

MANUAL FOR COMMISSION ON MINISTRY THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

Citations to the *Book of Order* are from the 2015-2017 edition, unless otherwise noted.

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To get forms, guides, or publications, click on the “Click here” or on the title in the Appendix. This will link to the appropriate document on the NHP Web site

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COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PART I

Introductory Information

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**From the Book of Order
*Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)***

G-3.0301

The Presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of its congregations, the Presbytery shall keep before it the marks of the Church (**F-1.0302**), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (**F-1.0303**) and the six Great Ends of the Church (**F-1.0304**).

In light of this charge, the Presbytery has responsibility and power to:

- a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include organizing, receiving, merging, dismissing, and dissolving congregations in consultation with their members; overseeing congregations without pastors; establishing pastoral relationships and dissolving them; guiding the preparation of those preparing to become *teaching elders*; establishing and maintaining those ecumenical relationships that will enlarge the life and mission of the church in its district; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to congregations in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration to the end that the church's witness to the love and grace of God may be heard in the world.
- b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord's Supper at its meetings at least annually and for fellowship groups, new church developments, and other non-congregational entities meeting within its bounds; authorizing and training specific ruling elders to administer or preside at the Lord's Supper when it deems it necessary to meet the needs for the administration of the Sacrament; and exercising pastoral care for the congregations and members of Presbytery in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the Presbytery may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.
- c. nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. This responsibility shall include ordaining, receiving, dismissing, installing, removing, and disciplining its members who are teaching elders; commissioning ruling elders to limited pastoral service; promoting the peace and harmony of congregations and inquiring into the sources of congregational discord; supporting congregations in developing the graces of generosity, stewardship, and service; assisting congregations in developing mission and participating in the mission of the whole church; taking jurisdiction over the members of dissolved congregations and granting transfers of their membership to other congregations; warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within its bounds; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

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*, commissioned ruling elders to a particular service, and certified Christian educators of the Presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the Presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders to a particular, 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 Presbytery of New Hope delegates responsibility and authority to fulfill the functions above that relate to congregations, ministers, and church professionals to the Commission on Ministry, as follows:

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

FUNCTIONS:

- Provide for the responsibilities delineated in *Book of Order and the COM Manual of Operations*
- Provide for a COM Executive Committee (for makeup, see “Membership” below)
- Lay Pastor Program (including a re-organization of the program).

COM CO-MODERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Moderate COM plenary
- Consult with EP regarding issues involving church professionals and congregations and develop strategies to address those issues.
- Lead COM Executive committee
- In consultation with EP, assign and authorize Vacancy Counselors
- Review and approve MIFs
- Lead East/West teams with a focus on pastoral issues
- Assign and approve temporary moderators of Session and for Congregational meetings
- Assist advocates in addressing issues with their congregations

COM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Establish “COM Teams” for the East and West Regions of the Presbytery.
- Establish advocates for pastors and congregations
- Review the work of COM taskforces working with congregations or church professionals.
Conflict Resolution beyond Level I (members of COM, as well as individuals outside of COM may serve on a Conflict Resolution Task Force).
If an issue is determined by a Team to surpass Level I conflict, it will be referred WITH RECOMMENDATIONS to the COM Executive Committee.
- Approve requests for Honorable Retirement
- Maintain Stated Supply List
- Assign Churches in Team Clusters (then reviewed by Teams and adjusted as necessary)
- Receive written Exit Interviews from regional teams
- Assign and approve long-term moderators of Session
- Approve requests to be on Supply list from ministers in good standing within the Presbytery
- Review the manual and make recommendations to COM Plenary
- Strategic planning for COM

COM PLENARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provides concurrence (or non-concurrence) for all temporary/transitional and installed pastors
- Changes in Terms of Call
- Oversee Validated Ministries. Receive reports and follow up
- Oversee Ministers at Large- Receive reports and follow up as needed
- Oversee Interim Ministers- Receive reports and follow-up as needed
- Establish and oversee Conflict Resolution teams
- Recommend to Coordinating Body any requests for Administrative Commissions
- Receive and refer to Coordinating Body information regarding congregations seeking Gracious Separation
- Approve requests to be on Supply list from ministers outside our denomination or Presbytery
- Set policy for activities of the COM
- Review recommendations and approve changes to the COM Manual

ADVOCATE RESPONSIBILITIES ~ THE COM EAST AND WEST TEAMS:

- **Support for both Pastors and Associate Pastors**
- **Fostering Relationships with:**
 - Churches in each region
 - Temporary Pastors
 - Ministers at Large
 - Commissioned Ruling Elders to a Particular Service

OTHER COM ROLES fulfilled through subteams and shared with COM Plenary **Care Subteams**

- Conflict Transformation – provide for and oversee CT teams composed of COM members as well as those outside COM
- Healthy Boundaries training – oversee training and track participation
- Ministers at Large – provide care and nurture; oversee validated ministries
- Honorably retired ministers – provide care and nurture; help connection to NHP

Leadership Subteams

- Transitional ministry – pastoral transitions; vacancy counselors
- Interim Ministry – receive reports; track contracts; mutual support among interim ministers
- Commissioned Ruling Elders – provide training and mutual support

MEMBERSHIP:

The Commission on Ministry shall be elected by the Presbytery following nomination by the Nominations Committee. The number of members allowed on the Commission is 24, made up of 3 classes of 8 each, together with the Moderator of the Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission. There is to be a balanced number of elders and ministers. In addition to the policy of the Presbytery to seek diversity, the Nominations Committee of the Presbytery of New Hope will also seek a balance in members residing in the East and West regions of the Presbytery. Members of the Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission shall not be counted toward a quorum (except for the Moderator).

Ordinarily, leadership will consist of Co-Moderators, who serve rotating, two-year terms. A COM Executive Committee will consist of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Co-Moderators, the Moderator of the Examinations and Transfers Sub-Commission, one member each from the Care Sub-team and the Leadership Sub-team, and the out-going COM Co-Moderator if they continue as members of the COM. The EP/Stated Clerk will serve ex-officio.

QUORUM:

Full COM: One third of those elected and serving on the commission (not including members of Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission) shall constitute a quorum.

East/West Regional COM: One third of those elected and meeting as part of an East/West regional team of the COM (not including members of Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission) shall constitute a quorum.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly

LINKAGES:

The Commission on Ministry reports directly to the Presbytery.

EXAMINATIONS AND TRANSFERS - SUB-COMMISSION OF COM**FUNCTIONS:**

- To conduct examinations of each minister or candidate entering the Presbytery on his or her Christian faith, view of theology, the sacraments, government of the church and English Bible as needed.
- To conduct audiences with each minister or candidate and the representative(s) from the church they are expecting to serve to determine the compatibility of the match between candidate and the church.
- To conduct examinations of each ruling elder being considered for call as a commissioned ruling elder to a particular service.
- To conduct audiences with each commissioned ruling elder and representative(s) from the church they are expecting to serve to determine the compatibility of the match between the candidate and the church.
- To act as a commission on behalf of the whole COM to approve the call or contract between the church and the prospective leader.
- Report each action to the Commission on Ministry.

MEMBERSHIP: The Examinations and Transfers Sub-Commission shall be composed of fifteen (15) members, in three classes of five (5) members each, with a Moderator and Vice Moderator.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly, however, additional meetings will be scheduled as needed.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

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POLICY ON PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. There will be four types of pastoral relationships:
 - a. Installed Pastors¹
 - i. Pastor
 - ii. Associate Pastor
 - iii. Co-Pastor
 - iv. Designated (Pastor positions)²
 - b. Transitional Pastors³
 - i. Stated Supply (Pastor or Associate Pastor positions)
 - ii. Pulpit Supply (Pastor positions)
 - iii. Interim Pastor (Pastor positions)
 - c. Commissioned Ruling Elders
 - d. Interns
2. Teaching Elders are eligible for all Installed Pastor and Transitional Pastor positions.
3. Ruling Elders who have been through Commissioned Ruling Elder Training are eligible for commissioned positions in a particular church. Authority to moderate the session and administer sacraments must be granted by Presbytery⁴.
4. Seminary Students are eligible for Intern positions as approved by the Preparation for Ministry Sub-Committee and/or the Committee on Ministry (as appropriate).
5. All Installed Pastor positions require a thorough search by a congregationally elected Pastor Nominating Committee.
6. Selected candidates for all Installed Pastor, Transitional Pastor, and Commissioned Ruling Elder positions must be approved by COM or the Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission.
7. Stated Supply Pastors are invited by Session, with concurrence of COM. Relationship will be established on a case-by-case basis for periods specific to each case and for purposes specific to each case. Each period shall not exceed twelve months, but may be renewed. With Presbytery's approval, may serve as Moderator of Session. For each Stated Supply, COM will work with the Session to develop a Stated Supply Plan that will outline the intent of the supply, the total anticipated duration of the supply and the work to be done by the Session to move from a Transitional Leadership Position to an Installed Position (for churches that have the potential for calling an Installed Pastor).
8. At the termination of a relationship with an Installed Pastor, COM will request a written State of the Church Report to be provided by the church's COM Advocate to be completed within one month of the announcement of termination. The report will address the current "health" of the church through a minimum of three interviews: outgoing Installed Pastor, the Clerk of Session, and the Chair of the Personnel Committee. This report will help inform the COM on the skills needed by the Interim Pastor.

¹ Consistent with current COM Manual

² Used only as a bridge position for Interim Pastors becoming Installed Pastors for the same church (see Policy on Interim Pastors)

³ Removes Interim Associate Pastor, Temporary Supply Pastor, Temporary Associate Pastor

⁴ Book of Order 2013-2015 Section G-2.1001

9. Interim Pastors are invited by Session with concurrence of COM. At the termination of a relationship with an Installed Pastor, COM will work with a Session to identify an Interim Pastor. The Interim Pastor will have completed all training required by the Presbytery for interim work. The Interim Pastor will be invited by the Session with COM concurrence for the purpose of working with the Session and Congregation to develop a Mission Plan for the church. The Interim Pastor will be expected to remain in the position for a one-year period. COM may approve two six-month extensions. Ordinarily, those serving as interim pastors in the Presbytery of New Hope will be members of the presbytery, but exceptions to this policy will be considered. A minister from another Presbytery seeking approval to serve as an Interim Pastor within the Presbytery of New Hope will be examined by the COM Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission.
10. Ordinarily, an Interim Pastor may not become the next Installed Pastor of a church in which he/she has served as an Interim Pastor, but the Presbytery may make an exception by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of those present and voting. A church wishing to make such a change in relationship must provide to COM a formal request outlining the full and open search made before making this determination and a rationale for why the particular and unique situation within this church supports this request. [See [Policy Regarding Intentional Interim Pastors](#) for further guidance].
11. When an Interim Pastor is approved to become the Installed Pastor of a church where he/she has served as the Interim Pastor, the pastor will be installed as Designated Pastor ([see p. 73 \[click\]](#)) for that church for a period of two years. After a two-year period, with concurrence of COM, the pastor will become the Installed Pastor.
12. In order to eliminate pastoral and professional conflicts of interest, this Presbytery has determined that an Associate Pastor may not become the next Installed Pastor of a church for which he/she has served as an Associate Pastor.⁵
13. Stated Supply may not become the next Installed Pastor in a church unless he/she leaves the church for three months prior to the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee.

⁵ Book of Order 2013-2015 Section G-2.0504c

MINIMUM TERMS OF COMPENSATION

Each year the Board of Pensions of the PCUSA recommends minimum terms of compensation for Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Each year, the Presbytery votes whether or not to accept the recommendation of the Board of Pensions. If the Presbytery declines to accept the recommendation, the Stated Clerk will send a pastoral letter to ministers and clerks of session advising them that the minimum compensation standards for the previous year are still in effect, but that churches are encouraged to meet or exceed the minimum standards at their discretion.

Reimbursed Expenses

Auto Allowance—to be reimbursed at the IRS standard rate of compensation.

Benefits

a. Pension/Medical Dues

Full participation in the denominational Pension and Major Medical Insurance Program:

b. Study Leave

Study leave for full time ministers is two weeks.

c. Paid Vacation

Paid vacation for four weeks (includes 4 Sundays).

d. Sabbatical

It is the policy of the Commission on Ministry to recommend to churches that full-time ministers be offered 3 months sabbatical after 5 years service.

Annual Report of Minister's Compensation

In January of each year, churches will submit to the Presbytery the form entitled, "Report of Ministers Compensation."[\(Click to get form\)](#)[6 pages]

If the Report of Ministers Compensation form is not filed, An Annual Compensation Review Report must be filed. ([Click to get this form](#))[1 page]

LABORING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

INSIDE

A minister member of another Presbytery seeking to labor within the bounds of the Presbytery of New Hope must submit a request to the Commission on Ministry through the stated clerk of the Presbytery. If the minister is in the process of accepting a call to the Presbytery of New Hope, he/she **may not** move onto the field until a sustained examination is conducted by the COM Sub-commission on Examinations and Transfers.

OUTSIDE

G-2.0502 has led to the convention of ministers seeking permission of their presbyteries to conduct or participate in one-time events outside the bounds of their Presbytery (e.g., weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.), and likewise of the Presbytery in which the event is scheduled to labor within their bounds.

Ministers are no longer required to request permission to labor within the bounds, or outside the bounds, for one-time events, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.

**PARTICULAR BENEFITS
FOR MINISTER-MEMBERS
AND CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE**

MEDICAL REIMBURSEMENT (Cafeteria 125 plans)

Because the Major Medical Plan of the Board of Pensions does not fully reimburse a minister/educator for medical expenses, many churches have established a medical reimbursement fund upon which the professionals and their families may draw each year. (Referred to as a "Cafeteria 125 fund," some IRS rules apply.) If a church wishes to follow this practice, the amount of the fund shall be established annually, as a part of the annual compensation review. The fund shall be used only for the same type of deductibles which are covered by the Major Medical Plan of the Board of Pensions and other qualified medical and child care uses defined by IRS rules.

MATERNITY-PATERNITY LEAVE

In addition to other benefits, a session is encouraged to consider the inclusion of maternity and/or paternity leave in their personnel policies for all staff. Churches can consult the Presbytery of New Hope Personnel Policies if they care to see a sample policy in this regard.

SICK LEAVE

It is recommended that the congregation provide at least 12 days of sick leave annually which can be accumulated up to 90 days total. If employment termination is caused by illness, the congregation may choose to monetarily compensate for any earned but unused sick leave. In such cases, the session and congregation are encouraged to work with the minister and Board of Pensions to accommodate the criteria for disability status.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

If a minister/educator remains disabled by illness or injury after exhausting all accumulated paid sick leave benefits, the minister/educator will also be entitled to the following:

1. A pastor is eligible for disability benefits as a participating member of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Disability benefits commence after 90 days of disability. See www.pensions.org. Disability benefits (Board of Pensions and Social Security together) equal 60% of the pastor/educator's effective salary on the date disability began.
2. Churches are responsible for the minister/educator's compensation for the first 90 days of disability. This should include pay for unused sick leave.
3. Refer to the state's disability statutes to ensure compliance.
4. For current information on disability benefits, contact the Board of Pensions.

TRAVEL AND AUTO COSTS

A minister/educator's work includes much travel for hospital and home visitations, as well as travel for governing body responsibilities. These travel costs shall be reimbursed as part of the terms of the Call to the pastor. Auto expenses are not to be added to the W-2 form if the reimbursement is done in accordance with an accountable reimbursement plan, but each minister must account to the church for travel expenses.

PARTICULAR BENEFITS - cont'd

Auto expenses are constantly increasing and such reimbursements should reflect this. It is recommended that the current I.R.S. mileage rate be established as the amount reimbursed. Reimbursement in excess of the I.R.S. mileage rate, must be added to the pastor's W-2 as additional compensation.

Travel expenses, Continuing Education Expenses and Professional expenses may be combined into the same line item in the church's budget or as separate line items.

VACATION

1. A vacation with pay is provided for all minister/educators. It is a necessary time of rest, refreshment, and relaxation for health and work performance.
2. For contract ministers and certified educators, vacation should be prorated in the first calendar year of service, as well as the last year.
3. For installed ministers, vacation is banked at the start-up of the ministry for use at times agreed upon by the minister and session. Vacation is prorated for the last year of service.
4. It is the responsibility of the Personnel Committee and the minister/educator to see that vacation time is used annually in order to have an effective ministry.
5. Vacation is to be kept separate from study leave, attendance at conferences, or weekly days off and sabbatical leave.
6. Ministers/educators are encouraged to take vacation in a large enough block of time (at least one week) for the refreshment which is necessary for effective renewal.
7. Ministers/educators in the Presbytery of New Hope shall have as part of their Call at least four weeks of vacation. This is to be defined as twenty-eight (28) calendar days, including their normal days off during the vacation period and no more than 4 Sundays.
8. The church shall be financially responsible for coverage of all pastoral functions including preaching.
9. The Presbytery encourages that up to but no more than 10 days of vacation time be rolled from one year into the next calendar year. The annual refreshment from vacation comes only if the minister or educator takes the vacation regularly. Excessive accumulation of vacation time does not provide for that regular refreshment. Unused vacation benefits are payable in full to the date of the dissolution of the call.
10. It sometimes happens that churches, no matter how much they may regret it, are only able to compensate their pastors at the minimum terms of call. In such cases, they may wish to acknowledge that and show their appreciation by offering an additional Sunday or two away from the pulpit, or additional days away for study or spiritual reflection, which are above and beyond professional development or vacation time.

WEEKLY TIME OFF

1. Ministers/educators are expected to take at least one full, uninterrupted day off each week.
2. When there has been an unusually heavy week, ministers/educators are encouraged to take an extra day off during the next week to compensate. This is not considered a vacation day.
3. It is the responsibility of the minister/educator and personnel committee/team of session to communicate clearly about this kind of arrangement.
4. The Commission on Ministry of the Presbytery considers a normal pastoral week to be 40-50 hours.

PARTICULAR BENEFITS - cont'd

HOLIDAYS

It is recommended that the congregation provide for customary holidays.

1. The following nine holidays are recommended as paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- President's Day
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- Christmas Day and the day after

2. If a minister or educator works on a designated holiday, another day should be recognized as a day off.

3. When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it should be observed as a holiday on the nearest Friday or Monday respectively.

4. When a holiday occurs on a minister/educator's day off, it may be observed either the day before or the day following.

PULPIT SUPPLY FEE

The church shall establish an adequate budget reserve to cover the costs of a substitute for the pastor when required during periods of vacation, study leave, and other absences.

On the website for the Presbytery of New Hope (and the link at the end of this section) minimum compensation guidelines are provided regarding occasional supply.

SAVINGS PLANS AND ANNUITIES

The local church and minister/educator may wish to enter into some type of arrangement whereby money is withheld from the pastor/educator's salary and placed into a tax deferred savings plan.

There are various tax-sheltered plans and annuities which are available for such purposes. The Board of Pensions has established a 403b with Fidelity. Another plan has been designated by the Internal Revenue Service as a "Tax-sheltered Annuity Program for Employees of Public Schools and Certain Tax-exempt Organizations." Yet another alternative is a "Rabbi Trust." Ministers are encouraged to consult with tax and investment professionals. Tax code provisions of any such plan must be closely followed by the Session and the minister/educator.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Consult state regulations regarding requirements in this regard.

PARTICULAR BENEFITS - cont'd

GUIDELINES FOR EQUITY ALLOWANCES: PROPOSED: TO CHURCHES AND MINISTERS INTERESTED IN THIS OPTION OF AN ADDITIONAL BENEFIT:

Home equity is not a reality for many ministers who have spent their careers living in church manses, unless a minister's Terms of Call includes an Equity Allowance. These Guidelines provide one approach for a minister living in manse and will contribute toward sufficient resources whereby the minister may be able to own a home (not necessarily in this area) after 40 years of service.

Here follow some guidelines that are intended to assist churches and ministers to incorporate Home Equity Allowance in the Terms of Call.

1. It is the responsibility of the particular church to ensure that the terms of call support the minister in providing for retirement home ownership. Although the Presbytery compensation policy sets the minimum effective salary for ministers, this responsibility extends to ministers whose effective salary exceeds the minimum required by Presbytery.
2. In most cases, this requirement is satisfied either by: (a) providing a housing allowance so the minister can purchase a home in which to live during his or her current call; or (b) by paying an equity allowance to **a minister who is living in a manse or renting a home**. The minimum equity allowance should be at least the amount specified in the Presbytery compensation policy, but it may be larger. Any equity allowance is included as part of the minister's effective salary.
3. In some cases, the minister may have an existing long term plan for retirement home ownership other than one of the means included in paragraph 2, above. The terms of call should be tailored to support such an alternative plan in a way that does not disadvantage the minister financially. The Committee on Ministry is available to assist in this process.

How to pay an equity allowance. In general, the equity allowance should go into a tax-advantaged investment account for the benefit of the minister. The Presbytery of New Hope cannot provide specific advice on how to set up such accounts, but can suggest alternatives that churches may wish to consider. The most common alternatives are:

1. Establish a 403(b)(9) account. This account functions much like a 401(k) account, but is designed specifically for churches. The minister owns the account, and either owner or the church can make contributions to it. The tax-free contributions remain and grow free of tax in the account until withdrawn. Like a 401(k) account, there are rules governing the timing and minimum size of withdrawals and penalties apply if the rules are not observed. The Board of Pensions is a good source of information for setting up such an account.
2. A church may set up an investment account in its name, but for the benefit of the minister. Contributions are made to this account and, as long as the church remains the owner, are not taxable. The account can be retained by the church after a minister leaves to accept a new call, or it can be transferred tax-free to a church to which the minister has moved. The account can be transferred to the minister at any time without penalty for early withdrawal, but the full amount in the account is taxed at that time. The Presbyterian Foundation can explain in more detail how these accounts operate. Note that in either of the above options, the equity allowance must be reported to the Board of Pensions as part of the effective salary, and so the Board of Pensions contribution must be paid on them. Starting in 2008, however, matching contributions to a 403(b)(9) plan were no longer included in effective salary.

PARTICULAR BENEFITS - cont'd

GUIDELINES FOR EQUITY ALLOWANCES - cont'd

3. An established calculation for an equitable contribution toward the equity allowance is for the church to (a) place funds in a separate fund (deferred equity allowance, 403b, etc.) an amount of 1/40th of the "median house cost" or (b) pay the minister additional salary if the minister has a long term housing plan. The "median house cost" is established to be latest quarterly reported US median sales price of existing single-family homes for metropolitan areas as calculated by the National Association of Realtors. This information is available at <http://www.realtor.org/research/research/metroprice>.

OR...

3. The pastor and the Session are encouraged to arrange as an increase to the pay (if one is not already established) a tax-sheltered annuity into which at least \$2,000 (or 10 percent of cash salary) can be deposited annually to provide equity toward housing costs upon retirement. (This is especially critical if your pastor is within fifteen years of retirement.) This tax-deferred compensation must be included in calculating benefits dues to the Board of Pensions (PCUSA).

[Click here](#) for form "Compensation Guidelines for Temporary/Occasional Pastoral Services" [2 pages]

Guidelines for Announcing Retirement

A Resource for Ministers in the Presbytery of New Hope

1. As you consider whether God is calling you into retirement, contact the Board of Pensions **at least three months in advance** to request their packet of materials for their retirement process. You want to be sure that you are fully aware of their process so that there is no unnecessary delay in the start-up of your pension benefits.
2. Determine the effective date you wish your retirement to be granted by the Presbytery.
3. Request (in writing) that the Commission on Ministry recommend to the Presbytery that the status of Honorable Retirement be granted to you, effective date-certain.
4. Determine when to tell your session. In anticipation of that announcement, write a letter to your congregation announcing your expected retirement. Mail that letter so that it will be received in most homes of your congregation the day following the session meeting where you make your first public announcement.
5. Invite the Church Advocate of the Commission on Ministry to be present with your session when you announce your retirement, or to plan for that presence at the next meeting. The purpose of this presence will be to help the session consider **the options** for future pastoral leadership.
6. Recommend that the session consider forming a **Congregational Transition Team** to begin work immediately. The purpose of this team will be to work with you and the other leaders of the congregation to ensure that the work and worship of the congregation will go forward with as few "hitches" as possible. This includes making arrangements for the congregation to celebrate with you your retirement; to continue further consideration of options for pastoral leadership, and the requisite recommendations to session regarding leadership.
7. Relax and enjoy the final months with your congregation, and may God's blessings be showered down upon you as you prepare for this significant step in your personal and professional life as well as in your faith journey.

See also pp. [44-48 \(click here\)](#)

Sabbatical Leave Policy for Ministers: FAQ's

Why do we need a sabbatical policy for our Presbytery?

Many Terms of Call for clergy entering the Presbytery of New Hope contain clauses providing for Sabbatical. This policy provides consistency and guidance for local churches. It is the recommendation of the Presbytery of New Hope that a minister be provided 3 months of sabbatical leave after 5 years of service.

Is the sabbatical policy mandatory?

This policy is recommended but is not a requirement; however, we foresee occasions when there will be either increased demand for including a sabbatical on the part of pastors or the proposal of sabbatical by Pastoral Nominating Committees to recruit a candidate.

Why do clergy and educators need more time off?

The stress and pressure faced by church professionals is well documented. The time offered by Sabbath rest is not the same as "vacation" where one does not completely disengage from the parish. Sabbatical provides the type of time and space required for spiritual renewal and healing.

How are we going to pay for this?

This is a key part of the policy. Clergy and congregations are encouraged to find creative ways to fund the sabbatical. There also are ample grants for which church professionals and congregations may apply to support financially both the church and the individual during the sabbatical.

How will this policy affect smaller churches?

We believe that smaller membership churches will benefit immensely from this policy. We covenant to work with these congregations to secure temporary leadership.

So what will my church "get" out of this?

Sabbaticals are meant to increase long-term pastorates, which in turn, are proven to strengthen congregations. It only makes sense that church professionals, who have been reinvigorated for ministry, are going to be more effective!

Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave

The Presbytery of New Hope

Introduction to 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.

Sabbatical Leave Defined:

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 five (5) 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 Sabbatical Leave:

To be eligible for a Sabbatical Leave, the pastor/educator shall present, in writing, to the Church 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 in the year prior to the Sabbatical Leave, the Plan shall be forwarded to the churches Commission on Ministry for their review and recommendation. Included in this Plan will be the church's plan for pastoral/educator services during the period of the Sabbatical Leave.

Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave - cont'd

At the completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the pastor/educator should present to the next regular meeting of the church Session, a written report of activities and findings. This report also will be sent to the Commission on Ministry immediately following up 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 church will reap from granting Sabbaticals. For example, ministers/educators who have the opportunity to examine issues of professional growth and development as ministers 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 church. It also offers an incentive to both ministers 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 elders trained as Lay Pastors or Associate Pastors who might be willing to preach one Sunday without honorarium, etc.

NOTE: The Louisville Institute, a Lilly Endowment Program housed at Louisville Seminary, provides study grants for pastoral leaders. Contact Rev. David J. Wood at 1044 Alta Vista Rd., Louisville, KY 40205-1798. Their email address is info@louisville-institute.org. The website for the Louisville Institute is <http://louisville-institute.org/index.asp> and the website for the Lilly Endowment is <http://www.clergyrenewal.org/>

Re-Entry Into Ministry:

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 under-utilized
- 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 as the congregation's Sabbath Leave.

For further information, see the Presbytery Sabbatical Policy ([click here](#)).

SHARED PASTORAL LEADERSHIP (YOKED RELATIONSHIP)

PURPOSE: The purpose of sharing pastoral leadership between churches is to provide competent pastoral leadership and to enhance and strengthen the ministry of the cooperating churches.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The congregations are within close enough geographic proximity to make shared pastoral leadership feasible.
2. The congregations are similar in expectations of ministry.
3. The congregations share a similar vision of mission and ministry.
4. The congregations are willing to cooperate and plan some ministries together.
5. The congregations are willing to develop a covenant that will include a joint vision, mission statement and ministry plans.
6. The congregations are willing to cooperate in developing joint expectations for pastoral leadership.
7. The congregations are willing to cooperate in sharing responsibility for pastoral compensation that, at the very least, meets or exceeds the Minimum Terms of Call for the Presbytery of New Hope.

PROCESS:

1. Preliminary conversation with two congregations by Presbytery staff or representatives of the Commission on Ministry (COM) will outline the possibilities and responsibilities related to the sharing of pastoral leadership.
2. If two congregations are open to exploring a shared pastoral ministry arrangement, the COM advocate will continue the exploratory conversations between the two sessions.
3. If the two sessions agree to proceed toward a covenant agreement, a joint task force from the churches will be appointed to develop the covenant plan, in consultation with the COM.
4. The church task force will work together to develop a covenant that includes:
 - Vision and Mission Statement.
 - Ministry Goals/Plans.
 - Pastoral Expectations.
 - Related Agreements including responsibility for pastoral compensation.
5. The draft of the covenant will be presented to each session and each congregation for discussion and approval.
6. The covenant will be presented to the Commission on Ministry for approval.
7. The Agreement for Pastoral Compensation will be presented to the Commission on Ministry for approval.
8. If all parties approve the covenant, the way is clear for the two congregations to form the appropriate committee for seeking a pastor (Joint Pastor Nominating Committee or Search Committee), with equal numbers from each congregation.
9. If one of the churches already has a pastor and the shared leadership involves that person, the minister should be part of all of the above conversations, and once the way is clear, the shared leadership begins.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PART III: POLICIES

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Policy Regarding Background Check The Presbytery of New Hope -- Commission on Ministry

Procedure: A background check shall be requested by the PNC of a church **prior** to making a request to COM for approval for "Clearance for Step One" (see page [76](#)), accompanied by a disclosure and release authorization. The Moderator of COM shall certify to the chairperson of the PNC that a background check has been completed.

Process: The PNC and/or local church shall ask COM to conduct a background check using information given by the candidate or received by permission from the candidate. In addition to checking personal references provided by the candidate, an individual background check shall be made for reports, records, or incidents of moral turpitude and criminal activity. The computerized search is normally completed within one business day. The information obtained shall be used solely for the purposes described in this policy and shall be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law.

Funding: *Installed and contract relationships:* Local church shall pay for checks of prospective clergy receiving calls to enter the Presbytery of New Hope.

Background checks of *Retired Clergy* entering Presbytery of New Hope shall be paid through the office of the Stated Clerk.

Record Retention:

All records shall be retained at the Presbytery Office for four years after the clergy person has left the Presbytery of New Hope.

[Click here](#) for form "Disclosure and Release Authorization" [1 page]

BEHAVIORAL ETHICS IN MINISTRY

- | | |
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| 1. Standards of Ethical Conduct | (this page) |
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-

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT, CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS, AND COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS TO A PARTICULAR SERVICE

As an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

I

I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and Consistent with my public ministry. Therefore, I will:

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make;
4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my office of ministry, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

II

I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a *council* (governing body) or colleagues in ministry. Therefore, I will:

1. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my office and positions of responsibility I hold;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as

- defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy, and adapted by the Presbytery of New Hope;
6. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission, unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
 7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
 8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
 9. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise my ministry;
 10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
 11. Observe limits set by the appropriate *council* (governing body) for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;
 12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry;
 13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
 14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;
 15. Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by Presbytery, and invited by that session; and which adhere to the departing policy of the Presbytery of New Hope ([see pp. 44-46](#)).
 16. Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the Presbytery, and invited by that session, and provide pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and which adhere to the departing policy the Presbytery of New Hope.
 17. Consult with the Commission on Ministry in the Presbytery of New Hope regarding my involvement in any ministry setting during my retirement.

III

I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore, I will:

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
 2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;
 3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations;
- and ---
4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

From "Standards of Ethical Conduct," PC(USA)

Writing and Preaching

Presbyterians believe that the efficacy of preaching is the work of the Holy Spirit, not the cleverness or even the scholarship of the preacher. Thus, preaching is a regular spiritual partnership involving the preacher, the Holy Spirit, and the people of God who hear the Word and respond – not to the preacher, but to God.

Over the past decade, the development of the Internet has given rise to a vast amount of information (much of it unedited) that is accessible through a variety of technologies. With the growth of this communication medium has also grown the problem of utilizing such materials in improper ways.

The internet is a great tool for learning and background research, but these materials must be chosen and evaluated carefully in light of our primary allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord, the Scriptures, the Reformed tradition and the *Constitution* of our church. We misrepresent ourselves, as well as demean the labor of others, if we fail to make proper attribution of borrowed material.

This word from the Commission on Ministry is offered to the preachers in our Presbytery as a corrective for failures in the past. It is also an encouragement to practice excellence and integrity in the study and the pulpit. To fulfill the gospel as truly good news, it must take up residence in the preacher, the preaching, and the listening Church.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Presbytery of New Hope

I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), hereinafter referred to as PC(USA), that all ministers, councils/governing bodies (including officers, employees and members), church members, church officers, and nonmember employees and volunteers of churches and governing bodies are to maintain the integrity of the ministerial, employment, and professional relationship at all times. Persons who engage in sexual misconduct are in violation of the principles set forth in Scripture, and also of the ministerial, pastoral, employment and professional relationship. It is never permissible or acceptable for any of the persons covered by this policy to engage in sexual misconduct.

Distribution

Copies of this policy and its procedures shall be made available to all councils/governing bodies and entity offices. Specifically, within the bounds of the Presbytery of New Hope, this policy and its procedures will be made available and commended to all sessions within the Presbytery. Sessions are urged to adapt this document for application to the local church.

In adopting this document, the Presbytery of New Hope shall require that all *ministers, commissioned ruling elders to a particular service, certified Christian Educators, and other church professionals* under its jurisdiction and all employees of the Presbytery abide by its provisions.

This policy and its procedures shall be made available to persons who accuse others of misconduct, including those who are or claim to be victims of sexual misconduct and their families.

II. Standards of Conduct for All Engaged in Ministry in the Presbytery of New Hope

The ethical conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the church because through these representatives an understanding of God and the gospel's good news is conveyed. "*Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the World*" (**Book of Order, G-2.0104**).

The basic principles of conduct guiding this policy are as follows:

1. Sexual misconduct is not acceptable. It is a violation of an individual by a person who has a supervisory position or roles involving religious, moral, or spiritual counseling, teaching or instruction. These persons are called upon to exercise integrity, sensitivity, and caring in a trust relationship. Sexual misconduct breaks the covenant to act in the best interests of the persons being supervised or counseled.
2. Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. If the person being

supervised or counseled initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is the responsibility of the person providing supervision or counseling to maintain the appropriate role and prohibit any sexual relationship, contact, conduct or harassment.

3. Sexual misconduct takes advantage of the vulnerability of persons, including children, who are less powerful and unable to act for their own welfare. It is antithetical to the gospel call to work as God's servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world. It violates the mandate to protect the vulnerable from harm.

4. Sexual misconduct may include but is not restricted to offensive, obsessive or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling, rape or sexual contact by force, threat or intimidation, or a relationship the parties believe to be consensual.

5. Sexual conduct between a Minister, Commissioned Ruling Elder to a Particular Service, or Certified Christian Educator and a church member or counselee, is only permissible in the context of their marriage.

6. Sexual malfeasance (wrongdoing by a person who holds a position of trust) is defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship.

7. Sexual misconduct includes misuse of technology to communicate harassing or abusive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this misuse of technology includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

DEFINITIONS

***Sexual Misconduct* is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include:**

Child sexual abuse 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 another person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether consented to or not by the child. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen.

Sexual abuse defined: "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 years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of office or position" (***Book of Order, D-10.0401c***).

Sexual harassment defined for this policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when

- a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or their continued status in an institution;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;
- c. 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; or
- d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.

III. Church Response to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

A. PRINCIPLES

In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, members, officers, and employees of the church should seek healing and assure the protection of all persons. Where possible, the privacy of persons should be respected and confidentiality of communications should be maintained.

In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, members, officers, and employees of the church should seek to uphold the dignity of all persons involved, including persons who are alleging harm, persons who are accused of sexual misconduct, and the families and communities of each.

The PC(USA) has jurisdiction over its members, officers, and employees. If a member, officer, or employee is alleged to have committed an offense against Scripture or the PC(USA) Constitution, the church has the duty to inquire into the allegations and, if the allegations are proven, to correct the behavior of the member, officer, or employee and ensure the safety of others in the community. Allegations of sexual misconduct are always considered allegations of offense against Scripture or the PC(USA) Constitution that initiate the disciplinary processes of the PC(USA) set forth in the *Book of Order*. In the case of an active non-member who is employed or volunteers with the Church, the individual will be covered by the procedures of the written personnel policies of the governing body or entity.

If the person accused of sexual misconduct is no longer a member, officer, or employee of the PC(USA), but the conduct occurred while the person was acting on behalf of the PC(USA), the church does not have jurisdiction to correct the behavior, but it does have a duty to hear the allegations of offense and to take measures to prevent future occurrences of harm. The *council* (governing body) may appoint an administrative committee or commission to hear the allegations of sexual misconduct. The *council* may also take measures to prevent future occurrences of harm through education and policy.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Reporting Sexual Misconduct

A person needing to report that a Minister, Commissioned Ruling Elder to a Particular Service, Certified Christian educator, or employee of the Presbytery has committed sexual misconduct is encouraged to seek guidance from the stated clerk of the Presbytery regarding filing the report.

Local Church: The Presbytery does not have jurisdiction over employees of local churches, only Ministers. If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is a member, elder, deacon, volunteer, or employee of a congregation, the report of allegations should be made to the pastor, the clerk of session, or the chair of the personnel committee. If the accused is a member or officer of the church, the church will respond by using the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the accused is a nonmember employee or volunteer, the church will respond by using procedures set forth by the session of the congregation in their personnel policies.

Presbytery: Any allegations of sexual misconduct by a Minister member, Commissioned Ruling Elder to a Particular Service, or Certified Christian educator, volunteer, member or nonmember employee of the Presbytery, shall be reported in writing to the stated clerk of the Presbytery. The stated clerk will ensure that the Presbytery responds according to the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*, by policy or bylaws of the Presbytery.

Higher Council (Governing Body) or Entity of the General Assembly: If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is an employee or volunteer of a synod or General Assembly or any entity established by a synod or General Assembly, contact the stated clerk of that particular synod or General Assembly.

2. Receiving Reports of Sexual Misconduct

Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct will occur in a variety of ways. Because a council (governing body) or entity cannot control to whom the victim of sexual misconduct will speak first, it is important that officers, employees, and persons highly visible to church members and visitors understand how reports of incidents are channeled to the proper person. The allegations may come from persons who have or who do not have a formal relationship with the PC(USA) and may be made to a variety of officers or leaders within the PC(USA). It is the duty of these officers to see that any allegation of sexual misconduct is reported appropriately keeping in mind the mandatory reporting requirements for allegations of child abuse.

Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded and allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the victim, the accused, and the church. Reports of allegations should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality, both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as outlined below.

The first person to learn of an incident of sexual misconduct should not undertake an inquiry alone or question either the victim or the accused unless the incident is divulged in the process of pastoral care, counseling, or a therapy session. If the victim is hesitant to talk to "higher authorities," the person who has received the initial report has a special pastoral responsibility to build trust and willingness to speak with

the accuser, lest the church be unable to respond because no one is able to give firsthand information.

The person receiving the initial report of allegations of sexual misconduct shall analyze the relationship of the person accused of sexual misconduct with the PC(USA) and shall make sure that the allegations of offense are filed with the *council* with jurisdiction over the person accused. This may be done by the person alleging harm or by any member of the PC(USA).

If the report is made orally, the person receiving the report of allegations should request that the person making the report of allegations place it in writing. A written report of allegations of sexual misconduct from a member of the PC(USA) alleging another member or officer of the PC(USA) committed an offense must be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If a clerk of session or stated clerk receives a report of allegations in writing from a nonmember of the PC(USA) alleging another member or officer of the PC(USA) committed sexual misconduct, the report also should be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the person who makes the report is unwilling or unable to place it in writing, any member of the PC(USA) may make the written statement that will automatically initiate the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*.

3. Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

Ministers, Commissioned Ruling Elders to as Particular Service, Certified Christian Educators and Deacons.

“Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by the church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in **G-4.0301**, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.”
G-4.0302.

All persons covered by this policy have an additional duty to report knowledge of child sexual abuse to the employing entity, supervisor, or governing body representative. All persons should be informed of and must comply with state and local laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected child sexual abuse. These reports should be made within a reasonable time of receiving the information.

These provisions of the *Book of Order* attempt to balance conflicting moral duties for officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

For Ministers and Commissioned Ruling Elders to a Particular Service, the provision strives to balance the duty to protect children from future harm with the duty of a pastor to hold in confidence any information revealed to them during the exercise of pastoral care in any ministry setting as defined in **G-4.0301 in the *Book of Order***.

For ruling elders, deacons, and Certified Christian educators, the provisions strive to balance the duty of an officer of the church to protect children from harm and any secular duty the officer may have to hold in confidence any information revealed as a

result of a secular relationship such as attorney/client, counselor/client, or physician/patient. The secular duties will be a function of secular law and may vary from state to state.

C. RESPONDING

The appropriate *council* or entity response will vary according to the relationship of the PC(USA) with the person who is accused of sexual misconduct. Church members and officers are subject to inquiry and discipline (censure and correction) under the *Book of Order*. Non church member employees and volunteers are subject to oversight and correction by the governing body or entity that employs them.

1. Accused Covered by *Book of Order*

When an allegation of offense of sexual misconduct has been received by the clerk of session or stated clerk of the Presbytery, the clerk of the council (governing body) will report to the council that an offense has been alleged and that the council will proceed according to the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. The council should appoint an investigating committee to inquire into the allegations. The investigating committee must promptly begin its inquiry into the allegations. Delay may cause further harm to the victim and/or the accused.

Councils and entities must cooperate with authorities in an investigation of child sexual abuse or other criminal sexual misconduct. Church disciplinary proceedings cannot interfere with a criminal investigation by civil authorities and may have to be suspended until these are completed.

The session has original jurisdiction in disciplinary cases involving members, ruling elders, and deacons of the church, each congregation having jurisdiction only over its own members.

A Presbytery has original jurisdiction in disciplinary cases involving Ministers (and to a limited degree, *Commissioned Ruling Elders to a Particular Service*, and Certified Christian educators). A Presbytery may dissolve a pastoral relationship when the "church's mission under the Word imperatively demands it" (**G-2.0904**). However, a Presbytery may only place a minister on administrative leave when allegations of child abuse have been received and the Presbytery has followed the *Book of Order* procedures to conduct its risk evaluation to determine whether or not a minister member accused of child abuse should be placed on administrative leave (**D-10.0106**). It is recommended that the permanent judicial commission (PJC) members who will conduct this risk evaluation based upon the allegations and a hearing should also take into account secular legal advice.

When a church officer renounces jurisdiction, the clerk of session or stated clerk shall report the renunciation at the next meeting of the council (governing body) and shall record the renunciation in the minutes of the council. The status of any pending charges may be shared with the council at that time.

2. Accused Not Covered by *Book of Order*

When a council (governing body) receives an accusation of offense of sexual misconduct against a nonmember employee or volunteer, the procedural response of the council or entity will be guided by the written personnel policies of the council or

entity. Usually the council or entity will have a personnel committee that will be responsible for the inquiry. If a council does not have a personnel committee, it may appoint either a committee or administrative commission for the review of the allegation.

The committee or commission that will respond to the allegation of offense of sexual misconduct will do the following:

- a. Determine whether or not the allegation gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of sexual misconduct by the accused.
- b. If so, gather additional information necessary to make a decision about correcting the behavior.
- c. Determine any remedies, including limiting ministry, suspension, or termination necessary and advisable under the circumstances. If the accused is a member of another denomination, that denomination will be notified of the allegations and the response.
- d. Inform the victim and the accused of the remedy.
- e. In all cases, the personnel committee shall prepare a written report, which shall be included in the permanent personnel file of the accused. The accused shall be allowed to attach any written statements to said documents, also for permanent inclusion in the permanent file.

All procedures shall follow the guidelines set forth by the council, employing agency, or entity of the General Assembly.

3. Council (governing body) or Entity Record Keeping

The council or entity shall keep detailed records of its actions and minutes of its deliberations and its conversations with the accuser, the accused, and other parties involved, correspondence, and copies of the reports received from committees or commissions. Such records will be kept confidential. In Case #208-6, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) interpreted the Rules of Discipline to say that a council (governing body) or entity may share the contents of inquiry reports with other councils or entities of the PC(USA) when necessary. The clerk of the council or director of the entity will maintain the records while the inquiry is in process.

IV. Prevention and Risk Management

A. IMPLEMENTATION

The General Assembly urges all councils (governing bodies) and related entities including colleges, universities, and theological institutions, to establish policies and procedures that make it a violation of the employer's work rules to engage in sexual misconduct and that encourage reporting of sexual misconduct. Councils and entities are strongly encouraged to take appropriate steps to inform members, employees, volunteers, and students of the standards of conduct and the procedures for effective response when receiving a report of sexual misconduct.

B. LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

A council or entity can be held liable for harm caused by sexual misconduct of an officer, minister, or employee based on a number of legal theories. Councils and entities should take such potential liability into consideration when establishing hiring and supervisory practices.

Councils and entities shall regularly inform their liability insurance carriers of the activities and programs they operate or sponsor and of the duties and responsibilities of officers, employees, and volunteers. The standard insurance policy should usually be enhanced by endorsements to cover specific exposures such as camps, day-care operations, shelters, or other outreach programs.

It is also recommended that councils and entities obtain an endorsement to their general liability insurance policy specifically covering sexual abuse and molestation. Such coverage may provide for legal defense expenses and judgments in civil suits brought against the council or entity, its officers, directors, or employees.

C. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

1. Record Keeping

Accurate record keeping is an essential part of hiring and supervision practices of churches, councils, and related entities. Every council and entity should maintain a personnel file on every employee, including ministers. The file should contain the application for employment, any employment questionnaires, background checks, references responses, and all other documents related to an employee's employment, except records that may be required, by law, to be kept in separate files.

2. Prescreening Applicants

Councils and entities are urged to establish thorough and consistent hiring practices. If an applicant is unknown to the employer, the employer should confirm the applicant's identity by requiring photographic identification such as a driver's license. The council should perform a background check, including a national criminal background check, on all applicants that may have interaction with children and youth.

Part of pre-employment screening should include specific questions related to discovering previous complaints of sexual misconduct.

3. References

The employing council or entity is responsible for contacting references for prospective ministers, employees, or volunteers. A written record of conversations or correspondence with references should be kept in the minister or employee's personnel file.

The person within the council or entity authorized to give a reference is obligated to give truthful information regarding allegations, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct of the applicant.

If false or misleading information is given by the applicant, or relevant information is withheld, the applicant should be eliminated from consideration.

Applicants should be informed of negative comments regarding sexual misconduct and shall be given an opportunity to submit additional references or to give other evidence to correct or respond to harmful information obtained from a reference.

V. Educating and Training—Awareness

Since the issue of sexual misconduct has become a more present reality, there is an emerging need to educate and train a wide variety of persons. Persons needing this specific education include: ministers; volunteers; officers; nonprofessional and professional staff; ministerial candidates; professionals who will be working with this issue within the denomination; members of the congregation; and *councils* staff including supervisors, employees, and stated clerks.

Education provided or required for these persons and groups may be different on a group-by-group basis. The Presbytery or the session, as appropriate, shall develop or implement educational materials or courses appropriate for all such groups, or may contract with expert entities to provide such materials or courses. A minister-member not currently residing in the Presbytery, or any other group mentioned above with good cause, may undertake alternative education in accordance with this policy in satisfaction of this requirement, if the member demonstrates to the stated clerk of the Presbytery of New Hope that such alternative education is substantially equivalent to that provided under this paragraph.

Theological institutions should include material in their existing curriculum on sexual ethics including the appropriate use of ministerial power, the General Assembly policy and its procedures on sexual misconduct, and other resources. It is further urged that the appropriate Presbytery committee(s) include training for inquirers, candidates, newly ordained pastors, and new pastors to their presbyteries regarding sexual misconduct, especially including education on their specific policy and procedures.

Much of a congregation's education currently happens in response to an actual case of sexual misconduct. However, it is recommended that the congregation be as proactive in this area as possible offering education in a variety of settings. There are already numerous resource materials available that could be adapted to a congregation's setting.

Employing entities need to make sure all employees are well acquainted with, understand, and abide by their policy and procedures. Employing entities should offer additional training and resources, such as: a workshop during staff meeting; lunchtime discussion group; articles and books made available; etc.

Any professional (therapists, attorneys, advocates, mediators, arbitrators) used by a *council* should have access to experts qualified in the field of sexual misconduct if they themselves are not.

The Presbytery of New Hope requires all Minister members, Commissioned Ruling Elders to a Particular Service, and church professionals to participate in an educational event which outlines professional and ministerial boundaries, the General Assembly Sexual Misconduct Policy, and policies regarding its own specific council or entity. This event is offered each year and is required every three years.

Appendix A for Sexual Misconduct Policy

Definitions

Accused is the term used to represent the person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is made.

Accuser is a term used to represent the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy. The accuser may or may not have been the victim of the alleged sexual misconduct. A person such as a family member, friend, or colleague may be the accuser.

Church when spelled with the initial capitalized refers to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Church when spelled with the initial in lowercase refers to local churches. The word congregation is used loosely for members and participants.

Employee is the comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are hired or called to work for the Church for salary or wages.

Entity is the term used to refer to any program or office managed by a board, committee, council, or other body whose membership is elected by a governing body.

Council (Governing Body) is a representative body composed of elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament: sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. A *council* may establish entities such as day-care centers, conference centers, camps, or homes for the aged. A *council* may have both church members and nonmembers as employees.

Inquiry is the term used in the Rules of Discipline to determine whether charges should be filed based upon allegations of an offense received by a *council*. **See *Book of Order*, D-10.0000.**

Mandated Reporter is described by some states' laws as a person who is required to report any and all suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse that come to their attention. State laws vary from defining "all persons having knowledge" as mandated reporters to specifying very limited lists of professions whose members are required to report.

Persons Covered by this policy includes church members, church officers, ministers, and nonmembers who are employees or volunteers.

Response is the action taken by the *council* or entity when a report of sexual misconduct is received. It may include (1) inquiry into facts and circumstances, (2) possible disciplinary action (administrative or judicial or both), (3) pastoral care for victims and their families and others, and (4) pastoral care and rehabilitation for the accused and care for their families.

Secular Authorities are the governmental bodies, whether city, county, state, or federal, who are given the responsibility to investigate, criminally prosecute, and/or bring civil charges against individuals accused of sexual crimes or offenses against adults and children.

Secular Law is the body of municipal, state, and federal laws and is often referred to collectively as civil and criminal law. Prohibited behavior addressed by this policy may result in criminal and/or civil charges filed under secular law.

Victim is a person claiming to have been harmed and/or abused by a person covered under this policy.

Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups. For purposes of this policy, volunteers are treated the same as employees.

Appendix B for Sexual Misconduct Policy

Meeting the Needs of All Involved

In cases of sexual misconduct there are needs that have to be met for the good of all persons, groups, and entities. To ensure that the *council* is ready to meet the variety of needs present, an independent response coordination team may be named. This team will not investigate the allegation or in any way function as an investigating committee for disciplining members or officers, but should confine itself to coordinating a process that will meet the specific needs of victims and their families (if any), the accused and family (if any), employing entities, congregations, and governing bodies:

A. The Needs of the Victim

The *council*, employing entity, and response coordination team should assure that adequate treatment and care are available for alleged victims of sexual misconduct and their families. Sometimes, the victim or family is so angry and alienated from the church, that offers of help may be perceived as insincere or as attempts of a cover-up. If the victim or family at first refuses, the church should continue to offer help. Above all the church should not act in a self-protective manner by ignoring the victim and their families.

The extent of the damage to the victims of sexual misconduct will vary from person to person, and is influenced by such factors as the degree or severity of abuse, the age and emotional condition of the victim, human dynamics, and the importance of one's religious faith. The *council*, entity, and response coordination team is to assume in all cases that the victim has been wounded by the experience.

Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are frequent injuries suffered by victims. It is important for the response coordination team to be sensitive to the victim's pain and need for healing, and to act by making appropriate pastoral care available.

The following are some of the needs of the victim:

1. To be heard and taken seriously. From the time that the victim is first able to indicate that sexual misconduct has occurred, that person should receive immediate attention and serious consideration from all church representatives.
2. To receive pastoral and therapeutic support. The victim may require spiritual and professional assistance as a result of sexual misconduct. The response coordination team should offer to help arrange for such support from a pastor and therapist, if the victim desires. Discussions with such people would be confidential, privileged conversations.
3. To be informed about church process and progress with regard to the accusation. One member of the response coordination team should be the church contact person for the victim. Frequently, this contact person will give the victim information as to what is happening in the church as a result of the accusation.
4. To receive legal advice. The response coordination team should suggest that the victim might benefit from independent legal advice. (Legitimate claims might be more effectively pursued and flimsy or false claims discouraged.) If requested, the response coordination team should suggest ways in which independent legal advice can be obtained.
5. To be assured of an advocate of one's own choosing. A victim may need continuing moral support from one individual who is present while the church process deals with the accusation.

This advocate may be a relative, friend, or someone suggested by the response coordination team. This advocate could speak for the victim, if necessary.

6. To be assured that justice will be pursued. The victim needs to be told by the response coordination team, and shown by the processes of the church, that justice is being pursued through fact-finding, truth-telling, confrontation, and agreement that may include removal or temporary exclusion of the accused from office or adjudication of the complaint.
7. To receive healing and reconciliation. In addition to specific forms of restitution mentioned above, the victim needs to receive a sense of healing and reconciliation with all concerned — the self, the family, the church and, ideally, the accused. The response coordination team can help bring this about using the church's processes and resources. While the above are needs of the victim, one recognizes that all of these needs may also not be met through a reasonable handling of a specific case, but may only occur over a lengthier period of time. All of these needs, however, should be taken seriously and compassionately, and the rights of the victim respected.

B. *The Needs of the Accused*

The *council* or entity shall offer treatment and care for the accused as well as alleged victims and families. If the accused is a minister, this is the primary responsibility of the Commission on Ministry. Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, depression, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are often experienced by the accused. In addition, there may be fear of job loss, incarceration, and indignation if an allegation is false.

When a person is found not guilty of charges of sexual misconduct, it is important for the *council* or entity to see that the decision is disseminated as widely as possible within their power, unless doing so would further injure the person accused.

1. *Personal Care*

Whether the allegations about the accused are eventually found to be true or not, the accused deserves to be treated with Christian kindness and respect. The response coordination team may suggest that the accused seek spiritual support or professional counseling. People in staff positions, such as Presbytery executives or stated clerks, should not engage in personal counseling of the accused because of their potential involvement in disciplinary process.

2. *Economic Security and Care for Family of Accused*

When an allegation of sexual misconduct has been made against a minister, the economic security of the accused is directly threatened, along with reputation, career, and family relationships. Again, the Committee on Ministry can be of assistance. The response coordination team may alert the Committee on Ministry to the possible spiritual, emotional, and financial needs of the family of the accused and recommend expert resources.

C. *The Needs of a Congregation in a Context of Sexual Misconduct*

The *council*, employing entity, and response coordination team should be aware of the problems a congregation or employing entity may experience following allegations of sexual misconduct by a minister, employee, or volunteer. The allegations may polarize the congregation or organization, damage morale, create serious internal problems, and even limit the trust a congregation may place in succeeding pastors. Efforts should be taken to recognize and identify the problems and heal any damage that may be done to the congregation or organization.

When there is sexual misconduct on the part of a minister, non-ordained staff, or volunteer in a particular congregation, a number of needs unique to that congregation will emerge since sexual misconduct impacts congregations in different ways. Therefore, these needs will not necessarily emerge in the same sequence in each situation. Depending on the parties involved in the sexual misconduct, some of the needs may not emerge. In any event, those managing the church's response to the sexual misconduct will want to know that the following needs may emerge:

1. *Pastoral Care*

Members and staff of the congregation will need pastoral care. If it is the pastor who is involved in the sexual misconduct, care will need to be provided by another member of the ordained staff (if the church is a multiple-staff church) or by a trained interim pastor. If the pastor leaves as a result of sexual misconduct, in extreme cases a trained interim pastor or consultant in sexual misconduct may need to work with the congregation for an extended period of time. If it is not a pastor who is involved in the sexual misconduct, then the pastor will provide the needed care for the congregation. The pastor, if not previously trained in this specialty area, will need to consult with denominational specialists who will advise how to proceed and any anticipated problems.

2. *Information About the Case*

Members of the congregation will need opportunities both to receive and give information. If a case of sexual misconduct becomes a matter of public knowledge within a congregation and if a pastor has been found guilty of sexual misconduct, the interim pastor or consultant may hold appropriate meetings with individuals, small groups, or with the whole congregation. Such meetings should provide information about sexual misconduct in general, Presbyterian polity and our judicial process, and how others who may have been victimized may be heard and ministered to. If the offender is not the pastor, then the pastor may perform these functions. At such meetings, one may expect members to vent their feelings. An opportunity for this to happen should be provided. If this venting does not take place, then it may create serious problems for the future of the congregation, for future pastors, and for the *council*.

3. *Resource Persons*

In light of the above needs, the following are resource persons whose services would be valuable to a congregation in the context of sexual misconduct: a trained interim pastor, a Commission on Ministry representative knowledgeable in polity and the effects of sexual misconduct in the church, a consultant or therapist with knowledge and experience in dealing with sexual misconduct, an attorney who can discuss legal aspects of a case, and an insurance agent who can advise the congregation about their exposure to liability or coverage.

It is the responsibility of each *council* to establish policy and its procedures governing cases of sexual misconduct in that jurisdiction. The PC(USA) policy and its procedures are intended to guide the development of *council* policy and procedures.

[CLICK HERE FOR SIGNATURE PAGE \[1 page\]](#)

SEPARATION ETHICS.1 (Minister)

THE RELATIONSHIP OF FORMER PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS in the Presbytery of New Hope

Toward just, smooth, and healthy transitions as pastors leave congregations.

Few circumstances in the professional life of a pastor requires more wisdom and judgment than the ones raised when leaving a congregation. Somewhat ironically, the most difficult transitions are often those involving congregations in which the pastor has been warmly loved and appreciated. In addition to making a professional move, the pastor and her/his family are leaving supportive friends and community. When the transition involves the retirement of a pastor who elects to remain in the community, and perhaps even in the community of the church, the issues become even more complex and challenging.

The Book of Order offers important guidance in the matter of transitions:

(G-2.0905) "After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session." This refers to any former pastoral relationship with a congregation (i.e., pastor, associate pastor, designated pastor, co-pastor, interim pastor, stated supply pastor, temporary supply pastor, parish associate, etc.)

While such transitions involve a number of entities (i.e. sessions, congregations, etc.), the Commission on Ministry (COM) believes that the burden of responsibility for creating a healthy transition lies primarily with the professional behavior of the pastor who is leaving. Pastors must view the process of separation and transition as perhaps a final, but critical part of their ministry to the congregation they have served. Not to do so undermines the future health of the church and is a violation of professional ethics. Considering the time, energy, and emotions a pastor gives a church, it is reasonable that he or she would give due attention to facilitating a successful transition for the next pastor.

Practically, the exiting pastor must work to educate the session and congregation on the Presbyterian understanding of the transition. The exiting pastor ought to take great care in expressing support for the process and the role that the Presbytery plays in it.

Emotionally and spiritually, the exiting pastor can play a positive role in the welcome that the interim or installed pastor will receive. Explaining the transition process and the reasons for it will also assist the exiting pastor in drawing and maintaining proper boundaries. Not unimportantly, the former pastor who works to make a good and positive transition also leaves the congregation with a final and selfless example of the love and care of the pastor for the congregation.

The following are based on the Book of Order, and shared experience of the COM. Representatives of COM shall review this policy statement with each minister who is leaving / retiring from a congregation in the Presbytery of New Hope. The information below will also be presented to the session of the congregation affected by the move prior to the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) as a part of the

transition meeting conducted by a representative of COM. In addition, a pastoral letter regarding this process shall be shared with the congregation. (A sample letter is attached).

Departing pastors will be asked to sign and submit to the COM the form "Declaration of Intent," attested by the clerk of session for the church.

- A.** When the Presbytery dissolves the pastoral relationship, that relationship is ended. Only the pastor duly installed by the Presbytery, or the pastor approved by the Presbytery for temporary service, is authorized to perform pastoral duties among a particular congregation.
- B.** The former pastor shall not participate in any funerals, weddings, etc., of the former parish, unless invited by the moderator of session. Also, there shall be no visitation or contact which could be interpreted in any way as pastoral. This will be difficult, but if the first invitation is accepted, there will be no reason to refuse other requests.
- C.** During the first year, it is advisable to refrain from all pastoral contact.
- D.** In the case of a pastor who retires in the same community as her/his former church, COM strongly recommends that the former pastor and 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 nevertheless cannot be avoided.
- E.** Simple sensitivity and courtesy ought to rule. Pastors who violate this process and return to a previous congregation are showing disregard for the minister or interim in place there. The congregation or individual members who insist on inviting a previous pastor to perform duties undermine the success of the pastor currently serving them.
- F.** The former pastor shall vacate both the manse and the office by the date of termination or some immediate predetermined date. At the time of vacating, all keys should be returned to the session or proper church committee. Further, definite plans should be made by the former pastor for the disposition of pastoral counseling notes, personal records, etc.
- G.** Concerns or complaints regarding any of these issues shall be directed to the COM for resolution. In the event that a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the matter will be forwarded to the stated clerk of the Presbytery.
- H.** Upon receiving the unresolved complaint, the stated clerk shall invite the Moderator of COM and two other COM members to meet with the person alleged to have violated the privilege of the pastoral relationship. Should they find the complaints valid, and should the practice continue, the matter may be brought before the entire COM. The former pastor may be subject to censure according to the "*Rules of Discipline.*"
- I.** Former pastors who are elected pastor emeriti are reminded that this is an honorary title only and carries no job responsibilities or privileges unless they are expressly stated by the session and approved by the Presbytery.
- J.** Former pastors are still under the obligation of the Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Policy.
- K.** Subject to the needs and desires of the former pastor and family, the Presbytery has the responsibility to meet the spiritual and physical needs of his/her family and to utilize their talents and gifts to the glory of God.

A sample letter to be sent by a pastor leaving a congregation

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I write this with all the mixed emotions that necessarily are a part of saying good-bye to folks who have been important in my life. Soon I will no longer be your pastor as I [begin my _____]. I leave confident that God will continue to care for and meet all your needs. An interim pastor will soon be present to serve as your pastor and “prepare the way” for an installed pastor to arrive and lead you into a new chapter of your life.

Leaving a congregation that has become dear is not easy. I know that in the days to come, I will continue to “feel” like your pastor. There is something of grieving in this. It will be tempting to try to keep up with the life of _____ Church. I suspect that some of that same thing might be true on your part as well — that it may take time before someone else becomes your “pastor.”

We can serve each other in this. Our Presbytery has had a good deal of experience in this business of “saying good-bye” to a pastor. Guidelines have been developed that will help us to bring honor to all that we have been to each other as well as all that we have achieved, and will bring a healthy closure to our shared ministry. Fundamental to these guidelines is the simple reminder that when a pastor leaves a congregation, it marks the end of the pastoral relationship. It does not mark the end of love and care for each other, but of necessity, the end of our former relationship. Toward this end, after _____(date of departure)_____, I will not involve or insert myself in any part of the life of _____ Church.

For the sake of the next pastor’s success, it would be inappropriate for me to continue as a theological guide, as an officiate for weddings or funerals, or as your pastoral presence in times of crisis such as hospitalization. As one who poured energy, time, and emotions into the health of this congregation, I want the church to prosper. Consequently, you will find no greater advocate than me for your next pastor. Please do not cause me to choose between my love for you and the success of your next pastor by asking me to perform pastoral duties that rightly rest with him/her.

Please trust that experience has taught that when a pastorate is ended, the responsibility of leadership and care must end as well. For the sake of the pastor leaving a field, but even more, for the sake of the church, an ethic of separation needs to be honored by all. I hope you welcome your interim pastor and the next installed pastor with the same warmth and love that enveloped me when I arrived as a stranger among you. I will try to honor you by focusing my energy on that which God has determined for my future, and will joyfully, in whatever I do, share all that you have taught me about being a pastor.

[CLICK HERE](#) FOR FORM “DECLARATION OF INTENT” [1 page]

SEPARATION ETHICS.2 (Church)

Ten Guidelines For Church Members When a Pastoral Relationship Ends

1. When the pastoral relationship between a minister and a congregation is dissolved by reason of retirement, a call to other service, or any other cause, the minister's relationship with members of the congregation is altered in ways that must be respected by all persons involved. The relationship that formerly existed between the minister as pastor and members of the congregation is no longer appropriate. The minister may continue to be a friend, and will continue to be a sister/brother in Christ. However, this minister is no longer the pastor.
2. Efforts by a member of the congregation to continue the past relationship (such as asking the former pastor to perform some usual or customary pastoral services) creates an ethically awkward situation. While the former pastor may wish to honor the request (and certainly would not want to hurt feelings), ministerial etiquette and separation ethics make it inappropriate to render such services.
3. Effort should be made to schedule weddings, funerals, hospital calls, etc. so the current pastor, whether interim or installed, can provide the required pastoral services. If your church is without any pastoral leadership, the Presbytery can be of assistance in helping secure the services of someone to assist for specific occasions.
4. Although the former pastor is likely still to be interested in the health of the congregation, it is imperative that members avoid discussing the congregation, the new pastor, the Session or any other aspect of congregation life with the former pastor. Such discussions are likely to be perceived as soliciting the former pastor's advice or counsel on church matters. It is in her/his best interest and for the health of the church that the former pastor distance herself/himself from the congregation. Raising issues related to the congregation with the former pastor makes this more difficult and frequently puts her/him in an awkward ethical situation.
5. It is inappropriate to take comments, concerns, or criticisms of the current pastor to a former pastor. Attempts should be made to resolve such issues directly with the current pastor. If that fails, present the issues to the Session or Personnel Committee, if applicable. Should this prove unsatisfactory, further recourse is available through the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry. Any effort to involve a former pastor in any issue between members and the current pastor will only confuse the situation and make matters worse. It will also put the former pastor in an untenable ethical situation.

SEPARATION ETHICS.2 (Church) - cont'd

6. As quickly as possible, re-define relationships with the former pastor. A friendship based on common interests and personal compatibility is entirely appropriate. Such relationships with a former pastor may and should be continued as long as care is taken to avoid slipping into a pastor-parishioner relationship. Continue to be a colleague in ministry with the former pastor through the Presbytery, ecumenical, or community organizations. There may be other aspects of the relationship with a former pastor that will continue after termination of the pastor-parishioner relationship.
7. If the former pastor is leaving the community, say good-byes and express affection and esteem in appropriate ways before she/he leaves the service of the congregation. This will help avoid continuing the relationship in inappropriate ways after the pastor has left the congregation.
8. Seek out the new pastor for pastoral care and support. During the transition from a former pastor to a new pastor, the task of the members of the congregation is to make the change to new leadership. Anything which aids this adjustment will contribute to the health of the congregation.
9. Work on developing an appropriate relationship with the new pastor. Talk about concerns and expectations for the congregation. Share expectations, hopes and dreams for the pastoral relationship she/he will develop with each member.
- 10. Finally, pray on a regular basis for both the current and former pastors, and for the congregation!**

A COVENANT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

For Use by the Commission on Ministry (COM)

MYTH #1: Confidentiality means secrecy.

MYTH #2: If you receive confidential information, you cannot use it.

FACT #1: The deliberations of COM should be considered confidential. The *actions* of COM will be reported to Presbytery, but the *deliberations* should be treated as confidential and any background or supporting information shared during the reporting should be considered carefully.

FACT #2: Once you report information, it is open information, unless it occurs in the context of an executive or private session of the group to whom you are reporting. Any files which you keep should be secured, maintained carefully, and accessible only to qualified persons (those approved by COM).¹

Definition of Confidentiality

Confidentiality may best be understood as the careful stewardship and wise management of the information with which COM members are entrusted as they conduct business on behalf of the Presbytery.

By proper definition the word "confidential" refers to information released to a second person, with the assurance or professional requirement that it will not be shared with others without expressed or written permission.²

Content of Confidential / Limited Access Information

All information obtained and discussed by the members of the Commission on Ministry of the Presbytery of New Hope **shall** be respected as confidential/ limited access information.³ All information and documentation is to be considered for *internal use only* and is not to be shared with any person who does not have the need to know.

The majority of information shared within the context of COM is more appropriately defined as "limited access information" or "qualified confidential information."

This information may or may not have been confidential in nature but is released for the purpose of relevant, responsible committee work prior to the information becoming general knowledge. "Limited access information" **usually** reveals specific but limited details (and even may be anonymous) and is protected for a specified period of time.⁴

Specified Period of Time

Most COM information becomes "open information" once it is reported/ received by the Presbytery and therefore is no longer considered "confidential/ limited access information." Even when such information becomes open information, COM members need to be mindful that they often possess more details than others in the Presbytery. As "information stewards" COM members **shall not** reveal details beyond the information shared as open information.⁵

Wise use of information

Discernment is crucial in determining **who** needs to receive the information as well as **what** needs to be shared. A good rule in evaluating sensitive information is that only the *essential details* should be shared. There are occasions when there is a need for the name(s) of the person(s) involved to remain anonymous until it is appropriate to release the name(s).⁶

Electronic Communications:

Discipline is necessary with the relative ease of electronic communication. E-mail transmission of COM business **shall not** be forwarded or copied to those inside or outside COM who are not participating in the particular matter/situation. E-mail communications regarding the business of COM should be deleted from member's computers upon completion of service on COM.

Limitations of Confidentiality

The Commission on Ministry recognizes that there may be times during the course of consulting with clergy and congregations that certain things cannot be kept confidential, such as incidents involving illegal discrimination or abuse, sexual harassment, acts of workplace violence or felony activity, where the laws of the State of North Carolina dictate certain action(s). Information will be disclosed according to applicable legal mandates for reporting and according to the ethical standards of the leadership in the P.C. (USA). In those cases, however, confidentiality will be maintained about any and all information not directly related to the concern for safety.⁷

Defamation, Slander, and Libel

Nothing is defamation if it is TRUE and not spread with MALICE or "careless disregard of the facts." The same is true for slander and libel (oral or written testimony, respectively). It is very important that the information shared during the search process and during any committee deliberations or work with congregations, pastors, and inquirers/candidates to be TRUE to be best of your knowledge and investigations. If you are unsure of the veracity of any information, it is best not to share or act upon it. RUMORS should never be spread. Even if what is shared is not technically illegal, remember that perception is often more powerful than truth.⁸

Violation of Confidentiality

Violation of this Covenant of Confidentiality shall be considered highly detrimental to the member ministers and churches of the Presbytery and may result in removal from the Commission on Ministry, as well as disciplinary action as per the Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order of the PC (U.S.A).

Endnotes:

1) Adapted from: "COMs, CPMs, and Confidentiality"

Synod of Lakes and Prairies Prepared by Diana Barber, Associate Synod Executive for Leadership Development 6/23/97/Rev 2/4/03

<http://www.pcusa.org/mgbconnect/pubs/comcpmconfidentialitysynodoflandp.pdf>

2) Healthy Disclosure, Ruth & McClintock, Alban, 2007, p. 94-100

Levels of Information Disclosure

Private:	Information known only by one person who therefore owns it.
Confidential:	Information released to a second person, usually with assurances that it will not be shared with anyone beyond the two without expressed or written permission.
Limited Access:	Information known by three or more people but protected from distribution by agreements protecting it.
Open:	Information shared openly with the (constituency) yet not easily accessible to the public.
Public	Information easily accessible and widespread, such as news reports and criminal records.

3) Ibid., p. 100-106; **4)** Ibid.; **5)** Ibid., p. 96-100; **6)** Ibid., p. 100-106; **7)** Ibid., p. 98;

8) "COMs, CPMs, and Confidentiality"

[CLICK HERE](#) FOR SIGNATURE PAGE OF COM MEMBER [2 pages]

Candidate Indebtedness Policy

The Presbytery of New Hope

When the Presbytery of New Hope is the Presbytery of Care

1. Liaisons shall discuss with inquirers the possibility of meeting with a financial planner/counselor during the inquiry year, in order to assess net worth, and to make a plan for financing the cost of seminary; or of participating, during the inquiry year, in a "Fiscal Fitness" workshop being sponsored by the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA), with the Presbytery assisting in securing funds to cover the travel and accommodations costs of that workshop.
2. The Committee will make available to inquirers persons who can counsel with the inquirer regarding the inquirer's level of indebtedness *vis a vis* prospective salary that can be expected based on the current median income for the denomination reported by the Board of Pensions, and based on the minimum effective salary established by the Presbytery.
3. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will encourage each inquirer and candidate to use his or her available assets to pay for the cost of seminary tuition and room and board rather than incurring indebtedness. If indebtedness cannot be avoided, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry may counsel with the inquirer or candidate concerning the level at which this debt increases as well as the assets that may be made liquid to assist with seminary debt repayment.
4. In cooperation with the Financial Aid for Studies Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and PC (USA) seminaries, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry will assist each candidate or inquirer annually to determine what options exist for pursuing grants and interest free loans and funding.
5. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will be an advocate with the congregation of which the candidate is a member, and with other congregations of the Presbytery as appropriate, in order to generate financial support for the candidate.

When the Presbytery of New Hope is the Presbytery of Call

1. Any minister who is serving a first call following graduation from seminary and who comes with any educational indebtedness may be advised to attend a financial planning workshop such as a Fiscal Fitness workshop sponsored by the Board of Pensions. The costs of the registration fee, accommodation, and travel for such a workshop will be considered legitimate reimbursable expenses from study leave allowance.
2. The Commission on Ministry may encourage calling congregations to utilize further educational debt reduction as a point in negotiating salary with a prospective pastor who is a recent seminary graduate.

See "Candidate Indebtedness Policy" ([click here](#))

Dissolution of Pastoral Call (Minimum Terms)

COM will make certain there is provision for pastoral care for the pastor if an involuntary or pressured dissolution is evident.

- Dissolution will be negotiated, using COM document "Agreement Form for Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship (w/Continued Benefits)." (below)
- Presuming the dissolution is without cause, continued benefits **shall** include:
 - ◆ For a pastor with 1-35 months of service on his/her current call, a minimum of two months of salary, housing, pension medical and social security allowance (if latter is included in latest approved Terms of Call)
 - ◆ For a pastor with 3 years or more of service on his/her current call, an additional month of continued benefits for each year of service for years 3-9. Regardless of years of service on his/her current call, the minimum need not go beyond 9 months.
 - ◆ Payment for unused vacation time (as per personnel policies of the church regarding provisions regarding rollover from year to year).
- Presuming the dissolution is without cause, continued benefits **shall also** include:
 - ◆ Provision that unused Professional Development Allowance be sent to the Treasurer of the next employing organization or the appropriate Presbytery, or to the Presbytery of New Hope to be held until next Call (or if there is no Call, use may be authorized by the Executive Presbyter). When a Call is in place, any escrowed funds will be sent directly to the calling church. Ordinarily, unused professional development time is not compensated, unless COM finds that the use of professional development time has been limited or blocked by the church.

For dissolution with cause, the aforementioned terms are negotiable.

[Mileage/auto reimbursement **shall not be covered** in the minimum terms of dissolution.]

Once session, pastor and COM representative have agreed on the terms of dissolution, including appropriate continued benefits, the "Terms of Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship" is sent to COM for their approval and presented to the congregation for their approval. COM approval is final, pending congregational approval; congregational approval is final, pending COM approval.

The departing pastor understands that time is of the essence and agrees to actively and diligently seek a new call/employment.

If during the term of the salary continuation period:

- a. The departing pastor finds employment at less than his/her current effective salary (salary and housing), then the former church will make up the difference to equal that of the dissolution agreement. **"Employment" may be secular or in ministry, unless specifically noted otherwise.**
- b. The departing pastor finds employment (**secular or in ministry**) at more than his/her current effective salary (salary and housing), then the salary continuation provision of the dissolution agreement becomes null and void.

[CLICK HERE](#) FOR Agreement Form for Dissolution of the Pastoral Relationship [2 pages]. This form is to be used for ALL dissolutions both under conflict and not. If no compensation is to be provided, please insert 0 (zero) in the appropriate spaces.

MINISTER MEMBERSHIP THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

Continuing minister members in the Presbytery of New Hope include the following:

1. validated
 - a. installed or temporary pastors, or
 - b. ministers engaged in ministries beyond a local congregation
2. member-at-large
3. honorably retired **(G-2.0503)**

A. Validated Members (G-2.0503)

Validated members are (1) ministers who are actively engaged in ministry as installed or temporary pastors or (2) ministers engaged in ministries beyond the congregation. Types of validated ministry include, but may not be limited to:

Installed Pastors

1. pastor
2. associate pastor
3. co-pastor
4. designated pastor

Temporary Pastors

5. interim pastor
6. stated supply pastor
7. pulpit supply pastor

Ministries beyond a local congregation

8. hospital/hospice chaplain
9. ministerial director of a non-profit organization
10. presbytery, synod or general assembly staff
11. college, university or theological seminary faculty, chaplains or staff
12. missionary

B. Member-at-Large

MINISTER MEMBERS-AT-LARGE THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

Continuing minister-members of the Presbytery of New Hope include the following: 1. *validated: a. installed or temporary pastors; b. ministers engaged in ministries beyond the congregation*; 2. *member-at-large*; 3. *honorably retired (G-2.0503)*.

A **minister-at-large** is addressed in the *Book of Order* in **G-2.0503b**.

In the Presbytery of New Hope a Minister of Word and Sacrament may be considered for minister-at-large status if there has not been an intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry. This minister, for a number of reasons, no longer may be engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in **G-2.0503a**. These reasons may include, but not be limited to:

1. geographic location without a call;
2. resignation from a call within the Presbytery without moving to another;
3. non-ministerial employment, but with intention to participate actively in the life and ministry of the Presbytery, including that of a congregation.

When the pastoral relationship between a minister-member of the Presbytery of New Hope and a congregation/session is dissolved, but the minister remains a member of the Presbytery of New Hope, without a call or contract, that minister automatically becomes a member-at-large. This status will be reviewed annually through the Annual Report required of a minister-member at Large.

If a minister requests transfer into the Presbytery as a member-at-large, a current Personal Information Form and Statement of Faith are required, before the way is clear to meet with the Examinations and Transfers sub-commission of COM.

A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in **G-2.0503a** as possible and shall be encouraged to participate in the life of a congregation as a Parish Associate. The Parish Associate Covenant must be approved by COM.

A member-at-large shall make an annual report to the Commission on Ministry, due on October 1st each year.

C. Honorably Retired

Honorably Retired ministers seeking to transfer membership to New Hope Presbytery shall:

- Submit a statement of faith and a brief resume of work, each a page or less.
- Appear at a COM meeting for informal conversation in small groups.

The Stated Clerk can delegate approval to COM members.

D. Membership Rolls Maintained by the Stated Clerk (G-3.0104)

1. Validated members
2. Members-at-large
3. Honorably retired
4. Certified Christian Educators within the bounds of the Presbytery
5. Persons who have been deleted from the other rolls

E. Annual Review of Members

The Commission on Ministry shall review annually the membership rolls and request reports from all ministers not serving in congregational settings.

VALIDATION OF A MINISTRY BEYOND THE CONGREGATION

POLICY FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

A ministry beyond the congregation shall be validated, i.e., shall be deemed a Validated Ministry, under the following conditions:

- I. Requirements of the Ministry** A ministry shall be validated if the ministry:
 - A.** Is in conformity with the mission of God's people as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, *The Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and,
 - B.** Is accompanied by a complete job description that meets the criteria of paragraph A. above.
 - C.** Is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or with a denomination in correspondence with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or involves service beyond the jurisdiction of the church that is consonant with the mission of the Presbytery in an organization, agency, or institution in which this church has no official participation.
- II. Requirements of the Minister** A call to a validated ministry is in order if **the minister:**
 - A.** Is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in good standing.
 - B.** Is accountable to a legally constituted and incorporated governing body with oversight responsibility for the ministry (e.g., a Board of Directors or Trustees).
 - C.** Is willing to submit an annual report to the Presbytery of New Hope through the Commission on Ministry.
 - D.** Participates regularly in the worship and service of a local congregation (to include Parish Associate relationship if invited), and performs the sacraments when called upon and authorized to do so; and
 - E.** Is active in the work of the Presbytery of New Hope.
- III. Approval Process**
 - A.** The responsibility for the **approval and oversight** of a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church (PCUSA) rests with the Presbytery (as delegated to the Commission on Ministry); the responsibility for a **thorough review** of the proposed ministerial function rests with the Commission on Ministry.
 - B.** The request for the validation of a ministry shall be submitted in writing, along with the **completed Application for Validation of Ministry (Click here** for the application form).

[Click here](#) for "Application for Validation of Ministry (Minister)" [2 pages] and "Application for Validation of Ministry (Organization)" [2 pp]

- C.** If the ministry beyond the local congregation is validated by the Commission on Ministry, that validation stays in place until such cause is shown to withdraw the validation. There will be an annual review, however, to determine if the validation shall continue (see IV.B below). A minister's call to this validated ministry is handled through the existing process for calls within the Presbytery of New Hope.
- D.** When a new ministry is being considered for validation, representatives from COM will meet with the minister to further discuss the proposed validated ministry, the minister's call, and how the proposed validated ministry meets the requirements of all validated ministries.
- E.** If approved, the action of the COM shall be reported to the Presbytery at its next meeting.
- F.** It is appropriate for Presbytery to conduct a service of installation or a service of recognition at the inauguration of this ministry.

IV. Annual Reporting

- A.** On behalf of the Presbytery, the Commission on Ministry shall request and require the completion of an annual report from each minister serving a call to an approved validated ministry beyond the call of the congregation. Information to be requested may include, but is not limited to, the current status with regard to the validated ministry and the minister's call to the ministry, the current level of participation by the minister in the life of a congregation and of the Presbytery, and other items that may be deemed pertinent to such a ministry and call and to an annual review.
- B.** The Commission on Ministry shall review the contents of all annual reports, approve (or not) the continued validation of this ministry beyond the call of the congregation, and the individual minister's call to that ministry. If approved, the action of COM shall be reported to the Presbytery at its next meeting.

[Click here](#) for "Annual Report for Validated Ministry (Minister)." [3 pages]

[Click here](#) for "Annual Report for Validated Ministry (Organization)." [2 pp]

SEMINARY GRADUATES FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION SEEKING ORDINATION THROUGH THE PCUSA

The basis for this policy is found in the Book of Order, G-2.0505

The candidate may fall in one of two categories:

- If not already ordained to the preaching ministry: The individual must enter into the preparation process under the guidance of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. There exists the possibility for exceptions to some requirements, but such exceptions are to be made on a case-by-case basis.
- If currently ordained to the preaching ministry and in good standing with another Christian denomination: The Commission on Ministry has purview over the process. A provisional policy has been adopted for receiving ministers ordained in another denomination to become members of the PCUSA through the Presbytery of New Hope. ([Click here](#) for the policy)

If a requirement is waived, it requires approval of the Presbytery.

Healthy Boundaries “A Sacred Trust”

As pastors, educators, and leaders in God's church we are called to the Sacred Trust of serving and nurturing others. Guided by the respect we have for our congregants/students and by their having entrusted us with their spiritual well-being, we as church leaders seek to serve rather than be served, to enhance, support, and nourish others rather than simply meet our own needs. But, in a culture which celebrates the absence of boundaries as individual freedom, maintaining such a focus on others is not always easy. Lines and values can become blurred, perspective lost, and trust destroyed, Hence, the importance of Boundaries. We believe Boundaries are a gift.

In order to maintain the integrity of ministerial and teaching relationships boundaries are essential. Indeed, without boundaries we cannot truly function in servant relationship; there can be no Sacred Trust.

And so, to enhance and deepen the effectiveness of our ministries, New Hope Presbytery requires all pastors and educators now actively serving, or who anticipate active service, to receive Healthy Boundaries Training. Our goals are to:

- ⤴ Increase awareness of the need for healthy boundaries in clergy-congregant and teacher-student relationships
- ⤴ Define boundaries and why they are important
- ⤴ Provide clergy, lay leaders and teachers with guidelines for appropriate boundaries and for their own self-care
- ⤴ Illustrate strategies to sustain a safe, healthy church
- ⤴ Encourage continuing self-reflection and responsibility for one's own actions in ministry

We will offer Healthy Boundaries 101 and 201 at various times throughout the year with the expectation that all pastors and educators will participate in training/enrichment every three years.

Using materials from the FaithTrust Institute (www.faithtrustinstitute.org) our workshops will be led by trained facilitators.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PART IV: PROCESS

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Dissolution of Conflicted Ministry

The Presbytery of New Hope

Commission on Ministry

[At the outset of this section, it is understood that "separation for cause" is handled by a different process and is not addressed by the following.]

I. Theological and Reformed Statement of a Ministerial Call

*The Church's ministry is a gift from Jesus Christ to the whole Church. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God's new creation. Christ's ministry is the foundation and standard for all ministry, the pattern of the one who came "not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). The basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions. Members and those in ordered ministry serve together under the mandate of Christ. **(BO G-2.0101)** The Presbytery may inquire into reported difficulties in a congregation and may dissolve the pastoral relationship if, after consultation with the minister, the session, and the congregation, it finds the church's mission under the Word imperatively demands it. **(BO G-2.0904)***

These statements from the Book of Order remind us that the call to a minister is a four-way covenant between God, the minister, the congregation and the Presbytery. It is different from the hiring of a corporate executive or a football coach or a superintendent of a public school system. A call is when the congregation and minister individually discern, and the Presbytery corporately confirms, that God is calling them to be together in ministry at a certain time and place to bear "*witness in word and work that in Christ the new creation has begun, and that God who creates life also frees those in bondage, makes all things new, and is still at work in the world.*" **(BO F-1.0302d.)**, "*The Apostolicity of the Church*". The measure of ministry for a minister and a congregation is faithfulness to the gospel **(BO, Chapters F 1-3, G 4)**.

Change is part of what it is to be a minister and a congregation in the Reformed Tradition: "Reformed always reforming according to God's word." Therefore conflict will be part of the church today just as it was part of the church from the beginning of Paul's and Peter's conversations about who and what the church should be. It is imperative that people yearning to be faithful to God's common calling to ministry be able to deal with conflict in ways that are productive. The Biblical model for dealing with conflict is found in Matthew 18:15-16: "*If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens you have gained a brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.*" The biblical goal in dealing with conflict is the learning, reconciliation and growth that happen through communication. The minister, congregation and Presbytery are **all partners with God in the mission of the church**. Therefore, it is incumbent that all work through the conflict together, faithfully fulfilling God's call to ministry in Jesus Christ.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor. 12:26).

II. MIS-MATCHED EXPECTATIONS IN MINISTRY

Unfortunately, there will be times when all efforts to resolve a conflict will fail. The goal of the Commission on Ministry (COM) is to provide a fair and just process for those situations. In all cases, COM cannot be a neutral party when it enters a congregation because of difficulties, because COM represents the Presbytery in these situations and has a stake in how the situation is resolved. COM represents the third part of the three-way partnership in a pastoral relationship. A triangle exists the moment COM agrees to enter the situation and it must be a healthy partner in the triangle. It is important to remember that COM representatives cannot change the people involved in the difficulty or control how they will act. COM representatives can be a non-anxious presence, and in doing so, reduce the strain in the relationship and heal its brokenness. COM representatives must be able to manage their own reactions to conflict and criticism. These are the only behaviors they will be able to control.

III. IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

When all efforts toward resolution are exhausted, and it appears impossible to resolve the differences:

- COM will make certain there is provision for pastoral care for the pastor if an involuntary or pressured dissolution is evident.
- The whole community (i.e., congregation, pastor, and the Presbytery) and the process becomes the COM's focus. Representatives of COM are not a neutral party but have a stake in how the situation is resolved.
- COM will recommend persons who have requisite skills to facilitate discussions/mediation. Pastor may have advocate present.
- Dissolution will be negotiated, using COM document "Agreement Form for Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship" ([see page 52](#)).
- Continued benefits are outlined on page 52 and on the form ([click here](#) for form) [2 pages]
- Once session, pastor and COM representative have agreed on the terms of dissolution, including appropriate continued benefits, the "Agreement Form for Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship" is sent to COM for their approval and presented to the congregation for their approval. COM approval is final, pending congregational approval; congregational approval is final, pending COM approval.

WHEN TO INITIATE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CLOSING A CHURCH

"For Everything There Is A Season..."

One of the most solemn responsibilities of a Presbytery is to assist a congregation in their discernment of whether the time has come to close the church. This responsibility lies with the session of the church, the Commission on Ministry and General Council, with the primary leadership coming from General Council (responsible for the mission/vision of the Presbytery.)

Knowing when the time has come to initiate these conversations is difficult. Below are listed some indicators that would alert all parties that the time to initiate consultation is imminent:

- active membership roll falls below 25
- no members under the age of 70
- inability or failure to submit session records for review
- inability or failure to file annual statistical report
- no regular pastoral leadership
- expenses consistently exceed income
- inability or failure to maintain church facility
- inability or failure to send a commissioner to Presbytery meetings
- inability or failure to elect and/or install elders

The above list is not meant to be exhaustive. Other significant signs may be added at later dates.

The presence of one or more of the above indicators may initiate the consultation. It is hoped that the session of the church would take the lead and seek counsel from the Presbytery. And just because these conversations have begun does not mean that closure is a mandate. That conclusion will only be reached after all other avenues for renewal are exhausted.

In the event that the decision to close is reached and is to be recommended to the Presbytery, the expectation is that the congregation will find creative ways to celebrate the ministry of the church – its history and mission – with the Presbytery. The Presbytery will work with the church's leadership in all ways possible to be sure that the affairs of the church are handled with dignity and respect as the life-cycle of the church's ministry comes to conclusion.

PROCESS FOR DISSOLUTION OF A PARTICULAR CHURCH

A painful responsibility of a Presbytery is the closure of a congregation. After the leaders of a congregation (pastor/session) have counseled with representatives of the Presbytery about the future of their church, a motion to request dissolution may be proposed in a duly called meeting of the congregation. If the vote is in the affirmative, the Presbytery will be asked to take action to concur with this decision and to support it in the following ways.

I. It is normally best for a Presbytery to create an Administrative Commission to aid with the process. This approach is suggested since many of the legal consequences and processes will require action by the Presbytery and it is best for all if the same group can stay with the process from beginning to end. It is most often helpful if an elder from the dissolving congregation can be made a member of this commission to assure input from the remaining members throughout the process. If there is a minister of the Presbytery who is in some way related, he/she may be included as well.

II. A careful, specific motion creating such a Commission is essential to a "successful" dissolution.

Any such motion should include at least the following provisions:

1. Presbytery approves the dissolution of the _____ Presbyterian Church, effective __/__/__.
2. Assign Commission to assist the pastor and/or session to wind up the affairs of the church, transfer of remaining members, plan worship, giving thanks to God for the ministry of the congregation.
3. Authorize the Stated Clerk to receive Session Records (list all the records), retain records to wind up affairs, deposit with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, who will then forward to Presbyterian Historical Society.
4. Authorize the Stated Clerk to grant letters of dismissal to members whose names are still on the roll. Ordinarily the time limit recommended for this is one year, to encourage movement in finding new church homes.
5. RECITE: Under Form of Government, Chapter 4, Sections 3 and 5 (**G-4.0203**, and **G-4.0205**) all property of the _____ Presbyterian Church is held in trust for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Administrative Commission of the Presbytery of New Hope, elected __/__/__, is authorized to take possession of all real and personal property, financial records, inventories of equipment, (list other assets if there are others) and arrange for transfer of title to the Presbytery of all accounts and real property known to be in the possession of _____ Presbyterian Church.
6. Authorize the Commission to consult with the session regarding requests the congregation may have relating to the disposition of equipment and memorials and other property of the _____ Presbyterian Church, and from the date of the action to approve the disposition of property or to arrange for its retention and storage for future use at the direction of the Presbytery.
7. Authorize the Commission (and/or officers of the Presbytery corporation) to assert claim of the Presbytery to any property of the _____ Presbyterian Church not known at this time or property which may come to the _____ Presbyterian Church as the beneficiary of a will or trust not known at this time.

The claim of authority over the property of a dissolved church is based on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Constitution* and this must be understood by those who make these decisions.

III. Once formed, the Commission tends to pastoral issues first.

- A. Normally, the session retains control over as much of the day-to-day responsibilities as they are willing and able to do.
 - 1. Commissions should normally defer to the session on deciding on a workable time-line for closure.
 - 2. The Commission should encourage the session to continue to have responsibility for worship for as much of this period as the session is willing.
 - 3. As noted above, the Commission ordinarily defers to the session as to where particular pieces of personal property should go.
 - 4. The Commission, as one of its first acts if no pastor is present, should be to help the session provide for pastoral care of the remaining members (Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms, Hospital Visits, Counseling)
 - 5. The Commission should encourage the session to transfer members to other area churches. (In the best of all possible worlds this can be done before session dissolves.)
 - 6. The session should be primarily responsible for deciding on the type of closure service that will be most meaningful for the remaining members. The Commission should provide assistance and Presbytery support in this. The Commission should encourage the session to plan a service of celebration, if appropriate. The Commission needs to balance the remaining members' need to have some private time "for us" with participation from the at-large Presbytery at such services.
- B. In all the above steps, the Commission should work WITH the session, helping when requested or necessary.

IV. Once the pastoral issues are dealt with, then the Commission needs to work on the legal issues surrounding a dissolution.

- A. The Commission will confirm the final church roll (those who have not found new congregations by dissolution date), transferring it to the Stated Clerk, who keeps this roll, and who will be the responsible party if such members are still on the roll when the Commission is dissolved.
- B. Dissolving the Corporation. This is normally done by filing Articles of Dissolution with the State Secretary of State or comparable state official. Commission will consult a local attorney to determine process for dissolving not-for-profit corporations in the state of North Carolina.) Recommended alternative is described in D.1 below.
- C. Deciding what to do with the Real Estate.
 - 1. If sold to third party, it is the Commission that normally signs the deed and handles the sale (including hiring professionals - Attorney, Real Estate Persons, Appraisers, etc)
 - 2. If the real estate is going to be retained by the Presbytery. If the Church Development and Evangelism Committee thinks the property may be a good site to start a new congregation, the Commission needs to see that the title to the property is put in the Presbytery's name. It is best to have the session do this as one of its final acts; however if that doesn't happen, the Commission can do it, so long as it has been given the power.

- D. The Commission is to make sure that any of the congregation's personal property that has not been distributed by the session is transferred to the Presbytery's name.
 - 1. The Commission needs to take care that some assets (most often a trust) might lapse if the corporation is ended. If a congregation has such an asset (used to be common in trusts arising out of wills), the Commission may then want to transfer the Corporation into the Presbytery, naming Presbytery corporate officers as the Corporate officers.
- E. The Commission needs to make sure that the Presbytery is the successor in interest to any and all present and future assets. The clause described in II.A.7. above should be executed.
- F. The Commission should make sure that the Presbytery's insurance policy will cover the assets of the dissolving church. The Commission needs to beware of any possible lapse in coverage from the congregation's policy to the Presbytery's policy, and ensure that a lapse does not happen.
- V. As its final act the Commission needs to draw up a final report on the dissolution.**
 - A. It is helpful for the Commission to recite briefly the congregation's history, lifting up the highlights and giving Thanks to God and the generations of the congregation for the ministry.
 - B. Next the report needs to describe the process and actions the Commission has taken (including the action making the Presbytery the "successor in interest" to the congregation).
 - C. Finally the report needs to give a full accounting of the transfer of members (and listing those remaining on the roll so Stated Clerk can thereafter keep the roll) and of the distribution of the assets.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PART V: TRANSITION RESOURCES

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FastTrac – Pastor or Associate Pastor To a Spirit-Led and Effective Ministry

to strengthen the start-up of new ministries

Participants:

For Pastor (P): “new” Pastor, Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), and Session.

For Associate Pastor (AP): “new” Associate Pastor, Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC), the Head of Staff, two to three representatives of those ministries the AP serves, including the elders serving those ministries, and at least three Session members not serving in any of the areas to which the associate pastor is assigned.

When: Ideally, within the first three months of the new Pastor/Associate Pastor coming onto the field, but no longer than six months out.

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the new Pastor/Associate Pastor, session and other key leaders to develop **shared expectations** for the conduct of the ministry of the church, informed by the discussions between the PNC/APNC and the Pastor/Associate Pastor during the search process. This process will provide a foundation for further conversations between the Pastor/Associate Pastor, the session and other key leaders as the ministry of the church grows and a need to modify roles and expectations arises.

Workshop to Include:

- ❖ Begin with The Word.
- ❖ Explanation of purpose (*may include examples of bad matches – resulting from conflicted expectations*).
- ❖ Small groups for charting needs and expectations.
- ❖ De-briefing on needs and expectations.
- ❖ Clarify meanings, and identify priorities or next steps.
- ❖ Identify what (if anything) cannot be accommodated.
- ❖ Shared learnings from this event.
- ❖ Commitment by Facilitators to prepare written report/summary from data gathered, to send to clerk and moderator of session, and to Committee on Ministry. (See “Follow-up” below).
- ❖ Closing Blessing.

Facilitators: To be determined by the church.

Time: Two to three hours, depending on the size of the group assembled.

Space: A room large enough for everyone, plus one or two smaller meeting rooms.

Equipment: Easels with paper, markers, name-tags, and masking tape.

Follow-up: In one week the Facilitators will provide a written summary of the event.

Sample -- FastTrac Agenda

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
and
PASTOR/ASSOCIATE PASTOR _____
DATE _____

FIRST HOUR:

THE WORD

WHY WE'RE HERE (Introductions and Purpose of Workshop)

SESSION/PNC & PASTOR GROUP MEETINGS

--- OR ---

MINISTRY GROUP/APNC & ASSOCIATE PASTOR GROUP MEETINGS

QUESTIONS:

Session (for pastor) or Ministry Group (for associate pastor: session members, key leaders, and head of staff)

What are the most important skills and leadership style(s) you expected the Pastor/Associate Pastor to bring to your church and its ministry?

In what ways have these expectations been met?

Identify areas for growth/improvement.

What about your new ministry together excites you?

Have there been surprises in these beginning months?

What are the three most pressing challenges for your church's ministry?

PNC/Pastor or APNC/Associate Pastor

QUESTIONS:

PNC/APNC: What was this person told were the most important skills and leadership style(s) s/he needed to bring to this church and its ministry?

Pastor/Assoc. pastor: What did you hear from the PNC/APNC?

Both: How have these expectations been met?

Identify areas for growth/improvement.

What about your new ministry excites you?

Have there been surprises in these beginning months?

What are the three most pressing challenges for your church's ministry?

Second/Third Hours:

COMPARING AND INTEGRATING EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS

Identify congruencies and gaps

Identify priorities for future work

Identify what cannot be accommodated

WHAT ARE WE TAKING AWAY FROM THIS CONVERSATION?

CLOSING BLESSING

CALLING AN INTERIM PASTOR

The relationship of an interim pastor and a church is described in the Book of Order as a "Temporary Pastoral Relationship" (**G-2.0504b.**) The session, with the approval of Presbytery, may enter into an agreement for a temporary pastoral relationship. A temporary pastor is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

Interims as Next Installed Pastor:

The usual practice of the Presbytery of New Hope is that a temporary pastor is not eligible to become the next installed pastor. The Commission on Ministry will consider an exception to the usual practice of the Presbytery. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis as outlined below. Churches with a history of conflict, or where the outgoing installed pastor has served for fifteen or more years will not be eligible for exception. If calling an interim pastor as the installed pastor is approved by the Commission on Ministry, approval by the Presbytery will be a three-fourths affirmative vote of the members of Presbytery present and voting (**G-2.0504c**).

Process for an Interim Minister to become the Next Installed Pastor

- Only after the developmental tasks of interim ministry are addressed and stated goals for the congregation completed are an interim leader's intentions to be a candidate for an installed position to be made known to the PNC, at which time an open search (as defined by the CLC process) is conducted in accordance with the existing process for filling a vacancy in pastoral leadership.
- If, after an open search, the teaching elder who is serving in an interim capacity is determined to be the candidate the PNC wishes to pursue, the teaching elder and PNC will provide rationale for the discernment at the time of the interview with COM.
- If approved by COM, the teaching elder shall be elected by the congregation and installed as a designated pastor ([see p. 73 \[click\]](#)) for a period of two years. The intent of the designated pastor period is to allow for adequate transition time from the role of interim to installed leadership, to provide space for ongoing discernment, and to provide a natural boundary for reassessment or reaffirmation of the pastoral relationship.
- If after two years the pastoral relationship is affirmed by the congregation, teaching elder, and COM, the designated pastor is called and elected as the installed pastor. If the call is no longer affirmed by the teaching elder or congregation, an interim pastor is elected, and the search process begins again.
- According to the Book of Order, such relationship shall be approved by three-fourths vote of the Presbytery.

Interims and the COM Examinations and Transfers Sub-Committee:

A minister from another Presbytery seeking approval to serve as an Interim Pastor within the Presbytery of New Hope will be examined by the COM Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission.

The following indicates most of the steps that the Interim Search Committee will traverse as it goes about the process of first discerning and obtaining a Bridge Interim Pastor, and subsequently an Intentional Interim Pastor. Your COM advocate and the Executive Presbyter will be available to help you navigate each of these steps.

INTERIM PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (IPNC) STEPS

Organizational Meeting

Meet with COM advocate for orientation. Choose Chairperson and schedule meetings.

Prepare for Seeking Bridge Interim: Prepare job description, perhaps building on previous MIF with updates. This needs to define the role you are seeking to fill for a short time while you search for an Intentional Interim (typically 45 – 90 days). This also needs to include the anticipated compensation package – not to exceed that of the departing pastor. Review job description with COM advocate and Session for approval. (Duration: Typically 30-45 days).

Review PIFs for Candidates: Decide on process for considering candidates. COM advocate will provide a limited number of PIFs for the Bridge Interim. Evaluate them, listen to sermons if that is important to your committee and choose candidates of interest. Check references.

Schedule and hold interviews: Once a selected candidate has been discerned, notify COM advocate for approval to negotiate Terms of Call. COM provides a template for the Agreement. COM will obtain release to do a background check and will do a formal background check. If your policies require drug or substance testing, you are responsible for having that done.

Obtain Approval for Contracting with Bridge Interim: After all background checks have been completed and COM advocate has approved moving forward, obtain Session approval of the proposed Agreement. Work with COM advocate to schedule an Audience at the next COM meeting; this will include the candidate and the Search Committee. (The candidate will normally be a member of the Presbytery of New Hope, but additional steps may be required if they are not.) Note: Request for an audience and proposed Terms of Call must be submitted to COM at least 7 days prior to COM meeting.

Welcome and Introduce Bridge Interim: Plan for introductions at first worship service, and perhaps a reception for the congregation to meet new Bridge Interim.

Prepare MIF and enter it into CLC system: Have MIF reviewed and approved by Session and COM Moderator (COM advocate will provide preliminary review if desired.) Once MIF is approved, Clerk of Session & COM Moderator each enters approval in CLC system.

Review PIFs for Candidates: PIFs for the Intentional Interim will come from the CLC system, either by matching or self-referral. Some candidates may email their PIF to the Search Committee, and the Executive Presbyter may suggest some. Screen candidates and pick candidates of interest. Obtain approval of Executive Presbyter before contacting a candidate. Evaluate top candidates, listen to sermons, check references and choose top 4 or 5.

INTERIM PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (IPNC) STEPS - cont'd

Interview Top Candidates: Schedule and hold initial interviews (probably by phone) and narrow field down to top 2 or 3. Hold a second more in-depth interview (probably by phone) and discern chosen candidate. Repeat process until a candidate is discerned. Notify COM advocate for approval to negotiate Terms of Call. (See Terms of Call Agreement). COM will obtain release to do a background check and will do a formal background check. Negotiate preliminary Terms of Call. If your policies require drug or substance testing, it is your responsibility to arrange.

Face to Face Visit: Arrange and hold a face to face interview with candidate (and possibly spouse). Tour facility, introduce them to staff, and provide introduction to local area and potential housing. Coordinate visit with COM advocate.

Obtain Approval for Contracting with Intentional Interim: After all background checks have been completed and COM advocate has approved moving forward, obtain Session approval of the proposed Agreement. Work with COM advocate to schedule an Audience at the next Examinations and Transfers Sub-commission meeting; this will include the candidate and the Search Committee. Note: Request for an audience and proposed Terms of Call must be submitted to COM at least 7 days prior to audience meeting.

[Click here](#) for form "Interim Pastor Agreement (Terms)" [6 pages]

Examination by the Presbytery of New Hope: If the candidate is not a member of the Presbytery of New Hope, they will be given permission by COM to Labor Within the Bounds of the Presbytery until the next Presbytery meeting. The candidate will be introduced on the floor of a Presbytery meeting.

Exit of Bridge Interim Pastor: Approval of the Intentional Interim Agreement by COM and the Session constitutes notice to the Bridge Interim of the conclusion of their Agreement and Service. Their departure should then be planned, announced and carried out so that they have departed shortly prior to the arrival of the Intentional Interim.

Welcome and Introduce Intentional Interim: Plan for introductions at first worship service, and a reception for the congregation to meet new Intentional Interim. Other introductory activities should be planned in conjunction with the Interim.

Dissolution of Interim Search Committee: The work of the Interim Search Committee is now concluded and it can be dissolved by the Session. The committee should continue to maintain a close relationship with the Intentional Interim and provide a support structure for him/her.

CALLING A DESIGNATED PASTOR OR The Presbytery of New Hope Committee on Ministry

A designated pastoral relationship, full or part-time, is a call to a minister of the Word and Sacrament established by the Presbytery for a term of not less than two nor more than four years. The congregation and the minister must both have agreed to be considered for a designated relationship. The congregation's pastor nominating committee (PNC) shall nominate to the congregation for its consideration and vote, only from among those ministers designated to it by the Presbytery's Commission 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, at the request of the pastor or at the request of the church by action of the congregation, when the Presbytery, after consultation with the minister and the congregation finds that the church'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 minister to serve as designated pastor, sharing duties within the congregation as agreed upon by the session and approved by the Presbytery. When there is more than one pastor, the ministers and the session shall agree on a schedule for sharing the times each will moderate the session.

If there has been an open search process conducted by the PNC and after at least two years of the designated pastor relationship, upon the concurrence of the Commission 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. The session, with the concurrence of the Commission 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.

In summary:

Designated Pastor:

- is selected from among a few candidates provided by Presbytery's Commission on Ministry (COM);
- is generally able to move into a new position fairly quickly;
- is an installed position;
- is a term-limited position;
- requires a vote of the congregation to establish position and to approve specific call;
- requires approval by COM to establish position and to approve specific call;
- requires an installation;
- requires review and reconsideration as the designated term concludes as to whether to convert to a called-installed "permanent" position, or to part company.

[Click here](#) for form "Designated Pastor Agreement (Terms)" [7 pages]

BASIC OUTLINE FOR CALLING AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR **The Presbytery of New Hope -- Commission on Ministry**

To fill a position that has been vacated:

1. Session determines if calling an Associate Pastor (AP) meets the needs of the church's ministry, or if hiring a Christian Educator or other Church Professional would better suit those needs. If calling an Associate Pastor for a position already established is the preference,
2. Session requests permission of the Commission on Ministry to elect an APNC (Associate Pastor Nominating Committee).
3. The congregation elects an APNC.
4. The Pastor/Head of Staff serves ex-officio on the APNC with voice but no vote. The expectation is that the Pastor/Head of Staff would participate primarily in the early APNC stage (i.e., helping in the writing of the MIF) and late stage (i.e., serious contact and interviews) of the process. Regardless, the APNC may request to meet with the Pastor/Head of Staff or the Pastor/Head of Staff *may request* to meet with the APNC at any time in the process.
5. The APNC conducts the search and narrows candidates to a "small list" of finalists.
6. The APNC forwards the names of the small list of candidates to the Executive Presbyter for Executive clearance.
7. The Executive Presbyter notifies the APNC if the process should move forward with all of the candidates.
8. When the list of candidates is narrowed to a small list of finalists it is appropriate for the APNC to invite the Pastor/Head of Staff to participate in the interviews (***generally as an observer***) and/or have a separate interview/conversation with each of the finalists. The Pastor/Head of Staff ***may share thoughts*** with the APNC before the APNC makes its final candidate choice.
9. APNC notifies Commission on Ministry (COM) of the final candidate choice.
10. COM approves Terms of Call and schedules candidate to meet with Examinations and Transfers sub-committee of COM. **ALL THE ABOVE MUST HAPPEN BEFORE APNC NOTIFIES SESSION OR CONGREGATION!**
11. Once all approvals have been obtained from the Commission on Ministry and the candidate has been successfully examined, the APNC shall ask Session to schedule a meeting of the congregation to elect the Associate Pastor. The announcement of the call for the congregational meeting should include information about the candidate.
12. After the congregation approves the call for the Associate Pastor, he or she may begin work at the church.

To create a new Associate Pastor position:

1. Session considers if there is a need for a Christian Educator or other Church Professional on the staff or if there is a need for another ordained minister on staff to meet the needs of the church's ministry.
2. Session requests permission of the Commission on Ministry to establish a new Associate Pastor position for the church and to elect an APNC.
3. The congregations votes to establish the position and elects an APNC. Both of these actions may be taken, in sequence, at one meeting of the congregation.
4. See process above beginning with Step 4.

CALLING A PASTOR

The best reference for the process used by a PNC in calling a new installed pastor is found in the document "On Calling a Pastor." It may be downloaded from the PCUSA CLC site: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/calling-pastor/>

A brief description of the search process for PNCs is shown as a workflow diagram ([Click here](#) for the diagram).

[Click here](#) for form "Pastoral Call form"

Definitions and Process for PNC's For Preliminary Contact and Contact Requiring Clearance

The Presbytery of New Hope Commission on Ministry

Preliminary Contact (Information exchange with no commitment)

At the beginning stage, the PNC may:

- Telephone the candidate and discuss availability only.
- When a small list of available candidates has been identified by the PNC, the PNC will provide the list to the Executive Presbyter.
- Receive audio and video copies of sermons, etc.

Contact Requiring Clearance

To proceed further with a particular candidate, clearance must be granted through the Executive Presbyter.

Steps:

- The Executive Presbyter of the candidate's Presbytery will be contacted for clearance by the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of New Hope.
- The Executive Presbyter will notify the PNC of the general results of clearance.
- The PNC will conduct a Background Check on the Candidate when clearance is received by the Executive Presbyter.

Upon completion of the Executive Clearance, the PNC may proceed to:

- Conduct a phone interview by most or all of PNC
- Discuss the MIF, including salary ranges with the candidate
- Discuss the candidate's status in his/her search
- Negotiate specific terms of call
- Conduct a face-to-face interview with the candidate
- Hear the candidate preach in a neutral pulpit

Executive Presbyter Clearance

The clearance check by the Executive Presbyter involves a conversation with the Executive Presbyter of the Candidate's Presbytery.

All conversations regarding candidates shall be held in confidence, with comments being reported in generalities without attribution and refraining from direct, attributed quotes.

The types of questions the Executive Presbyter will ask are:

- Is this person a member in good standing in your Presbytery? Are there any "red flags" or charges pending?
- How long have you known the individual and in what capacity? Is there someone with whom I should speak who better might know this person? What type of reputation does his/ her work enjoy?
- Is there anything in this person's background that raises questions about her/ his suitability for ministry?
- What might our Presbytery expect from this individual in terms of his/ her participation in the ministry of the larger church? In what capacity has she/ he served your Presbytery?
- Offer a brief description of the position/ church that is interested, do you think this person has abilities that would be suitable for such a call?
- Would you describe this person as a "visionary" leader or a "maintenance" pastor?

Upon completion of the Executive Clearance, the Executive Presbyter will notify the PNC.

Note: Clearance by the Executive in no way is a substitute for the reference check work performed by the PNC.

TRANSITION TASK LIST FOR SESSION WHEN PASTOR LEAVES

- ❑ Pray for the Pastor and his/ her family as they depart the church family as well as for the congregation and leadership that God may guide them in their work.
- ❑ Session welcome Pastoral Transition Team from Commission on Ministry, to work with session and resource the congregation throughout the transition between pastors.
- ❑ Issue a Call for a Special Meeting of the Congregation to dissolve the pastoral relationship.
- ❑ Communicate with the Congregation
 - Call of the Special Meeting
 - Letter from Pastor to the Congregation
 - Information on Separation Ethics for Church Members
- ❑ Session arranges for temporary Pulpit Supply and makes arrangements to address pastoral care needs of the congregation.
- ❑ COM appoints Moderator of Session until interim or transitional pastoral leadership is in place.
- ❑ Session makes decision regarding best type of leadership in time of transition. The Session may choose to form an Interim Pastor Search Committee (in some cases the Session may act as the Search Committee).
 - Presbytery is able to provide information regarding the availability of qualified Interim Pastors.
 - The Session enters into a Contract with the Interim ([click here](#) for form [6 pages]).
- ❑ Session requests permission to form a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) from COM.

With permission of COM, Session calls a Special Meeting of the Congregation to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).

The most current version of all COM forms and publications can be found at www.nhpresbytery.org/com-forms. For assistance with any forms or publications, please contact Christine Kelson in the presbytery office at (919) 322-0143 ext. 113.