

STAGE 1: DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

Check List

- 1. Pastor decides to leave current position and begins search for new position.
 - a. The Presbytery Leader and the Stated Clerk should be contacted by the pastor prior to posting PIF on Church Leadership Connection in order for the Clerk to attest to the pastor's standing in the presbytery.
 - b. The Stated Clerk send pastor a "Leaving Packet."

- 2. Pastor notifies COM liaison of call or other change in status.
 - a. If retiring, pastor consults with COM liaison well in advance.
 - b. It is suggested that a special Session meeting be called to notify the Session. The pastor should consult with the COM liaison as to whether do this alone or with the COM liaison and/or Presbytery staff member present.

If the Pastor does it alone, 1) a date for another Session meeting is set to have a visit from the COM liaison, and 2) the conversation is limited to dissolution plans (dates, notification of congregation, contract terms). The pastor is prohibited from entering into conversations about future ministry at this church.

- 3. Pastor and COM liaison meet with Session.
 - a. Pastor requests dissolution (if not already done).
 - b. Liaison presents the next steps with Session in one or more meetings.
 - 1) *The Dissolution Policy* and the *Policy Regarding Former Pastors: Separation Ethics with Boundaries Covenant* found in this section are shared with Session. The liaison engages the Session in a conversation around the Separation Ethics document and the Session and Pastor sign the Boundaries Covenant.
 - 2) Pastor and Church are advised to contact the Board of Pensions regarding next steps.
 - c. Letter from pastor is sent to the congregation notifying them of pending dissolution.
 - d. Session calls congregational meeting ASAP to act on pastor's request and to make recommendations to Presbytery.
 - e. Session or its Personnel Committee works out terms of dissolution with pastor to be approved by congregation and reviewed by the COM for compliance to the terms of call adopted by the Presbytery.
 - f. COM liaison discusses with Session various options for temporary supply ministry. Pastor is excused for this section of the meeting. See *Policy on Temporary Pastoral Relationships* .
 - 1) If another installed pastor is to be sought, Session appoints three to five current Session members for Interim Search Committee. See interim search process in Stage II.
 - 2) If the congregation can no longer support an installed person in the position, other temporary supply options are discussed with the Session.
 - 3) If the Session decides to pursue a commissioned ruling elder for this position, please see Policy for Commissioned Ruling Elders.

- 4. Congregational Meeting. See *Congregational Meeting Agenda*:
 - a. Pastor may moderate unless she/he deems it impractical.
 - b. Pastor requests dissolution.
 - c. Congregation votes on request.
 - d. Congregation elects two representatives: one to testify at the next Presbytery meeting that action has taken place in proper order; and a second to speak to the pastor's ministry. Pastor

- signs *Report of Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship*. Form is completed by Clerk of Session and given to the COM liaison who then provides copies to Stated Clerk, Presbytery Office.
- e. COM liaison explains next steps to the congregation and answers questions.
 - 5. Presbytery acts to dissolve pastoral relationship after hearing report and recommendation of COM and two representatives of congregation. The Presbytery (upon COM recommendation) appoints a moderator.
 - 6. Congregation and pastor develop a service of worship (or a portion of the regular worship) which celebrates the ministry of the pastor. See *Guideline for a Litany of Farewell* and *Suggested Litany for Dissolution of a Pastoral Call* for suggestions. The COM liaison or a committee representative should be present at this service.
 - 7. COM liaison sets up exit interview with another COM member and pastor using the *Exit Interview for Pastors and CREs* form.
 - 8. The pastor and the treasurer of the congregation must file the required termination forms with the Board of Pensions. Failure to do so will result in the loss of coverage. The pastor should contact the Board Pensions directly for information regarding his/her specific transitional situation.
 - 9. COM liaison shares current *Pulpit Supply List* with Session.
 - 10. COM liaison sets up an exit interview with Session following *Exit Interviews with Sessions*.