

**OPERATIONS MANUAL  
OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY FOR SALEM PRESBYTERY  
Revised 5/2022**

**Purpose** - Subject to the provisions of the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Manual of Salem Presbytery, the Commission on Ministry of Salem Presbytery shall conduct its affairs according to this document.

**Amendments** - This Operations Manual may be amended upon recommendation of the COM Task Force on Policy, Compensation, Mediation and Church Officer Development to the Leadership Team.

**Structure** – The work and ministry of Commission on Ministry shall be carried out according to the following structure:

There will be thirty-six (36) members of COM.

**The COM Leadership Team**

To coordinate the overall work of the COM task forces, a COM Leadership Team will consist of 19 people:

- co-moderators of each task force (14) \*includes Examinations co-moderators
- Stated Clerk and Transitional General Presbyter
- COM member serving as “bridge” for the Engagement Pastors
- COM Leadership Team co-moderators (elected at annual COM gathering)

The COM Leadership Team will hold stated meetings quarterly (approximately two weeks before each Presbytery meeting) and will hold called meetings as needed. **In the beginning of this restructure process, the COM Leadership Team will meet monthly.**

***Duties of COM Leadership Team Co-Moderators***

- set agenda for COM leadership team meetings
- collect/compile minutes of all task force meetings (from task force clerks)
- oversee Church Partner assignments (e.g. when COM members rotate off)
- prepare and present quarterly Presbytery meeting reports (includes contacting all individuals who are in the COM report- transfers, candidates, PNC chairs, retirees, etc.)
- moderate COM leadership team meetings (set up Zoom as needed)
- create minutes for COM leadership team meetings and distribute to all COM members
- serve as ex-officio members of Executive Council
- “direct and connect” COM business to the appropriate task force as needed
- work with Stated Clerk and Salem Administrative Assistant to ensure proper filing of contracts and forms
- issue credentials to CLC for PNCs to utilize the system and provide approval of MIFs
- participate in the crisis management response as directed by the COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight.

## COM Task Forces

The COM will be divided into seven Task Forces. Each task force covers the entire presbytery, but its work will be task-specific. Each task force will elect co-moderators and a clerk and will hold monthly stated meetings. The seven Task Forces are:

COM Task Force on Ministry for the Changing Church - 12 members plus adjunct list of coaches and mentors, session moderators, trained transition responders/liaisons, and pulpit supply.

COM Task Force on Transitions in Ministry (for Installed Positions)- 7 members plus adjunct list of trained transitional pastors, session moderators, trained transition responders/liaisons

COM Task Force on CRE Training and Oversight- 7 members plus adjunct list of trained mentors

COM Task Force on Policy, Compensation, Mediation and Church Officer Development- 5 members plus adjunct list of trained mediation coaches and the Salem Equip group

COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight- 5 members (one of these is the “bridge” for engagement pastors)

Additionally, there will also be a COM Task Force on Examinations- 12 members (separate from 36 COM members)

## Task Force Duties

***COM Task Force on Ministry for the Changing Church*** will oversee ministry in Temporary Pastoral Relationships – G.2.0504b

This is a combined task force from what was Transformational Ministry for the Changing church, and Temporary Ministry and Pulpit Supply. The focus of this Task Force will be churches served by a Temporary Supply, Stated Supply, CRE, or no one.

### Committee work:

- maintain an up-to-date list of churches searching for non-installed positions (currently a page on the vacant church list)
- resource churches in their search for non-installed positions (connecting with the Task Force on CRE Oversight)
- maintain a list of churches who might be open to new models of pastoral ministry
- work with congregations seeking new models of pastoral ministry (examples: yoked, co-pastor cluster parishes, merging)
- coach churches as they discern their mission and current pastoral needs (example: are they shifting from installed to supply?)
- counsel with sessions regarding temporary pastoral services when a church is without a teaching elder, and it shall provide lists of teaching elders and ruling elders who have been trained by the Presbytery to supply vacant pulpits
- serve as primary contact for churches and ministers in transition with non-installed positions (upon announcement of pastor's departure to hiring of next pastor)
- provide training and oversight for non-PCUSA ministers serving congregations in Salem Presbytery (e.g. Salem Academy) \*G-2.0506
- appoint transition responders and/or COM liaisons upon the departure of a pastor (will

normally be members of this task force)

- hold exit interviews for departing pastors and sessions; include discussion of COM policy regarding the relationship between pastors and former congregations
- determine Suitability and Fit of candidates via interview
- communicate with supply pastors regarding contract renewals
- grow and maintain pulpit supply list; communicate regularly with churches who rely heavily on the pulpit supply list ("Sunday-to-Sunday" churches)
- resource ministers who are not Salem members regarding Salem practices and policies (e.g. Healthy Boundaries)
- maintain awareness of Board of Pensions opportunities/policies for temporary positions
- maintain appropriate COM policies, working in concert with the Task force on Policy (etc.) in their development and updating.
- Notify the COM Task Force on Examinations when there is a candidate for their docket.
- resource and guide churches through the process of closing
- maintain appropriate COM policies, working in concert with the Task force on Policy (etc.) in their development and updating.

**Commission work:**

- make recommendations on new models of pastoral ministry
- make recommendations (in working with Stated Clerk) about a church closing
- Oversee the Dismissal Policy
- act upon request for a minister member to labor outside the bounds of Salem Presbytery (not installed positions)
- act upon request for a minister to labor inside the bounds of Salem Presbytery (not installed)
- act upon requests for temporary supply contracts and renewals
- act upon requests for stated supply contracts and renewals
- act upon requests for designated pastor/co-pastor contracts and renewals
- act upon requests for temporary assistance agreements
- act upon requests for Parish Associate contracts and renewals
- recruit, recommend and appoint moderators of session in times of pastoral transition (and/or as needed)
- act upon requests for ministers to be placed on pulpit supply list
- act upon requests to authorize elders to celebrate the Lord's Supper and/or moderate the session

**COM Task Force on Transitions in Ministry (for Installed Positions)** will oversee the call/search process for installed positions in Salem Presbytery.

**Committee work:**

- counsel with churches regarding calls for permanent pastoral relations
- serve as primary contact for churches and ministers upon announcement of the request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship where both parties concur until installation of the next minister to that installed position.
- appoint transition responders
- resource church transition committees (incl. search for transitional pastors)
- hold exit interviews for pastors and sessions; include discussion of COM policy regarding the relationship between pastors and former congregations
- provide for gatherings of Transitional Ministry Network
- determine the need for mission studies and provide oversight for that process/ approve mission studies / grant permission for formation of PNCs/APNCs
- evaluate and approve MIFs (send to COM Leadership co-moderator and the General Presbyter will run matches)
- appoint COM liaisons for PNCs/APNCs (will normally be members of this task force)
- provide training for PNCs/APNCs
- determine Suitability and Fit of candidates via interview
- maintain an up-to-date list of churches searching for installed positions (currently referred to as the vacant church list)
- act on request from a PNC for candidates to move onto field prior to ordination
- coordinate with the Care of Ministers Task Force concerning the mentoring program.
- counsel with churches wishing to move designated pastor into installed position
- maintain appropriate COM policies, working in concert with the Task force on Policy (etc.) in their development and updating.
- Notify the COM Task Force on Examinations when there is a candidate for their docket.

**Commission work:**

- act between Presbytery meetings for transfers of Installed Teaching Elders in and out of Salem Presbytery where ordination is not required
- recruit, recommend and appoint moderators of session in times of pastoral transition, as needed
- act upon requests for contracts and contract renewals with an interim pastor/transitional minister
- act upon requests for dissolution of pastoral relationship where both parties agree (installed positions)
- recommend to the Stated Clerk the establishment of an Administrative Commission of Salem Presbytery to ordain/install clergy
- act upon requests for terms of call for installed positions (candidates, transfers, and minister members) *\*Presbytery action- for those coming to be ordained.*

### ***COM Task Force on CRE Training and Oversight***

\*G.2.1001-1004: Commissioning Ruling Elders to Particular Pastoral Service

#### **Committee work:**

- connect with churches contemplating a CRE relationship
- oversee the training and certification of new CREs
- organize on-going continuing education programs for CREs
- oversee the work of CREs and monitor required attendance
- oversee mentoring program
- maintain the CRE manual- work with Policy task force on changes in policy
- maintain appropriate COM policies, working in concert with the Task force on Policy (etc.) in their development and updating.
- provide care for CREs, including those not serving a commission
- Notify the COM Task Force on Examinations when there is a candidate for their docket.

#### **Commission work:**

- act upon request for contract and contract renewals for CREs
- act upon request for commission for CRE and congregation (\*recommend to Salem Presbytery)
- act upon request for annual re-commissioning of CREs at presbytery meeting (\*recommend to Salem Presbytery)

### ***COM Task Force on Policy, Compensation, Mediation and Church Officer Development***

#### **Committee work:**

- provide for the implementation of equal opportunity employment for teaching elders and candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, or disability
- 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 teaching elders and churches. Its purpose shall be to mediate differences and reconcile persons, to the end that the difficulties may be corrected by the session of the church if possible, that the welfare of the particular church may be strengthened, that the unity of the body of Christ may be made manifest
- provide resources for mediation as needed (this may come as a referral from another task force or COM member)
- facilitate the Healthy Boundaries program of Salem Presbytery, including contacting ministers regarding compliance
- maintain awareness of current PCUSA compensation “big picture” discussions (e.g. Living by the Gospel)
- maintain communication with churches in arrears with Board of Pensions
- work with Equip to facilitate church officer development as needed (e.g. supporting the work of church treasurers)
- resource all COM task forces on current COM policy
- maintain COM policies, working in concert with the applicable Task Forces, to make and receive recommendations for policy updates as needed
- recommend to Salem Presbytery concerning remuneration for temporary tasks
- recommend to Salem Presbytery compensation minimums, cost of living increases, and other changes in terms of call.
- Collect and review annual changes in Terms of Call for installed positions

**Commission work:**

- recommend, after discernment, to the Stated Clerk the establishment of an Administrative Commission of Presbytery to address issues in particular churches, with or without asserting original jurisdiction
- act on requests from churches to waive service limitation requirements

***COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight***

**Committee work:**

- visit regularly and consult with each teaching elder of the Presbytery. It shall report to the Presbytery annually the type of work in which each teaching elder of the Presbytery is engaged
- connect with Salem Engagement Pastors: this task force will include one member who will serve as a “bridge” for the work of the five engagement pastors
- provide pastoral care and support for minister members (including retirees) in times of crisis and in other times as needed
- develop and maintain a crisis management response for Salem Presbytery
- resource ministers upon the request for retirement, including connecting them to the Kate B. Reynolds Fund through the Salem Administrative Assistant
- maintain regular communication with retirees
- provide for retiree fellowship and special events, including the annual gathering with our Board of Pensions representative
- support the certified Christian educator program in Salem Presbytery (Charlotte Nance-Allbright at First Burlington is official contact) *\*G-2.1103: Christian Educators*
- provide an annual review of members-at-large; work with Stated Clerk to provide annual Member-at-Large report to Presbytery *\*G.2.0503b The status of member-at-large shall be reviewed annually.*
- provide an annual review of those members working in validated ministry beyond a particular congregation *\*G-2.0503a The presbytery shall review annually the work of all ministers of the Word and Sacrament engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.*
- coordinate gatherings for those engaged in validated ministry beyond a particular congregation
- act upon request for sabbatical plans and provide encouragement to churches and pastors regarding sabbaticals
- oversee the mentor program for newly ordained/new members of Salem Presbytery
- maintain appropriate COM policies, working in concert with the Task force on Policy (etc.) in their development and updating.

**Commission work:**

- act upon request for validated ministry work beyond a particular congregation (and/or re-validate) *\*G-2.0503a*
- act upon request for honorable retirement (\*recommend to Salem Presbytery) *\*G-2.0503c*
- approve the following individuals seeking membership in Salem Presbytery: retiree transfers, member-at-large transfers and those seeking ordination and engaged in validated ministry beyond a particular congregation
- act on requests for the naming of a Pastor Emeritus

### ***COM Task Force on Examinations***

#### **Committee work:**

- examines candidates, commissioned ruling elders, and teaching elders on behalf of the Commission on Ministry
- examines those non-PCUSA individuals seeking to serve as temporary supply in the churches of Salem Presbytery.
- make recommendations to the appropriate body or task force.
- maintain appropriate COM policies, working in concert with the Task force on Policy (etc.) in their development and updating.



## Duties of Task Force Moderators/Co-Moderators and Clerks

Task force Moderators/Co-moderators will:

- arrange for meeting via Zoom (or arrange a meeting space when appropriate) *\*a number of Salem churches have offered spaces to be used for presbytery work*
- create agenda for monthly stated meetings- send agenda, meeting information, and supporting documents to task force members
- contact and arrange for those individuals (candidates, etc.) needing to meet with the task force
- moderate task force meetings
- provide follow-up communication to all individuals and churches with business addressed at the task force meeting (e.g. pastor who submitted sabbatical plan, PNC waiting to hear about MIF approval, etc.)
- send all paperwork that requires filing (e.g. contracts) to the COM Leadership Team co-moderators- they are working with the Stated Clerk and Administrative Assistant to ensure the signage and proper filing of such documents
- follow all above protocol for called meetings

Task Force Clerks will:

- take attendance of task force meetings
- take minutes of task force meetings, circulate minutes to task force for changes, submit revised minutes to COM Leadership Team Co-moderators
- follow all above protocol for called meetings

**Terms of Office** - During a three-year period of serving on the COM, the Officers shall be elected for a term of one year and are eligible to be re-elected.

**Special Meetings** - The Moderator [or Co-Moderators] of the Leadership Team or of Task Forces may call special meetings at any time desired, provided sufficient notice of time and place is given. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

**Quorum** - The quorum for all meetings shall be a majority of the members.

**Attendance Policy** – Regular attendance at meetings is expected of all members of the COM. Attendance will be reviewed periodically.

**Urgent Items** – When there are items which the Leadership Team or Task Force Moderator/Co-Moderator deem to be urgent, those items may be dealt with in the following manner: by zoom, conference call or email. In all cases, the actions shall be reported and confirmed at the next COM meeting.

**How will the COM stay directly connected with the churches in Salem Presbytery?** COM members (36) will serve as church partners for specific congregations in their geographic area. Partners should regularly contact pastors and/or sessions. One good beginning question to ask is “how can the Presbytery and congregation partner in Christ’s mission?” COM partners (both ruling elders and teaching elders) should make efforts to attend monthly parish/cluster fellowship events planned by the Engagement Pastors, noting their presence as a COM member.

**How will Salem Presbytery staff be available to the task forces?**

Salem Presbytery Transitional General Presbyter- will attend all task force meetings, conduct Presbyter to Presbyter reference checks, and provide matches through CLC for the task forces responsible for calls and transitions.

Salem Presbytery Designated Presbyter for Transformational Ministry - will attend some task force meetings.

Salem Presbytery Administrative Assistant- will monitor incoming COM communication and work with task force co-moderators to distribute these communications and order the required Background Check. The Administrative Assistant will also work with the Stated Clerk to appropriately file paperwork after task force meetings.

Salem Presbytery Stated Clerk- will be available to task forces as needed and requested. When a pastoral relationship or validated ministry is dissolved by the Commission on Ministry/Salem Presbytery, and the pastor remains within the jurisdiction and/or bounds of Salem Presbytery, Stated Clerk shall ensure that the pastor's ecclesiastical status for the Presbytery records is updated.

Salem Presbytery Engagement Pastors- will connect with COM through a designated COM member who will "bridge" their work to the COM Leadership Team and the COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight.

**Minister to Return to Salem Presbytery, if less than three years** - When a Minister Member of Salem Presbytery transfers membership to another Presbytery and subsequently returns to Salem Presbytery seeking membership, if the period of absence has been less than three years, the appearance of the Minister before the Examinations Committee may be waived and the Minister appear directly for suitability and fit by the appropriate Commission on Ministry Task Force, and subsequently stand before the Presbytery for examination for reception as a Minister member.

**Code of Ethics** – All COM members shall review the Code of Ethics annually, at the first meeting of the calendar year.

1. I will honor all confidential information shared with or within the Commission on Ministry. I will not share it with colleagues, friends, or even the Presbytery except as required by the *Book of Order* or the manual of Presbytery.
2. When giving a reference concerning a minister of the Presbytery, I will confine my answers to matters on which I have direct knowledge and competence or that could otherwise be substantiated by reference to public records. I will not knowingly libel or slander a colleague in ministry. I will not knowingly recommend to another Presbytery a minister who has personal problems (such as child abuse or alcoholism but not necessarily limited to these) with which they are not dealing effectively.
3. I will be discreet in the way I conduct myself as a member of the Commission on Ministry. I will not knowingly take actions that would embarrass colleagues or signal others that "trouble" exists when they would not be entitled to that knowledge.
4. I will treat all my colleagues and particular churches of the Presbytery fairly and equally. I will, like a good mediator, balance the power of disputes and will move the

parties toward reconciliation and wholeness insofar as possible.

5. I will seek to avoid conflicts of interest by absenting myself from deliberations of the Commission on Ministry when matters are introduced which specifically and directly pertain to my personal interests or interests of my particular congregation or a congregation I have served in the past. I will absent myself if I, or others, believe my presence may be hindering to the Commission on Ministry and/or a “candidate.”
6. I will not use my “friendships” with other members of the Commission on Ministry to attempt to influence the outcome of matters which pertain to my personal interests or the interests of my church.
7.
  - a. I will make myself available within reason to other ministers of the Presbytery or various Presbytery members who ask me to hear them out. I will warn them that the matters they share with me may not be kept from secular authorities or the courts of the Church. Examples are special areas such as child abuse or sexual abuse. I will explain that information shared about someone else will be considered public knowledge. I may refer them to the Executive Presbyter or to intervention specialists or specialists in psychiatry or pastoral care as the situation demands.
  - b. After the conditions of 7.a have been met, I will actively listen to those who continue to share their needs and concerns with me.
8. I will respect the collective wisdom of the Commission on Ministry and its staff. In working with churches and ministers, I will remember that I am an agent of the Commission. I will fairly represent the position of the Commission on Ministry or others with whom we work (PNCs, etc.) and will not present my own personal position or views as the position of the Commission when my position or views may be different from those of the Commission. I will not knowingly ignore, by-pass or act contrary to the *Book of Order*.
9. I will seek to conduct myself in the manner consistent with my office and as a follower of Christ.