

COVENANT OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

I will keep confidential all information shared with or within the Committee on Ministry, unless or until this information is also made common knowledge. I will not share it with colleagues, friends, spouse, or others except as required by law, the *Book of Order*, or the standing rules of presbytery.

I will use discretion in the way I conduct myself as a member of COM. I will not knowingly take actions that would embarrass colleagues or signal others that "trouble" exists when they would not be entitled to that knowledge. I will not participate in conversations which speculate on, or gossip about, situations involving member churches or members of presbytery.

I will avoid conflicts of interest by recusing myself from deliberations of COM when matters which pertain to my personal interests or the interests of my particular congregation or a congregation I have served or been a member of in the past. I will, however, make myself available at the request of the Committee on Ministry if I have information which may shed light on an ongoing situation in my particular congregation or a congregation I have served in the past.

I will not use my relationships with other members of COM to attempt to influence the outcome of matters which pertain to my personal interests or the interests of my particular church.

I will treat all my colleagues and churches of the presbytery fairly and equally. I will, like a good mediator, attempt to balance the power in disputes. I will be inclusive in my behavior with colleagues in governing body life and will try to empower them for full participation and service in the life of our church.

I will make myself available within reason to other ministers and elders of the presbytery who ask me to hear them out. I will warn them that the matters they share with me may not be kept from secular authorities or the courts of the Church in some special areas (such as child abuse) and that they should, therefore, exercise discretion in what they say to me. I will actively listen to them as they share their needs and concerns with me, and refer them to the General Presbyter or to qualified specialists as the situation demands.

I will respect the collective wisdom of the Committee on Ministry and its staff. In working with churches and ministers, I will remember that I am an agent of the committee. I will not act unilaterally unless the Committee gives me that authority. I will fairly represent the position of the Committee on Ministry and will not present my own personal position or views as the position of the committee when my position or views may be different from those of the committee. I will not ignore, bypass, or act contrary to the *Book of Order*.

I will not accept remuneration or personal gifts from ministers or churches of the presbytery, except when offering some special extended service (moderator of session, long term conflict consultant, or pulpit supply). Tokens of thanks upon the completion of Committee on Ministry services may be appropriate.

I will not give a reference concerning a minister of the presbytery unless I have been listed by that minister as a reference or otherwise approved by that minister or presbytery's policy to give such a reference. When giving such references, I will confine my answers to matters on which I have direct knowledge and competence or that could be otherwise substantiated by reference to public records. I will not knowingly libel or slander a colleague in ministry.

I will conduct myself ethically in all the usual ways that Elders and Ministers of the Word and Sacrament are expected to conduct themselves and be mindful of the vows I made at my ordination. Failure to abide by this Covenant of Conduct will be grounds for removal from the Committee on Ministry.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date