

APPENDIX D

NEW CASTLE PRESBYTERY'S POLICY CONCERNING DEPARTING PASTORS AND THEIR FORMER PARISHONERS

D.1001--Introduction and Policy

The act of a pastor leaving service with a congregation means that the pastor must completely sever the pastoral relationship with that congregation. This does not mean that the ties of love and friendship must be broken. However, a departing pastor is ethically responsible to strengthen the ties between the new pastor and members of the congregation. The Book of Order, G-2.0905, provides a general policy for departing pastors which needs to be strictly observed.

New Castle Presbytery (THE PRESBYTERY), in accordance with the general provisions of G-2.0905, adopts the following policy. Exceptions to this policy may only be granted by its Committee on Ministers and Congregations (COMC).

1. Former pastors shall not conduct worship, preach, celebrate the sacraments of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, conduct weddings or funerals, or engage in any other form of pastoral care for the congregation recently served.
2. Congregational members are to be informed not to request such services from a former pastor, and a former pastor must decline any such requests.
3. The COMC has assumed responsibility for assisting both former and incumbent pastors during the time of transition. To this end, this policy will be supplied by the COMC to a departing pastor and she/he will be asked for a signed covenant of agreement.

D.2001--Guidelines

While friendship with the departing pastor will surely continue, the pastoral relationship must not. This is an important distinction. It marks a boundary that is essential to the well-being of the congregation as it moves forward under new pastoral leadership. Hence, such friendship must not impinge on any pastoral services which are the province of the new pastor, e.g., hospital visits, weddings, funerals, counseling, or upon any policies of the church under the new pastor's

leadership. It is understood that the recently departing pastor will not return to worship with a congregation that she/he has served without the permission of the COMC. The departing pastor must refrain from any activity which could be viewed as detrimental to the congregation just served. If these guidelines and the above policies are not observed, the COMC may intervene.

At departure of a pastor, acceptance of the ensuing restrictions may be eased if that pastor, before she/he leaves, makes it clear to the congregation what her/his day of departure is and what the congregation must expect when that day arrives. Oral and printed announcements of this date and of the church's policy should be provided to the congregation. These restrictions may be difficult for the congregation to adhere to, but members need to be made aware of the necessity for them. It will be up to the departing pastor to fully inform the congregation of the restrictions and of the rationale for them, and then to adhere strictly to them himself/herself.

The spouse of a departing pastor may continue to participate as a member of the congregation, supporting and encouraging the ministry of the new leadership, but she/he must exercise restraint and good judgment in this new role.

Departing pastors, when invited to give leadership in community events, should consult with the current pastor concerning the appropriateness of such a role.

If tensions develop between an incumbent pastor or the moderator and any former pastor or associate pastor of a congregation, or if the congregation involved does not observe and accept the restrictions of G-2.0905 and of the Presbytery, then the incumbent pastor or the session of such a church is encouraged to solicit the advice and counsel of the COMC.