

Faith Narrative

Throughout my life, my calling has been a slow, persistent call. There was never one mountaintop, lightning bolt moment of clarity; but instead, many still, small moments of discernment. As a child, I was born into a family that always put God first. My immediate family and my extended family are all faithful followers of Christ. My parents had my brother and I at church every Sunday, and my grand parents took us when we spent the weekends at their houses. I was extremely fortunate to grow up in a family that taught me about God's love and fostered my relationship with the church.

Forest Hills Presbyterian Church was also essential in the development of my faith. From Sunday school teachers to youth advisors, the congregation at Forest Hills challenged and nourished my faith as I grew up. The church provided me with many learning opportunities like Vacation Bible School, retreats at Montreat, mission projects and worship leadership. Forest Hills is a church that is very good at discerning what kind of ministry and outreach is needed both for it's congregation and it's community. Therefore I was never without something new to do that allowed my faith to grow.

Once I graduated from high school, I went to East Carolina University to study art. As soon as I arrived in Greenville, North Carolina I found the Presbyterian Campus Ministry and signed up. This is another crucial part of my faith journey, campus ministry. First Presbyterian Church in Greenville hosted the campus ministry and it was my rock during college. It allowed me to connect to a new congregation, volunteer organizations within the community, as well as other campus ministries around the country. First Presbyterian was very supportive of the campus ministry and they encouraged college students to help lead worship, teach Sunday school and be a part of their mission projects.

During my time at ECU in the campus ministry is when I finally realized that I was being called to go to seminary. At the time, my husband Luke and I were dating and he supported my decision whole-heartedly. After we graduated from ECU we got married and moved to Richmond where I began the dual degree program at Union Presbyterian Seminary. Union allowed me to study and focus on a call I had been feeling for my entire life. I have enjoyed my time there so far and I can say without a doubt that I have learned a great deal and will continue to learn.

While at Union, I have worked with Second Presbyterian Church in downtown Richmond. I have worked for several years with their UKirk Campus Ministry for VCU students. I have felt a call towards campus ministry as well as young adult ministry because I believe these types of programs are desperately in need around the country. College students want to be involved, but the church often times must go to them and search them out to keep them involved. I work hard to promote campus ministry because that is where God worked a lot in my life.

Most recently, my husband and I went on a travel seminar with Union to the Middle East. We visited Turkey and Israel back in May for a little over three weeks. This trip has had a huge impact on my faith. Luke and I are still processing and reflecting over all of the things that we saw and learned while we were there, and I hope that we are better followers of Christ because of it. Change has become a theme in our family. Luke has started his first year of medical school at Virginia Commonwealth University and I am getting closer to finishing my years at Union. Every semester looks different and every year my faith continues to be shaped by my relationships, my studies and my experiences.

POLICY REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP OF DEPARTING MINISTERS TO THEIR FORMER CONGREGATIONS (P-37)

Current Policy

1. A departing pastor must stay away from the former parish completely until the next installed pastor has been in place for at least a year.

4. It is not ordinarily appropriate to continue contact on any social media. This will involve un-friending/ hiding people on Facebook, not following on Twitter and/or deleting contacts. For example, automatic birthday wishes should cease, as things like this remind individuals about the wonderful pastor that left and their pastoral relationship. It will require extreme discipline to resist even the most innocent interactions.

Suggested Revisions/Additions (revisions/additions in **bold**)

1. A departing pastor must **cease from contacting members of his/her former parish beginning on the date of the dissolution of his/her call and lasting** until the next installed pastor has been in place for at least a year. **This includes the time period in which an Interim or Temporary Pastor is with the congregation.**

4. **No social media contact is permitted during this time.** This will involve un-friending/ hiding people on Facebook, not following **people** on Twitter, and/or deleting contacts. For example, automatic birthday wishes should cease, as things like this remind individuals about the wonderful pastor that left and their pastoral relationship. It will require extreme discipline to resist even the most innocent interactions.

6. **If the Pastor or Associate Pastor is under administrative leave or allegations are being reviewed by an Investigating Commission or proceedings are underway to dissolve the call due to cause, all communications with the members shall cease. Communications may resume by action of the Committee on Ministry.**

7. Representatives of the Committee on Ministry shall review this policy statement with both the pastor who is leaving/retiring and with the Session prior to the pastor leaving. The departing pastor, session and all program and support staff will be asked to sign the covenant which should be shared with the congregation. A pastoral letter written by the Clerk of the Session regarding this policy and a copy of the covenant should be shared with the congregation at the time of the departing pastors leaving and the new pastor's arrival

**Policy Regarding the Relationship of Teaching Elders
(Honorably Retired, Member-at-Large & Validated Ministry)
to the Congregations Where They Worship**

The Committee on Ministry
Salem Presbytery

Introduction

The Teaching Elder who serves as pastor of a particular church has clearly defined responsibilities (G-2.0501). While all Teaching Elders are called to equip “the people of God for their ministry and witness” (F-3.0202), pastors “shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life.” (G-2.0501) The relationship of pastor and church member involves an intimacy that makes the office of Pastor different than those of other Teaching Elders.

One of the tensions all Teaching Elders must cope with is that they are not members of a particular congregation. Teaching Elders are members of a Presbytery and are supervised by their presbytery through its Committee on Ministry who is “pastor and counselor to teaching elders.” (G-3.0307) The Committee on Ministry is charged with determining if the work of a Teaching Elder (not serving as a pastor) is helpful to the church in mission (G-2.0502) but it is the pastor of a particular church who is charged with equipping the members of that church to fulfill their calling to be God’s mission.

Teaching Elders and Particular Churches

Teaching Elders who are retired, a Member-at-Large or serving in a validated ministry are colleagues with other Teaching Elders serving as pastors and are to help them further God’s mission in the particular church with whom they are serving. These Teaching Elders possess unique gifts and skills based on their service or calling and COM seeks to assist these men and women in discerning how their gifts and skills might be used for the mission of Salem Presbytery in our particular churches.

Families and Spouses of Teaching Elders Worshipping in Particular Churches

Teaching Elders who are honorably retired, a Member-at-Large or serving in a validated ministry are supervised by the presbytery’s Committee on Ministry, and while a minister's family or spouse is not within the COM's jurisdiction they remain within our concern because they are members of the larger body of Christ. When the Teaching Elder who is honorably retired, is a Member-at-Large or who serves in a validated ministry and their family or spouse worship in a particular congregation a new kind of relationship is established that isn’t clearly defined by our polity.

When the Teaching Elder and her/his family and/or spouse establish a relationship with a particular church, the family and/or spouse (like all other members of a church) will be under the

jurisdiction of the Pastor and the Session per the *Book of Order*.

Purpose of This Policy

In the hope of loving one another as Christ loves us, the COM institutes a policy of pastoral care toward all Teaching Elders who are honorably retired, members-at-large or ministers serving in a validated ministry—and their families and/or spouse—when they worship in one of our particular congregations. The policy is intended both to encourage them in their spiritual growth and to assist the Pastor and people of the congregation with whom the Teaching Elder and his/her family or spouse will be worshipping in finding appropriate ways the Teaching Elder and his/her family or spouse might use their gifts in helping the congregation fulfill God's mission.

Ethical Framework

Our *Form of Government* does not offer specific guidance when it comes to the relationship of honorably retired ministers, member-at-large ministers or ministers serving in a validated ministry to a particular church—except in the case of the church one served prior to retiring. There is a code of ethics which guides all Teaching Elders. *Life Together in the Community of Faith: Ethical Standards for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (USA)* will be the framework on which this policy's collegiality and accountability practices are based.

Collegiality and Accountability Practices

1. The presbytery, through its Committee on Ministry, maintains oversight of the Teaching Elders under its purview and shall determine if the ministry of each Teaching Elder who is honorably retired, a member-at-large, or serving in a validated ministry is helpful to the Church and the presbytery's mission. (*G-2.0502*)
2. Yearly reports from all Teaching Elders who are members-at-large or serving in a validated ministry shall be submitted to the COM subcommittee on Compensation and Relationships per the *COM Manual*.
3. Per the *Book of Order* and the *COM Manual*, all Teaching Elders who are retired, a member-at-large, or serving in a validated ministry are to be involved in the mission of Salem Presbytery by serving on its committees and attending presbytery meetings.
4. Teaching Elders worshipping in a particular church shall not serve on Session committees, be a member of a group within the church or direct activities of any committee or group except at the invitation of the Pastor, and if the Pastor deems advisable, this invitation to serve without remuneration may be detailed in a written covenant with the Pastor (see #5 below). However, if the desired service is to be remunerated, then the Pastor and Teaching Elder shall comply with all of the covenantal requirements (see #5 below).
5. When a Teaching Elder who is honorably retired, a member-at-large or serving in a validated ministry and her/his family or spouse establish a relationship with a particular church, the Teaching Elder and Pastor will meet in a timely manner:
 - a. They shall discuss boundaries and appropriate roles for the Teaching Elder and his family/spouse and they shall review this policy at this meeting;

- b. Should the Pastor and the Teaching Elder agree that the Teaching Elder possesses certain gifts and skills that might be helpful for the Pastor to accomplish her/his ministry, they shall create a written covenant detailing how the Teaching Elder will use her/his gifts and skills under the supervision of the Pastor (cf. Parish Associate);
 - c. The Pastor and Teaching Elder shall send a letter to the congregation (or send a mass email or post this letter on the church website) informing the congregation of the nature of the relationship the Teaching Elder and her/his family will have with the congregation and how the Teaching Elders will covenant to support the Pastor in her/his ministry by using the gifts and skills of the Teaching Elder;
 - d. The Teaching Elder shall meet with the council of the church (the Session) to discuss the covenant agreement he/she has made with the Pastor.
6. Upon notice that the Pastor will be leaving the church, the covenant with the Teaching Elder will be automatically terminated. It is incumbent on the Teaching Elder to refrain from any part of the covenant when the church is without a Pastor unless otherwise directed by the Committee on Ministry (see #8).
7. The Pastor has the discretion to terminate the covenant with the Teaching Elder at any time and shall communicate with the Committee on Ministry and the Session the reasons for the termination.
8. When there is a Temporary or Interim pastor, the covenant with the previous Pastor will be reviewed by the Temporary or Interim Pastor and discussed with Session. The Temporary or Interim Pastor, in consultation with the Session, may reinstate the previously-agreed upon or follow the guidelines as set above in #5 to create a new covenant with the Teaching Elder.

RESOLUTION FROM BUFFALO

As reported by John Hartman

The Discernment team was comprised of John Hartman, Jim Rissmiller, and Jean Rodenbough. Dianna Wright and Mack Dagenhart served as Presbytery staff representatives.

Representatives from this team also met with the congregation on March 30, 2014 for an Question and Answer informational meeting which centered around two questions: What is the Quorum needed to satisfy the congregational meeting requirements? Second, there were questions regarding the church's property.

On June 21, 2014, the congregation (with 94 present and a 66.7% quorum) voted to leave PCUSA and join with the EPC by a vote of 88-6.

The Reconciliation Team was then asked by Council to continue on as Resolution Team to further discussed a financial settlement with Buffalo Church.

After further discussions, a \$10,000 figure was proposed by the session of Buffalo Church.

Elders from Buffalo (Bill Rhodes and Tom McKnight) met with the Resolution Team (Bryan McFarland, John Hartman, and Jean Rodenbough) on August 25, 2014 to further discuss the figure, and it was agreed to.

They were informed that the Resolution Team endorsed their settlement donation to Council and asked if their clerk of session would send an official letter to Council.

Presbytery Council was informed and supported the actions at its September 18, 2014 meeting.

The congregation met on September 28, 2014 and voted to concur with the Session and Resolution Team. following amendment was placed before the congregation: "When it is dismissed by Salem Presbytery from the Presbyterian Church (USA) to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Buffalo Presbyterian Church shall give a lump sum gift of \$10,000 to Salem Presbytery in appreciation for the years of support and shared mission."

RESOLUTION FROM MEMORIAL

As reported by Tempe Fussell

A Discernment Team was sent to meet with the session of Memorial Presbyterian Church on June 24, 2013. Prior to this there had been some conversation with ministers and Presbytery staff about denominational concerns. The session expressed a deep concern on behalf of a number of their members who had problems with the stance of the policies of the PCUSA, particularly those dealing with the authority of Scripture. The Discernment team was comprised of Paul Ridolfi, Mark Brainerd and Tempe' Fussell. Dianna Wright and Bryan McFarland served and attended and Sam Marshall provided resource assistance.

The Discernment Team also joined the congregation for a plenary discussion on August 11, 2013.

After this point there was the understanding that there were unresolved concerns and so the Council in concert with COM asked that those who were working as the Discernment Team to continue on as a Resolution Team.

Representatives from this team met with the session on November 11 and then met on two occasions with the congregation where they considered in plenary as well as in small groups, what reformed denomination would best suit their shared faith beliefs, with strong leanings toward the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

On March 30, 2014, the congregation voted to leave PCUSA and join with the EPC.

The Resolution team met with Mack Dagenhart on June 1, 2014 and discussed the precedence for financial reimbursement. We all decided that we were unaware of clear process for determining an objective dollar amount and if the church gave the Presbytery a figure that seemed thoughtful and reasonable, we would encourage them to submit that figure to the Council. The session met with the Resolution Team that day and they proposed a \$6,000 gift to Presbytery. They were informed on June 2 that the Dissolution team endorsed their settlement donation to Council and asked if their clerk of session would send an official letter to Council.

The congregation met on the 12th of October. A quorum was 38 and there were 41 present. The following amendment was placed before the congregation: "When it is dismissed by Salem Presbytery from the Presbyterian Church (USA) to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Memorial Presbyterian Church shall complete the remaining balance of its 2014 pledge of \$6000 to Salem Presbytery (currently \$1500), and give a lump sum gift of \$6000 to the Presbytery in appreciation for the years of support and shared mission."

A motion from the floor amended the original motion to raise the lump sum gift from \$6000 to \$10,000; the amendment was approved by voice vote unanimously. The amended motion passed unanimously in a balloted vote.

Terms Negotiated by Resolution Team of Council of Salem Presbytery and Session Team of First Presbyterian Church of Winston-Salem Pursuant to Salem Presbytery Dismissal Policy.

1. Financial Terms

- a. FPC shall make payments to Salem Presbytery as follows:
 - (I) in 2014, \$35,000, payable in one installment of \$8,750, due upon dismissal, and a second installment of \$26,250 by December 31, 2014.
 - (II) in 2015, \$30,000 payable in four quarterly installments of \$7,500.
 - (III) in 2016, \$25,000 payable in four quarterly installments of \$6,250.
 - (iv) in 2017, \$20,000 payable in four quarterly installments of \$5,000.
 - (v) in 2018, \$15,000 payable in four quarterly installments of \$3,750.
- b. FPC shall provide financial support to El Buen Pastor of \$35,000 annually from 2014 through 2018 paid in quarterly installments of \$8,750. All amounts paid in 2014 prior to dismissal shall be credited to the \$35,000 for 2014.
- c. In addition to the payments above, FPC shall pay \$435,000 to Salem Presbytery, in ten annual installments of \$43,500 with the first payment due on December 31, 2014 and future payments due on December 31 of the successive nine years. At any point in time, FPC may prepay the entire remaining balance of *this* subparagraph at a twenty percent (20%) discount of the then remaining balance. The preferred use of the subparagraph 1.c payments is for mission and ministry opportunities that fall outside the scope of the regular operating budget.

2. Property Reversion

For a minimum of ten years, FPC shall be under the ecclesiastical authority of ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, or a successor denomination, or other denomination which is a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, or a successor or similar entity. Failing that, the real property dismissed with FPC shall revert to the status as it existed immediately prior to the dismissal.

3. Church Records

All of the church records of FPC existing as of the dismissal will remain with FPC, but original Session and Congregation meeting minutes will be made available to Salem Presbytery for photocopying.

4. Members who desire to remain in the PC(USA)

Upon the request of members who wish to remain in the PC(USA) but have not already transferred to another church in the Presbytery, FPC will provide pastoral care through the transition.

5. Pastoral Statement Regarding the Columbarium

a. Anyone who leaves FPC because of its dismissal from PC(USA) will have the right to be inurned in the FPC Columbarium, provided there is space, and they may also have their funeral or memorial service at the church. A PC(USA) pastor may be invited to take part in that service, provided a pastor from FPC serves as the host pastor.

b. A plaque regarding improvements and future development of the columbarium while FPC was a PC(USA) church will be placed in the columbarium area.

6. Pastoral Statement Regarding Weddings

If a former members, or loved one of a former member, who left FPC because of its dismissal from PC(USA) wants to get married at the church, they will be given every consideration as if they were a current member. If the individual would like to have another pastor assist in performing the wedding ceremony, they may do so, provided a pastor from FPC serves as the host pastor for the ceremony. FPC's desire is to honor the ties that have been important in the past and recognize the importance of space and place in the lives of people who have been a part of the FPC community.