

WHEN YOU PLAN THE DISSOLUTION OF YOUR PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

1. When a pastor is reasonably certain that a call to another position will be offered and he/she has decided to accept it, or he/she has decided to return to school, retire, take another job, or leave the present pastorate for any other reason, the pastor must
 - contact the chairperson of the Committee on Ministry and the General Presbyter, and
 - inform them of tentative dates for final candidating and relocation plans.
 - This information will be kept confidential until the pastor is ready to announce his/her plans to the session and congregation.

2. When a call to another position has been extended to the pastor and the pastor is ready to announce his/her plans,
 - he/she will need to inform the session so that they can call a congregational meeting.
 - Discuss with the session the intended termination date and the date for a congregational meeting for the congregation to concur with the request to dissolve the pastoral relationship.
 - Prepare a letter of resignation.
 - Present the letter of resignation to the session with the Committee on Ministry representative present.
 - The session will arrange to call a congregational meeting.
 - The following morning after the session meeting, mail the letter to members of the congregation.

3. At the congregational meeting, the congregation may act to concur in the request to Presbytery* and select two or three members, representing the session and congregation, to attest to the action when it comes before Presbytery. These names, the date of the action, and the name of the minister moderating the meeting must be reported to the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry.

* If they do not concur, see G-14.0602ff.

4. Sometime after the pastor contacts the chairperson of the Committee on Ministry, a committee representative will be appointed to meet with the session. This initial meeting may take place at Step 2, or at a subsequent session meeting. The representative will counsel with the session in these areas:
 - the session's responsibility to secure short-term pulpit supply from those persons approved by the Presbytery (see Approved Preaching List).
 - the need for a full-time or part-time interim.
 - the appointment of a moderator by the Presbytery. The session may wish to express a preference as to their moderator, but appointment is made by the Presbytery upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministry. (See #5)

- the membership and election of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The PNC may not be elected until the Presbytery Committee on Ministry has given its approval. Another congregational meeting needs to be called when approval has been given for the electing of a Pastor Nominating Committee.
 - the Church Information Form (CIF). Normally, the Pastor Nominating Committee will develop the CIF to describe the church's mission and pastoral expectations. It is important that the Presbytery representative be involved in this process. The CIF must be approved by the session and the Committee on Ministry before it can be transmitted to the national office.
5. Presbytery will appoint a moderator for the church served. Essential working information such as neighbor pastors willing to provide short-term pastoral care, session committees, mailing lists, key contact persons for church programs, organizations, bulletins and newsletters, trustees, committees, etc. should be provided to the moderator by the clerk of session.
 6. The General Presbyter will arrange an "exit interview" with the pastor prior to departure. While the General Presbyter will normally do the "exit interview," the pastor may request the COM chairperson to assign one or two others to do the interview if he/she feels uncomfortable with the General Presbyter doing the interview.
 7. Be sure that all necessary call forms are in the hands of the Stated Clerk for the Presbytery meeting or the Committee on Ministry meeting at which action is expected on the request.
 8. *Please consult the Policy for Terminating Pastoral/Professional Relationships for further instructions.*
 9. Godspeed!

Note: These guidelines (marked confidential) as well as the Policy for Terminating Pastoral/Professional Relationships should be given to pastors then they begin their search and the General Presbyter gets a reference check or the Stated Clerk attests to clear them for circulating their dossier.