

2015 Personnel Policies and Procedures of Holston Presbytery, Inc.

Introduction

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (“PCUSA”) is an unincorporated body of Reformed Christians, who have agreed to conduct worship and other religious activities in conformity with the then current version of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution, which contains among other things, in its *Book of Order*, a Form of Government setting forth a detailed formal structure of the Church. As an ecclesiastical organization, PCUSA does not exist under any federal law. Central to the structure of PCUSA is the concept of governing bodies. The General Assembly is the national governing body; the synod is the next regional governing body, composed of presbyteries; the presbytery is the next regional governing body, composed of congregations; and the session is the governing body of congregations. Holston Presbytery is a middle-governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Holston Presbytery of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. is a corporate entity of Holston Presbytery and is a tax exempt religious organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

These policies do not constitute a contract. Their terms are implemented in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Calls to Ministers of Word and Sacrament are established/changed in accordance with G-2.05 of the *Book of Order*.

These policies may be withdrawn or changed at any time without notice by actions of the Holston Presbytery upon recommendation of the Administration and Planning Committee. A decision of the Presbytery on the interpretation or application of these policies shall be final and binding on all staff. All previous policies and procedures, to the extent that they are inconsistent with this document, are hereby revoked.

These policies shall at all times comply with the requirements of the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). To the extent that there is any difference, the *Book of Order* shall control and the personnel policies shall be deemed amended in accordance with those requirements.

Staff members may resign their employment at any time and for any reason, and the Presbytery reserves the same right regarding the discontinuation of an individual’s employment.

Theology of Employment

Holston Presbytery is a community of faith called into being by God’s grace in Jesus Christ, “...known by its convictions as well by its actions.” (F-2.01 *Book of Order*)

The Presbytery’s personnel system is designed to reflect the continuing mission concerns of the Presbytery, including program and budgetary decisions.

Scope and Application of the Personnel Policies

The personnel policies are established by the Presbytery with regard to all staff employed by the Presbytery, including elected officials and volunteers.

Development and Administration of Personnel Policies and Procedures

The Presbytery is responsible to provide for:

- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** An employment plan consistent with the principles of inclusiveness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- **Compensation:** To develop and administer a process of job classification and compensation.
- **Reimbursement of Business Expenses:** To develop and administer a process for the reimbursement of staff business related expenses.
- **Continuing Education:** To develop and administer a process of continuing education consonant with the needs of the Presbytery, and the career goals of the staff person.
- **Benefits:** To provide staff benefits consonant with the goals and financial capacity of the Presbytery.
- **Staff Concerns and Problems:** To establish and administer a procedure for resolving job related problems.
- **Distribution:** To provide to each employed and elected staff members a copy of the Presbytery's personnel policies, and to provide guidelines for all volunteers.

Basic Policies:

Inclusiveness: The Presbytery resolves to be an employer consistent with the principles of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Drug and Alcohol Dependency: The Presbytery recognizes that alcoholism and other drug dependencies are a significant problem with a potential for causing severe effects to the Presbytery's work force. Staff members are expected to perform their jobs efficiently, safely and in a professional businesslike manner. Therefore, it is the Presbytery's intent to provide a drug-free, smoke-free, healthful, safe and secure work environment.

Sexual Harassment:

The Presbytery strongly condemns discrimination based upon sex, including sexual harassment. Such conduct is against the law and will not be tolerated in any form, by any person.

All sexually harassing conduct in the presbytery or in the fulfillment of the presbytery's ministry and mission, whether committed by employees or volunteers, in a supervisory or non-supervisory role, is prohibited. Such conduct includes:

- Making unwelcome sexual advances or request for sexual favors or other verbal or physical contact of a secular nature, a condition of an employee's obtaining employment, or their continuing said employment; or
- Making submission to or rejecting of such conduct the basis for employment decisions affecting the employee; or
- Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment by such conduct. This prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual flirtations; advances or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic verbal comments about an individual's body; sexually degrading words; and the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Persons who believe that they have been the subject of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should report the alleged act immediately to their pastor, an elder, or presbytery staff. Presbytery staff members who believe that they have been the

subjects of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should report the alleged act immediately to their supervisor. If they do not feel comfortable talking to the individual supervisor, they may speak with the Moderator of the Presbytery's Administration and Planning Committee.

Any staff members who have been found by the Presbytery, after appropriate investigation, to have sexually harassed another employee, will be subject to appropriate sanctions, depending upon the circumstances, from a warning in his or her personnel file up to and including termination.

Sexual harassment does not include relationships between spouses, nor is it meant to restrict church professionals from having normal, mutual, social, intimate, or marital relationships.

Other Types of Harassment:

The Presbytery prohibits harassment in any form by its staff members based on factors of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age or disability.

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct which is insulting or intimidating, has the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

It shall be the responsibility of each staff member to maintain an environment which is free from such harassment and to report incidents of conduct which he or she believes to constitute such harassment.

Staff members who believe they have been the subjects of harassment described herein should report the alleged act immediately to their supervisor. If they do not feel comfortable talking to the individual supervisor, they may speak with any executive or administrative staff person, the Moderator of the Presbytery's Administration and Planning Committee.

Any staff member who has been found by the Presbytery, after appropriate investigation, to have harassed another employee, agent of any other governing body, or volunteer, will be subject to appropriate sanctions, depending upon the circumstances, from a warning in his or her personnel file up to and including termination.

Conflict of Interest:

No staff shall accept any gift, gratuity, grant, service, or any special favor from any person, persons or businesses which provide or receive goods and services or which seek to provide or receive goods and services from the Presbytery. However, minor courtesies such as luncheons, dinners or similar arrangements in connection with business discussions may be received.

In addition, if an employee is called upon to participate in a decision in which the interests of the Presbytery conflict with his or her personal interests, the employee should abstain from participating in the decision.

Full-time employees who hold other paid positions should ensure that such outside employment will not interfere with their performance of their duties or produce a conflict of interest in the pursuit of those duties. Any question regarding this should be reviewed with their supervisor.

All employees shall avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest, special interest, or any other inappropriate conduct. If an employee discovers that he or she may be in a position of conflict, he or she shall immediately report this conflict to his or her supervisor.

Standards of Ethical Conduct:

In 1998 the 210th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) adopted a Professional Code of Ethics entitled, *Standards of Ethical Conduct*, which is commended as a model to synods, presbyteries and congregations for study and approval.

Confidentiality and Security of Presbytery Records

It is the policy of the Presbytery that staff are required to protect organizational records entrusted to them or accessible to them against unauthorized access, loss, or destruction. These records include all written and/or computerized information produced by and for the Presbytery.

Staff may be assigned records or computer accounts identified by their personal names; however, the documents and information produced or stored in these and all records and accounts remain the property of the Presbytery.

Employment Categories and Terms:

Officers: Persons elected by the Presbytery as provided in G-3.0104 of the *Book of Order*.

Administrative Staff: Persons employed by the Presbytery as provided in G-3.0110 of the *Book of Order*.

Full-Time Staff: Persons who are employed at least 35 hours per week.

Part Time Staff: Persons who are employed less than 35 hours per week.

Exempt Staff: Persons who, because of their positional duties and responsibilities and level of decision making authority, are exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Non-Exempt Staff: Persons who are hourly employees and are subject to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Ordained Clergy: Persons who are ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are serving in a validated ministry in other service of this church (*Book of Order*, G-2.0503a).

Certified Christian Educators: Persons who have the certification of the Educator Certification Council on behalf of the General Assembly Mission Council (*Book of Order*, G-2.11).

Volunteers: Volunteers serve without pay or benefits and are subject to the same general conditions and expectations as paid employees.

Position Descriptions:

All positions will be defined in a position description, which shall be reviewed periodically.

Work Week and Payroll Periods:

The Presbytery work week begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at 12:00 midnight Saturday.

Each month is divided into two payroll periods. Payroll is made by electronic funds transfer (EFT), by the staff person's previous authorization, into a designated bank account on the 5th and 20th of each month (or the last business preceding the 5th and 20th).

All staff persons are reimbursed for regular budgeted expenses they incur in the fulfillment of their employment responsibilities. Staff reimbursed business expenses are payable upon request of the staff person to the presbytery Treasurer, using the Staff Expense Voucher with supporting documentation. Staff reimbursed business expenses are paid to staff by electronic funds transfer (EFT) on the last business day of each month.

Salary Administration and Review:

Salaries for administrative staff will be determined on the basis of uniform factoring. Initial placement within a salary range should reflect a judgment of the qualifications and experience of the person relative to the position requirements.

Staff shall be reviewed annually as to focus and quality of their work. The purpose of reviews is to promote better performance, to give staff support, and to ensure their work is related to Presbytery goals. Attention will be given to cost of living adjustments and other increases as merited or necessary within budget constraints. The process for these reviews shall be developed and administered by the Administration and Planning Committee and the Executive Presbyter.

Ordinarily, any salary or wage adjustments will be effective January 1 of each year.

Staff who are ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall report changes in their terms of call to the Presbytery in accordance with G-2.0503a of the *Book of Order*.

For non-ordained staff, taxes (federal and local taxes, including Social Security and Medicare) will be withheld from the employee's pay; and the employer will pay their required tax (Social Security and Medicare). Ministers of the Word and Sacrament are considered self-employed for tax purposes and are responsible for their payment.

All honoraria received having to do directly with the work of the Presbytery shall be turned in to the Presbytery. Honoraria received for services not related to the position description may be retained by the staff person.

Benefits:

Benefits Plan: Full-time staff have employer-provided medical, death and disability benefits through the Benefits Plan of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Part-time staff will have the option of joint employer-employee participation in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or an alternative benefits arrangement. Staff who are ministers of the Word and Sacrament shall be enrolled in the Benefits Plan of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

403(b) Plan: All staff are eligible to participate in an employee deferred-compensation 403(b) plan. Holston Presbytery has adopted the Retirement Savings Plan of Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as the only 403(b) plan for employees.

Flexible Spending Plan: All staff are eligible to participate in an employee flexible spending plan for qualified expenses.

Workers' Compensation: Workers' Compensation Insurance is provided for all staff according to the provisions of state law.

Unemployment Insurance: Presbytery staff are excluded from unemployment compensation insurance pursuant to state statute.

Moving Expenses: Moving expenses will be negotiated at the time of employment.

Holidays :

The annual paid holidays are: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the day following Christmas.

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or regular day off, it will be observed as a holiday on the nearest working day before or after the holiday.

Vacation with Pay:

Vacation with pay is provided for all paid staff.

Full-time, exempt and non-exempt, non-ordained staff receive ten days of vacation with pay the first year of employment. In the second and third years of consecutive employment, an additional five days of vacation with pay is given for each year. In the fourth year of consecutive employment a total of 22 days of vacation with pay is given.

Part-time, exempt and non-exempt, non-ordained staff receive the same number of days of vacation with pay, on a prorated (part-time) basis, as full-time, exempt and non-exempt, non-ordained staff.

Vacation with pay for staff who are ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament are included in their call.

All staff are encouraged to use all vacation annually. However, staff will be allowed to accumulate up to a maximum of ten earned vacation days.

Ordinarily, vacation should be taken in blocks of time whenever possible.

Specific vacation dates shall be determined in advance in consultation with the staff person's supervisor.

Leave With Pay

Military Leave: Time off for Military Reserve duty as required by law shall be allowed.

Marriage: Up to three days shall be granted to staff who has been employed by the Presbytery for at least one year for that staff person's marriage.

Jury Duty: Time off for jury service shall be allowed. For up to a maximum of two weeks per year the Presbytery will pay the difference between the individual's normal and customary pay less whatever the individual receives for jury duty.

Parental Family Leave:

Parental leave should normally be requested of the supervisor, and approved by the Executive Presbyter or the Moderator of the Administration and Planning Committee, by staff at least one month in advance of the expected arrival of the child. The request should specify the amount of leave time desired, for a maximum of three months, which may include time before or after the expected birth or adoption of the child. If both parents are

on the Presbytery payroll, only one parental leave may be granted. However, leave may be shared by the two parents.

Staff will be compensated at the rate of 60% of his or her monthly pay rate according to the following schedule:

- employment less than one year, no paid leave
- beginning the first year, one month
- beginning the second year, two months
- beginning the third year and thereafter, three months

Benefit coverage (except vacation, and sick leave accrual) and credited service will continue during the entire leave with the cost of benefits being paid by the Presbytery. Any salary increase action for which the staff person may become eligible in the course of the leave will be effective upon return to employment.

Upon completion of parental leave, the staff person will be entitled to return to his or her position if not eliminated due to a reduction in force. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

Health and Medical Leave: Staff are entitled to up to twelve working days of sick leave each calendar year, cumulative up to ninety days. Health and Medical leave during the first year of employment will be prorated according to length of employment. At the time of termination of employment (either voluntary or involuntary) staff shall have no claim for pay in lieu of unused sick leave.

Emergency Leave: A maximum of five days per year shall be allowed for emergency leave arising out of the death of an immediate member of the family. In the event of serious illness or other emergency related to an immediate member of the family, such leave may be allowed by the Executive Presbyter or the Moderator of the Administration and Planning Committee.

Leave Without Pay:

Staff may be granted leave without pay, for example: jury duty beyond two weeks and excess parental leave. Benefits defined herein may be continued at the staff person's own expense, but paid leave benefits, e.g. vacation, sick leave or holidays will not accrue during this period. The leave is subject to the approval of the Administration and Planning Committee upon recommendation of the Executive Presbyter.

Continuing Education:

Continuing education benefiting the staff and the Presbytery shall be encouraged. Staff are to submit plans for continuing education to their supervisor for consideration. Such leave is solely at the discretion of the Presbytery Administration and Planning Committee.

Annual study leave with pay and assistance for expenses for continuing education may be granted by the Executive Presbyter.

Continuing education leave and expenses for staff who are ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament are included in their call.

Sabbatical Leave:

Ordained clergy and Certified Christian Educators are entitled to receive paid Sabbatical leave after six years of continuous service. The details of the Sabbatical leave (at least six weeks in length, goals, follow-up) for eligible staff are determined in consultation with the Administration and Planning Committee, with the concurrence of the Presbytery General Mission Board.

Unsatisfactory Performance and Involuntary Termination

Occasionally, a staff person's behavior or work performance is unsatisfactory. When this arises, normally the staff person's supervisor will meet with the employee in an effort to improve the unsatisfactory behavior or performance. However, the Presbytery reserves the sole right to determine whether disciplinary action should occur and the nature and extent of the discipline to be imposed. This process may include verbal warning(s), suspension or termination, all in the sole discretion of the Presbytery. In this connection, the Presbytery reserves the right to bypass one or more of the options set forth above. While it is not possible to list every type of behavior that might be deemed a problem, the following list includes examples of behavior which may result in discipline up to and including termination:

Unsatisfactory performance, insubordination, neglect in the care and use of Presbytery property and funds, unexcused absence and/or repeated tardiness, moral turpitude, violation of Presbytery personnel policies, falsification of timekeeping records, reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, threatening violence in the workplace, sexual or other unlawful harassment, possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace.

The examples cited above are for illustration only and shall not be considered as comprehensive or limiting the Presbytery's right to administer discipline in its sole discretion.

In the event of the involuntary separation of administrative staff of the Presbytery, the staff relationship may be dissolved by majority vote of the electing governing body on request of the staff member or on recommendation of the General Mission Board or a special committee or commission of the electing governing body. When the General Mission Board, committee, or commission has decided to prepare a recommendation to terminate, it shall notify the person in writing, stating the reasons for proposing to terminate, and offering the staff member an opportunity to resign or to request a hearing before the recommendations are adopted and reported by the General Mission Board, committee, or commission to the governing body for action. The hearing shall be one in which the staff person may appear personally with counsel (*Book of Order* D-7.0301, D-11.0301) to respond to the findings of the committee or commission and present reasons and evidence why the relationship should not be terminated. The hearing shall afford safeguards as in cases of process, following the rules of evidence in the Rules of Discipline, Chapter XIV (D-14.0000). A record shall be made of the hearing, which shall become a part of the record filed under D-6.0304 in the event of a judicial complaint following the final action of the governing body.

Notification of termination will be ninety calendar days, or until other employment is secured, whichever is shorter.

Reduction in Force

Reduction in force, because of the discontinuance of a project or retrenchment in budget or for other circumstances arising out of no fault of the staff person, is at the sole discretion of the Presbytery.

Written notice of such reduction will come from the Presbytery General Mission Board Moderator after consultation with the Administration and Planning Committee. At least six months' notice shall be given. Should reemployment take place before the expiration of the notice period, salary payment will continue, offset by any pay received by the staff person during this period.

When notice is given, severance allowance will be given in relation to length of service with the Presbytery as follows:

- less than one year of service, two weeks
- one year but less than four, four weeks
- four years but less than five, six weeks
- five or more years, eight weeks plus a week's salary for each year over five years, to a maximum of twelve weeks

Pay in lieu of six-month notice may be given if so determined by the Presbytery. Normally severance allowance will not be granted to a staff person who receives pay in lieu of the six-month notice. Vacation time accrued shall be honored with time or pay at the time of severance.

Voluntary Termination of Employment

Staff wishing to terminate their employment with the Presbytery should submit a written resignation to their supervisor, indicating the reason for terminating employment as well as the last day he or she expects to work.

A minimum of thirty calendar days' notice is requested of administrative staff.

The supervisor upon receipt of a resignation, in consultation with the Presbytery Administration and Planning Committee Moderator, should arrange for an exit interview with the staff person, placing in that person's personnel file the resignation letter and a summary of the exit interview. This interview shall take place before the staff person's completion of service.

In the instance of the resignation of the Executive Presbyter, the resignation letter shall be submitted to the Moderator of the Presbytery, with a copy to the Moderator of the Administration and Planning Committee. The Administration and Planning Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Moderator, is responsible for the exit interview.

Pay will be granted for accrued vacation if notice is given.

Job Descriptions

Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk

Classification – This position is an elected, exempt, full-time, administrative staff (Executive Presbyter) and officer (Stated Clerk).

Term – This position is for an indefinite term.

General Responsibilities – General responsibilities of the position are described in the *Book of Order* G-3.0104; D-6 through D-14; and below.

The Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk shall be responsible for:

- Leading the presbytery in fulfilling its purpose of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ by coordinating the life and ministry of the presbytery through its congregations, committees, leaders, staff and ministries;
- Providing pastoral, consulting, and communication services to the congregations and congregational leaders within the presbytery ;
- Serving as advisor and interpreter of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Constitution;
- Serving as a member ex-officio and without vote on the General Mission Board, and advise all presbytery committees and sub-committees, as necessary;
- Relating to presbytery committees as a coordinator and advisor;
- Monitoring of the General Mission Budget;
- Supervising the presbytery office and staff;
- Coordinating the presbytery relationships with the Synod, General Assembly, other governing bodies, and ecumenical agencies.

Accountability – The Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk is accountable to the Presbytery through the General Mission Board and the Administration and Planning Committee.

Evaluation – The Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk shall be reviewed annually by the General Mission Board through the Administration and Planning Committee.

Director of Holston Camp and Retreat Center

Classification – This position is elected, exempt, full-time, administrative staff.

Term – This position is for an indefinite term.

General Responsibilities – General responsibilities of the position are described below.

The Director of Holston Camp and Retreat Center shall be responsible for:

- Leading the presbytery in fulfilling its purpose of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ by overseeing the ministry of Holston Presbytery Camp and Retreat Center;
- Providing the resources and services of Holston Presbytery Camp and Retreat Center to the congregations and congregational leaders within the presbytery ;
- Promoting the ministry of Holston Presbytery Camp and Retreat Center within and outside the bounds of the presbytery;
- Developing and maintaining the facilities of Holston Presbytery Camp and Retreat Center;
- Serving as a member ex-officio and without vote on the General Mission Board, and advise the Holston Presbytery Camp and Retreat Committee and sub-committees, as necessary;
- Fulfilling other responsibilities as may be assigned.

Accountability – The Director of Holston Camp and Retreat Center is accountable to the Presbytery through the Administration and Planning Committee.

Evaluation – The Director of Holston Camp and Retreat Center shall be reviewed annually as provided in the Holston Presbytery Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Communications Director

Classification – This position is elected, exempt, full-time, administrative staff.

Term – This position is for an indefinite term.

General Responsibilities – General responsibilities of the position are described below.

The Communications Director shall be responsible for:

- Leading the presbytery in fulfilling its purpose of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ by managing and developing strategies to enhance communication within the presbytery through its congregations, committees, leaders, staff and ministries.
- Overseeing production of internal and external materials such as brochures, press releases, web copy, newsletters and executive presentations;
- Providing communication services to the congregations and congregational leaders within the presbytery;

- Serving as the Recording Clerk for all presbytery meetings;
- Serving as a member ex-officio and without vote on the General Mission Board, and advise presbytery committees and sub-committees, as necessary;
- Coordinating the presbytery's communications with the Synod, General Assembly, other governing bodies, and ecumenical agencies;
- Fulfilling other responsibilities as may be assigned.

Accountability – The Communications Director is accountable to the Presbytery through the Administration and Planning Committee.

Evaluation – The Communications Director shall be reviewed annually as provided in the Holston Presbytery Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Campus House Director

Classification – This position is exempt, part-time, administrative staff.

Term – This position is for an indefinite term.

General Responsibilities – General responsibilities of the position are described below.

The Campus House Director shall be responsible for:

- Overseeing and maintaining the facilities, including the use, of the Campus Ministry House of the Presbyterian Campus Ministry at ETSU;
- Providing administrative support, coordination and communication for the Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry Committees of Holston Presbytery;
- Serving as a member ex-officio and without vote on the General Mission Board, Youth Ministry Committee, and Young Adult Ministry Committee;
- Fulfilling other responsibilities as may be assigned.

Accountability – The Campus House Director is accountable to the Presbytery through the Administration and Planning Committee.

Evaluation – The Campus House Director shall be reviewed annually as provided in the Holston Presbytery Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Treasurer/Financial Manager

Classification – This position is elected, exempt, full-time, administrative staff.

Term – This position is for an indefinite term.

General Responsibilities – General responsibilities of the position are described below.

The Treasurer/Financial Manager shall be responsible for:

- Leading the presbytery in fulfilling its purpose of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ by overseeing the financial affairs of the presbytery;
- Depositing and disbursing all funds within the presbytery, according to the Holston Presbytery Financial Policies and Procedures;
- Overseeing the payment of all staff payroll, including withholdings, deferred compensation plans, flexible spending plans; the administration of benefits; and staff vacation;
- Preparing and handling of all financial reports, including budgets, balance sheets, income and expense reports, and other financial analyses;
- Providing financial advice to the presbytery, its congregations, committees, leaders, staff and ministries;
- Serving as a member ex-officio and without vote on the General Mission Board;
- Coordinating the presbytery's finances with the Synod, General Assembly, other governing bodies, and ecumenical agencies;
- Fulfilling other responsibilities as may be assigned.

Accountability – The Treasurer/Financial Manager is accountable to the Presbytery through the Administration and Planning Committee.

Evaluation – The Treasurer/Financial Manager shall be reviewed annually as provided in the Holston Presbytery Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Personnel Policies and Procedures Appendix

- §1. Standards of Ethical Conduct
- §2. Tennessee State Revenue Sales Tax Exemption
- §3. IRS 501(c)(3) Designation
- §4. Committee Expense Voucher
- §5. Direct Deposit Agreement Form
- §6. Employee Salary Reduction Form
- §7. Health Flexible Spending Account
- §8. Staff Expense Voucher

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Life Together in the Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Life Together in a Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Life Together in a Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Integrated Version—References and Examples

Professional Code of Ethics

Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Developed by
The Special Committee on a Professional Code of Ethics

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September 1, 1998

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

As you may be aware, the 210th General Assembly (1998) approved a report submitted by the Special Committee on a Professional Code of Ethics. The report, as approved, is titled "Life Together in the Community of Faith:

- A. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
- B. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
- C. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);"

The General Assembly took several actions to implement the use of "Life Together in the Community of Faith." Though it was not the first action taken, the action that is perhaps of the most interest to you is that the General Assembly commended the Standards, as a model, to presbyteries and synods for study, approval, and inclusion in manuals of operations, and to congregations, as a model, for study, approval, and use with sessions, new member classes, adult education classes, personnel committees, and in contracts. In addition, the General Assembly commended the Standards to seminaries for inclusion in curricula. The General Assembly approved A and B as Standards of Ethical Conduct for those serving in General Assembly entities and instructed those entities to include the Standards in personnel policies.

To make the report available to governing bodies and the seminaries, I have been instructed to publish and distribute the full report, including references and examples. I am pleased to put this important report in your hands. Some may ask why we need "Life Together in the Community of Faith." After all, we have the Bible, The Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order. However, the 207th General Assembly (1995) recognized there were a number of different perspectives from which the issue of misconduct might be viewed. The committee was given the task of providing a resource that can help the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) prevent harm to individuals and the community of faith and provide an example of ethical conduct to the world.

I hope that in your session, presbytery, synod, or seminary faculty, the study of this report and implementation of the standards it upholds will be an enriching experience and will help produce a life together that reflects the shalom that God intends for us.

Yours in Christ,

Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR
MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

As a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, I accept Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of the church, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

I

I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my membership in the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.). Therefore I will:

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;
4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my life's work and church membership, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

II

I will conduct myself within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) so that nothing need be hidden from sisters and brothers in Christ. Therefore I will:

1. Bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of positions of responsibility I hold;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise my witness and relationships within the community of faith;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. 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;
7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;

8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit to others where due and observe copyrights;
9. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me; and
10. Accept the discipline of the church.

III

I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore I will:

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
2. Show respect and provide encouragement for sisters and brothers in Christ;
3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

As an employee or volunteer in an entity, governing body, or congregation associated with the Presbyterian Church(U.S.A.), I commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

I

I will conduct my life in a manner that will support the ministry of my workplace. Therefore I will:

1. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
2. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern;
3. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my position, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
4. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs; and
5. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech.

II

I will conduct myself at my workplace in a manner that will support its ministry. Therefore I will:

1. Honor relationships within the workplace and observe appropriate boundaries;
2. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my position;
3. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my work;
4. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the workplace for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;

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;
6. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
7. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
8. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria;
9. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and, upon leaving a position, speak and act in ways that support the work of my successor;
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
11. Accept the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable;
12. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
13. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues; and
14. Cooperate with persons of other faith traditions.

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR
ORDAINED OFFICERS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

As an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

I

I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my public ministry. Therefore I will:

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;
4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my office of ministry, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

II

I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry. Therefore I will:

1. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my office and positions of responsibility I hold;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. 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;
7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
9. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise my ministry;
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
11. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;
12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry;
13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;
15. **Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by presbytery;
16. **Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the presbytery and provide pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and
17. **Consult with the committee on ministry in the presbytery of my residence regarding my involvement in any ministry setting during my retirement.

III

I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore I will:

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;

2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;
3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

** These standards apply only to pastors; they also apply to commissioned lay pastors when they are performing pastoral functions.

IV. INTEGRATED VERSION—REFERENCES AND EXAMPLES*

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR ORDAINED OFFICERS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

As an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God’s grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

References

Ordination vows—G-14.0405b [ministers]; G-14.0207 [elders and deacons]:

“(1) Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?”

“(2) Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God’s Word to you?”

“(3) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?”

“(4) Will you be a minister of the Word and Sacrament [elders and deacons: Will you fulfill your office] in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and continually guided by our confessions?”

“(5) Will you be governed by our church’s polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit?”

“(6) Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?”

“(7) Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?”

“(8) Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?”

Ordination vows—G-14.0405b(9) [ministers]

“(9) Will you be a faithful minister, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, and caring for people? Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the governing bodies of the church; and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?”

Ordination vows—G-14.0207 [elders and deacons]:

“i. (For elder) Will you be a faithful elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in governing bodies of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?”

“j. (For deacon) Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people’s help to the friendless and those in need? In your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?”

Jesus Christ as pattern for my life and ministry

Matthew 20:26–28: “. . . whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” See also G-6.0101.

Philippians 2: 1–5: “If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” See also 1 Peter 1:15–16.

C-9:24 (The Confession of 1967): “The new life finds its direction in the life of Jesus, his deeds and words, his struggles against temptation, his compassion, his anger, and his willingness to suffer death.”

G-14.0103: “The purpose and pattern of leadership in the church in all its forms of ministry shall be understood not in terms of power but of service, after the manner of the servant ministry of Jesus Christ.”

Relying on God’s grace

C-9.22–23 (The Confession of 1967): “The new life takes shape in a community in which men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no man has any ground on which to stand, except God’s grace.

“The new life does not release a man from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, fear. He still has to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as he matures in love and faithfulness in his life with Christ, he lives in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.”

Commit myself to the following ethical standards

1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1: “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

Philippians 1:27: “. . . live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”

James 1:22: “But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.”

James 3:1: “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”

C-5.167 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“SYNODS. Nevertheless, there ought to be proper discipline among ministers. In synods the doctrine and life of ministers is to be carefully examined. Offenders who can be cured are to be rebuked by the elders and restored to the right way, and if they are incurable, they are to be deposed, and like wolves driven away from the flock of the Lord by the true shepherds.”

G-2.0200: “These confessional statements are subordinate standards in the church, subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him. While confessional standards are subordinate to the Scriptures, they are, nonetheless, standards. They are not lightly drawn up or subscribed to, nor may they be ignored or dismissed. The church is prepared to counsel with or even to discipline one ordained who seriously rejects the faith expressed in the confessions. . .”

I. I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my public ministry.

References

Titus 2:7–8: “Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.”

Hebrew 13:7: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”

C-4.032 (Heidelberg Catechism):

“Q. 32. But why are you called a Christian?”

“A. Because through faith I share in Christ and thus in his anointing, so that I may confess his name, offer myself a living sacrifice of gratitude to him, and fight against sin and the devil with a free and good conscience.”

G-6.0106a: “To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament—God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.”

G-6.0202a: “. . . When a minister of the Word and Sacrament is called as pastor or associate pastor of a particular church or churches, she or he is to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commend the gospel to all persons and that communicate its joy and its justice. . . .”

G-6.0303: “Elders should be persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel, both within the church and in the world. (G-6.0106)”

G-6.0401: “The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, of exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, warm sympathies, and sound judgment should be chosen for this office.”

Therefore I will:

I.1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;

References

Exodus 20:8: "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Romans 12:11-13: "Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers."

Ephesians 6:18: "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

C-5.164 (Second Helvetic Confession): "But in order that the minister may perform all these things better and more easily, it is especially required of him that he fear God, be constant in prayer, attend to spiritual reading, and in all things and at all times be watchful, and by a purity of life to let his light to shine before all men."

W-2.2004: "... Those responsible for teaching and preaching the Word have a special responsibility to ensure that in their personal worship they observe a discipline of reading from the fullness of Scripture."

W-2.2007: "... Preaching requires diligence and discernment in the study of Scripture, the discipline of daily prayer, cultivated sensitivity to events and issues affecting the lives of the people, and a consistent and personal obedience to Jesus Christ."

W-5.1004: "The life of a Christian is empowered by grace, is expressed in obedience, and is shaped by discipline. God has given as means of grace the elements of worship to be used by households and by individuals as well as by congregations."

W-5.2001: "Daily personal worship is a discipline for attending to God and accepting God's grace. The daily challenge of discipleship requires the daily nurture of worship. Daily personal worship may occur in a gathered community of faith (W-1.1006; W-1.3012; W-3.4000), in households and families (W-5.7000), or in private. Scripture, prayer, self-offering, and commitments to service are elements of daily personal worship. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are by their nature communal, but preparing for and remembering these Sacraments are important in daily personal worship. An aspect of the discipline of daily personal worship is finding the times and places where one can focus on God's presence, hear God's Word, and respond to God's grace in prayer, self-offering, and commitment to service."

W-5.5004-.5005: "Giving has always been a mark of Christian commitment and discipleship. The ways in which a believer uses God's gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God's self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ's call to minister to and share with others in the world. Tithing is a primary expression of the Christian discipline of stewardship. (W-1.3030; W-2.500)

"Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth and God's creatures. (W-7.500)"

W-6.2006: "The primary standard and resource for the nurture of the church is the Word of God in Scripture. The central occasion for nurture in the church is the Service for the Lord's Day, when the

Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are celebrated. All members of the community, from oldest to youngest, are encouraged to be present and to participate. . . .”

Examples

- An elder always takes his ten-year-old daughter to Sunday School and returns home to read the Sunday paper and drink a cup of coffee

- A minister becomes so wrapped up in church responsibilities that she drops her daily personal time for prayer and study.

- + A deacon who teaches the high school Sunday School class leads the class in establishing a recycling program.

- + When an elder’s son asks why they say prayers every night before they go to sleep, she explains why Christians pray and the variety of prayers she says each day.

I.2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;

References

Exodus 20:16: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Ephesians 4:15: “...speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”

Ephesians 4:25: “So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another.”

Colossians 3:9–10: “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.”

G-1.0304: “That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Savior’s rule, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ And that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man’s opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise, it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.”

Examples

- When a conflict arises in a church, the minister tells only partial truths and withholds some of the relevant facts to avoid taking appropriate responsibility for his actions.

- An elder with access to the church’s tax exempt identification number uses it for his personal benefit.

- + A minister puts the wrong date in publicity for a church-wide dinner. Instead of blaming the error on the church secretary, she accepts responsibility for her mistake.

- + A deacon discovers an error in his favor on his bill at the hardware store and returns to the store to correct the mistake.

I.3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;

References

Genesis 21:22–34: Story of the covenant of Abraham with Abimelech.

Exodus 20:14: “You shall not commit adultery.”

Exodus 20:17: “. . . you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. . . .”

Matthew 19:4–6: “He answered, ‘Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’”

Hebrews 13:4: “Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.”

C-6.123 (Westminster Confession of Faith): [Re: keeping covenants]

“An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man’s own hurt: nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.”

C-6.131 (Westminster Confession of Faith): “Christian marriage is an institution ordained of God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, established and sanctified for the happiness and welfare of mankind, into which spiritual and physical union one man and one woman enter, cherishing a mutual esteem and love, bearing with each other’s infirmities and weaknesses, comforting each other in trouble, providing in honesty and industry for each other and for their household, praying for each other, and living together the length of their days as heirs of the grace of life.” See also G-6.0106b.

C-9.47 (Confession of 1967): “. . . Man’s perennial confusion about the meaning of sex has been aggravated in our day by the availability of new means for birth control and the treatment of infection, by the pressures of urbanization, by the exploitation of sexual symbols in mass communication, and by world overpopulation. The church, as the household of God, is called to lead men out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ. Reconciled to God, each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons; a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern; parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality. The church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection by man when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time.”

G-6.0106b: “Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”

[An amendment is before the presbyteries that would revise the language of this section. This reference will reflect the current constitutional language.]

Examples

- A minister regularly promises to do more than is humanly possible, undercutting the credibility of the office and leading people to see her interest in them as shallow and short-lived.
- + An elder who finds himself attracted to a member of a committee begins marriage counseling with his wife in order to strengthen his marriage.
- + A single minister discusses with her session the need for an office door with a window so that counseling sessions can be confidential yet observed.
- + A Stephen Ministries Committee decides to make home visits in teams after one of their Stephen Ministers is met by parishioner wearing a swimming suit.

I.4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;

References

Exodus 23:9: "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt."

Leviticus 19:15: "You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor."

Matthew 25:37-40: "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"

Mark 12:28-31: "One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' " See also Matthew 19:19 and 22:39, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8-9.

Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.'"

1 Corinthians 11:19-22: "Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?"

C-7.232 (Larger Catechism):

"Q.122. What is the sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to man?"

"A. The sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to man is, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do to others what we would have them to do to us."

C-8.19–20 (Barmen Declaration): “ ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant.’ (Matt. 20:25, 26)

“The various offices in the Church do not establish a dominion of some over the others; on the contrary, they are for the exercise of the ministry entrusted to and enjoined upon the whole congregation.”

C-9.44 (Confession of 1967): “God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, he overcomes the barriers between brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. The church is called to bring all men to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize their fellowmen, however, subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith they profess.”

C-9.46 (Confession of 1967): “. . . A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.”

G-6.0304: “It is the duty of elders, individually and jointly, to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation committed to their charge. Together with the pastor, they should encourage the people in the worship and service of God, equip and renew them for their tasks within the church and for their mission in the world, visit and comfort and care for the people, with special attention to the poor, the sick, the lonely, and those who are oppressed.”

Examples

- A minister spends so much time with members whom he particularly enjoys that he neglects pastoral care for the part of the congregation towards whom he feels less affinity.

- A session makes decisions favored by more wealthy/active/powerful members of the church at the expense of less noticeable members.

- + A minister makes an effort to talk with other members of presbytery with whom she disagrees.

- + An elder on the personnel committee meets weekly for coffee with the congregation’s obnoxious custodian to provide moral support during the custodian’s divorce.

I.5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my office of ministry, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;

References

Exodus 20:8–10: “Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work . . .”

Exodus 20:12: “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

C-9.47 (Confession of 1967): See I.3. above.

Examples

- A minister becomes so absorbed in local school politics that he stops giving adequate pastoral care and leadership in developing church programs.
- + A deacon negotiates with her family to schedule one dinner hour a week organized around Scripture, prayer, and reflection on family life before anyone flees to the Internet.
- + A session discusses the balance of responsibilities the minister carries, so that the session understands her work and the demands on her time and attention. The elders covenant to share in the ministry more fully, expanding their understanding of ordination and providing the minister adequate time to have meals with family, engage in regular exercise, participate in a hobby or sport, and maintain a Sabbath.
- + A church secretary asks the session for permission to take a church administration course offered by the continuing education department at a local seminary in order to update her skills and get some new ideas.

I.6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;

References

Exodus 20:15: “You shall not steal.”

Proverbs 20:1: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray is not wise.”

Proverbs 23:29–35: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger late over wine, those who keep trying mixed wines. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last, it bits like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind utter perverse things. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. ‘They struck me,’ you will say, ‘but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.’ ”

1 Corinthians 3:16–17: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys

God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”

Galatians 5:13–15: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment,

‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.”

C-7.251–.252 (Larger Catechism):

“Q.141. What are the duties required in the Eighth Commandment?

“A. The duties required in the Eighth Commandment are: truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods

unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections, concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose of those things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and a diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits, and suretyship, or other like engagements; and an endeavor by all just and lawful means to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.

“Q.142. What are the sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?”

“A. The sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment besides the neglect of duties required, are: theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing; . . . injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; . . . all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness, inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise . . . we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate; and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.”

G-6.0106a: “Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God’s people and the concurring judgment of a governing body of the church.”

cf: Freedom and Substance Abuse. Adopted by the 205th General Assembly (1993), 2f, (Minutes, 1993, Part I, p. 762):

“Three principles guide this exploration of substance abuse.

“(1) God wills wholeness for each person, and wills the healthy interdependence of family and friends, congregation and community; rather than the loneliness and alienation of dependency.

“(2) The use of mind-altering substances is to be judged by their effect on health, creativity, reason, conscience, and respect for self and others.

“(3) Reformed theology calls on believers as individuals, households, congregations, denomination, and participant in society to accept social responsibility for substance dependency and its public consequences.”

Examples

- A minister continually yells at his inexperienced secretary when she doesn’t “read his mind” and do exactly what he thought she should do.
- An elder logs onto a sexually explicit web site each night, gradually increasing his time online.
- + A minister takes education opportunities to develop supervision skills to foster growth and professionalism in the staff.
- + A personnel committee of a session organizes an intervention for an alcoholic minister of music in which members of the committee, family, and choir participate.

I.7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and

References

Exodus 20:16: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Leviticus 19:16: “You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people . . .”

Proverbs 20:19: “A gossip reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a babbler.”

2 Timothy 2:16–17: “Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety, and their talk will spread like gangrene . . .”

James 4:11–12: “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?”

1 Peter 2:1: “Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.”

C-7.254–.255 (Larger Catechism): See also C-4.112 (Heidelberg Catechism).

“Q. 144. What are the duties required in the Ninth Commandment?”

“A. The duties required in the Ninth Commandment are: the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors, loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatters, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

“Q. 145. What are the sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?”

“A. The sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment are: all prejudicing of the truth, and the good name of our neighbors as well as our own, especially in public judicature; . . . speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling; . . .”

G-1.0304: See I.2. above.

Examples

- A minister repeats a story about the mayor without checking the facts.
- An elder perpetuates an unverified rumor about misuse of money by the denomination.
- A member yells, swears, and calls the minister names in order to intimidate the minister into a particular action.
- A minister talks negatively about the chair of a committee who won't acquiesce to the minister's wishes.
- + A recently ordained elder attempts to dispel unfounded rumors about the personal life of the moderator of the property committee when a conflict develops over a building renovation.

I.8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

References

Psalms 51: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions," et seq.

Proverbs 28:13: "No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy."

Matthew 18:21–22: "Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven.' "

Philippians 2:3: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves." See also Proverbs 22:4, 1 Peter 5:5–6.

James 1:21: "Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls."

James 5:16: "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."

1 John 1:8–9: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

C-4.088–.089 (Heidelberg Catechism): See also C-4.090–.091.

"Q. 88. How many parts are there to the true repentance or conversion of man?

"A. Two: the dying of the old self and the birth of the new.

"Q. 89. What is the dying of the old self?

"A. Sincere sorrow over our sins and more and more to hate them and to flee from them."

C-7.254–.255 (Larger Catechism): See I.7. above.

C-6.086 (Westminster Confession of Faith):

"As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof, upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy: so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him."

C-9.21 (Confession of 1967):

"The reconciling work of Jesus was the supreme crisis in the life of mankind. His cross and resurrection become personal crisis and present hope for men when the gospel is proclaimed and believed. In this experience, the Spirit brings God's forgiveness to men, moves them to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience, and initiates the new life in Christ."

Examples

- A minister threatens to sue whenever she disagrees with the actions of presbytery concerning her behavior in the pastorate and the possible dissolution of her pastoral relationship.
- A trustee refuses to acknowledge mistakes, blaming them on the financial secretary.
- + A minister organizes a feedback group to assist in his growth and development and help him see past his blind spots.

+ A member apologizes for unkind words, mistaken statements, or failure to follow through on task.

II. I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry.

References

Joshua 7:19: "Then Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession to him. Tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.' "

Psalms 69:5: "O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you."

I John 1:5-7: "... God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellow- ship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." See also Ephesians 5:8-12.

G-1.0303: "That our blessed Savior, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation of both truth and duty; and that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God."

Therefore I will:

II.1.Preach, teach and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;

References

Leviticus 19:15: See I.4. above.

2 Samuel 12: Story of Nathan's encounter with David, the king regarding Bathsheba, at v. 7: "Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says the Lord . . .'"

Jeremiah 26: "Jeremiah's Prophecies in the Temple." See especially vs. 14-15: "But as for me, here I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will be bringing innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the Lord sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears." See also Jeremiah 28, story of Jeremiah and the yokes of wood and iron.

Acts 10:34: See I.4. above. See also James 2:8-9.

Acts, Chapters 24-26: Story of Paul's trial in Jerusalem and imprisonment in Caesarea. See especially 26:22-23: "To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would pro- claim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

1 Peter 3:13-18: "Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Al- ways be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good

conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God."

C-7.269 (Larger Catechism):

"Q.159. How is the Word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto?

"A. They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season, and out of season, plainly, not in the enticing word of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God. . . ."

G-6.0304: "It is the duty of elders, individually and jointly, to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation committed to their charge. . . . They should cultivate their ability to teach the Bible and may be authorized to supply places which are without the regular ministry of the Word and Sacrament."

G-6.0402: "It is the duty of deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. They shall assume such other duties as may be delegated to them from time to time by the session."

G-14.0801c: "When a presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and after additional instruction deemed necessary by the presbytery has been provided, a presbytery may authorize a commissioned lay pastor to perform any or all of the following functions described in (1)–(6) below."

Examples

- A minister fails to address a particular issue from the pulpit even though the text and context warrant it because she knows it will offend a member of the congregation.
- A minister does not express his opinion openly regarding local pollution because he pastors a church in a small company town
- + A deacon risks addressing racism and poverty in his affluent Anglo congregation even though he suspects the challenge will not be welcome.
- + An elder defends a person under her supervision from racist attacks from the elder's own supervisor.

II.2.Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;

References

Genesis 38: Story of Judah and Tamar.

Genesis 39: Story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

Psalms 55:20: "My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me. . . ."

Matthew 26:48–49: "Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him."

C-4.105:

“Q.105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

“A. That I am not to abuse, hate, injure, or kill my neighbor, either with thought, or by word or gesture, much less by deed, whether by myself or through another, but to lay aside all desire for revenge; and that I do not harm myself or willfully expose myself to danger. This is why the authorities are armed with the means to prevent murder.”

G-3.0101b: “God liberated the people of Israel from oppression; God covenanted with Israel to be their God and they to be God’s people, that they might do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Lord; God confronted Israel with the responsibilities of this covenant, judging the people for their unfaithfulness while sustaining them by divine grace.”

cf: Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures. Adopted by the 205th General Assembly (1993) (Minutes, 1993, Part I, p. 572), Section II.B.2, Standards of Conduct:

“Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relation to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. If the parishioner, student, client, or employee initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is the pastor’s, counselor’s, officer’s, or supervisor’s responsibility to maintain the appropriate role and prohibit a sexual relationship.”

Examples

- A single minister has sexual relationships with a single member of his congregation.
- A minister of pastoral care whose primary role is counseling fails to arrange for regular supervision.
- A male head of staff begins each staff meeting with a brief devotional period, then transitions into the business of the meeting by telling an off-color joke. The nervous laughter of the staff (both male and female) registers their disapproval of this behavior. The head of staff considers the laughter as reinforcement and refuses to stop the behavior.
- + A single minister who desires to date a member of the congregation arranges for spiritual direction and counseling to explore the meaning of that desire.
- + A church’s youth director arranges for an adequate number of male and female adult chaperones for every youth trip event.

II.3.Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my office and positions of responsibility I hold;

References

2 Samuel, Chapters 11 and 12: Story of David and Bathsheba.

Matthew 20:25–28: “But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’”

Matthew 23:8, 10–12: “But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. . . . Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

1 Peter 5:1–3: “Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock.”

C-5.157 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“THE POWER OF MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH. Now, therefore, it is fitting that we also say something about the power and duty of the ministers of the Church. Concerning this power some have argued industriously, and to it have subjected everything on earth, even the greatest things, and they have done so contrary to the commandment of the Lord who has prohibited dominion for his disciples and has highly commended humility (Luke 22:24 ff.; Matt. 18:3 f.; 20:25 ff.) There is, indeed, another power that is pure and absolute, which is called the power of right. According to this power all things in the whole world are subject to Christ, who is Lord of all, as he himself has testified when he said: ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’ (Matthew 28:18), and again, ‘I am the first and the last, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Hades and Death’ (Rev. 1:18); also, ‘He has the key of David, which opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens’ (Rev. 3:7).”

C-9.40 (Confession of 1967): “. . . Different orders have served the gospel, and none can claim exclusive validity. A Presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition.”

G-1.0307: “That all Church power, whether exercised by the body in general or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no Church governing body ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. Now though it will easily be admitted that all synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity, yet there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws than from the right of judging upon laws already made, and common to all who profess the gospel, although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.”

G-6.0102: “One responsibility of membership in the church is the election of officers who are ordained to fulfill particular functions. The existence of these offices in no way diminishes the importance of the commitment of all members to the total ministry of the church. These ordained officers differ from other members in function only.”

G-11.0403b: “The ministry shall be one that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministries of others.”

G-14.0405b(5), G-14.0207e: See ordination vows above at Introduction.

W-7.4002: “Reconciliation: Justice and Peace:

“Justice is the order God sets in human life for fair and honest dealing and for giving rights to those who have no power to claim rights for themselves. The biblical vision of doing justice calls for

“a. dealing honestly in personal and public business, “b. exercising power for the common good,

“c. supporting people who seek the dignity, freedom, and respect that they have been denied, “d. working for fair laws and just administration of the law,

“e. welcoming the stranger in the land,

- “f. seeking to overcome the disparity between rich and poor,
- “g. bearing witness against political oppression and exploitation,
- “h. redressing wrongs against individuals, groups, and peoples in the church, in this nation, and in the whole world.”

Examples

- A head of staff calls upon others to take assignments without giving time to prepare, changes schedule without warning, does tasks that fall in others’ areas of responsibilities.
- + The chair of the nominating committee keeps before the committee and the session the importance of extending opportunities to serve, to be looking for “Who is not here.”
- + A minister sees that the new chair of the property committee is insecure with her new responsibility and devotes special time for leadership training, enabling her to do this job well.
- + A minister gathers information for the session and invites outside resource persons to assist the session regarding how to invest a large bequest.

II.4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry;

References

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” See also Luke 16:13.

G-6.0202a: “. . . When a minister of the Word and Sacrament is called as pastor or associate pastor of a particular church or churches, she or he is to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commend the gospel to all persons and that communicate its joy and its justice.”

Examples

- An elder recommends buying insurance coverage whose premiums are higher than those of another agent because she is related to the first agent.
- A minister tries to persuade an auto mechanic member of the congregation to provide free service for her car.
- A minister has a joint discretionary bank account with the church that no one is permitted to review.
- + A minister whose spouse owns a local business encourages her not to solicit business or clients from the congregation.
- + A Committee on Ministry member recuses himself from the committee’s discussion of a conflict in the congregation where he is pastor.

II.5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the covenant community for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;

References

2 Samuel 11: David and Bathsheba story.

Psalms 55:20: “My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me.”

C-5.157 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“THE POWER OF MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.” See II.3. above.

C-9.47 (Confession of 1967): See I.3. above.

D-10.0401:

“b. Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to

“(1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or

“(2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of office or position.” cf: Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures at II.2. above.

Examples

- A minister requests loans and gifts from a parishioner, i.e., an auto loan, tickets to sports events, or use of a vacation home.
- A minister uses a church member’s business connections to lobby the chairperson of a pastor nominating committee in another church where the minister is seeking a new call.
- + A tent-making minister refrains from soliciting business for his secular employment from members of the church.
- + An elder, acting as youth group sponsor, sensitively declines sexual invitation by teenager from an abusive home and assists teen to find counselor.

II.6. 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;

References

Proverbs 11:13: “A gossip goes about telling secrets, but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence.”

Proverbs 25:9–10: “Argue your case with your neighbor directly, and do not disclose another’s secret; or else someone who hears you will bring shame upon you, and your ill repute will have no end.”

C-7.254–.255 (Larger Catechism): See I.7. above.

cf: A Resolution on Clergy Confidentiality. Adopted by the 199th General Assembly (1987) “. . . the 199th General Assembly (1987) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

“1. Reaffirms the historic position of the Presbyterian Church that it is a spiritual and professional duty of clergy to hold in confidence matters revealed to them in their counseling, caring, and confessional ministries, and that being called to testify in a court of law does not negate this sacred obligation, the law of God being prior to the laws of human courts.”

D-9.0101: “A member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who feels injured by rumor or gossip may request an inquiry for vindication by submitting to the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery a clear narrative and statement of alleged facts.”

Examples

- A minister uses confidential information as thinly veiled sermon illustrations.
- An elder tells a church member about the personal problems shared during a session's prayer time.
- + At the presbytery's request, a session maintains confidentiality concerning allegations of embezzlement by the pastor until the presbytery's investigation process is complete.
- + A minister breaks the bond of confidentiality when he knows a child is abused and at risk for suicide.

II.7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;

References

Romans 12:3–8: "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness."

Ephesians 4:7, 11–12: "But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. . . . 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, . . ." See also I Corinthians 3:6–7.

C-5.151(Second Helvetic Confession):

"ORDINATION. And those who are elected are to be ordained by the elders with public prayer and laying on of hands. Here we condemn all those who go off of their own accord, being neither chosen, sent, nor ordained (Jer. ch 23). We condemn unfit ministers and those not furnished with the necessary gifts of a pastor."

G-6.0105: "Both men and women shall be eligible to hold church offices. When women and men, by God's providence and gracious gifts, are called by the church to undertake particular forms of ministry, the church shall help them to interpret their call and to be sensitive to the judgments and needs of others. As persons discover the forms of ministry to which they are called, and as they are called to new forms, they and the church shall pray for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit upon them and upon the mission of the Church."

W-1.1005a: ". . . The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, orders and empowers the new community of the covenant. To each member, that Spirit gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and for equipping it for the work of ministry."

W-6.3003–.3004: "Some in the community of faith who have special gifts and appropriate training are called in the church to the particular ministry of pastoral counseling with individuals and with groups formed for this purpose.

"In certain circumstances the ministry of pastoral care may call for referral to specialized ministers or others qualified by credentials and faith-perspective to provide appropriate counseling or therapy."

Examples

- A minister advises members on their financial investments and retirement planning.
- A minister continues to counsel a member even though the person's needs are beyond the minister's level of competence.
- + A minister declines to serve as executor of a member's estate.
- + A church preschool director refers parents of deeply troubled toddler to child psychologist.

II.8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;

References

Exodus 20:15: "You shall not steal."

Proverbs 20:17: "Bread gained by deceit is sweet, but afterward the mouth will be full of gravel."

Romans 13:7: "Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due."

Galatians 6:3: "For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves."

C-7.251–.252 (Larger Catechism): See I.6. above. See also C-4.110 (Heidelberg Catechism).

Examples

- A minister purchases books of published sermons and preaches them as her own, and uses prayers for worship published by others without citing the source.
- A music director photocopies music for the choir's use.
- A minister censured by presbytery for sexual misconduct deletes the final page required page of his Personal Information Form (certifying no sexual misconduct findings or charges) as he seeks a new call.
- A church member who is a therapist is found to have misrepresented his professional qualifications.
- + An elder who is a church educator gives proper credit for copyrighted intergenerational materials and lesson plans in- stead of using them as if they are her own.

II.9. Refrain from incurring indebtedness which might compromise my ministry;

References

Exodus 20:15: "You shall not steal."

Proverbs 22:7: "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender."

Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13: See II.4. above.

Luke 12:29–31: "And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

Romans 13:8: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."

Hebrews 13:5: "Keep your lives from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' "

C-7.251–.252 (Larger Catechism): See I.6. above.

Examples

- A minister with heavy seminary debts and undergraduate guaranteed student loans defaults on the student loans and is later embarrassed by being pursued by the government for defaulting.
- A minister buys expensive furniture from a church member who owns a furniture store. When the minister moves to a new call, none of the debt has been satisfied and the store owner pursues collection through the new presbytery.
- + Presbytery's Committee on Ministry makes financial management counseling and assistance with debt available as a part of its service to ministers. A minister with large debts seeks and accepts financial management counseling.

II.10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;

References

Exodus 20:15: "You shall not steal."

Luke 16:1–3, 10–13: "Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer." . . . Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. . . . if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.' "

1 Corinthians 4:1–2: "Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy."

C-7.251–.252 (Larger Catechism): See I.6. above.

Examples

- A wealthy church member learns that the minister has been enriching his family for five years with frequent thousand dollar gifts that the member had intended for the church's emergency fund.
- An elder who serves as treasurer pays her personal bills with church funds.
- + At the end of the year, a minister discovers that she was overpaid for continuing education expenses and returns the money to the church.
- + A minister starts an accounting system for the pastor's discretionary fund with accountability to the finance committee.

II.11. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;

References

Exodus 23:8: “You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.”

Ecclesiastes 7:7: “Surely oppression makes the wise foolish, and a bribe corrupts the heart.”

Acts 4:32–5:11: See story of Ananias and Sapphira’s sale of land, concealing their holdback of part of the proceeds forwarded to the congregation.

1 John 2:15–16: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.”

C-7.251 (Larger Catechism): See I.6. above.

G-10.0102n: [The session . . . has the responsibility and power] “to provide for the administration of the program of the church, including . . . personnel policies, and the annual review of the adequacy of compensation for all staff . . .”

G-11.0103f: [The presbytery . . . has the responsibility and power] “to provide encouragement, guidance, and resources to its member churches in the areas of . . . equitable compensation, personnel policies, and fair employment practices;”

G-12.0102f: [Synod . . . has the responsibility and power] “to consult with its member presbyteries with regard to . . . equitable compensation, personnel policies, and fair employment practices;”

G-13.0201i: [. . . General Assembly . . . Council . . . shall have the following responsibilities:] “to consult with the synods with regard to equitable compensation, personnel policies, and fair employment practices;”

Examples

- Without disclosing his sources, a minister accepts expensive gifts from wealthy members and friends of the church, such as season tickets to sports events, membership in the local country club, all-expenses paid cruises, use of vacation houses, new cars, and payment of private school or college tuition for his children.

+ A minister receives two frequent flier tickets as a gift from a church member in order to take a winter vacation in a warm climate. When negotiating with the session for the time away, the minister discloses the gift of the tickets.

+ A presbytery staff member trained as a certified leader in a program area is asked to help a congregation in another presbytery. He discusses with the personnel committee whether an honorarium may be received, and what limitations should apply.

+ A tent-making minister entering a new presbytery negotiates the secular part of employment with the committee on ministry and shares the details with the session so that all parties are aware of the extent of this employment and its compensation.

II.12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry;

References

Joshua 7: Story of Achan. See especially vs.19–20: “Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession to him. Tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’ “And Achan answered Joshua, ‘It is true! I am the one who sinned against the Lord God of Israel. This is what I did.’ ”

2 Corinthians 5:19–20: “. . . 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.”

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13: “But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.”

C-5.165 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“DISCIPLINE. And since discipline is an absolute necessity in the Church and excommunication was once used in the time of the early fathers, and there were ecclesiastical judgments among the people of God, wherein this discipline was exercised by wise and godly men, it also falls to ministers to regulate this discipline for edification, according to the circumstances of the time, public state, and necessity. At all times and in all places the rule is to be observed that everything is to be done for edification, decently and honorably, without oppression and strife. For the apostle testifies that authority in the Church was given to him by the Lord for building up and not for destroying (II Cor. 10:8). And the Lord himself forbade the weeds to be plucked up in the Lord’s field, because there would be danger lest the wheat also be plucked up with it. (Matt. 13:29f.)”

C-5.167 (Second Helvetic Confession): See Above, Introduction, “Commit myself to the following ethical standards.”

C-6.109 (Westminster Confession of Faith): “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.” See also G-1.0301.

G-1.0302: “That, in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed; that in the exercise of this right they may, notwithstanding, err, in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet, even in this case, they do not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.”

G-1.0305: “. . . while under the conviction of the above principle we think it necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters 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.” See also G-1.0307 at II.3. above.

G-2.0200: See Introduction above, “Commit myself to the following ethical standards.”

G-6.0108:

“a. It is necessary to the integrity and health of the church that the persons who serve in it as officers shall adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity as expressed in The Book of Confessions and the Form of Government. So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained.

“b. It is to be recognized, however, that in becoming a candidate or officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek or hold office in that body. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the governing body in which he or she serves. (G-1.0301; G-1.0302)”

G-14.0405b(3) (5), G-14.0207c, e: See ordination vows above at Introduction.

D-1.0101: “Church discipline is the church’s exercise of authority given by Christ, both in the direction of guidance, control, and nurture of its members and in the direction of constructive criticism of offenders. Thus, the purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings. In all respects, members are to be accorded procedural safe- guards and due process, and it is the intention of these rules so to provide.”

Examples

- An elder whose viewpoint does not prevail at a session meeting threatens to resign unless the decision is reversed.
- In a triennial visit, the Committee on Ministry discovers that a minister is making improper use of a pastor’s discretionary fund. The minister refuses to discuss this matter with COM, insisting that this is purely between the minister and the session.
- + A minister refuses to leave the session meeting during a triennial visit, seeing no value in giving the elders a chance to discuss anything on their minds which they might be uncomfortable saying in her presence.
- + When asked to conduct a private baptism for the grandchild of a church member, a minister uses The Book of Confessions to explain that baptism is an act of the covenant community to be conducted in the context of corporate worship. Even when the member suggests that no one needs to know about the baptism and offers a substantial honorarium, the minister holds firm.

II.13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;

References

Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach the statutes and ordinances in Israel.” See also Neh. 8:13.

Psalms 32:8-9: "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you."

Proverbs 9:9: "Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous, and they will gain in learning."

Colossians 3:16: "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."

Titus 1:9: "He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it."

Re mentoring: Note especially Paul's relation to Timothy, as expressed in 1 Timothy:

4:16: "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers."

6:20-21: "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge; by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith."

"Grace be with you."

2 Timothy 3:10-11; 14-17: "Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and suffering the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. . . . But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work."

C-9.49 (Confession of 1967): ". . . effective preaching, teaching, and personal witness require disciplined study of both the Bible and the contemporary world."

G-10.0102k: [re: the session's responsibility and power]: "to engage in a process for education and mutual growth of the members of the session;"

G-11.0103f: "The presbytery is responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district. It therefore has the responsibility and power . . . to provide encouragement, guidance, and resources to its member churches in the areas of leadership development, church officer training . . ."

G-14.0305j(2): "By the end of the candidacy phase, each candidate to be ordained shall demonstrate readiness to begin ministry of the Word and Sacrament by . . . presenting evidence of readiness to participate in a calling presbytery's plan for transition and of plans for continuing study and growth . . ."

G-14.0801d: "The commissioned lay pastor shall work under the supervision of the presbytery through the moderator of the session of the church being served or through the committee on ministry. A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor."

Cf. Minutes of the 204th General Assembly (1992), ACC Opinion L, paragraphs 21.257-.258, p. 323.

“Request 89-6 asks whether elders and deacons who have been previously ordained and, at a later time, reelected to be active officers may be required by session to be trained or examined for their new service.

“Session may require such training or examination under Book of Order, G-10.0102j that lists as one of the responsibilities and powers of a session ‘to engage in a process for education and mutual growth of the members of the session.’ ”

Examples

- A minister fails to participate in any continuing education program, merely spending his study leave money on books for his library.
- A minister diverts continuing education funds to vacation activities.
- + An elder participates in presbytery-sponsored lay spirituality training events.
- + A presbytery designs a mentoring program for every pastor entering the presbytery.

II.14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office, speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;

References

Deuteronomy 34:9: “Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses.”

2 Kings 2:1–14: Elisha inherits Elijah’s mantle.

Romans 13:7: “Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.”

1 Corinthians 3:3–9: “. . . For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, ‘I belong to Paul,’ and another, ‘I belong to Apollos,’ are you not merely human? “What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

C-5.155 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“THE NATURE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Paul explains simply and briefly what we are to think of the ministers of the New Testament or of the Christian Church, and what we are to attribute to them. “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God’ (I Cor. 4:1). Therefore, the apostle wants us to think of ministers as ministers. Now the apostle calls them ὑπηρέτης, rowers, who have their eyes fixed on the coxswain, and so men who do not live for themselves or according to their own will, but for others—namely, their masters, upon whose command they altogether depend. For in all his duties every minister of the Church is commanded to carry out only what he has received in commandment from his Lord, and not to indulge his own free choice. And in this case it is expressly declared who is the Lord, namely, Christ; to whom the ministers are subject in all the affairs of the ministry.”

G-14.0405b(5), (7), G-14.0207e and g: See ordination vows above at Introduction.

Examples

- A minister talks openly about the mistakes her predecessor made and characterizes him as a poor pastor and administrator.
- + A new minister takes his predecessor to a lunch at which they agree that when a family in the church asks that previous pastor to conduct a wedding or funeral, the new pastor will conduct the service, assisted by the previous pastor.
- + A congregation celebrates the accomplishments of prior ministries at anniversaries of the church.
- + A former pastor is approached by members of the congregation complaining about the new pastor. The former refers the members back to their new pastor for candid conversation.

**II.15. Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by presbytery;

References

1 Corinthians 3:3–9: See II.14. above.

C-5.155 (Second Helvetic Confession): See II.14. above.

G-11.0502: (Re: Committee on Ministry)

“f. It shall counsel with sessions regarding stated supplies, interim pastors, interim co-pastors, interim associate pastors, and temporary supplies when a church is without a pastor, and it shall provide lists of pastors, commissioned lay pastors, and qualified lay persons who have been trained and commissioned by the presbytery to supply vacant pulpits. Concurrence of the presbytery through its committee on ministry is required when a session invites an interim pastor, interim co-pastor, or interim associate pastor as provided for in G-14.0513b and c. . . .

“i. It shall serve as an instrument of presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between ministers and churches. . . .”

G-14.0405b(7), G-14.0207g: See ordination vows above at Introduction.

G-14.0605: “When any pastor or associate pastor retires, and the congregation is moved by 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 or emerita, with or without honorarium, but with no pastoral authority or duty. This action shall be taken only after consultation with the committee 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 presbytery, and may take effect upon the formal dissolution of the pastoral or associate pastoral relationship or anytime thereafter.”

Examples

A minister who moves from one church in a metropolitan area to another undermines the continuing ministry of her former parish by encouraging persons from that church to transfer their memberships to her new church.

- A minister moves seven hundred miles away from his former parish, but five years later continues to accept telephone calls from elders and to comment on issues before the session.

+ A minister whose retirement date is six months away declines to recommend names of interim pastors to the session as his replacement, telling the session that committee on ministry will provide them with such names.

+ On the last Sunday prior to leaving a call to become chaplain at a nearby hospital, a minister reads to the congregation the presbytery's ethics policy for ministers who leave a call. The departing minister assures the members of his love for each of them and indicates that all member contact by him will cease.

**II.16. Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the presbytery and provide pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and

References

1 Corinthians 3:3-9: See II.14. above.

C-5.155 (Second Helvetic Confession): See II.14. above.

G-14.0405b(5): See ordination vows above at Introduction.

G-14.0606: "Former pastors, associate pastors, and assistant pastors may officiate at services for members of a particular church, or at services within its properties, only upon invitation from the moderator of the session or, in case of the inability to contact the moderator, from the clerk of session."

Examples

- A minister leaves youth work in a Presbyterian church to work for a nearby church of another denomination in direct competition for the youth of the community.

- A minister agrees to do wedding for charter member's granddaughter without first talking with his successor and being invited to participate.

+ A minister from a small town is in the city making hospital calls when she discovers that an elder whom she knows from a presbytery committee is in the hospital. She contacts the elder's pastor before stopping in for a brief pastoral visit with the elder.

+ A minister calls her successor before agreeing to participate in the funeral of a close friend in that congregation.

**II.17. Consult with the committee on ministry in presbytery of residence regarding my involvement in any ministry setting during my retirement.

References

1 Corinthians 3:19-23: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their craftiness,' and again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.' So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—All belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God."

G-11.0412b: "Honorably retired ministers are encouraged to transfer their membership to the presbytery in which they live and the presbytery is encouraged to receive them. If they are active in presbytery, additional elders may be elected to keep a proper balance between ministers and lay

persons at the presbytery meetings. (G-11.0101b) Presbyteries should encourage honorably retired ministers to use their experience and skills in creative and meaningful ways. Those who are able and willing to reengage in ministry and service to others should relate to a particular church or presbytery. For those who do not or cannot, the presbytery should provide nurture and support.”

G-14.0606: See II.16. above.

Examples

- A retired minister moves to a new community and strikes up a friendship with the associate pastor of the church where he worships. He is drawn into becoming the associate’s advocate as the committee on ministry and the session negotiate with the associate pastor about leaving the call.
- A retired minister joins a holistic health clinic as its “spiritual advisor” without contacting the committee on ministry.
- + A retired minister who moved to a new presbytery approaches committee on ministry to offer his services for supply preaching and for moderating sessions of churches without an installed pastor.
- + A retired minister requests permission to act as the chaplain in a retirement home located within a presbytery that is not his presbytery of membership.

III. I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the church universal.

References

Galatians 6:9–10: “So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”

C-5.127 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“PARTS OR FORMS OF THE CHURCH. The Church is divided into different parts or forms; not because it is divided or rent asunder in itself, but rather because it is distinguished by the diversity of the numbers that are in it.”

G-4.0200–.0203: “The unity of the Church is a gift of its Lord and finds expression in its faithfulness to the mission to which Christ calls it. The Church is fellowship of believers which seeks the enlargement of the circle of faith to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone.

“There is one Church. As the Bible speaks of the one body which is the Church living under the one Spirit of God known through Christ, it reminds us that we have ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.’ (Ephesians 4:5–6)

“Visible oneness, by which a diversity of persons, gifts, and understandings is brought together, is an important sign of the unity of God’s people. It is also a means by which that unity is achieved. Further, while divisions into different denominations do not destroy this unity, they do obscure it for both the Church and the world. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirming its historical continuity with the whole Church of Jesus Christ, is committed to the reduction of that obscurity and is willing to seek and to maintain communion and community with all other branches of the one, catholic Church. (G-15.0000)”

G-15.0101: “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to manifest more visibly the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ and will be open to opportunities for conversation, cooperation, and action with other ecclesiastical bodies and secular groups.”

Therefore I will:

III.1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;

References

Ephesians 4:4–6: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

C-5.126 (Second Helvetic Confession):

“ONLY ONE CHURCH FOR ALL TIMES. And since there is always but only one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Jesus the Messiah, and one Shepherd of the whole flock, one Head of this body, and, to conclude, one Spirit, one salvation, one faith, one Testament or covenant, it necessarily follows that there is only one Church. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. We, therefore, call this Church catholic because it is universal, scattered through all parts of the world, and extended unto all times, and is not limited to any times or places. . . .”

C-9.40 (Confession of 1967): See II.3. above.

G-1.0303: See II, Introduction above.

G-4.0200–.0203: See Introduction to Section III, above.

G-15.0101: See Introduction to Section III, above.

G-14.0405b (7), (9), G-14.0207g, i: See ordination vows above at Introduction.

Examples

- A minister votes in favor of the presbytery’s budget, then recommends to the session that it withhold funds from the presbytery.
- + A minister who serves as interim pastor in churches around the country changes presbytery membership each time in order to have closer accountability and better relationship with the presbytery in which each church is located.
- + A retired elder spends three months as a volunteer in mission.
- + An elder agrees to represent the presbytery at the regional council of churches meetings.

III.2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;

References

1 Corinthians 12: 26–30: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. . . . Are all prophets? Are all

teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?"

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13: See II.12. above.

C-6.186 (Westminster Confession of Faith): "By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit all believers being vitally united to Christ, who is the head, are thus united one to another in the Church, which is his body. He calls and anoints ministers for their holy office, qualifies all other officers in the Church for their special work, and imparts various gifts and graces to its members. He gives efficacy to the Word and to the ordinances of the gospel. By him the Church will be preserved, increased, purified, and at last made perfectly holy in the presence of God."

G-14.0405b(5), G-14.0207e: See ordination vows above at Introduction.

Examples

- Some ministers develop a negative climate in presbytery by competing with, judging, and demeaning their colleagues.
- + A presbytery sponsors cluster support groups for ministers, elders, and other lay leaders.
- + Retired ministers and members-at-large in a presbytery voluntarily step forward to preach on occasion without honorarium so that each installed minister can have an occasional Sunday off.
- + An elder takes time to listen to the pain felt by a fellow elder over the direction of the congregation's evangelism program

III.3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations;

References

Exodus 20:17: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Matthew 7:12: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets."

C-7.256–.257:

"Q.146. Which is the Tenth Commandment?

"A. The Tenth Commandment is, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.'

"Q.147. What are the duties required in the Tenth Commandment?

"A. The duties required in the Tenth Commandment are: such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul towards our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto and further all that good which is his."

G-4.0104: "Each particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be governed by this Constitution. Its officers are ministers of the Word and Sacrament, elders, and deacons. Its government and guidance are the responsibility of the session. It shall fulfill its responsibilities as the local unit of mission for the service of all people, for the upbuilding of the whole church, and for the glory of God."

Examples

- A minister calls on persons who are members of other congregations when they are hospitalized, develops a relationship with them, then encourages them to join his church.
- + An elder encourages an active member of another congregation to assume volunteer leadership positions in the church where that person is a member.
- + A minister leads session in cooperating with presbytery in new church development in nearby community, inviting members to transfer to the small organizing congregation.
- + A minister provides pastoral care for a member of a colleague's congregation while the colleague is on vacation. She then gently discourages the member's interest in transferring her membership, and consults with her colleague about the request.

III.4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

References

Micah 6:8: [The Lord] "has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

C-9.41-.42 (Confession of 1967): "The church in its mission encounters the religions of men and in that encounter becomes conscious of its own human character as a religion. God's revelation to Israel, expressed within Semitic culture, gave rise to the religion of the Hebrew people. God's revelation in Jesus Christ called forth the response of Jews and Greeks and came to expression within Judaism and Hellenism as the Christian religion. The Christian religion, as distinct from God's revelation of himself, has been shaped throughout its history by the cultural forms of its environment.

"The Christian finds parallels between other religions and his own and must approach all religions with openness and respect. Repeatedly God has used the insight of non-Christians to challenge the church to renewal. But the reconciling word of the gospel is God's judgment upon all forms of religion, including the Christian. The gift of God in Christ is for all men. The church, therefore, is commissioned to carry the gospel to all men whatever their religion may be and even when they profess none."

C-9.46 (Confession of 1967): "The reconciliation of man through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless, lack of national resources, absence of technological understanding, or rapid expansion of populations. The church calls every man to use his abilities, his possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to him by God for the maintenance of his family and the advancement of the common welfare. It encourages those forces in human society that raise men's hopes for better conditions and provide them with opportunity for a decent living. A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God."

G-3.0401:

"The Church is called:

“a. to a new openness to the presence of God in the Church and in the world, to more fundamental obedience, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work;

“b. to a new openness to its own membership, by affirming itself as a community of diversity, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, and conditions, and by providing for inclusiveness as a visible sign of the new humanity;

“c. to a new openness to the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activity in the world;

“d. to a new openness to God’s continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be a more effective instrument of mission in the world.”

G-15.0104: “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will seek new opportunities for conversation and understanding with non-Christian religious bodies in order that interests and concerns may be shared and common action undertaken where compatible means and aims exist.”

G-15.0105: “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will initiate and respond to approaches for conversation and common action with movements, organizations, and agencies of the business, educational, cultural, and civic communities that give promise of assistance toward accomplishing the mission of the Church in the world.”

W-7.4003: “There is no peace without justice. Wherever there is brokenness, violence, and injustice the people of God are called to peacemaking

“a. in the Church universal fragmented and separated by histories and cultures, in denominations internally polarized by mutual distrust, and in congregations plagued by dissension and conflict;

“b. in the world where nations place national security above all else, where the zealotry of religion, race, or ideology explodes in violence, and where the lust for getting and keeping economic or political power erupts in rioting or war;

“c. in communities racked by crime and fear, in schools and workplaces marked by vicious competition and rebellion against order, and in households and families divided against themselves, scarred by violence and paralyzed by fear.”

Examples

- A minister refuses to participate in ministerial groups and community projects that include persons outside the Christian faith.

- An elder makes disparaging, negative comments about other Christian groups and other faith traditions.

+ A minister takes her turn as the volunteer police chaplain in her community.

+ An elder participates in a Presbyterian-related mission trip to the Middle East, visiting with both Muslim and Jewish communities.

* The examples are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

** These standards apply only to pastors; they also apply to commissioned lay pastors when they are performing pastoral functions.

+ Indicates example of appropriate conduct.

- Indicates example of inappropriate conduct.

Abbreviations for Sources and References:

The Book of Confessions: C Form of Government: G Directory for Worship: W Rules of Discipline: D
Translation of the Bible—New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

2011 Committee/Volunteer Expense Voucher

Holston Presbytery

1415 Waverly Road • Kingsport, TN 37664
 423.247.6178 • 888.674.0009 • 815.550.2780 (FAX)

Presbytery Committee: _____

Make Check Payable To: _____

Address: _____

Account <small>(Office Use Only)</small>	Item Description	Amount
	_____ miles traveled @ \$0.24 per mile =	
	Total Amount Requested	\$

Committee Chairperson Signature: _____

Date: _____



Holston Presbytery
 1415 Waverly Road
 Kingsport, TN 37664
 423-247-6178 (Voice)
 888-674-0009 (Toll-Free)
 815-550-2780 (Fax)

Direct Deposit Agreement Form

I hereby authorize **Holston Presbytery** to initiate automatic deposits to my account at the financial institution named below. I also authorize **Holston Presbytery** to make withdrawals from this account in the event that a credit entry is made in error.

Further, I agree not to hold **Holston Presbytery** responsible for any delay or loss of funds due to incorrect or incomplete information supplied by me or by my financial institution or due to an error on the part of my financial institution in depositing funds to my account.

This agreement will remain in effect until **Holston Presbytery** receives written notice of cancellation from me or my financial institution, or until the financial obligation of **Holston Presbytery** has been satisfied.

Name of Organization: _____

Name of Financial Institution: _____

Address: _____

Routing Number: _____

Account Number: _____

Effective Date: _____

Deposit Amount: _____

Checking <input type="checkbox"/>	Savings <input type="checkbox"/>
Monthly <input type="checkbox"/>	Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/>
Annually <input type="checkbox"/>	(check one)

Authorized Signature (Primary): _____ **Date:** _____

Authorized Signature (Joint): _____ **Date:** _____

Please attach a voided check or deposit slip and return this form to Holston Presbytery.

Holston Presbytery Employee Salary Reduction Form

Name (Last, First, Middle): _____

Social Security Number: _____

Salary Reduction Authorization

Pursuant to the provisions and conditions set forth on the bottom of this page, I hereby request and authorize Holston Presbytery to reduce my salary by \$ _____ per month and direct the amount of such reduction to Fidelity Investments of the Board of Pensions.

Employee contribution \$ _____ (per month)

Check all that apply: Change in deduction amount Increase Decrease

New 403(b) Annual salary increase

Effective date of change _____

Cancellation/continuation request: please cancel/continue my previous tax deferred retirement contribution to:

Fidelity Investments of the Board of Pensions

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Salary Reduction Agreement/Amendment

It is agreed that the wages earned or contract of employment between my employer and the below-named employee is amended effective the first day of the month following the below date so that thereafter, my employer is requested and authorized by employee to reduce the amount of salary payments due employee and to direct the amount of such salary reduction to the company indicated above for the purchase by that company of a 403(b) account for employee under the provisions of sec. 403(b) of the U. S. Internal revenue code and other applicable law. By signature of employee below, receipt of copy of this salary reduction agreement/amendment to employment contract on the below date is hereby acknowledged.

It is also agreed that this salary reduction agreement/amendment to employment contract shall apply to any future wages/employment contracts or any amendment to the present or to any future wages/employment contract, providing only that the employee has the right, at any time, to revoke this agreement. Employee agrees that my employer shall in no way be liable to employee or their successors for any money damages which might arise from the federal or state tax consequences of their participation in a 403(b) retirement account and consistent therewith, employee further agrees to save and hold harmless my employer from any such money damages.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Health Flexible Spending Account Enrollment

Employee Information

Name _____ Soc. Sec. # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Type of Action

Enrollment Date _____

Annual enrollment period New employee enrollment Revised enrollment due to change in family status

(Type of Change) _____ on (Month/Day/Year) _____

Health Flexible Spending Account Contribution:

I elect to have the following amount contributed to my Health Flexible Spending Account by reducing my salary by:

\$ _____ per pay period (\$ _____ on an annual basis).

Acknowledgment and Signature

I have read the description of the Plan and understand that

- I am responsible for obtaining, reviewing, and understanding FSA materials made available by my employer and for all decisions concerning participation in the FSA.
- I can elect to participate or not participate in the FSA option.
- I am responsible for initiating any change in elections due to a change in family status, as defined under the FSA, within 30 days of such change.
- I am responsible for understanding the effects on my individual financial situation as a result of altering taxable income by converting salary to purchase benefits on a before-tax basis.
- I understand that my employer does not guarantee any particular tax consequences as a result of my participation in the Health FSA.
- I understand that the amounts I have authorized as contribution to my Health Flexible Spending Account will be deducted from salary otherwise payable to me.
- I further understand that my election to make these contributions cannot be changed except during the annual enrollment period or within 30 days of a change in family status.

Please return to FSA Plan Administrator: _____

Signature of Employee _____ Date _____

2011 Staff Expense Voucher
Holston Presbytery
 1415 Waverly Road • Kingsport, TN 37664
 423.247.6178 • 888.674.0009 • 815.550.2780 (FAX)

Make Check Payable To: _____

Address: _____

Account (Office Use Only)	Item Description	Amount
	_____ miles traveled @ \$0.50 per mile =	
	Total Amount Requested	\$

Staff Signature: _____

Date: _____