Presbytery of South Dakota on 60 days notice or earlier by mutual agreement. The Transitional pastor may terminate the agreement with 30 days notice and forfeit any payment beyond that period.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Transitional Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee on Ministry Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Agreement

## **Sample Covenant with a Transitional Minister**

This Covenant Between the Session of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Church, Town) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Transitional Pastor) is for the purpose of providing Transitional pastoral services.

This relationship shall begin effective \_\_\_\_\_ (date) until \_\_\_\_\_ (no more than 12 months) at which time it may be renewed if necessary with the concurrence of session, Transitional Pastor and Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Pastor) will become a member of (Name) Presbytery upon release from his/her present presbytery and acceptance by \_\_\_\_\_ (Name) Presbytery.

It is understood that the Transitional Pastor is accountable to the presbytery through the Committee on Ministry and will provide written reports about his or her ministry every \_\_\_\_\_ months and participate with this Committee and the Session in an evaluation of this ministry in \_\_\_\_\_ months.

It is understood that the Transitional Pastor is ordinarily not eligible to be called as Pastor.

It is agreed that this covenant may be terminated upon (30, 60, 90) days' written notice by either the Transitional Pastor or by the session. If terminated by the session prior to the end of the covenant period, compensation will continue for \_\_\_\_\_ days after the date of termination of ministry.

Goals for this ministry are to work with the congregation on the five "developmental tasks" of Transitional ministry:

- 1) Coming to terms with history,
- 2) Discovering a new congregational identity
- 3) Facilitating shifts in lay leadership and changes in congregational power structures
- 4) Rethinking and renewing denominational linkages
- 5) Preparing for new pastoral leadership and a new future.

The Transitional Pastor will fulfill the following responsibilities.:

- Provide spiritual and administrative leadership for the congregation.



- Lead worship and administer the sacraments.
- Officiate at weddings and funerals;
- Provide pastoral care for the congregation and for all who seek comfort and guidance through the church.
- Serve as moderator of the session;
- Serve as head of staff;
- Assist boards and committees in their ministry.
- Train newly elected officers and assist in preparing persons for membership.
- Participate in the presbytery.
- Assist the presbytery consultant in the conduct of a congregational mission study.
- Assist in the preparation of the Ministry Information Form.

The Transitional Pastor will not be involved in the work of the Pastor Nominating Committee beyond providing opportunities for them to communicate with the session and congregation about their progress.

The compensation for this agreement shall be that in TERMS OF CALL below.

Salary	.....\$
Housing	.....\$
Pension and Medical Benefits	.....Full
Moving Expenses	.....Full
Vacation	.....1 week per quarter
Continuing Education.	.....\$ (reimbursed as used)

and 1 week every six months

Reimbursement of Ministry Expenses including

Automobile.....\$0. per mile (reimbursed as used)

---

(Name of Pastor), Transitional Pastor

---

Clerk of Session

---

For the Committee on Ministry

---

Date

## Covenant for Temporary Pastor

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Temporary Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery of Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Service From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Review of this covenant prior to renewal or termination will be by the session, the Temporary Pastor, and the presbytery's Committee on Ministry.

### Provision for termination of covenant relationship prior to expiration:

30 days notice by either party.

### Responsibilities of Pastor *(check those which apply):*

- ☐ Lead worship and preach each Sunday
- ☐ Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
- ☐ Moderate session and congregational meetings
- ☐ Visit the sick and shut-in
- ☐ Lead funeral services upon request
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Time Expectation:: \_\_\_\_\_ days per week

Compensation:      Cash salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the term of the covenant.  
Housing: \_\_\_\_\_ Free use of manse    Yes    No

Ministry expenses reimbursed including travel at IRS approved rate.

Vacation - 1 week per quarter

Continuing Education - 1 week every six months

Moderator of Session: \_\_\_\_\_ Temporary Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Session Action: \_\_\_\_\_

COM Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

## **CONTRACT FOR TEMPORARY PASTORAL SERVICES**

The following contract between the session of \_\_\_\_\_  
Presbyterian Church and the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_, is for the  
purpose of providing pastoral services as \_\_\_\_\_ to the Church for a period of  
\_\_\_\_\_ (not to exceed 12 months). The contract is to begin on  
\_\_\_\_\_20\_\_\_\_.

### **DUTIES:**

The pastor will be responsible to (please add or delete from this list):

- moderate the session and congregational meetings
- serve as Head of Staff
- lead worship and preach at regular Sunday services
- arrange for substitute preachers on any Sundays not present
- call on sick and home-bound
- provide administrative leadership
- officiate at weddings and funerals
- lead new member classes
- work with committee chairs
- represent the church in dealing with outside organizations
- pray for the church

The congregation and session will be responsible to (please add or delete from this list):

- support the pastor in his/her ministry
- provide regular financial compensation according to the terms outlined below
- provide a performance review to the pastor at least annually
- pray for the pastor during this contract period
- negotiate goals for contract period

During the length of this agreement, the pastor will be accountable to the presbytery. It is understood that the pastor will participate in the quarterly temporary pastors meeting sponsored by the presbytery. Should the Temporary Pastor have any serious differences or difficulties with any former pastor of this congregation, the matter will be immediately referred to the presbytery. It is understood that the pastor will not be involved in any way with the Pastor Nominating Committee, except to facilitate that committee's regular reports to the session and the congregation. Any concerns or suggestions about the congregation's search for a new pastor shall be carried to the presbytery liaison. It is understood by all parties that the pastor under contract ordinarily may not be considered for the installed pastoral position in this congregation.

## CONTRACT FOR TEMPORARY PASTORAL SERVICES

(Page 2 of 2)

This agreement may be terminated by either party (session or pastor) upon 30 days written notice. This agreement may be extended in periods of one to 12 month upon written notice to, and the approval of, the presbytery. It is understood that the pastor will participate in any training/discussions sponsored and/or requested by presbytery and will participate in an exit interview conducted by presbytery.

### TERMS:

The pastor is employed on a ( ) full-time ( ) part-time basis, serving approximately \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week, and will be compensated as follows:

#### Effective salary

Cash Salary	\$ _____
Fair rental value of manse	\$ _____
Housing Allowance	\$ _____
Utilities Allowance	\$ _____
Deferred Compensation	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____
<b>Total</b>	\$ _____

#### Reimbursable expenses (by voucher)

Automobile expense (____per mile)	\$ _____
Business/professional expenses	\$ _____
SECA Supplement (up to 50%)	\$ _____
Continuing Education	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____
Moving Costs (up to)	\$ _____

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions

Paid Vacation \_\_\_\_\_

Paid Continuing Education \_\_\_\_\_

### APPROVALS:

The session approved this contract and its conditions on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: (clerk of session) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to accept the terms of this contract.

Signed: (pastor) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The presbytery approved this contract and its conditions on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Moderator of COM)

*Signed copies to be given to: 1) the minister, 2) the clerk of session, 3) the presbytery and 4) the minister's presbytery of membership/care (if other than the presbytery of this congregation).*

## Covenant with a Commissioned Ruling Elder

**NAME OF CHURCH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF Commissioned Ruling Elder:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Term of service:**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER**

- Lead worship and preach \_\_\_\_\_ times each month

(Presbytery determines which are authorized)

- Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
  - Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
  - Moderate session meetings under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery.
  - Perform marriages (state law must allow)
  - Have voice at presbytery meetings
  - Have vote at presbytery meetings
  - Other duties:  
Attend presbytery meetings
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**TIME EXPECTATIONS** (per week) \_\_\_\_\_

**COMPENSATION** as applicable:

**Cash salary:** \_\_\_\_\_ /week, month (circle)

**Medical and pension benefits**

**Continuing education and/or book allowance** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vacation time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Continuing education time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry costs to be reimbursed with documentation:**

**Travel reimbursement** @ \$0.\_\_\_\_ per mile

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presbytery COM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator of Session

\_\_\_\_\_  
CRE

**Date of session action** \_\_\_\_\_

Review of this covenant prior to renewal or termination will be by the session and the Committee on Ministry. This relationship may be terminated prior to expiration with \_\_\_\_\_ days notice by either party with the concurrence of the Committee on Ministry.

## **Agreement for Termination and Separation**

TERMS OF DISSOLUTION BETWEEN  
THE REV. \_\_\_\_\_ AND \_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_  
(City and State)

We, the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ church Session agree to request dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ pastor / staff for the following reasons and on the following terms:

1. List reasons for the dissolution:

2. List the terms:

- A. Amount of salary to be paid
- B. Housing arrangements
- C. Vacation to be paid
- D. Pension\medical to be paid
- E. Repayment of loans
- F. Any special financial arrangements such as this will be paid in lump sum or over a period of time.

3. Specify the time and date of separation:

- A. The effective date that ministry duties will cease. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. The relationship will end on a date set by the congregation and approved by the presbytery on \_\_\_\_\_ date.
- C. Date set for congregational meeting \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. Date for presbytery action and completion of the separation agreement. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Other terms to be specified:

- A. Promise to seek remedies for grievances only in the Courts of the PC(USA).
- B. It is understood that all benefits for Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ will be discontinued at any time before \_\_\_\_\_ (payoff date) should he / she receive another call for full time employment.
- C. Any other terms that may be required by the presbytery or by the state.

We the undersigned have negotiated this agreement in good faith and have every intention of being faithful in fulfilling it.

Approved by the Session of \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_

_____ Moderator of Session	_____ Date	_____ Clerk of Session	_____ Date
-------------------------------	---------------	---------------------------	---------------

Committee on Ministry Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by other members of Session:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Date approved by congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Date approved by COM \_\_\_\_\_

Date approved/disapproved by Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_

Copies to: The Minister, Clerk of Session, Stated Clerk of Presbytery, Moderator of COM

**Request for Appointment of a Commission for  
Ordination/Installation of a Teaching Elder**

Candidate's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Ordination/Installation Service \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Ordination/Installation Service \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Elder Members of the commission are: (two or three)

Name Position	Congregation Served
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Ruling Elder members of the commission are: (two or three from different congregations)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Ordinarily the ordination/installation service is immediately preceded by a sermon (adapted to the occasion) by a teaching elder previously appointed.

The sermon will be preached by \_\_\_\_\_.

Are all of the recommended participants living within the bounds of the Presbytery of South Dakota? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No\_\_\_. If no, give names and addresses of those who do not live in this presbytery.

_____	_____
Name of Person Providing the Ordination/Installation Information	Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address/City/State/Zip Code



## REPORT OF THE ORDINATION/INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER

Please provide the following information and forward to the Stated Clerk.

- I. I certify that on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, the Administrative Commission appointed by Presbytery did ordain/install (cross Out any not applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:First

\_\_\_\_\_  
Middle

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last

As \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ Church,  
Pastor, Associate Name of church  
\_\_\_\_\_, SD.  
Town

Members of the Commission present were:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator of the Commission

- II. Submit record of the proceedings of the Commission

Minutes of the Commission

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator of the Commission

- III. Attach a copy of the Service of Ordination/Installation for the Minister's file in the Presbytery Office.

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN MINISTRY

### Report on Pastoral Search Process

To: Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Church, City, State

Title of Position Filled: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Called: \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply:

Racial/Ethnic: \_\_\_\_\_

Woman: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

	Total Number	Racial/Ethnic	Women
PIFs received			
Phone interviews			
Heard preach			
Face to face Interviews			
Offered the position			

\_\_\_\_\_  
PNC Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Complete at the end of your search process and return to your presbytery.*

**Report to Presbytery of South Dakota**  
**Temporary Pastoral Relationship**

Type of Pastoral Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
Transitional, Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Etc.

Church \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Telephone)

Address/City/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

The session of the above named parties have agreed that \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

will be/will continue to be the \_\_\_\_\_ for the period  
(Position as given above)

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ not to exceed one year.

*If this is an extension of a current contract, also complete  
the Statement of Review of the Temporary Pastoral Relationship.*

The terms of this relationship are as follows:  
*(List the responsibilities of the temporary pastor and of the congregation. Attach another  
page if necessary)*

Clerk of Session	Date	Minister/Supply	Date
------------------	------	-----------------	------

-----  
The Committee on Ministry or the Presbytery of South Dakota has concurred with the  
agreement between the session of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and  
\_\_\_\_\_ as delineated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee on Ministry Moderator or Presbytery's Stated Clerk      Date of Action to Concur

**Statement of Review of the Temporary Pastoral Relationship**

Our session has reviewed with our temporary pastor the effectiveness of his/her relationship with our congregation and reports:

Our session has reviewed the compensation relative to the work requirements for the temporary pastoral relationship and is reporting its recommendations regarding any changes to these terms:

The session recommends that the relationship between the church and

\_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Relationship

Be extended \_\_\_\_\_ Be terminated \_\_\_\_\_

## **Session Review of a Temporary or Stated Supply Pastor**

### **For the session:**

1. List three generally accepted strong points of the pastor.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. List two areas of possible growth in his/her work with your congregation:
  - a.
  - b.
3. Please make any relevant comments on significant points concerning any of the following areas of ministry: preaching, visitation, leadership, personal relationship, administration or other.
4. Please comment on your session/congregation relationship to the pastor.
5. Does the pastor have realistic expectations of the church? Please comment.

**For the pastor:**

1. What do you see as your strengths?
2. What do you see as possible areas for your growth?
3. What do you see as areas of strength of the congregation?
4. What do you see as areas of possible growth for the congregation?
5. Does the congregation have realistic expectations for you as \_\_\_\_\_?  
(Relationship)  
Please comment.
6. Is the session/congregation friendly and cooperative?
7. Are they willing to maintain and promote programs on their own to keep their congregation active?

We, the members of the session, recommend\_\_\_\_\_, do not recommend\_\_\_\_\_, that the \_\_\_\_\_ relationship be continued for another year.

The pastor requests\_\_\_\_\_, does not request\_\_\_\_\_, that the \_\_\_\_\_ relationship be continued for another year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Annual Report to Presbytery by  
Teaching Elders in Specialized Ministries**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

Date Mailed: \_\_\_\_\_

Roll Status:

Active \_\_\_\_\_

Member-At-Large \_\_\_\_\_

Inactive \_\_\_\_\_

Ecclesiastical Occupation Designation:

\_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

This form should be completed and returned to the presbytery's Stated Clerk by September 1.

1. Employment during the past year (including self-employment for which income was received). Describe the position and give the name and address of the employing body. If this does not apply, write "not so employed".

2. Way you have been engaged in activities of religious or ecclesiastical nature:  
In the presbytery where you are now residing:

In a particular congregation:

In other religious, ecclesiastical, or ecumenical activities:

3. Description of how your present ministry fulfills each of the criteria for membership in the presbytery, *Book of Order*, G-2.0502:

a. Demonstrates conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, *the Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*.

b. Serves others, aids others and enables the ministries of others.

c. Shows accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and to other organizations and agencies, where appropriate.

d. Includes responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the presbytery and in the worship and service of a congregation.

4. Please check the following statement(s) which apply to you.

☐ I want to continue on the Presbytery of South Dakota's roll of teaching elders with the same ecclesiastical designation and membership status as listed on the front of this report.

☐ There has been a change in my situation which will necessitate a change in my Authorized Ecclesiastical Occupational Designation.

Please explain.

☐ I request that my membership designation on the Presbytery of South Dakota's roll be changed to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Active Member    \_\_\_\_\_ Member-At-Large    \_\_\_\_\_ Inactive Member

☐ I request that my membership be transferred to the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ Having given serious consideration to my status as a teaching elder, and being a continuing member of the Presbytery of South Dakota, I herewith apply to be released from the exercise of the ordained ministry according to the *Book of Order*, G-2.0507.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



### Annual Review of Commissioned Ruling Elder

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date Commissioned \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Commissioned to Serve at/in \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning date \_\_\_\_\_

Fax and/or E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Elder of \_\_\_\_\_ Church

1. Some numbers which indicate the level of responsibility you have had:

Number of Sunday morning worship services led \_\_\_\_\_

Special Worship services led:

Advent/Christmas \_\_\_\_\_

Marriages \_\_\_\_\_

Lenten/Easter \_\_\_\_\_

Mid-week, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Funerals \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Number of baptisms of children \_\_\_\_\_ of adults \_\_\_\_\_

2. What have been the greatest challenges in leading worship services?
3. What have been the most rewarding aspects of leading worship services?
4. Have you used the lectionary scriptures on a regular basis? If not, how did you determine the scriptures used?
5. Have you prepared the worship bulletins (type, copy) for the services you lead? Describe this aspect of your work.

6. Describe how you handled the responsibilities related to baptism as given in the *Book of Order* W-2.300, particularly W-2.3011 – 2.3014.
7. Describe how you handled the responsibilities related to marriages as provided in the *Book of Order* W-4.9002.
8. How much visitation did you do on behalf of the congregation?  
  
In homes of the members of the congregation  
  
In Nursing Homes  
  
In hospitals, etc.
9. Describe what you did with children and youth of the congregation(s).
10. Did you teach a class (classes) for new members?      for new officers?  
Describe.
11. How much moderating did you do?  
  
With Session of \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
Of congregation? \_\_\_\_\_ Church

12. Did you meet with other groups in the congregation? Describe.
13. Did you do administrative work for the congregation? If so, describe.
14. How often did you confer with your mentor?
15. What help could be provided for Commissioned Ruling Elders in the future?
16. What suggestions do you have for training Commissioned Ruling Elders?

## EXIT INTERVIEW FOR PASTOR

---

Pastor's Name

---

Location of Exit Interview

---

Com. on Ministry Representative

---

Date

In your time of service you have come to know the congregation and the community you served in a special way. We would like to have the benefit of your insights. Please respond to the following questions as candidly and as comprehensively as you feel you can. Confidences will be kept.

1. What goals or dreams did you have when you began your ministry here?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you consider to be your major accomplishments during your ministry here?

Did you stay the length of time you expected to stay?

3. How would you describe the overall health of this congregation?

What criteria do you use?

What are its primary strengths and weaknesses?

What leadership training has taken place?

4. Describe the mission and ministry of this congregation.

What are strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the community?

On what do you base your evaluation?

5. What were your disappointments/frustrations and/or unrealized expectations here?

What didn't happen that you thought could have.

What help can the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry provide to improve the situation?

6. What conflicts/problems, if any, arose in your relationships with the congregation, staff, session, or community?

7. What do you wish you had known about this pastorate when you first came and what advice would you have for the next pastor to follow you?

8. Other comments you would like to make.

## EXIT INTERVIEW FOR SESSION

---

Church Name

---

Church City

---

Committee on Ministry Representative

---

Date

When a pastor leaves a congregation it provides an opportunity to reflect on the past relationship and, perhaps, grow from that. The following questions are asked in order to aid the Congregational Transformation/Development Ministry, the Committee on Ministry, the congregation, and the incoming pastor in a more effective ministry. Please respond to the following questions as candidly and as comprehensively as you feel you can.

1. Thinking in terms of the overall health of your congregation:

- A. What are the major strengths (i.e., what does your congregation do well)?
- B. What are any major needs (i.e., what does your congregation not do well that it should)?
- C. Describe the outreach efforts and program that you do for your own members.
- D. Describe the kinds of leadership training given the officers of this congregation.

2. What are the major joys and frustrations of living in your community?

3. What were the major accomplishments of your pastor?

What hopes did you have when your pastor came?

4. What things did he/she not do that should have been done?

5. What, if any, problems/conflicts arose between the pastor and the staff, session, congregation, or community?

6. What do you wish the pastor had understood about this congregation before he/she came?

7. What kind of assistance can the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry give to this congregation?

8. Other comments you would like to address...

-----  
Cover To Here  
If Copied

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Cover To Here  
If Copied

## Congregational Mission Statement

(Sample)

**for** \_\_\_\_\_ **Church,**  
**at** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adopted on** \_\_\_\_\_

### Our Mission:

A brief, two-three sentence statement of the unique mission of this congregation which encompasses:

Who we are. . . our purpose for existing. . . what we are called to do

### Our Vision:

What we envision our congregation/church will be/become in the future. . . perhaps five to ten years from now. For all facets of the life of the congregation include visions for both remaining the same and for changing.

Sample Portions of such a statement:

Guided by God's Spirit, we will build a strong community of believers who \_\_\_\_\_ and will pass on to others what they believe and practice.

Members will realize the privilege of serving the Lord wherever they are ...

Working with other churches, we will ...

Our Goals and Objectives: (Ideas/proposals/do-able things growing out of the mission statement and vision statements.)

### Sample of an introductory statement about the goals:

Goals for the next five years are listed below. Following each goal are some initial objectives that work toward reaching these goals. The Session will provide leadership to insure that these objectives are met and that new objectives are developed as well as. These goals and objectives are to remain visible to the congregation for the entire time period and are to be evaluated on a yearly basis.

### Sample of Goals:

Goal 1. We will make a personal and corporate commitment to explore ways to learn and experience God's energizing presence.

Goal 2. We will make a personal and corporate commitment to living our faith and finding ways to faithfully pass it on to others.

Goal 3. We will make a personal and corporate commitment to serve God joyfully



within the church and in the community.

Goal 4. We will make a personal and corporate commitment to learn how to resolve conflict in our congregation and community.

[The objectives may then be listed under the appropriate goals, sometimes with a date for completion.]

Sample Objectives:

Our worship committee will arrange for members of the congregation to assist with worship leadership at least two Sundays a month.

The Session will promote a series of opportunities to individuals to deepen personal faith and commitment.

We will:

- create a Caring Callers network for the congregation and community.
- contact every inactive member of the congregation at least four times and include them in the life of the congregation through newsletters, special reminders, birthday greetings.
- contact the congregation/campus ministry for each college student from our congregation.
- have 75% of our members active in prayer/share groups by the end of 20xx.
- hold a mission fair in our congregation each year.
- increase our stewardship emphasis using special educational materials and a dinner with a special speaker.
- increase our general mission support budget by 15% each year for five years.
- hold two new adult Bible Study seminars/series.
- actively invite newcomers in the community to worship with us.
- invite youth to help plan and lead contemporary worship services quarterly.
- In 20xx our session will establish a personnel committee.

By Easter of 20xx we will:

- have made our buildings handicapped accessible.
- have established transportation service for Senior Citizens in our community.

We will:

- offer scholarships for youth to attend church camp.
- adopt a cabin at Camp Rimrock.
- invite the Presbytery to meet in our church in 20xx.

In 20xx we will replace the choir robes.

## CONGREGATIONAL MISSION STUDY

The following *Congregational Mission Study* may be used at a number of times in the life of a congregation, e.g. sessions may use the information to draft or update a Mission Statement for their congregation; PNCs may use the information to complete the Ministry Information Form.

1. What is our mission, or purpose for being, as a Presbyterian congregation?

How are we fulfilling this mission locally, regionally, nationally, and globally?

How are we organized to fulfill this mission?

2. What are the key issues of our church and society and how are these key issues being addressed by our congregation?

3. What are the primary responsibilities we expect our pastor to fulfill?

In what areas do we expect the pastor to assume primary leadership? (worship, spiritual development, education, committees, administrative, etc.)

How does that compare with what is presently being done? OR, if pulpit is vacant, What qualities and skills are we looking for in a pastor?

**Report Form for Non-Parish Teaching Elders**

**PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY  
ANNUAL REPORT FORM  
TEACHING ELDERS IN VALIDATED MINISTRY REPORT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and return to the Stated Clerk no later than \_\_\_\_\_.

\* \* \* \* \*

What is the title of the position you currently hold? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your current employment in detail.

List some of your strengths in your ministry.

Tell some exciting experiences you have had during this past year.

How has your faith in God been affected during this past year?

List any continuing education programs in which you have participated.

List books you have recently read that have strengthened your faith and ministry.

With what Presbyterian groups or councils have you been involved in the past year?  
How were you involved in them?

Identify the congregation in which you worship most frequently and describe the nature of your involvement in that congregation?

Are you available for pulpit supply in your presbytery of residence?

Did you administer either or both of the Sacraments this past year?

To help the COM determine validation for your ministry, describe in detail how your ministry meets the criteria in G-2.0503a.

If you do not live within the bounds of this presbytery, in which presbytery do you reside?

Are you available for pulpit supply within the bounds of your presbytery of residence?

Additional comments (family news, hobbies, and interesting trips.

Thank you,

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH DAKOTA**  
**100 South Spring Ave., Suite 175**  
**Sioux Falls, SD 57104**

PAYEE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

If new address, please check: ☐

DATE OF EXPENSE \_\_\_\_\_ PURPOSE \_\_\_\_\_

AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

- DRIVER: Round Trip Mileage is \_\_\_\_\_ miles x \$0.375 per mile: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ AUTHORIZED PASSENGER(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Total Miles x \$ .02 per mile \$
  - Names of riders \_\_\_\_\_

- MEALS: *Attach receipt* \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- LODGING: *Attach receipt* \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- OTHER: (Specify) *Attach receipt* \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

→ PLEASE DEDUCT from the total expense which I hereby make as a contribution  
to the Presbytery of South Dakota (\$ \_\_\_\_\_)

**GRAND TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Please remember to attach all receipts, invoices, statements, copies of airline tickets, motel bills, telephone bills, etc.

**D Acknowledgement of this charitable deduction will be made on the upper portion of the check. A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to those contributing the full amount to the Presbytery of South Dakota.**

→ Requested by (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Charge to Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ Account Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix

### Sexual Misconduct Policy

The flowing sexual misconduct policy is from the POSD *Manual of Administrative Operations* and is to be distributed to all newly installed or commissioned teaching elders and CREs.

#### P3-4.S.2.1.3. Sexual Harassment:

A. The presbytery strongly condemns discrimination based upon sex including sexual harassment. Such conduct is against faith and practice as well as the law and will not be tolerated in any form by any person.

B. All sexually harassing conduct in the workplace, whether committed by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, is prohibited. Such conduct includes:

1. Making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, a condition of an employee's obtaining employment or their continuing employment; or
2. Making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for employment decisions affecting the employee; or
3. Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment by such conduct. This prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal comments about an individual's body, sexually degrading words, and the display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

C. Employees who believe that they have been the subject of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to their supervisor. If they do not feel comfortable talking to that individual, they may speak with the executive or administrative staff person.

D. Any supervisor, agent, or other employee who has been found by the presbytery, after appropriate investigation, to have sexually harassed another employee, will be subject to appropriate sanctions, depending upon the circumstances, from warning in his/her personnel file up to and including termination.

#### P3-S.2.6. Policy Regarding Sexual Misconduct by Those Involved in Ministry

Adopted by the Committee on Ministry 1/18/93

Revisions Approved by the Committee on Ministry 5/3/93 & 9/30/93

Adopted by Presbytery 6/94

Revisions Approved by the Committee on Ministry 9/26/97  
Revisions Approved by Presbytery  
Revisions Approved by Presbytery 6/26/98

## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

This policy statement is based upon: our understanding of Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church (**Book of Order F-1.0201**); the Scriptures as the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to us (**Book of Order, W-4.4004a2**); and the creeds and confessions of **The Book of Confessions** as standards subordinate to the authority of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures (**Book of Order F-2.02**).

## SECTION II: POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Presbytery of South Dakota that all members, officers, non-member employees, and volunteers of governing bodies and entities of the presbytery are to maintain the integrity of ministerial, employment, and professional relationships at all times. Sexual misconduct is not only a violation of the principles set forth in Scripture, but also of these relationships and is never permissible.

## SECTION III: SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to the members, non-member employees, officers, and volunteers of the Presbytery of South Dakota and is commended to the sessions of the presbytery to use as a guide for developing their own local policy. In implementing local policies, the presbytery's response coordination team (RCT) will be available, upon formal request by a session, to assist that session in its response to allegations of sexual misconduct.

## SECTION IV: PURPOSE

The purposes of this policy are:

- A. To prevent and eliminate sexual misconduct within the presbytery. This includes establishing a safe environment and lines of accountability.
- B. To provide clear procedures for effective pastoral response to written allegations of sexual misconduct within the presbytery, thus assuring care and support for all persons and congregations concerned.
- C. To provide oversight into the processes and actions that are taken in response to written allegations of sexual misconduct.
- D. To promote healing of all persons and congregations when sexual misconduct has been occurred or has been alleged.

## SECTION V: DEFINITIONS

This policy relates to all people who fall under its scope: all ages, of both genders, ordained and nonordained, members, staff, committee members and other representatives of the Presbytery of South Dakota, who minister in the name of Jesus Christ in and for the Presbyterian Church (USA).

[Note: Because of jurisdictional concerns, this presbytery policy will ordinarily apply directly only to those who are members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and members



of the Presbytery of South Dakota. Criminal or civil issues must be dealt with according to state law.]

### **Sexual Misconduct**

The following descriptive definition of Sexual Misconduct from the Book of Order is operative for this policy (D-10.0401):

Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to:

- (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen without the mental capacity to consent; or
- (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of **ordered ministry** or position.

These definitions are not meant to restrict church professionals from having normal social or marital relationships.

## **SECTION VI: RESPONSE COORDINATION TEAM (RCT)**

### **A. DEFINITION**

A Response Coordination Team shall be nominated by the presbytery's nominating committee in consultation with the committee on ministry and the presbytery administrator and elected by the presbytery. Its purpose is to coordinate the presbytery's response to allegations of sexual misconduct. It shall not deal directly with the needs of persons and groups affected by such allegations. The RCT is to assist the presbytery officers, committees, and staff in responding to allegations of sexual misconduct and will be available to assist a local session when the session has voted to request assistance. The Response Coordination Team shall consist of six members divided into three classes, each serving three-year terms with one class elected each year, without term limits. One member shall be designated as the moderator by the committee on ministry.

### **B. COMPOSITION OF THE RCT**

The RCT shall consist of those persons who are in good standing in the community of faith, demonstrate Christian maturity, and possess one or more of the following skills or experience, so that the combined group incorporates these areas of knowledge and practice:

1. Christian counseling
2. Understanding of group dynamics and healthy systems
3. A survivor's advocate (child or adult)
4. Legal know-how (with particular experience in sexual harassment or abuse cases, domestic law, and criminal proceedings)
5. Conflict resolution, particularly in a religious community setting
6. Insurance and risk management
7. Personnel management and training

All elected members of the RCT shall be members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and shall be familiar with our constitution, policies, and procedures, particularly in the area of sexual misconduct. When consultants with particular expertise are needed, they do not need to be members of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

### **D. ROLE**

1. Consultative. In response to allegations of sexual misconduct, the RCT, as a part of its coordinative function shall consult with appropriate staff, officers, and committees of the presbytery concerning appropriate ways to meet the needs that arise in the context of a sexual misconduct case and to delegate tasks to meet these responsibilities. The RCT shall work in a consultative manner with a local session when requested to do so by that local session.
2. Training. The RCT shall provide or arrange to provide training for persons serving on entities of the Presbytery of South Dakota and for local sessions when requested to do so to perform the tasks listed below which may need to be addressed by the governing body:
  - a. Required Reporting
    - (1) To insurance carriers
    - (2) To appropriate local, state, or federal authorities, if the allegations involve the abuse of a minor or other criminal behavior.
  - b. Contact with the complainant and/or complainant's family
    - (1) Meeting their needs (e.g. counseling, advocacy)
    - (2) Interviews in relation to the investigation
  - c. Contact with the respondent and respondent's family
    - (1) Meeting their needs (e.g. counseling, advocacy)
    - (2) Interviews in relation to the investigation
  - d. Contact with the session and congregation (if a congregation is involved). Based upon the need-to-know decisions, in order to help the session and congregation to be faithful and to heal.
  - e. Contact with others affected (This may include other persons in the presbytery or an agency.)
  - f. Contact with the media
  - g. Make sure appropriate legal counsel is consulted
3. Prevention. The RCT shall provide or arrange to provide
  - a. A variety of methods by which teaching elders, ruling elders, and lay people, as well as Presbytery officers, leaders, commissions, sessions, committees, and other entities can create a healthy and safe environment for ministry and mission.
  - b. Evaluation of processes, training, and methods of prevention.
  - c. Distribution of this policy.

Copies of this policy shall be distributed to all members, Presbytery employees, clerks of session, and entity officers, and shall be available to all church members. It is intended for use by church members, church officers, employees, and volunteers. The policy shall be made available to persons who accuse others of misconduct, including those who are or who claim to be victims of sexual misconduct and their families. The policy will be available to those serving on special investigative or disciplinary committees, Committee on Ministry members, and Response Coordination Team, and others. Upon receipt of this policy, ministers and Presbytery employees must sign a written acknowledgment of receipt. This acknowledgment shall be kept in the person's personnel file. Local congregations will want to develop a procedure to insure that appropriate people receive a copy of this policy.

## SECTION VII: HOW ALLEGATIONS WILL BE PROCESSED

A. Criminal Acts. If there is a reasonable discernment that a criminal act has occurred, civil authorities shall be contacted immediately.

B. Unwritten Allegations. In such instances where no written allegations have been received and yet there is reasonable discernment that some form of misconduct has occurred, the moderator of the RCT shall be contacted immediately. When a local session requests the presbytery RCT's assistance, the clerk of session or pastor will make this contact.

C. Written Allegations. All written allegations of sexual misconduct will be investigated through the appropriate process as indicated in the "Rules of Discipline" (Book of Order) and in the standing rules of the governing body. In cases of members under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of South Dakota, the judicial process as provided in the "Rules of Discipline" will be followed. In cases involving employees, the provisions of the personnel policy will also be followed. For employees who are members of the presbytery, both personnel policy provisions and the disciplinary process will apply.

1. Judicial. Whoever receives a written allegation must forward it to the stated clerk and then immediately call the moderator of the response coordination team. When the stated clerk receives a written allegation under D-10.0100, an investigating committee (D-10.0201) shall be put in place according to B7-5. The moderator of Presbytery, the presbytery administrator, and the stated clerk are responsible for appointing an investigative committee or a committee of counsel if or when needed, which shall meet as soon as possible after its formation. The investigating committee shall conduct its investigation in accordance with D-10.0202. The investigative committee shall maintain regular contact with the person making the written allegations, keeping him/her informed about the status of the investigation. Under no circumstances shall the investigating committee contact the person being the respondent without first advising the person making the written allegations of the date of that contact. The response coordination team shall have the right to meet with the investigative committee only in regards to consultation concerning its process or special circumstances surrounding the written allegation.

2. Some Administrative Considerations. Following an accusation of misconduct against a staff member of the presbytery or a member of the presbytery serving a church or agency, the appropriate committee (Committee on Ministry or Personnel) shall consult with the complainant, the respondent, and the involved session or board of oversight to ascertain whether the circumstances would be aided by the respondent being advised to take administrative leave. In terms of teaching elders, the committee on ministry cannot require the session to use the administrative leave option; it may only consult with the session. If the respondent refuses administrative leave and the presbytery believes it is imperative to remove the person, the presbytery may proceed under G-2.0904 or its personnel policy to do so. In such instances, if the presbytery establishes an administrative commission, such a commission will abide by the process found in G-3.0109. The committee on ministry or other body may also request that an administrative commission be appointed to deal with the discord caused by the alleged misconduct. The committee on ministry will maintain a list of

Transitional or supply pastors trained in responding to congregations where abuse has occurred. The committee on ministry will also work carefully with the session to recognize and deal with denial and anger that typically accompanies abuse allegations. Evaluation: The RCT shall coordinate an evaluation after all the procedures outlined above have been carried out, seeking responses from persons and groups involved in the response to allegations of misconduct.

## **B7-2.6. RESPONSE COORDINATION TEAM**

A Response Coordination Team (RCT) shall have six members elected in three classes, each serving three year terms with one class elected each year. Member terms are not limited.

### **B7-2.6.1. Responsibilities**

The response coordination team will serve the congregations and the presbytery in accordance with the provisions of the presbytery's policy regarding sexual misconduct by those involved in ministry (P3-5.2.6.).

# Index

Accountability.....	41	Pastoral care during.....	57
Accountable reimbursement.....	<b>177</b>	CIF.....	20
Active member.....	95	CISM.....	110
Affirmative Action.....	18	Civil Air Patrol.....	106
Afterpastor.....	<b>225</b>	CLC.....	20
Annual Consultation.....	18	Clerk of Session.....	20, 91, 247, 253, 271, 285
Annual review.....	130, 149, 174	Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).....	20
Appreciative inquiry.....	<b>46</b> , 209	CLP.....	13, 20
Assessment and evaluation.....	101	COM Expectations.....	16
Assistant Pastor.....	18	Commission.....	21
Associate Pastor.....	18	Commissioned Lay Pastor.. <i>See</i> Commissioned Ruling Elder	
At-Large Member.....	18	Commissioned Ruling Elder.....	21, 37, 82, <b>99</b> , 160
Background checks.....	<b>126</b>	Extent of Commission.....	100
Bi-Vocational Pastor.....	18	Compensation for Ministers.....	175
Board of Pensions.....	147, <b>205</b>	Confidentiality.....	12, 14, 15, 16, 38, 39, 71, 186, 195, 197
Book of Confessions.....	18	Conflict.....	14, 39, 43, 46, <b>51</b> , 59, 65, 70, 97, 100, 101, 110, 125, 141, 142, 184, 201, <b>205</b> , 207
Book of Order.....	18	COM Action.....	187
Boundaries.....	19	Intensity.....	<b>53</b>
Call.....	19, 36, 131	Taking Cognizance.....	55, 64
Candidate.....	19	Conflict utilization.....	<b>238</b>
Candidate Assessment.....	19	Steps.....	<b>55</b>
Candidating.....	19	Congregational health.....	<b>51</b> , 203
Career Development Center.....	20	Congregational meeting.....	<b>131</b>
Certification.....	20	Congregational strategy.....	<b>190</b>
Certified Christian Educators.....	11, 20, 176	Continuing Education.....	39, 101, 279, 280
Change.....	201	Cumulative.....	145
in congregations.....	198	Expenses.....	177
Chaplain.....	20, <b>107</b>	Continuing members.....	21, 102, <b>217</b>
Chaplain endorsement.....	<b>109</b>	Cooperative Committee.....	21
Characteristics of A Small Church.....	<b>47</b>	Coordinating with CPM.....	<b>139</b>
Christian Educators.....	<b>179</b>	Co-Pastor.....	21
Church		Covenant Relationship.....	22
Particular.....	36	CPE.....	22
Church conflict.....	<b>54</b> , <b>59</b> , <b>205</b>	CPM.....	22
Advisory intervention.....	57	CRE.....	<i>See</i> Commissioned Ruling Elder
Assessment.....	<b>55</b>	Deacon.....	22
Authoritative intervention.....	57	Death in Presbytery.....	<b>174</b>
Hypothesis.....	56		

Deferred Compensation .....	177
Depression .....	39
Designated pastor.....	14, 22, 65, 81, <b>96</b>
term of call .....	96
Developmental Counseling.....	22
Directory for Worship.....	22
Discounts .....	40
Divorce .....	39
DPNC .....	<b>134</b>
Ecclesiastical endorsement .....	<b>105</b>
Ecumenical Shared Ministry.....	23
Effective salary .....	<b>147</b>
Elder .....	23
EP <i>See</i> Executive Presbyter	
Equal Opportunity Employer.....	18
Ethical conduct .....	16, 37, 195, 196, 222
Ethics .....	37, <b>72</b> , 195
Evaluating Counseling.....	23
Examination Services .....	23
Exception .....	23
Exit interviews .....	<b>70</b> , 71
Session.....	71
Transitional minister.....	71
Extraordinary .....	24
Family Crises .....	39
Family leave .....	<b>146</b>
Federated Congregation.....	24
Fees.....	40
Field Education.....	24
Final Assessment .....	24
Finding temporary leadership .....	81, 103
Five Part Form .....	24
Formula of Agreement.....	25
Formula Partner Churches .....	82
Formula Partners.....	104, <b>231</b>
Foundations of Presbyterian Polity.....	25
Friendships.....	168
Full Communion .....	25
GAC.....	25
General Assembly.....	25
General Presbyter.....	25

Glossary .....	18
Governing bodies .....	35
Head of Staff .....	26
Healthy goodbye .....	<b>69</b>
Healthy Ministry .....	<b>11</b>
Honorably Retired .....	26
Honoraria .....	40, <b>41</b>
pulpit supply .....	41
Housing and/or utility allowance .....	177
Housing expense .....	<b>148</b>
Immigrant fellowship .....	26, 198
Immigrant ministers .....	198, <b>232</b>
In Correspondence .....	21
Inactive member.....	26, 95
Inquirer.....	26
Inquiry.....	26
Installation.....	26, 33, <b>134</b> , 144
Installed pastoral relationships.....	26, 96
Interim.....	<i>See</i> Transitional
Interim minister .....	26
Intern.....	27
Interviewing .....	<b>127</b>
Investigating Committee .....	27
Joint Congregational Witness .....	27
Laboring Outside/Inside the Bounds .....	27
Large congregations .....	<b>200</b>
Larger parish .....	27, 49, 50, 84
Leadership.....	36
Liaison .....	14, 27, <b>43</b> , 69, 70
Liaison responsibilities.....	174
Maternity leave .....	<b>145</b>
Maternity Leave .....	<i>See</i> Parental Leave
Member-at-large.....	28, 95
Mentor.....	28, 160, <b>169</b>
MIF .....	28, 94, <b>123</b> , 136, 271
Military Chaplains.....	<b>105</b>
Minister of The Word and Sacrament .....	<i>See</i> Teaching Elder
Ministerial misconduct.....	<b>221</b>
Ministers of Other Denominations .....	<b>103</b>

Ministry Development .....	28
Mission studies .....	<b>201</b> , 202
Mission Study .....	28
Moderator .....	28, <b>66</b>
NCD .....	<i>See</i> New Church Development
Negotiation for Service.....	28
Neutral Pulpit.....	28
New Church Development.....	28, 47, 65
New Pastor Seminars .....	167
nFOG .....	28, 59
Ordered Ministry.....	29
Ordination .....	29, 216
Ordination exams .....	29, 30
Organizing pastor.....	29, 99, <b>102</b>
Other Denominations .....	83
Parental Leave.....	<b>145</b>
Parish .....	29
Parish Associate .....	29, <b>102</b>
Parish Council.....	29, 85, 88, 89, 250, 251
Part-Time Ministers .....	145
Pastor .....	29
Pastor Emerita or Emeritus .....	23, <b>74</b>
Pastor Nominating Committee .....	29
Pastoral Counselors.....	<b>107</b>
Pastoral relationships .....	<b>95</b>
Pastoral Transitions.....	<b>113</b>
Pastors Resigning.....	78
Paternity leave.....	<b>146</b> , <i>See</i> Parental Leave
PCCMP .....	<i>See</i> Military Chaplains
Peer advice.....	38, 196
Pensions for Chaplains.....	107
Permanent files .....	<b>240</b>
Personnel Committee .....	29
PIF .....	30
PNC . 28, 29, 30, 69, 94, <b>122</b> , 125, 126, 131, 134, 139, 140, 204, 220, 227	
PNC Workshop.....	216
Presbytery Membership .....	172
Presbytery of Call .....	30
Presbytery of Care.....	30

Privileges	
Special.....	40
Problem Areas .....	<b>168</b>
Professional Development.....	<b>163</b>
Pulpit Supply .....	30, 213
Racial Ethnic and Multicultural.....	58
Racial ethnic pastors.....	<b>58</b>
Racial/ethnic Church .....	205
Reduction in work force .....	229
Relationships .....	15, 19
Relationships with congregations .....	<b>69</b>
Release from Exercise of Ordained Office .....	31
Renunciation of Jurisdiction.....	31
Response Coordination Team.....	<b>314</b>
Responsibilities .....	13
Responsibilities of the Session .....	77
Restoration .....	31
Retired supply .....	<b>102</b>
Retirement .....	164, 171
Retiring.....	79
Ruling Elder .....	31
Sabbatical leave.....	166, <b>233</b> , <b>236</b>
Saying Goodbye .....	<b>73</b>
Separation Ethics.....	<b>72</b> , 173
Separation for cause .....	229
Session .....	32
Session Workshop.....	<b>212</b>
Severance .....	32
Severance Policy .....	113, <b>120</b>
Sexual harassment .....	<b>309</b>
Sexual misconduct.....	32, 45, <b>222</b> , <b>309</b> , 311
Allegations .....	313
Sexual Misconduct Statement .....	<b>126</b>
Small church.....	<b>47</b>
Small congregations .....	47
Social Security Offset.....	177
Solo Pastor .....	32
Specialized Ministry.....	32, <b>105</b>
Stated Clerk.....	15, 24, 29, 32, 125, 134, 228
Stated supply .....	16, 32, 99, 212, 270

Stress.....	39	Transfer .....	34, 104
Supervised Practice of Ministry .....	32	Transition .....	43, 45
Supervisor.....	160	Transitional minister .. 71, 99, 100, <b>140</b> , 141, 213, <b>226</b> , 278	
Synod .....	33	Assessment and evaluation .....	101
Systems thinking.....	197, 198	Goals.....	142
Teaching Elder.....	33	Travel expenses.....	177
Temporary Membership.....	33	Triennial visit .....	16, 34, <b>59</b> , 60, 61, 62, 63, 204
Temporary Ministers.....	<b>137</b>	Conversation Starters .....	64
Temporary pastoral relations .....	<b>98</b>	Planning .....	61
Temporary supply .....	33, 99, 100, 213	Purpose .....	60
Tentmaking pastor .....	18, 33, 48, <b>98</b> , 135	Resistance .....	63
Term limit.....	135	Union Church.....	34
Termination of Call.....	<b>116</b>	Unsatisfactory Performance .....	230
Presbytery action .....	119	USERRA.....	<i>See</i> Military Chaplains
Termination agreement.....	118	Validated ministry .....	34, <b>95</b> , <b>218</b>
Terms of Call .....	16, 33, 136, 144, 237	Veterans Administration Chaplains.....	<b>106</b>
Theological Reflections .....	35	Vote.....	<b>131</b>
Thinking systemically.....	<b>197</b>	Waiver.....	34
Time to Move?.....	<b>113</b>	Yoke.....	34
Training .....	<b>189</b>	Yoked agreements .....	16
		Yoked churches.....	34, 49, <b>84</b>
		Commissioner to presbytery .....	85