

# Commission on Ministry Presbytery of Charlotte

## **Background and Rationale**

The Commission on Ministry develops and maintains mechanisms and processes regarding Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Pastors (CPs), and Certified Christian Educators of the Presbytery; facilitates relations between the Presbytery and its congregations; and settles difficulties in those relationships on behalf of Presbytery (G-3.0307). The Committee on Ministry (COM) is a standing committee of the Presbytery of Charlotte charged with fulfilling this Book of Order mandate.

In July, 2009, the Presbytery adopted “*Framework for a New Direction*” (revised February, 2011 and January 2024), a new approach to the Commission Ministry structure which decentralized much of the work of the COM into geographical areas called Clusters.

Among the outcomes hoped for were:

- Better relationships between pastors, CPs, Certified Christian Educators, and congregations in geographical areas;
- Greater shared identity and ownership by cluster partners;
- The development of regional strategies;
- Wider participation in cluster celebrations and events such as ordinations, anniversaries, barbecues, etc.; and,
- A working experience of connectionism and being Presbyterian.

In the time since this organization approach was adopted, various strengths and weaknesses have been realized. The original Framework document stated that “Keys to success will include keeping working parts to a minimum and keeping those parts flexible and functional”. The changes being proposed now seek to fulfill that statement. In making these changes now, it is intended that improvements be realized in the following areas:

- Better training of Commission members
- Allowing decisions regarding individual churches to be made by those who are closest to the church (Clusters)
- Allowing the full COM to focus more on policies, procedures, and larger issues which might arise
- More consistency in working with churches, in training, in how Clusters operate, and in how COM policies and procedures are applied
- Making changes to the Clusters as needed to balance size, ministry effectiveness, and liaison workloads
- Allowing the Commission flexibility in how it organizes itself (clusters, subcommittees, etc.) so that it can operate in the most productive manner

## **Commission on Ministry/Cluster Organization and Membership**

The COM is governed by the Book of Order, as well as the policies, guidelines, and regulations of the Presbytery. It is comprised of ministers of word and sacrament and ruling elders, in equal number, elected by the Presbytery to serve on the COM. The Presbytery will be divided into four geographic clusters, with each member of the COM normally serving on the Cluster in which the member resides or serves. The size of the COM should be 36 members (three classes of 12).

**As of February, 2016, there shall be four (4) geographic Clusters:**

- North Cluster – serving churches primarily in Cabarrus County and the upper part of Mecklenburg County
- South Cluster – serving churches primarily in Union County and the southern part of Mecklenburg County
- East Cluster – serving churches primarily in Anson, Richmond, Montgomery, and Stanly Counties
- West Cluster – serving churches primarily in the central part of Mecklenburg County

A list of the churches in each cluster, as of January 2024 is attached as part of this document. This list may be modified from time to time as needed by the COM.

**COM Moderator(s):** The Presbytery COM shall have a Moderator or Co-Moderators nominated by the COM and elected by

the Presbytery. The term of office for the COM Moderator(s) shall be up to two (2) years starting in January. The duties of the COM Moderator(s) will continue to be those traditionally assigned by Presbytery.

COM Leadership Team: The Leadership Team (LT) is comprised of the moderators of the COM and each cluster, with the General Presbyter and Coordinator of COM as ex-officio.

Cluster Co-Moderators: Ordinarily each Cluster will have Co-Moderators who are appointed annually by the COM Moderator(s). As with all Cluster members, Co-Moderators shall be elected members of the COM. In the case where Co-Moderators cannot be appointed for a Cluster, a single Moderator is allowed.

The responsibilities of the Cluster Co-Moderators include:

- Scheduling regular Cluster meetings and communicating the meeting schedule to Presbytery staff.
- Moderating Cluster meetings and reporting the business conducted at those meetings to the COM Moderator(s) and Coordinator for COM.
- Assigning all churches within the cluster to COM members who will serve as their liaisons.
- Informing each church within the Cluster who their liaison is and how to get in touch with him/her.
- Overseeing the work of the Cluster and ensuring that the assigned tasks (listed below) are being accomplished.

Cluster Membership:

**Size**: The ratio of Cluster members to churches should be approximately one Cluster member for every two or three churches. All Cluster members shall be elected members of the full COM.

**COM Members**: Each elected COM member will be assigned to a Cluster except the COM Moderator(s). It is recommended that they serve in the cluster where they reside, but exceptions may be determined by the COM Moderator(s). The Presbytery Committee on Representation will be asked to be intentional about nominating representatives from each cluster area to the COM so that the desired ratio of Cluster members to churches be maintained.

**Voting**: Clusters will conduct and approve the routine business of the COM in their Cluster area. Issues out of the routine or with implications beyond the Cluster will go to the full COM for action.

### **Commission on Ministry Responsibilities-Full COM**

- On an annual basis, establish minimum terms of call for new calls for pastors and Certified Christian Educators
- Approve changes to the PoC severance policy

### **Commission on Ministry Leadership Team Responsibilities**

- Validate specialized ministries
- On an annual basis, review the status of members-at-large within the Presbytery
- Act on recommendations from the Conciliation Team
- Make recommendations to the Presbytery regarding the need to establish an Administrative Commission in a church
- Review, Update, and Develop policies, as needed

### **Commission on Ministry Cluster Responsibilities**

- Assign liaisons to establish positive working relationships with churches and pastors
- Conduct regular (at least biannual) visits to church sessions
- Work with churches to ensure compliance with Minimum Terms of Call Salaries and Board of Pensions
- Approve Terms of Call for new calls
- Approve Installation Commissions for new calls

- Approve Presbytery of Charlotte Pastors to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery and non-Charlotte pastors to labor inside the bounds of the Presbytery
- Dissolve relationships between churches and pastors
- Dismiss pastors to other Presbyteries
- Approve Temporary Pastor and Moderator assignments for the Presbytery as a whole
- Approve people for the Pulpit Supply List
- Assist churches in transition
  - Insure compliance with severance policies and approve exceptions to the policy
  - Conduct an Exit Interview with pastors, CPs and when they leave a church.  
Conduct an Exit Interview with the Session when a pastor, CP or CE leaves a church.
  - Work with churches without a pastor to conduct a Mission Study (when needed)
  - Approve formation of PNC's and APNCs
  - Train and work with Pastor Nominating Committees (PNCs) and Associate Pastor Nominating Committees (APNCs) during the call process
  - Approve Ministry Discernment Profile Forms (MDPs)
  - Work with churches seeking a Transitional Pastor
  - Work with churches seeking a Temporary Pastor
  - Approve contracts between Temporary and Transitional Pastors and a church, using a template provided by COM
  - Work with churches in need of Pulpit Supply Pastor/Commissioned Pastor (CP)/Certified Christian Educators
  - Appoint Moderators for church sessions when there is no called pastor
  - Assign mentors to new pastors and Certified Christian Educators

**Liaisons:** The primary role of Cluster members is to be in relationship with the churches they serve as liaisons. Liaisons are the primary link between pastors and congregations and the Committee on Ministry and Presbytery. This is an important role, one which requires commitment and diligence. Liaisons will be in regular communication with their assigned churches. The goal is to be a known “face of the Presbytery” that pastors, sessions, and congregations can go to for assistance. Knowing that prevention of problems is always preferable to intervention, the focus of liaisons is on fostering healthy congregations. A Cluster member shall not serve as liaison to the church where he or she has an established relationship (e.g. congregation member, pastor, staff member, etc.).

**Liaison Referral Procedures:** Liaisons will encounter situations that require referral to either the larger COM or one of its centralized subcommittees. They may also find it necessary to receive assistance from the presbytery’s Ministry Resource Committee. When a referral is made, it is the responsibility of the liaison to inform the Cluster and/or COM Co-Moderators.

### **Referrals to General Presbyter**

1. Inquiries about or expressions of desire for churches to separate from the PCUSA or seeking dismissal to another denomination shall be referred to the General Presbyter.

### **Referrals to Stated Clerk**

1. Indications of sexual misconduct shall be immediately reported to the Stated Clerk for investigation.  
2. Inquiries about or expressions of desire for teaching elders to separate from the PCUSA or seeking dismissal to another denomination shall be referred to the Stated Clerk.

### **Commission on Ministry and Cluster Meetings**

Beginning in January, 2016, meetings of the full COM will be held four times a year, Leadership Team meetings will be held 5-6 times a year, while Clusters will meet in the other months in order to ensure that Presbytery business is conducted in a timely manner. This schedule may be modified by the Committee as needed to achieve the most productive and efficient approach to serving our churches. Committee members who are unable to be present for a meeting may participate by conference call. Minutes will be recorded for all meetings of the COM and individual Clusters. Cluster minutes should be sent to the COM Moderator(s) and the Coordinator for COM.

## **Authority to Act**

Actions taken at Cluster meetings go to the COM for *information only*. If necessary due to scheduling constraints, any duty normally delegated to a Cluster may be referred to and handled by the full COM if necessary. When doubt exists about a Cluster's authority or appropriateness to act, the matter shall be referred to the COM. Delegation of duties between the full committee and the clusters may be modified as appropriate by the COM.

The Presbytery authorizes the COM, its Clusters and its subcommittees (as applicable) to act on its behalf in performing the responsibilities listed in this document.

\*Timely but routine matters as determined by the COM Moderator(s) can be voted on by an electronic ballot.

## **Commission on Ministry Subcommittees** **(may be modified by the committee from time to time as necessary)**

### **Commissioned Pastors**

- Examines and recommends commissioning for particular pastoral service for CPs to a church

### **Transfers and Certification**

- Conducts examinations of all candidates for call as Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Minister at Large.
- Provides certification of credentials of ordained pastors entering the Presbytery of Charlotte from other reformed denominations.

### **Conciliation**

The Conciliation Team is comprised of specifically trained individuals in the areas of conflict and conciliation. While these individuals are not ordinarily members of the COM, the Team serves as an arm of COM and is responsible for providing coaching to churches and individuals in conflict situations, along with listening and mediating services.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality shall be a high priority for all COM work.

### **Conflict of Interest**

COM members shall recuse themselves in all matters where there is a conflict of interest, at both the full committee and cluster levels.

# Presbytery of Charlotte Church Clusters

## NORTH CLUSTER

1. Bellefonte, Harrisburg
2. Bethpage, Kannapolis
3. Bethpage United, Concord
4. Catawba, Huntersville
5. Cedar Grove, Concord
6. Cornelius, Cornelius
7. Covenant, Concord
8. Covenant, Kannapolis
9. Davidson, Davidson
10. Davidson College, Davidson
11. Derita, Charlotte
12. First, Concord
13. Flow-Harris, Concord
14. Gilwood, Concord
15. Harrisburg, Harrisburg
16. Hopewell, Huntersville
17. Kirkwood, Kannapolis
18. Mallard Creek, Charlotte
19. Meadowlake, Huntersville
20. New Friendship, Huntersville
21. New Hampton, Charlotte
22. Newell, Newell
23. Pleasant Grove, Charlotte
24. Poplar Tent, Concord
25. Ramah, Huntersville
26. Rocky River, Concord
27. Statesville Avenue, Charlotte
28. Williams Memorial, Charlotte

## SOUTH CLUSTER

1. Amity, Charlotte
2. Avondale, Charlotte
3. Ben Salem, Charlotte
4. Bethany, Monroe
5. Beulah, Monroe
6. Black's Memorial, Monroe
7. Carmel, Charlotte
8. First, Monroe
9. First, Pageland, SC
10. First, Waxhaw
11. Good Shepherd, Charlotte
12. Henderson Grove, Mint Hill
13. Indian Trail, Indian Trail
14. Matters 2 Mission (M2M) \*\*NWC
15. Matthews, Matthews
16. Matthews-Murkland, Charlotte
17. MorningStar, Matthews
18. Myers Park, Charlotte
19. Philadelphia, Mint Hill
20. Providence, Charlotte
21. Quail Hollow, Charlotte
22. Saint Andrews, Charlotte
23. Sardis, Charlotte
24. Selwyn Avenue, Charlotte
25. Sharon, Charlotte
26. South Mecklenburg, Charlotte
27. Stephenson, Monroe
28. The Fellowship Place, Charlotte
29. Third, Charlotte
30. Trinity, Charlotte

## **EAST CLUSTER**

1. Candor, Candor
2. Ebenezer, Morven
3. First, Albemarle
4. First, Hamlet
5. First, Mount Gilead
6. First, Norwood
7. First, Rockingham
8. First, Wadesboro
9. Locust, Locust
10. Macedonia, Candor
11. Marks Creek, Rockingham
12. Morven, Morven
13. Star, Star

## **WEST CLUSTER**

1. C.N. Jenkins, Charlotte
2. Caldwell Memorial, Charlotte
3. Central Steele Creek, Charlotte
4. Christ, Charlotte
5. Cooks Memorial, Charlotte
6. Covenant, Charlotte
7. First, Charlotte
8. First United, Charlotte
9. Grier Heights, Charlotte
10. H.O. Graham Metropolitan, Charlotte
11. McClintock, Charlotte
12. Memorial, Charlotte
13. Mount Olive, Charlotte
14. Mulberry, Charlotte
15. Paw Creek, Charlotte
16. Robinson, Charlotte
17. Saint Paul, Charlotte
18. Smallwood, Charlotte
19. South End, Charlotte
20. Steele Creek at Pleasant Hill Charlotte
21. Sugaw Creek, Charlotte
22. The Avenue, Charlotte
23. The Grove, Charlotte
24. Woodland, Charlotte