

## **Salem Presbytery Committee on Ministry**

### **Guidelines for Teaching Elders in Salem Presbytery who are Affected by the Dismissal of their Particular Church from the PC(USA)**

If a particular church is dismissed from Salem Presbytery by action of the Presbytery, one of the paramount concerns is to assure that the rights and status of affected minister members are considered and properly handled. In every case, the action of the Presbytery shall reflect grace, mercy, and peace for all individuals and organizations involved.

#### **Status of Teaching Elder's Membership**

1. Teaching Elders may choose to remain as members of Salem Presbytery and not transfer to the other reformed body with which the affected church is affiliating.
2. Teaching Elders who will continue in a pastoral role with the dismissed church should normally immediately begin procedures to join the reformed body to which the affected church is affiliating. In order to provide a locus for continuing membership during this process, any such Teaching Elder shall be afforded membership in Salem Presbytery for a period of time to be determined by the Presbytery's Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk will notify the Teaching Elder of the time period which he/she will remain as an active member in Salem Presbytery. For reasons of grace, the Stated Clerk may extend this period at his/her discretion, but only so long as the Teaching Elder shows the Stated Clerk evidence of continued activity in the process of affiliating with the other denomination.

The Committee on Ministry and the Presbytery's Stated Clerk, using one or more methods, may determine whether a Teaching Elder is "continuing in a pastoral role" with the dismissed congregation. One method would be that the Teaching Elder has notified the Presbytery officials in a formal manner (letter, email, telephone conversation) of his/her continued work. Another method would be that the governing body of the dismissed church would announce that the Teaching Elder was continuing in service to their church in their new affiliation. Still another method would be that the Teaching Elder, without formally notifying officials of the Presbytery, has clearly indicated by word or action his/her intention to continue to provide pastoral services to the dismissed congregation.

Any Teaching Elder whose membership in Salem Presbytery has been concluded under this policy shall be welcome at meetings of the Presbytery with the status of visitor.

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3. Transfers to another reformed body shall normally be approved, unless the Teaching Elder is the subject of a pending judicial or investigative action. Members under discipline of the Presbytery may not be transferred until the administrative process is complete and any required remedial actions have been completed. The reasons for not granting immediate transfer shall be communicated by the Presbytery's Stated Clerk to appropriate persons. At the point when an administrative process is complete and any remedial actions are completed, the transfer may occur. Any residual record of the Investigating Committee or Permanent Judicial Commission must be transmitted to the other body by the Stated Clerk prior to the transfer being affected so that proper disclosure of any issues can occur.
4. If the Teaching Elder expresses his/her desire not to remain in the service of the congregation that is disaffiliating with the PC(USA), the Teaching Elder shall be considered a Member-At-Large of Salem Presbytery until such time that he/she takes a call to a validated ministry in the PC(USA). Representatives of the Committee on Ministry, together with the Presbytery Executive, the Stated Clerk, and the affected Teaching Elder him/herself, shall work with the congregational officials to affect an appropriate severance package for the affected Teaching Elder who chooses to remain in the PC(USA).
5. The Presbytery cannot dismiss a Teaching Elder to a non-reformed denomination or to an ecclesiastical body with whom the PC(USA) is not in correspondence. If a Teaching Elder desires to follow a congregation to a non-reformed denomination or an ecclesiastical body with whom the PC(USA) is not in correspondence, the Teaching Elder shall formally notify the Presbytery's Stated Clerk. In this case, the Stated Clerk shall at the Teaching Elder's request remove him/her from the Presbytery's roll. If the Teaching Elder chooses not to make such formal notification, but yet continues in pastoral service to a congregation outside a reformed body or outside the PC(USA) correspondent denominations, the Stated Clerk shall consider this an act of renunciation of jurisdiction and shall remove the Teaching Elder from the Presbytery's roll. Such a Teaching Elder shall continue to be welcome at any meeting of Presbytery with the status of visitor.

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### **Status of Members Under Care of Presbytery**

Special attention shall be given to members of the dismissing congregation who are preparing for ministry and under the care of Salem Presbytery.

1. Each individual under the care of the Presbytery, together with his/her liaison from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), should be advised immediately of the congregation's desire to seek dismissal.
2. If the congregation is dismissed from the PC(USA), the member-under-care shall be given the option of being dismissed with the congregation, or remaining under Salem Presbytery's care and transferring their membership to another congregation within Salem Presbytery or within another PC(USA) Presbytery.
3. If the member under care chooses to transfer his/her church membership to a PC(USA) congregation outside Salem Presbytery, the Presbytery Executive and the Salem CPM moderator will assist the member in seeking a waiver of the usual six-month requirement for church membership in order to maintain "care" status.