

Policy Regarding Former Pastors: A General Statement of Underlying Principles

The Rev. _____ and the _____ Presbyterian Church of _____ have agreed to request that the Presbytery of Baltimore dissolve the Pastoral Relationship that exists between them with the terms outlined in the separate Dissolution Agreement.

All parties agree to conform to and abide by the Ministerial Guidelines of the Presbytery of Baltimore and understand that all financial payments shall be forfeited if the minister violates these Guidelines and those stated in the Dissolution Policy of the Presbytery of Baltimore. It is understood by all parties that the retiring Pastor will neither provide ministerial services nor be asked to provide such by either the congregation or its members after the pastoral relationship is dissolved.

In particular, when pastoral relationships with congregations are dissolved, certain ethical behavior is required in order to preserve the peace and unity of the church. When a pastor leaves a congregation:

- a. All pastoral and administrative duties in the congregation are to be terminated;
- b. The pastor is not to return to officiate at any baptism, wedding, or funeral, except at the invitation of the moderator of the session;
- c. The pastor is not to return as a regular worshipper or participant in the congregation without consultation with the General Presbyter or the Commission on Ministry;
- d. Pastors shall exercise great care to have no further influence on the former congregation and its members by conversation, correspondence, or other action;
- e. All belongings are to be removed from church and manse so that the interim and/or new pastor can use the facilities;
- f. All church property, including all church keys, will be returned on the last day of service;
- g. Former pastors may not use the services of the church office or support staff;
- h. Former pastors shall exercise no part in the selection of a Pastor Nominating Committee or in the selection of a successor (pastor, interim, stated supply);
- i. Pastors are to treat successors with courtesy.
- j. Pastors are to refrain from commenting on or voicing judgments about the ministry of a successor, including in social or other gatherings.
- k. Pastors are not to initiate professional contacts with persons in former parishes.
- l. Pastors making social visits with members of former congregations are to take care that professional matters do not intrude.
- m. Pastors shall not agree to the status of "Pastor Emeritus" until at least two years have passed since serving the congregation. This shall be done in consultation with the current minister and Commission on Ministry.
- n. This letter of agreement will be shared throughout the congregation so that others may understand the changes in the pastoral role and responsibilities and can cooperate as the church and pastor move into another phase of their respective lives.

Received by:

Pastor _____ Date _____

Commission on Ministry Representative _____ Date _____

Clerk of Session _____ Date _____

Copies to: Minister, GP, Clerk of Session, Stated Clerk, Chair of COM