

## Administrative Manual: Chapter 6—Committee on Ministry

### 6.1100 COM - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE and RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 6.1101 Vision Statement. (originally adopted in 2007):

The nurture, care and development of positive relationships among: Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, educators, congregations, and Presbytery.

#### 6.1102 Member Expectations.

##### A. Committee Composition:

The committee shall consist of up to 21 members and shall be equally divided between ministers and ruling elders and arranged in three (3) classes.

##### B. Committee on Ministry Responsibilities:

###### 1. General

- a. To serve as pastor and counselor to the Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Certified Christian Educators of Presbytery in conjunction with the General Presbyter and the Pastoral Care Team.
- b. To facilitate the relations between congregations, ministers, Certified Christian Educators, and the Presbytery.
- c. To share responsibility with the congregation to ensure that the Book of Order requirements regarding oversight/accountability are fulfilled and that ordination vows are honored.
- d. To settle difficulties on behalf of Presbytery when possible and expedient.
- e. When operating as a commission, the COM will act on behalf of Presbytery in receiving new members.
- f. Provide oversight to the Clerk of Session Records Review process
- g. Deploy resources of the Pastoral Care Team when appropriate.
- h. Perform all duties assigned by Presbytery.

###### 2. Acting as a Commission

To expedite the calling and receiving into membership of ministers and to allow them to move onto the field in a timely manner, the Committee on Ministry shall function as a Commission to examine and admit into membership all ministers seeking membership in Peace River Presbytery and to approve terms of call and commissions of installation of those it examines. COM shall function as a commission when the following contingencies have been met: the Ministers of the Word and Sacrament in good standing of the PC (USA); unanimous approval by the Committee on Ministry of the examination; promise of match and terms of call; and the call and election of the nominee by the congregation or other calling agencies (i.e., non-parish calls). If the vote is not unanimous, the approval must go to the full Presbytery for approval.

###### 3. Members of the Committee on Ministry shall:

- a. be familiar with the Book of Order, the COM Manual, the General Assembly “On Calling a Pastor” Manual, and the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

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- b. attend meetings of the COM (including training and other special meetings and events).
- c. serve as a member and attend meetings of the cluster team as assigned. See section (E) for cluster team responsibilities.

Note: All relevant expenses incurred as a member of the COM (phone calls, copies, postage, and travel) are reimbursed by voucher in accordance with Presbytery policy.

- C. Moderator/co-Moderator of the COM, in conjunction with the General Presbyter, shall:
  1. preside at the meetings of the COM.
  2. present the COM report to the Presbytery.
  3. appoint special task forces as needed.
  4. provide training and updates on policies and procedures of the COM.
  5. consult with the General Presbyter concerning activities and actions of the COM.
  6. convene cluster leaders for meeting agenda preparation and as necessary.
  7. attend, or designate attendance, at monthly Presbytery Steering Committee meetings.
  8. moderator/co-moderators, in consultation with the General Presbyter, may appoint Session moderators as needed. Such appointments will be confirmed by COM at next meeting.
- D. The General Presbyter shall:
  1. serve as the staff person and major resource person for the COM.
  2. assure that communication is effective within and beyond the COM.
  3. assure that a record of minutes, reports, and actions of the COM are maintained at the Presbytery office.
  4. check references on all potential candidates and ministers requesting transfer or permission to labor within the bounds of the Presbytery.
- E. Cluster Leader Responsibilities:
  1. Serve as contact person for congregations/ministers in cluster.
  2. Coordinate the following with the appointed liaison for a church going through transition:
    - a. attend announcements of resignation where possible,
    - b. set up and conduct exit reviews,
    - c. in conjunction with the General Presbyter and COM moderator, appoint PNC/IPNC liaison and train PNCs/IPNCs for approval by COM,
    - d. set up initial interview and dialogue with final candidates,
    - e. arrange for neutral pulpits where requested,
    - f. Provide the Presbytery office with information on pastoral calls (i.e. statement of faith, biographical sketch, terms of calls, effective dates, ordination/installation dates, etc.).
    - g. see to it all call forms and ordination/installation forms are received by the Stated Clerk and the Presbytery office prior to COM and Presbytery meetings,
    - h. establishes and gives oversight to relationships for all newly called ministers,
    - i. set up first year review workshops for ministers, PNC and Session and ensure that a mentoring process with first year ordained ministers is in place.
  3. Make arrangements for COM representation at all triennial reviews in cluster.
  4. Keep the COM moderator/co-moderators and the General Presbyter informed of what is happening in assigned cluster so an informed agenda for COM meetings can be constructed.

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5. Visit session and Designated Pastor one year prior to the pastor's term expiration.
6. Call and conduct meetings of assigned cluster.

### **F. COM Cluster Team Responsibilities (Set up by Cluster Leader):**

- a. Conducts exit interviews with departing ministers.
- b. Conducts initial reviews (clearance) with final candidates.
- c. Participates in first year review of pastor's call.
- d. Participates in Triennial Visits.
- e. Receive retired ministers when the minister does not intend to pursue active pastoral roles in the Presbytery.

## **6.1200 PRESBYTERY MEMBERSHIP**

### **6.1201 Presbytery Membership Categories and Responsibilities.**

Membership Categories. The definition of each of the three presbytery membership categories is found in G-2.0503 a, b, and c. They are Validated Ministry, Member-at-large, and Honorably Retired.

A. Validated Ministries. A Presbytery shall determine the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who shall be its continuing members. In making this determination the Presbytery shall be guided by written criteria developed by the Presbytery for validation of ministries within its bounds. These criteria shall be based upon the description of the nature of ordained office found in G-2.05 and the following standards:

1. The ministry of continuing members shall be in demonstrable conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, The Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order of this church. In addition to having fulfilled the ordination requirements of the Presbytery, the person shall have received the call of God to service to a congregation or other work in the mission of the church that is acceptable to the candidate and the Presbytery. Ordinarily such a qualifying call shall be a minimum half time.
2. The ministry shall be one that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministries of others.
3. The ministry shall give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word. This will normally require the Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent and the completion of the requirements for ordination set forth in G-2.0607.
4. The ministry shall be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the Presbytery and to organizations, agencies, and institutions.
5. The ministry shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the Presbytery and in the worship and service of a congregation.

All ministers with Validated Ministries are expected to regularly participate in the meetings, life and work of the presbytery. Since members of Presbytery shall be expected to participate in the life and work of the

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Presbytery, we regularly remind ministers of the importance of attending Presbytery meetings, and we provide a written list of attendance at the meetings of Presbytery the previous year at each January meeting.

Those ministers called to a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news, shall participate in a congregation, in their Presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships, shall be eligible for election to higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils. A letter shall be sent annually, at mid-year, to those serving in validated ministries asking them to submit their request for renewal, along with form 6.1201a.

### **6.1201a Validated Ministry Annual Report.**

I. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Ecclesiastical Status

\_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Validated by Presbytery: part-time \_\_\_\_\_ full-time \_\_\_\_\_

\* \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry directly related to PC(U.S.A.) part-time \_\_\_\_\_ full-time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Ministry in ecumenical work accountable to a governing body of the PC(U.S.A.):

Part-time \_\_\_\_\_ full-time \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Ministry in interdenominational work, but not directly accountable for your ministry to governing body of the PC(U.S.A.):

Currently worshipping at: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Fill in items I and II only

III. Report on Employment from / / to / / (must be one year or less)

List all full or part-time positions held, whether secular or religious (including self-employment) from which income was earned. Describe positions, give name and address of employing body or write "not so employed".

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I certify that I am in compliance with the Validated Ministry criteria according to the Book of Order G-2.0503a and adopted by Peace River Presbytery:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### 6.1201 (cont.) Presbytery Membership Categories and Responsibilities

- B. Members-at-Large. A member-at-large is a minister of the Word and Sacrament who has previously been admitted to the Presbytery or another Presbytery as an active member, and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in the Book of Order. Members-at-Large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of a congregation.

A minister may be designated a member-at-large because (s)he is limited in his or her ability to engage in a ministry fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry because of family responsibilities or other individual circumstances which Presbytery recognizes as important. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in the Book of Order as possible. A member-at-large is entitled and expected to take part in the life and meetings of the Presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office. The status of each member-at-large shall be reviewed annually by the Committee on Ministry.

- C. All Honorably Retired members are encouraged to participate as fully as possible in the meetings, life and work of the presbytery.

Receiving Honorably Retired Ministers Into Peace River Presbytery. Honorably Retired Presbyterian (U.S.A.) ministers seeking membership will be received into Presbytery by providing a biography and Statement of Faith and by coming before COM to be received in the same way as called ministers of the Presbytery. If Honorably Retired ministers do not have immediate plans to be active, COM may elect not to have a Cluster Interview. This policy is based the following:

1. When C.O.M. receives an HR minister into the Presbytery, (s)he is entitled to vote on any or every issue that comes before Presbytery.
2. (S)He may honestly feel that they do not want to participate in the life of the Presbytery but after a few months of retirement (s)he may want to get involved as Parish Associate, Interim Pastor or Pulpit Supply Pastor. At that time it will be necessary to provide the C.O.M. with a Personal Information Form and schedule a Cluster interview for fit.
3. C.O.M. needs to examine the theology of the person so as to admit those who fall within the wide parameters of our theological ethos.

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4. C.O.M. needs to impress upon those applying that we take this seriously and so should (s)he.
5. C.O.M. makes a statement to the Presbytery that we have done due diligence and present him/her for their affirmation.

### 6.1201b Welcome Letter to Honorably Retired Ministers

Dear \_\_\_\_\_;

We extend our best wishes to you upon your retirement and want to welcome you to Peace River Presbytery. The enclosed brochure will provide you with background information on our history, membership, mission and vision.

We have designated three cluster groups within the Committee on Ministry representing churches in the north, central and south regions of the Presbytery. A member of the appropriate C.O.M. cluster will contact you in the near future to arrange an informal meeting to discuss your retirement and prepare to welcome you into Peace River Presbytery as an Honorably Retired member. We ask that you provide us with your Biographical Statement and Statement of Faith in preparation for this meeting.

We have also enclosed *A Code of Ethics for Ministers and The Peace River Presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy*. The documents reflect our commitment to preserve the integrity of our pastoral relationships and immediately address any behavior that compromises this standard. We ask that you study both these documents so that we can discuss any questions you have since our members confirm their commitment to uphold this standard by signing each document.

We look forward to meeting with you and trust that you will contact us with any questions on this process.

Sincerely, signed by COM moderator(s)

### 6.1210 Parish Associate Policy

**Parish Associate Relationship.** A Parish Associate is a minister who wishes to maintain a relationship with a particular church or churches in keeping with ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The relation shall be established, upon nomination by the pastor, between the Parish Associate, the session and the Presbytery. The Parish Associate shall be responsible to the pastor, as head of staff, on an “as needed, as available” basis and with or without remuneration.

**May Not Be Next Installed Pastor.** A Parish Associate may not be called to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor of a church served as Parish Associate, unless at least six months have elapsed since the end of the Parish Associate relationship.

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**Presbytery Oversight (G-2.0504b).** C.O.M. will have the oversight on:

- A. the time and energy required as a Parish Associate. Since the role of Parish Associate is ordinarily part-time, that it will not interfere unduly with the work of the person's primary work responsibility.
- B. that installed leadership of the particular church be protected in its effective functioning.
- C. that the Parish Associate continue to meet the criteria for continuing membership in the Presbytery based on other than this relationship to a particular church.
- D. the term of service will be for a specified period, not to exceed twelve months, but it is renewable with the approval of the Committee on Ministry. A letter will be sent to all churches annually, at mid-year, asking them to update the status of their Parish Associates. Usually a Parish Associate will have standing in Peace River Presbytery, refer to section 6.1201 (c) (2). In the event that the pastor under consideration is not a member of Peace River Presbytery, it will be necessary to request an Order of the Day with COM, provide a biography and Statement of Faith and gain permission to labor from the pastor's current Presbytery. For Ordained Ministers from other denominations serving churches in a pastoral role, see section 6.1470 of the COM Manual. All Parish Associates shall be asked to sign the Code of Ethics Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

**Termination of the Relationship.** The agreement between the session, the Parish Associate, and the Presbytery shall terminate when the call to the installed pastor is dissolved. The Presbytery may dissolve the relationship with the Parish Associate upon the action of the Committee on Ministry.

### 6.1220 Counselors.

- A. Counselors under the authority of this policy fall into two categories.
  - (1) ministers serving congregations whose primary responsibility is to provide pastoral counseling.
  - (2) ministers whose validated ministry primarily consists of pastoral counseling.
- B. Pastors, associate pastors, designated pastors, interim pastors, stated supplies, and parish associates whose primary responsibility is other than counseling are not subject to this policy. They are subject to the oversight of the Session.
- C. The Committee on Ministry (COM) is authorized to determine who is under the authority of this policy (using the criteria indicated above). All ministers subject to this policy must provide the following to the COM when applying for membership in the Presbytery or for a validated ministry:
  - (1) Documentation of training in pastoral counseling such that the pastoral counselor could meet the current requirements of the "Member Level" of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (for details, contact AAPC at 9504 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031,

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703/385-6967). If these requirements have not yet been met, documentation must be provided showing a formal plan leading to completion of the requirements. Each year the progress made toward completion of the requirements will be reviewed by the COM.

(2) Identification of a regular and on-going (at least monthly) consulting relationship with one of the following:

(a) a pastoral counselor recognized by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors at the “Member” level or above, OR

(b) a certified psychotherapist or psychologist approved by the COM.

(3) A certificate of insurance showing the following: counseling professional liability coverage, sexual misconduct/sexual molestation liability coverage, with the Presbytery of Peace River listed as an additional insured (when permitted by the employing organization), and a cancellation provision such that the insurer will mail notice of cancellation at least 10 days before the effective date of termination to the Presbytery of Peace River.

D. All ministers subject to this policy must annually provide the COM with:

(1) Written reports from the pastoral counselor’s session or employing organization and the pastoral counselor’s consultant (see above) attesting to a positive pastoral counseling ministry.

(2) A certificate of insurance renewal (with the provisions above).

**6.1230 Chaplains.** Chaplains under the authority of this policy include all ministers serving in non-parish, validated ministries at an institution or agency other than a congregation of the Presbytery of Peace River.

A. The Committee on Ministry (COM) is authorized to determine who is under the authority of this policy (using the criteria indicated above). All ministers subject to this policy must provide the following to the COM when applying for membership in the Presbytery or for a validated ministry:

(1) Documentation that the standards for board certification as a Chaplain have been met through the Board of Chaplaincy Certification, or documentation that equivalent standards have been met. Details for certification can be obtained at website: [www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org); mailing address: 2800 W. Higgins, Suite 295, Hoffman Estates, IL 60169; telephone: (847) 240-1014.

(2) If these requirements have not yet been met, documentation must be provided showing a formal plan leading to completion of the requirements. Each year the progress made toward completion of the requirements will be reviewed by the COM.

(3) If the minister is covered by an insurance policy of the employing institution, a description of the insurance which applies to the minister is required.



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(4) If there is no insurance provided by the employing institution, the minister is required to submit a certificate of private insurance showing the following: counseling professional liability coverage, sexual misconduct/sexual molestation liability coverage, with the Presbytery of Peace River listed as an additional insured (when permitted by the employing institution) and a cancellation provision such that the insurer will mail notice of cancellation at least 10 days before the effective date of termination to the Presbytery of Peace River.

B. A description of the supervision and peer review plan for the chaplain is required.

C. All ministers subject to this policy must annually provide the COM with:  
Written reports from the chaplain's supervisor attesting to a positive ministry and a certificate of insurance renewal (with the provisions above).

### 6.1240 Certified Christian Educators.

On Calling a Certified Christian Educator. Congregations seeking to call a Certified Christian Educator shall inform the COM. The COM shall provide a liaison to all congregations seeking to call a church educator. The Search Committee should be elected by the congregation not the session. The COM shall approve the call of all Certified Christian Educators.

Support for Educators. The COM shall implement all provisions of the Book of Order which pertain to Certified Christian Educators. Triennial visits shall include conversations with the Certified Christian Educator. The COM shall conduct an exit interview with Certified Christian Educators.

Rights and Privileges of Educators. The presbytery grants the privilege of the floor with voice but not vote to all Certified Christian Educators who are active in Presbytery and are employed in churches within the Presbytery. Certified Christian Educators who are also ordained ruling elders have the right of both voice and vote. These people count as elder commissioners at large. All Certified Christian Educators employed by churches of the Presbytery (full-time or part-time) shall be included in all Presbytery-wide mailings.

### 6.1300 MINISTRY IN ACTION

#### 6.1301 A Code of Ethics for Ministers. PREAMBLE:

*By grace you have been saved through faith. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works. As God who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not under compulsion but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly; do not lord it over those in your charge but be examples to the flock. You know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness. Ephesians 2:8, 10; I Peter 1:15, 5:2; James 3:1 NRSV*

**6.1302** In their ordination vows, all Ministers promise to trust Jesus Christ as Savior, to acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and to believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are further

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committed to serve in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, continually guided by our confessions and governed by our church's polity and discipline. In their personal lives all ministers, acting as God's servants, are called to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love their neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world. In both their personal and professional lives they strive to further the peace, unity, and purity of the Church, and pray for and serve with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

### **6.1303 Fundamental Principles.** Ministers in Peace River Presbytery:

- A. Take their ordination vows seriously as they consciously strive to glorify God in all they do, both personally and professionally.
- B. Are accountable to one another, and to the larger church, as they abide by the church's discipline and work as friends among their colleagues in ministry.
- C. Act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honor, integrity, morality, and dignity of their calling to serve Jesus Christ.

### **6.1304 Guidelines for Ministers' Code of Ethics.**

A. These ethical standards are not an attempt to set legalistic limitations, but rather to guide all of us in showing the love Christ has shown us. We live by the grace of God and willingly choose to do so in a disciplined manner. The sole purpose of such standards is to build up the body of Christ.

B. These are not exhaustive guidelines but are an attempt to lift up particular concerns as Ministers seek to carry out their ordination vows.

C. While ministers are directly accountable to the Presbytery to which they belong or where they labor with permission, they also bear accountability to their employing body or session and congregation. In the realm of ethics, there is also a larger accountability to the religious community as a whole and to the general public.

D. Ministers are called by God to an office that requires integrity and high standards; therefore, it is right that people expect ministers to act accordingly. Ministers will show sensible regard for the moral, social, and religious standards of the Christian community and the community at large, realizing that any violation on their part may be damaging to their parishioners, to colleagues in ministry, to their calling, and to the body of Jesus Christ. The minister's integrity in personal business and financial dealing is also an ethical concern, and ministers do not involve themselves or their congregations in questionable business practices. They do not incur debts they cannot pay in a reasonable time, nor do they leave any community with unpaid personal bills.

**6.1305 Personal and Professional Practices.** In all matters, ministers should give glory to Christ, advance the goals of the church, and nurture, challenge, and honor church members.

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- A. Ministers accurately represent their professional qualifications, education, training, and experience in all contacts with the church or the public.
- B. Ministers use their knowledge, skill, and experience, and their professional connections for the benefit of the people and the institutions they serve and not for personal advantage.
- C. Ministers limit their work to those positions and responsibilities for which they are qualified and make referrals where such are indicated.
- D. Financial arrangements or expectations regarding preaching, speaking, counseling, weddings, funerals, and other professional services are discussed at the start of such relationships and are handled in a business-like manner. Ministers who serve congregations offer their services to members of their own congregations without charge and without expecting any honoraria. While fees for the use of church facilities are set by the session, honoraria or fees for the pastor's services to non-members are set by the pastor in consultation with the session.
- E. Ministers are responsible for reporting to the Internal Revenue Service all income, including honoraria and unused housing allowance.
- F. Ministers are responsible to insure that notes on counseling sessions, and the like, are stored in a place assuring security and confidentiality.
- G. Ministers avoid the disparagement of any person.
- H. Ministers respect the integrity and protect the welfare of persons or groups with whom they are working.
- I. Ministers do not engage in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with church members, employees, counseling clients, or any persons by whom they may be perceived to be in a pastoral relationship. Ministers are always responsible for considering the impact of their words and actions, and refrain from actions that create the appearance of an inappropriate relationship.
- J. All personal communications from parishioners are treated with professional confidence, with the exception of Section K below. Confidentiality respects the uniqueness of parishioners as individuals. It is the foundation for honest communication and is a necessary element in the creation of a community where people feel free to express personal thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. When confidentiality is violated, when private information is made public, trust between a parishioner and pastor is

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destroyed. It is important for a pastor to preserve confidentiality so that relationships with parishioners may foster personal and spiritual growth.

K. Ministers have an obligation to society as well as to their parishioners. When a teaching elder becomes aware that persons with whom they are working...

(1) intend to inflict grave bodily harm on another individual, the pastor takes all reasonable steps to inform the intended victim immediately. If applicable, the pastor is to inform civil authorities.

(2) are inflicting physical and/or sexual abuse on children or the elderly, the pastor informs civil authorities (and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery if a pastor is involved).

(3) are a danger to themselves, the minister takes reasonable steps to arrange treatment and/or hospitalization, even against the person's wishes.

L. Ministers receiving funds (i.e., loans or grants other than normal honorarium) from either a congregation or members with whom the pastor has had a pastoral relationship, or ministers who are beneficiaries, personal representatives or trustees of estates or trusts involving members of their congregation shall report such information to the Committee on Ministry.

M. Sessions whose pastor has a discretionary fund shall assure that they have appropriate guidelines and accountability for how these funds are used.

**6.1306 Colleague Relationships.** Ministers are encouraged to maintain a vital association with their professional colleagues and with colleagues in related professions – health care, social services, legal services, and the like. This includes persons in the Presbyterian Church, those in other faith groups, and possibly some without any faith-group connection. They communicate with such peers and collaborate with them professionally.

A. In staff relationships, as in all intra-church relationships, the objective is to work together with a spirit of cooperation in building up the whole church. Ministers are understanding toward one another, accept each other as persons, respect the competencies of each other, offer constructive suggestions to one another, forgive misunderstandings, and are tolerant of differences of opinion and style of operation.

B. Loyal support between members of the staff is a tremendous help toward building good working relationships. Members of the staff do their work with enthusiasm and confidence in each other. Innuendo and gossip are avoided. Staff members are encouraged to speak openly and frankly about their differences and problems to the individual concerned and only to that person. The principles of ethical, healthy staff relationships apply equally to professional, paraprofessional, and support staff (secretarial and custodial employees) and volunteers. All staff members are given equal respect without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, or marital status.

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- C. After leaving a church, former pastors shall exercise due care so as to have no further influence upon the congregation by conversation, correspondence, or other action.
- D. Former pastors, either directly or indirectly, shall not seek to influence the selection or policies of any successor, moderators of the session, interim or supply pastors, or the membership of a Pastor Nominating Committee.
- E. When the relationship between a pastor and a congregation is dissolved, the pastor shall call attention to the fact that there will be another pastor to whom the people should give their loyalty, and shall state clearly that the departing pastor should not be called upon for pastoral services or ceremonies. The departing pastor shall provide the names of persons on the session or Committee on Ministry who should be called when such services are desired.
- F. Pastors who leave a parish position to retire or take on a different kind of work while continuing to reside in the same community shall be especially careful to accord all professional and pastoral courtesies to other ministerial colleagues in the community whether associate, interim, stated supply, or installed pastors.
- G. Retired or relocated pastors shall be especially discreet when visiting in a former parish. In such cases, it is proper to pay personal respects to one's successor. Frequent visits to one's former parish are avoided.
- H. When a pulpit is vacant and there is no interim pastor, stated or temporary supply, the former pastor shall serve only as called upon and approved by the session and Committee on Ministry. At the coming of a new pastor, all professional relationships are dissolved.
- I. In the unfortunate instance where a parishioner insists on seeking the services of a former pastor for an occasion like a wedding, baptism or funeral, the previous minister is expected to redirect the parishioner to the current pastor. The current pastor, moderator of session, may choose to invite the predecessor to serve in such a way. At times, such flexibility may help smooth a difficult transition.
- J. Any former pastor shall seek to be supportive of the new pastor when comments are made about that person or any program, policies, or activities in the former church. If the former pastor cannot in good conscience be supportive of the new pastor, (s)he shall remain silent.
- K. Ordinarily a pastor shall not provide pastoral care to a person who is a member of a church other than the one currently being served. This includes pastoral calls to someone's home or hospital room unless specifically invited at the person's initiative or by that person's pastor.
- L. Professional courtesy suggests that if a pastor does call on a parishioner from another church, the parishioner's own pastor shall be notified. The need for pastoral visitation is never used as an opportunity for proselytizing.

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- M. Pastors who worship with a particular church without a formal pastoral function in that congregation maintain proper professional boundaries. They do not officiate at weddings, funerals, and baptisms unless invited by the pastor of the church involved.
- N. Pastors not in pastoral relationships shall administer the sacraments only at the request of the local pastor or session or by permission of the Presbytery.
- O. When a pastor is called upon to officiate at a non-member's wedding, funeral, or baptism, the pastor shall determine whether they are members of another church. If they are, the pastor shall urge to secure the services of their own pastor. If that effort fails, the pastor seeks to inform their pastor of the circumstances.
- P. An installed, interim or supply pastor shall always be courteous to any predecessor. In special circumstances the current pastor may choose to invite a former minister to participate in some service. This is always at the initiative of the current pastor. Careful flexibility in such matters may help a congregation more readily accept a new minister as their own.
- Q. Pastors who are elected as pastor emeritus recognize that this is an honorary title only and carries no job responsibilities or special privileges unless they are expressly stated by the session and approved by the Presbytery.
- R. The purpose of an interim pastor is to prepare a particular congregation for the coming of a new pastor. To this end, the interim shall not seek to glorify or mold loyalties to self, but rather to the office of the pastor, and most of all, to Christ and His Church. The interim or supply pastor cannot be a candidate for the pulpit served. Interim and supply pastors do not become involved in the search process.

**6.1307 Conclusion and Rationale.** Ministers are called to lifestyles that reflect the words of Jesus in John 15:12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." This code of ethics seeks to guide us in that endeavor.

**6.1310 Sexual Misconduct and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. Introduction.** In an effort to further the peace, unity and purity of the church through the prevention and remediation of sexual misconduct, minor abuse and vulnerable adult abuse within the church, Peace River Presbytery has developed the following policy. In preparing the document, attention was given to setting and providing for enforcement of standards of ethical behavior consistent with Reformed tradition and secular law. Requirements and protections guaranteed under the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline were particularly noted. This policy document should help in assuring consistency of practice and action within the Presbytery, provide an information base for educating both minister members of Presbytery and lay persons, and serve as a model for local congregations in their development of personnel policies. This policy applies to all clergy, employees of the Presbytery and all volunteers working on Presbytery committees, projects and activities. This policy defines sexual misconduct, minor abuse and vulnerable adult abuse and outlines procedures for reporting such misconduct to the Presbytery.

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**6.1311 Definition of Sexual Misconduct.** Sexual misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include sexual abuse of children or adults, rape or sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of authority and power. It breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantage over another for personal gratification in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. Categories of sexual misconduct are described below.

- A. Sexual abuse occurs whenever a person in a position of trust engages in a sexual act or sexual contact with another person to whom (s)he owes a professional responsibility. Such abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - (1) Sexual acts or sexual contact with a minor.
  - (2) Sexual acts or sexual contact involving inducement, threat, coercion, force, violence, or intimidation of another person.
  - (3) Sexual acts or sexual contact between ministers, laity, or staff to whom they are not married and with whom they have a professional relationship. Such relationships are not acceptable even when consensual, and regardless of whether pastoral care is involved. The inherent imbalance of power between ministers and lay people or staff undermines the validity of such consent.
  - (4) Sexual acts outside the bounds of marriage.
  - (5) Sexual acts or sexual contact with a person who is incapable of appraising the nature of the conduct or is physically incapable of declining such activity.
  - (6) Sexual acts or sexual contact arising from the administration of a drug or intoxicant which substantially impairs the reasoning or judgment of another.
  - (7) Ministers are always responsible for considering the impact of their words and actions, and refrain from actions that create the appearance of an inappropriate relationship.
- B. Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child or an adult lacking the mental capacity to consent and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching and includes the display or use of sexually suggestive materials, objects, or pictures. Child sexual abuse between an adult and a child is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. Child sexual abuse is a crime in all states and must be reported to civil authorities and to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.
- C. Rape or sexual assault is a crime in every state and should be reported to civil authorities and to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.
- D. Sexual harassment includes behavior in the workplace which may affect an individual's employment, unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for

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sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexually offensive nature when any of the following circumstances prevail:

- (1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or his/her continued status in an institution.
- (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual.
- (3) 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. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or multiple persistent or pervasive acts. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to the following:
  - sexually oriented jokes or humor;
  - sexually demeaning comments;
  - verbal suggestions of sexual involvement or sexual activity;
  - questions or comments about sexual behavior;
  - unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact;
  - graphic or degrading comments about an individual's physical appearance;
  - express or implied sexual advances or propositions;
  - display or use of sexually suggestive materials, objects or pictures;
  - repeated requests for social engagements after an individual refuses.

**6.1311 (a) Definition of Minor Abuse and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Not Involving Sexual Misconduct.** Minor and vulnerable adult abuse includes, but is not limited to, any act or failure to act that results in the physical, psychological or emotional mistreatment, neglect or exploitation of a minor or vulnerable adult. Such abuse includes the use of technology and/or social media to harass or otherwise abuse a minor or vulnerable adult.

### **6.1312 Policy on Sexual Misconduct and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Abuse.**

- A. Sexual misconduct and minor/vulnerable adult abuse is never permissible. It is a violation of the principles set forth in Scripture as well as of ministerial, pastoral, employment, and professional relationships. Sexual misconduct by a minister violates the ordination vows of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- B. All ministers and ministerial inquirers and candidates shall be required to attend a seminar offered by the Presbytery on the issues of sexual misconduct and minor/vulnerable adult abuse biennially and to sign a statement agreeing to comply with the policy. If unable to participate in the Presbytery-offered training, the minister shall work with Presbytery to find a suitable alternative. Failure to comply may result in investigation and discipline.
- C. Whereas this policy addresses sexual misconduct and minor/vulnerable adult abuse by ministers, each congregation and organization in Peace River Presbytery is responsible for developing a policy



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for church professionals, officers, members, non-member employees, and volunteers which is consistent with this document.

### 6.1313 Responsibilities and Roles of Peace River Presbytery in Policy Implementation

#### A. Availability of Policy and Procedures:

- (1) All ministers shall be given copies of the Peace River Presbytery **Sexual Misconduct and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy** and are required to sign an acknowledgment of receipt and agreement to comply.
- (2) Those being examined for membership in Presbytery shall be furnished with a copy of this policy prior to the Committee on Ministry examination. They must sign the policy and be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt and agreement to comply prior to being received.
- (3) This document shall also be available to all sessions and church members and to the public.
- (4) Presbytery employees shall receive this document as a supplement to the employee handbook.

#### B. Resource Documents. The Book of Order requires all councils to adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy (see G-3.0106). The responsibilities, structures, and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct are mandated in part by the Book of Order, such as the role of an Investigating Committee (see G-3.0307 and D-10.0200).

#### C. Liability and Insurance. The Presbytery and its congregations shall periodically obtain from their insurance agents, confirmation that their liability insurance policy covers sexual misconduct liability for their programs and activities.

#### D. Record Keeping. Peace River Presbytery will include in every employee's personnel file, including files for ministers, the application for employment, any employment questionnaires, reference responses, and other documents related to this policy including a signed receipt for receiving the sexual misconduct policy and agreement to comply.

#### E. The following procedures shall be followed whenever the Presbytery sponsors an event involving minors and or vulnerable adults: a) all workers must have a criminal background check on file with their home congregation or with the Presbytery; b) at least two non-related adults shall always be present in groups of minors and if both genders of minors participate in the event, the two adults shall be one of each gender; c) when minors and workers are in a room together, there should be an unobstructed window in the door to the room or the door to the room shall be left open; and d) workers will ensure that no other adults are using a restroom before allowing a minor to enter and the worker shall remain outside the restroom to assure that no other adults enter while the minor(s) is(are) using the facility.

### 6.1314 Pre-Employment Screening for Prospective Incoming Clergy

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- A. Reference Checks. Pre-employment screening includes specific questions related to previous complaints of sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse. The Presbytery reviews Sexual Misconduct Information of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Personal Information Form when interviewing persons seeking ministerial calls.

The General Presbyter is responsible for making reference checks through the appropriate Presbytery Executive, or other authorized persons, to ascertain whether incoming clergy have any history of sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse. The General Presbyter reports to the Committee on Ministry either that there was no reported sexual misconduct, or that the committee should inquire into reported sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse. A written record of conversations and correspondence with references will be kept in the minister's/employee's personnel file.

The person within the Presbytery authorized to give a reference is obligated to give truthful information regarding complaints, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse by the applicant.

Applicants shall be given an opportunity to correct or respond to information regarding sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse obtained from a reference check.

- B. Background Checks. Pre-employment screening for prospective incoming clergy also includes a mandatory National Criminal History and Financial Background Check, requested and paid for by the church. This should take place prior to the candidate being examined by the Committee on Ministry. (See section 6.1425 [21])

### **6.1315 Maintenance of Sexual Misconduct Response Team.**

The Sexual Misconduct Response Team will be responsible for the following:

- A. Providing for Presbytery-wide training on preventing sexual misconduct and on the Presbytery's policy for addressing potential misconduct situations.
- B. Identifying, in consultation with the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk, those ordained officers within the Presbytery who may be appropriate to serve as liaisons to the victim, the accuser, the accused, and the affected congregation(s), and training liaisons for their role when notified of a report of potential sexual misconduct.

### **6.1316 Policy on Response to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct or Minor/Vulnerable Adult Abuse by Ministers**

- A. Known or suspected sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse by a pastor shall be reported to the Peace River Presbytery Stated Clerk per D-10.0103.
- B. In addition to the above, known or suspected sexual misconduct involving children shall be reported to civil authorities.

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- C. A written complaint to the Stated Clerk alleging sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse by a minister member of the Presbytery subjects that pastor to any Committee on Ministry policy on administrative leave in effect. (A recommended policy will be provided by the Committee on Ministry.)
- D. Allegations of sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse should be made as promptly as possible. The ability of the Presbytery to respond quickly and justly to sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse is related in part to the opportunity to receive allegations and to gather evidence soon after the occurrence. This policy, however, recognizes the special problems sometimes related to the discovery and recognition of certain forms of sexual misconduct. For example, child sexual abuse may not be recognized until the victim of abuse reaches the age of awareness or recognition, or fear may deter a victim from coming forward. Therefore, reports of certain forms of sexual misconduct may be delayed for many years. Reports should be taken seriously and responded to appropriately, even if a period of time has elapsed before the report is made.
- E. Importance of Confidentiality: Allegations of sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse should never be taken lightly or disregarded or allowed to circulate without concern for the well-being, integrity, and reputation of the accuser, the accused, and the Church. Allegations should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality, before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities.
- F. Role of Sexual Misconduct or Minor/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Response: In responding to accusations of sexual misconduct, the Church should seek healing and assure the protection of all persons. Where possible within the limits of the process contemplated under this policy, the privacy of all persons involved should be respected. The *Book of Order* assures all persons of fair procedures in the disciplinary process, and all persons involved should be informed of these procedures at the outset.

When the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery receives a verbal report or a written statement of an alleged offense, the Stated Clerk shall immediately notify the Chair of the Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Response Team.

A fundamental principle in responding to an accusation of sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse is to ensure that the actions of the Sexual Misconduct Response Team promote and enhance the process of reconciliation and healing by effectively supporting those affected, without compromising or disrupting (1) any investigation by civil authorities and due process or (2) inquiry or judicial process that may be undertaken by the governing body.

### 6.1317 Glossary of Terms

**ACCUSED** - The person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is being made.

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**ACCUSER** - The person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy or a person claiming to have been the subject of sexual misconduct by a person covered under this policy.

**ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE** - The temporary removal from office of an accused individual, during which period the person is entitled to personal compensation but not continuing education or professional benefits.

**ADVOCATE** - A person trained by the Response Team in the issues of sexual misconduct and qualified to provide support and emotional and physical presence, to the alleged victim(s) and their family, the accused, family members of the accused, or the congregation involved in a sexual misconduct case. The advocate also provides clarification of the investigative process of the church and the judicial process of the church to the person(s) with whom (s)he works. The role of an advocate is not to speak for the party for whom (s)he is advocating but to inform that party of his or her rights within the investigative process. The advocate shall not give advice regarding civil remedies. When requested by the party for whom she or he is advocating, the advocate may accompany that person to meetings of Presbytery entities when that party is testifying.

**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE** - Includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a person under 18 years of age (a minor) and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. Such behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** - The withholding of information from all those except those who need to know as determined by the Sexual Misconduct Response Team.

**MANDATED REPORTER** - Refer to Book of Order G-4.0302. Florida law defines mandated reporters as all persons having knowledge of or reasonable cause to suspect abuse.

**MINOR** – A minor is any child or youth between the ages of 0 to 17 years old.

**RESPONSE** - The action taken by the governing body or entity when an accusation of sexual misconduct is received. The Presbytery should respond swiftly and justly to allegations of sexual misconduct. The response has two dimensions: 1) a pastoral response and 2) a judicial or disciplinary response. Both are key elements in accomplishing the goals of justice and compassion.

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT** - A misuse of authority and power which breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantage of another for sexual pleasure in an abusive, exploitative and unjust manner. Even if someone else initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is always the responsibility of the member or officer of the Presbytery to maintain the professional role.

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT RESPONSE TEAM** - The Sexual Misconduct Response Team is responsible for 1) regular education about the Presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy and training about Sexual Misconduct and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Prevention and 2) providing a pastoral response for those affected by allegations of sexual misconduct or minor/vulnerable adult abuse.

**VULNERABLE ADULT** – Any person 18 years old or older without the cognitive capacity to consent.

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**WORKER**—Any adult who serves as a volunteer or a paid staff person given the responsibility of working with minors or vulnerable adults during Presbytery sponsored events.

**6.1320 Continuing Education Policy.** Education has traditionally been stressed by Presbyterians. An educated clergy is the hallmark of our church. Education does not stop with graduation exercises and the conferring of a degree. Rather it is a continuing process in the life of the pastor. A part of the call to pastors serving in the Presbytery of Peace River is the provision for a minimum of two (2) weeks study leave each year, along with financial support for the study time.

### Pastor's Continuing Education Guidelines

A. Introduction. These guidelines for pastor's continuing education planning are based on several assumptions:

- (1) That the ministry is both a vocation and a profession. As a vocation, it is a response to God's call for an individual to use his/her gifts in service to God's people. As church professionals, pastors have a specialized body of knowledge that they apply in specific ways to address particular human needs. That this body of knowledge and its application is not static but continues to grow and develop.
- (2) That seminary is simply the beginning of professional training. Its purpose is to equip pastors with the tools for a lifetime of continuing professional development.
- (3) That it is the responsibility of a professional to continually update his/her professional expertise that s/he might service his/her constituents better.
- (4) That continuing education is to enhance ministerial skills and the understanding of the Christian faith.
- (5) Planning is helpful and positive to a pastor. It is, however, something that is a part of the ministry and should not be substituted for continuing education.

B. It is for these reasons that ministerial calls in Peace River Presbytery include minimums of both time and money for professional continuing education (see latest Presbytery minimum terms of call). These guidelines are intended to assist both pastors and governing bodies in using these resources wisely.

C. Sessions are encouraged to consider providing similar provisions for Certified Christian Educator and other program staff.

D. Guidelines for Continuing Education

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1. General Guidelines. Pastors are encouraged to consult their session, personnel committees, or other governing authority in discerning the general areas in which their continuing education resources might best be spent. The pastor should schedule continuing education in coordination with the session.

Both pastors and churches are encouraged to respect time away. Calls back to the church to see how things are going or consulting with the pastor who is away are discouraged. Pastors and sessions are encouraged to review their administrative procedures so as to ensure the church is able to continue to function smoothly with the pastor away. Similarly, provisions for providing normal pastoral care should be made during the pastor's absence for Continuing Education so that she or he need not have to be called.

2. Expected Outcomes. The goal of professional continuing education is to equip the individual to serve the congregation and the church at large more effectively. Pastors and their governing bodies are encouraged to discover ways in which new knowledge gained through continuing education might be put to use in the life of the church or organization. Some examples of the ways professional continuing education might benefit the church include:

- (a) Improvement of specific ministerial skills such as preaching, administration, counseling, conflict mediation, spiritual guidance, etc. so as to be a better overall leader.

- (b) Increased spiritual maturity and commitment to Christ so as to better lead the congregation in following God's call.

- (c) Increased understanding of the Scriptures, Christian history and practice, theology, etc. so as to be a better preacher and teacher.

- (d) Development of some new, innovative program, mission, outreach, service, or other form of new mission/ministry direction.

- (e) First hand interpretation of foreign or national mission programs so as to better interpret these programs and encourage greater commitment to mission in general.

- (f) Improvement of skills in cultivating diversity, inclusiveness, tolerance and openness within the church or organization.

N. Continuing Education includes the following:

- (a) Formal workshops, seminars, and other events sponsored by

- i. accredited bodies of higher learning

- ii. governing bodies of the church, and

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iii. other recognized and approved institutions (hospitals, American Association of Pastoral Counselors, etc.).

(b) Courses of study leading to further professional degrees (M.A., D. Min., Ph.D., etc.)

(c) Travel that is specifically study oriented (see above).

(d) Time at a spiritual retreat center or time in solo retreat under the guidance of a spiritual director.

(e) A disciplined, systematic, self-directed reading program developed in conjunction with the session, personnel committee, or other governing body.

O. Uses of Resources. While all clergypersons are encouraged to make maximum use of their continuing education resources, time away in excess of that agreed upon in the call must be approved by the session or other governing body.

Pastors anticipating the need for additional Continuing Education money in any given year will want to have this reflected at the time the call is approved for the year so as to avoid having to pay tax on this amount.

Continuing Education time or money not spent in a calendar year must be returned to the church budget unspent unless accumulated for use in a previously negotiated longer period of leave.

(5) Travel. While travel can be enlightening, educational and culturally satisfying, a travel event that is equivalent of a vacation for a layperson is not an appropriate form of Continuing Education. Travel that is part of one's ministry or which clearly enhances one's work is acceptable.

While traveling with, or conducting an organized tour should normally be considered as vacation time, exceptions might be considered for tours to such places as the Holy Land, if clear goals and benefits related to one's ministry can be reviewed and approved by the session.

P. Accumulated Study Leave. Continuing Education time and funding may be accrued up to six (6) weeks over a three (3) year period when it has been contracted in advance between the minister and the session. They are encouraged to plan this time away carefully in terms of 1) the minister's study plans, and 2) the continuing well being of the church (i.e., pulpit supply, pastoral care, program supervision, etc.).

Continuing Education time not used at the end of a pastoral dissolution will not be compensated. Also, Continuing Education expenses may not be paid except as actually used for an approved event.

**6.1330 Study Leave (Sabbatical) Program Guidelines.** The purpose of the STUDY LEAVE (SABBATICAL) PROGRAM is to provide, in cooperation with the session of the congregations an opportunity for full-time pastors and Certified Christian Educators to spend three months away from the parish. It is envisioned that the pastor or Certified Christian Educator would use his/her two weeks of continuing education time, and an

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additional ten weeks granted by his/her session to increase pastoral skills in a setting free from the demands of the parish. This three month sabbatical should not include the annual month-long vacation time. It is hoped that this same study leave program would be available to full-time church professionals serving in a non-parish setting.

At the end of the study leave the pastor/Certified Christian Educator would return to the church family renewed by the extended absence from routine congregational pressures and by new insights and skills gained during the leave. It is hoped that this will enable church professionals to discover a newness in their professional life that some seek by changing positions, even though they do not feel a need to move otherwise. Guidelines:

A. Sessions would approve the participant's leave of absence and would continue to pay his/her salary during the study leave time. Sessions would give guidance and suggestions regarding the content of the study leave.

B. Study leave participants will be expected to apply their annual continuing education funds toward the cost of the study leave.

C. To qualify, participants would have completed 5-7 years of continuing service to their parish and would agree to continue at least one additional year after the study leave before taking another call.

D. It is expected that all participants will provide a written evaluatory report both to his/her session and to the Committee on Ministry.

**6.1340 Parental and Family Leave Guidelines.** The celebration, nurture, and encouragement of the family take place in many ways and on many levels in the life of a church. During times of joy and times of sadness the congregation has the opportunity and the responsibility of extending care for the pastor and the pastor's family.

The addition of children to a family is a gift and blessing of God. In the case of childbearing or adoption, the church should recognize and accommodate its special needs as it would any major illness. Specifically, the pastor, associate pastor or Certified Christian Educator would fulfill all normal duties until the physician decides to limit the person's normal activities, and would resume duties after the arrival of the child as the physician prescribes. While under the physician's care, all terms of the contract including salary, housing, and benefits, but excluding travel expenses and allowance, would continue without interruption. The session is responsible to assume and implement the ongoing work of the church during the person's time of limited activity.

The following guidelines are recommended by Peace River Presbytery to aid in conversations between session and pastor or Certified Christian Educator. An agreement may be negotiated at the time of call or as need arises.



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**6.1341 Parental Leave.** When Christian parents give birth to or adopt a child, the celebration is shared by the whole family of faith. Timing, duration, and compensation of parental leave shall be mutually agreed upon between pastor and session. Congregations are encouraged to provide:

- (1) Maternity leave: An eight week minimum following birth of a child.
- (2) Paternity leave: A four week minimum following the arrival of a child.
- (3) Adoptive leave: A four week minimum following the arrival of a child.

**6.1342 Family Leave.** Family leave is appropriate in life altering circumstances wherein the pastor is called upon by reason of major life trauma or serious illness to be the primary caregiver for the pastor's spouse, child, parent, sibling, or other family member for whom the pastor bears primary responsibility. Timing, duration, and compensation of family leave shall be mutually agreed upon between pastor and session, but congregations are encouraged at a minimum to provide full salary and benefits for up to four weeks. Other salary arrangements may be negotiated to extend the leave beyond the initial period. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

- (1) The pastors shall give their Sessions as much advance notice of the need for the Parental leave as possible, but ordinarily no less than 60 days.
- (2) Pastors upon utilizing family leave shall discuss with their sessions how best to schedule "re-entry" at the close of the leave.
- (3) The Committee on Ministry should be informed when a Parental or Family Leave option is exercised by a pastor. The Committee on Ministry will provide consultation if asked.
- (4) The expectation is that the pastor will return to service.
- (5) The session ought not to feel over-burdened by monetary considerations in negotiating leave. If a church desires to be supportive and generous, the Presbytery shall seek to assist the congregation when necessary to provide pulpit supply and pastoral services.

### 6.1350 Compensation Guidelines/Terms of Call

These compensation guidelines should not be interpreted as tax advice. For answers to specific tax questions, please seek the advice of a competent tax advisor. Please refer to the Internal Revenue Code Regulations (especially IRS Publication 517). For questions concerning the Benefits Plan, please contact the Board of Pensions directly (see especially the Board of Pensions **Benefits Administrative Handbook** and **Understanding Effective Salary**). An excellent book on the subject of how taxes influence clergy compensation is **Church & Clergy Tax Guide** by Richard R. Hammar (Attorney and Certified Public Accountant).

### **DIRECT COMPENSATION**

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**Line 1: Annual cash salary** refers to cash compensation (payroll) paid directly to the minister on a regular basis (monthly or weekly), salary supplements, and severance payments. Each year the Presbytery issues minimum compensation guidelines that apply to all pastoral positions. Annually market conditions are reviewed to identify qualifying markets that can be guided by an alternate minimum compensation at 20% less than the standard minimum. To qualify the market must fall in the lowest quartile of Peace River Presbytery markets in two of the following three criteria: 1) per capita income, 2) cost of living and 3) median home price. Churches wishing to offer terms of call under the alternate minimum compensation guidelines shall disclose their financial condition to the Committee on Ministry with justification for using the alternate minimum.

**Line 2: Housing allowance** refers to the amount designated annually by the session or employing organization in advance of payment. It includes the actual costs of housing for a minister. Expenses that can be tax sheltered include: utilities, maintenance expenses, household furnishings, cleaning and repair supplies. For those not living in a manse, the following can also be included: mortgage principal and interest, real estate taxes, house and flood insurance. Utility expenses should be included in the housing allowance and are used to cover the cost of utilities for a manse, as well as a home being rented or purchased by the minister. However, if the manse utilities are in the name of the church and paid directly by the church, they are NOT included on this line. The housing allowance is based on anticipated housing expenses, not based on a percentage of salary. For IRS purposes, the amount considered as housing allowance must be designated by the session in advance of payment. The minister must keep strict records to show it was all used for housing. Only that portion actually spent for housing expenses may be claimed.

According to the IRS clarification to questions regarding Ministers' Compensation and Housing Allowance: *"If you receive as part of your salary (for services as a minister) an amount officially designated (in advance of payment) as a housing allowance, and the amount isn't more than reasonable pay for your services, you can exclude from gross income the lesser of the following amounts:*

- *the amount officially designated (in advance of payment) as a housing allowance;*
- *the amount actually used to provide or rent a home; or*
- *the fair market rental value of the home (including furnishings, utilities, garage, etc.).*

*If your congregation furnishes housing in kind as pay for your services as a minister instead of a housing allowance, you may exclude the fair market rental value of the housing from income, but you must include the fair market rental value of the housing in net earnings from self-employment for self-employment tax purposes." Response to Publication 517 question, Help and Resources Study 1545-1432. Should the church provide a manse, please see the footnote at the end of this section and consult with COM.*

If the housing allowance is overestimated at the beginning of the year, it can be adjusted downward when the minister files a Form 1040 at the end of the tax year. But, it cannot be adjusted upward if it was underestimated at the beginning of the tax year. Any unused portion is subject to income tax. Therefore, it is better to slightly overestimate the portion of compensation designated as Housing Allowance on this form. Housing allowances are subject to SECA Taxes.

FOOTNOTE: Fair rental value of a manse is defined as what the open market would charge for rent in similar accommodations. The church should pay all manse utilities (reported under housing allowance on Line 2 unless the

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manse utilities are in the name of the church and paid directly by the church). For Board of Pensions purposes, the fair rental value of the manse should be at least 30% of Lines 1-5.

**Line 3: Deferred income** includes tax-sheltered annuities, IRS 403(b) Plans, Keogh and Retirement Savings Plans, housing equity allowances for ministers living in manses, and other forms of funded or unfunded arrangements. The Presbytery recommends that churches set a housing equity allowance for those ministers living in a manse. Churches should consult with the Board of Pensions concerning the legal requirements of setting up a housing equity allowance.

**Line 4: Special Income** refers to Board of Pensions optional dental or life insurance, supplemental medical or disability insurance (in addition to the Benefits Plan of the Board of Pensions). This line also refers to unvouchered or lump sum allowances which are not paid through an IRS Accountable Reimbursement Plan (such as unvouchered or lump sum book, auto, study or professional expense allowances), a down payment grant for the purchase of a house, savings from low-interest or no-interest loans (not principals), student loan repayments, year-end and other bonuses, any other gift from the church (not gifts from private donors or honoraria), personal auto insurance, and insurance premiums for any other additional insurance coverage provided for individuals (premiums for group coverage are not included).

**Line 5: Other Income** includes all forms of compensation not otherwise covered on Lines 1-4, including salary reduction contributions to IRS Section 125 Flexible Spending Plans (“Cafeteria” plans), medical deductibles and coinsurance payments not paid through a group benefit plan (such as an IRS Section 105 Medical Reimbursement Plan). If an allowance is provided to reimburse Social Security tax obligations, any amount in excess of 50% of the minister’s SECA tax obligation (the “second half” of SECA tax) must be included on this line (see Line 8 below).

If a decision is made to pay auto allowance as a lump sum rather than through an accountable reimbursement plan, then that compensation is subject to Board of Pensions dues and is listed on line 5.

**Line 6: Total Effective Salary** is the sum of Lines 1-6. Total Effective Salary is the amount subject to Board of Pensions dues. Dues are required for all installed positions.

**Line 7: Board of Pensions Dues** vary according to the situation; installed full-time or part-time, non-retired or honorably retired, or position vacancy. Refer to the Board of Pensions dues calculator to model medical, pension and death and disability dues: <http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/Calculators/Pages/Dues-Calculator.aspx>

Our guidance to churches is that Temporary Pastors are “holding a place” for a called pastor and active pastors should be compensated according to 6.1412, currently 37% of Effective Salary for BOP dues. Should the Temporary Pastor be HR and the BOP dues are 12%, then liaisons should remind churches that the full 37% will again be needed when a pastor is called.

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**Line 8: Self-Employment Contributions Act Allowance** be offered to help offset the SECA tax obligation of the clergy, who are classified by the IRS as “self-employed” for Social Security taxes. The Presbytery recommends up to 50% of the minister’s SECA tax obligation (7.65% of Lines 1+2+4+5+6). **This is not part of the Total Effective Base Salary and is not subject to Pension Dues, but it is subject to Federal Income Taxes.** Compensation paid beyond 50% of the minister’s SECA tax obligation should be reported on Line 5 and is subject to Board of Pension Dues. All compensation for this purpose is subject to both income tax and social security tax.. For Certified Christian Educators and Associate Certified Christian Educators, the employer’s share of FICA is paid by the church.

**ACCOUNTABLE REIMBURSEMENT PLAN (vouchered expenses):** The IRS allows ministers to establish Accountable Reimbursement Plans with their employing churches which will exclude items from tax consideration which are paid in reimbursement for vouchered expenses. These items are not subject to Board of Pension dues. The items below should be included in an Accountable Reimbursement Plan. See Richard Hammar’s **Church & Clergy Tax Guide** for details on how to establish an Accountable Reimbursement Plan which meets IRS rules. See especially Internal Revenue Code Reg. 1.162-17 and 1.274-5(e)(2).

**Line 9: Automobile** expenses must be either (A) vouchered and reimbursed at the current IRS per mile rate, or (B) a church-owned car with full expenses provided. Line 9 should record the amount budgeted by the church to reimburse the minister or to pay the expenses of operating a church owned vehicle. Accurate records of mileage or auto costs should be kept by the minister and reported to the church treasurer. Minimum automobile allowance is full reimbursement at the current IRS per mile rate, or a car with full expenses provided.

FOOTNOTE: The preference of the Committee on Ministry is for options (A) or (B) above. However, some pastors may have been accustomed to receiving automobile allowance as a lump sum paid on a regular basis. If this option is chosen, the church’s budget figure would be reported on line 5 above. The pastor is still responsible for keeping accurate records of mileage and auto costs for IRS purposes.

**Line 10: Continuing education allowance** includes such items as tuition, room, board, travel to study events, and should be reimbursed as spent by the minister. This cannot be paid on a monthly or lump sum basis. **Minimum continuing education allowance** is \$1,500. Continuing education funds may be accumulated up to three years by prior arrangement.

**Line 11: Book allowance** includes such items as books and subscriptions to magazines.

**Line 12: Professional expense allowance** (optional) includes such items as supplies, business meals, etc.

**Line 13: Medical** “IRS Section 105 Plan reimbursements only” refers to a specific plan in the IRS Code which is an optional benefit allowed by the IRS. This plan provides a method whereby specifically defined categories of medical expenses can be paid by the church and excluded from the minister’s Federal Income and Social Security Taxes. These categories could include the medical deductibles and coinsurance payments (medical expenses not covered by the Major Medical Plan of the Board of Pensions), optional dental insurance,

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eyeglasses and other expenses as defined in the IRS Code. Care should be exercised in order that churches conform to the strict IRS regulations which govern the IRS Section 105 Plan. Further information about how to set up an IRS Section 105 Plan is available from the Presbytery office.

### **ALSO PROVIDED**

**Vacation** should be given in terms of **one month** (not four weeks). The time, whether taken together, or broken into smaller segments, must be approved by the session. **Minimum vacation leave** is one month per year.

Minimum **Study Leave** is two weeks per year.

**Other** covers such areas as moving expenses (an accountable reimbursable expense) and maternity benefits.

**Maternity Benefits:** Eight weeks leave or its equivalent at full compensation. If further leave beyond eight weeks is required for medical reasons, such leave should be granted on a compensation arrangement worked out between the church professional and the session based on what would be comparable to an employee on extended disability.

### **OTHER PERSONNEL ISSUES:**

**Annual Review** of the adequacy of the ministerial compensation package shall be conducted by the session (See G-2.0804). Evaluation resources are available from the Committee on Ministry.

**Parental and Family Leave** Refer to 6.1340.

**Pulpit Supply** for a minister leading worship and preaching for a congregation should ordinarily receive no less than \$175 for one service and \$225 for two services, plus mileage.

**Honoraria:** Session moderators (other than members of the Committee on Ministry) of churches without installed pastors, stated supplies or interim pastors should be paid an honorarium of \$75.00 per meeting of the session plus mileage. Sessions without pastors are reminded that the Form of Government (G-11.0502f and G-14.0513) requires churches to meet with the Committee on Ministry and with its aid, advice and consent secure the services of temporary supplies and interim pastors.

**Pastor Nominating Committee Expenses:** Ministers preaching for a PNC shall have their expenses (travel, lodging, meals, etc.) reimbursed by the PNC, not the “neutral pulpit” church.

**Part-time Positions** are subject to the Presbytery Minimum Compensation Guidelines. All part-time position descriptions will specify what proportion of full-time the position requires. (Example: a half-time position must be compensated at 50% of the full-time minimum.)

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**Personnel Committee:** It is strongly recommended that each session have a Personnel Committee to review not only the adequacy of the compensation package but also to conduct a performance review. Resources on personnel policies and committees are available from the Presbytery office.

**Church Educators:** Certified Christian Educators have passed all certification requirements as specified in G-2.1103a and have been certified by the General Assembly Certification Council. Associate Certified Christian Educators have passed requirements at the associate level. Each year the Presbytery issues minimum compensation guidelines that apply to Certified Christian Educators.

**Other considerations for Certified and Associate Christian Educators:** Board of Pension Dues or a mutually accepted agreement between educator and session regarding major medical and pension benefits, Auto Allowance, Continuing Education Allowance and Leave, and Vacation (same as clergy).

### 6.1360 **Triennial Visits—Replaced in 2020 with the Congregational Advocate Program (see 6.1365).**

Triennial Visits are planned to establish a relationship and conversation between Presbytery and its sessions and Pastors, to listen and discuss mission and ministry of a particular congregation, and to encourage full participation in the life of the larger church.

### 6.1361 Plan:

1. **Three-year cycle:**  
All churches will be visited by the Committee on Ministry based upon a three-year cycle. The schedule will also allow for additional consultation and assistance from Committee on Ministry for churches facing extraordinary challenges. Additionally, an effort will be made to balance the workload across the clusters.
2. **Participation:**  
The triennial model will use a first-year review workshop within the first year of a new pastorate. For all continuing pastorates there will be a three-year rotation schedule. The regular triennial consultations shall involve a meeting with the pastor(s), clerk of session, 2-3 elders and 2 members of Committee on Ministry.
3. **Three meeting segments:**  
The visit should be staged to allow three separate exchanges: the Committee on Ministry members to visit privately with the pastor(s) to focus on pastoral questions below, the Committee on Ministry members to visit privately with the elders, and the Committee on Ministry members, pastors and elders together. When multiple pastors are on staff the Committee on Ministry members will meet separately with each pastor.
4. **Assessment report:**  
After the Triennial Visit, the Committee on Ministry team will prepare a one page report that summarizes the following: overall health assessment, mission goals (it is noted that the goals may require further dialogue between the church and Committee on Ministry team), current strengths and weaknesses. The report would be distributed to all Committee on Ministry members and to the church's session members along with the 10-year Statistical Report from PCUSA and the Executive Version of Mission Insite. (the data reports would be the same as provided to the small group of elders involved in the Triennial visit; see below).

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5. Follow-up activity:

If the Triennial Visit reveals warning signals, a customized plan should be developed for the church with appropriate interventions planned. The following may be considered for intervention, launching a change effort or facilitating implementation: conduct a first-year review workshop, follow-up visits with Pastor, Session and/or selected elders, organize a Learning Community.

**6.1362** Preparing for the Triennial Visit. Triennial visit members should go to the meeting equipped with the following, as applicable to the church:

1. Pastor(s) name(s), with their installation dates, and list of Session members that will be participating in the visit.
2. The church's previous written report on the Triennial Visit (will not be available until after the initial 3-year cycle.)
3. The church's year-end financial report (from the church or PRP).
4. 10-year Statistical Report from PCUSA.
5. MissionInsite Reports – [www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com) - (PRP's Agency # is E8YOR) – At this point, create Personal login and password.
6. Resources available to church on PRP's website. [www.peaceriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org)
7. Committee on Ministry participants may bring additional resources available through PRP.

### Questions:

It is anticipated that these questions will be used as discussion starters and may lead to the more specific questions that follow. The pastoral questions can be used to start the dialogue for the private discussion with the pastor(s).

1. In terms of ministry and programs, what are you excited about?
2. What are the questions you are asking yourselves?
3. What do you see as the most pressing issue/problem/concern in the life of your church?
4. What are the strengths, programs and emphases upon which you wish to keep building for the next three years? (The session may not be prepared to answer this question during the visit. If appropriate, a timeframe should be established for follow-up.)
5. Additional questions may address topics such as evangelism, long range planning, budgeting, officer training and community outreach.

### Pastoral questions

1. In actual breakdown of time, energy and thought, is your ministry to this church in balance? Are your intended goals for ministry being realized in this congregation, or are the goals achieved different from your intentions?
2. What is the wonderful side of ministry with this church? What is the not so wonderful?
3. Are your financial needs being met? Over the long and short hauls, are your spiritual and physical needs being met? Your need for renewal?
4. How does the program of this church meet what you hoped it could?
5. You support a great many people. Are there people from whom you draw support? Are they readily available to you when you need them?

**6.1363** First Year Review Workshop Purpose. To name the expectations, affirm the experiences, and appreciate the hopes that the PNC, the pastor, the session, and COM have for the church as the

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pastor

begins his/her ministry as pastor/head of staff, and as the church moves into God's future. Two different models are available for adaptation to the situation; Great Expectations and From Gratitude to Hope. Both are outlined below.

### Great Expectations:

Part I Table groups (Interview Conversations) – every table has both PNC and session members. Directions:

1. Table Group –need a timekeeper, recorder, reporter.
2. Pair Interviews - Turn to person at your table -- Take 10 minutes each to interview each other by asking the other all 4 questions.
3. Switch – 10 minutes.
4. Note: when you return to the Table Group you will be asked to introduce each other to the table group sharing.
  - a. Name, current role, number years of service, and their hometown or Presbytery.
  - b. One highlight from the interview.

### Question 1:

(Opening - we are in this together) Share what excited you or attracted you about your initial invitation (call) to serve.

- on the session
- or come as pastor
- on the PNC
- What keeps you here?

### Question 2:

(High Point) – Looking back over the past 3 years, what has been a high point, a time when you felt most alive, most inspired. What was it about that experience that made it a high point? Who was involved? Tell a story.

### Question 3:

(Core Factors) - As you think about what it takes to be a faithful, healthy, growing, vibrant, alive, and spiritually and emotionally mature congregation, what are some of the core factors (life-giving forces) that will allow that to emerge at your church?

### Question 4:

(Futuring) – If you were given three wishes to improve the health and vitality of this pastor- people-session-congregation-presbytery partnership, what would they be? (Write down on 3x5 cards).

Part II Questions discussed in PNC and Session table groups.



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- 1) What has surprised you since pastor began? What has gone well? Where have there been bumps in the road?
- 2) PNC/Session- What are your top three expectations of your pastor during their first year at the church? How is it going?

Pastor - What were your top three expectations during your first year at the church? How is it going?

- 3) PNC/Session - When (not if) your pastor does something (or fails to do something) which bothers you or disappoints you, what will you do? (Most people say they will talk it over with the pastor. So, the follow up question is: If talking to the pastor about your concerns does not resolve the issue, what should you do next? What is not helpful from your perspective?)

Pastor - When (not if) a member of session does something (or fails to do something) which bothers you or disappoints you, what will you do? And when you do something that is of a concern to a member of the session, how do you hope they will handle that concern?

What is not helpful from your perspective?

- 4) PNC/Session - What are your three hopes for the church in the next year? What is the pastor's role in that?

Pastor – What are your top hopes for church in the next year? What is your role in that?

- 5) What would you like to see the pastor do more of in the next year? What would you like to see the pastor do less of in the next year? What in your mind is essential for us to remember in the next year?

Pastor – What would you like the session and leadership of the church to do more of in the next year? What would you like to see less of in the next year? What in your mind is essential for us [pastor, session, congregational leadership] to remember in the next year?

- 6) Imagine it is 3 years from now and we have achieved everything we had set out to do during this time, what do you see? What has changed?

From Gratitude to Hope: A Guided Conversation: Introductions – The value of this kind of conversation  
Gratitude – Looking back over the past year what has been a high point(s), a time when you felt inspired, hopeful. What was it about that experience that made it a high point? Who was involved? Tell a story.

Hope – on the threshold of 'something new' – What images, ideas, programs come to mind as you envision (church) doing ministry in the future?

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Getting from here to there – Getting into one promise land is never a straight line (it took the children of Israel 40 years). Key is being aware – always seeking to grow up in Christ, etc.

- What roadblocks, internal and external, could keep us (as a congregation) and pastor from the preferred future?
  - o Attitudinal (e.g. how we make decisions, deal with conflict, exercise power, communicate, etc.)
  - o Externally (e.g. stewardship, resources, community realities, etc.)
  
- What do we – as a session – need in order to discern our new identity and mission and lead into it?
  - o need from ourselves as the session
  
  - o need from our pastor
  
  - o need from the congregation
  
  - o need from the Presbytery
  
- What is it our pastor needs from us? What have we learned over the past 10 years so that our pastor is able to:
  - o do well in this place as our pastor
  
  - o sustain him/herself
  
  - o serve with energy, intelligence, imagination and love

**6.1364** Triennial Visit Invitation Letter. The following letter may be sent in advance of the Triennial Visit to prepare the ministers for the contact.

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee on Ministry (COM) to let you know that this is the year for a triennial visit with (name of church).

Shortly you will be contacted by \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ who are the Committee on Ministry team assigned to your church. They will work with you to schedule a date when the following can take place:

- A meeting between the pastor(s) and COM representatives. (If the church has multiple pastors a COM representative will meet privately with each pastor.)
  
- A meeting involving 2-3 elders, the Clerk of Session and the COM representatives.
  
- A joint meeting of all the parties (the pastor, the elders, Clerk, the COM representatives). Each of these meetings should take about an hour. Discussions will focus on the church's strengths and challenges, its goals for the next three years, as well as any matter of importance to you and/or the Session.

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We look forward to this opportunity to gain an insight into the life and work of the (church).

Sincerely,  
Moderator, Committee on Ministry

### **6.1365** Congregational Advocate Program.

The purpose of this program is to establish and build a relationship between the Presbytery and its sessions and pastors so as to more effectively support the mission and ministry of specific congregations and to encourage more participation in the life of the larger church. It is expected that there will be some variety in the ways found to best build a strong relationship. With 37 churches and 21 COM members, each COM member is assigned 1-2 churches as a Congregational Advocate (CA). A position description for the CA is posted in the COM Tool Kit. The session is asked to select one active Ruling Elder as the primary contact person for the COM person. While a church may focus engagement on the CA, the approach is not meant to preclude interactions with other COM members.

*Revised and approved by COM 10/13/2020*

**6.1370 CALLING ADDITIONAL PASTORS.** When a congregation determines that its strategy for mission under the Word so requires, the congregation may call additional pastors. Such additional pastors shall be called co-pastors or associate pastors, and the duties of each pastor and the relationship between the pastors of the congregation shall be determined by the Session with the approval of the Presbytery. G-2.0504. Congregations preparing for this shall:

1. Define pastoral position

2. Request COM approval of new position

- Session calls a Congregation meeting to consider the addition to the pastoral staff. At that same meeting the Congregation may elect the members of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee.

**6.1380 COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS.** Peace River Presbytery follows the guidance offered in the Book of Order, G-2.10, in commissioning ruling elders to particular pastoral service. A letter will be sent to all churches annually, at mid-year, asking them to update the status of their commissioned ruling elders.

### **6.1390 SHARED GRANTS – BOARD OF PENSIONS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions comprises a range of programs designed to meet specific assistance needs of Presbyterian pastor and other church workers and their spouses with special financial needs or in emergency situations. The need may be extraordinary medical expenses, a family emergency,

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custodial care at home or any number of special situations not covered by the Benefits Plan or insurance. Recipients must be recommended by the Presbytery or the employing organization that is willing to financially share in the grant with the Board.

To be considered for an urgent financial need grant, both the individual needing assistance and the Presbytery or employing organization must complete the written application

The Board will not approve any shared grants that subsidize a presbytery's mission responsibility, substitute for a presbytery's or an employer's support of a terminated church worker, provide moving expenses (except in extreme cases), pay for legal fees, fines, legal penalties, pay for Benefit plan dues.

The presbytery is considered to be the "**Applicant**" for a grant on behalf of one of its minister members or (employed) staff and completes Part I of the application. The Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, or the Committee on Ministry moderator may sign the application for the Presbytery. If designated Peace River Presbytery funds are to be used for the shared grant, the Committee on Ministry shall approve the application. If designated funds are not available the request shall be approved by both the Committee on Ministry and the Trustees. In all cases the Committee on Ministry shall be informed of any shared grant applications.

The person who needs financial assistance is considered the "**Recipient**" (of the Shared Grant) and completes Part II. The person needing financial assistance (or an attorney-in-fact, if the person himself isn't able to sign) will sign the application.

Every Shared Grant application should be accompanied by documentation that will help demonstrate the Recipient's need.

Shared Grants are usually financed on a 50/50 basis between the presbytery sponsoring the grant application and the Board's Assistance Program. There may be instances when the funds for the shared grant come from a congregation or individual who designated the gift to the presbytery for this stated purpose.

### 6.1400 MINISTRY IN TRANSITION

**6.1401 PASTORAL LEADERSHIP TRANSITION SUMMARY.** The Ministry in Transition section is intended to offer guidance for working through a critical time in the life of a congregation. It is intended to assist Committee on Ministry liaisons who will work with sessions, transition teams and Pastor Nominating Committee (PNCs), as well as those leaders in congregation who oversee and implement the transition process.

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**6.1402 CONGREGATIONAL CULTURE.** While each church transition is unique and requires unique responses to its particularities, there are some important broad concepts to understand about nearly all church transition.

Ordinarily transition, those times of leadership change resulting from a pastor leaving because of a new call or retirement, are opportunities for congregations to analyze and assess their ministry and discern where God is calling them to go in the future. Other transitions are related to trauma, disappointment, or conflict, and during these times there needs to be efforts to heal, learn and adjust before moving on.

**6.1403 FOCUS POINTS.** The first reaction during a time of pastoral transition is “Well, we all know what to do – get a new pastor. And the sooner, the better!”

As frustrating as it might seem to our impatient natures, without taking the time to explore to where God might be leading, congregations make decisions *emotionally* first, and *spiritually* second. After an unhappy pastoral relationship, congregations impulsively look for a polar opposite of the last pastor, without ever stopping to understand their role in the difficulties in the ministry; and while style and personality are indeed important, neither may have been at the root of the problem. More commonly however, congregations, after a happy pastoral relationship, impulsively seek a clone of the departed beloved pastor. Initially, such might seem to be a logical conclusion which might make many people happy, but the reality is that such a direction show no real understanding on the changes that have occurred over the time of that successful ministry.

Congregational studies have identified five specific focus points during the transition period:

- A. Heritage,
- B. Mission
- C. Connections
- D. Leadership
- E. Future

Trained interim pastors know many ways to help a congregation handle these tasks and historically the Presbytery has relied nearly exclusively on this model for transition. However, it is recognized that some churches lose momentum during the traditional interim pastorate and under limited and controlled situation the Presbytery is open to exploring new models for effective leadership transition.

Regardless of which transition model is used, when the focus points above are effectively completed, the start-up of a new pastor is enhanced. When the focus points are not completed, the effectiveness of the new ministry is delayed.

**6.1404 DISSOLUTION.** Upon accepting an invitation to candidate for a new call, or at the time a retirement date is planned, the pastor should inform the Committee on Ministry, the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk. In most cases, the process that follows begins.

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- A. Called Meeting of the Session: The session does not act on the dissolution request but calls a congregational meeting to act on the pastor's request, including notice of a termination date. Terms of the present call continue to the termination date.
- B. Congregational Meeting: The resigning pastor cannot moderate this meeting (G-2.0903), and normally invite another teaching elder from the Presbytery to moderate. If necessary, the Committee on Ministry can assist in obtaining a moderator.
- C. Committee on Ministry Meeting: The Presbytery, through the Committee on Ministry, dissolves the pastoral relationship, appoints a liaison, and appoints a moderator of the session, effective the dissolution date.
- D. The Committee on Ministry will ordinarily have an exit interview with every outgoing pastor to gather helpful information for ministering with the particular congregation.
- E. It needs to be determined how the church will provide for a suitable farewell. Often this is the responsibility of a congregational committee appointed by the session. Farewell celebrations should be a time where expressions of appreciation may be made.

Additional dissolution information is found in section 6.1480

It is noted that any Parish Associate positions terminate at the dissolution of the pastor relationship.

**6.1405 TRANSITION ORIENTATION.** As soon as possible the Committee on Ministry liaison and General Presbyter should meet with the session. The incumbent pastor, if continuing in service, should not attend the meeting but appoint a *moderator pro tempore* to preside. The goals for this meeting are to get to know one another, to outline what the transition period will entail, to explore temporary/interim pastoral options, to discuss how to break the ties with the incumbent pastor, to consider the establishment of a transition team, to establish an initial timeline, and to draw up a list of assignments needing immediate attention, chief among these is often the need for determining the immediate next steps in pastoral service.

The "Separation Ethics: When Pastor and Congregations Say Goodbye", section 6.1484, shall be reviewed with the session, the pastor and the congregation.

**6.1406 TRANSITION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES.** Sessions may find it helpful to appoint a Transition Team to assist the session, the congregation, and the Committee on Ministry during a pastoral transition. The following responsibilities may be appropriate but circumstances will vary materially among churches.

- A. Work with session, the congregation, and the Committee on Ministry to identify issues that require special attention, e.g. pulpit supply, pastoral care, etc. Work with the Committee on Ministry to identify a moderator for session or congregational meetings in the event that a temporary pastor relationship has not been finalized. The Committee on Ministry chair and Stated Clerk or General Presbyter may appoint moderators in emergency situations to later be affirmed by action of the Committee on Ministry.
- B. Develop and present names to session for an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee. The Personnel Committee, or any other group designated by session, can also accomplish this step.

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- C. Prepare data for the Ministry Information Form (MIF) to be used in the Interim Pastor search.
- D. Review with the session and the congregation “Separation Ethics: When Pastor and Congregations Say Goodbye”.
- E. Make recommendations for appropriate recognition of the retiring or departing pastor.

**6.1407 PASTORAL SERVICE.** The *Book of Order* (G-3.0201a) assigns the responsibility for the continuation of pastoral service during this time to the session. The *Book of Order* defines all non-installed pastoral relations as temporary pastoral relationships (G-2.0504b). COM will assist the session in determining the best immediate course of action as well as strategy for a longer term.

Normally, COM encourages a move to interim ministry which is meant for a church without a pastor but actively engaged in seeking a new pastor. This is a relationship between the session and pastor, and must be approved by the Presbytery, through COM. See section below for comparison of temporary pastoral relationships.

In cases where the vacancy was anticipated due to retirement and the church has been stable or growing, it is possible that the interim ministry focus points may be completed while the incumbent is in continuing service. Consideration of the church’s readiness for an adaptive transition model will be done in conjunction with the session and COM. Among the guidelines to be considered will be: outgoing pastor retiring after at least seven years of service, previous three years have shown positive or stable metrics in membership, worship attendance, financial receipts and annual budgets, indebtedness, staff turnover. Additionally, that the qualitative factors of theological awareness, spiritual engagement and system dynamics are all healthy. As part of the readiness review, the congregation shall participate in a mission study process prior to the beginning of the succession planning.

COM will work with the session to determine the most advantageous approach for the congregation. Depending on the timing and availability, often this process can be concluded so that there is no gap between the end of the departing pastor’s tenure and the commencement of the interim (or temporary pastor) or the arrival of the newly installed pastor. However, where this is not the case, the session has the responsibility to determine worship leadership. The Peace River Presbytery staff is able to provide contact information for pastors who are available on Sunday mornings to assist with pulpit supply. Ordinarily a representative of the COM or the General Presbyter should be asked to fill the pulpit on the Sunday after the pastor leaves in order to share with the congregation the steps involved in the pastor search process and to nurture the partnership with the Presbytery in the process.

### **Preparing for the Adaptive Transition – Assessment of Church Readiness**

Churches wishing to be considered for the adaptive transition model may use the following outline to guide their work.

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- A. Pastor/Discernment Team:** Prepare a church readiness report addressing the following to share with the Committee on Ministry in seeking approval for following the adaptive transition model.
- B. Quantifiable Metrics:**
1. Length of current pastoral call
  2. Trend in membership (3 years)
  3. Trend in worship attendance (3 years)
  4. Trend in financial receipts (3 years)
  5. Annual budget
  6. Current indebtedness
  7. Staff turnover in last 3 years
- C. Qualitative Factors:**
1. Theological awareness
  2. Spiritual engagement
  3. System dynamics (caring relationships)
  4. Intentional Evangelism
- D. If approved by COM, next step: Establish a Transition Team to do the following:**
1. Review with Session the transition options and the adaptive transition being considered.
  2. Develop relationship with Committee on Ministry
  3. Provide ongoing communication with congregation and involve the congregation in a self-study process as a component of a mission study
  4. Deliberate on the five focus points below and document findings to be shared with congregation and the Committee on Ministry prior to approval to establish a Pastor Nominating Committee.
  5. As the pastoral transition is completed it would be wise to plan a workshop to evaluate the completion of the interim focus points. A workshop outline is available in the Committee on Ministry tool kit which can be found on the Peace River website.
- E. Five Focus Points During Transition:** *These are the tasks that would normally be the central focus of an interim pastor call.*
1. Heritage – clear picture of congregation’s shared past and its ongoing meaning
  2. Mission – how core values and identity of the church shape the future work of the church; may include vision and mission statements and tactical plans
  3. Connections – discussion of the network of relationships the congregation has; denomination, groups within the community, communications and technology connections.
  4. Leadership – identifying the leadership (lay and ordained) that is needed for the congregation’s mission and a plan to develop that leadership intentionally
  5. Future – future orientation for the congregation’s core values, with openness to how God is using their heritage and mission to call them to new things.

### **6.1408 TRANSITIONAL PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS** (formerly Temporary Pastoral Relationships)

Peace River Presbytery has defined these specific temporary pastoral relationships.



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- A. Interim Pastor. An Interim Pastor has responsibilities for worship, pastoral care, Christian education, and administration until a permanent pastor is called. The interim is expected to focus on five focus points.
1. Heritage
  2. Mission
  3. Connections
  4. Leadership
  5. Future
- B. Stated Supply. A Stated Supply is a Teaching Elder appointed by the Presbytery, after consultation with the session, to perform the functions of a pastor in a church which is not seeking an installed pastor or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties. The relation shall be established only by the Committee on Ministry and shall extend for a period not to exceed twelve months at a time. A Stated Supply shall not be reappointed until the Presbytery, through the Committee on Ministry, has reviewed her or his effectiveness. A Stated Supply may, with Committee on Ministry's approval, serve as moderator of the session. A Stated Supply may, with the approval of three-quarters of the members of the Presbytery present and voting, become the church's called and installed pastor.
- C. Associate Stated Supply. Associate Stated Supply is a Teaching Elder appointed by the Committee on Ministry, after consultation with the session, to perform functions of an associate pastor in a church which is not seeking an installed associate pastor or while the associate pastor is unable to perform her or his duties. The relation shall be established only by the Committee on Ministry and shall extend for a period not to exceed twelve months at a time. An Associate Stated Supply shall not be reappointed until the Presbytery, through the Committee on Ministry, has reviewed her or his effectiveness. An Associate Stated Supply may, with the approval of three-quarters of the members of the Presbytery present and voting, become the church's called and installed associate pastor.
- D. Bridge. A Bridge Pastor may be considered to provide pastoral support for a church when a search for a Called Pastor is well along, but an Interim Pastor is not able to continue until the Called Pastor begins. There may also be special situations in which a pastor must step in quickly to provide short term pastoral support until longer term Called or Transitional Pastor support can be arranged. The relation shall be established only by the Committee on Ministry and shall extend for a period not to exceed six months at a time. If a candidate is a member in good standing in Peace River Presbytery, a position description and Terms of Call providing at least the minimum effective salary must be approved. No Cluster interview is required. If the term is six months or less, no reporting is required. If a candidate is not a member of Peace River Presbytery, a position description and Terms of Call, and a COM Cluster Interview are required before approval by COM. Becoming a member of Peace River Presbytery is not required. An approval process for candidates for terms longer than six months will be individually addressed BY COM as needed.

**Transitional** Pastoral Relationships are approved by the Committee on Ministry and do not carry a formal call or installation. Contracts for **Transitional** Pastoral Relationships may be renewed on the contract anniversary date with the approval of the Committee on Ministry. NOTE: A Designated Pastor is NOT a **transitional** pastor

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relationship, but a consideration for a church seeking a new pastor. Additionally, the interim pastor relationship, but a consideration for a church seeking a new pastor. Additionally, the interim pastor is normally the process used during pastoral transitions and the other forms exist only for special needs.

Approved by COM 8/11/2020

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### 6.1409 INTERIM MINISTRY.

Temporary pastoral relationships are explained in G-2.0504 b/c. They are approved by the Committee on Ministry and do not carry a formal call or installation. Titles and terms of service shall be determined by the Committee on Ministry. The term shall not exceed twelve months which is renewable by the Committee on Ministry.

The primary elements of the interim pastor agreement are:

- A. Serve as Moderator of the Session.
- B. Serve as Head of Staff
- C. Become a member of Peace River Presbytery
- D. Not influence the Pastor Nominating Committee in selecting an installed pastor.
- E. Not be a candidate for the position of installed pastor.
- F. Serve for one year, but the covenant may be renewed if necessary with the concurrence of the Session, Interim Pastor and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. This covenant may be terminated upon 30-day written notice by either the Interim pastor or by the Session.
- G. Be accountable to the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry and will provide written reports about their ministry every two months and may participate with this committee and the Session in an evaluation of the ministry in six months.
- H. Assist the Session and the congregation in carrying out the five focus points of interim ministry.
- I. Provide Leadership Training for all church officers.

### 6.1410 Primary Responsibilities of the Interim Pastor will be:

#### (1) Relate to worship by:

- (a) Planning worship in conjunction with the appropriate staff and committee responsible for worship.
- (b) Preaching.
- (c) Providing opportunities, when appropriate, for worship education.
- (d) Officiate at weddings and funerals, and administer Sacraments as agreed with Session.

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### (2) Relate to pastoral care by:

- (a) Visiting the sick, shut-ins, and others desiring pastoral care.
- (b) Being accessible to and providing a confidential presence to those desiring short-term pastoral counseling and possible referral to professional counselors.
- (c) Assisting appropriate congregational groups and persons in providing pastoral care to church members.

### (3) Relate to Christian Education by:

- (a) Teaching courses as negotiated with the committee responsible for Christian Education.
- (b) Serving as a resource for those responsible for Christian Education.
- (c) Assisting in leader development such as officer and teacher training.

### (4) Relate to Administration by:

- (a) Devising and implementing, together with the Session, a plan by which the congregation will study its life and mission, including issues related to finances, personnel and church property.
- (b) Working with committees and other leadership groups and persons to provide for clear communication within the congregation and between congregation and the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- (c) Performing other administrative duties as negotiated with the Session.
- (d) Assisting the Pastor Nominating Committee with method, process, and reports, but will not be involved in the actual selection of the new pastor.

### (5) Goals for the Interim Ministry shall include:

- (a) Maintenance (restoration, if necessary) of a healthy congregational life.
- (b) Continuity and strengthening of leadership.
- (c) Development of a Vision Statement and associated priorities.
- (d) Preparation of the congregation for the arrival of its next installed pastor.

#### 6.1411 Rationale for Interim Not Eligible for Permanent Call

The Book of Order (**G-2.0504**) states that a presbytery, after it has determined its “mission strategy” related to pastoral transitions, may (rather than shall) have a policy that allows an exception to the established norm that interims not be considered for the position of installed pastor.

The COM of Peace River has determined that the “mission strategy” related to churches in transition is that someone called as an “interim pastor” may not be a candidate for the called permanent position. This change

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in the Book of Order means that not all presbyteries will have the same mission strategy, needs, and policies. The following rationale is offered to explain why, in Peace River, interims by their contracts will not become candidates for installed pastor positions. *(Note: this rationale is based on the experience of our COM and congregations, the writings, work and policy statements of the Interim Ministry Network, the PCUSA, several conferences of the UCC, and the Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministers.)*

**Rationale One:** *Interim pastors can enable congregations to deal with their agenda better if they have no vested interest in their own long-range call to that congregation.*

Interim pastors need to help congregational leaders identify key agenda items needing to be addressed at this time. It is essentially impossible for an interim pastor to be objective when the question becomes, “What must I do to get the call here as the installed pastor?”

**Rationale Two:** *Trust that persons will keep their word is essential in covenantal relationships; changing the “rules of the game” may foster distrust of the pastor and the congregational leaders who “changed the rules.”*

When an interim pastor becomes a candidate for the open position, it changes the conditions/agreements upon which the interim pastor was hired for a specific purpose. Usually there has been no general congregational involvement in an interim search process and no congregational vote or concurrence to the call issued by the governing board of the congregation for the interim pastor. Some people may feel betrayed, fooled, or taken advantage of, and distrust may then be part of the climate in which a new long-term relationship will begin.

**Rationale Three:** *Consideration of the interim pastor as a candidate may shortchange the search process.*

When a search/call/nominating committee decides to consider the interim pastor as a candidate, it may shortchange the search process. The focus will likely be on the personality of the interim pastor rather than on an objective definition of what the congregation wants to be in the future and the appropriate skills, strengths and abilities needed in the next pastor. When the search/call/nominating committee decides to find a way to “keep the interim”, they can no longer be objective in the crucial task they are performing on behalf of the congregation.

**Rationale Four:** *It is risky to call an interim pastor when there may be underlying opposition to that individual by persons in the congregation.*

The interim pastor may be liked by many, but usually there will be some persons who do not like the interim pastor for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the interim pastor has had to push, confront, challenge or strongly discourage certain behavior, actions or policies. This may have angered or alienated the interim pastor from some individuals or groups. The anger or hostility can usually be tolerated knowing the interim pastor will one day (not too far in the future) be leaving, but now if the interim pastor is called for a long-term position there will likely be strong opposition and undermining of the interim pastor’s ability to be effective for the long haul.

**Rationale Five:** *It is best to keep clear the contract with the interim pastor as an interim position and not to confuse the issues with considerations of being a candidate for the open pulpit.*

Suppose the interim pastor is considered as a candidate and then is not chosen by the decision-making bodies during the process? It will likely make it extremely difficult for the interim pastor to continue as an effective interim pastor for that congregation. Feelings generated by the interim pastor and those who either

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supported or opposed him/her for the position cannot be easily discarded after a decision has been made.

**Rationale Six:** *The church needs to be fair to all possible candidates and protect the concept of what an intentional interim ministry program can provide for congregations.*

It is not fair to other persons who want to be considered for the open position. The interim pastor will have a decided advantage in the call process. Of course there are probably some exceptions where the interim pastor could indeed be the best possible candidate. However, the attitude that “we are an exception” is really a myth predicated on the false assumption that “there is only one person” that is right for us as our pastor now. There will always be many candidates who can serve the congregation. The search/call/nominating committee needs to be free to screen all interested candidates without the undue, though often unintentional, influence of the interim pastor.

**Rationale Seven:** *Preserving and protecting the role and strengths of a good interim pastor which may be liabilities for a permanent pastor.*

If it is possible for an interim to become a candidate, then the ability of the interim to address the Five Focus Points and deal with troubling issues may be compromised. Interims are trained to serve the interests of a congregation best when they have the competencies and freedom to objectify people and situations in order to do what’s best for the health of the congregation. They must have the unflinching willingness to wade into the midst of trouble sooner rather than later, the radar constantly scanning for “change back” messages, with the predisposition to speak the truth even when they know it will hurt. An interim, because of not wanting to create negative feelings and impressions, may overtly or even unconsciously avoid some of the hard work that needs to occur. That will not serve the “mission strategy” of the Presbytery or the long-term vitality, health, and growth of a congregation.

**Rationale Eight –** *Honoring the interim’s task of building a solid foundation on which the next called pastor can build.*

An interim by nature is to be transitional, bridging the past and the future. However, when an interim becomes a possible candidate, it may be end up being a short-term solution tied more to the last pastor and how the interim compares to him/her, rather than building a strong foundation for the next chapter in the life of the congregation.

### 6.1412 Temporary Pastor Search Steps:

1. When it has been determined that a church will seek a temporary pastor, the session normally will appoint a small search committee of three or four members. It is not required that this committee be elected by the congregation. The Committee on Ministry liaison shall assist this committee in preparing goals and objectives for the ministry, as well as a job description with appropriate compensation.
2. Session establishes a salary range and position description for the Temporary Pastor Nominating Committee (TPNC) to use in recruitment; usually similar to salary of vacated pastor. Ordinarily, a

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temporary pastor is to be paid not less than 90% and not more than 110% of the compensation package paid to the pastor that has just left the church including:

- (1) Salary
  - (2) Housing
  - (3) Board of Pension dues
  - (4) Continuing Education
  - (5) Automobile Allowance
  - (6) Professional Expenses
3. A Ministry Information Form (MIF) can be written for the TPNC to use in the search process to expand on the limited candidate pool that may be available locally. In September 2019, COM re-instated the requirement that all Interim Pastor candidates are required to have Transitional Training.
  4. TPNC (with COM liaison) interview and select finalist for temporary pastor. Should a candidate be selected who is not a PCUSA member, the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk should be consulted for guidance on next steps.
  5. Reference checks are conducted by IPNC to confirm "goodness-of-fit", as well as by the General Presbyter in conversation with the sending Presbytery's General Presbyter.
  6. A sub-committee of COM interviews (can use video-conferencing) the final interim candidate.
  7. TPNC (with COM liaison) negotiates a contract with candidate. If the temporary pastor carries the classification of 'interim' there are additional clauses to be included in the contract.
  8. Temporary pastor finalist meets with COM for interview and approval for membership in the Presbytery. In September 2019, COM re-instated the requirement that all Interim Pastor candidates are required to have Transitional Training.
  9. TPNC makes recommendation to session and session elects temporary pastor.
  10. COM introduces the temporary pastor to the next Stated Presbytery Meeting.
  11. Interim pastor provides, bi-monthly, a written report to COM during their interim period, and attends the interim lunch conversations hosted by COM and the General Presbyter.
  12. The session and temporary pastor, in consultation with the transition team and PNC (if applicable), and COM, establishes a process to: review the accuracy of the mission statement and congregation's self-understanding. Especially as it relates to the calling of a pastor, review the congregation's history, conducts appropriate congregational surveys or mission studies, and communicates in face-to-face gatherings and in written reports, all appropriate learnings and emerging directions to the congregation.

**6.1413 DESIGNATED PASTOR.** The *Book of Order* (G-2.0504a) states that a teaching elder may be installed in a pastoral relationship for a designated term determined by the Committee on Ministry in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.

The Designated Pastor plan is ordinarily used when a church is in significant conflict or in significant economic distress and needs two to four years to address the conflict or the economic problems before a permanent

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pastor is called. A Designated Pastor plan offers a few years for planning a new mission or ministry and can build self-confidence in the church's ability to call a pastor rather than continuing in a stated supply relationship.

Churches often feel that a stated supply relationship is temporary and may be terminated on short notice. The DP plan provides for a 2, 3 or 4 year period of consistent leadership. Because the DP is called and installed, the congregation and the pastor are able to gain a sense of self-assurance in their ministry.

After consultation and approval of the Committee on Ministry, any congregation may call a Designated Pastor. The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and the minister will evaluate each other in a manner similar to the usual process.

The congregation still elects a Pastor Nominating Committee. The difference is the number of ministers whom the PNC will consider. The COM will ordinarily recommend a limited number of pastors.

At any time the Committee on Ministry can recommend, or the PNC may request, that the Designated Pastor plan no longer be pursued and the usual calling procedure be used.

The terms of the call, including the length of time of the contract (two, three or four years) will be agreed upon at the beginning of the term with the COM.

### 6.1414 Designated Pastor Search Steps:

- A. The COM discusses this alternative with the session and secures their agreement to proceed.
- B. A congregational meeting is called to elect a PNC and approve the Designated Pastor process.
- C. The plan is outlined to the congregation; and a PNC is elected.
- D. The Committee on Ministry meets with the PNC to explain its requirements for forms and process, and outlines the suggested time line. PNC completes all these requirements which may include the writing of a Ministry Information Form.
- E. The Committee on Ministry ordinarily provides the PNC with the names of persons whom they have pre-screened and who are interested in a call as a Designated Pastor.
- F. PNC considers these persons. The PNC, Committee on Ministry and the candidate selected agree on terms of call, including the contracted time of the call.
- G. PNC asks session to call a congregational meeting; the congregation hears the report of the PNC and elects the pastor in the usual manner. The COM liaison reports the action of the congregation to the Peace River Presbytery Stated Clerk for PCUSA processing. The pastor is installed in the usual manner.
- H. One year prior to the ending date of the call, the session, the Designated Pastor, and the Committee on Ministry conduct a review of the ministry. If the pastor and the session want to continue the pastoral relationship beyond the agreed upon term, the congregation is asked to join in making a request to continue the relationship either for another specified period of time or to proceed to call the minister as the permanent installed pastor.



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If the relationship is unsatisfactory, normally the contract with the Designated Pastor ends at the agreed upon time. One year prior to the end of the contracted time, the congregation, the minister and the Committee on Ministry meet and agree to discontinue the relationship at the end of the contract period. The pastor will then have up to one year to secure a new call.

### 6.1415 TEMPORARY or DESIGNATED PASTOR CONTRACT

Between \_\_\_\_\_  
(Church)

and \_\_\_\_\_  
Interim Pastor/Stated Supply/Designated – (Circle One)

We, the Session of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Church)

and \_\_\_\_\_ intend to enter into a relationship, with the following characteristics,  
(Teaching Elder)

Effective \_\_\_\_\_ Part-time \_\_\_\_\_ Full-time \_\_\_\_\_ %-time \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month, Day, Year) (Number of hours per week)

\_\_\_\_\_ will be \_\_\_\_\_ for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ months  
(Teaching Elder) (pastoral classification)

with the following remuneration:

<b>DIRECT COMPENSATION</b>		
1	Salary	\$
2	Housing Allowance	\$
3	Deferred Income	\$
4	Special Income	\$
5	Other Income	\$
<b>6</b>	<b>TOTAL EFFECTIVE SALARY</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>BENEFITS</b>		
<b>7</b>	Board of Pensions Dues	\$
<b>8</b>	SECA Reimbursement	\$
<b>9</b>	*Auto Expense	\$
<b>10</b>	*Continuing Education Expense	\$

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<b>11</b>	*Book Expense	\$
<b>12</b>	*Professional Expense (optional)	\$
<b>13</b>	Medical Expense (optional)	\$
<b>14</b>	<b>TOTAL BENEFITS</b>	\$
TOTAL PACKAGE		

\*These items are paid through an Accountable Reimbursement Plan.

### Also Provided

- Vacation (minimum one month)    ■ Study Leave (minimum two weeks)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 5/2019

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. The duties will include those functions ordinarily filled by the teaching elder, such as a regular schedule of worship services and preaching, pastoral calling on the sick and shut-ins, serving as resource and/or consultant to church program groups and committees; and, to oversee the normal administrative functions. The teaching elder may serve as Moderator of the Session if so approved by the Committee on Ministry.
2. This agreement can be terminated by either party upon 30-day notice, pending consultation with the Committee on Ministry.
3. The attached Statement of Faith and Personal Information Form (PIF) and Biography have been reviewed by the Session.

Items 4-6 are required to be included on Interim Pastor contracts.

4. The Interim Pastor will also submit a written report to the Committee on Ministry on the First day of every other month.
5. The Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ is not a candidate for a Called Pastor.
6. Goals for the Interim Ministry: Implement a process to address all Five Focus Points of Interim Ministry.

### SIGNATURES

\_\_\_\_\_

Clerk of Session

\_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Elder

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

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### **6.1416 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS for PNC USE DURING CANDIDATE SCREENING**

From Transformational Regional Bodies by Roy M. Oswald (Pages 84 & 85)

These are the seven principles that should guide the interview process:

- The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.
- Behavioral performance is significantly more important than work experience.
- The focus is less on single behavior, more on a group of behaviors.
- Indirect observation of behavior by the interviewer is central to the interview.
- The interviewer needs to maintain decision uncertainty.
- Selection is a mutual decision-making process.
- Effective selection is a function of making a match between the person the place, and the call.

A bedrock principle in this interview process is to consistently ask the candidate to give examples of their behavior in a particular situation. Hypothetical questions are to be avoided. Remember the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, not wishful thinking. As the candidate is describing a situation, try to visualize the scene as best you can, like a video camera, in order to ask all the questions that will give you the fullest picture.

#### **Personal Motivation**

- Describe some of your most important accomplishments.  
How did you go about reaching your goals?
- How do you go about making yourself more effective in your work?
- Describe conflicting demands on your time, and how you go about resolving them.
- What energizes you in ministry?
- What depletes your energy?

#### **Building Body Cohesiveness**

- Describe a ministry situation where you felt particularly successful in accomplishing a goal important to you and the Church?
- Describe how you helped new members become part of the congregation.

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- Describe how you build corporate identity around church and among the people.
- Think back on your ministry and tell me about a time when you confronted a person or group of people who were undermining the unity of the Church.
- How do you feel when someone takes over your idea and changes it?
- What have you done in such a situation?

### **Visioning Capacity**

- Describe your current vision for the ministry you serve.  
How did other capture the vision?
- Tell me about a time you built something from nothing?
- Describe for me a time when you felt most clear about the ministry you were performing and what you were doing in the midst of that ministry.
- Describe a situation that was stagnant or failing and how you stepped in to revitalize it.

### **Reaching the Unchurched**

- Describe how you typically associate with unchurched people in your community.
- Tell me about an adult you introduced to the faith. How many adults have you baptized in the last two years?
- How do you convey a positive Christian witness without demeaning unchurched people.
- What does Jesus mean in your life?
- What training or guidance do you give church members who are willing to reach unchurched people.
- Tell us about a time you went knocking door-to-door

### **6.1417 TRANSITIONAL (formerly Temporary) PASTOR REPORTING**

Transitional pastors shall provide the Committee on Ministry a one page (front and back) report on how the pastor has provided leadership to the church. The following guidelines apply to these reports.

#### **A. Interim Pastors – Every other month**

During the first phase the pastor shall report bi-monthly on progress in addressing these five focus points, as well as conducting church officer training.

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### THE FIVE FOCUS POINTS OF INTERIM MINISTRY

#### 1. Heritage:

Creating ways for the congregation to share defining stories, articulating and affirming a shared past, its ongoing meaning, and the sense of purpose it can provide.”

#### 2. Mission:

How the core values and identity of the church shape the future work of the church. Can include developing vision and mission statements and preparing tactical plans.

#### 3. Connections:

Discovering the network of relationships the congregation has outside of itself. An opportunity to strengthen connections with the denomination and groups within the community, as well as to consider updating communication, including use of technology.

#### 4. Leadership:

Discerning what kind of leadership (lay and ordained) is needed for the congregation's mission and developing that leadership with intentionality.

#### 5. Future:

Developing a future orientation for the congregation's core values, with openness to how God is using their heritage and mission to call them to new things.

(Keydel, John. "Focus Points and the Work of the Congregation." *Transitional Ministry Today* Ed. Norman B. Bendroth.)

Once the above tasks are substantially complete, and the church's search process is underway, second phase reports may address such questions as the following:

- Are there any particular goals or tasks specified in your contract? If so, how are you working to fulfill them?
- Are you aware of any hopes/intentions from the COM for this particular congregation? If so, how are you working to fulfill them?
- What are the ongoing challenges in your position, and how are you addressing them?
- What conversations are you having?
- What new direction is needed for the congregation? Are there resources to undergird this new direction?
- What is the dynamic or chemistry in the church at this time?
- What is your own discernment about the church's future?

#### B. Stated Supply Pastors

Stated supply pastors normally are serving a church which does not expect to call a pastor. Pastors shall bring to the COM any issues that need attention. Many of the above second phase questions for Interim pastors should be considered.

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- C. Bridge Pastors (a new section describing this position will be added to the COM Manual soon)  
Bridge pastors normally are appointed for periods of less than six months. During this time no report is required.

**6.1418 MISSION SELF-STUDY OF THE CONGREGATION.** Mission circumstances and conditions challenging congregations change significantly on an on-going basis. Churches which assess the situation God has called them to serve may have a clearer identity of who they are, what their direction is, and the mission to which God calls them in Jesus Christ. Ideally, a congregation will conduct an in-depth mission self-study every five to seven years, and review the study every two year, updating as necessary. The time of pastoral transition offers a unique opportunity to conduct a new mission self-study if a recent one is not available, or to review and update an existing mission self-study, to communicate in face-to-face gatherings and in written report/s all appropriate learning and emerging directions to the congregation. This process is an effective way to meet the interim focus points requiring attention during the transition period and to provide information for the process of calling a pastor.

Sessions and transition teams are urged to contact their COM liaison about resources available.

The session may appoint a committee to undertake this task or may refer it to the transition team. The interim pastor may participate in the process, offering orientation, guidance, and expertise, as well as spiritual context and foundations for the undertaking. When the mission self-study committee formulates its findings and recommendations, these are presented to session for discussion and revision. The session is encouraged share the self-study with the Committee on Ministry and the congregation. This information may be incorporated by the PNC into the writing of the church's Mission Information Form (MIF).

### **6.1420 PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE.**

#### **6.1421 Organizing:**

1. COM appoints a liaison for the PNC, (the initial liaison may continue). Typically, the Committee on Ministry liaison will regularly attend the initial meetings until the church's Ministry Information Form is written. During the time that the PNC is reviewing Personal Information Forms the liaison will maintain weekly contact with the committee chair. At the time the committee is ready to conduct phone/skype interviews the liaison should be present, especially for any face-to-face interviews that are conducted.
2. COM, upon the request of the session to form the PNC, and with the concurrence of the interim pastor, approves the request of the session to proceed to call a Congregation Meeting for the purpose of electing the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC).

Election of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) ordinarily should take place after the pastor has left, the session has met with representatives from the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) and a temporary pastor relationship has been secured. In cases when an adaptive transition model is being pursued, the election of the PNC may happen earlier in the transition process.

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3. The congregation agrees to a nominating process to nominate members of the congregation to serve on the PNC (Note: the session can make recommendations to the congregation related to this process and the PNC ordinarily should consist of between five and nine members representative of the whole congregation. Many congregations will use one of the following methods to produce candidates that are representative of the congregation and are presented as a slate of candidates for the congregation's election: (a) use the existing Church Nominating Committee; or (b) session appoints a special nominating committee to put names before the congregation.

4. Selecting a Pastor Nominating Committee Guidelines: (Process also relevant for selecting an Associate Pastor)

a. Initial orientation meeting(s): Nominating a Pastor Nominating Committee is one of the most important responsibilities and will impact the congregation for years to come. Therefore, it is valuable to take some time at the beginning of the process to agree on some basic understandings of how to proceed. Once this portion is completed, the next focus will be on gathering names of potential nominees.

- Welcome and Introductions
- Discuss goal
- Overview of PNC process
- Review a position description for the pastor to be called (if available)
- Consider organizational criteria (see 4b)
- Consider characteristics desired for PNC members (see 4c)
- Consider characteristics desired for PNC Committee as a whole (if not already covered)
- Develop a timeline for completing the task
- Assure responsibilities are clear on completing the task

b. Organizational Criteria

1. Is God working with us and through us during this nomination process?

*We serve and pray with this hope. Based on past experience, we can be confident that God is leading—if we will follow!*

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2. Will we have enough qualified candidates to fill the number of positions?  
*Because this will be the biggest—and most important—decision we make for many years, almost everyone we ask will accept and serve well.*
3. How many members should serve on the PNC?  
*Most PNCs have 5-9 members. Some prefer an odd number in total.*
4. How broadly should it represent the congregation?  
*The PNC MUST represent the congregation. The goal is for every member of the congregation to look at the PNC members and see someone they know and trust.*
5. What age range? Should mobility be an issue?  
*How young—is it better to have someone who is a youth or someone that represents the interests of the youth (parent, teacher, etc.)? How old—will the person need to visit candidates, drive at night, computer literacy, etc.?*
6. Are there special skills required?  
*It is important for one person to have strong computer skills and be willing to be the PNC recorder/secretary.*
7. How closely should the genders balance?  
*The ideal is to have an equal number of males and females—unless you choose an odd number!*
8. Who is eligible? Members of Nominating Committee? Family members of leaders?  
*Generally, members of the nominating committee are not eligible. Immediate family members—spouses, parents, children—may/may not be eligible. Exceptions can be considered, especially in smaller churches.*
9. Should Ruling Elders and/or Deacons be included in consideration?  
*At least one session member and one deacon should be nominated for the PNC. Both are important groups to represent. More may be acceptable as appropriate.*
10. Should we include a youth representative?  
*Usually answered under question #5, but it's important to agree and articulate the rationale for your decision.*
11. Should we nominate the moderator and vice-moderator?  
*There are merits to either nominating or not. If yes, the Nominating Committee can balance abilities and personalities, helping the PNC to get off to a good start. If no, an important organizational beginning is provided for the PNC for them to participate in the selection of their leaders.*
12. What church groups should be represented?



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*Consideration should be given to representation by the “major” groups in your congregation: choir, Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Men, etc., however, the PNC MUST represent the congregation as a whole.*

13. What characteristics should PNC members embody?

*See 4c for Desired Characteristics*

c. Desired characteristics for PNC members:

1. Participation in the life of the church e.g. regular worship attendance, involvement in education, outreach, and/or fellowship.
2. Ability and initiative to communicate—speak and listen—with the congregation and other PNC members.
3. Ability to absorb information, use own judgment in decision making, and follow through on agreed actions.

Desired PNC candidate qualities include the following (partial list): integrity, calm manner/non-anxious presence, team builder and player, sound judgment, organizational and communication skills, open-mindedness, patience, ability to keep information confidential, sense of humor, hopeful attitude, and love of others.

d. Searching for and selecting PNC nominees:

After a Nominating Committee has completed the initial work, suggestions for possible candidates should be broadly encouraged. Direct communication with the congregation is essential.

The Nominating Committee should next discuss the suggested candidates and identify those candidates to present as a slate for a congregational vote. If a candidate is to be recommended, a discussion should be held with the candidate so that the individual understands what will be expected if elected, especially an estimate of the time and skills required. Any candidate presented should have given assurance that they will serve if elected.

Candidates should be made aware of the timing of the congregational meeting and vote. Nominating Committees may use a variety of approaches to introduce their proposed slate of candidates to a congregation. Congregations should be reminded that electing a PNC is one of its most important responsibilities and will impact the congregation for many years to come.

e. Congregational meeting—election of PNC:

Session calls a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a PNC. The Nominating Committee presents its recommended slate of candidates and any supporting comments it would like to make. Nominations are open to the floor. If there are more candidates than the recommended size of the PNC, a secret vote should be taken. If not, an open vote may be taken.

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5. Session approves a salary range, a position description for the PNC to use in recruitment, along with search expenses budget for travel and relocation.
6. COM liaison and General Presbyter instructs and trains the PNC, and provides regular guidance. If the search is for an Associate Pastor, the Pastor/head of staff will be involved in appropriate ways (to be determined in consultation with COM, the COM liaison, and members of the APNC). The PNC will also be provided with a copy of *On Calling a Pastor*, a manual from the PC (USA) about the search process.
7. The PNC should organize, identifying a chairperson and secretary. Many PNCs also have a vice chairperson. It is advised that the secretary be computer literate.
8. The congregation and the session need to understand that the PNC works in extreme confidentiality and, except for regular progress reports on the process, does not consult with or report to either the congregation or the session during its work.

### 6.1422 Ministry Information Form:

9. The PNC is responsible for completing the Ministry Information Form (MIF). The information gathered from the congregation during the mission self-study will be used by the PNC in writing the MIF, and will inform the pastoral search deliberations. It is possible to work on many parts of the MIF at the same time by making assignments. Some sections can be assigned to individual members for writing. It is helpful, however, to have two readings of every section before its acceptance is voted upon. Other parts of the MIF require discussion and agreement of the PNC as a whole (required experience and leadership competencies). The MIF which includes Equal Employment Opportunity Statement (below), shall be approved by the Session. The Clerk of Session has to attest to the MIF. Once completed, send MIF to Presbytery office as pdf and WORD file to be included on COM agenda for approval.

For Associate Pastor Searches *Only*: Occasionally there may be a candidate that is known to the church and believed to be the preferred choice. With COM approval the church may set aside steps 11 through 16 and 18. Once the COM approves the MIF the APNC shall interview the known candidate and consider whether or not to consider other candidates. If it is in the recommendation of the APNC to call the known candidate then the process shall continue with step 20.

### 6.1422a Equal Employment Opportunity Statement from Ministry Information Form:

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution. (F-1.0403)

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**6.1422b** Milestones in the calling process at which the commitment to inclusiveness shall be remembered include:

A. When the PNC is formed. As far as possible, this committee should be composed of people of different ages, sexes, marital conditions, races, talents and abilities.

B. Obtaining PIFs, reading them and deciding who will be given further consideration. Search procedures should be used which will locate and consider for employment persons regardless of race, sex, age, disability or marital status.

C. In the interviewing process, whether by phone or in person, only questions relevant to the position and its stated responsibilities should be asked.

D. Factors in deciding which candidate to nominate should have nothing to do with race, age, sex, disability or marital status unless it can be shown that the factors have a significant relationship to a person's ability to perform the job.

10. COM approves MIF and Stated Clerk of Presbytery provides verification to CLC.

11. COM chair provides church with "on-line" ID number for MIF; unique to the church, combination of letters and numbers, and is case sensitive when typed into the screen log-in box.

12. MIF is entered into the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) web site. The CLC has instructions that can be downloaded. It is highly recommended that the person assigned by the PNC to type the MIF on the computer read these instructions. For example, a church can download computer-friendly (WORD format) forms to type most of the material "off line" and then cut and paste the information into the CLC site. Further, care should be taken, inasmuch, as there is a character limit to many of the narrative responses on the MIF. These limits are imposed without exception by the computer program.

13. MIF becomes "Active" on CLC website. CLC phone # 1.888.728.7228. At this point the PNC is free to advertise the position seeking self-referrals.

14. PIFs are downloaded from CLC site, received from referrals, and recruited. Instructions for receiving the PIFs can be downloaded from CLC. One person from the PNC is usually assigned to download these PIFs. The CLC does not send paper copies. Further, the PNC may not request certain PIFs from the CLC, even if the church has a PIF identification number; an individual PIF may be obtained by contacting the candidate directly.

### **6.1423 Initial Screening:**

15. COM Liaisons are to have a copy of all PIFs the PNC has received.

16. The PNC, after studying the PIFs, should identify their candidates-of-interest; likely to be five to seven candidates. The PNC may consult with the COM liaison for evaluation ranking methods.

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17. The liaison and General Presbyter will help the PNC design an interview process that identifies competencies and skills necessary to be successful in the position. Looks at areas of emotional, relational, and spiritual maturity, and interview questions that are based on behavior and past performance, not just wishful thinking. Included in this design will be suggestion on helpful ways, in addition to the MIF, to introduce candidates to the church and community. After initial interviews the Pastor Nominating Committee may call additional references for follow up questions.

### **6.1424 Active Screening:**

18. The PNC after studying the PIFs, checking references, listening to sermons, doing video conference interviews, etc. should select a priority list of three to five persons. Should a candidate be selected who is not a PCUSA member, the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk should be consulted for guidance on next steps.

### **6.1425 Final Screening:**

19. An executive reference check is conducted by the General Presbyter, Stated Clerk or Chair of COM (or designee), prior to an invitation for face-to-face interviews with a potential candidate. If the candidate is a seminary student it will be necessary to secure clearance from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry/Presbytery that is maintaining the covenant relationship with the candidate.

20. The PNC must hear the final candidate preach and lead worship in person in either a neutral pulpit or private worship setting. An APNC may arrange a suitable face-to-face activity applicable to the candidate's expected primary responsibility.

21. It is required that the PNC do a comprehensive (including criminal and financial) background check on the finalist candidates through the Presbytery office. Candidates will be informed that the PNC, as part of its process and in addition to doing reference checks, will do a comprehensive background check. (Note: The church will pay for the cost of the background check. Only the PNC Chair, COM Chair, PNC liaison, Stated Clerk and General Presbyter will have access to the information.) Additional information is in section 6.1314.

The PNC Chair should ask the Presbytery office to forward the Background Study Authorization form for completion by the candidate. Since the form requests personal information (social security number and driver's license number), it is recommended that the candidate return the completed form directly to the Presbytery office.

22. Sub-committee of COM interviews the finalist candidates. It is typically convenient to arrange this interview meeting in conjunction with a candidate's visit to the church campus.

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### 6.1426 Offering the Call:

23. Once the PNC has made their selection, ordinarily the chair of the PNC contacts the candidate to discuss the call, provide specifics of the terms of call, and outline the next steps in the process.

### 6.1427 Preparing for the Committee on Ministry Meeting:

24. The PNC will coordinate with the Committee on Ministry to schedule an Order of the Day interview to be conducted with the candidate. Members of the PNC will come to the meeting to introduce the candidate and be prepared to discuss the rationale for selecting the candidate being presented.

25. Prior to the meeting, the PNC will provide the Committee on Ministry with the following: the candidate's Personal Information Form, the terms of call which must meet Presbytery minimum and include start date (complete form in section 6.1450), the candidate's biographical sketch (a one-page summary) and a personal statement of faith. The biography and statement of faith documents will be used to introduce the candidate to the members of the Peace River Presbytery. Additionally, the PNC shall provide a one-page statement setting forth the reasons the PNC believes this particular pastor is the right person for their church. The comprehensive background check will need to be completed and reviewed prior to the COM Order of the Day. Additionally, the candidate shall have returned the acknowledgement of receipt of the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and the Code of Ethics for Ministers. Liaisons should confirm that the reference check from the General Presbyter is on file and that the Stated Clerk has the necessary Presbytery transfer information, if applicable.

Statement of Faith Guidelines for Ministers: The Statement of Faith should include, but not be limited to the following topics:

- A. Person and Work of Christ
- B. Trinity
- C. Holy Spirit
- D. Authority of Scripture
- E. Sacraments
- F. The Church – its mission and ministry to society

26. Welcome Letter: The PNC should request the Presbytery office to send the Welcome Letter and packet to the candidate.

Salutation,

The Committee on Ministry of Peace River Presbytery supports ministers and congregations in Christ. We understand that you have reached a point in your candidacy where additional information might be helpful to your discernment process and our conversation about your sense of call to the new congregation and presbytery.

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Ours is a covenant community grounded in a shared commitment to live into and under the discipline of our promise to *be a friend among (our) colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit* (Book of Order W-4.4003).

We invite you to prayerfully consider our mission statement and two specific documents that reflect our commitment to collegial relationships based upon God's Word and mutual respect for the standards we embrace as leaders in this community of faith.

*Peace River Presbytery Mission/Vision Statement.* We believe Peace River Presbytery is called:  
to assist and support congregations,  
to connect disciples in mission,  
and to be the body of Christ together.

A *Code of Ethics for Ministers* is important to us and our congregations. Please review the attached document carefully so that you are prepared to seek clarification if necessary, and subject to affirmation of your call, sign the document.

The *Sexual Misconduct Policy and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy* enables us to preserve the integrity of our pastoral relationships and immediately address any behavior that compromises this standard. We ask that you study the document so that we can discuss any questions you have since our members confirm their commitment to uphold this standard by signing the document.

We look forward to meeting with you and appreciate your dedication to ministry and the call process that has brought you to the pivotal point. Know that we hold you in our prayers as we prepare to meet on \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ in North Port, Florida.

Sincerely,

COM Moderator

### 6.1428 Approvals:

27. Final candidate is examined by the COM and terms of call approved.

The Presbytery of Peace River has the responsibility to examine ministers and candidates seeking membership in the Presbytery (G-3.0306) including their Christian faith and view in theology, the sacraments, and the government of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Presbytery of Peace River has delegated this examination to the Committee on Ministry (COM).

Presbytery and Interview Questions. The Committee on Ministry (COM) is authorized by the Presbytery of Peace River to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve all calls for service of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other presbyteries, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur, and to dismiss ministers to other presbyteries, with the provision

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that all such actions be reported to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery, in accordance with G-3.0306 & G-3.0307.

The COM examination of all persons seeking membership in the Presbytery will take place at its regular monthly meeting on the second Tuesday.

The examination will include the following:

- (1) The applicant's Christian faith and views on theology, the Sacraments, and the government of the church.
- (2) The applicant's suitability for the position.
- (3) The "match" between applicant and position.
- (4) The talents and interest of the applicant.
- (5) The needs of the church or employing body.
- (6) The applicant's knowledge of the position.

### 6.1429 Interview Questions for COM Use in Examining Candidates

- (1) Tell us about your faith journey.
- (2) What are the things you feel best about in your present ministry?
- (3) What have been the challenges there?
- (4) What makes you think you may be called to leave there now?
- (5) What interests you about this position?
- (6) What do you bring to church ministry?
- (7) What are your greatest strengths in ministry?
- (8) What are your greatest weaknesses?
- (9) One of the goals is to strengthen \_\_\_\_\_. How would you do that?
- (10) Describe a typical week in your ministry.
- (11) Share your perspective on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

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(12) How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?

(13) What questions or concerns do you have?

If the COM vote is unanimous the pastor can begin serving once congregation approves call (steps 28-29).

28. PNC requests session to call a congregational meeting to hear their report.

29. The congregation receives the PNC's recommendation and calls the pastor. Ordinarily, the candidate will preach on the Sunday on which the congregational meeting is held. At this meeting the PNC may be dismissed at a date certain. The COM liaison reports the action of the congregation to the Peace River Presbytery Stated Clerk for PC (USA) processing.

30. The candidate will confer with COM regarding the composition of the Administrative Commission appointed to install the pastor, and will give COM the names to make up that commission. COM will elect this Administrative Commission to install the pastor.

31. Remove MIF from CLC when the call has been extended and accepted.

32. COM presents the pastor, biography, statement of faith and terms of call, at a meeting of Presbytery for official welcome. A representative from the congregation will attest before Presbytery that a congregational vote was received in support of the candidate. Interested members of the congregation are often observers at the meeting of Presbytery when their candidate is presented.

33. PNC to issue letters to candidates at the time the candidate is no longer being considered.

### **6.1430 Preparing for New Ministry:**

34. The General Presbyter ordinarily preaches the Sunday prior to the new pastor's arrival.

35. Service of Installation is coordinated by new pastor and COM liaison, in consultation with General Presbytery and PRP Moderator. COM encourages installations of pastors and designated pastors to occur at times other than on Sunday mornings so that members of the Presbytery can be present. The Service of Installation is a Presbytery event, even if it is combined with a congregational worship service. Ordinarily the current moderator of the presbytery convenes the commission and asks the installation or ordination questions, and the General Presbyter brings greetings on behalf of the presbytery.

36. Many churches have found it helpful to keep the PNC in place for the first six months of the new pastorate to serve as a support team and transition committee for the new pastor.

37. A First Year Review Workshop is normally held with the PNC, the session, the pastor, COM liaison and General Presbyter within the first year of the pastor's ministry. It is designed to name the expectations, affirm the experiences, and appreciate the hopes that the PNC, the pastor, the session, and COM have for the church



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as the pastor begins their ministry as pastor/head of staff, and as the church moves into God’s future. Additional information in section 6.1360.

### 6.1450 PASTORAL TERMS OF CALL (refer to section 6.1350 for detailed explanation of compensation guidelines)

\_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church of \_\_\_\_\_, Florida,  
 being well satisfied with your qualifications for ministry and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one whose service will be profitable to the spiritual interests of our church and fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord, earnestly and solemnly calls you,

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Name)  
 to undertake the office of  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Pastor, Associate Pastor)

of this congregation, beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ (date), promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and allegiance in the Lord.

That you may be free to devote full time/part time (*if part time, indicate what percentage of time devoted to this call:* \_\_\_\_\_) to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to provide you the following annually:

<b>DIRECT COMPENSATION:</b>		
1.	Salary	\$
2.	Housing Allowance	\$
3.	Deferred Income	\$
4.	Special Income	\$
5.	Other Income	\$
6.	<b>TOTAL EFFECTIVE SALARY</b>	\$
<b>BENEFITS:</b>		
7.	Board of Pensions Dues	\$
8.	SECA Reimbursement	\$
9.	*Auto Expense	\$
10.	*Continuing Education Expense	\$
11.	*Book Expense	\$
12.	*Professional Expenses (Optional)	\$
13.	*Medical Expense (Optional)	\$

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14.	TOTAL BENEFITS	\$
TOTAL PACKAGE (add item 6 plus item 14) =		\$

\*These items are paid through an Accountable Reimbursement Plan

**ALSO PROVIDED:**

- ▶ Vacation (minimum 1 month)
- ▶ Moving Expense Reimbursement (taxable) up to \$\_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Study Leave (minimum 2 weeks)
- ▶ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuant to G-2.0804 of the Book of Order, the Session promises to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation. Pursuant to G-1.0503 of the Book of Order, these Pastoral Terms of Call shall be effective upon the affirmative vote of the congregation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teaching Elder

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

Revised 5/2019

**6.1451 CERTIFICATION OF CALL**

Once the call has been review approved by the Committee on Ministry the Stated Clerk electronically certifies with call with the PCUSA. To complete that the pastor’s personal contact information should be sent to the Stated Clerk.

**6.1460 Ordination- Installation Guidelines:**

When the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) of a church has completed its task, and when the teaching elder has been called by the congregation, and when the teaching elder-elect has signified his/her intention to accept the call, it is time to plan a service of installation/ordination. The ordinary date and time for the service shall be 4:00 PM on a Sunday afternoon.

A commission for ordination/installation will be elected by the COM and consists of five (5) or more persons having authority to act for the Presbytery. The teaching elder-elect and the calling church have the privilege to nominate the persons who will comprise the Commission. Members of the Presbytery staff will welcome invitations to participate in the Ordination/Installation service (W-4.4000). Section 1461 should be completed and forwarded to the Presbytery Office for COM action.

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1. Before the date of the service is set, the Moderator of the Presbytery should be consulted. The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be the Moderator of the Commission, but if unavailable on the desired date, the Vice-Moderator or former Moderator can fulfill the duties.
2. There shall be at least 5 *ruling* elders and *ministers* from the Presbytery *including the Moderator* in as balanced a ratio as possible. No more than one ruling elder may come from a single church. The Commission shall include both men and women. Presbytery permits the teaching elder-elect to invite ministers and ruling elders from another Presbytery to participate in the service as corresponding members. Expenses for such should be paid by the church, not the Presbytery.
3. The Commission gathers one-half hour before the service and is convened in prayer by the Moderator. It is dismissed by the act of Benediction at the conclusion of the worship service.
4. Sample Order of Worship for an Installation Service: (Additionally, the Book of Occasional Services, PCUSA website is a good resource.)

<p><b>Call to Worship (Moderator):</b></p> <p>“Peace River Presbytery is assembled here in the persons of this Commission for the worship of God and the installation of the Rev. _____</p> <p>as teaching elder (associate teaching elder) of _____</p> <p>Presbyterian Church.”</p> <p>Welcome from Peace River Presbytery: offered by either the General Presbyter or Stated Clerk</p>	<p><b>Offering:</b></p> <p>“The offering today will be used to help seminary students from Peace River Presbytery who are preparing for ministry.”</p> <p>Installation Questions (Moderator) (from W-4.4003)</p> <p>Questions to members of Peace River Presbytery</p> <p>Questions to the Congregation</p> <p>(a Ruling Elder)</p> <p>“Prayer and laying on of hands.</p>
<p>Hymn</p> <p>Prayer of Confession</p> <p>Assurance of Pardon</p>	<p>Charge to Teaching Elder</p> <p>Charge to Congregation</p> <p>Hymn</p>

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Scripture Reading

Benediction (Teaching Elder being Installed)

Sermon

5. After the Ordination or Installation service is concluded, the commission should complete section 6.1462 and submit it to the Presbytery office.

### 6.1461 Ordination and/or Installation Commission

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**Instructions:** There must be a total of at least five (5) ruling elders and ministers from Peace River Presbytery in as balanced a ratio as possible. No more than one (1) ruling elder may come from any single church. The commission shall include both men and women. An offering will be taken for the theological education fund (candidates' fund) of the Presbytery. Please return this form to the Presbytery office.

**On behalf of Peace River Presbytery, the following people constituted the commission for**

ordination  installation of \_\_\_\_\_ as

Teaching Elder or  Associate Teaching Elder of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church located

in \_\_\_\_\_, Florida on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, year \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_ o'clock.

**The ordinary date and time for the service shall be 4:00 PM on a Sunday afternoon.**

Name of teaching elder being ordained/installed: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Members of the Commission

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Moderator of Presbytery (or Moderator's designee.)

**Ministers from Peace River Presbytery:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Ruling Elders from Peace River Presbytery:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Church: \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Church: \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Church: \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Church: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Ministers and Ruling Elders from other Presbyteries or denominations may be invited to participate in the service; however, they are not included in the official commission.

Please complete this form and return it to the Presbytery office at 5600 Peace River Road, North Port, Florida 34287.

### 6.1462 Minutes of the Administrative Commission to Ordain and/or Install

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_

as the      Pastor \_\_\_\_\_      Associate Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ (check one)

Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Ministers Present:

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Ruling Elders Present:

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Others Participating:

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Who opened Commission meeting with prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was elected Secretary? \_\_\_\_\_

Moderator or Designee \_\_\_\_\_

Elder who propounded questions to congregation \_\_\_\_\_ (Book of Order W-4.4004)

Motion: to dissolve commission with the benediction of the Service of Ordination/Installation

Motion made by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, action \_\_\_\_\_.

Closing Prayer and Benediction \_\_\_\_\_

If guest ministers or elders who are *not* members of Peace River Presbytery; please indicate Presbytery to which they belong or church in which they serve as ruling elders (in spaces above.)

A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council or councils for incorporation into its record. Actions of a commission shall be regarded as actions of the council or councils that created it. (Book of Order G-3.0109b(6))

Please attach a copy of the printed program and mail it to: Stated Clerk, Peace River Presbytery, 5600 Peace River Road, North Port, FL 34287.

Signature of Secretary of Commission \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Moderator \_\_\_\_\_

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### 6.1470 Policy Regarding Ordained Ministers from Other Denominations Serving Churches in a Pastoral Role

In accordance with the Book of Order (G-3-0307), it is the responsibility of the Committee on Ministry (COM) to oversee the pastoral care provided by ministers to the churches of Peace River Presbytery. If there are ordained clergy that are functioning in the churches of Peace River Presbytery in pastoral roles (preaching,

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teaching, pastoral care, training of new members), whether they are Presbyterian Church (USA) ministers or not, they are to be under the care and oversight of COM.

The churches of Peace River Presbytery should seek the clearance of the Committee on Ministry before employing people in pastoral roles. If there are churches currently employing such persons in pastoral roles not in called positions, they should seek the clearance of the Committee on Ministry. The requirements are the same as for a pastor working in a called position except no COM Cluster Interview or COM Order of the Day is needed. Instead, COM expects that the head pastor will be responsible for adherence to Presbyterian polity. Also, COM expects an annual review by the head pastor and session will be conducted with a copy of the review sent to COM.

Ministers from other denominations serving in pastoral roles should have a working knowledge of the Book of Order and The Book of Confessions. They shall sign the Presbytery's Clergy Ethics Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy and shall receive mandated training. If serving in a church staff position, these ministers shall receive an annual review by the pastor and session, and a copy of this report shall be sent to the Committee on Ministry. If the minister is serving in the role of a stated supply solo pastor, the session shall conduct the annual review to be sent to the Committee on Ministry.

As stated in 6.1408 B, a stated supply relationship "shall be established only by the Committee on Ministry and shall extend for a period not to exceed twelve months at a time. A stated supply shall not be reappointed until the Presbytery, through the Committee on Ministry, has reviewed her or his effectiveness."

**6.1480 Dissolution of a Call or Appointment.** Churches and pastors shall use the following to prepare the dissolution arrangements.

### Dissolution of a Call or Appointment

On the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ year \_\_\_\_\_, at a properly called meeting of the  congregation (or)  session of the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church of \_\_\_\_\_ Florida, it was voted to request the Presbytery to dissolve the  pastor  associate pastor  interim pastor  stated supply  parish associate relationship between the church and Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ effective the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ year \_\_\_\_\_. The last day of work will be the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ year \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. The pastor will remove all personal items from church property by the effective date of the dissolution. All property belonging to the church, including keys to the church, will be returned to the Clerk of Session or person designated by the session. Arrangements for payment of any monies due to the pastor (salary, annuities, house equity, etc.) or the repayment of any loan made by the church to the pastor shall be made by the effective date of the dissolution unless herewith stipulated by both parties in writing.

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B. The pastor will inform the congregation that all future pastoral services (funerals, weddings, counseling, hospital visits, etc.) cannot be provided by a former pastor without prior written authorization and permission of the session.

C. Complete all the items below that apply:

- Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ requests designation as “Honorably Retired” effective \_\_\_\_\_.
- The congregation voted to request that Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ be designated Pastor Emeritus.
- Cash salary will be paid until \_\_\_\_\_.
- Housing Allowance will be paid until \_\_\_\_\_.
- The pastor will have free use of the manse until \_\_\_\_\_.
- Deferred Income will be paid until \_\_\_\_\_.
- Board of Pension Dues will be paid until \_\_\_\_\_.
- Other compensation will be paid until \_\_\_\_\_.

Itemize: \_\_\_\_\_

Other terms. Itemize: \_\_\_\_\_

**Confirmation Signatures**

**Telephone**

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor/Educator/Candidate . . . . . (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Clerk of Session . . . . . (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Committee on Ministry Chair . . . . . (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_



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\_\_\_\_\_ Stated Clerk . . . . . (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**6.1481 Guidelines For Severance For Ordained Teaching Elder Members and Certified Christian Educators Serving in a Called Position within the bounds of Peace River Presbytery.** Severance should be couched in our reformed understanding of compassion and grace, and thus should not be considered a reward for incompetence.

A. Severance is to be considered in those instances when a pastor is forced/encouraged to resign without another call with no accusations of malfeasance or misconduct against him or her. When there are accusations or charges filed or pending against a pastor consideration can be given to the needs of the family even though there may be an absence of sympathy for the pastor.

B. Severance is considered in lieu of Unemployment Compensation.

C. Severance is considered appropriate in providing a level of transitional support to the pastor and family.

D. Normally, severance will cease when the person obtains future employment comparable to or in excess of severance. However, if the pastor obtains employment or receives a call that does not reflect market-based comparability to the former position then the church will make up the difference during the term of the severance package.

E. Recommended severance includes up to six months “effective salary” plus pension and health benefits (generally reported as Board of Pension dues). It may include medical deductible and/or dental insurance. All of these figures will be based on the most recent terms of call on file in the office of Peace River Presbytery.

F. Due consideration should be given to the church’s ability to pay severance.

G. Lump sum payments may be allowed but may have serious tax implications. Any such proposal should be reviewed by the Committee on Ministry.

**6.1482 Exit Interview Protocol.** An exit interview shall be conducted by members of the Committee on Ministry and Presbytery staff with all ministers retiring or leaving their current call. In October 2019, COM approved having Exit Interviews carried out for Interim Pastors as well. The purpose of these interviews is to:

A. Celebrate the pastor’s ministry,

B. To bring closure to that person’s ministry,

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C. To gain information that will help the Committee on Ministry regarding the congregation's possibilities and problems,

D. To discover if there is anything the pastor has shared that cannot be shared with the Committee on Ministry, and

E. To review the ground rules regarding the relationship with the church the pastor is leaving by sharing the ethical guidelines from the Code of Ethics for Ministers and Separation Ethics.

**Background and Purpose.** It is the intention of the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the Presbytery to schedule Exit Interviews with pastors leaving their called positions. The purposes of these interviews are several and often depend largely upon the conditions surrounding a pastor's departure. The Exit Interviews may simply provide closure and an opportunity for celebration and blessing for the pastor, the church, and the Presbytery. The Exit Interview may also serve as a kind of debriefing, or unpacking, of a pastor's experience with a particular church. Authentic sharing may also provide insights related to the challenges and opportunities in a given church, as well as point to appropriate qualities for its next pastor.

For purposes of both candor and confidentiality, one-on-one conversations may prove most effective. No formal minutes of the meeting would be recorded apart from noting the date and place of its occurrence. (Note: It will be at the pastor's discretion what is confidential and what may be shared with the COM or the PNC.) The PNC liaison from COM would use his or her judgment as to what information to relay to the COM or Pastor Nominating Committee, but all information that will be helpful to the Presbytery (COM) should be shared with the General Presbyter and COM chair. The liaison may also become a resource for the interim pastor.

In the event of special concerns, the PNC liaison may also request another COM representative to attend the meeting. The same guidelines regarding confidentiality would apply.

### 6.1483 EXIT INTERVIEW USED AT DISSOLUTION AND VACANCY

#### **Suggested Questions:**

1. Why are you leaving?
2. What information does the Presbytery need to know as a new pastor is called to serve this church?
3. What is your assessment of the church you served as you leave and a new pastor is called?
4. What goals did you bring to the position? Were they fulfilled? How?
5. What did you see as good in the life and ministry of this church?

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6. What did you enjoy the most?
7. Where did you find “support” during the time of your ministry in this church?
8. What was your experience of staff relations?
9. Are there changes needed in the job description/ expectations of the church?
10. How was the Presbytery helpful or not helpful, supportive or not supportive of you? What could the Presbytery do better?
11. Review Separation Ethics

**6.1484 Separation Ethics: When Pastor and Congregation Say Goodbye.** (Background and guidelines for pastors, sessions, and congregations concerning relationships and responsibilities upon the dissolution of the pastoral relationship)

**A. The Background To These Guidelines.** The pastoral relationship is very important, often deeply personal, and, in some cases, life-saving to people in a congregation. This relationship evolves through study, teaching, preaching, administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, weddings, funerals, presence in crises, and praying with and for members of the congregation. With the leadership of a congregation and particularly with the elders, the pastor works to encourage the people in the worship and service of God, equipping them for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world. In all of these dimensions of the pastoral relationship there are the elements of trust, confidence, admiration, affection, fondness, caring, and love.

The ending of the pastoral relationship is often a trying a traumatic experience for both the pastor and the members of a congregation. It always means change for the life of the pastor involved and the congregation. Because of the sensitivity of the pastoral relationship, it is imperative that the departing pastor assume particular responsibilities and observe necessary modes of behavior. This will allow the congregation to be free, in all respects, without the departing pastor’s influence, to make the adjustments necessary to changes of leadership, interim and permanent.

The guidelines which follow are to provide assistance to those who find themselves facing the situation of pastor and congregation saying “Goodbye.”

### **B. The Guidelines**

- (1) **SAYING GOODBYE.** The need to say goodbye to a congregation occurs for one of several reasons. A pastor may receive a call to another field of service. A pastor may decide to

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

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

(b) **Saying Goodbye But Remaining a Neighbor.** When a pastor says goodbye and remains nearby, there are particularly sensitive aspects of separation which require careful attention on the part of the departing pastor.

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

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

A retiring pastor who remains in the proximity of the congregation from which (s)he has retired will need to give careful consideration to the responsibilities that follow below in "Responsibilities in Saying Goodbye".

(c) **When One is Elected Pastor Emeritus.** When a pastor retires, the congregation may bestow upon him or her the title of **Pastor Emeritus**. When any pastor or associate pastor retires, and the congregation is moved by affection and gratitude to continue an association in an honorary relationship, it may, at a regularly called congregation meeting, elect him or her as pastor emeritus or emerita, with or

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without honorarium, but *with no pastoral authority or duty*. This action shall be taken *only after consultation with the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery concerning the wisdom of this relationship for the peace of the church*. This action shall be subject to the approval of Presbytery, and may take effect upon the formal dissolution of the pastoral or associate pastoral relationship or anytime thereafter. To elect one as pastor or associate pastor emeritus:

i. is evidence of a long and loving, mutually caring pastoral relationship.

ii. is a congregation's way of saying to the church-at-large and to the world that they love this person and are thankful for his or her time with them.

iii. is a gift to the retired pastor which says something special to him or her.

iv. however, the pastoral relationship has been dissolved. The relationship of pastor to people has ended and there is no expectation of the person to be present with the congregation because of the election. All expectations related to the former pastor of a congregation apply to a pastor emeritus.

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

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

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

The material which follows is addressed to pastor, session, and congregation as appropriate, and finally, the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery. However, **the pastor is the one in the professional leadership role and, therefore, the one who has the responsibility for making sure that the separation that occurs is anticipated and carried through with foresight and effectiveness.**

- (1) **Responsibilities of the Departing Pastor.** Because of the sensitivity of the pastoral relationship, it is important that the departing pastor, in any dissolution, assume certain responsibilities to the former congregation, to individual members of that congregation, and to the interim and next installed pastors.

**(a) To the Congregation.** When the date has been set for the dissolution of the

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

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

- i. that all pastoral and professional relationships and responsibilities of the pastor with the congregation will end as of the effective date of the dissolution;
- ii. that the pastor will not be involved in any way in the selection process of either the interim pastor or the next installed pastor. Neither will (s)he be involved in any way with the selection of any search team or pastor nominating committee.
- iii. that the pastor, after leaving, will not become engaged in conversations which, in any way, offer opinions or criticism about the life of the congregation or the performance of the interim or any subsequent installed pastors;
- iv. that any desire on the part of members of the congregation for the departing pastor to participate in congregational life or services should be discussed not with the departing pastor, but with the interim pastor or subsequent installed pastor;
- v. that the departing pastor may participate in a wedding or funeral of the congregation, after the date of dissolution, only by invitation of the interim pastor or installed pastor, who shall be the officiant. Baptisms, because they are part of regular worship of a congregation, are not included.

**(b) To Individual members of the Congregation.** It is important that, with particular friends, it be made clear that the pastoral relationship will come to an end. This does not mean that friendships must come to an end. Friendships are priceless and are to be preserved, but there is a special responsibility on the part of the departing pastor to prevent friendships from becoming confused with the pastoral relationship. The pastoral functions of counseling, calling, conducting weddings, funerals, or baptisms are not appropriate. Neither is the rendering of opinions or judgments about the ministry of the former church or its pastor. It is the departing pastor's responsibility to see that this really happens.

If the former pastor receives a request to return to the congregation for a particular occasion, it is important for the former pastor to remind those making the request, that the current pastor is the one to whom the request should go through. In any social context, where the former pastor is with friends or other members of the former congregation, it is the responsibility of the former pastor to be sure that (s)he voices no criticism or

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evaluative comments about the new leadership of the congregation. It is not appropriate for the former pastor to comment on the “state of the congregation” or to be involved in any way in the selection of a successor, once she or he has departed.

**(c) To the Interim and Subsequent Installed Pastors.** The former pastor has a responsibility to the interim pastor and to subsequent installed pastors to make sure that any requests that come to him or her for services in the former congregation be redirected by the requesters to the interim pastor or installed pastor. It is important that, when any request comes to the former pastor, she or he be in touch with the current pastor to let it be known what contacts have been made with him or her. This is a courtesy which is important to be extended to the current pastor. There should be no pastoral functions of any kind performed by the former pastor without the prior invitation or request of the current pastor.

Should any community non-church function call the former pastor back into the community for public appearance of whatever nature, as a courtesy, the former pastor should inform the current pastor of the fact and the nature of the occasion.

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

**(a) To the Departing Pastor.** Following the pastor’s decision to request dissolution of the pastoral relationship, the session can give support and encouragement to the pastor in the implementation of the decision. It will be helpful for the session to support and assist the pastor in interpreting the meaning of the end of the pastoral relationship to the congregation and, if need be, to the wider community. As a caring expression of closure, it is appropriate for the session to arrange for an occasion when the congregation and pastor may formally say goodbye.

**(b) To the Congregation.** The session will want to be sensitive to the feeling of loss experienced by members of the congregation while demonstrating through their actions the meaning of the end of the pastoral relationship. Additional session leadership may be needed in the transition period so that worship, congregational life, and fellowship may continue. The session can help the members of the congregation by encouraging them to see this time as an opportunity for growth and change. It can be a time for listening to individuals and groups in the congregation. It can be a time for examining present life, ministry, and service, and to be open to new possibilities. It is important that the congregation be prepared for change for new pastoral leadership.

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

### **(3) Responsibilities of the Committee on Ministry**

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

**(b) To the Session and Congregation.** A Committee on Ministry representative will be present at the meeting of the session when the pastor announces his or her resignation. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the session fully of these guidelines and to orient the session to the process of seeking pastoral leadership following the departure of the present pastor.

A representative of the Committee on Ministry shall be present at the meeting of the congregation when the pastor requests concurrence in her or his plans to leave, to inform the congregation of the process for obtaining subsequent pastoral leadership. When a congregation plans to elect a retiring pastor as Pastor Emeritus, an interpretive statement on the meaning of Pastor Emeritus will be sent to the session for use in the congregation.

**(c) To the Interim and Next Installed Pastors.** It will be important for the Committee on Ministry to review these guidelines with the interim pastor and the next installed pastor and to be available for counsel should any difficulties arise regarding relationships with the former pastor. This guideline has been prepared in the hope that it will provide guidance, support, and encouragement to pastors, sessions, and congregations in those situations in which a pastor and congregation discover that they must say goodbye.

### **6.1485 Retirement Recognition Protocol:**

1. Consult with retirement candidates to understand and align with their wishes where possible.
2. Offer a range of alternatives from no recognition to the use of the retirement litany from the Book of Occasional Services with a simple announcement of past service being intermediate.
3. Retirement recognition may occur during the COM Report to the Presbytery or at other times during the Presbytery meeting. Determination will be made with the candidate and with consideration of other plans for that specific Presbytery meeting with the Stated Clerk.

**6.1490 Guidelines for Undecided Calls.** The Committee on Ministry WILL NOT interview candidates who are undecided as to what call they want. In other words, if a candidate is undecided, Committee on Ministry will wait until they have made their decision prior to interviewing them for a call in Peace River Presbytery.

**6.1500 Restoration of Teaching Elder - Book of Order (D-12.0201) Desire to be Restored.** A person under the censure of removal from ordered ministry or from membership may be restored by the council imposing censure when the council is fully satisfied that the action is justified and the person makes a reaffirmation of faith for membership restoration or is re-ordained for restoration to ordered ministry. The forms of the restoration are described in D-12.0202 and D-12.0203:



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- A. A formal letter is sent to the Stated Clerk expressing a desire to be restored. Also, in the letter the person must indicate what PCUSA congregation of which (s)he are currently a member.
- B. The Stated Clerk notifies the Committee on Ministry and opens all relevant files related to that person's decision to lay aside his/her ordination.
- C. The Committee on Ministry seeks input from those who had firsthand knowledge of the reason why the person laid aside his/her ordination.
- D. The General Presbyter, Stated Clerk, and Committee on Ministry will interview the person desiring to be restored. (Questions to be asked would be similar to the candidacy process of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry – sense of call, readiness to be ordained, theology, emotional, relational, spiritual maturity and health, reviewing what led to the decision to set aside one's ordination, etc.).
- E. The Committee on Ministry interviews persons who can attest to the person's current spiritual health and call into ministry, including the pastor and session of the congregation where (s)he is currently a member.
- F. Reference checks are conducted by the Committee on Ministry.
- G. The full Committee on Ministry interviews person, and makes a determination and communicates the decision to the person.
- H. If the Committee on Ministry recommends against restoration, no further action will be taken by Peace River Presbytery;
- I. If proceeding with restoration, the person would provide the Presbytery the same background information as is required for all seeking membership in Peace River Presbytery; and the Presbytery will vote on whether to restore this person to ordained office and membership in Peace River Presbytery.
- J. Like all candidates for ministry, except for those honorably retired, Committee on Ministry will certify him/her ready to be restored pending a call to a validated ministry position.

**6.1600 Pastor Assistance Fund.** This fund has been established to respond to an unforeseen combination of circumstances that result in a state that requires immediate reaction to assist a pastor financially. When a request for financial assistance is made, the Committee on Ministry Co-Moderators and Cluster Leaders of Peace River Presbytery are authorized to:

- 1) make the determination that a qualified emergency exists that merits financial assistance and;
- 2) direct the amount of the financial assistance to be issued from the Pastor Assistance Fund.

A report will be made to the Committee on Ministry at its next monthly meeting as to the distribution from the Pastor Assistance Fund. In addition, an annual report on the past year activities and current fund status will be made to the Committee each January.