

**Expectations and Priorities
for Pastors and Certified Christian Educators
of the Presbytery of Carlisle**

A Companion to the Ethics Policy

Adopted November 23, 1999

Amended June 25, 2002

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus....”

Colossians 3:17

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and certified Christian educators in the Presbytery of Carlisle, having been called to preach and teach and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, are to carry out their ministries under the Lordship of Christ, the authority of Scripture, and the guidance of the confessions and polity of the Presbyterian Church (USA). In the course of their daily work they shall seek to pattern their life and ministry after the example of Jesus, relying on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of all their endeavors.

The following document is intended to be of help in this regard by setting forth a number of practical guidelines for the conduct of ministry. It is hoped that these guidelines will evoke a vigorous, ongoing discussion of the issues and challenges before us, by both leaders and church members alike.

No set of guidelines can cover every possible issue or anticipate every question that may arise. Therefore, if these guidelines are silent on a given issue, it is the responsibility of the minister or certified Christian educator to return to the basics of Scripture, the polity and confessions of the church, and consultation with colleagues in ministry and other professionals to arrive at an acceptable way to proceed. This paper affirms *Life Together in the Community of Faith* (GA, 1998) and its scriptural guidelines (see *Life Together*, p.5), and builds upon it in ways that take into account specific circumstances in the Presbytery of Carlisle and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Professional Practices

In all professional matters ministers of the Word and Sacrament and certified Christian educators (herein referred to as CCE's) shall maintain practices that give glory to Christ; advance the mission of the Church; nurture and protect the welfare of church members, parishioners, clients, and the public; and challenge such persons in their endeavors to lead a Christian life. Their practice of ministry will include, but not be limited to, the following practices:

1. Ministers and CCE's shall accurately represent their professional qualification, education, training, and experience in all contacts with the church or the public. Personal Information Forms (PIF's), announcements of professional services, and other kinds of publicity are to be accurate, objective, and dignified. Ministers are themselves responsible for correcting any misrepresentation.
2. Ministers and CCE's shall use their knowledge, skill, experience, and professional relationships for the benefit of the people and the institutions they serve and not to secure unfair personal advantage.
3. Ministers shall limit their pastoral care to those methods and practices for which they are qualified, and shall seek consultation from, or make referrals to, other professionals such as physicians, psychotherapists, attorneys, accountants, and licensed counselors, when appropriate. Ministers with dual certification who provide professional pastoral counseling shall do so following the professional standards of the counseling and training discipline.

4. Ministers shall stand ready to render appropriate services to individuals and communities in crisis without regard to financial remuneration. While fees for the use of the church facilities are set by the session, honoraria or fees for the minister's services to non-members can be set by the minister or the session. Ministers are expected to offer their services to members of their own congregations without charge or honoraria except where the session has established honoraria for weddings or funerals, or when members voluntarily offer such honoraria.
5. All ministers and CCE's shall be honest, truthful, and trustworthy. They shall not violate confidences.
 - a) Ministers and CCE's may be confronted with conflicts between the obligation to maintain confidentiality and a legal or moral responsibility to disclose confidentially acquired knowledge of abuse of children or others, or of the commission of crimes, to appropriate secular authorities.
 - b) It is the minister's responsibility to determine whether or not the law requires reporting. The Pennsylvania Child Abuse Reporting Act now requires ministers to report child abuse under certain circumstances. CCE's are also required to report suspected child abuse under this act (23 Pa. C. S. paragraph 6311).
 - c) Ministers are encouraged to contact the stated clerk of the Presbytery of Carlisle to obtain current additional information when specific questions arise.
 - d) These conflicts (*see 5.a*) shall be resolved through informed, thoughtful consideration, with guidance through prayer, and with the advice of an attorney when necessary.
6. Ministers and CCE's shall give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations. In their planning and leadership of church events, they shall observe copyright protection of worship materials, computer software, music, audio and video tapes, and any other intellectual property protected by law.
7. Ministers and CCE's shall refrain from the disparagement or defamation of any person, particularly of colleagues and other professionals, but shall give honest evaluations and references when requested. In the case of requests for references, care shall be taken to use first-hand information in a balanced and fair manner, and to refrain from passing on gossip and innuendoes.
8. Ministers should not be the financial or legal agents, that is, executors of wills or holders of powers of attorney, for members of their congregation. They should avoid the appearance of financial impropriety such as fraud, conversion, undue influence, embezzlement, or theft. Ministers receiving donations for designated purposes are responsible for making sure that the donations are applied to their intended purpose. Ministers involved in stewardship solicitations shall avoid giving the appearance of making their pastoral care contingent upon the level of contributions from individuals.
9. Ministers and CCE's should seek to be exemplary in the management of personal finances and respect the resources of those they are called to serve. Ministers and CCE's shall not use church funds, accounts, and/or property for personal or private advantage. Adequate accounting shall be made for any funds administered by ministers or CCE's. Ministers and CCE's shall avoid being signatories for any church related accounts, legal documents, or contracts unless specifically authorized by the session and/or trustees. All requests by ministers or CCE's for reimbursement from church funds shall be accompanied by receipts or other appropriate documentation. All ministers and CCE's should exercise prudence in personal financial matters, including care in assuming debt and responsible payment of any debts assumed, and prompt payment of applicable taxes.
10. Ministers and CCE's shall maintain professional competency throughout their careers. This shall be aided through a variety of continuing education, professional reading, and other educational activities.

As spiritual leaders, ministers and CCE's shall maintain personal spiritual disciplines of scripture reading, prayer, and regular participation in worship.

Responsibility Toward God, Self, and Others

Responsibility Toward God: Spiritual Life

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and CCE's bear primary responsibility for seeking the face of God.

1. Recognizing that the ongoing spiritual life of any individual is a matter of personal responsibility, ministers and CCE's shall actively develop, pursue, and seek to maintain a nourishing spiritual discipline.
2. The spiritual life of ministers and CCE's shall be grounded in worship, personal devotion, continuing education, and study leave.

Responsibility Toward the Self: Personal Life

The minister of the Word and Sacrament and CCE's have the same rights, needs, and gifts as all God's children: privacy, relationships, freedom, rest, meaningful work, and recreation. A proper balance of responsible self-care frees the minister or CCE to function effectively and to invest purposefully in the joys and burdens of their vocation.

1. Ministers and CCE's shall work toward a balance between time at work (no more than an average 45-55 hours per week), personal time, and time with family and friends, recognizing the need for healthy interpersonal relationships which include intimacy, interdependence, and affirmation.
2. Ministers and CCE's shall plan for days of respite, continuing education for renewal, and vacations for enjoyment. When appropriate, the minister or CCE shall also seek personal counseling and spiritual direction.
3. Health for all ministers and CCE's includes an awareness of limitations, a sense of appropriate diet and physical exercise, and the ability to recognize problems and seek therapeutic help and/or spiritual guidance when necessary. Circumstances in which assistance should be sought include, but not be limited to, family problems, alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual dysfunction, compulsive behaviors, and burnout.
4. While the personal and professional lives of ministers and CCE's are separable to some extent, both should be consistent with Christian ethics. Unchristian behavior can be used to discredit the cause of Christ and the integrity of the church and its ministry.

Responsibility Toward Those We Serve and Toward Colleagues

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and CCE's shall respect the integrity and protect the welfare of persons or groups with whom they are working by maintaining high professional standards.

Pastoral Relationships

1. Ministers and CCE's shall protect the interests of those they serve and empower them for ministry. They shall be aware of the influential and powerful position of trust and dependency bestowed upon

them and recognize that the religious/spiritual convictions of individuals have powerful emotional and volitional significance.

2. Given the nature of this trust, dependency, and power, any sexual interaction between a minister or CCE and person whom they serve (other than their own spouse) is sexual misconduct. Colleagues have the responsibility to report sexual misconduct to the stated clerk of presbytery as set forth in the Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Presbytery of Carlisle.
3. Ministers and CCE's are encouraged to be aware of the effect that personal friendships can have within the congregation or work-place and on those friends. Unmarried ministers or CCE's who choose to date are encouraged to seek such relationships outside the congregation/work place. Ministers and CCE's should be equally accessible to the entire faith community which they serve.
4. Ministers and CCE's shall seek to embody the hospitality and grace of the divine relationship and shall not refuse pastoral care to anyone on the basis of age, race, gender, creed, national origin, disability, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation.

Collegial Relationships

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament regularly associate with their ecclesiastical colleagues and with colleagues in related professions - health care, social services, legal services, and the like. This includes persons in the Presbyterian Church, those in other faith groups, and others without any faith-group connection. CCE's also associate regularly with clergy, colleagues in educational ministry, and related professions both within the Presbyterian Church and other faith groups.

1. In staff relationships, the object is to work in a spirit of cooperation to build up the whole church. To this end, members of a staff must seek to understand one another, accepting one another as human beings, respecting their various competencies, and respecting others' areas of responsibility. Suggestions to staff colleagues should be constructive, differences of opinion tolerated, and misunderstandings resolved and forgiven. Differences in style of operation should be accommodated as much as possible to allow for the effective functioning of the organization. A staff member should not aspire to succeed to any other person's position. Innuendo and gossip shall be avoided. A staff member should first speak openly and frankly about differences and problems directly with the person with whom there are differences, and should not gossip about those matters with others not directly involved. Loyalty among members of a staff builds a positive working climate. If a person working on a staff feels unable to manage effective relationships with other staff members, advice and counsel may be sought from the Committee on Ministry or the executive presbyter.
2. The minister's first responsibility is to his/her own parishioners. Ordinarily, a minister should not make a formal pastoral visit with someone who is a member of another church unless such a call is initiated by the parishioner, family members, friends, or their pastor. Care shall be taken by the calling pastor to avoid proselytizing members of other churches. Respect shall be accorded the pastoral ministry already being given by pastors of other congregations, and a reasonable effort will be made to advise the person's pastor of such a contact
3. When a minister is called upon to officiate at a wedding or funeral for families who are not members of the minister's own congregation, the minister shall find out whether they are members of another church. If they are, the minister shall urge them to seek these services from their own pastor. If this effort fails, the minister shall make a reasonable effort to contact the pastoral colleague to explain the circumstances. For Baptism, see the Book of Order (W-2.3011)

4. When the relationship between minister and congregation is dissolved, the minister must announce publicly that she/he will no longer be available for pastoral services, calling attention to the fact that there will be another minister or interim minister to whom the people should give their support, and stating clearly that the departing minister should not be called upon for pastoral services or ceremonies except at the invitation of the current pastor and/or session.
5. The purpose of an interim pastor is to prepare a congregation for the arrival of a new pastor soon to be called. To this end, an interim pastor shall not encourage personal loyalties but rather loyalties to the office of pastor, and most of all, loyalty to Christ and the Church. According to the *Book of Order*, an interim pastor cannot be a candidate for the installed pastoral position which he or she is serving in an interim capacity.
6.
 - a) When a pastor is called to another position or retires, the departing pastor shall not influence the selection process for a successor or the practices of the newly called pastor, either directly or indirectly, by spoken or written word.
 - b) A courtesy visit to the new pastor is appropriate, but frequent visits to one's former parish should be avoided, and discretion should be exercised with any visits to former parishioners. The former pastor should act and speak always in ways that reflect support for the ministry of the new pastor, especially if the former pastor maintains friendships with members of his/her former congregation. Current installed or interim pastors shall accord the same respect to former pastors and their families, and speak of their ministries in ways that reflect public support and appreciation for their legacy as former servants of that particular congregation.
 - c) Former pastors and associate pastors are encouraged not to attend meetings or worship at the former parish, especially during the first two years of retirement or departure except for those occasions when specifically invited by the moderator of the session or, in case of the inability to contact the moderator, the clerk of session (G-14.0606).
 - d) Ministers who are elected as pastor emeritus shall recognize this honorary title that carries no job responsibilities or special privileges unless expressly stated by the session, in consultation with the pastor, and approved by the Presbytery of Carlisle.
7. The minister successor also has a responsibility to be courteous and respectful to a predecessor. The new pastor shall act graciously in inviting a former pastor to care for parishioners in certain instances. A wise new pastor knows that a gracious response to these situations will increase his or her acceptance by the people far more quickly than will resistance or standing up for one's rights as the new pastor.
8. Ministers serving calls beyond the parish shall not accept requests for officiating at weddings, funerals, or baptisms from members of Presbyterian congregations unless invited by the pastor of the church involved, or by the session when there is no pastor.
9. Ordinarily, non-parish ministers and spiritual directors shall not advise members of churches regarding problems in their churches, but should encourage troubled members to seek out their own pastors. This matter of advice does not apply to non-parish ministers serving on the Committee on Ministry, Presbytery staff, or regional representatives for the Board of Pensions advising on Board of Pensions issues. Parish associates, pastoral counselors, and spiritual directors should exercise caution with regard to communications from disaffected or spiritually needy parishioners.