

## **The Presbytery of Elizabeth Dissolving A Pastoral Relationship**

- Departing/Retiring pastor consults with a representative of COM and/or the Transitional Leader before informing the session of intention to request dissolution of the pastoral relationship
- A representative of COM or the Transitional Leader is present with the pastor when the resignation is announced, so as to consult with the session about informing the congregation and making initial decisions about the transition process.
- Announcement, usually through a letter, and remarks at next regular worship service, developed in consultation with a representative of COM or Transitional Leader
- Discuss Dates of Dissolution
- Congregational Meeting
- Session plans for the process of saying good-bye
- Covenant of Separation is reviewed and signed by departing pastor and Session and communicated to congregation
- Presbytery Concurrence, recommended through the Committee on Ministry
- Arrangements for pulpit supply and pastoral care, until a temporary pastor can be recruited (made by the Session, in consultation with COM)
- Arrangements for a Moderator of the Session and COM liaison to the Search Team for an Interim (made by COM)
- Vacancy Dues to Board of Pensions (Treasurer)
- Review of congregation's financial position (Treasurer and Session representative, along with representatives of COM and Presbytery Trustees)
- Exit interviews for the departing pastor and the Session are conducted by the COM liaison

## **Searching for A Temporary Pastor**

- After Exit interviews and review of finances have been conducted, the Moderator appointed by COM will discuss with the Session, the temporary pastor options available.
- Session designates a Temporary Pastor Search Committee.
- The Temporary Pastor Search Committee works with COM liaison to describe the church and the Temporary Pastor position, including full or part-time status, ministry responsibilities and compensation package
- The Temporary Pastor Search Committee consults with the Transitional Leader and COM to identify potential candidates for the position.
- If the Search Committee wishes to utilize the PCUSA Church Leadership Connection in searching for an Interim, a Ministry Information Form is completed, approved by COM, and launched to the CLC database. From this MIF, the church is matched with interims searching for positions.
- Before the Search Committee begins conversation with potential candidates, an Executive Presbyter reference check is conducted by the Transitional Leader
- If the Temporary Pastor comes from a presbytery other than The Presbytery of Elizabeth, the candidate is interviewed by COM for membership in the

- presbytery.
- The Search Committee interviews candidates for the position, checks references, requests a background check (handled by the presbytery office), and makes a recommendation to the Session
  - The Session extends a call to the Temporary Pastor, confirming with COM that the compensation package meets presbytery minimum
  - It should be noted that for the first year of the covenant, the Temporary Pastor is not to be considered for the installed position. The Temporary Pastor covenant is reviewed annually.

### **During the Interim Period**

- The Session plans for a Mission Review study by appointing a Mission Study Team
- The COM liaison and Temporary Pastor work with the Mission Study Team, using “Research Strategies for Congregations” as a guide.
- The Mission Study Team, representative of the whole congregation, conducts a Mission Review and produces a report, including a recommendation about whether or not the congregation is in a position to search for a permanent, installed pastor.
- The Temporary Pastor provides continuity of pastoral roles and responsibilities and provides assistance and guidance to the congregation, in working through the process of separating from the departing pastor and in preparing for new installed pastoral leadership. This includes coming to terms with the congregation’s history and identity as well as discerning a faithful and fruitful path into the future, given current realities.
- When the Mission study report has been completed and approved by COM, the congregation is authorized to form a Pastor Nominating Committee.