

DISSOLVING PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

I. Policy Statement

The relationship between a pastor, co-pastor or associate pastor and a church may be dissolved only by presbytery or by grant of such authority to the Committee on Ministry. The minister or the congregation may request the dissolution of relationship in accordance with the conditions and process outlined in the Book of Order.

II. Rationale

Orderly transition benefits the church, the minister and the presbytery, ensuring that the needs of all parties are fairly served.

III. Responsibilities

A. Committee on Ministry (COM) Responsibilities

1. COM shall name the moderator of the congregational meeting where the vote to dissolve the existing call is taken except in the case of dissolving a relationship with an Associate pastor.
2. COM shall meet with the departing minister for an exit interview to review his/her relationship with the congregation and to assess the congregation's current status.
3. COM shall offer to conduct an exit interview with the session of the church.
4. COM shall request the attendance of the departing minister at the next presbytery meeting for a service of recognition.

B. Minister Responsibilities

1. A minister departing a church shall give written notification to the session of that church and the chair of COM, providing full details regarding last date of service and plans for transferring responsibilities.
2. The minister shall meet with the COM for an exit interview.
3. The minister shall report reemployment to COM and, when appropriate, to the session.

C. Session Responsibilities

1. The session shall call a meeting of the congregation for a vote on dissolution of the pastoral relationship.
2. Any accrued vacation time and study leave (time and funds) shall be used prior to the termination date. In those instances where possible, accrued study leave

funds may be transferred to a calling church or organization.

3. In cases of dissolving a pastoral relationship at the request of a congregation, the congregation shall be required to provide the following:
 - a. A commitment of continued prayer for the pastor and family.
 - b. Continued financial support per the conditions of the most recent terms of call, excluding travel and professional expenses, and including contributions to the Board of Pensions, for a period of six months. Regardless of the specific period of time, the financial support will cease upon the reemployment of the pastor involved. In counsel with COM, the financial support may be considered for up to 12 months.
 - c. When the decision for termination is agreed upon by the pastor, session, congregation and presbytery, termination compensation shall begin upon the effective date agreed to by the parties involved.

D. Additional Responsibilities/Information

Refer to Policy PT-2: *Relationship Between Congregations and Former Pastors*.