

NEW CASTLE PRESBYTERY'S CODE OF ETHICS FOR TEACHING ELDER MEMBERS AND OTHER CHURCH PROFESSIONALS

APPENDIX G *(as approved in The Manual of New Castle Presbytery, 9/18/2012)*

G.1001 - PREFACE

As members of the ordained ordered ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)(PC(USA)) who are under obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and under the guidance of the Confessions of the PC(USA), teaching elders and other church professionals shall affirm the vows made at their ordinations, if any, shall confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for their life and ministry, and in reliance on God's grace, shall commit themselves to the following standards of ethical conduct.

These ethical standards also seek to inform the non-ordained members of the PC(USA) as to what they can expect from teaching elders and other church professionals. It is recommended that sessions of the Presbytery's local churches adopt similar standards for their own employees.

These standards do not speak to all aspects of the lives of teaching elders and other professionals. They are minimum standards, and guidance should also be sought from Scripture, personal conscience, the Book of Order, Christian tradition, and peer review. This code does however articulate certain customs and practices that have been well accepted for teaching elders and those serving in allied church professions.

G.2001--PERSONAL LIFE

Teaching elders and other church professionals will conduct their lives in a manner that is faithful to the Gospel and consistent with their public ministry. Therefore, teaching elders and other church professionals will:

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;

2. Be honest and truthful in their relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants they make and honoring marriage vows;
4. Report to the chair of the Committee on Ministry (COM) any divorce actions in which they may become involved;
5. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
6. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of their office of ministry, their commitments to family and other primary relationships, and their need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
7. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
8. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech;
9. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will;
10. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise their ministry;
11. Report to the Executive Presbyter or to the chair of the COM any incidents where he or she is arrested; and
12. Report to the Executive Presbyter or chair of the COM any civil litigation in which the teaching elder or church professional becomes involved.

G.2002-- PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Teaching elders and other church professionals will conduct their ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a council or from colleagues in ministry. Therefore they will:

1. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of their office and positions held;

4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of their ministry;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission, unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
7. Recognize the limits of their own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
9. Be a faithful steward of, and fully account for funds and property entrusted to them;
10. If unmarried, refrain from dating any member of a congregation they may be serving, or any other person with whom the minister has a direct pastoral responsibility;
11. Observe limits set by the appropriate council or other governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family members, in compliance with the Presbytery's guidelines;
12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom he/she is accountable for ministry;
13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
14. Deal honorably with the record of their predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office, speak and act in ways that support the ministry of their successor;
15. Participate in the life of any former ministry setting only in compliance with the Presbytery's Policy on Concerning Departing Pastors" (Appendix D of this MANUAL);
16. Refrain from providing pastoral services for a congregation they previously served in compliance with this policy on departed pastors; and

17. Consult with the COM in the presbytery of their residence regarding their involvement in any ministry setting during their retirement.

G-3001--THE LARGER CHURCH

Teaching elders and other church professionals will participate as partners with others in the ministry and mission of the church universal. Therefore they will:

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;
3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

G.4001--VIOLATIONS AND SANCTIONS

The Presbytery considers that fidelity to these standards enhances the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Violations of these standards may be viewed as a breaking of ordination vows and subject to the disciplinary processes of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

G.5001--CANDIDATES AND INQUIRERS

The Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall make these standards available to its inquirers and candidates seeking ordination as teaching elders. It shall make clear that these standards apply to those under its supervision.

G.6001-- CONCLUSION AND RATIONALE

Central to the vocation of teaching elder is leadership of the people of God in a peculiarly Christian lifestyle which has at its core the embodiment of Jesus' words in John 15:12. "This

is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." These ethical standards are an attempt not to set legalistic limitations but rather to guide us all in showing the kind of love for each other that Christ has shown. So may all be encouraged to live in such a manner as to promote the health and growth of the Church, and to give glory to God in Jesus Christ.