

**PRESBYTERY OF GENESEE VALLEY
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Policy on Temporary Pastoral Relationships

The Presbytery of Genesee Valley as part of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) is determined to assist congregations within its jurisdiction in obtaining competent and vital leadership for its congregations. The Presbytery's desire and preference is to see that its congregations have pastors that adhere to Reformed theology and are within the Presbyterian tradition.

As Presbyterians we believe that pastors and congregations are brought together through a call from God. This call is confirmed as the pastor, the church, and the Presbytery form a partnership to say "yes" to the relationship. This three-way partnership is acted out throughout the pastoral vacancy process.

Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) is an active participant with a congregation as it seeks a new pastor. It will be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in particular situations and be open to make appropriate adaptations in order to provide pastoral services for a congregation.

During the time of transition between pastors, congregations must engage in a spiritual discernment process to discover its call – what God wants it to be and do in the next phase of its ministry. This activity by a congregation will assist it in determining the type of pastoral relationship it needs. This will eventually take the form of a permanently installed pastoral relationship or a temporary pastoral relationship.

This policy hopes to address the varied types of temporary pastoral relationships and to affirm the importance of securing Presbyterian leadership whenever possible.

PULPIT SUPPLY

As soon as a congregation learns that its pastor is leaving, the Session would be wise to obtain immediate transitional (*temporary*) pastoral leadership for filling the pulpit on Sunday mornings following the departure of the pastor. Consulting with the church's assigned COM liaison, the Session will be encouraged to use the Pulpit Supply List.

The Pulpit Supply list of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley is comprised of individuals who have been cleared by the COM with regards to their credentials (if ordained pastors or elders) and to their understanding of the Reformed faith and belief. The COM shall have the right to refuse an applicant's request to be placed or kept on Presbytery's approved Pulpit Supply List. In addition, the COM will make an annual review of the names on the Pulpit Supply List. The list will be updated as needed to keep it current.

Session should be aware that use of the approved Pulpit Supply List of the Presbytery can help avoid undue hardship on Sunday mornings.

Eligibility for placement on the Presbytery's Pulpit Supply list is established through the Committee on Ministry according to the following order of preference:

- **Ordained PC(U.S.A.) minister members of Presbytery of Genesee Valley.**
- **Ordained PC(U.S.A.) minister members of other presbyteries.**
- **Ordained Formula of Agreement Ministers** (Reformed Church of America, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- **Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs)** whose Presbytery credentials are current

- **Ordained PC(U.S.A.) elders**, in accordance with G.6.0304, who have been approved by the COM after a personal interview to review their sense of call, and written statement of faith and readiness for preaching.
- **Ordained/Credentials Formula of Agreement Lay Persons** who have been approved by the COM after a personal interview to review their sense of call, and written statement of faith, and readiness for preaching.
- **Seminary Students under care of their Presbytery or Formula of Agreement Churches** with appropriate Seminary references and have been approved by the COM after a personal interview to review their status, sense of call, and written statement of faith and readiness to preach.
- **Ordained clergy of other denominations** whose credentials and references are in order and who have been approved by the COM after a personal interview to review their credentials, sense of call, experience and written statement of faith and readiness to preach.

The Presbytery is aware that from time to time a Session will invite ordained or lay people to preach in their pulpit that are not on the approved Pulpit Supply List. A thorough reference check, examination, and clearance of such an individual is essential. A Session is responsible to be aware of an individual's sense of call and statement of belief before allowing him or her to preach in the pulpit.

A person serving as Pulpit Supply preacher may only preach up to four consecutive Sundays in a given congregation and then the Session is encouraged to seek another to fill the pulpit. After a two week hiatus period has occurred, a former Pulpit Supply preacher can be asked again to preach in that congregation.

All pulpit supply preachers are subject to the appropriate directives of the current Book of Order and both the Pulpit Supply preacher and the Session understand that filling a pulpit is not a means of establishing a permanent or temporary supply relationship between a preacher and congregation.

The Presbytery recommends that the Session provide a minimum \$125 honorarium for Pulpit Supply, in addition to reimbursement for meal and travel expenses.

OTHER TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

Depending on the size and needs of a congregation and the transition work that a Session wants to accomplish, a Session may select from the following temporary pastoral relationships: Interim Pastor; Designated Pastor, Stated Supply Pastor; Temporary Supply Pastor, or Commissioned Ruling Elder.

It is the general policy of this Presbytery that temporary pastoral leaders are not eligible to serve the congregation as permanent installed pastors. The title "temporary" implies just that. Although, there is the option for the presbytery to change these temporary positions to permanent by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the presbytery but only if the presbytery determines that it would enhance its mission strategy. Interim pastoral relationships are ineligible for consideration for this presbytery action.

The Presbytery reminds its congregations that the order of preference to be used in securing individuals to fill these temporary pastoral relationships is as follows:

- **Ordained PC(U.S.A.) minister members of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley.**
- **Ordained PC(U.S.A.) minister members of other presbyteries.**
- **Ordained Formula of Agreement Ministers** (Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- **Commissioned Ruling Elder (CREs)** whose Presbytery credentials are current .

- **Seminary Graduates who are also PC(U.S.A.) Candidates for Ministry** with the approval of their Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the COM of call.

In these types of temporary pastoral relationships the Session has the authority to contractually hire the person with the approval of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry and without congregational approval on an annual basis submitting a Covenant Agreement.

In addition, each temporary pastoral relationship is unique and has other criteria to be followed. Please refer to the current *Book of Order*.

The Presbytery's COM stands ready to help a Session to understand the differences in these types of transitional (*temporary*) pastoral leaders. Sessions are encouraged to be in contact with their COM liaison as soon as possible. The COM is ready to help a Session to select the best option for the church and to find an appropriate person(s) to be considered for each.

Once an option has been agreed upon and the rationale approved by the COM, COM will follow its process for selection of a predetermined number of candidates from which the church extends the invitation to an individual for pastoral service.

Interim Pastor Relationship

This Presbytery's policy is to permit an Interim Pastor to ordinarily serve a congregation for up to two years while the congregation seeks to call an installed pastor. The Presbytery through its Committee on Ministry may grant an extension when circumstances warrant. Interim Pastors may serve a congregation within this Presbytery if they have completed at least the first level of Interim Training or are willing to do so during the first year of their service with a congregation. Congregations wishing to procure the services of an Interim Pastor may do so with the approval of the Committee on Ministry. This Presbytery's order of preference for Interim pastoral relationships is first PC(U.S.A.) Ministers of Word and Sacrament, then Formula of Agreement ministers and finally ministers of other denominations. It is the policy of this presbytery that certain situations are helped in transition by the work of a pastor addressing needs and issues without the pastor or congregation expecting a possible permanent position; therefore the Interim Pastor ordinarily will not be eligible to serve as the next Called/Installed Pastor, co-pastor or associate pastor.

A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy with a particular congregation would be enhanced by allowing the interim to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate. In order to establish such a relationship, this will take a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the presbytery.

Temporary Supply Relationship

It is this presbytery's policy that a temporary supply is one who serves a year or less.

A Seminary Graduate who is also a PC(U.S.A.) Candidate for Ministry can serve as a Temporary Supply in a congregation only after consultation with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the approval of the Committee on Ministry.

In the instance where the Temporary Supply is a Seminary Graduate and PC(U.S.A.) Candidate for Ministry, the Presbytery may consider a congregation's issuing of a call to the Temporary Supply only after the Seminary Graduate and PC(U.S.A.) Candidate for Ministry has been absent from the congregation for a minimum of six months, the congregation has made a concerted effort to conduct a thorough search through Church Leadership Connection and the Presbytery has approved such by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote. It is in the best interest of the health and well being of both the Seminary Graduate and PC(U.S.A.) Candidate for Ministry and the

congregation that they have the experience of the established call process through the Church Leadership Connection of the PC(U.S.A.).

Designated Pastor Relationships

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. has available a pastoral relationship that is unique in nature. This position provides for a temporary relationship to happen but also affords the congregation and pastor an opportunity for a more permanent or installed relationship.

A designated pastoral relationship, full or part-time, is a call to a minister of the Word and Sacrament established by the Presbytery for a term of not less than two and no more than four years. The congregation and minister must both have agreed to the designated relationship and the Committee on Ministry given its approval.

If a designated pastor and congregation wish to pursue a longer relationship, this can happen, if an open search was initially conducted by the Committee on Ministry, and after at least two years of the designated pastor relationship has expired and the COM has given its concurrence. The Session acting in place of the pastor nominating committee with vote of the congregation can issue a call to the designated pastor as the installed pastor.

We encourage congregations to seriously consider this option when they are looking at 2-4 years of stabilized pastoral services. See the Transition Manual for more information on the designated pastor call process.

POSTING TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Presbytery of Genesee Valley through its COM will take prudent measures to advertise any temporary pastoral relationship through written, verbal and media avenues, inclusive of the Presbytery's website if deemed warrant. There will be no posting of information to the website without approval of the COM.