

**Commission on Ministry  
Salem Presbytery**

**EXIT INTERVIEW**

The Exit Interview is for the Commission on Ministry to be able to hear from the resigning or retiring pastor and the Session about situations, circumstances or policies that have been helpful or frustrating or that have been roadblocks or green lights. It is not a time for evaluation of the pastoral position and the church itself. The Transition Responder is responsible for scheduling this interview.

**Guidelines for the Interview**

1. Careful notes should be kept. Specificity is encouraged.
2. Interview questions will be sent to all participants prior to the interview. Time should be made available at the end of the interview to ask questions and to share additional insights.
3. At the interview of both the Session and the outgoing minister, the COM representative should review Salem's policy on the Relationship Between Departing Pastor and Congregation, or the policy on the Relationship Between Retiring Pastor and Congregation. The appropriate form should be signed by the Pastor, the Clerk of Session, and the COM representative.
4. The interview will be written up as soon as possible and first be sent to the outgoing pastor for written comments. It is then sent, with the pastor's written comments, if any, to the appropriate Commission on Ministry Task Force, and filed in both the church's file and the minister's file.

## **THE EXIT INTERVIEW - PASTOR**

As part of the process of closing a pastoral relationship, the Commission on Ministry will conduct an exit interview with a pastor as they leave the congregation. Participating in the interview will be the pastor, and two (2) members of the appropriate Commission on Ministry Task Force. This interview will serve several purposes:

1. To offer the pastor an opportunity to reflect on the experience of this pastorate in an affirming, constructive manner.
2. To give the pastor an opportunity to share their insights on ministry with this particular congregation.
3. To give opportunity for insights and suggestions pertinent for future pastoral relationships.

### **Process**

1. When a pastor or associate pastor notifies the Commission on Ministry of their intention to accept another call or to retire, an exit interview will be scheduled with that pastor by a representative of COM.
2. An edited version of the interview, after being signed by the participants, will be made available to the appropriate COM Task Force(s).
3. This interview is confidential material available only to the participants in the interview, the Commission on Ministry, and the General Presbyter.

### **Suggested Questions for the Interview**

1. What have been your goals in this pastorate? In what ways have you met them? In what ways have you not met them?
2. What accomplishments are you most pleased with?
3. What has been most disappointing?
4. What have you learned about yourself in ministry that will assist you in your next pastorate?
5. Evaluate the congregation's mission in terms of local mission, outreach into the community, world mission and membership potential.
6. What are the strengths of the congregation and its leadership?
7. What are the areas in which the congregation and its leadership need development?
8. What excites you about this church's future?

9. What concerns you about this church's future?
10. What has been the nature of your relationship to the Session?
11. How supportive of you and your work was the Session?
12. What has been the nature of your relationship to Presbytery?
13. What led you to seek and accept another position?
14. If housing was provided, what was its suitability and condition, and how were the arrangements for pastor and Session communication regarding housing matters?
15. If this was a yoked parish, what was the relationship of the churches, the health of the yoke, and your assessment of the prospects of the yoked relationship in the future?
16. If this was a multiple staff church, what is the status of the staffing relationships? What is the nature of the staff's working styles? What factors do you see in the staff matters that affect the calling of another pastor?
17. What would you advise the Commission on Ministry as it works with this congregation to secure another pastor?
18. How can the Presbytery best support this church?
19. How can the Presbytery best support the next pastor?
20. What pastoral care was available to you in this pastorate?
21. What advice or counsel would you want to leave for your successor(s)?
22. What are some of your hopes for the future?
23. Any other questions that may be pertinent to this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

## **EXIT INTERVIEW - SESSION**

### **Format:**

This interview is to take place as soon as possible after the conclusion of the pastoral relationship with a representative of the Commission on Ministry, the COM appointed Moderator, and if possible, the General Presbyter. The Moderator will chair the meeting, and it is important that all members of the Session be present. The COM liaison will lead the exit interview, and the Moderator will take notes following the format of questions, with care to note pertinent information and comments.

### **Purpose of Meeting:**

To give the Session a chance to voice its feeling and to be affirmed about the future.

To provide a source of information for use by the COM in dealing with the church.

To provide data/counsel for the next pastor, if appropriate.

To give an overview of the pastor search process, if appropriate.

### **Setting:**

The Session interview should be after the pastor has left the community.

### **Questions on Feelings:**

1. As a Session, what are your feelings at this point?
2. What are your anxieties or regrets?
3. What do you feel good about?

### **General Reflection Questions:**

1. What are the ways in which this church has been faithful in its Church Mission?
2. What are the ways in which this church has been effective in the past two years?
3. Describe your minister's leadership style and recent initiatives.
4. Were there barriers to their effectiveness here?
5. Did the Session and congregation encourage and support the minister's ideas?
6. What are the challenges / growing edges of this congregation?
7. What is the most important thing this church must not lose in the weeks and months to come?

8. Describe your annual review of the church's program and the pastor's compensation.
9. How did the housing arrangement work out with your minister? Are there any housing/manse needs?
10. Were there areas of conflict between you and your pastor?
11. Were there barriers to their effectiveness here?
12. What were their strengths?
13. What were their growing edges?
14. How did the congregation relate to the minister's family?
15. Comment on the community's acceptance of the minister and family.

\_\_\_\_\_Clerk of Session

\_\_\_\_\_Date

\_\_\_\_\_Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_Date

\_\_\_\_\_COM Representative

\_\_\_\_\_Date