

Called Minister Leaving
Process Outline

This process applies to called, installed pastors leaving their church. Pastors hired by contract with the Session (Interim or Stated Supply pastors) use the Pastoral Transition 1 Minister Leaving Temporary process ([Pastoral Transition 1 Temporary Minister Leaving Process \(1\).docx - Google Docs](#))

Who is Responsible	Action to be Taken
Phase 1: Announcing the Departure	
Pastor	1. The Pastor notifies the General Presbyter and the Committee on Ministry (COM) Chairs/Co-Chairs of his/her intention to leave the congregation to accept a new call or to retire.
COM Chair/Co-Chairs	a. The COM Chairs/Co-Chairs will notify the head of the COM Transition Team and the head of the Congregational Relations Team .
COM Transition Team head	b. The Transition Team head will appoint a Transition Representative for the church.
COM Pastoral Relations Team head	c. The Congregational Relations Team head will be responsible for appointing a moderator for the church after the Pastor's departure. d. The Congregational Relations Team will ensure a turn over meeting takes place to fully inform the Transitions Representative of all relevant information that impacts the transition process.
Pastor Session General Presbyter Transition Rep	2. The Pastor requests a special Session meeting at which the GP and the Transition Rep meet with the Pastor and the Session . At this meeting, the Pastor makes the request to have the relationship with the church dissolved. After any joint discussion, the Pastor is excused from the meeting. The GP or Transitions Rep moderates the balance of the meeting. The Session and COM members discuss next steps and set the date for a congregational meeting.
Pastor	3. The Pastor sends a letter to the congregation notifying them of the pending dissolution and informing them that the congregational meeting will be held
Pastor	4. The Pastor should become familiar with the Presbytery's policy on former Pastors. a. Appx C – Policy and Agreement for Pastors and Churches Following the Conclusion of a Pastoral Relationship

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	5. The Pastor fills out an information form and sends it to the <u>Presbytery office</u> a. Link to Minister Leaving Data Form
Session	6. The Session will call a special congregational meeting to vote on the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. The Session will share the Presbytery's policy on former pastors (Appx C) and publish the policy in the church's bulletin and newsletter. a. Appx C – Policy and Agreement for Pastors and Churches Following the Conclusion of a Pastoral Relationship
Pastoral Relations Team Head	7. The Congregational Relations Team will identify and appoint an appropriately trained moderator for the congregational meeting.
Session	8. If the church has not done an assessment in the previous three years, the session will initiate an assessment, working with the Transition Rep. Timing on this step is flexible; but it must be completed, and the response approved by COM, before the search for a long-term pastor is started. It is usually in the best interest of the church to begin as soon as it is practical. Link to Assessment Process
Phase 2: Congregational Meeting	
Pastor	1. The Pastor requests that the congregation dissolve the pastoral relationship. The Pastor is then excused.
Moderator	2. The Moderator will conduct the meeting (See Phase 1, paragraph 7)
Congregation	3. The Congregation votes. If deemed appropriate, a written ballot may be used instead of voice vote.
Transition Rep	4. The Transition Rep is introduced to the congregation. The Transition Rep will work with the congregation through the period of dissolution, will work with the PNC through the interim search/search process, and will remain with the congregation until the end of first year review for the new/interim Pastor.
Pastor Moderator Session	5. After the meeting concludes, the Pastor, the Session, and the Moderator complete and sign the appropriate forms and submit them to the Presbytery. a. Appx B1 – Congregational Meeting Agenda for Dissolution of Pastoral Relations b. Appx B2-Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship c. Appx B3-Minister Being Dismissed (when a minister is leaving HRP and going to a new Presbytery)

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Phase 3: Formalizing the Departure	
COM Pastoral Relations Team head	1. COM acts on behalf of the Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship. If not already done, a moderator is appointed for the church.
Pastoral Relations Team Transition Rep Pastor	2. The Transitions Team arranges and conducts an exit interview with the Pastor (Appx D1). The Presbytery's policy on former pastors will be reviewed during the interview, and if not already completed, the Pastor will complete and sign the form. The Transition Rep will submit a report of the interview (Appx D3). Appx D1 – Exit Interview with Pastor Appx D3 – Report on Exit Interview
Transition Rep Pastoral Relations Session	3. After the Pastor has departed, the Transition Rep will arrange and conduct an exit interview with the Session (Appx D2, report Appx D3) following the same procedure as with the Pastor. Appx D2 – Exit Interview with Session
Phase 4: Next Steps	
Transition Rep	1. The Transition Rep will share the presbytery's Pulpit Supply list with the Session . Pulpit Supply Policy ii. Pulpit Supply List
Session General Presbyter	2. The Session may consider inviting the GP to preach and lead worship on the Sunday following the Pastor's departure or as soon afterwards as can be arranged.
Session	3. The Session is responsible for pulpit supply.
Session Transition Rep	4. The Session will meet with the Transition Rep to discuss the next steps for the church. a. The church will need to complete an assessment process unless one has been completed within the last three years. If significant changes have taken place in the church since the last assessment, it may be appropriate to conduct a new assessment even if the old one is within that time period. i. The assessment process consists of three parts: a survey or focus group; the interpretation of the results; and a document prepared by the church describing their strengths, challenges, and future direction.

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	ii. That document must be reviewed and approved by selected members of COM before the church may start the search for a long-term pastor. (<i>Link to Assessment Process</i> . b. The Session will determine the Pastoral Model the church will pursue going forward. Link to Pastoral Models chart Appx A1
Session	5. A Search Committee appropriate to the chosen pastoral model is elected. The committee may be elected before the Pastor leaves to prepare written materials and begin the search process. <i>No on-site face-to-face meetings may occur until the Pastor has left.</i> Appx A1 Pastoral Models chart Appx H – Composition of PNC/PSC
For Search Committee Procedures, See (Link to Pastoral Transition 2 Search Process)	

Approved by COM January 10, 2023