

Pastoral Relationships in the Presbytery of Carlisle

PURPOSE: Under the present *Book of Order*, presbyteries have the opportunity to define and describe the relationships between Ministers of Word and Sacrament and congregations. The Commission on Ministry of the Presbytery of Carlisle recognizes both Installed and Temporary Pastoral Relationships, the nature of which are described as follows, along with the specifics as to how each relationship is constituted.

INSTALLED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Pastor
- Co-Pastor
- Associate Pastor
- Designated Pastor

All installed pastoral relationships require three partners: the Minister of Word and Sacrament being called, the congregation extending the call, and the presbytery approving the call.

Generally, an installed pastoral relationship is for an indefinite term and is filled through a full and open search process with a properly constituted Pastor Nominating Committee elected by the congregation. After the Commission on Ministry approves the prospective candidate pastor, the Commission authorizes the Session of the church to call a Congregational Meeting for the purpose of voting on the call of the pastor.

While an installed pastoral relationship is customarily for an indefinite term, there are occasions where it is advisable for a pastoral relationship to be designated for a term, the length of which is determined by action of the Commission on Ministry in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call. All conditions for a full call are required in such instances—i.e. a full and open search by a duly elected pastor nominating committee, examination by and concurrence of the Commission on Ministry, and an affirmative congregational vote. The only difference between such a call being for a designated period is that all parties agree to the time limitation in question. After the time limitation has been met, the Session of the church may petition the

Commission on Ministry for additional designated time. Or, should the congregation so desire and vote affirmatively, a pastor in a designated position may be called with Commission on Ministry approval to an indefinite term as installed pastor.

Ordinarily, a Minister of Word and Sacrament in a position as Associate Pastor is not eligible to become the pastor in the church in which he or she is serving as Associate Pastor. **(G-2.0504a)**. Any action to move an Associate Pastor to become the installed pastor must be achieved as outlined in the *Book of Order* (G 2.0504c) and the Presbytery of Carlisle Policy on Making Exceptions in Calling a Pastor (VI-DPR-4-5), Carlisle Presbytery Leadership Handbook.

TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

The *Book of Order* permits the presbytery to establish temporary pastoral relationships when a congregation is without called and installed pastoral leadership. Any temporary pastoral relationship shall be set forth in a Covenant of Agreement between the temporary pastor and the Session of the church where the pastor will be serving. The Commission on Ministry shall vote to approve or not approve any temporary pastoral relationship arranged by a Session. An individual in a temporary pastoral leadership relationship may be a teaching elder or a commissioned ruling elder. When the congregation is without called and installed pastoral leadership, the Session, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, takes the initiative to secure temporary pastoral leadership. In a temporary pastoral relationship, no formal call is issued and no formal installation takes place. (G-2.0504b)

The *Book of Order* leaves it to presbyteries to determine titles and terms of service for temporary pastoral relationships. (G-2.0504b) The Presbytery of Carlisle recognizes that there are varying circumstances when a church is in need of temporary pastoral leadership and that not all temporary pastoral relationships are alike. To respond to these various needs, the Presbytery has established the following descriptions of temporary pastoral relationships. These may be applied to both Pastor and Associate Pastor relationships.

Temporary Pastor: Interim/Transitional

An Interim/Transitional Pastor is the preferable option when a church would benefit from specialized leadership to navigate the transition between fully installed pastors. Interim/Transitional Pastors bring skills to work with the dynamics of congregations in transition, including feelings of grief, loss, and, sometimes, relief or anger. Interim/Transitional pastors help Sessions provide for continuity of essential ministries, and may assist the session in assessing new directions due to changes in ministry context or congregational realities. The interim/transitional pastor is instrumental in helping the congregation prepare to welcome the leadership of a new installed pastor. Ordinarily, an interim/transitional pastor shall have successfully completed training in *Transitional Skills for Transformational Ministry*. In some cases, a church can be just as effectively served by a Minister of Word and Sacrament or by a ruling elder commissioned to particular pastoral service (G-2.10) who does not bring specialized training in Transitional Ministry.

Temporary Pastor: Supply

Some congregations in need of pastoral leadership are unable to call a full-time pastor to an indefinite term, but do wish to continue as a congregation. In such cases, a part-time Supply Pastor (formerly known as Stated Supply) may be placed in a congregation to serve for an unspecified amount of time. In other cases, Sessions may wish to employ an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in a position defined for a particular ministry area(s). Such positions (often known as Parish Associate positions) are not intended to lead to a permanent pastoral relationship, but fill a need for specific pastoral leadership, temporarily. Those serving in Supply Pastor positions may include Ministers of Word and Sacrament or ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service (G-2.10). All Temporary Pastors serve in a position defined by a Covenant of Agreement between Session and Pastor, and approved by the Commission on Ministry, for a term up to twelve months, renewable annually. Temporary Pastors help the

Session provide for continuity in essential ministries, assess where changes are needed, and explore models for future pastoral leadership.

NOTE: When a ruling elder is commissioned as a Temporary Pastor or Supply Pastor, the plan included in the Carlisle Presbytery Leadership Handbook (VI- CRE-1, 2) entitled “Commissioned Ruling Elder Plan for the Presbytery of Carlisle” shall be followed.

Presbytery of Carlisle Process for Requesting Exceptions in Calling a Pastor

Unless the presbytery determines that its mission strategy permits it, a Minister of Word and Sacrament currently called as an Associate Pastor is not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor. Likewise, a Minister of Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor or Associate Pastor of the congregation, unless the presbytery determines its mission strategy permits it. ***Such relationships shall be established by a three-fourths vote of the members of the presbytery present and voting, according to the following process:***

1. Representatives of the church (Pastor Nominating Committee, Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, Session or Transition Team) request, in writing, that the Commission on Ministry consider asking the presbytery to vote on an exception, with rationale based upon the mission strategy of the presbytery. A COM team works with the church to shape the recommendation and rationale, in light of the *Book of Order* criteria. As part of this work, the COM team meets with the candidate and transition team; a statement of faith and spiritual autobiography are provided. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss their mutual sense of call. When the report, rationale, and fit interview have been completed, the team informs the chair of COM that the church wishes time on the COM’s docket.
2. Representatives of the PNC, APNC, Session, or Transition Team (as applicable) meet with the Commission on Ministry to present their request and rationale. After discussion and discernment, the Commission on Ministry acts on a recommendation with regard to the request for exception. (positive, negative, neutral).

3. The Commission on Ministry refers the request for exception to the presbytery at a stated meeting. At its meeting, in order that the presbytery may consider the request for exception:
 - The church's written report, and COM's recommendation, with rationale, are posted with meeting materials.
 - The Moderator reads aloud the Book of Order guidance concerning exceptions G-2.0504c, and calls upon representatives of the PNC, APNC, Session, or Transition Team to state their request in the form a motion.
 - Representatives of the entity making the request for exception and the Commission on Ministry are given opportunity to speak to the motion, summarizing their rationale.
 - Presbyters are given opportunity to ask questions and debate the motion.
 - In order for the exception to be granted, the Presbytery must vote to approve the exception and establish the pastoral relationship by an affirmative vote of three fourths of the members of the presbytery present and voting. (G-2.0504c)
4. After the affirmative vote of the presbytery, the way is clear for the call process to proceed, in accordance with the *Book of Order* and the policies of the Commission on Ministry.

Pastor Emeritus or Pastor Emerita

When a Minister of Word and Sacrament retires, and the congregation is moved by affection and gratitude to continue an association in an honorary relationship, it may, at a regularly called congregational meeting, elect him or her as Pastor Emeritus or Emerita, with or without honorarium, but with no pastoral authority or duty. This action shall be taken only after approval by the Commission on Ministry concerning the wisdom of this relationship. This action may take effect immediately following a two-year period of separation or at any time thereafter.

Approved by the Commission on Ministry, October 2021

APPENDIX A

**Chart of Pastoral Relationships in the Presbytery of Carlisle
Pastor, Co-Pastor, Associate**

PASTOR/ ASSOCIATE/ CO-PASTOR	DESIGNATED PASTOR	TEMPORARY PASTOR: INTERIM/ TRANSITIONAL	TEMPORARY PASTOR: SUPPLY
<i>Called/Installed</i>	<i>Called/Installed</i>	<i>Provides pastoral leadership with or without specialized training that helps guide church through time of transition</i>	<i>Church is not seeking a full-time installed pastor. Provides continuity for the essential ministries of the church.</i>
PNC elected by congregation	PNC elected by congregation	Chosen by Session with Presbytery approval through COM	Chosen by Session with Presbytery approval through COM
Open search process	Open search process	Search process may be local or denomination-wide	Search process probably limited
Called by congregation	Called by congregation for limited term; renewable	Hired by Session/ Congregation not involved	Hired by Session/ Congregation not involved
Terms of Call	Terms of Call	Covenant of Agreement outlining expected duties and financial terms of call	Covenant of Agreement outlining expected duties and financial terms of call
Approved by COM	Approved by COM	Approved by COM	Approved by COM
Permanent position	After completion of specified term, can be called as permanent pastor	Ordinarily not eligible to be called as next installed pastor, associate pastor or designated pastor	Ordinarily not eligible to be called as next installed pastor, associate pastor or designated pastor

Original chart inspiration came from Genesee Valley Presbytery