

MISSOURI UNION PRESBYTERY

COM MANUAL

Adopted Structure: 1/5/10

Adopted Manual: 10/5/10

Revised 1/11/11

Revised 10/7/14

Revised January 9, 2018

Revised December 1, 2020

Revised January 1, 2022

Revised February 26, 2022

Revised December 1, 2023

Revised January 18, 2024



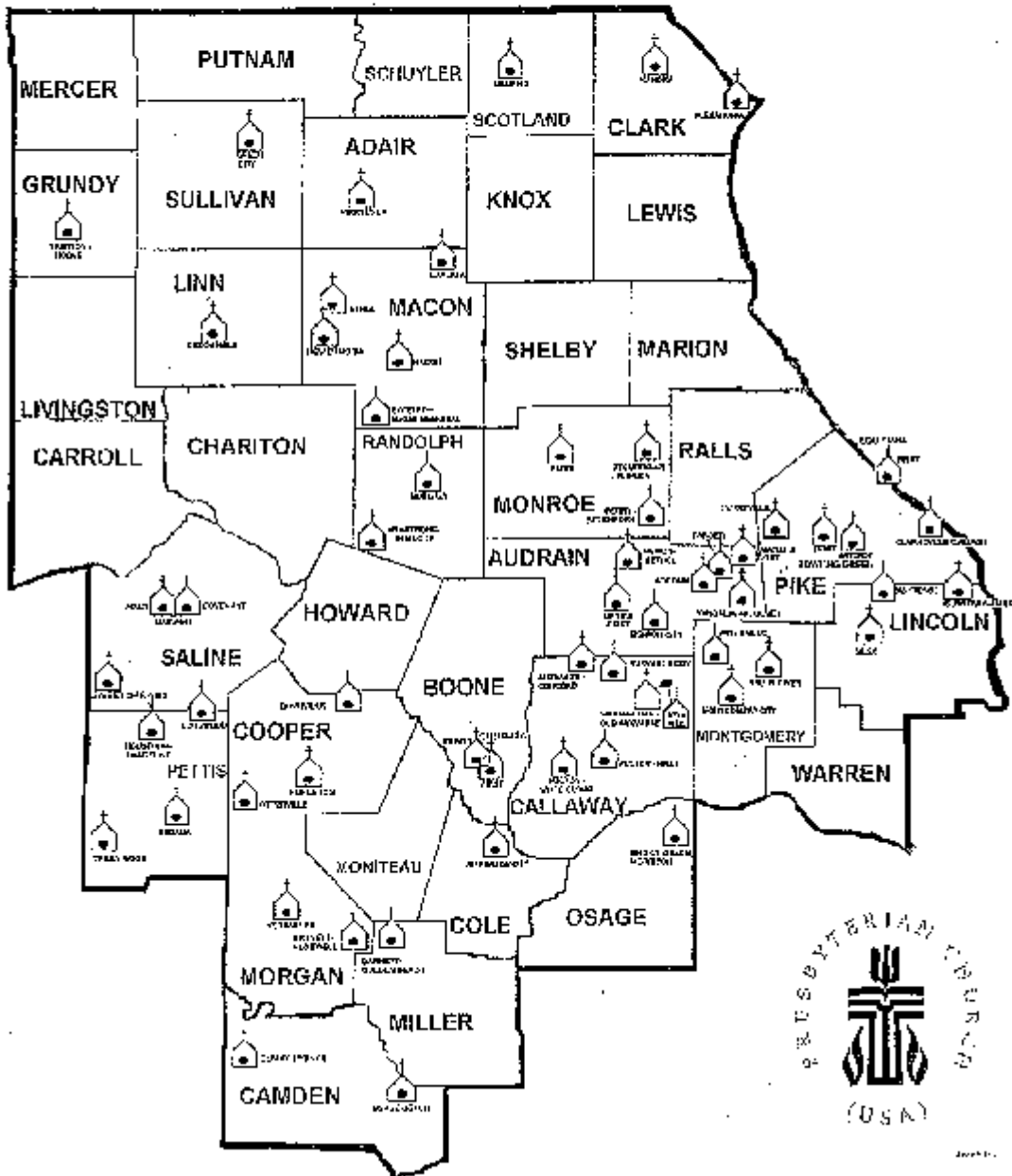
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This binder is for current COM members. It is to be kept and maintained during your term of service. **When your term is over, this guide should be returned to MUP so that it can be passed on to new members of the committee,** in order that they may benefit from this resource and refer to specific GA,

Synod, and MUP guidelines. Thank you for your willingness to serve on this committee. Your support is vital to the health of Missouri Union Presbytery.

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Missouri Union Presbytery**

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I. Overview of Responsibilities of the Commission on Ministry

The committee usually meets six times a year in Columbia with special called meetings as needed. Meetings are ordinarily in person but may be held by conference call.

All COM work is focused on **HELPING** churches and pastors to remain:

- a) healthy (spiritually, financially, etc.)
- b) active (physically, emotionally, in community, missionally)
- c) connected (denominationally, ecumenically, etc.)

COM work is **CONFIDENTIAL**

Life Together in the Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (1998):

- #5 "Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission unless an individual is a danger to self or others."

COM members are expected to **PRAY**

Pray privately and in worship for the pastors and churches to which they have been assigned as team members, for all congregations in the presbytery, and for other pastors/congregations in special circumstances.

Members of COM serve in two ways: on the committee as a whole and as a team member (MUP 2/26/19).

Overview of responsibilities as outlined in the *Book of Order*

G-1.0101 *The Mission of the Congregation*

"...The congregation is the basic form of the church, but it is not of itself a sufficient form of the church. Thus congregations are bound together in communion with one another, united in relationships of accountability and responsibility..."

G-3.0301 *Composition and Responsibilities*

"...The presbytery is responsible...for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness...the presbytery has responsibility and power to:

- a. *provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard*
- b. *provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received*
- c. *nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ"*

G-3.0307 *Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Teaching Elders and Congregations*

"Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations."

"Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and Christian educators of the presbytery: to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastor service, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient. To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of...it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery."

**Overview of responsibilities as outlined in the Advisory Handbook for Ministry Committees/Commissions
Presbyterian Church (USA):**

- a. *“One of the ways a presbytery leads and guides the witness of its congregations, “...so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness,” is through its role as pastor, counselor, and advisor,”*
- b. *“In this role a presbytery keeps the lines of communication open with its congregations and church leaders, enabling presbytery to better understand their lives and ministries and, in turn (when called for) to respond appropriately and in a timely manner.”*

There are particular responsibilities listed in G-3.0301 and G-3.0307 which a presbytery will want to refer to as it determines how to fulfill its role as pastor, counselor, and advisor.

COM will approve and recommend to Presbytery for approval (COM 12/2/14; MUP 2/10/15)

- Call of pastor, presbytery membership, and terms of call
- Request authority to set the date and membership of an Administrative Commission to ordain/install a newly called pastor
- Temporary pastoral relations and presbytery membership
- Re-commissioning of CRE
- Terms of Call report
- Continuing Education report
- Permission for a minister to labor inside/outside the bounds of the presbytery
- Validated ministries
- Minimum terms of call

COM will bring before the Presbytery for approval (COM 12/2/14; MUP 2/10/15):

- Concur with congregational vote to dissolve pastoral call
- Honorably retired status and dissolution of call upon retirement date

COM will decide and inform the Presbytery (COM 12/2/14; MUP 2/10/15; MUP 2/26/19):

- Date and membership of administrative commission to ordain/install
- Transfer of presbytery membership of ministers
- Meeting dates
- Mentoring relationships
- Appointment of moderators
- Approval of trained elders to serve communion
- Team Members

Email vote of the committee (date 3/6/12)

Routine business of COM can be conducted by email. The moderator of COM will send out an email. The subject line of the email will start with “COM.” Responses may be made to just the moderator. The moderator will tally the responses and email the outcome to the committee. All email votes will be confirmed at the next stated meeting of COM.

Rules for Email Voting (MUP 2/26/19)

Voting. When issues are decided by a vote, all voters may have to be present in the same room at the same time, as when secret ballots must be counted in the presence of the membership. However, a vote by e-mail shall be acceptable unless explicitly disallowed.

To conduct an e-mail vote, a ballot is sent to the voting membership stating exactly what is to be voted on and containing at the beginning a clearly designated place for the member to mark a vote. The subject line (or equivalent) of the email should contain the term "ballot."

Members who share an email account with a spouse or significant other should let the spouse/significant other know that they should not open emails with the word "ballot" in the subject line.

If a vote is to be counted, the ballot should clearly designate the choices. Here are two hypothetical examples:

I vote _____ (fill in "yes," "no," or leave blank).

I vote for _____ (fill in "Jones," "Miller," "Wang," or leave blank).

The email should contain a deadline for members to return their email vote. A majority of the members must respond in the affirmative for the vote to pass and be recorded. Not all members have to respond to the email for the vote to pass.

The email vote has to be without dissent to pass. If there is dissent it will need to be discussed at the next meeting.

The moderator will send out an additional email reporting the outcome of the vote.

Results of the email vote will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.

II. COM Responsibilities

The Presbytery's role of pastor, counselor, and advisor is best developed and maintained by building strong connections between pastors and session with one member of the Commission on Ministry (MUP 2/26/19).

COM members will serve on a team. A checklist is a tool to track connections with the congregations. (See 5-FORMS section for the checklist)(MUP 2/26/19).

A. Visits Sessions

Arrange for session visits (previously known as triennial visit; MUP 2/26/19)

One team member shall schedule a formal visit at least every four years with the session and pastor/moderator. A visit includes the following:

1. Personal visit with the pastor (and spouse)
2. Visit with the session and pastor, and
3. Visit with the session without the pastor

A written report will be sent to the COM moderator and General Presbyter and reported at the next COM meeting. (Questionnaires for these visits are found in section 5-FORMS and in the G. A. Liaison Advisory Handbook – "Revisiting the Triennial Visit". See also Liaison G. A. Advisory Handbook – "What is Healthy Ministry and Building an Effective Ministry Together")

B. Manages Congregational Conflict

Report to the General Presbyter and Commission on Ministry moderator when any indication of trouble appears in a congregation (MUP 2/26/19):

1. Committee members are to BE NEUTRAL in church conflicts.
2. COM team members serve all sides and shall avoid becoming an ally of one or the other.
3. Team members need to recognize the signs of conflict.
4. When necessary, call to attention of the COM moderator and General Presbyter the possibility/necessity of closing a congregation.

C. Helps Alleviate Congregational Distress

Appeal to the General Presbyter on behalf of a congregation when they are confronted with internal or external distresses. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is available to respond to a disaster. A disaster is a situation in which the response is beyond what the body can absorb. Disasters can be storms, fires, economics, loss of life, etc.

D. Assists Administrative Commission (AC) in Church Closings

There are many reasons that a congregation closes. The work of a COM Team Member is to assure the remaining members that their congregation's witness to the world is valued. The AC will offer to guide the congregation to consider their legacy of witness even after their closing. The narrative and checklist information about closing a church are helpful tools to guide a congregation through its closing (MUP 2/26/19). (See 5-FORMS – "When the Time Comes to Close a Church-Checklist")

When the Time to Close a Church Arrives....



Consult with the Presbytery!

A team from Missouri Union Presbytery, with representatives from the Commission on Ministry and the Board of Trustees, will visit with you to discuss the important questions of whether there are alternatives to dissolving your congregation. If an alternative cannot be found, these representatives will discuss with your congregational representatives how to proceed in closing your church as well as an appropriate disposition of your church building and other assets. Creative use of an existing facility will always be encouraged. For example, churches have become housing for historical societies and performing arts centers. Even if a church building must be razed, the Presbytery can help do this in an acceptable way. While legally and morally all assets of a church are turned over to the work of the larger church through the Presbytery, the members and officers of Missouri Union are pledged to work with local churches for appropriate uses of property and funds. Often such funds are placed in accounts designated for new church development, church renewal, or creative ministries. At the Presbytery meeting where a vote is taken to officially close your congregation, your representatives will be asked to share a brief history of the church and its accomplishments.

Celebrate the History!

Gather important pictures, documents, and mementos together for display. Plan a special closing service and invite members of the community and its other churches as well as the Presbytery. In the midst of inevitable grieving over the closing of your beloved church, lift up the many important minutes of ministry that God has helped you to experience.

Preserve the History!

Make copies of any important documents and then send your records and rolls to the Presbyterian Church, USA, Historical Society. Consider making both archival paper and digital versions. Place them in strategic places such as your local library, historical society, and families of your congregation. The Stated Clerk of Missouri Union Presbytery is eager to assist you in this process.

Contact all Members on Your Church Roll!

Every person on either a church's active or inactive roll should be contacted informing them of the pending dissolution of the congregation and asking their wishes concerning a transfer of membership. Typically, a self-addressed stamped return postcard is enclosed to make the reply easy to accomplish. List on the card possibilities such as, "I have already transferred my membership to another congregation," "I wish a letter of transfer to be sent to the following congregation," "Transfer my membership to congregation A/B/C." or "I wish to be dropped from all official rolls." Finally make arrangements with another Presbyterian church to have any members transferred to its care who do not respond to your inquiry.

Remember: Your Church is a Witness to Jesus' Resurrection!

Believe and proclaim that, although you may be closing a specific congregation, the faithful work of your discipleship has and still is preaching good news in many places and ways both known to you and perhaps known only to God. Closing a congregation will bring moments of sadness and regret, but also acknowledges that we are a larger People of God committed to service in new ways and new places. See Section IV -FORMS – "When the Time Arrives to Close a Church Checklist"

III. Pastoral Care Work

Presbytery has a responsibility to serve as pastor and counselor to: all teaching elders, installed and temporary pastors; those engaged in validated ministry and members-at-large; honorably retired teaching elders; all commissioned ruling elders; and all certified Christian educators of the Presbytery. This work is done primarily through the Commission on Ministry and the General Presbyter. What follows are ways that COM accomplishes its pastoral care work.

A. Assign mentors

1. Appropriate to the position, the length of time in ministry, and newness to Missouri Union Presbytery, etc.
2. Ensure that for first-call clergy, terms of call include requirements that clergy attend (with local congregational support) the Synod-sponsored program for first-call clergy (G. A. Advisory Handbook – *First Call Pastors*)

B. On-going Care

1. Support of pastoral leaders – encourage formation of support groups
2. Coaching/spiritual direction – publicize availability of “Coaching”
3. Conduct annual visits/contacts to retired clergy, non-parish clergy, etc.
4. Observation of anniversaries – ensure appropriate observation (presbytery and local congregation) of significant dates in clergy life (ordination anniversary, call anniversary, etc.)
5. Retreat for pastoral leaders – initiate retreat(s). Advance planning for budget needs is critical.
6. Board of Pensions – publicize Board of Pensions opportunities for retirement planning, fiscal health, & career changes. (A COM member is elected to serve as pension liaison & benefits specialist, and can serve as a resource.)

C. Annual Reports

Collect and collate annual review of terms of call and report of continuing education. Work with MUP office staff in preparation of annual report of terms of call to a COM meeting and then to a MUP meeting. When necessary, serve as advocate with sessions for clergy and CRE’s in salary and benefits adjustments. Evaluate and bring to full COM for recommendation to presbytery any changes in presbytery minimum terms of call.

D. Continuing Education

Each pastor (other than honorably retired) and each active certified Christian educator shall in January of each year report his or her continuing education programs, activities, and/or endeavors engaged in the previous calendar year, including the title of each program, the presenting organization, leaders, locations and dates of the events. The reporting of details requested will enable the Commission on Ministry to make pastors of the presbytery aware of continuing education opportunities which they may find valuable. Presbytery staff shall, no later than January 3 of each year, provide to those persons a form for the reporting of continuing education programs, activities, and/or endeavors. Each pastor and certified Christian educator shall complete such report form and return it to the presbytery office no later than the February date when the annual denominational statistical reports are due.

At the second meeting of presbytery each year, the Commission on Ministry shall report in writing the terms of call for each pastor and certified Christian educator and the continuing education information received from each person. If no continuing education for the year is reported, such fact shall be included in the committee’s report to presbytery. **Rationale:** *“The publication of continuing education activities will be incentive to assure participation in a reasonable program of continuing education by each of our pastors.”* (G. A. Advisory Handbook *Professional Development and Sabbatical Leave*)

E. Boundaries Training

Missouri Union Presbytery requires appropriate boundary and ethics training for pastoral relationships every three years or within the first year of coming into the Presbytery for all teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders in order to remain in good standing.

F. Transitions and Healthy Departures

1. Dissolving the pastoral relationship

A pastoral relationship is dissolved by the request of the pastor to the session to call a congregational meeting, the vote of the congregation to concur with the pastor's request and the vote of the presbytery to concur with the request of the pastor and congregation.

Appropriate boundaries for former pastors and the congregations they served:

The time that a pastor retires or leaves a congregation for another call is marked by the end of providing pastoral services to that congregation. Former pastors may not provide pastoral services (weddings, funerals, baptisms, make pastoral calls, or provide counseling regarding a personal situation or the life of the congregation) to members (including family of members and those with ties to the church that are not members) of former congregations without the invitation of the pastor/moderator of session.

The departing pastor will communicate with the session and congregation members the necessity of ending the pastoral relationship in order to allow a healthy transition to the next pastor. For example, the departing pastor may say, "Just as I have cherished the pastoral relationship we have had, I also cherish for you the opportunity to form a new pastoral relationship with those who will fill this position in the future. For this reason, I ask you to respect the professional boundaries of ministry and not ask me to officiate for weddings, funerals, baptisms, to make pastoral calls, or to provide counsel regarding a personal situation of the life of the congregation. I want only the best for this congregation and will do all that I can to insure the future health of your ministry, and not to weaken the ministry of your pastor. Please continue to honor our respect and affection for one another by honoring these guidelines." It is the former pastor's responsibility to say no to any requests for pastoral service. For example, the former pastor may say, "For the continued health of the congregation, it is inappropriate for me to perform any pastoral function now that I am no longer the pastor." It is appropriate for the former pastor to contact the pastor/moderator of session whenever a request has been made. The session of the congregation where a pastor has left or retired is to secure pastoral services to provide for the pastoral needs of the congregation.

See the GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTING PASTORS ADOPTED BY MUP ON JUNE 12, 2018 IN THE APPENDIX

2. Retirement

A pastor usually seeks the consultation of the General Presbyter and the Board of Pensions in considering retirement. The pastor requests the session to call a congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship and determine the retirement date. At the congregational meeting, a vote will be taken to concur with the pastor's request for retirement and to dissolve the pastoral relationship. That action is communicated to the COM, which brings it before the presbytery where a vote is taken to concur with the request of the pastor and congregation for retirement and dissolving the pastoral relationship. The presbytery may confer the title of "Honorably Retired." The details of the retirement pension are under the direction of the Board of Pensions. (Advisory Handbook - *Retired Teaching Elders*)

Pastor-Parish Relations Work

Pastors and congregations are in relationship with one another in their ministry together. The Commission on Ministry is the arm of Presbytery that helps facilitate this work and aids in maintaining healthy relationships. This work includes assisting in the search for new pastoral leadership with congregations, assisting with dissolutions of pastoral relationships, and many other aspects of the beginnings, endings, and all work between those two events that is a part of healthy and effective ministry. The Pastor-Parish work of COM is accomplished through the COM liaison as well as the committee as a whole.

A. Oversight of all matters relating to transitions of installed pastors

1. Dissolving the pastoral relationship (MUP 2/26/19)

a. Meet with the General Presbyter and COM member Representative

The General Presbyter and team members will meet with the session when the pastor decides to take another call or retire.

b. The COM member will report on the congregational meeting and effective date of dissolution

The congregational meeting can be held on the last Sunday or earlier. It can be moderated by the pastor or another person approved to moderate.

c. Request to COM to dissolve call

The request by the pastor and congregation to dissolve the call will be passed through COM to the presbytery for approval to complete the process.

d. Exit interview – when a pastor leaves (Changed 9/9/08)

When a minister or a CRE ends their service with a MUP congregation, there shall be an exit interview. The interview team shall be formed under the leadership of the COM moderator.

The interview team shall be composed of:

1. The General Presbyter or the moderator of COM. (Whichever of these two is actually present shall see that the other is informed of the interview results, and shall see that the other is furnished with a copy of the final report of the interview.)
2. The COM Interview Team member, with the congregation and when possible, another team member assigned by the COM moderator. The interview team will arrange for the exit interview with the departing pastor and the session. The team should meet with the pastor first, then with the session without the pastor present, and then, if possible, with the pastor and session combined. As appropriate, the interview team may use questions developed for triennial visits or for the recommissioning of a CRE and shall develop questions appropriate to the particular circumstances of the departure.

e. Severance policy

When the dissolution of the call is initiated by the congregation, a severance can be considered using the policy – *Guidelines for Severance for Ordained Ministers Serving in A Called Position in Missouri Union Presbytery (9/2/06)*

Preliminary understanding: Severance should be couched in our reformed understanding of Compassion and grace, and thus should not be considered a reward of incompetence.

1. Severance is to be considered in those instances when a minister is forced/ encouraged to resign without another call with no accusations of malfeasance or misconduct against him/her. When there are accusations or charges filed or pending against a minister, consideration can be given to the needs of the family even though there may be an absence of sympathy for the minister.
2. Severance is considered in lieu of unemployment compensation which is available

- to most lay people, but not to clergy in called positions.
3. Severance is considered appropriate in providing a level of transitional support to the minister and his/her family.
 4. Normally, severance will cease when the person obtains future employment comparable to or in excess of severance. If the minister obtains employment or receives a call that is not comparable to the former position, then the church will make up the difference during the term of the severance package.
 5. Normally, severance includes Effective Salary and Pension and Health benefits. It may include medical deductible and or dental/insurance. All of these figures will be based on the most recent terms of call on file in the presbytery office. Representatives of the Commission on Ministry will serve as an advisor and arbiter of all severance packages.

These guidelines for appropriate severance are given to the churches in our presbytery for their prayerful consideration:

- 1-4 years of service = 4 months of severance
- 5 years = 5 months of severance
- 6+ years = 6 months of severance

f. Guidelines for election of Pastor Emeritus/Emerita (2/20/14)

The retiring of a revered and/or long-term pastor is a time of many emotions and transitions within the life of a congregation. How to say goodbye, how to honor and how to move on are important issues for the continued health of the congregation. One opportunity to honor a retiring pastor is to confer the status of Pastor Emeritus/Emerita. Congregations are encouraged to think about other appropriate and personal ways to honor their retiring pastors.

Pastor Emeritus/Emerita defined in the Book of Order prior to 2011:

“When any pastor or associate pastor retires, and the congregation is moved with affection and gratitude to continue an association in an honorary relationship, it may, at a regularly called congregational meeting, elect him or her as Pastor Emeritus/Emerita, with or without an honorarium, but with no pastoral authority or duty. This action shall be taken only after consultation with the Commission on Ministry of the presbytery concerning the wisdom of this relationship for the peace of the church. This action shall be subject to the approval of the presbytery, and may take effect upon the formal dissolution of the pastoral or associate pastoral relationship or anytime thereafter.”

Commission on Ministry process in Missouri Union Presbytery

The conferring of this title is to be taken in consultation with the Commission on Ministry (COM). The first step in the process is for the session, or representative of the session, to contact the COM for their input and guidance. It is also wise for the session to consult with the retiring pastor in order to take into account their wishes.

When can a session approach the COM?

A congregation can approach the COM at any time after receiving official notification of the pastor’s intention to retire.

Who is eligible for pastor emeritus/emmerita status?

Both pastors and associate pastors are eligible upon their retirement. Since this is an honorary

relationship built upon gratitude and affection of a congregation for their pastor, the COM normally anticipates a pastoral tenure of 10 years for consideration of pastor emeritus/emerita status.

In entering into consultation with the COM, sessions are reminded that the designation pastor emeritus/emerita is an honorary relationship “with no pastoral authority or duty.” It is the responsibility of the session and the pastor emeritus/emerita to be absolutely clear on this matter and to clearly make this known to the congregation at large.

Is it appropriate for the name of the pastor emeritus/emerita to be listed in the bulletin, letterhead, or masthead of the church?

No. Since the position is honorary, “with no pastoral authority or duty,” to list them along with the active staff of the congregation can and often does communicate that is appropriate to continue pastoral expectations of the pastor emeritus/emerita. It is appropriate to have a plaque designating the pastor emeritus/emerita.

Can a congregation have more than one pastor emeritus/emerita?

Yes.

Does the pastor emeritus/emerita relationship change the responsibility of the individual to follow the ethics guidelines for retired pastors?

Absolutely not. The guidelines for retired pastors are to be followed by all pastors. If anything, the pastor emeritus/emerita has increased responsibility to follow and interpret the ethics guidelines to the members of the congregation who may misunderstand the relationship and assume a continuing pastoral relationship.

Conferring the Honorary Title

Once the COM and the presbytery have given their blessing, and a congregation has, at a duly called congregational meeting, elected their former pastor or associate pastor as emeritus/emerita, the congregation is encouraged to celebrate this relationship in a worship service. This may be done as a simple prayer and blessing or at a large-scale festival. At this celebration it is wise to remind all in attendance that the designation pastor emeritus/emerita is an honorary relationship and one that implies no pastoral authority or duty.

2. During the vacancy

a. A moderator will be appointed to moderate the session.

A teaching elder member of the presbytery will be assigned to moderate the session.

Elders approved to moderate a session or congregational meeting (1/3/12)

When a church is without a pastor, the moderator of the session shall be a teaching elder (minister) appointed for that purpose by the presbytery, or a minister of the same presbytery invited by the session to preside on a particular occasion. When it is impossible for such a minister to attend, the appointed moderator will name one of the ruling elders to preside.

Rationale: The Missouri Union Presbytery Commission on Ministry (COM) manual of operations shall include the policy that allows a church’s moderator to give a ruling elder authority to moderate a session meeting or part of a congregational meeting when specifically needed.

History: Ruling is modeled after the old *Book of Order*: G10.0103b

- b. A pulpit supply list will be provided by the PNC Team member with the encouragement to have three months of pulpit supply arranged from the date the pastor is finished (MUP 2/26/19)
- c. Interim – The General Presbyter will work with the session to consider finding an Interim.
If the congregation chooses to employ an interim, the committee, PNC team member, and General Presbyter shall meet with the session’s interim search committee to help them begin the process. Ordinarily, an interim pastor shall be a member of the presbytery and moderate the session of the church he/she is serving. Examination team and presbytery approval is mandatory (MUP 2/26/19).

3. Calling a new pastor

- a. Permission to select a PNC (MUP 2/26/19)

The PNC Team member will coordinate with the session and COM to secure permission to elect a PNC.

G-2.0801 Pastoral Vacancy

“When a congregation has a vacancy in a pastoral position, or after the presbytery approves the effective date of the dissolution of an existing pastoral relationship the congregation shall, with the guidance and permission of the presbytery, proceed to fill the vacancy in the following manner.”

G-2.0802 Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee

“The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee that shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee’s duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation, interviews, reference checks, and subsequent installation of the pastor.”

- b. Congregation elects Pastor Nominating Committee

After securing permission from the COM, the congregation may elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). When the Pastor Nominating Committee is elected by the congregation, the PNC Team member to the PNC and General Presbyter shall meet with the PNC at its first meeting and help them determine the next steps and a plan for the search process utilizing “On Calling a Pastor.”(MUP 2/26/19)

- c. The PNC Team Member is to counsel the PNC regarding equal opportunity.

F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity

“God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person.”

A portion of the Ministry Information Form (MIF) that must be filled out is:

Each Pastor Nominating Committee is expected to undertake its search for a minister in a manner consistent with the good news that in the Church “...as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

d. *Monthly communication between church and the PNC Team member (MUP 2/26/19):*
The PNC Team member shall be in regular (at least monthly) communication with the PNC throughout the process and shall provide help to them in the development and drafting of the Ministry Information Form (MIF). The General Presbyter and PNC Team member shall review the MIF before the session sees it. After the session has reviewed it, the PNC will submit it to the GA's Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website. Following submission, the proper approvals of clerk of session and COM moderator will be done on the CLC. The PNC Team member then assists in planning for interviews and reference checks and subsequent installation of the pastor.

e. *Presbytery to Presbytery reference checks*
The General Presbyter shall work with the PNC to secure a presbytery to presbytery reference check and arrange a background check of possible candidates.

f. *Background checks (MUP 11/8/04)*
Missouri Union Presbytery is strongly committed to the principle of setting a high standard for applicants seeking to minister within our churches. In an effort to provide all members under our ministry a healthy and safe environment, and prevent potential threats of conflict or abuse, Missouri Union Presbytery adopts the following policy and procedure:

Every minister member of Missouri Union Presbytery, minister from another presbytery or denomination, certified Christian educator, or lay person serving as pastor of a church, seeking a call, or commission within Missouri Union Presbytery after November 8, 2004, shall have a background check report on file in the presbytery office. The report shall include prior employment, credit worthiness, and criminal background. The presbytery ordinarily shall bear the cost of the report for up to two candidates per congregation.

Every ordained minister, interim minister, certified Christian educator, or lay pastor called or commissioned after November 8, 2004, shall complete an online registration with a designated background check service prior to the examination by the presbytery's Commission on Ministry. Included in the form shall be: name, address, and a valid social security number of the applicant; the signed consent of the applicant for a background check by a designated contracted service; the signed release of information contained in the background check.

A background check will be required on each candidate for a call in Missouri Union Presbytery before the candidate is invited into the presbytery to interview and preach at a neutral pulpit. The General Presbyter, COM moderator, and PNC will receive the full content of the report of the background check.

All records of called pastors obtained by Missouri Union Presbytery shall be retained in a secure manner at the presbytery office indefinitely. All others will be shredded.

In the event of an unfavorable report, the General Presbyter shall advise the candidate of a right to appeal the information contained in the background check. Any such appeal shall be filed in writing at the presbytery office within thirty (30) days of the candidate's receiving the results of the determination.

g. *The PNC will notify the PNC Team member when a candidate has been selected (MUP 2/26/19).*

G-2.0803 Call Process

"According to the process of the presbytery and prior to making its report to the

congregation, the pastor nominating committee shall receive and consider the presbytery's counsel on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call. When the way is clear for the committee to report to the congregation, the committee shall notify the session, which shall call a congregational meeting."

COM Commission to examine a candidate

When a candidate for a pastoral call makes his/her first visit to a congregation of the presbytery, the COM moderator and liaison shall arrange for an approximate two-hour block of time for the candidate to be examined both as to acceptability for membership in the presbytery and as to suitability for the particular church in question.

The exam commission shall ordinarily consist of the COM PNC Team member to the PNC, the moderator of COM and/or the General Presbyter, and two other members of the COM (MUP 2/26/19). Care shall be exercised for lay/clergy balance as well as gender balance representation. This commission shall act on behalf of COM regarding this examination.

When a pastor without a call (or non-parish clergy) seeks membership in the presbytery, the COM moderator or the General Presbyter makes the arrangements as noted in the previous paragraph.

Examination will be in the areas of the candidate's statement of faith, faith journey, worship and sacraments, theology, Bible, polity and call to the congregation. At the end of the examination, the committee shall excuse the candidate and discuss continuation of the examination, if necessary, or sustaining the examination. The candidate is then invited back to the group, given the results and told what to expect from the examination on the floor of the presbytery. The results are reported to the PNC.

The COM is not authorized to receive the candidate. The moderator of COM will present the candidate to the presbytery for examination. The COM moderator, or COM PNC team member-to the PNC will normally lead the examination on the floor of the presbytery (MUP 2/26/19).

The candidate is required to appear before either a called or stated meeting of presbytery and be admitted into membership before he/she may begin pastoral or administrative responsibilities.

- h. *The PNC Team Member will ensure all matters relating to presbytery minimums, terms of call, Board of Pension requirements, clergy tax issues, etc., at time of initial call of the pastor (MUP 2/26/19).*

MINIMUM TERMS OF CALL

Missouri Union Presbytery annually sets a minimum effective salary (salary plus housing) which is 70% of the national median salary for ministers in the PC (USA), as established by the Board of Pensions every July.

This includes a minimum of 30 days (including 4 Sundays) vacation and 14 days (including 2 Sundays) continuing education. The minimum also includes full participation in the benefits plan of the Board of Pensions of the PCUSA.

This does not include “reimbursable professional business expenses” which are the costs of having a pastor and are not “income” to the pastor.

Continuing education for development of skills in ministry shall be reimbursed up to a minimum of \$1,000. Any costs associated with required boundary training for those serving churches shall be reimbursed to the pastor.

For information:

1. Churches may want to consider a part-time call. Clearly defined responsibilities and work hours would need to be mutually agreed upon – for example an 80% call, with 80% of minimum paid.
2. The terms of call may be structured in any way that best benefits the pastor or the church (i.e., tax savings for the pastor and Board of Pension savings for the church).
3. This minimum terms of call is in keeping with master’s degree professionals in many of our communities. (see report of teachers’ salaries from Missouri Public Schools)
4. This minimum is in the median and upper level of pastors in our Synod serving churches of fewer than 100 members (see Board of Pensions statistics)
5. The Commission on Ministry and each church’s liaison will work with teaching elders and churches to discern mutually agreed upon terms of call.

Example of a call:

In order for _____ to serve the _____ church full time as our pastor, the church agrees to the following terms of call:

Effective Salary:

Salary	\$ _____
Housing	\$ _____
Total Effective Salary	\$ _____ (minimum of 70% of national median salary)

Reimbursable Expenses:

Continuing education	minimum of \$1,000 ***
Travel	minimum of \$1,500 reimbursement at IRS mileage rate ***
Supplies	minimum of \$500 reimb. for business expenses ***

Retirement

Full participation/PC(USA)

Board of Pensions Plan \$ _____ (percentage set annually by Board of Pensions)

30 days (including 4 Sundays) of vacation

14 days (including 2 Sundays) for continuing education

**what can be claimed by the pastor as housing is the least of: (1) actual housing expenditures; (2) what the congregation approves beforehand; or (3) the fair market rental value of the home or manse including furnishings and utilities.*

****not income to pastor, no Board of Pensions dues, because these are business expenses*

Vacation (30 days, including 4 Sundays): Ministers are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The ministry is increasingly becoming one of the most stressful callings, and one of the

most rewarding. Annual vacation time is a time for relaxation and renewal. Carryover of vacation from year to year is not encouraged. Pay in lieu of vacation is not appropriate.

Continuing education (14 days, including 2 Sundays): All professionals need to retool and keep abreast of the changes in their areas of employment. Ministers are no different. Continuing education is designed to make each clergy person a better professional, and it benefits the congregation. Ministers should work with their sessions in focusing their work in areas that need improvement. Most congregations set aside a budget amount to reimburse the pastor for his/her expenses.

Other considerations: There are other responsibilities and expenses of the pastor. Travel for church business should be reimbursed upon presentation of an itemized expense report. Office expenses and other professional costs, such as book purchases, organizational dues, or other session agreed upon expenses should be reimbursed as the pastor submits a voucher. These expenses are not effective salary or benefits, but expenses of the minister. Auto allowances paid monthly without vouchers are considered by the IRS as taxable income to the pastor and ARE included in effective salary, increasing the pastor's tax liability. The *Book of Order* requires that the session review pastoral compensation annually, and report those changes to the presbytery after the congregation approves the changes.

- i. *The PNC Team Member will submit the terms of call to the moderator of COM (MUP 2/26/19).* This information will also include start date and the Statement of Faith. The COM moderator coordinates with the presbytery moderator and stated clerk regarding the examination at a stated or called presbytery meeting.

4. Ordination/installation (MUP 2/26/19)

- a. In coordination with the PNC Team member, the candidate will begin to plan the ordination/installation by agreeing on a date with the presbytery moderator.
- b. The candidate will submit the date, time, and people on the commission to the COM moderator for approval by COM.
- c. The PNC Team member or COM moderator will notify the presbytery office about the details of the ordination/installation so notice can be put in the presbytery email newsletter.
- d. Minutes of the commission to ordain/install are submitted to the stated clerk.

G-2.0805 Installation Service

"When the congregation, the presbytery, and the teaching elder (or candidate) have all concurred in a call to a permanent or designated pastoral position, the presbytery shall complete the call process by organizing and conducting a service of installation. Installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship. A service of installation occurs in the context of worship. The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.4000) shall be followed."

5. At the conclusion of the search, shred documents.

B. Other Pastoral Relations

1. Temporary Pastors

COM recognizes that the term used by congregations for their called, designated, temporary, and interim teaching elders, CRE, pulpit supply, and interns is "pastor." The work of COM requires more specific terms to ensure orderly accountability. The terms "temporary supply," and "stated supply" are no longer used in the *Book of Order*.

ORDINATION STATUS	TERMS	APPROVAL BY:				DURATION
		CONGREGATION	SESSION	COM	PRESBYTERY	
Teaching Elder	Called and installed	X	X	X	X	Variable
	Designated	X	X	X	X	2-3
	Serving		X	X	X	Annual review
	Interim	(x)	X	X	X	Annual review
Ruling Elder	CRE		X	X	X	Review 1-3 years
	Serving		X			Annual review
	Interim		X		X	Annual
	Intern		X		X	Annual
None	Pulpit supply		X			Short term
	Non-PCUSA Pastor		X	X	X	Short term

Advisory Handbook – Temporary Pastoral Relationships

2. Review Temporary Pastoral Relations

Guidelines for Remuneration for Pulpit Supply in Missouri Union Presbytery:

- A. Preaching on the same day: One Service \$150 Two Services \$200 Three Services \$250
- B. Travel to Preach at the current IRS rate
- C. Fee for Moderating a session or congregational meeting - \$50 plus mileage at the IRS rate.
- D. Expenses – As vouchered and needed – One meal provided at \$10 when travel one way is over 50 miles; Two meals provided at \$20 when travel one way is over 100 miles; overnight housing provided when travel one way is over 100 miles and services begin early.

NOTE: Remuneration is expected at the time of service. These are suggested remunerations but not required. Considering that in many cases the entire Sunday plus preparation time is required, the suggested remuneration is not excessive.

3. Parish Associate

A parish associate is a teaching elder who serves in a validated ministry other than the local parish, is a member-at-large, or is retired, but who wishes to maintain a relationship with a particular church or churches in keeping with ordination to the ministry of teaching elder. Such persons, already qualified as continuing members of presbytery, may serve as parish associates. The relation shall be established, upon nomination by the pastor, between the parish associate, the session, and the presbytery. The parish associate shall be responsible to the pastor, as head of staff, on an “as needed, as available” basis with or without remuneration.

A parish associate may not be called to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor of a church served as a parish associate.

The agreement between the session, the parish associate, and the presbytery shall terminate when the call to the installed pastor is dissolved. The presbytery may dissolve the relationship with the parish associate upon the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry.

4. **Validated Ministry (date)**

The policy regarding Validated Ministry within MUP is based on the description – *Book of Order G-2.0503*

a. Engaged in a Validated Ministry

A validated ministry shall:

- (1) demonstrate conformity with the mission of God’s people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, The *Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order* of this church;
- (2) serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others
- (3) give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God’s Word;
- (4) be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and
- (5) include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G-5.0201).

When teaching elders are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all teaching elders engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.

The Validated Ministry Form will be completed by the pastor seeking the validated ministry status. A small group of COM will meet with the pastor and make a recommendation to COM regarding the validation of the ministry including the administration of the sacraments where appropriate. The pastor and COM will do an annual review.

5. **Designated**

The policy 5/5/09 regarding designated pastors is based on the *Book of Order* prior to 2011. The only reference to a designated pastorate in the current *Book of Order* refers to the installation. Therefore COM will adopt the previous policy and retain the language without specific section numbers from the earlier *Book of Order* as a policy.

Background: The operative language concerning designated pastors is as follows:

“A designated pastoral relationship is a call to a teaching elder established by the presbytery for a term of not less than two nor more than four years.”

The call approved by the presbytery is renewable anytime during the last six months of the term, and cannot be changed or dissolved except by consent of the presbytery, at the request of the pastor, or at the request of the church by action of the congregation, when the presbytery, after consultation with the minister and congregation finds that the church’s mission under the Word imperatively

demands it, or when the term specified in the call expires without action having been taken to renew the call.

If, after at least two years of the designated pastor relationship, upon the concurrence of the Commission on Ministry, the designated pastor, and the session, a congregational meeting may be held to call the designated pastor as pastor.

There are two important concepts to understand about the designated pastor relationship. First, it is a time-limited position. Secondly, there is a clear time frame for making renewal, termination, or call decisions. However, due to the special circumstances of the designated pastor position, it is prudent to involve the COM in an evaluation process early on in the designated pastor's term to allow for the earliest possible determination about that critical up, on, or out decision. Accordingly, the following proposed process is adopted for use in the churches of Missouri Union Presbytery.

REVIEW PROCESS:

- a. Within the first 6-9 months of a designated pastor's call, COM shall conduct a progress review of the designated pastorate through a review team. The review team will consist of:
 1. the General Presbyter and/or the COM Moderator,
 2. the designated pastor's mentor,
 3. at least one other member of COM selected because of geographical affinity or special knowledge of the congregation and/or designated pastor.
- b. The COM review team will utilize a set of written questions as a basis for a conversation among all parties.
- c. The COM review team will involve:
 1. the designated pastor,
 2. the designated pastor search committee, and
 3. the session in its review
- d. After an appropriate time for all the written answers to be prepared, the COM review team will schedule interviews with all the parties. The Triennial visit process may be used for these interviews.
- e. The review team will prepare a written report of its interviews, which will be shared with all parties, and incorporated in the designated pastor's file and the church's file. If the interview process uncovers issues which need to be addressed, the written report shall contain specific suggestions and a timeline for addressing those issues, and a reporting/accountability process.
- f. This written report will serve as the basis for the review process to be conducted by COM prior to the 6-month time. For that review, a similar process shall be followed.

6. Appropriate boundaries

7. Appropriate boundaries for social media

Appropriate boundaries that recognize the power disparity in pastoral relationships and the conclusion of pastoral relationships apply to social media.

C. Oversight of all matters relating to Commissioned Ruling Elders

1. Appropriateness

Lead sessions in determining appropriateness of employing a CRE.

2. Review to consider re-commissioning

Initiate review of CRE for re-commissioning, or non-continuance.

3. Review all terms of employment for CREs.

4. Arrange for re-commissioning at presbytery meeting

The COM assumes responsibility for the CRE when that person is certified by the CRE Committee of Presbytery as completing his/her training and is ready to be commissioned to a particular congregation.

After the CRE Committee completes its training and final examination of the candidate, the moderator will notify COM that the person is ready for commissioning. The person will then be placed on a list of potential commissioned ruling elders maintained by the COM and presbytery office.

5. Requesting a CRE

When a session requests or has need of a CRE, the session will be given the names of the potential individuals for commissioning. The liaison and COM Moderator or General Presbyter will meet and work with the session in discerning the appropriateness and “calling” of the CRE for this particular congregation. The consultation will include reviewing the particular nature and culture of the congregation, the skills and spiritual gifts of the CRE, the tasks to be accomplished by the CRE, and the review and oversight of the session and COM.

If the session requests the services of a person already serving them as temporary serving pastor, the consultation shall also include a review of the previous work of the temporary serving pastor in the congregation and shall focus at least on areas of growth in ministry, vision for the future of the congregation, and the ability of the candidate to grow in ministry and lead the congregation in growth.

When a CRE has completed training and the COM has identified a location for their service, the COM through its liaison shall:

- a. Consult with the session regarding:
 1. their receptivity of the candidate
 2. their understanding of their responsibility regarding compensation, evaluation with the mentor assigned by the COM, planning, and support
 3. their need to call a congregational meeting to seek congregational support for the proposed ministry.
- b. At the congregational meeting the liaison shall inform the congregation and session of:
 1. the role of the COM/presbytery in supervision and the exclusive power of the presbytery to commission
 2. the terms of the commission, the mentor’s role, and the review process

The COM shall annually conduct a review of the work of each CRE before the final date of the commission.

The review team ordinarily shall consist of the COM liaison, the CRE’s mentor, the moderator of the session, and the clerk of session. The COM liaison shall exercise wise discretion with regard to the information which may come to them from other sources. If there are any issues of concern, report needs to be made to the COM moderator for consideration and/or recommendation to the whole COM.

A more in-depth review shall be conducted by the COM liaison in connection with the triennial visit/re-commissioning evaluation of the COM to the session. This review shall be conducted in much the same way as the triennial visit to a church served by a teaching elder. A report of the triennial visit re-commissioning review shall be made to the COM which will consider and present the CRE to the presbytery for re-commissioning.

D. Ministers of Other Denominations

Because the PC(USA) is in covenant communion with three other denominations – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Reformed Church in America (RCA), and United Church of Christ (UCC) – pastors from each of these denominations may serve in any of the four churches according to the Orderly Exchange

of Ordained Ministers <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/formula-agreement-2004/>. This exchange is intended for pastors already ordained, so it is not intended for a first ordainable call.

Because the presbytery includes PC(USA)/United Methodist union congregations, the pastor assigned by the bishop is examined and may be a member of the presbytery during their service at the union church.

Pastors of denominations not in covenant communion may provide pulpit supply but may not administer the sacraments unless they are in a temporary pastoral relationship with the congregation.

E. Certified Christian Educators

Oversight of all matters relating to certified Christian educators

Provide encouragement, counsel, professional, and personal support for those called to and serving as certified Christian educators within the bounds of the presbytery.

F. Train sessions/congregations to do mission studies

1. Recommend for all mid-size and larger congregations or when changing nature of pastoral leadership or multi-point parish.
2. Utilize “Starting New Initiatives: A Discernment Process” of G. A. Mission Council, Office of Church Growth or MUP’s Discernment Process.
3. Facilitate session/PNC utilization of Percept or other demographic programs.
4. “Twelve Question Mission Study”: A pastoral transition affords a good opportunity for the church congregation to consider how the church functions in the way of activities to support the congregation in fellowship, worship, service, etc. The “Twelve Questions” take a look at all of these activities, and assess how these are appropriate for the congregation and a statement of goals for future growth. The answers to the questions provide a vehicle for the congregation to review its strengths and weaknesses and to prioritize what it feels is the actual purpose of the particular church. It also helps to inform the search process for a new pastor. The Twelve Questions has several functions:
 - a. it allows a church (congregation and/or leadership) to think about direction and emphasis in effort and resources for the future.
 - b. it is the basis for part of the Ministry Information Form submitted to the General Assembly Louisville offices as part of the pastor search process
 - c. it allows a pastor nominating committee to evaluate a candidate in terms of his/her strengths and interests in the areas of the work to be accomplished at the church
 - d. sent to a candidate, it allows the applicant to evaluate the fit of the church and its goals with the candidate
 - e. it serves as a tool for the session and pastoral staff to assess the accomplishments, and discuss programs and staffing to be changed/deleted due to circumstances.

This process replaces the laborious and time-consuming mission study process that was previously required of all churches seeking a pastor. This new process is designed to help churches prepare for a successful search. The questions are the kind of questions that will be asked by potential candidates. These questions can be answered by the session, or the pastor nominating committee (PNC), or a combination of both. Developing answers will help the church and PNC in the interviewing process. It is up to each session and PNC to gather the resources needed to answer the questions. They may need the input of the congregation or other resources available in your community. Answers should be shared by the PNC and session.

The Commission on Ministry will review the answers to determine if the congregation is ready to move forward in the search process. This process is intended to create an opportunity for creative dialogue among the congregation, session, and PNC. If your PNC is not able to fully answer these questions, the Commission on Ministry may determine that a complete and more detailed Mission Study would better satisfy the needs of your congregation. The questions are found in section IV - Forms.

IV. FORMS

Session Visit (Triennial)

Form 1 (Pastor)

(Visit may include spouse.)

1. What are you celebrating about your ministry?

2. What are your frustrations/disappointments?

3. Are you scheduling and taking your continuing education? If so, what have you done lately (continuing education can be shared)

4. Are you taking your vacation and days off --- taking care of yourself and family?

5. Are there situations where the presbytery has fallen short in supporting your ministry or your congregation's ministry?

6. Are you aware of the new Board of Pensions benefits? (May share Board of Pensions information.)

7. How can the COM be of more help to you? Do you have any messages for the Commission on Ministry?

Explain to the pastor that during the visit with the session there will be a time to meet with the session alone, then the pastor will be invited back in to resume the visit together. Some comments made by pastor and session may be shared in a way that builds cooperation.

8. Anything I need to know about before the meeting with the session?

Session Visit (Triennial)
Form 2 (Session)

Introduction of members (It can be helpful to write down names in the order that people are seated around the table.)

Explanation of Triennial Visit (see revisiting the Triennial Visit)

1. What have been some of the good/exciting events in the life of your church this past year?
2. Are there major events coming up?
3. What are some words you might use to describe this congregation?
4. If you have any written or already discussed plans for the future, what are they?
5. What does your future look like?
6. Every church has areas that need work or improvement. What are some of the areas that your congregation needs to work on?
7. What are the needs of the congregation?

Ask the pastor to excuse him/herself and then ask the rest of the session:

1. In what ways is your pastor fulfilling the ministry responsibilities outlined in the position description or contract?
2. How are you engaged with your pastor in fulfilling these ministry responsibilities?
3. Are there areas that need improvement?
4. Is your pastor taking continuing education, vacation, and days off?
5. Have you reviewed the pastor's compensation package this year? If the terms of call do not meet the presbytery minimum, how are you moving in that direction? (The minimum adopted full-time effective salary is \$41,000.)
6. Anything else you would like to share?
 - Pre-Triennial Checklist
 - Financial
 - Continuing Education
 - Terms of Call

Session Visit (Triennial)
Form 3 (*Pastor and Session*)

1. Affirm the pastor and congregation.

2. Ask about the vision of God's call to the pastor/congregation in the future.

3. Share comments that pastor and session have expressed about the other. (If there are concerns, set up a second meeting.)

4. Repeat any follow up actions that have been requested or offered.

When the Time to Close A Church Arrives

Theological Reflections:

The closing of a Church and the loss of a congregation are challenging to experience. We are told in Romans 8:38, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Hearing these words hopefully provides each of us the understanding that while a particular congregation is closing its doors, God is still at work in the process and will continue to be present through the individual lives of those who remain alive.

I Corinthians 15:36-38 states that, “...what you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it to a body as God has chosen and to each kind of seed its own body.” What this clearly says to a dissolving congregation is that there is hope that through God’s providential care, good things will come about in ways that we can’t necessarily even begin to imagine or see. Therefore, let us continue to hope for the resurrection to eternal life.

Compassionate Transitions:

Deciding on the right time to close a Church is a very difficult and painful thing to do. Most often this occurs when the active membership numbers drop to a point that it is no longer financially feasible to continue operating. The “death” of a Church is not unlike dealing with any other type of death. It will vary from situation to situation dependent upon a multiplicity of factors: 1) How long has the congregation been in decline? 2) Are those left “to deal” with the closing simply weary and sad, ready to be done with it, or are they agitated and angry? 3) What did the church and congregation mean to the congregants; were they lifetime members with a family history that dates back multiple generations, or was their engagement with this congregation only for the last 10 or 20 years? 4) Are there other emotional ties to the congregation, i.e., with the death of a child or spouse which was celebrated in the context of the current congregation? Be sensitive to these factors.

WHEN THE TIME TO CLOSE A CHURCH ARRIVES CHECKLIST

Contact the Presbytery

- _____ Contact the representative of the Commission on Ministry and the Board of Pensions.
- _____ Make an inventory of moveable times in the church buildings and manse.
- _____ Plan the disposition of church building, contents, and assets.

Contact All Members On Your Church Rolls

- _____ Inform members of the pending dissolution and ask their wishes concerning transfer of membership. A self-addressed stamped reply could include the following responses:
 - _____ I have already transferred my membership.
 - _____ I wish a letter of transfer be sent to the following congregation. _____
 - _____ I wish to be dropped from all official rolls.

Celebrate The History

Gather important documents and mementos:

- _____ Session minutes
- _____ Membership rolls
- _____ Articles of incorporation and bylaws
- _____ Property papers, titles and deeds
- _____ Annual reports
- _____ Statistical records
- _____ Congregational directories
- _____ Artifacts of the congregation (including pictures)
- _____ A closing worship service may be planned to celebrate the life and ministry of the congregation. It is appropriate to extend an invitation to the presbytery, the moderator of presbytery, and the community.

Preserve The History

- _____ The records collected may be copied and shared with local libraries, historical societies, and families of the congregation.
- _____ Send the records to the stated clerk who will then forward them to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Historical Society.

Resources:

“When the Time to Close a Church Arrives” (The Missouri Union Presbytery policy for church closing)

Ending with Hope: A Resource for Closing Congregations by Beth Ann Gaede, Alban Institute 2.002

In Dying We Are Born: The Challenge and the Hope for Congregations by Peter Bush, Alban Institute, 2008

Presbyterian Historical Society website www.history.ncusa.org.

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION OF CANDIDATES

1. *Personal faith and commitment to the ministry:*

- Briefly tell us your faith journey.
- Tell us about your call to the ministry.
- Why do you feel called to the Presbyterian ministry? (*for those of other denominations*)

2. *Theology*

- What is the place of Jesus Christ in human salvation? (Are there other ways to be saved except through Christ?)
- How do you seek to discover God's Word for us in Scripture?
- What in your opinion is the foremost theological issue facing the Church today?
- How do you define the essential tenants of the Reformed Faith?

3. *Worship and the sacraments*

- The Confessions call the sacraments signs (demonstrations) and seals (confirmation). What do they demonstrate and confirm?
- If a person says to you, "I was baptized in a Pentecostal church, and now want to be baptized as a Presbyterian," how would you respond?
- What is your understanding of the "real presence" of Christ at the Lord's Supper?
- Some congregations have communion once a quarter, once a month, and others every Sunday. What are the values of frequent or infrequent communion?

4. *Polity*

- How does the historical principle "that God alone is Lord of the conscience" fit with the ordination question, "Will you be governed by your church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline?"
- How do you understand the connectional nature of the Presbyterian Church (USA)?
- How do you see yourself participating in the life of this presbytery?
- What are the two parts of the PC(USA) Constitution and the four parts of the Book of Order?

5. *Fit for this congregation/call*

- What skills and talents do you bring to this congregation?
- What interests you in this position?
- Do you feel this might be a good fit with your abilities and interests?
- Do you have any questions about Missouri Union Presbytery that we could help answer?

SAMPLE TERMS OF CALL

EFFECTIVE SALARY

Cash salary	\$ _____
Fair rental value of manse	\$ _____
Housing allowance	\$ _____
Utilities allowance	\$ _____
Deferred Compensation	\$ _____
Other Allowances	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

REIMBURSEABLE EXPENSES (BY VOUCHER)

Automobile expense (_____ per mile)	\$ _____ (IRS rate _____/mile)
Business/professional expenses	\$ _____
SECA supplement (up to 50%)	\$ _____
Continuing education	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____
Moving costs (up to)	\$ _____
Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage Board of Pensions estimate	\$ _____
Paid vacation (minimum 30 days including 4 Sundays)	\$ _____
Paid continuing education (minimum 2 weeks including 2 Sundays)	\$ _____

EXIT INTERVIEW

Form 1 (*Pastor*)

1. What personal/professional reasons have led you to move/retire?

2. What do you believe were the strengths of your past ministry?
Challenges?

3. What would you like to see preserved in the ministry of the church you are leaving?

4. Tell us about your relationship with the session. Tell us about your relationship with the congregation.

5. What would you have liked to have known about this pastorate that you had to find out by yourself?

6. How has the presbytery supported your ministry while you were here?

7. What else would you like to have presbytery know about your pastorate?
Or about the session as you leave?

8. Are there any financial concerns as you depart or retire?

EXIT INTERVIEW

Form 1 (*Session*)

1. What are the major strengths of this congregation?
2. What are the opportunities for growth of this congregation?
3. What are the challenges facing this congregation?
4. Describe this community and/or ministry context.
5. During your current pastor's ministry here, what have been the major achievements of his/her ministry?
6. Are there concerns that should be dealt with before the congregation proceeds to look for a new pastor?
7. Do you have any specific recommendations for the Commission on Ministry?

TWELVE QUESTION MISSION STUDY

A pastoral transition affords a good opportunity for the church congregation to consider how the church functions in the way of activities the church functions in the way of activities to support the congregation in fellowship, worship, service, etc. The Twelve Questions take a look at all of these activities, and assesses how these are appropriate for the congregation and a statement of goals for future growth. The answers to the questions provide a vehicle for the congregation to review its strengths and weaknesses, and to prioritize what it feels is the actual purpose of the particular church. It also helps to inform the search process for a new pastor. The Twelve Questions have several functions:

1. They allow a church (congregation and/or leadership) to think about direction and emphasis in effort and resources for the future.
2. It is the basis for part of the Ministry Information Form submitted to the General Assembly Louisville offices as part of the pastor search process.
3. It allows a pastor nominating committee (PNC) to evaluate a candidate in terms of his/her strengths and interests in the areas of the work to be accomplished at the church.
4. Sent to a candidate, it allows the applicant to evaluate the fit of the church and its goals with the candidate.
5. It serves as a tool for the session and pastoral staff to assess its accomplishments, and discuss programs and staffing to be changed/deleted due to circumstances.

This process replaces the laborious and time-consuming mission study process that was previously required of all churches seeking a pastor. This new process is designed to help churches prepare for a successful search. The questions are the kind of questions that will be asked by potential candidates. These questions can be answered by the session or the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) or a combination of both. Developing answers will help the church and PNC as you enter into the interviewing process. It is up to each session and PNC to gather the resources needed to answer the questions. You may need the input of the congregation or other resources available in your community. Answers should be shared by the PNC and session.

The Commission on Ministry will then take a look at the answers to determine if you as a congregation are ready to move forward in the search process. This process is intended to create an opportunity for creative, extensive dialogue within your congregation, session and PNC. If your PNC is not able to fully answer these questions, the Commission on Ministry may determine that a complete and more detailed Mission Study would better satisfy the needs of your congregation.

1. What does your church have to offer that the world can't live without?
2. What sets your church apart from other Presbyterian churches? What sets it apart from churches of other denominations in your neighborhood?
3. What demographic information about your community will shape the next five years of ministry?
4. Why do people join your church? Why do they stay? Why don't they join?
5. Who is God calling you to reach out to in mission and ministry?
6. What issues of faith are engaging the congregation? What is exciting people theologically?
7. What do you see as the role of the pastor? Describe your previous called pastor – what were his/her strengths and weaknesses? How did he/she divide his/her time among such things as worship, teaching, pastoral care, administration, and church growth?

8. Who are you as a church? What are the demographics of age, sex, race, education, etc.? How would you describe the culture of the church?
9. What is the current relationship among staff, session, and congregation? Would you like those relationships to change with the new pastor? If so, how?
10. What do you see as areas of growth and challenge in the next few years?
11. What programs/areas of your church life are calling cards for your church? Which programs/areas need to be ended?
12. What has been your most energetic dispute?

REVIEW OF A DESIGNATED PASTOR

Form 1 (*Session, Personnel Committee*)

Questions to be used in a Designated Pastor initial review

1. What have been the major accomplishments of your designated pastor during the initial period of their pastorate?
2. From the session perspective, what expectations remain to be accomplished during the initial period of the designated pastorate? Can these be realistically accomplished during the remainder of the designated pastor's term?
3. Was the designated pastor's self-description in the PIF an accurate reflection of who they are? If not, where and why not?
4. What could be done by the session to improve the designated pastoral relationship in the next 6-9 months? Be specific.
5. What circumstances would indicate that you would wish to continue the designated pastorate for another term? What circumstances would indicate that your designated pastor should be called to a permanent position? What circumstances have changed that indicate that you would not be able to/wish to continue the designated pastorate for another term?
6. If you had to make the decision today, would you recommend continuance of the present designated pastor relationship? Why or why not?

REVIEW OF A DESIGNATED PASTOR

Form 2 (Pastor)

Questions to be used in a Designated Pastor initial review

1. What have been your major accomplishments as designated pastor during the initial period of your pastorate?
2. What have been your biggest disappointments during the initial period of your designated pastorate?
3. Was the PNC's self-description in their CIF an accurate reflection of who they are? If not, where and why not?
4. What could the session do to improve the designated pastoral relationship in the next 6-9 months? Be specific.
5. What circumstances would indicate that you would wish to continue the designated pastorate for another term? What circumstances would indicate that your designated pastorate should become a called and installed permanent position? What circumstances have changed that indicate that you would not be able to/wish to continue the designated pastorate for another term?
6. If you had to make the decision today, would you agree to continue the present designated pastor relationship? Why or why not?

VALIDATED MINISTRY REQUEST

Book of Order G-2.0503a. Engaged in a Validated Ministry

A validated ministry shall:

- (1) demonstrate conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, The Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order of this church;*
- (2) serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;*
- (3) give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word;*
- (4) be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and*
- (5) include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G-5.0201)*

When teaching elders are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence to a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all teaching elders engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.

**REQUEST TO THE MISSOURI UNION PRESBYTERY COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
FOR ENDORSEMENT OF A VALIDATED MINISTRY**

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Email _____

Presbytery Membership _____

Ministry to be Validated _____

I. Please describe how the ministry to be validated conforms to each of the five criteria found in the Book of Order (see above). Take as much space as needed.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

II. Share how you intend to “give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the Good News” and participate in a congregation, presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships.

III. Does this ministry include the administration of the sacraments?

IV. Terms of Call

Effective Salary	\$ _____
Pension	\$ _____
Insurance	\$ _____
Vacation	\$ _____
Continuing Education	\$ _____

Please return this form to the General Presbyter, Dr. Deborah Boucher-Payne, General Presbyter, debgp@mupresbytery.org.

RECOMMISSIONING INTERVIEWS FOR CRE

Form 1 (*Pastor*)

PROCESS:

1. A COM small group (liaison, other COM members) collects information relevant to considering the re-commissioning (i.e. covenant, job description)
2. A meeting is set up with the COM small group, the CRE and the session.
3. The COM small group moderator makes a recommendation to COM for approval/disapproval.
4. If approved, the COM moderator makes a motion at the next presbytery meeting to re-commission the CRE.
5. Following approval at the presbytery meeting, the commissioning is conducted by the moderator of the presbytery or moderator of COM asking the CRE the constitutional questions.

Questions for CRE:

1. What have been your major accomplishments as a CRE?
2. What have been your biggest disappointments as a CRE?
3. Was the congregation as you expected?
4. What are your expectations for the next three years?
5. What are your strengths in ministry? What are your challenges?
6. How did your continuing education strengthen your ministry?
7. What could be done to improve the CRE and congregation working together?
8. Do you believe God is continuing to call you to this particular congregation? Do you wish to be re-commissioned to this congregation?

RECOMMISSIONING INTERVIEWS FOR CRE

Form 2 (*Session*)

1. What have been the major accomplishments of your CRE?
2. From the session perspective, what expectations remain to be accomplished?
3. Is the CRE what you expected?
4. What are your expectations for the next three years?
5. What are the strengths of the CRE? What are the challenges for the CRE?
6. What could be done by the session to strengthen the CRE and congregation working together?
7. Do you believe God is continuing to call this congregation and CRE to minister together? Do you wish to continue the present CRE relationship? Why or why not?

SAMPLE MINUTES OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION TO ORDAIN/INSTALL

The Administrative Commission elected by the Missouri Union Presbytery to ordain/install _____ as pastor/associate pastor of _____ met on Sunday, _____ (date), at _____ (time) at _____ (place), and was called to order by the moderator, _____ who opened the meeting with prayer. _____ was elected to serve as clerk of the commission.

The following members of the commission, constituting a quorum, were present: Teaching Elder and presbytery of membership if other than Missouri Union:

Ruling Elders and congregation of membership:

Invited to sit with the commission and their membership (congregation/presbytery):

The printed order of worship was (adopted/amended) and it was voted that the minutes of this meeting be approved by the moderator and the clerk. The commission adjourned to the sanctuary for the service of worship. The meeting was closed with the benediction by the newly ordained/installed minister.

Attest: Moderator _____
Clerk _____

Please send these minutes with three (3) copies of the worship bulletin to:

Stated Clerk
Missouri Union Presbytery
3236 Emerald Lane, Suite 500
Jefferson City, MO 65109

Please, if possible, send a digital picture of the Administrative Council with Candidate by email to office@mupresbytery.org.

SAMPLE PASTORAL CALL FORM

PASTORAL CALL (for Pastor, Co-Pastor, Associate Pastor)

The _____ Presbyterian Church of _____ belonging to _____ Presbytery, being well satisfied with your qualification for ministry and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one whose service will be profitable to the spiritual interest of our church and fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord, earnestly and solemnly calls you,

(name)

to undertake the office of

of this congregation , beginning _____, promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and allegiance in the Lord.

That you may be free to devote full-time (part-time) to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to pay you in regular monthly payments the following effective salary and following vouchered expenses (*fill in those which are agreed to*):

Effective Salary		Reimbursable expense (by voucher)	
Cash salary	\$ _____	Automobile expense (___ per mile)	\$ _____
Fair rental value of manse	\$ _____	Business/professional expenses	\$ _____
Housing Allowance	\$ _____	Continuing education	\$ _____
Utilities Allowance	\$ _____	Other allowances	\$ _____
Deferred Compensation	\$ _____	Moving costs (up to)	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____	Retirement	
TOTAL	\$ _____	Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions \$ _____	
		Vacation - Studies	
		Paid vacation (30 days - 4 weeks-including 4 Sundays)	
		Paid continuing education (2 weeks -14 days including 2 Sundays)	

We further promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation. In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave, continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor’s absence.

In testimony whereof, we have subscribed our names this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Having moderated the congregational meeting which extended this call for ministerial services, I do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the presbytery policy and the Form of Government, and that the people who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

Vote of the congregation at the meeting was _____ in favor of the candidate and _____ opposed.

(signed) _____
Moderator of the meeting

CERTIFICATION OF CALL

A. Action by Presbytery of Call

The Presbytery of _____ has reviewed and approved this call.

Date of action _____ (signed) _____
Stated Clerk or Authorized Signer

B. Action by the Minister's/Candidate's Presbytery

The Presbytery of _____ finds it expedient (not expedient) to release _____ to accept this call.

Date of action _____ (signed) _____
Stated Clerk or Authorized Signer

C. Acceptance of the call

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of action _____ (signed) _____
Minister

Complete and sign four original copies. When all parties have signed, an original copy goes to: 1) the minister; 2) the calling church; 3) the presbytery of the call; and 4) the minister's presbytery of membership/care.

7. APPENDIX/RESOURCES

“Missouri Union Presbytery Standard of Ethics for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament” (1998)
“Sexual Misconduct Policy – Presbytery of Missouri Union”
Annual Report to Missouri Union Presbytery
MUP Checklist for Calling a Pastor
Sample Contract for Temporary Pastoral Relationships
Sample Covenant With An Interim Pastor
Session Presentation on Discernment
Gracious Dismissal Policy
Guidelines for the Relationship of Departing Pastors and their Former Congregations (MUP 8/21/18)
Policy on Changes in Pastoral Roles Within a Congregation (MUP 8/21/18)
Guideline for Merger of Churches (MUP 2/26/19)

APPENDIX

MISSOURI LAW RELATING TO CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

RSMo – 210.115.

1. When any physician, medical examiner, coroner, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, resident, intern, nurse, hospital or clinical personnel that are engaged in the examination, care, treatment or research of persons, and any other health practitioner, psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, day care center worker or other child-care worker, juvenile officer, probation or parole office, jail or detention center personnel, teacher, principal or other school official, minister as provided by section 352.400, RSMo, Christian Science practitioner, peace officer or law enforcement official, or other person with responsibility for the care of children has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the division in accordance with the provisions of sections 210.109 to 210.183. As used in this section, the term “abuse” is not limited to abuse inflicted by a person responsible for the child’s care, custody and control as specified in section 210.110, but shall also include abuse inflicted by any other person.
2. Whenever such person is required to report pursuant to sections 210.109 to 210.183 in an official capacity as a staff member of a medical institution, school facility, or other agency, whether public or private, the person in charge or a designated agent shall be notified immediately. The person in charge or a designated agent shall then become responsible for immediately making or causing such report to be made to the division. Nothing in this section, however, is meant to preclude any person from reporting abuse or neglect.
3. Notwithstanding any other provision of sections 210.109 to 210.183, any child who does not receive specified medical treatment by reason of the legitimate practice of the religious belief of the child’s parents, guardian, or others legally responsible for the child, for that reason alone, shall not be found to be an abused or neglected child, and such parents, guardian or other persons legally responsible for the child shall not be entered into the central registry. However, the division may accept reports concerning such a child and may subsequently investigate or conduct a family assessment as a result of that report. Such an exception shall not limit the administrative or judicial authority of the state to ensure that medical services are provided to the child when the child’s health requires it.
4. In addition to those persons and officials required to report actual or suspected abuse or neglect, any other person may report in accordance with sections 210.109 to 210.183 if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.
5. Any person or official required to report pursuant to this section, including employees of the division, who has probable cause to suspect that a child who is or may be under the age of eighteen, who is eligible to receive a certificate of live birth, has died shall report that fact to the appropriate medical examiner or coroner. If, upon review of the circumstances and medical information, the medical examiner or coroner determines that the child died of natural causes while under medical care for an established natural disease, the coroner, medical examiner or physician shall notify the division of the child’s death and that the child’s attending physician shall be signing the death certificate. In all other cases the medical examiner or coroner shall accept the report for investigation, shall immediately notify the division of the child’s death as required in section 58.452, RSMo, and shall report the findings to the child fatality review panel established pursuant to section 210.192.
6. Any person or individual required to report may also report the suspicion of abuse or neglect to any law enforcement agency or juvenile office. Such report shall not, however, take the place of reporting or causing a report to be made to the division.

7. If an individual required to report suspected instances of abuse or neglect pursuant to this section has reason to believe that the victim of such abuse or neglect is a resident of another state or was injured as a result of an act which occurred in another state, the person required to report such abuse or neglect may, in lieu of reporting to the Missouri Division of Family Services, make such a report to the child protection agency of another state with the authority to receive such reports pursuant to the laws of such other state. If such agency accepts the report, no report is required to be made, but may be made, to the Missouri Division of Family Services.

MISSOURI LAW RELATING TO PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR ADULTS

RSMo – 210.140. Any legally recognized privileged communication, except that between attorney and client, or involving communications made to a minister or clergyperson, shall not apply to situations involving known or suspected child abuse or neglect and shall not constitute grounds for failure to report as required or permitted by sections 210.110 to 210.165, to cooperate with the division in any of its activities pursuant to sections 210.110 to 210.165, or to give or accept evidence in any judicial proceeding relating to child abuse or neglect.

Missouri Union Presbytery Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy

Adopted November 14, 2023

Policy Statement

Missouri Union Presbytery (MUP) is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members, visitors, and staff in all presbytery activities.

Leadership in the church demands the highest standards of moral integrity and personal responsibility. It is a gift of the Spirit that can only be effectively exercised in an environment of trust. As the Gospel witness makes abundantly clear, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." (Luke 12:48).

Since trust is so fundamental to the well-being of the Christian community, Christian people have the right to expect that those they choose as leaders (ruling and teaching elders) understand and are committed to standards of behavior that are trustworthy. As the church and the body of Christ, we are united with all people of God in every place and time, and we are bound to serve and to respect the dignity of every human being. When this solemn trust is broken through some form of harassment, including sexual misconduct, not only is someone's dignity diminished and her or his wellbeing seriously harmed, but also harm is done to the community of faith.

Missouri Union Presbytery has established a Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and Procedures, to ensure, to the extent reasonably possible, that our children, youth, and endangered adults will be free to participate in presbytery-sponsored programs, services, and activities without intimidation, coercion, or abuse of any type. This policy is established to cover any and all forms of harassment, including sexual misconduct, directed toward legally capable persons ages 18 and older and complements the presbytery's Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is not acceptable in the eyes of God. Harassment is any unwelcome behavior, communion, or conduct, whether verbal, written, physical, or electronic, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic under applicable law.

Harassment may include but is not limited to:

1. Verbal harassment, including offensive jokes, slurs, or derogatory comments.
2. Non-verbal harassment, such as gestures, leering, or offensive images.
3. Physical harassment, including unwanted physical contact or threats.
4. Cyberbullying, online harassment, or any form of electronic harassment.
5. "Quid pro quo" harassment, where submission to harassment is used as the basis for employment or volunteer placement decisions.

Courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions between employees, including men and women, that are appropriate in the workplace and acceptable to and welcomed by both parties are not considered to be harassment.

Harassment Reporting Procedures

Any person who feels that he or she has been subject to any type of harassment is encouraged (but not required) to firmly and promptly notify the offender that the behavior is inappropriate and violates this Policy. Moreover, an individual who believes he or she has been the victim of or who has witnessed

harassment should promptly bring such conduct to the attention of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery or the Moderator of the Presbytery.

Failure to promptly report incidents of harassment will hinder MUP's ability to initiate investigation of a complaint of harassment and may limit MUP's ability to stop and prevent further harassment. Cooperation in reporting acts of harassment is essential.

Investigation Process (Book of Order D.7.01-7.1606)

Upon receiving a harassment complaint, the Moderator and Stated Clerk will promptly appoint an Investigating Committee. This Committee will then conduct a timely and fair inquiry gathering information, interviewing witnesses, and reviewing evidence.

If, after a thorough investigation, harassment is found to have occurred, appropriate corrective actions will be taken as follows:

- if it is determined that a person has violated this Policy, such person will be subject to appropriate corrective measures commensurate with the seriousness of the particular offense or other relevant circumstances;
- if it is determined that the complaining party falsely accused another of harassment, knowingly or in a malicious manner, the complaining party will be subject to appropriate corrective measures.

In all cases, the person who made the complaint and the alleged harasser will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.

Definition of Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include:

- *Sexual abuse* as defined in the *Book of Order*: sexual abuse is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of *ordered ministry or position*. *Sexual abuse is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and is therefore always an offense for the purpose of discipline.*
- *Sexual harassment*; defined for this policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
 - a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or their continued status in an institution;
 - b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;
 - c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or
 - d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.

- *Rape* or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.
- *Sexual conduct* is offensive, obsessive or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another.
- *Sexual malfeasance*; defined as any impropriety or wrongdoing resulting from sexual conduct within a ministerial or professional relationship. Examples of such conduct include adultery, indecent exposure, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition is not intended to cover relationships between spouses, nor is it meant to restrict church professionals from having normal mutual, social, intimate, or marital relationships.
- *Misuse of technology*; use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting or emailing suggestive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting Procedures

Allegations of sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded. Nor should they be allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the accused, and of the Church. Allegations should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as outlined below.

- The first person to learn of a sexual misconduct allegation should not undertake an inquiry alone or question either the victim or the accused. The person who received the initial report will ask the accuser to report the incident, if criminal in nature, to local law enforcement and to the General Presbyter/Presbytery Moderator.
- When the allegation is received, the General Presbyter will also notify the Moderator of the Presbytery and the Chair of the Sexual Misconduct Allegation Response Committee and will ensure that law enforcement has been notified if the alleged act is criminal in nature. If the General Presbyter is unavailable, the incident must be reported to the Moderator of the Presbytery who will follow the same reporting procedure.
- If the accuser is unwilling to report a criminal act of sexual misconduct to law enforcement and/or the General Presbyter, the person who received the initial report will make the report to the General Presbyter, who will in turn alert law enforcement, the Moderator of the Presbytery, and the Chair of the Sexual Misconduct Allegation Response Committee. Under these circumstances, the accuser and reporter should understand that this reporting method is considered second-hand information and will be processed differently than an accuser's first-hand information.

Presbytery Response

The response will vary according to the relationship of the PC (U.S.A.) with the person who is accused of sexual misconduct:

- The Presbytery is the court of original jurisdiction only for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, and Commissioned Ruling Elders. These individuals fall under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*.
- Allegations against a lay employee of the Presbytery, should be reported to the Personnel Committee of Council for investigation and action.

Accused Covered by Book of Order

- When an allegation of offense of sexual misconduct has been received by the General Presbyter or Presbytery Moderator and reported to the Sexual Misconduct Allegation Response Committee, this investigating committee must promptly begin its inquiry into the allegation(s). Delay may cause further harm to the victim and/or the accused.
 - The presbytery must cooperate with law enforcement in an investigation of criminal sexual misconduct. Church disciplinary proceedings cannot interfere with a criminal investigation by civil authorities and may have to be suspended until these are completed.
 - When an allegation of sexual misconduct is received against a minister of Word and Sacrament, the accused will be placed on administrative leave with pay immediately. Such administrative leave will continue until the matter is resolved. While administrative leave is in effect, the minister of Word and Sacrament shall not perform any pastoral, administrative, educational, or supervisory duties, and shall not officiate in any functions such as the administration of the sacraments, funerals, or weddings. (*Book of Order* D-7.0903)
 - Should circumstances indicate the pastoral relationship should be dissolved, the Presbytery may dissolve the pastoral relationship if, after consultation with the minister, the session, and the congregation, it finds the church's mission under the Word imperatively demands it (*Book of Order* G-2.0904). In other circumstances, the session may call a congregational meeting, have the presbytery appoint a moderator, and determine if circumstances warrant dissolution of the pastoral relationship. The Presbytery will take further action on the matter according to the *Book of Order* G-2.0903.
- Accused Not Covered by Book of Order
 - When the presbytery receives an accusation of offense of sexual misconduct against a nonmember employee or volunteer, the General Presbyter will immediately put the employee on administrative leave with pay until the matter is reviewed by the Personnel Committee and further action (termination, reinstatement, or continued administrative leave with or without pay) is authorized. Information regarding allegations shall be confidential.
 - Should the incident result in criminal conviction, the employee will be automatically terminated. If the employee is acquitted, the case is nolle prosequi, or otherwise not pursued by legal authorities, the person's employment status will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee.

Retaliation

Retaliation or attempted retaliation in response to lodging a complaint or invoking the complaint process is forbidden and is a violation of this policy.

Retaliation is any hardship, loss, or penalty imposed on any person in response to:

1. Filing or responding to a bona fide complaint of discrimination or harassment.
2. Appearing as a witness in the investigation of a complaint.
3. Serving as an investigator of a complaint.

Legal Compliance

MUP will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination.

Communication and Enforcement

This policy will be communicated to all ministers of Word and Sacrament, congregations, staff, volunteers, and participants in presbytery activities.

Training

The topics of this policy shall be included in the boundary training which all pastoral leaders are required to complete every three (3) years in order to remain in good standing in the presbytery.

Policy Review and Revision

The Presbytery Council will review this Policy annually to make such revisions as it deems necessary and appropriate, particularly those that may be required for continued compliance with applicable laws and best practices.

By implementing and enforcing this policy, Missouri Union Presbytery aims to maintain a faith community built on love, respect, and inclusion for all members and participants.

Annual Report to Missouri Union Presbytery

Required of Members-at-Large and Members Involved in Validated Ministry

G-2.0503, in the *Book of Order*, requires that Presbytery review annually the work of all teaching elders who either are engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation or are classified as members-at-large. To comply with the requirement, please complete this form and return it **by December 31, 2017** to: Missouri Union Presbytery, 3236 Emerald Lane, Suite 500., Jefferson City, MO 65109.

Please check whichever applies to you

I am involved in validated ministry _____

I am a member-at-large _____

(Even if unemployed, complete as much as possible.)

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____ City _____

_____ State _____ ZIP _____

EMPLOYER _____

Full or Part-time? _____ Position Title _____

Work Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE CONTACTS

Home _____ Work _____ Other _____

EMAIL ADDRESSES _____

Do you receive the Presbytery online newsletter? _____ yes _____ no but would like to _____

1. If employed, please describe your work or ministry. Do you have opportunity to preach the Word or administer the sacraments in the course of your employment?

2. How do you feel that you are living out your sense of call in the context of your current employment?

3. Does your current employment include an annual evaluation? If so, who conducts it?

4. What joys, accomplishments or special challenges have you encountered this year?

5. Please describe your continuing education activities in the last year. Is there one you would particularly recommend?

6. If your service is not to a congregation, where do you usually worship?

Name of church _____ Location _____

How are you involved in the life of the congregation?

7. Are you currently serving on a committee or in a leadership capacity within Missouri Union Presbytery? Within other ecclesiastical bodies or organizations? Please describe. If not, in what areas would you consider serving in the future?

8. How can the Presbytery be supportive of you in your ministry at this time? (If you are a member-at-large, are you anticipating a change in your status in the near future?)

9. For validated ministers -- Are you requesting a revalidation of this same ministry for next year? ___yes ___no. If not, please explain the change you are requesting.

SIGNATURE -- I certify that I know the information provided in this annual report to be a true and accurate representation of my status as a validated minister or minister member-at-large.

Minister's Signature _____ Date signed:

COM Representative _____ Date signed: _____

Thank you for helping Missouri Union Presbytery meet the requirements of the *Book of Order*.

MUP Checklist for Calling a Pastor The Call Process

(page 14 of the Calling a Pastor Manual with additions by COM)

- Contact the COM moderator, General Presbyter and COM Liaison upon first knowledge of the resignation or retirement of the Pastor
- Plan for the transition (COM and Session)
- Dissolve the Pastoral Relationship (Presbytery)
- Confer with COM whether a Mission Study will be required (Session)
- Discern your leadership Needs (COM and Session)
- Assess the financial capability of the Congregation to pay a full-time pastor (COM liaison and Session)
- Authorize a Congregational meeting to elect a PNC through the COM (Session)
- Elect the PNC (Congregation)
- Have the PNC trained by the General Presbyter and COM liaison
- Write the MDP (PNC)
 - Seek guidance from the General Presbyter, COM Moderator, and COM liaison
- Have Session approve the MDP
- Submit MDP to CLC for matching (PNC)
- Define an Interview Process/Protocol (PNC)
- Review and Receive PDP referrals (PNC)
- Select potential Candidates (PNC)
 - Call their references
 - Complete interviews by phone or Zoom
 - Narrow down to top 3 candidates
- Select a Nominee from top 3 candidates (PNC)
 - Contact the General Presbyter to have a reference/background check be completed **before** the in-person interview.
 - Arrange for a COM interview (contact COM Moderator)
 - Arrange for a face to face interview with the PNC
 - Schedule a Neutral pulpit at a church nearby (PNC)
 - Negotiate Terms of Call with the candidate (pastor and PNC with input from Session/Finance)
 - Submit terms of call to General Presbyter and COM Moderator
 - Consult with the General Presbyter and COM Moderator before extending a call
- Extend a call (PNC)
- Approval of Call and Terms (COM)
- Report Call to the Session (PNC)
- Authorize a Congregational meeting to call the Pastor (Session)
- Elect the Pastor (Congregation)
- Pastor and Terms of Call have to be examined and approved by the Presbytery at a meeting of the Presbytery
- Sign the Call at the Presbytery meeting (PNC and COM)

Pastor Nominating Committee Responsibilities

(page 17 of the Calling a Pastor Manual)

- Complete the MDP and submit it to Session and the Presbytery for approval
- Enter the MDP on-line with Church Leadership Connection (CLC) at www.pcsua.org/clc
- Receive, read, and evaluate PDPs
- Regularly provide reports to the congregation on the pastor search progress
- Narrow the field of prospective Pastors through listening to sermons, reference checking (PNC and Presbytery), and phone or video conference interviews—all while sharing, listening, and praying together
- Interview face-to-face the “short list” of prospective pastors, providing for a welcoming and hospitable visit to your church community
- Arrange with the presbytery for the necessary examinations and approvals of your finalists
- Negotiate Terms of Call with the final candidate/pastor
- Select one nominee to present to the congregation
- Obtain Presbytery approval of the call
- Present the nominee to the congregation for its vote, including terms of call
- Following an affirmative vote by the congregation, sign the pastoral terms of call and forward to COM for signature, which will then be sent to the Presbytery office
- Notify the CLC when a call has been extended and accepted
- Take your MDP off the CLC website

SAMPLE CONTRACT FOR TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

[The *Book of Order* allows for the establishment of temporary pastoral relationships (G-2.0504b). This is a relationship between a session and a teaching elder, ruling elder, or candidate under care of a presbytery to provide pastoral services for a congregation. This temporary relationship is for a defined period of time, not to exceed twelve months, which may be renewed with the approval of the Presbytery.]

The session of _____ Presbyterian Church of _____ requests that the Presbytery of Missouri

Union approve the temporary pastoral relationship with

_____, beginning _____ and ending _____. (Not to exceed 12 months.) Please check one of these...

___ This is a full-time position

-OR-

___ This is a part-time position, consisting of ___ hours per week, with the following services being provided:

DUTIES:

The pastor will be responsible to (please add or delete from this list):

- _____ lead worship and preach ___ Sundays per month
- _____ moderate the session and congregational meetings (if named moderator by presbytery)
- _____ do pastoral calling on sick, shut-ins, and prospective members
- _____ officiate at weddings and funerals as requested (and as allowed by state law)
- _____ arrange for substitute preachers on any Sundays not present
- _____ work with committees to assist them in carrying out their assigned tasks
- _____ provide administrative leadership as requested by the session
- _____ train those newly elected in ordered ministry (ruling elders and/or deacons)
- _____ lead new member classes
- _____ represent the church in dealing with outside organizations
- _____ pray for the church
- _____ Other:

The congregation and session will be responsible to (please add or delete from this list):

- support the pastor in his/her ministry
- provide regular financial compensation according to the terms outlined below
- provide a performance review to the pastor at least annually

- pray for the pastor during this contract period
- negotiate goals for contract period

During the length of this agreement, the pastor will be accountable to the presbytery. It is understood that the pastor will not be involved in any way with the Pastor Nominating Committee, except to facilitate that committee's regular reports to the session and the congregation. Any concerns or suggestions about the congregation's search for a new pastor shall be carried to the General Presbyter or COM Moderator. It is understood by all parties that the pastor under contract may not be considered for the installed pastoral position in this congregation.

This agreement may be terminated by either party (session or pastor) upon 30 days written notice.

This agreement may be extended in one to 12 month periods, upon written notice to, and the approval of, the presbytery. It is understood that the pastor will participate in any training/discussions sponsored and/or requested by presbytery and will participate in an exit interview conducted by presbytery.

TERMS:

Effective Salary		Reimbursable expense (by voucher)	
Cash salary	\$ _____	Automobile expense (___ per mile)	\$ _____
Fair rental value of manse	\$ _____	Business/professional expenses	\$ _____
Housing Allowance	\$ _____	Continuing education	\$ _____
Utilities Allowance	\$ _____	Other allowances	\$ _____
Deferred Compensation	\$ _____	Moving costs (up to)	\$ _____
Other allowances	\$ _____		
TOTAL	\$ _____		
		Retirement	
		Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions \$ _____	
		Leave	
		Paid vacation (30 days-including 4 Sundays)	
		Paid continuing education (2 weeks including 2 Sundays) see note below	

[If full time, paid vacation of 28 days annually including four Sundays, and two weeks continuing education leave, including two Sundays annually. If part-time, negotiable in relationship to hours, i.e. half-time, three-quarter time, etc.]

APPROVALS:

Individual: _____ Date: _____

Clerk of Session: _____ Date: _____

COM Moderator: _____ Date: _____

MUP Stated Clerk: _____ Date: _____

Signed copies to be given to: 1) the minister; 2) the clerk of session, 3) the presbytery and

4) the minister's presbytery of membership/care (if other than the presbytery of this congregation).

Sample Covenant With An Interim Pastor

This Covenant between the Session of _____ (Name of Church, Town) and _____ (Interim Pastor) is for the purpose of providing interim pastoral services.

This relationship shall begin effective _____ (date) until _____ (no more than 12 months) at which time it may be renewed if necessary with the concurrence of session, Interim Pastor and Presbytery's Commission on Ministry.

(Name of Pastor) will become a member of Missouri Union Presbytery upon examination and acceptance by Missouri Union Presbytery and upon release from his/her present presbytery, (Name) Presbytery.

It is understood that the Interim Pastor is accountable to the presbytery through the Commission on Ministry and will provide reports about his or her ministry every three months and participate with this Committee and the Session in an evaluation of this ministry in six months.

It is understood that the Interim Pastor is not eligible to be called as Pastor.

It is agreed that this covenant may be terminated upon (30, 60, 90) days' written notice by either the Interim Pastor or by the session. If terminated by the session prior to the end of the covenant period, compensation will continue for _____ days after the date of termination of ministry.

Goals for this ministry are to work with the congregation on the five "developmental tasks" of interim ministry:

- 1) Coming to terms with history,
- 2) Discovering a new congregational identity
- 3) Facilitating shifts in lay leadership and changes in congregational power structures
- 4) Rethinking and renewing denominational linkages
- 5) Preparing for new pastoral leadership and a new future.

The Interim Pastor will fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Provide spiritual and administrative leadership for the congregation.

- Lead worship and administer the sacraments.
- Officiate at weddings and funerals;
- Provide pastoral care for the congregation and for all who seek comfort and guidance through the church.
- Serve as moderator of the session;
- Serve as head of staff;
- Assist boards and committees in their ministry.
- Train newly elected officers and assist in preparing persons for membership.
- Participate in the presbytery.
- Assist the presbytery consultant in the conduct of a congregational mission study.
- Assist in the preparation of the Church Information Form.

The Interim Pastor will not be involved in the work of the Pastor Nominating Committee beyond providing opportunities for them to communicate with the session and congregation about their progress.

The compensation for this agreement shall be that in TERMS OF CALL below.

Salary	\$ _____
Housing	\$ _____
Pension and Medical Benefits	\$ _____
Moving Expenses	FULL
Vacation	1 week per quarter
Continuing Education	\$ _____ (reimbursed as used)
and 1 week every six months	
Reimbursement of Ministry Expenses including:	
Automobile	\$ _____ per mile (reimbursed as used)

(Name of Pastor), Interim Pastor Clerk of Session

For the Commission on Ministry Date

Session Presentation on Discernment

I. Purpose

- A. ***To discern God's will in regard to your congregation and to answer the following questions:***
 - 1. What is God calling us to do and be?
 - 2. What kind of pastoral leadership will help us to accomplish this?
 - B. **To engage the congregation in the discernment process over a *two week period which is God led* rather than a lengthy mission study**
 - C. ***To provide quality information for your Church Information Form which will then assist in your match through the computer with candidates seeking positions that would be a good match for***
-

II. Three parts of the process

- A. Meet with Session
 - 1. To inform them of the process
 - 2. Gain approval to move forward
 - 3. Set the dates for the discernment process with the congregation
- 8. Introduce congregation to the process during a worship service
 - 1. Hand out packets for them to use in their individual study and discernment
 - 2. Describe the process
- C. Discernment
 - 1. Two weeks later we do the actual discernment
 - 2. Divide into groups, look at their sheets (which they bring with them)
 - 3. Groups decide on two prevalent answers to the above questions to put forward
 - 4. Share with the big group
 - 5. Lead discussion on salient points made
 - 6. Four people chosen from volunteers to write a one page summary of the information that came forth during the discernment process and that becomes a

part of your MDP

III. Copies are sent to: Discernment team leader, your Care Team, Chair of COM (can be sent electronically)

A. COM approves the MIF and approves the formation of your PNC committee.

IV. Items needed:

- A. Copies made of the packet ready to be distributed on the First Sunday when the process is introduced to the Congregation
- B. Communication to the congregation on the importance of engaging in the discernment process with the dates published so that your congregation is aware - possibly announce in the pulpit the Sundays before and during the process - our goal is maximum participation from your congregation
- C. An easel to hold a big chart upon which we write. If you do not have one let us know so that we can bring one with us.

Discerning the Future of Our Church *Listening for God's Call*

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:2

Who Participates?

- All members of the congregation willing to let God help them focus their concerns for the future of the church

How do I become Involved?

- By receiving this packet of information...
- By agreeing to spend at least 15 minutes a day for the next two weeks reading Scripture, praying and reflecting on the future of our church.
- Read a brief Scripture lesson (10 days)
a different Scripture each day
each Scripture will present a 'picture' for the church's life and mission
- Pray for openness to God's leading
such as "Dear God, open my heart and mind so that I might hear your desires for our congregation."
- Spend time prayerfully reflecting upon the Scripture by asking three questions. What does this tell me about God? (2 or 3 descriptive words or phrases)
 - What does this tell me about God's desire for our church? (2 or 3 descriptive phrases or sentences)
What kind of pastoral leadership would be appropriate for our church if we were to live into this image of church? (2 or 3 descriptive words or phrases)
- Write down the key ideas that came during this time of prayer and reflection.
- Prepare a Summary Sheet at the end of the process.
- Come to the meeting designed for gathering and discussing the key ideas

What will happen to the key ideas that I have written down?

- They will be added to the key ideas for the rest of the congregation. These ideas will become the basis for the Ministry Information Form (MIF) that is developed for the pastor search process or for whatever plans that develop to determine leadership for your church
- The meeting for gathering and discussing these ideas will be announced.

What happens if I miss a day or two?

- Start again tomorrow with the Scripture lesson for the day. This will keep you together with the rest of the congregation.
- If you want to go back and spend a little time with the text you missed, you can do that. Just make sure that you have completed the regular work for the day before going back.

What if I'm not able to be at the meeting where the key ideas are gathered and discussed?

- Ask another member of the congregation to bring your Summary Sheet to the meeting. That way, your key ideas can be included.

Daily Scripture Readings

Week One

Monday

2nd Corinthians 5:17-20

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us, we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Tuesday

Ephesians 4:1-3

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Wednesday

Ephesians 4:11-13

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Thursday

1st Thessalonians 5:15-22

See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of the prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

Friday

Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Monday

Hebrews 13:1-3

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

Tuesday

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves in love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Wednesday

Matthew 5:13-16

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Thursday

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Friday

John 17:25-26

"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them"

Final Meeting

The final meeting involves a conversation with the congregation in which members will:

- Share the key ideas that were most present during your prayerful reflection.
- Select the most important ideas to create a foundation for your future actions and goals.
- Participate in conversation about your future, its challenges and opportunities in Christ

Close with a time of prayer for the process ahead.

Summary Sheet

(The summary sheet is to be completed prior to the meeting for gathering and discussing the *Key Ideas.*)

What are 3-5 *key ideas* about God's desire for our church that I discerned as I prayerfully reflected on the scriptures of the past 2 weeks?

=>

=>

What are the 3-5 *strongest ideas or impressions* which I thought/felt about the kind of pastoral leadership our church needs in order to be the kind of church God wants us to be?

Use opposite side of this Summary Sheet to record other ideas that you want to incorporate into the final discussion

Bring this summary sheet with you to the meeting for gathering and discussing the congregation's Key Ideas. The time for that meeting will be announced.

Policy For Considering Gracious Dismissal To Another Reformed Denomination Presbytery of Missouri Union

PROLOGUE

In 2008, the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a resolution expressing “the will of the assembly that presbyteries and synods develop and make available to lower governing bodies and local congregations a process that exercises the responsibility and power ‘to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members...with consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, openness, and transparency.’” In response to this directive, the Presbytery of Missouri Union commits itself to ministries of reconciliation, grace and mutual forbearance in dialogue regarding potential dismissals from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Ministry of Reconciliation

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us....(2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

As ambassadors for Christ, the people of the Presbytery of Missouri Union are committed to a ministry of reconciliation with regard to teaching elders, sessions and congregations who are seeking or considering dismissal from the denomination. Whether that reconciliation takes the form of dismissal, re-commitment to the Presbytery-congregational relationship, or something in between, it is the will of this Presbytery to create a gracious context and process in which the will of God is sought for the life, ministry, and calling of the particular congregation. The Presbytery commits itself and invites all its congregations to pursue this broad understanding of reconciliation with a graciousness befitting those who claim Jesus as Lord.

The Ministry of Grace

Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 4:15)

As beneficiaries of God’s grace, the people of the Presbytery of Missouri Union are committed to a ministry of grace with respect to the diversities and differences among us. We recognize that Presbyterians of good conscience, abiding faith in Christ, and genuine commitment to the Word of God and our confessions can come to different interpretive conclusions about the meaning of scripture and God’s will for the church. We affirm that those whose consciences are strained by recent decisions of our denomination, as well as those whose consciences are clear and are in support of these changes, are all brothers and sisters in need of grace. Because the new life in Christ “takes shape in a community in which people know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are,” we therefore seek to accept and love ourselves and others, “knowing that no one has any ground on which to stand, except God’s grace” (*The Confession of 1967*, 9.22, inclusive language version).

The Ministry of Mutual Forbearance

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

As a body of Reformed believers who affirm the importance of “bearing with one another in love,” the Presbytery of Missouri Union is committed to a “ministry of mutual forbearance” in relation to those with whom we disagree. The new “Foundations of Presbyterian Polity,” which mirror the Historic Principles of Church Order in previous versions of the *Book of Order*, claim “that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good character and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other” (F-3.0105). In the dialogues and discussions relating to potential divisions, dismissals or dissolutions of congregations within its bounds, the Presbytery of Missouri Union commits itself to follow this historic principle to the best of its ability, with God’s help.

I. DISCUSSION OF WHAT IT MEANS FOR PROPERTY TO BE “HELD IN TRUST” FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

“All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (G-4.0203).

- A. The Presbytery of Missouri Union understands that the Trust Clause (G-4.0203) is a reflection of the church’s organic unity as it fulfills “The Great Ends of the Church.” Even as we profess that congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do possess all the gifts necessary to be the church, we also profess in G-3.0101 of the *Book of Order* that there is “a mutual interconnection of the church through its councils” and that no congregation can claim to be “sufficient” in itself as the church. Under this provision, particular congregations “are called to share with others both within and beyond the congregation the task of bearing witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the world.” It is the charge and duty of all councils of the church “to nurture, guide, and govern those who witness as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to the end that such witness strengthens the whole church and gives glory to God.” The Trust Clause is a specific manifestation of what the “mutual interconnection of the church through its councils” means for us with regard to our faithful stewardship of the property given to us by God for ministry.
- B. The Trust Clause also reflects our understanding of the church as a communion of saints across time, with responsibilities both to those who came before and to those who will follow. When a congregation seeks to leave the Presbytery, it is breaking what is often a significant historic relationship; it is also departing from a fellowship in which its officers have participated, by whose polity they have pledged to be governed, and with which many members may feel bonds of affection.
This policy therefore cautions any congregation seeking to separate from the Presbytery to consider its actions carefully.
- C. Under the Trust Clause, a particular congregation’s church property, both real and personal (including, without limitation, land, buildings and fixtures), is held in trust for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Except as otherwise specifically provided in the *Book of Order*, a congregation cannot sell, lease, or encumber its property without the permission of Presbytery, nor can it take property with it to another denomination unless Presbytery voluntarily releases its claim upon the property.

- D. For the reasons set forth above, the Trust Clause should be viewed as a defense of the ministry and mission of the church universal, not as an offensive weapon to be used against any council or other embodiment of the church. In considering enforcement of the provisions of the Trust Clause, all parties with an interest in the Trust Clause are called to act with grace rather than as adversaries. Scripture calls us to seek in all humility to resolve our disagreements graciously, with due consideration for the interests of others and a recognition that the way we handle disagreements can serve as a positive witness to the gospel in the world.

II. OUTLINE FOR A PROCESS OF DISCERNMENT WITH PRESBYTERY

- A. When Presbytery becomes aware, through Session action, that a session and/or a congregation feels estranged from the PC(U.S.A.) to the extent of considering dismissal from the Presbytery and the PC(U.S.A.), an Administrative Commission will offer to meet with the Session and jointly, or subsequently, with the congregation as the church tries to discern God's will for denominational affiliation.
- B. The AC and the Session will seek a time of prayer and conversation focused upon understanding the conflict and identifying potential steps toward reconciliation.
- C. The meetings with the Administrative Commission (AC) shall be conducted as follows:
1. The AC shall covenant to meet together with the Session of the congregation. As each situation is unique, this may consist of more than one meeting
 2. At each meeting with the AC and the particular church, all participants covenant to strive earnestly, in a spirit of Christian love, to (i) pray and study together; (ii) search for avenues of mutual reconciliation, offer grace, and exercise mutual forbearance as led by the Holy Spirit; (iii) be open, honest, and transparent; (iv) speak the truth in love; and (v) genuinely seek to discern not human will, but God's will, for the denominational affiliation of the congregation.
 3. Members of the congregation are strongly encouraged to attend such meetings in order to listen to the content of the discussion.
- D. A primary goal of the AC conversations with sessions/congregations, when there is a group that desires to remain within the PC (U.S.A.) and a group that desires to be dismissed to another Reformed body, shall be the discussion of financial, property and other issues, including continued use of the church name. The purpose of this discussion shall be to enable members that wish to remain and those that wish to move to a new denominational fellowship to be reconciled in the aftermath of separation, if dismissal does occur. If after a period of dialogue, the AC and the Session are convinced of a deep gulf between the congregation and the PC(U.S.A.), and that they are not able to establish a process for continued relationship with the PC(U.S.A.), the AC and the Session will begin the process of determining whether the Session and congregation desire to request dismissal as provided in Section III below.

III. PROCESS TO DETERMINE IF A SESSION AND CONGREGATION DESIRE TO REQUEST DISMISSAL

If the Session, following the conclusion of the meetings described in Section II, in consultation with the Administrative Commission (AC), decides by majority vote, that maintaining the current relationship with the PC(U.S.A.) seems unlikely, then those discussions shall cease and the Session shall call for a congregational meeting to determine the desires of the congregation on the question of pursuing the process to request dismissal to another Reformed body.

- A. Written notice for such meeting shall be given thirty (30) days prior to the meeting and shall be noted in the weekly bulletin and from the pulpit four consecutive Sundays for a meeting to be held within ten (10) days of the last pronouncement from the pulpit.
- B. A quorum for this meeting shall be fifty percent (50%) of the active members of the congregation.
- C. The question to be determined at this congregational meeting shall be whether or not the congregation should request of the Presbytery permission to be dismissed to another Reformed body.
- D. Any active member shall have the right to speak at this meeting, and all speakers are urged to utilize Christian harmony in their presentation.
- E. The AC shall be invited to attend the congregational meeting and shall be permitted to speak if its members desire to do so.
- F. At conclusion of all discussion and a prayer, votes shall be taken on paper ballots that provide a vote for "Request dismissal" and "Do not request dismissal".
- G. The votes shall be counted by two designees of the Session and may be observed by the AC.
- H. If sixty-five percent (65%) of those present and voting, mark their ballots to "Request dismissal," it shall be deemed that the congregation has elected to seek dismissal to another Reformed body, and shall then enter into the next phase of the process.

IV. PROCEDURE TO DETERMINE TERMS OF DISMISSAL

A. Negotiating the terms of dismissal

The dismissal of a church from the Presbytery may be a traumatic event in the life of the congregation and the Presbytery. The actions of the Presbytery shall be truly focused on the preservation and even the advancement of ministry through the process of negotiation and after the congregation is dismissed. The Administrative Commission (AC) will engage with the Session to negotiate the terms of dismissal. The AC and Session shall elect a moderator for joint meetings by a majority of the vote of both bodies. It is expected that once the process has reached this stage, the negotiations should be able to progress relatively quickly and be able to be completed within sixty (60) days.

B. Terms for release to another body

Consistent with PC (U.S.A.) Polity and General Assembly actions, congregations seeking dismissal from the Presbytery may only be dismissed with its property to another Reformed body. A congregation cannot be dismissed to "independency." Also, congregations can only be dismissed by the formal action of the Presbytery. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event any provisions of this paragraph

are inconsistent with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall control.

C. Terms of dismissal of a particular congregation

1. The AC and the Session shall engage in discussions to determine what would be gracious, fair and reasonable terms under the circumstances for the particular congregation to be dismissed. To be dismissed with a significant portion, or all, of its liquid, real and personal property to another Reformed body, some aspects to be considered by the AC and Session could be:
 - Size of minority seeking to stay with PC(U.S.A.)
 - Relative contributions of time, talents, and financial treasure of those members who prefer to be dismissed from the denomination and those members who prefer to remain within the denomination
 - Amount and value of property of the congregation
 - Nature of the property, i.e. liquid or fixed, real and personal
 - Ability of a majority of the congregation to pay the contemplated amount
 - Congregation's existing debt service
 - The effective date of the dismissal
 - Whether the congregation has received financial assistance from the Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly or from other congregations within the Presbytery within the past ten years.
2. As one possible means of bringing resolution to the terms of dismissal, the AC and Session shall consider asking the congregation to make payments to the Presbytery of Missouri Union mission budget for a limited time. Such payments, if agreed to, could represent a shared commitment to outreach and mission that would continue despite the dismissal and be a witness to the world of the unity of purpose that still remains within the body of Christ notwithstanding the parting of ways. If the possibility of shared commitment exists, the AC and Session shall work in good faith to find mutually agreeable possibilities for this type of shared ministry.
3. In all cases of dismissal, notwithstanding any other terms and conditions negotiated by the AC and the Session, a congregation that has elected to be dismissed must commit to the following terms and conditions:
 - a. Payment to any teaching elder installed by that congregation at the time of dismissal who decides to remain with PC(U.S.A.) of a minimum of six (6) months' salary, housing and benefits, less any compensation received by the teaching elder from other sources of employment during said six (6) months' term as provided in the Presbytery's current dismissal policy for teaching elders.
 - b. If a congregation seeking dismissal has outstanding loans to the Synod or other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) body or affiliated foundation, then before dismissal occurs such loans must be paid back.
4. The Presbytery explicitly acknowledges that any session/congregation requesting and receiving permission to leave the Presbytery and the PC(U.S.A.) may, at any time, apply for readmission to the Presbytery under the then current provisions of the *Book of Order*.

V. CONGREGATIONAL APPROVAL OF NEGOTIATED TERMS

As soon as the Administrative Commission (AC) and the Session arrive at terms acceptable to the two committees, the Session shall call for a final congregational meeting to validate the terms negotiated.

- A. Notice shall be the same as provided for in the first congregational meeting.

- B. The quorum shall be computed the same as provided for in the first congregational meeting.
- C. All members of the congregation shall have an opportunity to speak, as well as the AC members.
- D. At the conclusion of all discussion and a prayer, votes shall be taken on paper ballots that provide a vote for “Accept terms” or “Reject terms” and no additional writing or marking on the ballot shall be considered. The votes shall be counted as provided in the first congregational meeting.
- E. If sixty-five percent (65%) of those present and voting elect to “Accept terms,” the agreement between the AC and the Session is validated and shall be deemed to represent the wishes of the congregation.

VI. PROCESS FOR PRESBYTERY TO VOTE TO DISMISS A CONGREGATION

Once the Session and congregation have formally voted to request dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and have accepted the terms of the negotiated agreement for dismissal, Presbytery will call a vote at the next Stated Meeting of Presbytery on accepting the terms of the agreement and dismissing the congregation to another Reformed body, by a simple majority vote. The written settlement agreement will be made available to all members of Presbytery for their review well in advance of the meeting at which the Presbytery vote will be taken.

VII. POST-DISMISSAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Status of Teaching Elder Members of Presbytery

Teaching elders who are installed within the congregation at the time of dismissal may request transfer to the Reformed body to which the congregation is requesting dismissal, or they may remain as members of Presbytery.

B. Status of Members of the Congregation Being Dismissed

It is important for both the AC and the Session to communicate carefully with congregation members so that divisiveness is minimized between those in the congregation who wish to withdraw and those members who want to remain in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). After formal voting by the congregation and Presbytery has been completed, all members will be contacted by the Presbytery of Missouri Union regarding their membership status.

C. Status of Members of the Congregation Who Wish to Remain Members of a PC(U.S.A.) Congregation

If specific members within a dismissed congregation choose to remain in the PC(U.S.A.), the Presbytery will provide pastoral support, guidance and resources for processing the transitions, seeking or developing a new PC(U.S.A.) congregation, and/or addressing other matters of concern and care.

D. Status of Members under Care of Presbytery

Special attention should be given to members of the congregation who are preparing for ministry and are under the care of Presbytery. Each member under care, together with his/her liaison from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), should be advised immediately of the congregation's desire to seek dismissal. The member under care will be given the option of being dismissed with the congregation or transferring their membership to another congregation with Presbytery and/or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If transfer to another congregation within Presbytery/the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.) is requested, the AC and the CPM liaison will assist the member in seeking a waiver of the usual six-month requirement for church membership in order to maintain care status.

E. Service of Worship to Acknowledge Dismissal

The Presbytery shall offer to organize and lead a worship service, including observance of the Lord's Supper, to acknowledge termination of the existing denominational relationship, to acknowledge the bonds of Christian love and duty that still bind us together, and to affirm the Presbytery's continuing care for the congregation.

F. Final Reports

The congregation shall close out its financial and membership books as of the official date of dismissal and file all reports required by the Presbytery for statistical record keeping. The Congregation shall provide its minutes and records for copying by the Presbyterian Historical Society and shall cover the expenses involved.

**Policy for the Relationship of Departing Pastors
And their Former Congregations
Adopted by MUP August 21, 2018
Revised: February 26, 2022
Commission on Ministry – MUP**

The Commission on Ministry (COM) has pastoral responsibility for all the pastor members of the Presbytery. That responsibility needs to be exercised with special care during periods of transition for the pastor members. The COM must show discretion in assisting the completion of the ministry in such a way that encourages health and wholeness for everyone.

In the hope of loving one another as Christ loves us, the COM offers the following policy to assist pastors in leaving a congregation in a healthy and constructive manner. Our hope is to move the people forward in the ministry so that they can enjoy the invigoration of all past service and anticipate fresh gifts from new servants of God.

POLICY

Congregational Education. Prior to departure, the pastor should clearly and consistently state that she or he should not exercise any pastoral roles at the pastorate's conclusion. This helps church members understand that it is not a personal matter when the former pastor declines to participate in a baptism, wedding, funeral, or to make a pastoral call. The COM will assist the pastor in educating the congregation both before and after the pastor's departure

Friendships with Church Members. The natural development of a special kind of friendship between a pastor and a church member can enrich the lives of all concerned. However, problems inevitably arise when the naturally close bonds between the pastor and a few members of a church result in the pastor being viewed as caring more for his or her "favorites." This is further exacerbated when the pastoral relationship is dissolved. It is unlikely that the same people who understand themselves as being exceptionally close with the current pastor will ever feel quite the same way with the next. It is therefore recommended that the pastor be intentionally encouraged to seek close personal friendships with people outside of the congregation instead of friendships within one's congregation.

The reason: The role of the pastor is a professional relationship similar to the physician and patient relationship. Lasting personal friendships are completely mutual. The pastoral relationship, by its nature is neither lasting nor mutual in the same manner as friendship. It is a relationship defined primarily by the Office of Ministry that a pastor holds. It is therefore a relationship that involves a power differential. Upholding the office precludes the same kind of absolute mutuality that a real friendship demands.

Every individual relationship between a pastor and a former member absolutely, inevitably *must* change once the pastoral relationship is dissolved in order for the congregation as a whole to remain a healthy part of Christ's Church. Pastors therefore should be vigilant in establishing boundaries between those who are church members and those with whom they have hopes of establishing long-lasting mutually-gratifying, egalitarian friendships, since a pastor's relationship with a church member is destined to change drastically at the end of her or his tenure.

Leaving it to the presbytery or the next pastor to establish those boundaries is a threat to the peace and unity of the church that the pastor vowed to uphold in his or her ordination vows. The pastor should

therefore discuss these boundaries at even greater length with congregants with whom the pastor has felt especially close. In addition, the pastor should be prepared for those relationships to suffer after his or her pastoral relationship has been dissolved and should be preparing his or her congregants for that reality. Simply put, the overall health of the church takes precedence over a pastor's personally gratifying friendships with members. Even agreeing to listen to assessments about the church or the new pastor (interim installed or otherwise) can adversely affect the relationship between that new pastor and the congregation; such conversation should therefore be actively avoided and soundly discouraged by the departing pastor.

In accordance with the Book of Order G-2.0905 a former pastor can *Officiate by Invitation Only: After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.* Without the invitation of the current pastor, it is important for the departing pastor to refrain from performing baptisms, funerals, weddings, and other services for friends. What this means is that the former pastor's response to any invitation by a former member to participate in anything in the church, in any capacity whatsoever, should be an emphatic "No."

Further, this response should be made without laying any blame for it on either the PC(USA) generally, or on the new pastor, specifically. A pastor's continuing involvement in the life of his or her former congregation can only cause significant delay in the healthy development of the relationship between the new pastor and his or her former congregation. There are, of course, exceptions. But those should be left to the new pastor and the session to decide. The only time a former pastor should ever take part in any aspect of the life of his or her former congregation is if he or she is asked by the new pastor/moderator to participate because the new pastor/moderator understands that the overall health of the congregation is at stake.

Church Governance. A departing pastor shall not influence, directly or indirectly, the selection of her or his successor. A former pastor shall not communicate with church members about issues affecting the governance of the church or the performance of a new pastor. The situation can become difficult when members of the former pastor's family serve on Session. As a result, the COM recommends that the spouse/partner of the former pastor not be involved in the governance of the departing pastor's church until the newly called pastor has been on site for at least a full year of ministry.

Social Media. Departing pastors should be careful in their use of social media contact with former church members. It is recommended the departing pastor conduct their use of social media with professional guidelines kept in mind and to be careful what he/she shares. It is important to not continue a pastoral relationship via social media.

Continued Involvement in the Church. In some cases, a departing pastor may retire to the community where he or she has served for an extended period. If the departing pastor wishes to continue to worship in a church following the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, then COM instructs the departing pastor to observe the following policy:

- a. The departing pastor should not be present – in worship one year after a new pastor is called, unless invited to worship by the new pastor. In time of extended interims or in special circumstances the departing pastor should seek the counsel of the COM before attending worship.
- b. Following the initial year, the departing pastor may seek to formally define the relationship the departing pastor will have with the congregation.

- c. If the new pastor deems that the time is still not right, the former pastor should respect this and initiate further conversation at some designated date in the future.
- d. The departing pastor should not serve in a leadership role in the church services or services for the church members (see paragraph 4 on page 2 of this document)
- e. The departing pastor should not be involved in the governance of the church. (see paragraph 4 on page 2 of this document)
- f. The departing pastor should neither expect nor seek the title of "Pastor Emeritus."

Over-involvement in the Church. Should the departing pastor become involved in the leadership, governance, or work of the church so that the peace and unity of the church is being disrupted, the pastor and/or clerk of session should contact the COM for assistance in reestablishing the peace and unity of the church.

Exit Interview. This policy will be discussed in the exit interview conducted by COM with the departing pastor. During the exit interview, the departing pastor will be encouraged to write a letter to funeral homes, nursing homes, and the congregation explaining that he/she will no longer be conducting funerals, weddings, baptisms, etc.

The signatures below indicate this policy has been discussed in an exit interview conducted by COM with the departing pastor.

 Departing Pastor's signature

 COM representative's signature

 Date

Policy on Changes in Pastoral Roles Within a Congregation

Missouri Union Presbytery and Commission on Ministry

Adopted by MUP on August 21, 2018

Introduction

For decades, the collective wisdom of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has held that changing a pastor's role from one position to another in the same congregation is rarely in the best interest of the congregation. In fact, until the 2011 revisions to the Form of Government, the Book of Order expressly forbade such pastoral changes. Interim pastors could not be considered for the corresponding permanent position in a congregation. Associate pastors were not eligible to be considered for a senior pastor position, nor could associate pastors become co-pastors.

The Form of Government revised in 2011 sought to change the pattern of creating a rule to address every uncertainty of our life in community. Instead, councils and congregations are encouraged to place God's mission at the heart of their decision-making, and the church is called to apply the broad principles of our polity with creativity and flexibility, with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Of particular interest has been the degree of flexibility afforded in Book of Order provisions regarding changes in pastoral leadership in a given congregation. This document sets out the COM policy on how the provisions regarding such changes will be interpreted and applied in Missouri Union Presbytery (MUP).¹

Note: This policy does not apply to other temporary pastoral positions.

Pastoral Succession in the Book of Order

With respect to changes in pastoral roles, the current Book of Order states:

- G-2.0504a Installed Pastoral Relationships ... "An associate pastor is *ordinarily* not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation." [emphasis added]
- G-2.0504b Temporary Pastoral Relationships ... "A teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is *ordinarily* not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor." [emphasis added]

The authority for granting exceptions to these provisions is found in the following:

- G-2.0504 © Exceptions. "A Presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a teaching elder currently called as an Associate Pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor, or a teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting."

¹A presbytery's responsibilities for the care, oversight, and accountability of teaching elders are broadly stated in the Book of Order, G-3.0306 and G-3.0307. In Missouri Union Presbytery, the Commission on Ministry (COM) handles most of these responsibilities. Matters of pastoral leadership in congregations are primarily carried out by COM.

The Broad Principles of our Polity regarding Pastoral Transitions

What are the broad principles that COM is called upon to apply with creativity and flexibility in these matters?

- A central principle of our theology and polity is the notion that *pastors are called through a process of spiritual discernment*, a deep listening for God's intention for the congregation and the pastor, as free as possible from the limitations of human imagination and bias.
- The relationship between pastor and congregation is unique, and *the policies and practices of the secular world that govern hiring staff do not largely apply to calling a pastor*.
- Over time, the church has learned that congregations are best served by *clean breaks in pastoral relations and that open searches* facilitate a Spirit-led discernment of a congregation's future pastoral leadership.
- Related to this is an understanding that changes in pastoral roles within a congregation should be informed by *what is best for the long-term health and vitality of the congregation* as a whole. This understanding is reflected in the ethical bounds of the pastorate – to make the health and wholeness of the congregation paramount in all decision-making. We should resist efforts to shortcut the search process by promoting staff from within or to use the process for the professional advancement of existing staff.
- It is important to remind congregation's that this is an opportunity to move forward by exposure to new ideas and ways of doing things. The idea of calling the Associate Pastor to the lead Pastor role maybe because it feels safer and more familiar.
- Discussions of changes in pastoral role often arise during interim periods. Over the years, the church has embraced the unique role of interim pastors during these "in-between times" in helping congregations come to terms with the past, envision a new identity, and prepare for a healthy relationship with a new pastor. COM believes strongly that *the effectiveness of an interim pastor in this critical work would be compromised if he/she were permitted to be a candidate for the installed position*.

COM Policy on Pastoral Transitions

At the heart of COM's understanding of the current Book of Order provisions is the word *ordinarily* [G-2.0504 (a)]. COM interprets that to mean that the principles that informed decisions on changes in pastoral roles within a congregation in the past still apply today, and only in *extraordinary* situations should COM approve exceptions to those principles. In practice, then, the starting point of COM's policy is the pre-2011 Book of Order prohibitions [G-14.0501(d), G-14.0513(b), and G-14.0513(d)]², while acknowledging that exceptions may be in order, as allowed by the current Book of Order provisions [G-2.0504 (c)]. Knowing that the needs for each church are different, COM will prayerfully consider the health of the church when deciding, on a case by case basis, what constitutes *extraordinary* situations.

Further, COM notes that exceptions to this policy require a three-fourths vote of the presbytery, as required by the Book of Order [G-2.0504 (c)], a significant hurdle not to be undertaken without prayerful and thorough consideration.

² G-14.0501(d) stated, in part, “...an associate pastor is not eligible to succeed immediately the pastor in a church in which they have served together, nor may the associate pastor be called as a pastor to serve as co-pastor of that church...” G-14.0513(b) stated, in part, “A minister may not be called to be the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a church served as interim pastor or interim co-pastor.” G-14-0513(d) stated, in part, “A temporary supply may not be called to be pastor or associate pastor of a church served as temporary supply...”

Special thanks to: National Capital Presbytery for developing the policy we borrowed from to create this policy.

Guidelines for Merger of Churches

Missouri Union Presbytery

February 26, 2019

The Book of Order has little to say about the merger of churches (G-11.0103h), thus the Presbytery has great flexibility in how it is done and the process can be tailored to each specific instance.

The following is a general outline for what needs to be done. The primary reference is OGA Constitutional Musings Note 2 with a number of details added.

1. The sessions shall contact COM to see if there would likely be any objections to a merger. There is no sense in proceeding if large barriers might prevent a merger. Work out any of these problems before proceeding.
2. There must be a clear desire expressed by each congregation to merge. Each session together shall explore the possibilities of a merger. If the sessions agree a merger is the positive action for both churches, a Merger Committee shall be organized which is composed of members from both sessions. The Merger Committee shall organize information to be presented at a called congregational meeting to get the congregation's input as to whether a merger is something that shall be explored (no final decision shall be attempted, at this time). Any substantial conflict needs to be addressed.
3. If both congregations express interest in a merger then a planning committee (PC) needs to be appointed with members from each church to plan a merger and get the requisite approvals. This may be the combined whole of both sessions, combined subcommittees of each session or a committee elected by the congregations. At least some strong session representation from each church shall be involved.
4. The Presbytery, upon recommendation of COM, shall request involvement of the standing administrative commission (AC) to work with the churches to plan and implement the merger. The presbytery can delegate the merger approval to the AC. The AC shall be structured with the following delegations and responsibilities.
 - a. Authority to develop a plan of union.
 - b. Authority to recommend to Presbytery dissolving of the old churches and creation of the new church.
 - c. Responsibilities of the AC and the sessions must be clearly delineated.
 - d. Authority to recommend the purchase, sale, and encumbrance of property to the Presbytery trustees.
 - e. Report to presbytery on a regular basis and keep thorough and accurate minutes of all meetings to be delivered to the Stated Clerk.
5. A plan of union must be developed with the PC and AC working closely together. The plan shall include the following.
 - a. A process for forming a session for the new church shall be developed. This could be the combined sessions, letting the session size drop by attrition until the optimum size is reached. Or, a new session can be elected with a specified percentage from each congregation.
 - b. There must be a plan for the disposition of property that specifies what property from each church will be transferred to the new church. This includes cash, securities, property and other assets. If

one church is “richer” than the other, an equitable arrangement must be made that is acceptable to all. Excess property can be donated to other churches in need or sold.

- c. If either church has debt, then the plan must specify how that debt will be handled by the new church. If one church has more debt than the other, then an equitable arrangement must be made that is acceptable to all. Once the new church is formed, any debt not settled beforehand will become debt of the new church.
 - d. Disposition of memorial gifts are often an emotional area with contention. Those that gave the gift may want to dictate how it is handled. For example, if both churches have memorial gifts of a baptismal font, which one will be used in the new church? How will the donor of the other one feel about it? Although the concerns of the givers and their heirs shall be considered, remember that these gifts are the property of the church once given and the church makes the final decision on their use, consistent with any restrictions on the gift.
 - e. There must be a plan for pastoral leadership. The PC must work closely with COM to determine the future pastoral leadership. This could involve pastor(s) of the old churches, or an interim until a pastor can be called. NOTE: Ordinarily, a new congregation will have new pastoral leadership.
 - f. If there is no installed pastor, then COM must appoint a moderator of the new combined session.
 - g. Bylaws must be written for the new church and there must be a process for adopting these bylaws for the new church.
 - h. The new church’s organizational structure and staffing shall be planned.
 - i. A process for approval of the merger must be developed. This would probably be a vote to merge by each individual congregation contingent on approval of the other congregation, followed by approval by the AC and Presbytery.
 - j. The name of the new church must be selected.
 - k. The new session or some other group must be empowered to form a new corporation and satisfy any civil obligations.
 - l. The final services of each congregation shall be planned as well as the first service of the new congregation.
6. The plan must be submitted for approval to the presbytery.
 7. A new roll book shall be created from the combined rolls of the old churches.
 8. Minutes of the old churches shall be archived at the Presbyterian Historical Society.
 9. The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery will handle the reporting of the merger and obtain a PIN for the merged church.
 10. The AC will produce a written report to be included in the presbytery minutes.

Thanks go to Presbytery of Northern New England for development of the foundation of this document.

Missouri Union Presbytery Pulpit Supply Policy [Adopted 3-8-2023]

What Pulpit Supply is: A Pulpit Supply is literally one who "supplies" the gift of preaching to a vacant pulpit of an active congregation on a given Sunday.

What Pulpit Supply is not: The designated Pastoral Leader of a congregation - either official or unofficial.

Missouri Union Presbytery (MUP) maintains a Pulpit Supply List (PSL) as its approved resource for congregations in need of someone to preach the Word for their congregations: in the absence of their officially recognized pastor, such as during a vacation or during times of transition until a new pastor is called and installed (or until a Minister of the Word and Sacrament (MWS) or Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is contracted or commissioned to serve the congregation as its pastor). When any individual offers their services to a congregation as Pulpit Supply, that person is not serving that congregation as its pastor but simply providing worship leadership and preaching for a designated worship service.

1. Oversight of the PSL for MUP rests upon the Commission on Ministry (COM).
2. The COM will publish and periodically update the PSL for MUP with contact information for all persons approved to provide Pulpit Supply services. The list will indicate which participants are MWS's, CRE's, Ruling Elders without CRE training, pastors of other denominations and any other helpful distinctions. The COM will also publish such minimum honorarium requirements as may be adopted by the Presbytery. Churches needing pulpit supply are strongly encouraged to contact one or more persons on the PSL to help fill their pulpit during times of vacancy. The PSL is located on the MUP Website at www.mupresbytery.org
3. The purpose of a Pulpit Supply preacher is to provide preaching and related worship leadership for a congregation's worship services. Persons providing these services are not to provide additional pastoral services for a congregation and should not be asked to do so. Eligibility for inclusion on the PSL differs substantially from the training required for persons who might serve as full or part time pastors of a church. In no event shall a church or its session allow any individual, either on the PSL or by session invitation to preach, to represent themselves as the pastor for the particular congregation. Any session wanting to arrange for additional pastoral services (especially during a transitional period), or that desires to change a congregation's relationship with any person providing pulpit supply services, must contact the COM.
4. Any ruling elder, teaching elder, and member of a PC(USA) church desiring to preach and conduct worship in the capacity of a Pulpit Supply preacher may be eligible for inclusion on the PSL. Persons with similar experience in other denominations may also be eligible.
 - a. Who May Participate:
 - i. Ruling elders, deacons and other PC(USA) church members desiring to be considered for providing Pulpit Supply services to congregations other than their own must first request from the session of their home church its recommendation and approval with that

individual's request for consideration by the COM. The session moderator or clerk should forward the session's recommendation and approval to the COM.

ii. MWS's or CRE's may be put on the list by a simple request - either to the General Presbyter or the Chair(s) of the COM.

iii. Persons who have served as pastors or in roles of spiritual leadership in other denominations may submit their request directly to the Chair(s) of COM or the General Presbyter for COM's consideration.

b. Except for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and CREs, requests to the COM for inclusion on MUP's PSL, should include an explanation of the individual's background and experience in spiritual leadership, knowledge of the Bible, public speaking experience, and writing proficiency. A resume covering all work and other relevant experience should also be provided, along with a personal statement of faith (under 300 words). Requests may be submitted (with any Session's concurrence) to the moderator of the COM.

5. All persons seeking to be included on the PSL are required to satisfy the Boundary Training required of members of the COM, MWS's and CRE's, which is currently an interactive on-line program that must be taken every 36 months. Each applicant must also consent to a background check by the Presbytery and any future background checks as may be required. The COM may require the applicant to pay the nominal costs for these services.

6. Persons seeking to participate may be examined by the COM, whereupon inquiry may be made into the individual's understandings of the essential tenets of the reformed faith and Presbyterian polity and their aptitude and talents for preparing worship and preaching the word to congregations; they may also be required to attend training provided by or arranged by the COM or appropriate alternative training. (Such examinations are more likely to be conducted for church members, Ruling Elders and Pastors or preachers from denominations not recognized by or in communion with the PC(USA).

7. The COM will provide or help arrange for Pulpit Supply training for ruling elders, lay members of MUP congregations (and others) who wish to be included on MUP's PSL. This training may also be available to any members who might assist in leading worship in their own church - a role that does not typically require COM approval when not being done on a regular basis.

8. Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA), Commissioned Ruling Elders, or Pastors of a denomination with which the PC(USA) is in communion, and who are in good standing, may be sent a copy of these guidelines (via email) and invited to be included on the PSL. All other individuals wishing to be included on the PSL shall be required to sign a Pulpit Supply Agreement with the COM before being added to the PSL, and subsequently being available to churches for preaching. The Pulpit Supply Agreement shall reflect the date on which the individual was approved for pulpit supply services, incorporate the current presbytery-approved remuneration terms, and set forth the role of and

expectations of any person providing pulpit supply services. The agreement will also describe the limitations of their services and their limited role in any congregation for which they may be asked to provide pulpit supply services. *A copy of the Pulpit Supply Agreement is attached to this Policy.*

9. Limitations on Service by Pulpit Supply Participants.

- a. Ruling elders not trained for a Commission, non-ordained participants, and any persons who are not part of the PC(USA), whether on the approved PSL or not, are prohibited from providing preaching on a regular basis in a single church without prior COM approval. **Any church desiring more frequent or more long-term preaching services from such persons should consult with COM.**
 - i. Preaching on a regular basis means that the individual is preaching in a vacant pulpit weekly for more than 2 weeks in a row, monthly on an ongoing schedule (expected to exceed four months), in a rotation of pulpit supply used over a period of four or more months) or an arrangement of similar nature.
 - ii. If a church has a desire for an individual to preach more than 4 times within a 6-month timeframe at the same church, it is deemed to be preaching on a regular basis and contact should be made with COM for the person to continue preaching.
- b. MWS's and CRE's may agree to preach for a church more frequently or for a longer time period as Pulpit Supply, provided they report their arrangement to the COM on an annual basis and remain in good standing as a member of the Presbytery. The COM may recommend adjustments to any preaching schedule to the session of the church and/or the Pulpit Supply participant.

10. The process for arranging for Pulpit Supply Preachers is set out below:

- a. In churches with called and installed MWS's, or with approved Stated Supply MWS's who have a contract for part time services for a congregation, or with a Presbytery approved CRE, when the pastor will be away for vacation/study leave/sabbatical/personal leave, Pulpit Supply may be arranged/approved by the Pastor/Moderator *or* the Session. The Pastor/Session is encouraged to use the MUP PSL. The COM does *not* require a pulpit supply arrangement for another pastor who is also serving as the moderator for that church to cover for that church when that pastor is away from the pulpit. Nor does it require a pulpit supply arrangement for ruling elders or other church leaders who are members of that church to preach within the home church where they are under the oversight of that church's pastor, provided they are *not* preaching on a regular basis. The Session may require a pulpit supply agreement at their own discretion.
- b. In churches in which the pastor/preacher is *not* the moderator of the session or congregation, when the pastor will be away for vacation or study leave, pulpit supply will be arranged/approved by the Session. The Session is encouraged to use the MUP PSL. The Session may require a Pulpit Supply agreement at their own discretion. The COM must be consulted if any one individual may be scheduled to provide worship leadership more than 4 times within a six-month period as a pulpit supply agreement may be required.

- c. In churches without a pastor, the Session will be responsible for securing pulpit supply in consultation with the COM. The session is encouraged to use the PSL. The COM must be consulted if any one individual may be scheduled to provide worship leadership more than 4 times within a six-month period as a pulpit supply agreement shall ordinarily be required.

11. When a session arranges for a preacher other than their regular pastor, the session minutes should include the name and identifying information of any individual scheduled to provide the preaching services along with the date(s) of their service. This applies to services led by participants on the PSL as well as all others who may be invited to lead worship, including elders within the congregation. The minutes should also indicate whether the preaching will be in person, virtual or pre-recorded.
12. The COM recommends utilization of the PSL to all churches needing to fill their pulpits because each Pulpit Supply preacher listed has completed boundary training, had a background check and has been approved by the COM (and, for non-Ministers of Word & Sacrament, by the sessions of their own churches, too). However, there are additional resources for preaching that may be considered by sessions:
 - a. Often churches will invite members of their own session and other members to preach, sometimes on rotation to fill several weeks when a pastor is unavailable or when the church is in transition between pastors. Where such arrangements are likely to exceed four weeks over a six month period, the COM requests to be notified of the arrangement and its intended length.
 - b. Isolated churches without a pastor finding it difficult to procure the services of a PC(USA) MWS to officiate at the Lord's Table, are encouraged to have some of their ruling elders trained and authorized by the Presbytery to preside over communion for their congregation. To this end, the COM offers periodic training for elders for this particular service as allowed in the Book of Order.
 - c. Sometimes pastors of other Reformed or Mainline denominations reside within or near the community and may be willing to assist with pulpit supply. The COM would recommend consideration of pastors of any of the following denominations: The United Church of Christ (UCC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA) who are officially "in communion" with the PCUSA. Individuals in good standing with the following denominations may also request to be on the PSL: the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church (UMC) and the Christian (Disciples of Christ (DOC)). Pastors of these denominations may contact the Chair(s) of the COM or the General Presbyter if they would like to be included in the PSL.
 - d. The COM urges sessions to practice extreme caution when considering preachers from non- denominational churches and those churches whose theology does not align with the essential tenets of reformed faith and the PCUSA's position on open communion, the ordination of women, etc.
 - e. While sessions have the authority as the council for their church's congregation to invite other persons to provide occasional pulpit supply services, persons who are not on the PSL have not been vetted by the COM and could pose a risk of liability to the church and Presbytery and theological confusion for the church.

**Missouri Union Presbytery
Pulpit Supply List Agreement
Adopted March 8, 2023**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email: _____

Home Church: _____

In accordance with the Commission on Ministry's Pulpit Supply List Policy, the following persons are required to submit a Pulpit Supply List Agreement to be considered for inclusion on the Pulpit Supply List for the Commission on Ministry of the Missouri Union Presbytery:

- A. Ruling elders, deacons and other PC(USA) church members who have obtained the recommendation and approval of their home church's session.
- B. Persons who are in good standing with and have served in roles of spiritual leadership (but not ordained ministers) within a denomination with which the PC(USA) is in Communion and submit the Pulpit Supply Agreement to the COM: The United Church of Christ (UCC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA).
- C. Persons who are in good standing with and have served as pastors in the following denominations: the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church and the Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church.

Please indicate which category applies to you: _____

Identify your home church (where you are regularly in attendance): _____

If you are a member of a PC(USA) congregation, please request the Clerk of your church's session to submit the Session's recommendation and approval for your providing Pulpit Supply Services within the bounds of Missouri Union Presbytery.

If you are not a member of the PC(USA), please indicate your denominational membership and submit certification that you are in good standing with that denomination: _____

Please provide as references two persons who have observed your exercise of public speaking and spiritual leadership with their telephone number(s) and email address and a brief description of the circumstances of their observations:

1. _____

2. _____

Qualifications:

1. Please provide a current resume or similarly-detailed description of your current and past employment and volunteer activities in both religious and non-religious organizations and institutions, your educational background and any material certifications, recognitions or awards you may have received.
2. Please attach a description of your experience in spiritual leadership, knowledge of the Bible, public speaking experience, and writing proficiency.
3. Please attach a description of any other experience in public speaking.
4. Please provide a brief (not exceeding 300 words) statement describing your faith.

Acknowledgments:

Please indicate by your signature below your agreement to adhere to each of the following requirements for service as a pulpit supply preacher in Missouri Union Presbytery.

1. Ruling elders not trained for a Commission, deacons, non-ordained participants, and any persons who are not part of the PC(USA), whether on the approved PSL or not, are prohibited from providing preaching on a regular basis in a single church without prior COM approval. Any church desiring more frequent or more long-term preaching services from such persons should consult with COM.
 - a. Preaching on a regular basis means that the individual is preaching in a vacant pulpit weekly for more than 2 weeks in a row, monthly on an ongoing schedule (expected to exceed four months), in a rotation of pulpit supply used over a period of four or more months) or an arrangement of similar nature.
 - b. Once that individual has preached 4 times within a 6-month timeframe at the same church, it is deemed to be preaching on a regular basis.

2. All persons seeking to be included on the PSL are required to satisfy the Boundary Training required of members of the COM, MWS's and CRE's, which is currently an interactive on-line program that must be taken every 36 months.
3. All persons must also consent to a background check by the Presbytery and any future background checks as may be required. The COM may require the applicant to pay the costs for these services.
4. Persons seeking to participate may be examined by the COM, whereupon inquiry may be made into the individual's understandings of the essential tenets of the reformed faith and Presbyterian polity and their aptitude and talents for preparing worship and preaching the word to congregations; they may also be required to attend training provided by or arranged by the COM or appropriate alternative training. (Such examinations are more likely to be conducted for church members, Ruling Elders and Pastors or preachers from denominations not recognized by or in communion with the PC(USA).
5. The purpose of a Pulpit Supply preacher is to provide preaching and related worship leadership for a congregation's worship services. Persons providing these services are not to provide additional pastoral services for a congregation and should not be asked to do so. A Pulpit Supply preacher is prohibited from representing themselves as the pastor for the particular congregation.
6. I have read the Commission on Ministry's Pulpit Supply List Policy and agree to adhere to all of its provisions.
7. All of the information provided in this Agreement and within the attached submissions is true to the best of my knowledge.

Name

Date

This Agreement and all other submitted materials should be sent to the Stated Clerk for Missouri Union Presbytery at:

Stated Clerk, Missouri Union Presbytery, 3236 Emerald Lane, Suite 500,
Jefferson City, MO 65109 or emailed to office@mupresbytery.org.

Questions should be directed to the Stated Clerk for Missouri Union Presbytery or the Moderator(s) of the Commission on Ministry.

Presbytery of Missouri Union Presbytery – Family Leave Policy

The Missouri Union Presbytery adopted the following policy for the compassionate care of Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in pastoral relationships in congregations who are covered by the Benefits Plan with the Board of Pensions when children are added to the family through birth, foster placement, or adoption, or to provide care for an ill or disabled family member, or to heal following a loss or tragic event. Sessions may adapt this policy to fit the needs of other church staff.

Family Leave Time

- Up to 8 weeks leave at full salary and housing allowance;
- If requested, an additional 4 weeks leave at 66% salary and housing allowance; **or**
- A negotiated agreement between the Session and the Minister of Word and Sacrament which follows the policy stated above.

Additional Family Leave Provisions:

1. Vacation and sick leave may be used to supplement the leave as negotiated between the Session and the Minister of Word and Sacrament.
2. All other benefits (health, pension) remain in effect.
3. If the Minister of Word and Sacrament is unable to return to work at the end of the leave agreed upon, the Session, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, would act appropriately to the particular situation.
4. Family leave should ordinarily be negotiated with the Session prior to the qualifying event, if possible.

Summary

This policy is required by the Book of Order (G-2.0804) but Sessions are free to exercise their support in more generous ways if they deem it appropriate. If needed, the Commission on Ministry may be called upon to assist with the negotiations in unusual circumstances.

The Minister of Word and Sacrament may elect, with the approval of the Session, to use vacation time in conjunction with this policy. Sessions and Ministers of Word and Sacrament should be aware of the difference between family leave and vacation time.

**MISSOURI UNION PRESBYTERY
CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY
EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 27, 2021**

Pastors and Sessions in Missouri Union Presbytery (MUP) are to work together in scheduling Continuing Education for the pastor each year. Pastors need to seek approval for time away for Continuing Education from the Session. Pastors are encouraged to inform their Sessions as to the type of study chosen and how they will anticipate it will fit into their ministry needs and/or goals. The Presbytery is always ready to serve as a resource if help is requested when seeking Continuing Education opportunities. Grants may be available through the Presbytery to help offset costs. Several educational opportunities are offered within the bounds of MUP free of charge and pastors are encouraged to invite elders or other congregational members, when appropriate, to attend these events so that learning is extended to the larger church. MUP will continue to make Continuing Education opportunities available and communicate those opportunities to member pastors and churches.

Both clergy and churches are encouraged to respect a pastor's time away. Calls back to the church to see how things are going or consulting with the pastor who is away are discouraged. Pastors and Sessions are encouraged to review their administrative procedures so as to ensure the church is able to continue to function smoothly during the pastor's absence so he/she need not be called.

Pastors serving in validated ministries, while not being under the jurisdiction of MUP in regard to Continuing Education requirements, are encouraged to participate in Continuing Education and share their learnings with the Presbytery.

MUP has developed guidelines for Pastors taking Sabbaticals and those guidelines are available on the Presbytery website or upon request from the Presbytery office.

Types of Approved Continuing Education

Continuing Education should provide an opportunity for professional enhancement and/or spiritual refreshment. MUP understands that what refreshes one pastor may cause anxiety for another. MUP therefore suggests the following list of activities or events. While the list is not meant to be absolute or definitive, ministers should be able to provide sound reasoning for those kinds of Continuing Education events that fall outside of these categories:

1. Formal workshops, seminars, and other events sponsored by
 - a. Accredited bodies of higher learning
 - b. Governing bodies of the church
 - c. Other recognized and approved institutions
2. Courses of study leading to further professional degrees (M.A., D. Min, PhD, etc)
3. Travel that is specifically study oriented and will enhance one's work
4. Time at a spiritual retreat center or time in solo retreat
5. A disciplined, systematic, self-directed reading program

Reporting Process

One of the goals of Continuing Education is to equip the individual to serve his/her faith community more effectively. Recognizing that sharing new learning opportunities may also serve the larger church, MUP will request that the pastors inform the Presbytery yearly of the pastor's study. A report form is provided for such a purpose. This information will be shared in print with the entire presbytery. The reported study may be one completed or one planned in the near future. A time will be set aside at one Presbytery meeting for pastors who are willing to share their learning with the gathered community as a whole and in small groups. At the local congregational level pastors are strongly encouraged to share their educational experience in creative ways such as –

1. Direct report to the Session
2. Newsletter articles
3. Incorporated into their preaching and/or teaching
4. Mini Workshops
5. Development of a new innovative program or mission

MUP REPORT FORM FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Pastor:

Date:

Continuing Education Event Planned or Undertaken including date:

Reason(s) this event was helpful or non-helpful:

I would recommend this event

Yes/No