

**PRESBYTERY OF GENESEE VALLEY
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Exit Interview with Session

Rationale: The Committee on Ministry will get a better sense of a congregation that will help it work with the church during the transition process if it conducts an exit interview with the Session whenever a pastor leaves the congregation. The church, through the Session, will benefit from an opportunity to address the pastoral relationship as it begins the transition process to other pastoral leadership. The focus of the interview should be on the health of the congregation.

Applicable Situations: Exit interviews shall take place whenever a pastor (minister of word and sacrament or commissioned lay pastor) leaves a church, including but not limited to interim arrangements, stated supply, and temporary supply that exceeds 6 months in length. An exit interview is not required unless requested by the COM liaison, COM, or the Session, when the pastoral relationship is by its terms both temporary and short term, such as temporary supply contracts for less than 6 months and pulpit supply arrangements.

Process:

- The COM liaison will be responsible for scheduling the exit interview with the Session. Whenever possible, the interview will be scheduled within one month after the pastor's last day at the church. Normally the exit interview with the Session will be scheduled after the exit interview with the pastor.
- The COM liaison plus at least one other member of COM will be present at the interview.
- The COM liaison will be responsible for sending out sample topics of discussion to the Clerk of Session before the date of the interview so that the members of Session will have an opportunity for prior reflection.
- The COM liaison will prepare a written summary of the discussion including the names of the COM representatives and promptly submit it to COM, and it will be filed in the Presbytery's records for the church. The liaison will also send a copy to the clerk of the Session.
- Once the written summary is filed with the Presbytery, it may be made available upon request to subsequent pastors of the congregation.

SAMPLE TOPICS OF DISCUSSION FOR SESSION EXIT INTERVIEWS

1. How does the congregation feel about the transition that has taken place? Are there tensions or conflicts arising out of the pastor's departure?
2. What is the current state of health of the congregation?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this congregation?
4. What is the financial condition of the congregation, and will financial concerns impact the search for new pastoral leadership?
5. Are there any critical problems that should be dealt with before the congregation proceeds to look for a new pastor?
6. How can the Committee of Ministry be of help to the congregation in this time of transition?
7. For interim pastor relationships: Has the church adequately completed all five of the Developmental Tasks for the Interim Period (coming to terms with history; discovering a new identity; allowing needed leadership change; renewing denominational linkages; commitment to new directions in ministry) ?