

Definitions of Pastoral Relationships

PURPOSE: Under the present Book of Order, presbyteries have the opportunity to give definition and specific descriptions to the teaching elders within their bounds. To that end, the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Carlisle sets forth these definitions of pastoral relationships between teaching elders and congregations, along with the specifics as to how each type is characterized.

INSTALLED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Pastor
- Co-Pastor
- Associate Pastor
- Designated Pastor

All installed pastoral relationships require three partners: the teaching elder (hereafter named pastor) being called, the congregation extending the call, and the presbytery approving the call. Generally, an installed pastoral relationship is for an indefinite term and is filled through the search process with a properly constituted Pastor Nominating Committee elected by the congregation. After the Committee on Ministry approves the prospective candidate pastor, the committee authorizes the Session of the church to call a Congregational Meeting for the purpose of voting on the call of the pastor.

While an installed pastoral relationship is customarily for an indefinite term, there are occasions where it is advisable for a pastoral relationship to be designated for a term, the length of which is determined by action of the Committee on Ministry in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call. All conditions for a full call are required in such instances—i.e. a full and open search by a duly elected pastor nominating committee, examination by and concurrence of the Committee on Ministry, and an affirmative congregational vote. The only difference between such a call being for a designated period is that all parties agree to the time limitation in question. After the time limitation has been met, the Session of the church may petition the Committee on Ministry for additional designated time. Or, should the congregation so desire and vote affirmatively, a pastor in a designated position may be called with Committee on Ministry approval to an indefinite term as installed pastor.

As a general rule, a teaching elder in a position as associate pastor is not eligible to become the pastor in the church in which he or she is serving as **associate pastor**. **Any action to move an associate pastor to become the installed pastor must be achieved as outlined in the Book of Order (G 2.0504 c).**

TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Book of Order permits the presbytery to establish temporary pastoral relationships which do not carry a formal call or installation. In general, a temporary pastoral relationship is used when a congregation is without pastoral leadership, but for various reasons, calling a fully installed pastor is not possible. Any temporary pastoral relationship shall be set forth in a Covenant of Agreement between the temporary pastor and the Session of the church where the pastor will be serving. The Committee on Ministry shall approve any temporary pastoral relationship arranged by a Session.

An individual in a temporary pastoral leadership relationship may be a teaching elder, or a commissioned ruling elder. Since temporary pastoral leadership is arranged without a duly elected PNC and without a full and open search, no formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

The Session takes the initiative to secure someone to provide temporary pastoral leadership when the congregation is without pastoral leadership. Occasionally, the Committee on Ministry may take the initiative to arrange for temporary pastoral leadership, with the involvement of the Session of the church.

The Book of Order leaves it to presbyteries to determine the appropriate titles for these temporary pastoral relationships. The Presbytery of Carlisle recognizes that there are varying circumstances when a church is in need of temporary pastoral leadership and that not all temporary pastoral relationships are alike. To respond to these various needs, the Presbytery has designated three temporary pastoral relationships:

- Interim pastor
- Temporary pastor
- Supply Pastor

An Interim Pastor has had special training for the unique ministry of serving churches in the midst of pastoral transition. An Interim Pastor is a teaching elder hired by a session to fill specific pastoral duties during a time when the church is without an installed pastor. These duties shall be outlined in a Covenant of Agreement between Session and Pastor and approved by the Committee on Ministry. **An interim pastor is the preferable option when a church needs time and leadership to bridge the transition between fully installed pastors.**

A Temporary Pastor¹ is a teaching elder already ordained for ministry, or a commissioned ruling elder², who is placed in a temporary position defined by a Covenant of Agreement between Session and Pastor, and approved by the Committee on Ministry. When a ruling elder is commissioned as an appointed pastor, the plan included in the Carlisle Presbytery Leadership Handbook (VI, CLP – 1, 2) entitled Commissioned Lay Pastor Plan for the Presbytery of Carlisle shall be followed. **A temporary pastor is an option when a church is in need of pastoral leadership while searching for the next fully installed pastor.**

A Supply Pastor may be placed in a congregation to serve over a longer term than might be customary for a temporary pastor. There are some congregations which, for various reasons, find themselves in need of pastoral leadership for an unspecified amount of time but are unable to call a pastor to an indefinite term. Among the examples are congregations that have difficulty supporting a full time called pastor but still wish to continue as a congregation. The duties of the supply pastor shall be outlined in a Covenant of Agreement between Session and Pastor and approved by the Committee on Ministry.

The length of the term for any of the above people in a temporary pastor relationship may be up to twelve months. The term is renewable annually, with the approval of the Committee on Ministry.

Within the Presbytery of Carlisle, an individual serving in any temporary pastoral relationship is not eligible to become installed as Pastor or Associate Pastor in the church where he or she is serving. While the Book of Order gives presbyteries the flexibility to allow such teaching elders to become installed as Pastor or Associate Pastor in the church where they are serving, that exception calls for the presbytery's mission strategy to permit such exceptions. Any action to move a temporary pastor to become an installed pastor must be achieved as outlined in the Book of Order (G 2.0504 c).

¹ The temporary pastor encompasses what had previously been referred to by one of these terms: Designated Pastor, stated Supply Pastor, Temporary Supply Pastor, Commissioned Lay Pastor and Parish Associate. These terms will no longer be used by the Presbytery of Carlisle.

² As defined in the *Book of Order*, G-2.10 Commissioning Ruling Elders to Particular Pastoral Service.