

WHEN YOUR CHURCH LOSES A PASTOR

Guidelines for Sessions

Pastor Resignation/Retirement:

The Moderator of the Commission on Ministry or the Stated Clerk of Presbytery is to be notified when a pastor requests the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of acting upon the request for dissolution of the pastoral relationship. If possible, the COM liaison should meet with Session to explain what happens when a church loses its pastor.

Session Moderator: (G-1.0504)

If the pastor that is leaving moderates the Session of the church COM will assign a Moderator.

Session's Initial Actions:

The Session should insure that proper plans are made to seek an effective transition between pastors. The following things need to be done immediately:

- a. Call a congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship.
- b. Report date and outcome of congregational meeting to Tamara Williams at the Presbytery office.
- c. Meet with liaison to discuss options for transition to include, but not limited to, pulpit supply, Interim/Temporary Contracts, Pastor Nominating Committee Process, etc.
- d. Meet with liaison for an exit interview and to review and sign the *Former Pastor Policy and Covenant of Closure*.

Pulpit Supply:

Sessions may contact pastors on the Pulpit Supply List on the Presbytery website (www.presbyofcharlotte.org).

Any person preaching more than two times a month must be approved by the Commission on Ministry.

Transitional Pastor:

The importance of a good transitional pastor cannot be overemphasized. Please refer to the Transitional Pastor Policy if the church plans to call an Interim.

Pastor Nominating Committee:

- a. Contact your COM liaison to request permission to form a PNC.
- b. The congregation has the authority to determine the process of presentation of nominees to the congregation and the number of members on the PNC. Depending on the circumstances, the optimum size is around seven people.
- c. Numerous procedures are possible in electing a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC):
 1. general nominations from the floor after establishing a number for the committee
 2. session nominates to congregation
 3. officer Nominating Committee nominates to the congregation
 4. special Nominating Committee nominates to the congregation

*Item 3 is generally preferred by most churches since this Nominating Committee is constituted from a variety of sources in the congregation. The PNC should be broadly representative of the whole congregation (i.e., women, men, different ages).

- d. The COM liaison will guide the PNC as a resource person. A designated member of COM will attend the first meeting of the PNC to orient and train the PNC.