

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY**

**MANUAL OF**

**ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS**

# Administrative Manual of the Presbytery of West Jersey

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Bylaws	3
Standing Rules	10
General Policies:	
Policy on Personal Boundaries and Sexual Misconduct	28
Child and Youth Protection Policy	36
Attendance Policy	55
Gracious Dismissal Policy	59
Personnel Policy	86
Committee Policies and Procedures:	
Council:	
Responsibilities and duties	68
Commission on Ministry:	
Responsibilities and duties	69
Ethics Policy	71
Compensation Policy	74
Finance Committee:	
Responsibilities and duties	84

**PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY**  
**BYLAWS**

ADOPTED January 20, 2015

(Includes Amendments through June 20, 2017)

**100 MISSION**

110           The mission of the Presbytery of West Jersey is to nurture the Christian faith, life and common witness of our congregations and pastors. Open to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we seek fresh ways to serve and grow; praying that in and through us God will make all things new.

**200 RELATION TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

210           The Presbytery of West Jersey is a member council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

220           This council shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**300 MEETINGS**

310           Meetings shall be held in accordance with the Book of Order (G-3.0304) and the Standing Rules.

320 Meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer. (G-3.0105)

## **400 MEMBERSHIP AND ROLL**

### **410 Membership**

- 411 All teaching elders shall be enrolled by Presbytery in accordance with the Book of Order. The categories of membership shall be: Engaged in a validated ministry; Member-at-large; Honorably Retired (G-2.0503.) Determination of classification shall be made by Presbytery upon recommendation of the Committee or commission on Ministry in consultation with the Stated Clerk.
- 412 Ruling elder commissioners elected by each Session are members and have the same rights as teaching elder members. Each church shall normally elect its commissioners for a term of at least one year and communicate the name(s) with address(es) to the Stated Clerk. When electing commissioners, churches should take into consideration the need for representation of racial/ethnic minorities, women, and varying age groups.
- 413 Each ruling elder elected Moderator, Moderator-Elect, an officer, a chairperson of a standing committee, or a member of the Council of Presbytery shall be enrolled as a member of the Presbytery for the term of office, whether or not commissioned by his or her Session. All such ruling elder members shall be counted within the parity report of the Stated Clerk.

- 414 Each past ruling elder moderator and ruling elder Stated Clerk shall be enrolled as a member of the Presbytery, whether or not commissioned by his or her Session. Enrollment shall continue as long as the ruling elder is a member of a constituent church of the Presbytery and shall be counted within the parity report of the Stated Clerk.
- 415 Commissioned ruling elders shall be enrolled as members of Presbytery for the term of their service and shall be counted as ruling elder commissioners within the parity report of the Stated Clerk.
- 416 Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators serving under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all Presbytery meetings and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

## **500 PRESBYTERY OFFICERS**

- 510 The ecclesiastical officers shall be: The Moderator, the Moderator-Elect, and the Stated Clerk.
- 520 The corporate officers shall be: the President of the Board of Trustees, the Stated Clerk, and the Executive Presbyter.

## **600 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

610 The membership of the Presbytery Council shall constitute the membership of the Board of Trustees of the Corporation.

## **700 ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

710 The Administrative Staff shall be the Executive Presbyter.

## **800 PRESBYTERY COUNCIL**

810 There shall be a Presbytery Council for the coordination of mission and program.

## **900 PRESBYTERY COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

910 The Presbytery shall organize itself for its work through committees and commissions required by the Book of Order, and other committees, task forces and commissions.

920 All committees, task forces and commissions shall be constituted in accordance with the Book of Order and the Standing Rules and policies of Presbytery.

930 Committees and Commissions required by the Book of Order

931 Permanent Judicial Commission

932 Representation

940 Other Standing Committees and Commissions

941 Ministry

942 Preparation for Ministry

943 Mission

944 Finance

945 Personnel

946 Nominating

950 Task Forces

960 Other Organizations

961 Presbyterian Women

970 Committee and Commission Membership and Duties shall be governed by the Standing Rules of the Presbytery of West Jersey.



## **1000 AMENDMENTS**

1010 These Bylaws shall govern the work of the Presbytery of West Jersey and may be amended only through the following procedure.

1011 Proposed amendments may be submitted only by Presbytery members as defined in #410. Written notification and the proposed new language for the Bylaws must be received by the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior to the meeting of Presbytery at which the amendment is to be received as a first reading.

1012 The Stated Clerk shall include the proposed amendment to the Bylaws in the written materials sent to each commissioner prior to the Presbytery meetings at which the amendment is to be received for first reading and for final vote.

1013 Final vote on the proposed amendment shall be at the next stated meeting after the first reading.

1014 A two-thirds majority of all votes cast is required for adoption.

## **1100 STANDING RULES**

1110 The Presbytery shall adopt a set of Standing Rules which shall govern the organization of its permanent committees and other organizational structures as may be deemed necessary.

1120 The Standing Rules shall be adopted by a majority vote.

1130 The Standing Rules shall be open to amendment or suspension at any Stated Meeting of Presbytery by a two-thirds majority of all votes cast.

## **1200 ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL**

The Stated Clerk will maintain an Administrative Manual which will contain all policies and duties of Committees, Commissions, and Task Forces approved by the Presbytery.

**PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY**

**STANDING RULES**

**Adopted June 20, 2017**

**Amended through September 19, 2017**

**100 GENERAL RULES**

110 The most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be observed as the rules governing the parliamentary procedures of West Jersey Presbytery except when it is in contradiction to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Presbytery may also make use of processes of discernment in its deliberations prior to a vote as agreed upon by the body (G-3.0105).

**200 MEETINGS**

210 Stated Meetings

211 Stated Meetings of Presbytery, also known as gatherings, shall normally be the third Tuesday of January, March, May, June, September and November. The times normally scheduled for the meetings are as follows:

January -	Evening beginning at 7:00 p.m.
March -	4:00 - 9:00 p.m.
May -	Evening beginning at 7:00 p.m.
June -	Evening beginning at 7:00 p.m.
September -	Evening beginning at 7:00 p.m.
November -	4:00 - 9:00 p.m.

The format of all Stated Meetings will include worship and business which shall rightfully come to the Presbytery and may include informational reports and times of fellowship. The March and November meetings may include a dinner.

212 The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for securing suitable locations for the meetings.

213 Worship shall be the responsibility of the Presbytery leadership in consultation with the pastor or moderator of session of the host church. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least twice a year. The designation of the offerings received during the worship shall be suggested by the Council and approved by the Presbytery. The June worship service shall include the installation of the Moderator and the Moderator-Elect.

214 The agenda once adopted shall be followed during the meeting.

220 Special Meetings

221 Special Meetings shall be called with seven-days advance notice at the request of three teaching elders and 3 ruling elders from different churches. The notification will be via email.

**300 MEMBERSHIP, ROLL AND QUORUM**

310 Membership

311 Categories of membership shall be per the Book of Order and the Bylaws.

312 Responsibilities shall be as stated in the Presbytery's Attendance Policy found in the Administrative Manual.

320 Roll

321 The roll at meetings shall be compiled by registration.

322 All members as defined in the Bylaws must register in order to be counted present.

330 Quorum

- 331 The quorum for stated meetings is ten ministers, also known as teaching elders, who are members of the presbytery and ten ruling elders from ten different congregations of the presbytery.
- 332 The quorum for special meetings is three ministers, also known as teaching elders, who are members of the presbytery and three ruling elders from three different congregations of the presbytery.

**400 PRESBYTERY OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES**

410 Election

- 411 The Moderator-Elect, who shall be elected and installed by the presbytery for a term of two years, shall begin that term of office on July 1 and become moderator the following July 1. The first name for the office shall be presented by the Nominating Committee.
- 412 The Stated Clerk shall normally be elected for a three year term. The Stated Clerk may be elected for additional terms. The Personnel Committee shall nominate one person for the position. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- 413 When more than one candidate is nominated for an office, election shall be by ballot.
- 414 In case of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Moderator-Elect will immediately assume the office of Moderator and shall be formally installed at the next Stated Meeting of Presbytery. At that same meeting, or no later than the following Stated Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present the name of a nominee to fill the office of Moderator- Elect.

- 415 In case of a vacancy in the office of Moderator-Elect, the Nominating committee shall present the name of a nominee to fill the office of Moderator-Elector at the Stated Meeting of Presbytery at which the resignation of the Moderator-Elect is approved.
- 416 A vacancy in the office of Stated Clerk shall be filled by elections in which the Personnel Committee makes the first nomination. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- 417 In case of a vacancy in the office of Stated Clerk, the Council shall appoint a temporary Stated Clerk, until such time as a new Stated Clerk can be elected by the Presbytery in accordance with section 415.
- 
- 420 The Moderator shall:
- 421 Preside at meetings of Presbytery.
- 422 After consultation with the Stated Clerk, Executive Presbyter, and Chair of the Commission on Ministry appoint all members of Investigating Committees, which shall be composed of no more than five but no less than three members of Presbytery, and report to the Presbytery when such an action has been taken.
- 423 Appoint all administrative commissions unless the Presbytery instructs otherwise.
- 424 Preside at services of ordination and installation and chair the commissions for these events.
- 425 Preside at Presbytery Council in the absence of the Executive Presbyter.
- 426 Serve as a voting member of Presbytery Council

430 The Moderator-Elect shall:

431 Serve as a voting member of Presbytery Council.

-

432 Preside at Presbytery meetings and services of ordination and installation in the Moderator's absence and chair the commissions for these events.

440 The Stated Clerk shall:

441 Perform the duties of the office in accordance with the Book of Order and the position description as approved by the presbytery.

442 Serve as a voting member of Presbytery Council.

443 Present, at the March meeting of the Presbytery, the annual statistical report to the General Assembly and to the Synod.

444 Annually, in the first week of January, ascertain the number of resident teaching elder members of the Presbytery, the number of ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service, the number of ruling elder members of Presbytery, and the number of ruling elders which the churches are entitled to send as commissioners to Presbytery meetings and recommend to Presbytery at its January meeting a method for redressing the imbalance, if any. The new parity formula shall take effect at the conclusion of the January Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

445 Serve as secretary/treasurer of the Presbytery Council and Board of Trustees.

446 Maintain the Presbytery's Administrative Manual, which shall contain all policies and duties of commissions, committees, and task forces approved by the Presbytery.

460 Authorized Signatories

461 The Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk and a member of the Finance Committee who shall be designated by the Committee are authorized as signatories to all Presbytery operating checking accounts.

**500 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

510 Membership and Officers

511 The Board shall be the Presbytery Council

512 The President ~~and~~ the Vice-President of the Trustees shall be elected from the voting members of the Council. The election shall normally take place at a meeting of the Board of Trustees held in conjunction with the June meeting of the Presbytery Council.

513 The President, or his or her designee, shall report the status of all Trustee-held funds, property and investments to Presbytery annually.

514 The secretary/treasurer of the corporation shall be the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The secretary shall keep the minutes of meetings, carry on the correspondence and have charge of the records of the Board. These records shall be separate from those of the Council.

**600 EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER**

610 Election of the Executive Presbyter (EP)

611 When the office of the Executive Presbyter is vacant the Personnel Committee shall notify the Council, who, working with the Synod, will function as an Interim Executive Presbyter Nominating Committee to nominate an Interim Executive



Presbyter. The Council shall report its recommendation to the Presbytery for the Presbytery's vote.

- 612 The Presbytery shall elect an Executive Presbyter Nominating Committee (EPNC) to recommend a candidate for the position of EP. The EPNC shall consist of three teaching elders who are members of the presbytery and three ruling elder commissioners or members of the presbytery from three different congregations of the presbytery. The Nominating Committee shall make the first six nominations. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the presbytery at the time of the election.
- 613 The work of the EPNC to recommend a candidate shall be governed by the provisions of the Book of Order and shall take place in consultation with the Synod. The Council shall provide leadership for the mission study.
- 613 The EPNC shall consult with the Presbytery Personnel Committee in setting a compensation package for the Executive Presbyter position.
- 614 When the EPNC has selected a candidate for the position, it shall report to the Presbytery its recommendation. Election shall take place at a stated meeting of presbytery.
- 615 The vote for election of the Executive Presbyter shall be by written ballot. A two-thirds majority of all votes cast is necessary for election.

620 Duties of the Executive Presbyter

The position description of the EP shall be approved by the Presbytery and included in the Administrative Manual of the Presbytery.

710 The Council shall consist of 10 members as follows:

The Executive Presbyter

The Moderator

The Moderator-Elect

The Stated Clerk

The immediate past Moderator

2-Past Moderators of Presbytery nominated by the Nominating Committee

3 Members at Large nominated by the Nominating Committee

711 The membership of Council shall be as evenly divided between teaching and ruling elders as possible. When Committee Chairs are present at Council they shall have voice but no vote.

712 The purpose of the Council of Presbytery is “to help congregations and the church as a whole to be more faithful participants in the mission of Christ.” (G-3.0101) by: encouraging and holding accountable the commissions, committees and task forces of the presbytery in their work of serving Jesus Christ and Christ’s church; coordinating and administering the activities of presbytery as directed in the by-laws; and prayerfully seeking God’s future for the presbytery through corporate discussion, visioning, discernment and planning.

713 The Council shall nominate annually the chairpersons of all standing committees and commissions.

714 The Council shall consider, at its November meeting, an administrative budget for the following calendar year and recommend to Presbytery at its November meeting an equitable apportionment among the churches to fund the administrative budget.

715 Present nominations at the Stated Meeting of Presbytery in June of individuals willing to serve on the Nominating Committee.

716 The Council shall report in writing to each Stated Meeting of Presbytery every item of business transacted by it.

**800 PRESBYTERY COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**

810 Standing Commissions/Committees required by the Book of Order

811 Permanent Judicial Commission

812 Committee on Representation

820 Other Standing Commissions/Committees

821 Committee on Preparation for Ministry

822 Commission on Ministry

823 Mission Committee

824 Finance Committee

825 Personnel Committee

826 Nominating Committee

830 Election and General Rules of Standing Commissions and Committees

831 All members of standing commissions and committees shall be elected by Presbytery.

- 832 The Presbytery Nominating Committee, also functioning as the Committee on Representation, shall present nominees for all Presbytery standing commissions and committees, except the Nominating Committee. Additional nominations may be made from the floor and shall have prior consent of the nominees. The Nominating Committee shall demonstrate its commitment to the principles of participation and inclusiveness set forth in the Book of Order (F-1.0403.)
- 833 Commissions are empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to them by presbytery. Commissions shall function in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Order relating to commissions.
- 834 Committees shall study and recommend action to or carry out decisions already made by the presbytery-
- 835 No members of standing commissions or committees shall serve on the same commission or committee for consecutive terms either full or partial aggregating more than six years.
- 836 A quorum for a standing commission or committee shall be 50% of its membership.
- 837 When elected members of any standing committee or commission are absent from three consecutive meetings, or when specific reasons are given for such removal, upon recommendation of the Presbytery Council, Presbytery may vote the removal of such persons from membership on such unit.

840 Administrative Commissions

- 842 Administrative Commissions may be established by the Presbytery in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Order for such appointments.
- 843 Members of such commissions, except for commissions for the ordination and/or installation of teaching elders, shall be appointed by the Moderator in as equal number of teaching elders and ruling elders as possible.

- 844 The chair of such commissions shall be designated by the Moderator.
- 845 A quorum of an administrative commission shall be 50% of its members.
- 845 Services of worship for the ordination and/or installation of teaching elders shall be conducted by an administrative commission, whose members shall be appointed by the Committee on Ministry, upon the request of the person to be ordained and/or installed.
- 846 The Moderator of the Presbytery, or in his/her absence, the Moderator-Elect, shall chair such a commission.

**900 COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES REQUIRED BY THE BOOK OF ORDER**

910 Permanent Judicial Commission

- 911 Membership shall consist of seven persons, composed of teaching elders who are members of the presbytery and ruling elders from three different congregations of the presbytery in numbers as nearly equal as possible.
- 912 The term of office of each member shall be six years. The members shall be elected in three classes, not more than half the members to be in one class.
- 913 Vacancies may be filled by the Presbytery at any duly called meeting by the election of a person for the unexpired term.

- 914 No person having served for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until a period of four years has elapsed.
- 915 The powers and duties of this Commission shall be those granted by the Rules of Discipline.
- 916 The rules of evidence promulgated by the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey, insofar as they are not inconsistent with the rules of evidence contained in the Rules of Discipline, shall be observed in taking testimony in judicial cases.

920 Committee on Representation

- 921 Membership shall consist of at least three persons, composed of teaching elders and ruling elders as nearly equally as possible.
- 922 The Committee shall advocate for diversity in leadership and participation in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403 of the Book of Order.
- 923 Members of the Committee shall also fulfill the duties of the Nominating Committee as described in section 1060 of these standing rules.
- 924 Duties shall be as described in the Committee on Representation manual as approved by Presbytery and maintained by the Stated Clerk in the Administrative Manual.

**1000 OTHER COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

1010 Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

1011 Membership shall consist of 4 persons, 2 teaching elders and 2 ruling elders. More members equally apportioned between teaching elders and ruling elders may be added to the committee by action of Presbytery if necessary.

1012 Persons indicating interest in church vocations assigned to the Committee shall include inquirers, candidates under care of Presbytery, and candidates for commissioned ruling elder.

1013 Duties shall be as described in the CPM Manual as approved by Presbytery.

1020 Commission on Ministry (COM)

1021 Membership shall consist of 12 persons, 6 teaching elders and 6 ruling elders. More members equally apportioned between teaching elders and ruling elders may be added to the commission by action of Presbytery if necessary.

1022 The Commission shall: serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators; and settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient

1023 Duties shall be as described in the COM Manual as approved by Presbytery and maintained by the Stated Clerk in the Administrative Manual.

1030 Mission Committee

1031 Membership shall consist of 8 persons, 4 teaching elders and 4 members of the laity.

1032 The duties shall be as described in the Mission Committee Manual as approved by Presbytery and maintained by the Stated Clerk in the Administrative Manual.

.

1040 Finance Committee

1041 Membership shall consist of 5 persons, as equally divided between teaching elders and members of the laity as possible.

1042 The duties shall be as described in the Finance Committee Manual as approved by Presbytery and maintained by the Stated Clerk in the Administrative Manual.

1050 Personnel Committee

1051 Membership shall consist of 5 persons, 2 teaching elders and 3 ruling elders.

1052 The duties shall be as described in the Personnel Committee manual as approved by Presbytery and maintained by the Stated Clerk in the Administrative Manual.

.

1060 Nominating Committee

1071 The members of this committee shall be the members of the



Committee on Representation.

- 1072 The duties shall be described in the Nominating Committee manual as approved by the Presbytery and maintained by the Stated Clerk in the Administrative Manual.

**1100 TASK FORCES OF PRESBYTERY**

- 1110 The Presbytery may establish task forces to address specific concerns which may arise from time to time and which are not expediently addressed by a commission or committee.

- 1120 Membership of any task force shall not exceed nine members. Membership size shall be determined by Presbytery upon establishment of the task force.

- 1130 Upon establishment of a task force by vote of Presbytery, the Nominating Committee shall bring a slate of candidates to serve on the task force to the next meeting of Presbytery.

- 1140 A task force shall not be in existence for a period of more than four years. If after four years, the work for which the task force was established has not been accomplished, the Presbytery Council shall consider and recommend to Presbytery a future strategy for addressing that concern.

- 1150 The establishment of a task force by vote of Presbytery shall include a budget item for the expense of a task force-

- 1160 Requests for funding for task forces beyond the first year shall follow the established procedure for administrative budget requests.

- 1170 Task forces may also be appointed by the Presbytery Council in accordance with Presbytery policies authorizing the establishment of such task forces in response to specific situations and needs.

1180 A quorum for a task force shall be 50%.

## **1200 OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF PRESBYTERY**

1210 Presbyterian Women

1211 Purpose: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

1212 Leadership: Presbyterian Women is administered on the Presbytery level by a coordinating team and a Moderator.

1213 The Moderator of Presbyterian Women shall have voice and vote at Presbytery.

## **1300 COMMISSIONERS AND OBSERVERS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SYNOD**

1310 General principles regarding the nomination and election of Commissioners to General Assembly and Synod.

1311 The Presbytery is responsible for “maintaining regular and continuing relationships to synod and General Assembly by electing commissioners to synod and General Assembly and receiving their reports” (G-3.0302a).

1312 “Commissioners to synod and General Assembly are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (F-3.0204).

1320 Method of Election of commissioners to synod and General Assembly

1321 The election of commissioners to the General Assembly shall take place in accordance with the requirements of the General Assembly.

1322 The election of commissioners to the Synod shall take place in accordance with the requirements of the Synod.

1323 The Nominating Committee shall submit slates of nominees to General Assembly and Synod at the respective presbytery meetings at which General Assembly and synod commissioners are elected. The Committee shall be guided by the principles of diversity set forth in F-1.0403 of the Book of Order as it prepares its slate of nominees.

1324 The Stated Clerk shall maintain a list of teaching elders, known as the seniority list, which reports the date of ordination, the length of time the teaching elder has been a member of West Jersey Presbytery, and the number of times the teaching elder has served as a General Assembly commissioner or a Synod commissioner and the dates of such service. The Stated Clerk shall also maintain a list of churches in the Presbytery showing the dates when the churches last had a ruling elder commissioner to the General Assembly or Synod. These lists shall be a guideline for the Nominating Committee.

1325 Presbyters may also make nominations from the floor at the time of the election.

1326 Election of commissioners and alternates to the General Assembly and Synod shall be by voice vote unless there are nominations from the floor, in which case, paper ballots shall be used.

1330 Advisory Delegates and Observers to General Assembly and Synod

- 1331 The Presbytery shall also elect a Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD) to the General Assembly and a YAAD to the Synod.
- 1332 The Presbytery may choose to send to the General Assembly the Stated Clerk, the Executive Presbyter or another person of its selection to serve as resource to the commissioners.

**POLICY ON PERSONAL BOUNDARIES AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**  
**The Presbytery of West Jersey**

Adopted November 18, 2014

James 3:1 - "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with great strictness."

I Peter 1:15 - "...As God who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct."

I Peter 5:1-3 - "...Exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it -- not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock."

Philippians 4:8-9 - "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you."

I Corinthians 12:26 - "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."

## **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

We believe and proclaim that all people are created by God. God values all human life, has shown great love for all persons in Jesus Christ, and intended that all people should relate to one another with justice.

Scripture asserts that religious leadership involves a covenantal relationship that presumes the trustworthy exercise of power on behalf of those being cared for. Furthermore, persons in religious leadership always have the responsibility for keeping appropriate boundaries and assuring the safety of those in their care. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of power and trust. We believe, therefore, that sexual misconduct is unjust, sinful, and requiring of repentance and discipline.

## **SECTION II: POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy covers the Presbytery of West Jersey, meaning all those persons who by position and ministry are responsible to it: the staff of the Presbytery and its agencies, members of congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders, deacons, youth workers, employees, volunteers and others as they serve the ministry, mission and business of the Presbytery.

It is the policy of the Presbytery that those described above maintain the integrity of ethical behavior consistent with Scripture and secular law by not engaging in personal boundary violations or in any form of sexual misconduct. As defined in this policy, these behaviors are never permissible. Further, it is the policy of this Presbytery that charges of sexual misconduct be treated with the seriousness they deserve and be dealt with swiftly and fairly for the benefit of all parties concerned.

Violations of personal boundaries are not normally subject to litigation. Therefore, the procedures described in this document will focus on sexual misconduct when the possibility of disciplinary action exists.

In keeping with American law and tradition, the presumption of innocence regarding the accused will be respected.

## **SECTION III: DEFINITIONS**

**Accused:** The person against whom an allegation of sexual misconduct is made.

**Accuser:** The person reporting alleged sexual misconduct committed by a staff person of the Presbytery or its agencies, members of congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders, deacons, youth workers, employees, volunteers and others as they serve the ministry, mission and business of the Presbytery.. The accuser may or may not be the victim of alleged sexual misconduct.

**Allegation:** A written statement accusing the accused of sexual misconduct.

**Investigation/Inquiry:** The terms used in the Rules of Discipline to determine whether charges should be filed based upon allegations received by a governing body. (Book of Order D-10.0201)

**Mandated Reporter:** According to New Jersey State Law, "any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or acts of child abuse shall report the same immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services by telephone or otherwise." (N.J.S.A. 9:6-8, 10)

**Original Jurisdiction:** The power and responsibility of a Council to govern. In judicial process, each of the councils has jurisdiction as outlined in D-3.0101 to D-3.0106. Therefore, a member or an employee of a congregation (except a teaching elder or a commissioned ruling elder) is under the jurisdiction of the session, even if there is an allegation of offense during a presbytery event.

**Personal Boundaries:** In all human interactions, in person or via any media, others are to be treated with honor and respect and with full regard for their rights to autonomy and privacy. Manipulation, coercion, bullying, belittlement, and all expressions of disrespect are violations of personal boundaries.

**Persons Covered:** Those covered by the **Policy On Personal Boundaries And Sexual Misconduct** include those persons who are the staff of the Presbytery and its agencies, members of congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders, deacons, youth workers, employees, volunteers and others as they serve the ministry, mission and business of the Presbytery and who are accused of sexual misconduct in circumstances in which:

- 1) access to the victim is related to some form of service to the church, or
- 2) access to the victim in a non-church related setting raises questions as to the character and effectiveness for ministry of the church and/or of the accused.

**Sexual Misconduct:** This is the comprehensive term used to include:

1) Child sexual abuse: includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between an adult and child wherein the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult. The behavior may or may not include physical touch. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered inappropriate whether or not consented to by the child. Child abuse must be reported to civil authority.

2) Any pornographic or predatory internet or social media contact with or pornographic material about a child or other vulnerable persons, or about a non-consenting adult.

3) Rape or sexual contact by force, threat or intimidation.

4) Sexual harassment: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made, either implicitly or explicitly, a condition of individual's employment status in an institution, or
- is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or
- such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment based on the

reasonable person standards.

5) Sexual impropriety: sexual advances toward those for whose spiritual welfare one is responsible by virtue of one's position in the church. Such behavior can be verbal or physical conduct, including use of social media, of an inappropriate nature (e.g. innuendoes, insults, ingratiating and over-solicitous behavior including sexually inappropriate visits and phone calls, seductions and fondling.)

## **SECTION IV: PROCEDURE**

### **1. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR REPORTING**

Allegations of sexual misconduct are reported in a variety of ways. An individual church or Presbytery cannot know in advance to whom an accuser will first report his/her concerns. Therefore, all church and Presbytery leaders and employees must know how reports of suspected sexual misconduct are to be handled so that they are directed to the proper authority.

Reports of sexual misconduct must never be taken lightly, disregarded, or allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the subject of the allegation (if not the accuser), the accused, and the church. Reports of misconduct must be handled with the highest confidentiality before and after they have been reported to the appropriate authorities

If an anonymous or unsigned accusation is received, no further action will be taken to investigate it unless the person about whom the accusation is made desires a "Court of Vindication" to investigate to clear his/her good name.

Both Church and State hold the welfare of children as a sacred trust and legal obligation. All persons with knowledge or suspicion of any abuse of children are mandated reporters and shall report the allegation or knowledge or suspicion to civil or criminal authorities as required by state or local law. Considerations of reputation or impact on the Church or individual must never be an impediment to this reporting.

The importance of properly reporting allegations of sexual misconduct cannot be over emphasized. Attempts to resolve allegations informally at the lowest level, while understandable, can often result in nothing more than covering up the problem, ignoring the problem or trying to make it "go away." This is not acceptable nor is it ever effective.

All allegations of sexual misconduct as defined in this policy, whether they involve children or adults, no matter whether the Presbytery or the local church has original jurisdiction, shall be reported to the Stated Clerk of West Jersey Presbytery. In the event that the accused is the Stated Clerk or the Stated Clerk is not available, the report will be made to one of following individuals in this order:

- ❖ Moderator
- ❖ Moderator Elect
- ❖ Chair, Committee on Ministry
- ❖ Executive Presbyter

### **2. THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE**

If the accuser chooses to file a complaint, the provisions of The Book of Discipline, Chapter D-10, will be followed.

### **3. PROCESS**

The process followed by the Presbytery of West Jersey will vary according to the ecclesiastical status of the accused. All members of particular churches and all members of Presbytery are subject to inquiry and discipline as provided in the Book of Order, D-3.0101.

- ❖ The Presbytery has jurisdiction over its teaching elder members and commissioned ruling elders {i.e.: ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral services by the presbytery}.
- ❖ Presbytery also has jurisdiction over teaching elders engaged in work within the geographic bounds of the presbytery. (D 3.0101b(2))
- ❖ Local sessions have jurisdiction over their members.
- ❖ If the local church fails to act on the report within ninety (90) days after it is initiated, the Presbytery may assume original jurisdiction (Book of Order, D-3.0103).

Notwithstanding the jurisdiction of the local church, ALL allegations of sexual misconduct shall be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.

#### 4.. PREBYTERY’S ROLE WHEN THE LOCAL CHURCH HAS JURISDICTION

- a) ALL allegations of sexual misconduct shall be reported to the Clerk of Session of the local church and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.
- b) When the Stated Clerk or, in the Stated Clerk's absence, another leader within the Presbytery (as mentioned above) receives, in writing, an allegation of sexual misconduct committed by a member of a local church, he/she will advise the Chair of the Committee on Ministry and Executive Presbyter of the allegation. The Stated Clerk will forward the allegation to the Clerk of Session of the local church. The Presbytery will provide pastoral care (see Section V) and guidance (as necessary) to help the church in its inquiry and resolution and for insuring that the issue is resolved promptly.
- c) It is required that local churches have a written policy on sexual misconduct. (See Appendix # 1)

#### 5. WHEN THE PRESBYTERY HAS JURISDICTION

The Presbytery has original jurisdiction over:

- ❖ its member teaching elders
- ❖ teaching elders working within its bounds
- ❖ commissioned ruling elders
- ❖ the accused member of a local church when the local church fails to act on the report within 90 days after it is initiated.

The Presbytery also has jurisdiction when there are appeals from cases decided at the local level.

##### a) Immediate Procedures

An allegation is received by the Stated Clerk.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Stated Clerk immediately refers the allegation to an Investigating Committee which is appointed by the Moderator of the Presbytery (See Standing Rule 432)</li> <li>✓ The Stated Clerk reports to the Presbytery at the next stated meeting that an offense has been alleged and that an Investigating Committee has been appointed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Stated Clerk immediately informs the Chair of the Permanent Judicial Commission</li> <li>✓ The Chair of the Permanent Judicial Commission appoints two former members to determine if paid administrative leave shall be imposed upon the teaching elder against whom an allegation has been made. (See section on Administrative Leave below).</li> </ul>



The Investigating Committee will follow the procedures outlined in Chapter 10 of the Book of Discipline.	The PJC receives the case if it is determined by the Investigating Committee that charges should be filed. The case proceeds according to the Rules of Discipline.
--	---

b). Certificate of Transfer

No certificate of transfer shall be granted while an inquiry or charges are pending.

c). Administrative Leave

When a written statement of an alleged offense of sexual misconduct toward any person has been received against a teaching elder over whom the presbytery has jurisdiction, the procedures regarding paid administrative leave in D-10.0106 shall be followed.

If paid administrative leave is imposed by the Permanent Judicial Commission upon a teaching elder, full pension, compensation (salary, housing, deferred income), Social Security reimbursement and the Presbytery-required additional medical coverage will be paid by the church or other compensating body under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery until the matter is resolved as defined in D-10.0106.

While administrative leave is in effect, a teaching elder may not perform any pastoral, administrative, educational, or supervisory duties, and may not officiate at any functions such as Baptism, funerals, or weddings. (D-10.0106)

Such administrative leave or restrictions will continue until resolution of the matter in one of the ways prescribed in the Rules of Discipline or the leave or restrictions are altered or removed by the designated members of the commission. (D-10.0106a)

d). Notice to particular employing organizations

When the accused has been convicted of an offense and is in a validated ministry beyond Church jurisdiction, a notification will be sent to the employing organization of the fact that charges of ministerial misconduct have been sustained.

## 6. RECORDS

- a). In addition to the records and procedures required by the Book of Order, D-11.0600, written records should be kept by persons involved in each aspect of the process above to memorialize conversations, actions, rationales and other data that may be pertinent. All records must be kept confidential. When the inquiry process has concluded either by the filing of charges or the dismissal of the allegations, all records are to be sealed and forwarded to the Stated Clerk.
- b). The Stated Clerk will maintain a record of allegations received, noting the accuser, the accused, and the action taken (i.e.. allegation withdrawn, no charges filed, charges filed, etc.). This file will be confidential with access restricted to the Stated Clerk, the Executive Presbyter and the Chair of the Committee on Ministry.

## 7. INSURANCE

- a.) It is the policy of the Presbytery of West Jersey, in keeping with G-3.0112 that “each council shall obtain property and liability insurance coverage to protect its facilities, programs, staff, and elected and appointed officers.” Such coverage will include sexual misconduct protection.
- b.) In the event of an allegation affecting the presbytery or congregation, the company providing the insurance coverage shall be notified.

## **SECTION V: PASTORAL RESPONSE**

Whether or not allegations of offense are ultimately sustained, the person bringing such allegations is doing so from a deep sense of being wounded by a servant of the church. Such wounds need to be addressed pastorally and immediately. The confidentiality required by our process of discipline in the stage of inquiry, the sensitivity of the matters usually brought for remediation through this process, the length of time needed to conduct inquiry and the isolation and alienation the accuser often feels from the usual networks of care within the church while this process is ongoing all require that an independent source of care, support, and advocacy for his or her special needs be provided from outside the ordinary channels of church government. The accused, once advised of the accusations, is also in need of special care, even more so after the accusations are public knowledge. Congregations or other constituent groups will all be affected by cases of alleged misconduct by a member of their group and, since they are a part of the church family, will need and are entitled to the care of the church.

### **1. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Presbytery of West Jersey to extend the care of the church to parties involved in allegations of sexual misconduct during and, if necessary, after the process of discipline.

### **2. PROCEDURE**

Whenever allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse are made in writing to the Stated Clerk against anyone over whom the Presbytery has jurisdiction, in addition to and separate from the process of discipline required by the Book of Order, the Stated Clerk, the Executive Presbyter and the COM Chair will confer and determine how and by whom pastoral care and other appropriate kinds of care shall be offered to and for the accuser, accused, subject(s) of the accusation (when the accusation is made on behalf of a third party), and the congregation.

- a) To avoid interfering with the ordinary process of discipline, no information about the nature of the allegations or the name of other parties involved shall be disclosed to pastoral care givers beyond a “need to know” basis.
- b) No persons involved in rendering pastoral care to any affected person(s) or group(s) listed above are to be involved in any way with the process of discipline as set forth in the Book of Order, Rules of Discipline. They shall not be concerned with determining the truth of allegation(s). Because advising those to whom care is tendered that they have the right to remain silent and be represented by counsel is antithetical to the purpose of pastoral care and creates an atmosphere in which pastoral care may be difficult, persons involved with the pastoral care as set forth above shall not advise those in their care of their rights and, consequently, shall not be witnesses for or against those persons in hearings by an Investigating Committee or Permanent Judicial Commission.
- c) All information given to those rendering pastoral care by any party shall be strictly confidential and such confidentiality shall be carefully maintained.
- d) The costs of pastoral care providers shall be a Presbytery expense as if it were part of the process of discipline. Extraordinary costs (such as for professional expenses, if deemed necessary) will be negotiated with the Presbytery, through the Stated Clerk, the Executive

Presbyter and the COM Chair before the services are offered. Insurance and Board of Pensions resources may be utilized.

## **SECTION VI: EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF**

### **THE POLICY ON PERSONAL BOUNDARIES AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT of the Presbytery of West Jersey**

#### **1. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery is responsible for the implementation, training, record keeping and reporting as outlined in this policy. The Executive Presbyter, Officers, Staff and Council will be consulted and will assist as needed.

#### **2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- a) The Stated Clerk, the Executive Presbyter, staff and the current officers of the Presbytery will review the policy each year in order to be versed in proper procedures to follow if they receive allegations or inquiries.
- b) Training is mandatory for teaching elder-members of the Presbytery who are full or part-time pastors or associate pastors, designated pastors, or temporary supplies, interim pastors, parish associates and all teaching elders on the Pulpit Supply List, and all corresponding members of Presbytery. Training is also mandatory for non-parish and retired teaching elders who do supply preaching and for commissioned ruling elders and all commissioned ruling elder candidates who are being trained by the Presbytery.
- c) All teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders who meet the requirements of b) are required to participate in a training event at least once every three years during their tenure within the Presbytery.
- d) All new members of the presbytery and all newly commissioned ruling elders are required to attend a training event within the first year of their membership.
- e) Ruling elders may be invited to attend training events as well.
- f) The Presbytery will arrange and allocate funds each year for education and training.

#### **3. ANNUAL REPORT**

An annual report on compliance with the policy will be submitted to the Council and the Committee on Ministry.

## APPENDIX # 1 Sexual Misconduct Policies for the Local Church

It is required that each church have policies for the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct. The policy of the Presbytery can serve as a template for many aspects of the local policy.

Session members, pastors and staff of churches should be conversant with the policy and its procedures in order to implement them promptly. Each congregation is highly encouraged:

- ❖ To ensure that at least one elder and one other person receives training.
- ❖ To include education in child protection and sexual misconduct and the appropriate policy in the program focus of the parish.
- ❖ To maintain this level of training and education as there are changes in personnel on boards and committees.

### Suggested Content

- ❖ Biblical and Theological rationale for the policy
- ❖ Definitions of sexual misconduct and related terms
- ❖ Laws regarding mandated reporting when children are in danger.
- ❖ Steps that the church will take to prevent misconduct and to protect children and vulnerable persons who are present on church property or at church activities on or off church property or under the supervision of church employees or volunteers.
- ❖ Steps that the church will take to inform parishioners of the policies and procedures for protecting vulnerable persons and also the process for addressing allegations should any be received.
- ❖ Requirement to notify the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery when an allegation of abuse is received.
- ❖ Procedures for addressing accusations of misconduct in accordance with the Book of Discipline.
- ❖ Emphasis on confidentiality.
- ❖ Financial considerations and Leave of Absence procedures

Upon request, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery will provide copies of sexual misconduct and child protection policies adopted by other churches.

A congregation's insurance agency may also have information and assistance in the preparation of a policy statement

# Child and Youth Protection Policy

The Presbytery of West Jersey

Haddon Heights, N.J.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

*A Vision for Children and the Church  
Adopted by the 205th General Assembly, 1993*

*Because we affirm that all children are a gift of God, created  
by God and created good;  
all children are a gift to the whole of the human community;  
all children have a real faith, and gifts for ministry;  
all children have the right to be children;  
and all children are not just tomorrow, they are today.*

*Because we believe that all children depend upon adults for safety and security in a world that  
does not always value children;  
all children are affected first and most deeply by those things that work against health and  
wholeness;  
where there is disease, children sicken and die;  
where there is homelessness, children sleep on the streets and in other dangerous places;  
where there is war, children are frightened and without a safe place;  
where there air and water are polluted, children feel the effect in their bodies and in their  
futures;  
where there is shame, children's spirits are wounded.*

*Therefore we hope for a world where all children can find a safe place;  
where all ages, races, genders, creeds, and abilities are recognized, valued, and celebrated;  
where all adults hear the voices of children and speak with as well as for them;  
where all children have "first call" on the world's resources and first place in the minds and  
hearts of the world's adults.*

*Because Jesus welcomed children and encouraged us to welcome them in his name;  
Jesus lifted up a child as an example of what the realm of God is like;*

*Therefore we hope for a church where we take seriously our baptismal vow to nurture all children committed to our care;  
where we bring good news to all those places where children are in need;  
where adults and children alike share in ministry.*

***We covenant to act so that this vision may be made real for all children, now and in times to come.***

**The Presbytery of West Jersey  
Haddon Heights, N.J.**

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

*Approved by the Presbytery, November 18, 2014*

***“Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”***

~ Mark 10:13-16\_

## **Contents**

Purpose  
Terms & Definitions  
Screening Volunteers and Employees  
General Procedures  
Code of Conduct  
Reporting  
Off-Site Trips and Events  
Outside Groups

## **Appendix**

Appendix A – Indications of Abuse  
Appendix B - Forms

## Policy Purpose

The Presbytery of West Jersey (WJP) is committed to providing a church environment that is a safe place for children and youth and that will protect them from any abuse when they are involved in church-related activities. WJP adopts these policies and procedures not only to maximize safety and prevent child abuse from occurring within its church community, but also to guide and protect volunteers and employees from unwarranted allegations of child abuse.

## Terms and Definitions

**Child abuse** - An act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust (even though he or she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens harm to a child's physical or mental health or welfare. Types of abuse may include physical abuse, including physical injury or threat of injury; physical neglect, such as failure to provide necessary care to a child; sexual abuse; mental abuse or neglect; emotional abuse; and spiritual abuse. Child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

***Neglect of Basic Needs*** - A form of abuse. Denial of food, water, cleanliness, clothing, and sleep are not appropriate means of discipline.

***Physical Abuse*** - Any physical force applied by an adult or older youth in a position of care or authority to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Physical force (hitting, spanking, shaking, shoving, etc.) is not to be used by leaders in our programs.

***Sexual Abuse*** – Any sexual contact or sexual interaction between a child (under the age of eighteen years) and an adult; any use of a child for the sexual simulation of an adult, a third person, or the child; any risqué jokes, innuendo, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome casual touch, unwelcome and inappropriate hugs and kisses, and sexually suggestive pictures between an adult and a child, as deemed inappropriate by any reasonable adult. Even if a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, out of ignorance, innocence, or fear does not resist, it is still abuse.

***Emotional Abuse*** - Inappropriately belittling, hateful, or angry words and/or actions directed toward a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Discipline by humiliation is also emotional abuse.

***Spiritual Abuse***- Using religious references to shame or by guilt to motivate a child into a particular action or behavior.

**Employee** – Any person who works for salary or wages at WJP.

**Volunteer** – Any person not employed by WJP who, at any time during the year, teaches, supervises, or helps with children and youth activities, or is in the presence of children or youth.

These activities include, but not limited to, Church School and Worship Enrichment, Nursery, Childcare, Presbyterian Youth programs, Children & Youth Choirs, Summer Camps & Conferences, Children & Youth mission trips, Scouting, Confirmation Mentors, and Weekday Preschool.

**Leader** – An adult designated by WJP or by a sponsoring organization to have responsibility for children and/or youth. The adult must be a minimum of 18 years of age. Leaders of overnight trips must be at least 21 years of age. It is suggested that leaders be a minimum of four years older than the children or youth they are supervising.

**Church Sponsored Activity** - Includes any and all gatherings that arise from any worship, educational, childcare, fellowship, administrative, pastoral, mission or recreational event generated or organized by WJP, whether on-campus or off-campus.

**Volunteer Ministry** – Includes any church sponsored activity engaged in by a volunteer.

**Child or Youth** – Persons under 18 years old and considered a minor under the law. This term shall also include legally incompetent persons.

## Screening

### Staff: Background Requirements

Applicants for full-time or part-time paid employment at WJP will be required to provide, complete or undergo the following:

- An Employment and Volunteer Ministry Application which will include information regarding past employment and prior convictions for crimes;
- A specific statement that the individual has no prior conviction for child abuse or sexual misconduct; and
- A reference check covering, where possible, the two immediate past employers, or personal references unrelated to the applicant if no information can be obtained from past employers.
- Prior to hiring an applicant, WJP will obtain a criminal record report for that individual. Every three years, WJP will perform national criminal database searches and national sex offender registry searches on existing employees, and each employee shall be required to execute any documents that WJP might request for such purpose. Any individual who has lived outside New Jersey in the last five years may be subject to additional county or state court search.
- Upon being hired, each new employee will be required to sign an acknowledgement that he or she has received a copy of the WJP Child & Youth Protection Policy, understands it and will comply with its terms.



- Each new employee will be provided orientation and training on child abuse, including its recognition and prevention, as well as on the terms and conditions of this policy.

Any candidate for employment who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect cannot be employed by WJP. Conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from employment: drug-related, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy or abuse of a minor.

## **Volunteers: Background Requirements**

Volunteers working with youth or children of the church in any volunteer ministry will be required to provide, complete or undergo the following:

- An Employment and Volunteer Ministry Application which will include information regarding past employment and prior convictions for crimes;
- A specific statement that the individual has no prior conviction for child abuse or sexual misconduct; and
- Prior to becoming a volunteer, WJP will obtain a background check for that individual. Every three years, WJP will perform national criminal database searches and national sex offender registry searches on existing volunteers and each volunteer shall be required to execute any documents that WJP might request for such purpose. Any individual who has lived outside New Jersey in the last five years may be subject to additional county or state court search
- Each new volunteer, prior to beginning any volunteer role, will be required to sign an acknowledgement that he or she has received a copy of the WJP Child & Youth Protection Policy, understands it, and will comply with its terms.
- Each new volunteer will be provided orientation and training on child abuse, including its recognition and prevention, as well as on the terms and conditions of this policy.

Any candidate for volunteer service who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding related to an allegation of child abuse or neglect MAY NOT work with children and youth at WJP. Refusal to complete the Volunteer Application process or a conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from volunteer service with children and youth: drug-related activity, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy, or abuse of a minor.

Leaders of other groups of children or youth (e.g., Girl Scout and Boy Scout leaders) who use WJP's facilities will also be required to read the Policy and sign the Volunteer Acknowledgement Statement.

## **General Procedures**

### **Supervision: *Two-Leader/Open-Door Policy***

Whenever possible, any adult who is present in a presbytery sponsored activity for children or youth should be accompanied by another adult. WJP employees and volunteers should not, during an WJP program, be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others.

In order to avoid situations where an individual is alone in a room with children, all children's and youth activities should be supervised by at least two adult leaders. Whenever possible, these adults should be unrelated. The presence of two leaders is to protect children and youth against situations in which abuse might occur, and to protect leaders against false allegations of abuse or neglect.

Classrooms, childcare rooms, and any area in which programs for children or youth are taking place may be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents, or other volunteer church workers. No windows may ever be totally blocked so as to prevent visual observation into the classroom.

In the event that two leaders cannot be present in the room, such that one leader is alone in a room with one or more children or youth, a door or half-door from the room must be left open. The leader should not position himself or herself in the room such that other adults passing in the hallway cannot see him or her.

Furthermore, at any counseling session with children or youth, the door or half-door of the room used must remain open for the entire session. The session should be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance.

Each classroom for children and youth should ideally have a door with an observation window or a half- door, such that the upper half may be kept open. If it does not, and two leaders are not present in the room, then the door must remain open at all times.

## **Ratios**

The recommended adult/volunteer-to-child/youth ratio, based on best practices, is 1:6, gender balance is recommended. For overnight trips, the ratio is 1:4, although 1:6 is permissible.

## **Parental/Guardian Consent**

Children and youth must obtain parental or guardian permission for involvement in presbytery sponsored activities or programs that involve travel away from the any presbytery physical facilities.

## **“Six Month” Rule for Volunteers**

A volunteer must be a member of a congregation of WJP, or have regularly attended that congregation, for six months before working with youth or children. This requirement does not apply to paid staff or volunteers involved in activities in which their own children are present.

The Council shall have the authority to waive this six-month rule upon request, where appropriate.

### **Policy Review**

The provisions of this Policy shall be reviewed annually by the Council. Any proposed changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of the Council for its input, if any, prior to any such changes becoming final. The Council shall report periodically to the presbytery and recommend any changes deemed appropriate.

## **Code of Conduct**

1. Staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the WJP Child Protection Policy guidelines in all their interactions with children and youth.
2. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable or that disregard their right to say no.
3. Staff and volunteers may not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
4. Physical restraint is used only in situations necessary to protect the child, other children, or staff from harm.
5. While supervising children and youth participating in WJP programs, staff and volunteers should know where participants are at all times.
6. Restroom supervision: Whenever possible, volunteers will make sure any restroom used is not occupied by any suspicious or unknown individual before allowing children and youth to use the facilities. Always send children in pairs with a volunteer. The staff or volunteer, will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff or volunteer (not being alone with a child). Staff and volunteers shall strongly encourage parents to take children to the restroom whenever possible.
7. Diapering and potty training should be done primarily by staff members/paid caregivers. Volunteers may be asked to help in certain situations and should follow posted nursery guidelines when performing diapering.
8. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of children. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported according to the WJP Child Protection Policy.
9. Staff and volunteers are discouraged from being alone with children or youth without parental permission.
10. Under no circumstances should volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other individual authorized by the parent or guardian.
11. Consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
12. Being impaired by legally prescribed drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
13. Possessing or using concealed weapons or firearms while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.

14. Smoking or use of tobacco *in the presence of* children, youth, or parents while working or volunteering is prohibited.
15. Staff and volunteers should not release children to any adult or family member, including older siblings, other than the child's parent/guardian unless prior verbal permission has been obtained from the parent.
16. Profanity, inappropriate jokes and media, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, youth, or parents are prohibited.
17. Staff and volunteers will be mindful of the content on any portable electronic device, social networking pages, or other electronic media that might be accessible to any children and youth.
18. Staff and volunteer adult and youth leaders shall wear appropriate dress when volunteering with children and/or youth.
19. Movies used in all church settings shall meet the voluntary movie rating system guidelines established by the Motion Picture Association of America for age-appropriate content.
20. Staff and volunteers may not date or be romantically involved with program participants or church members who are younger than 18 years of age.
21. Staff and volunteers are required to read, sign, and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and will attend training sessions on the subject.
22. Staff and volunteers are required to report any concerns or suspicions regarding their observations of any individual's interaction with a child. Except for concerns related to alleged or potential abuse, which require mandated specific immediate reports (see REPORTING below), these concerns may be reported to the individual. If the concerns are not alleviated by a change in the individual's behavior, a second report must be made to (name, phone number). If it is necessary for an adult to take a child or youth home after an event, all staff and volunteers shall abide by safe driving laws when transporting children or youth. Driving record history shall be obtained on all youth leaders and volunteers. An effort should be made to contact the family and inform them of the situation before transporting the child or youth. It is always advisable for leaders to give parents advance notice and full information regarding the event in which their child or youth will be participating.
23. In the event that a one-on-one child/youth to adult scenario arises, i.e., unexpected transportation needs, confirmation mentoring, or otherwise, parent permission should be granted in writing or by phone when possible. It is preferred to have mentors and confirmands meet in pairs or to meet in public places.

**Reporting:** here is information from  
[www.preventchildabuse.nj.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.nj.org)

---

## Report Abuse

### **Who is responsible for reporting suspected child abuse in New Jersey?**

In New Jersey, ANY person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been

abused or neglected has a legal responsibility to report it to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). A concerned caller does not need proof to report an allegation of child abuse and can make the report anonymously. Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect according to the law or to comply with the provisions of the law is a disorderly person and subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 or up to six months imprisonment, or both.

### **How do I report child abuse in New Jersey?**

Call New Jersey's Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline at **1-877-NJ ABUSE (652-2873)** (TTY/TDD use **1-800-835-5510**)

**They are available and will respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.** If a child is in immediate danger, you should call 911.

### **Do callers have immunity from civil or criminal liability?**

Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of child abuse or neglect or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report is immune from any criminal or civil liability as a result of such action. Calls can be placed to the hotline anonymously.

### **What happens when I call the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline?**

The hotline is answered by trained caseworkers who know how to respond to reports of child abuse/neglect. This caseworker may ask you about:

- **Who:** The child and parent/caregiver's name, age and address and the name of the alleged perpetrator and that person's relationship to the child.
- **What:** Type and frequency of alleged abuse/neglect, current or previous injuries to the child and what caused you to become concerned.
- **When:** When the alleged abuse/neglect occurred and when you learned of it.
- **Where:** Where the incident occurred, where the child is now and whether the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.
- **How:** How urgent the need is for intervention and whether there is a likelihood of imminent danger for the child.

### **What happens after I make the call?**

When a report indicates that a child may be at risk, the Division of Youth and Family Services will promptly investigate the allegations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report.

### **What if I tell Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey about my concerns?**

While Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey values the health and safety of children — we, like all NJ citizens, are legally required to forward concerns about suspected abuse to the Division of Youth and Family Services. They are the only investigative and protective bodies of the State of NJ responsible for handling them.

We all care about children. We urge you to report any concern about the welfare of a child to DYFS, the legal authorities responsible for investigating suspected situations of abuse. You should call **1-877-NJ-ABUSE** and let them know the details of your concern. They will take the matter seriously and gather information that is in the best interest of the child.

---

### **Confidentiality**

All communications shall be conducted in as confidential a manner as is compatible with the reporting of an allegation.

### **Parental Notification**

If an incident has occurred on church property during a presbytery-sponsored event, the parents of any minor involved in any allegation of abuse shall be immediately notified.

### **Potential Responses**

Upon any report of potential or alleged child abuse by an employee or volunteer of WJP, any individual accused of such conduct may be temporarily relieved of any duties involving youth or children pending an appropriate investigation.

## **Off-Site Trips & Events**

### **Permission Forms**

Parent/Guardian Permission Forms and Medical Consent Forms must be completed prior to all trips. The two-adult rule must be followed throughout the trip with any foreseeable exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities. Under no circumstances may one adult alone take or accompany minors on an overnight outing.

### **Ratios**

The required adult to child/youth ratio for chaperones for any ministry with children or youth shall be 1:6. Gender balance is preferred. For overnight trips, an adult to child/youth ratio for chaperones of 1:4 is preferred, although 1:6 is permissible. Gender balance is required.

### **Rooming Arrangements**

- Rooming arrangements should provide for children and youth of the same sex to room together and adults of the same sex to room together.
- When possible, adults' rooms shall be next to youth rooms and youth may be checked on during the night.
- Ordinarily, adults should not share rooms with children. An individual minor may share a room with an individual adult if the two are related (parent/child), or if written permission has been granted prior to the event by a parent or guardian (in such cases as Intergenerational Mission Trips).
- In situations where one large sleeping area is provided, two adults of the same sex shall accompany children or youth of the same sex.

## Medical

- Each child, youth, adult volunteer, and staff must submit a completed medical/insurance form. Each minor's forms must have a parent or guardian's signature.
- Whenever possible, all activities with children and youth shall have a staff or volunteer adult leader with current-certification first aid/CPR training.
- Group leaders should have a copy of all medical forms for overnight or off-site events. These forms will be kept on the event site for the duration of the event.
- First Aid supplies will be available on the event site. All workers will be informed of the location of First Aid supplies/equipment and shall have access to information concerning specific medical conditions and concerns of participants.
- A written report will be completed in the case of any accident, medical emergency or injury.

## Driving Rules/Travel

- It is suggested that all drivers of children and youth be over 21 and under 65. In situations where this is not possible, parent permission shall be obtained before the trip and vehicles shall travel together.
- When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-leader rule still applies unless parental permission is obtained prior to the trip. When several vehicles are taken for an event and two leaders are not available for every vehicle, keeping the other vehicle in sight at regular intervals is an acceptable substitution for the two-leader rule.
- Travel arrangements for off-campus events will be coordinated through the presbytery.
- All adult drivers of children and youth will be screened through a driving history search. A valid driver's license will be required.
- All vehicles should remain parked throughout the duration of the activity except for transporting children and obtaining supplies.
- Seat belts will be provided for all passengers.

## Outside Groups

All leaders of non-WJP sponsored groups and events that use WJP facilities and supervise children and youth are expected to adhere to these policies. Upon receipt of the policy from WJP, the leaders must review the Child and Youth Protection Policy and sign the Outside Group Leaders Release Form to acknowledge their review of it and to confirm their agreement to follow the policy. This includes, but not limited to, groups such as: Boy/Girl Scouts, as well as outreach groups, groups renting church space, and visiting youth groups. Given the nature of the outside groups that use WJP facilities, WJP will not perform background checks, seek personal and professional references, review employment records, or obtain civil and criminal records for such groups. Leaders of outside groups will be invited to attend WJP's frequently scheduled training classes and are expected to conduct their own due diligence in this regard.

## **Appendix A, Indications of Abuse**

### ***CHILD and YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY*** **INDICATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

#### **What is an “abused, neglected, or dependent child”?**

The definition of an abused, neglected, or dependent child is very broad. It includes any child under eighteen whose parents or other person responsible for his care:

- Inflicts or allows to be inflicted, or creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury not by accident;
- Creates or allows to be created serious emotional damage;
- Uses or allows to be used cruel or grossly inappropriate procedures or devices to modify behavior;
- Neglects or refuses to provide care, supervision, or discipline necessary for his health;
- Abandons such child or allows such child to live in an environment injurious to the child’s welfare;
- Is unable to provide for care or supervision and lacks an appropriate child care alternative; or
- Commits or allows to be committed any act of sexual exploitation or any sexual act upon a child in violation of the law.

#### **How can children be at risk in a “safe” place like church?**

There may be several reasons children can be at risk even in “safe” places like a church. The following factors may contribute to the risk in a church setting:

- Ready access to children
- Institutional surprise: “We’re good people”
- Many churches have historically failed to prosecute
- Fewer external barriers than other youth-serving organizations
- Challenges coordinating child protection strategies

#### **Potential indicators of sexual abuse**

A **combination** or **pattern** of indicators may indicate the possibility of sexual abuse. Potential indicators include:



- Child does not want to go to a certain place or be around a particular person
- Child shows sexual knowledge or behavior beyond that expected for his or her age
- Child is overly affectionate and seems seductive with peers and adults
- Child has recurring genital infections or pain in the genital area
- Child has difficulty in walking or sitting
- Child has torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Child shows reluctance to change clothes
- Child is withdrawn, chronically depressed, or displays infantile behavior
- Child has exceptionally poor peer relationships
- Child is threatened by physical contact
- Child has unexplained money or “gifts”

For more information, please visit:

Prevent Child Abuse America at [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina at [www.preventchildabusej.org](http://www.preventchildabusej.org)

## **Appendix B, Forms**

- Employee & Volunteer Ministry Application Form
- Employee and Volunteer Recommitment Form
- Agreement for Non-Affiliated Groups Utilizing Church Facilities

The Presbytery of West Jersey

# Employee and Volunteer Ministry Application Form

This application form is to be completed by all Presbytery of West Jersey (WJP) employees and any volunteers desiring a ministry position involving the supervision or custody of children and/or youth. This form will be completed on-line or by paper copy at the onset of ministry and resubmitted every three years. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. This confidential information will be viewed only by those persons designated by the Presbytery as having access to this private information. It will be stored in secure locked storage or secure on-line storage.

Name  
Last First Middle Date

Address

Home Phone Cell Phone

Occupation

Places of Employment

How long at this address? \_If less than five years, give previous addresses/years:

Years Address

Years Address

**VOLUNTEERS**

(Name of church) member since

List (names and addresses) other churches you attended regularly during the last five years:

What leadership/volunteer experience have you had with children/youth during the last five years? Be specific. Where possible, include dates and places if not at (Name of church).

Please list other (Name of church) ministries in which you were or are involved in the last five years.

# **Confidential Information ~ to be used only by those authorized by the Presbytery**

**Auto Insurance Carrier**

**Do you have any medical training?**

**Are you currently CPR certified?**

**Is there any health-related reason that would keep you from effectively working with or cause any potential harm to children? If yes, please explain.**

**Personal References (Two are required. Must be over 18 years of age and not related to you.)**

**Name**

**Address**

**Phone**

**Relationship**

**Name**

**Address**

**Phone**

**Relationship**

**The questions listed below are necessary in order to help ensure a safe and secure environment for our children and for the protection of our volunteer and/or paid staff. All information is held strictly confidential. Please answer these questions. If you have any concerns regarding the questions, please consult with the Stated Clerk or with the Executive Presbyter. If any one or more of the questions is marked yes, the application will be reviewed by those persons so designated by the Presbytery.**

**Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo contendere (no contest) to traffic violation(s) in the last five years?**

**Yes      No**

\_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, please describe all convictions for the past five years and any conviction resulting in the suspension of your license, whether or not within the past five years.**

**Have you ever been convicted for the possession, use or sale of drugs?**

**Yes      No**

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been hospitalized or treated for alcohol, substance abuse or mental illness? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been arrested for a criminal offense excluding minor traffic violations? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been arrested or convicted for any sexually related crimes? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been denied participation in supervising youth activities in any organization? \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain any yes answers. Add more pages as needed:

**APPLICANT'S STATEMENT**

The information contained in this application is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references, churches, or other organizations listed in this application to give you any information they may have (including employer's opinions) regarding my character and fitness for working with children or youth and I hereby release all such references, churches, or other organizations from liability for damages of whatever kind or nature that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to follow the Child and Youth Protection Policy and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I understand that any violation of this Policy or misrepresentation of information that I have provided may result in termination of employment or volunteer service with children/youth.

I have no past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect. I authorize that a Criminal and Civil Records Check may be conducted on me and that any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in police files or any criminal or civil file maintained on me, whether national, state, or local, be released to WJP. In so authorizing, I release any law enforcement agencies, WJP or those individuals receiving the results of the check from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

I acknowledge that I have read the WJP Child and Youth Protection Policy and have received a copy for my personal use.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE AS A WJP EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand. I understand that the personal information will be held confidential by the Presbytery.

Applicant's Signature

Date

**The Presbytery of West Jersey**

**Employee and Volunteer Recommitment Form**

This renewal of commitment form is to be completed annually by all employees and those desiring a volunteer ministry position involving the supervision or custody of children and/or youth. It is being used to help the presbytery provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

**Name** **Date**  
**Last** **First** **Middle**

**Address**

**Home Phone** **Cell Phone**

**Occupation**

**Places of Employment**

In the past year, are there pending, or have you been convicted of, or pled guilty, or nolo contendere (no contest) to any criminal charges other than minor traffic offenses?

If yes, please describe

**Auto Insurance Carrier**

**Do you have any medical training?**

Are you currently CPR certified?

Is there any health-related reason that would keep you from effectively working with or cause any potential harm to children? If yes, please explain.

Please list the (Name of church) ministries in which you are currently involved.

**APPLICANT’S RECOMMITMENT STATEMENT**

The information in this Recommitment Form is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I acknowledge that I have read the WJP Child and Youth Protection Policy and have received a copy for my personal use. I agree to follow the Child and Youth Protection Policy and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the presbytery. I understand that any violation of the Code of Conduct or misrepresentation of information that I have provided may result in termination of employment or volunteer service with children/youth.

Applicant’s Signature

Date

## **The Presbytery of West Jersey**

### **Agreement for Non-Affiliated Groups Utilizing Presbytery Facilities**

As a supervising member/leaders of (name of group), I am responsible for the activities of the members of (name of group) while using the facilities of or being present on the grounds of the Presbytery of West Jersey (WJP). I have received and read a copy of the WJP Child and Youth Protection Policy (the “Policy”). I agree to abide by policies and procedures set forth in the Policy. I understand, however, that WJP will not perform background checks, personal and professional reference checks, or provide training to the leaders, supervisors, or representatives of (name of group). I further understand that failure to abide by the Policy may result in termination of (name of group) use of WJP facilities on a temporary or permanent basis.

Signature of Leader/Supervisor

Date

**PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY**  
**Policy on Presbytery Attendance**  
**Adopted on January 19, 2015**

**Teaching Elders**

The ordination questions for teaching elders include this question: “Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?” (W-4.4003i(3))

Participation, active participation, is part of the ordination vow.

The Book of Order states that Teaching Elders “...shall participate in the responsibilities of governance seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ’s body through devotion, debate, and decision ...” (G- 2.0501)

The word “shall” is used in the Book of Order when action is mandatory. Section G- 2.0501 clearly is meant to define participation in Presbytery as being mandatory for all clergy.

All teaching elders are continuing members of a Presbytery, but their category of membership in Presbytery may differ. Teaching Elders shall be engaged in a ministry validated by the presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or honorably retired (G- 2.0503). A validated ministry shall meet all five criteria of G- 2.0503a:

- a. Demonstrate conformity with the mission of God’s people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, the *Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order* of this church.
- b. Serve and aid others, and enables the ministry of others.
- c. Give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God’s Word.
- d. Be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served.

- e. Include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G-5.0201).

**Categories of Teaching Elders Membership in Presbytery include:**

1. **Validated Ministry:** a teaching elder engaged in active service as defined above.
2. **Member-at-Large:** a teaching elder who has previously been engaged in a validated ministry and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all five criteria in G-2.0503a.
  - a. Ministers between calls
  - b. Ministers fulfilling family responsibilities
  - c. Other individual circumstances recognized by the presbytery.

A member-at-large is instructed to comply with as many of the five criteria for validated ministry as possible. The important phrase here is "...without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry." The *Book of Order* is very clear that active members must fulfill all five criteria and that members-at-large must comply with as many of the five criteria as possible.

3. **Honorably Retired:** Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age or physical or mental disability.

**The Standing Rules of the Presbytery of West Jersey as amended by this policy include these provisions:**

- 311 It is the duty of all teaching elders engaged in validated ministry, commissioned ruling elders, and at-large teaching elder members in residence to be present at all stated meetings of Presbytery. Honorably Retired teaching elders who are serving congregations in supply, interim or installed positions are to attend presbytery meetings while they are in service. Excuses for absence from Stated Meetings shall be required from all teaching elders, except those who have been honorably retired and those laboring outside the bounds of Presbytery. Excuses from teaching elders and churches not sending elder commissioners must be made in writing to the Stated Clerk no later than seven days after the meeting in question.
- 312 Teaching elders engaged in validated ministries, at-large members, and honorably retired teaching elders serving a congregation in supply, interim, or installed positions and commissioned ruling elders shall be liable to censure of the Presbytery when they do not attend a minimum of two stated meetings in a calendar year without rendering satisfactory reasons.



**Therefore**, it is the policy of the Presbytery of West Jersey that if a teaching elder whose duty it is to attend presbytery meetings or a commissioned ruling elder does not attend a minimum of two stated meetings in a calendar year without providing satisfactory reason:

1. a letter of censure will be sent by the Stated Clerk to the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder.
2. the name of the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder will be read during the January report of the Committee on Ministry.
3. if the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder is serving a church within the bounds of the presbytery, a letter will be sent to the session of the church noting the absences, the obligations of serving as a member of the Presbytery of West Jersey, and a request that the session counsel with the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder concerning his or her vows to be active in the life of the larger church.
4. if the teaching elder is a member-at-large and does not attend a minimum of two stated meetings in a calendar year without satisfactory excuse, the Committee on Ministry, through its appropriate subcommittee, shall counsel with the teaching elder to encourage a return to active participation.
5. A teaching elder whom the presbytery determines no longer to be engaged in a validated ministry (G-2.0503a) or to fulfill the criteria for membership-at-large (G-2.0503b), and who is not honorably retired (G-2.0503C) shall not have voice or vote in meetings of the presbytery, except when the matter under consideration pertains to his or her relationship to the presbytery. Names of such persons shall be reported annually to the presbytery by the stated clerk. If after three years the teaching elder does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, the presbytery may delete that person's name from the roll of membership and, upon request of a session, dismiss that person to a congregation. (G-2.0508).

## **CHURCHES**

Serving in the governing bodies of the Church is part of the vows of ordination for ruling elders. Each ruling elder is asked: "Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church...?" (W-4.4003i).

The Presbyterian system of government is connectional in nature, depending on both teaching elders and ruling elders to participate in equal number in the decision making of the church at all levels, working together for the good of the Church and for the proclamation of the gospel.

For that reason, the Stated Clerk of presbytery is required to make an annual parity report to presbytery at its January meeting and to suggest a method for redressing the imbalance of teaching elder and ruling elder participation in presbytery meetings.

**The Standing Rules of the Presbytery of West Jersey as amended by this policy include these provisions:**

- 313 It is the duty of each session to designate one or more ruling elder commissioner(s) to each stated meeting of Presbytery in accordance with the parity report of the Stated Clerk. Excuses for absence from Stated Meetings shall be required of duly elected ruling elder commissioners and shall be made in writing to the Stated Clerk no later than seven days after the meeting in question.
- 314 When a church has not been represented in Presbytery by a ruling elder at a minimum of two stated meetings in a calendar year without rendering satisfactory reasons, it shall be recorded in the minutes of Presbytery as delinquent and shall be notified of that fact by the Stated Clerk.

**Therefore,** it is the policy of the Presbytery of West Jersey that if a church is not represented by a ruling elder commissioner at a minimum of two stated meetings in a calendar year without providing satisfactory reason:

1. the name of the church will be read during the January report of the Committee on Ministry.
2. a letter will be sent by the Stated Clerk to the session of the church noting the absences, the obligations of serving as ruling elders of a church of the Presbytery of West Jersey, and offering the counsel of the Committee on Ministry with the session concerning its obligation to be active in the government of the whole church.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Following the September stated meeting, the Stated Clerk shall notify the Committee on Ministry and the Executive Presbyter of those teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders, and churches who have attended fewer than two Presbytery meetings in that calendar year to provide adequate time for pastoral follow-up with those who are in danger of being delinquent.

The Presbytery shall be careful to take into account special reasons for inability to attend its meetings, especially in cases of illness, financial hardship, continuing education, and family responsibilities. However, it remains the responsibility of teaching elders and churches to request from the office of the Stated Clerk excuses from stated meetings of Presbytery.

**Policy for Gracious Dismissal**  
**The Presbytery of West Jersey**  
**Adopted on September 15, 2015**

PREAMBLE

The mission of the Presbytery of West Jersey is “to nurture the Christian faith, life and common witness of our congregations and pastors. Open to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we seek fresh ways to serve and grow; praying that in and through us God will make all things new.”

We are called to nurture the Christian faith even when we encounter differences among us that cannot be mended. Dismissal to another Reformed denomination becomes a consideration when there is irreconcilable disagreement on issues essential to life and faith. The 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (Commissioner’s Resolution Item 04-28), urged, “that presbyteries and synods develop and make available to lower governing bodies and local congregations a process that exercises the responsibility and power ‘to divide, dismiss or dissolve churches in consultation with their members’ (Book of Order G-11.0103i) with consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, openness and transparency.”

When potential separation is the issue at hand it is easy to emphasize the property trust responsibilities of presbytery oversight to the exclusion of the pastoral responsibility of caring for all members and friends of a particular church. It is also easy to set aside the responsibility of public witness to Christ within the larger body of Christ, the community and the world. This policy seeks to address these considerations and one more: that our presbytery should be consistent in communicating how we will respond to congregations seeking dismissal and that all parties shall engage in a grace and Spirit-filled exchange.

## DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF WORK

The Presbytery of West Jersey is sensitive to the fact that a local session may be concerned that its mission no longer fits with that of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and may request dialogue regarding possible division, dismissal or dissolution. The following definitions shall apply when these terms are used in this policy. Division is the existence of an apparent irreconcilable disagreement within a congregation or between a congregation and the denomination. A division may be resolved by reconciliation, creating two churches from one, one or both of which may remain in the PC(USA), or dismissal. Dismissal is the decision to regretfully make the way clear for a particular church to leave the Presbytery of West Jersey to become part of another denomination in the Reformed tradition. Dissolution is the decision to close a church within the bounds of the Presbytery. Creating two churches from one and dissolution are governed by policies separate from this one. The Presbytery of West Jersey hereby establishes this process for responding to a request from a congregation to assist in dealing with division. If mending the division is not possible after faithful execution of the steps outlined in this process, the presbytery may guide the congregation through a discernment process that may lead to dismissal. This process is based on the following principles outlined in the resolution adopted by the 2008 General Assembly.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Consistency:** The local authority delegated to presbyteries is guided and shaped by our shared faith, service and witness to Jesus Christ. We are reminded that any action taken to dismiss a congregation is an act of the presbytery, supported by the congregation and consistent, we earnestly pray, with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

**Pastoral Responsibility:** The requirement in G-3.0301 to consult with the members of a church seeking dismissal highlights the presbytery's responsibility as well as the responsibility of the called and installed pastor(s) to encourage dialogue, to ensure that everyone who wishes to participate in the dialogue and decision-making has an opportunity to do so, to guarantee that everyone's opinion on the issues at hand is heard and respected and that no one is intimidated, cajoled or forced to take a point of view that does not represent the work of the Holy Spirit in their individual lives as they perceive it.

**Accountability:** For a governing body, accountability rightly dictates fiduciary and connectional concerns, raising general issues of property (G-4.02) and specific issues of schism within a congregation (G-4.0207) But full accountability also requires preeminent concern for ‘caring for the flock’, both members of the flock who seek dismissal and those who wish to keep the church fully intact.

**Gracious Witness:** Scripture and the Holy Spirit require a gracious witness from us rather than a harsh legalism. We believe that trying to exercise this responsibility and power through litigation alone is deadly to the cause of Christ.

**Openness and Transparency:** Early, open communication and transparency about principles, process, meetings, agenda, and invitations to participate in every discussion necessarily serve truth, order and goodness and work against seeking civil litigation as a solution.

In consideration of all of these items the following steps are presented to the West Jersey Presbytery for prayerful consideration.

**STEP 1: CALL TO DISCERNMENT** Recommended Timeframe: 1 month

Our first task is joint discernment which is the careful Spirit-centered sifting of all the options that might be considered to deal with division. A Session desiring to initiate this part of the process shall put the matter to vote of the Ruling Elders. If a significant majority (in excess of two-thirds) of the Session votes to initiate joint discernment, the Clerk of Session shall notify the Stated Clerk of the presbytery in writing.

Differences that are deemed to be of sufficient importance to seek joint discernment must be articulated by the Session in a position paper of not less than 2 pages and not more than 5 pages in length. Such a paper is as significant in the life of a congregation as a Mission Study. It must include a clear grasp of the current and target demographics of the church membership; an understanding of the ministry of the church to which it is called by God including a clear delineation of how current issues impede the fulfillment of this ministry; an explicated list of the immediate doctrinal, theological and/or governmental concerns of the Session; and a statement detailing how the peace, unity and growth of the congregation is jeopardized by the division. This position paper must be approved by a significant majority (in excess of two-thirds) of the Session and forwarded

within 10 days of the Session vote to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The Session vote and the Position Paper may be submitted concurrently.

The Presbytery Council, in consultation with COM, the Moderator, the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, the Pastor of the congregation and the Clerk of Session of the congregation will convene a Listening Task Force (LTF) of 6 persons comprised of both teaching and ruling elders; 3 from the presbytery and 3 from the Session. The LTF is a covenant community comprised of presbytery and congregation members who seek God's will for the particular church initiating this process through intense prayer, focused dialogue and complete attentiveness to and care for one another. Every effort will be made to consider the pastoral care needs of the Teaching and Ruling Elder(s).

The LTF will be convened within one month of the Stated Clerk's receipt of the Session Position Paper.

**STEP 2: THE WORK OF THE LTF** Recommended Timeframe: 3 months

The LTF is called to engage in a thorough and respectful dialogue so that a mutual, complete and Spirit-fueled understanding of the issues on the hearts of the members of the presbytery and the members of the congregation concerning division might be understood. Unity in the Holy Spirit and unity in the path forward to which God is calling both parties, presbytery and church, is the goal. Reconciliation, healing and restoration is the hope for this portion of the process. This hope can be nurtured by a series of opportunities for open and honest discussion between all parties.

The first meeting(s) of the LTF will focus on praying for the Lord's leading, introductions, listening to each person's concerns, clarifying questions on the Session Position Paper and actively opening every mind and heart to how the Spirit is moving in this dialogue space. When the LTF determines they are ready, it will meet with the entire Session of the church to ensure further and deeper understanding of the issues and to widen the space for prayer. When the LTF and the Session determine they are ready, a minimum of two Town Hall meetings with the congregation will be called. These meetings will be called according to the congregation's usual practice (detailed in their by-laws if applicable) for arranging such gatherings. Every member of the congregation will receive an invitation to these Town Hall meetings via a letter or email to each household. The first Town

Hall will include a presentation of the Session Position Paper and an update on the work of the LTF to date. The second Town Hall will include a significant portion of time for questions and answers from the congregation. If desired, and at any time during the congregation-inclusion phase, up to two (2) members of the congregation, not active on the current Session, recommended by Session and appointed by Presbytery Council, may be added to the LTF to participate in the work of the LTF as non-voting members. The LTF may schedule an additional Town Hall to facilitate this participation.

Within four weeks after the last Town Hall the LTF will prepare and submit a report to the Presbytery detailing the results of their discernment process and a suggested path forward. This report shall first be presented to Session for review and vote. If the suggested path forward is for the congregation to remain in the PC(USA), the report shall also include a request for any help needed from the Presbytery to ensure healing. The Presbytery recognizes that just the matter of addressing a division and raising important questions may cause wounds. Once this request for support from the Presbytery has been fulfilled, this process is concluded.

Should the Session disagree with the LTF recommendation, or should the vote on the LTF be deadlocked, the matter moves to the floor of Presbytery for resolution as a priority item.

If the suggested path forward is to seek dismissal, the report must include a list of those church members who do not wish to separate from the PC(USA). This list is transmitted directly to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery and is confidential. This is requested so that there is a clear understanding of those families who wish to remain in the PC(USA) so that new church homes might be found for them, so that helpful pastoral care from the PC(USA) might be made available to them through the forthcoming transition period and/or to discern if there is a viable PC(USA) congregation among those who seek gracious dismissal. Once the final LTF report, accompanied by the congregation count, is submitted to the Presbytery, a copy of this same report shall be sent by paper or e-mail to every household in the congregation. Then the process moves to Step 3.

**STEP 3: THE WORK OF THE RESOLUTION TASK FORCE (RTF)**  
Recommended Time frame: 3 months

The RTF is convened by presbytery in the event of a final report from the LTF that recommends that the path forward for the congregation is dismissal from the PC(USA). The RTF shall consist of 5 members, 3 representing the Presbytery and two from the congregation. The Moderator of the RTF shall not be the pastor of the congregation. The RTF members, one of whom shall be designated as Moderator, are appointed by Presbytery Council in consultation with COM, the Moderator of the Presbytery, the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk in consultation with the Teaching Elder and the Clerk of Session. The RTF will prepare the specific terms of dismissal to recommend to the Presbytery. Members of all congregations are reminded that the final decision to dismiss a congregation is made by the Presbytery. The Presbytery is subject only to the leading of Jesus Christ, as head of the church, as expressed and understood through the work of the Holy Spirit, in making its final decision.

Items for consideration by the RTF include the following. These considerations are not mandated, but are suggested so that all might be the most gracious witnesses in a difficult process.

(1) Payment of Per Capita

It is suggested that all cumulative, outstanding per capita be paid in full.

(2) Sustaining Per Capita

An additional sum based upon the current active membership reported in the most recent Annual Statistical Report may be contributed for the next five years on a sliding scale as payment to the West Jersey Presbytery so that the presbytery can gradually adjust to the loss in revenue necessary to sustain its ministries. Once this annual figure is established, 100% is paid in the first year of separation; 80% in the second year; 60% in the third year, 40% in the fourth year and 20% in the fifth year. This may be paid annually or satisfied at any time within the first five years of separation in a lump sum payment.

(3) Debt

Identification and satisfaction in full of any debt owed to any commercial or ecclesiastical institution shall be documented. Such documentation must ensure that neither the West Jersey Presbytery or the PC(USA) are guarantor of any congregation's financial obligations.

(4) Name



The present name of the congregation, with the consent of the West Jersey Presbytery, may be used in the future so long as all reference to the PC(USA) is removed.

(5) Members, Rolls, Registers, Minutes and Records

This report must include a plan for re-locating members who wish to remain in the PC(USA) to new church homes. Pastors of receiving churches should be involved in the reception and assimilation details ensuring that new members feel both welcome and wanted in a new church. Original rolls, registers, minutes and historical records related to the life of the congregation as part of the PC(USA) will be turned over to the West Jersey Presbytery. The congregation may copy these records prior to transmission or pay a third party to copy them.

(6) Disposition of Property

The fair market value of the real estate of the departing congregation shall be determined by the RTF through an appraisal. The West Jersey Presbytery and the departing congregation will share the cost of an appraisal. The Presbytery Stated Clerk shall provide the RTF with resources to assist them in conducting the appraisal. An audit of the financial records shall be conducted to establish the value of all financial assets and liabilities including bank accounts, unrestricted endowment funds, stocks and other investments. The Disposition of restricted endowment funds will be reviewed to ensure that the intentions of the donors continue to be honored. The RTF may also consider the value of the fixtures and furnishings, including but not limited to, pews, pulpits, communion table and ware, baptismal font, musical instruments, office equipment and other furnishings, equipment and supplies. The RTF is particularly charged to consider the interests of the entire PC(USA) as beneficiary of the property which the congregation holds in trust for the PC(USA). The RTF is also particularly charged to equip the congregation to be recommended for dismissal with resources sufficient to sustain its ministry, assuming it is to continue at its current location. To these ends the RTF may recommend a dismissal payment to the West Jersey Presbytery reflecting a faithful portion of the value of all assets combined according to the considerations outlined above.

(7) If Property is Sold or Congregation Leaves New Denomination

If the congregation dismissed by presbytery separates from the body to which it is dismissed within five years from leaving the PC (USA); or if the departing congregation sells its property within five years of leaving the PC(USA), the congregation owes the PC(USA) a total of 50% of the value of

all assets combined according to the fair market value assessment of the RTF. This means that if the congregation made a dismissal payment of 10% of fair market value of assets and separates from its new denomination or sells its property within five years, the Presbytery of West Jersey is due an additional payment of 40% of the dismissal fair market value within 30 days of either alternative action.

(8) Administrative and Legal Costs

The departing congregation may be asked to cover all administrative and legal costs of the West Jersey Presbytery associated with its dismissal.

STEP 4: CONGREGATION ADVISORY VOTE ON RTF TERMS

Recommended Timeframe: 1 month

Upon the conclusion of the work of the RTF, the RTF shall invite all members of the congregation to two Town Hall meetings. At the first, the RTF report shall be presented and the RTF shall respond to any questions that the congregation may have concerning the report and its implications. The second meeting shall occur two weeks later. The purpose of this meeting shall be to ascertain the opinion of the congregation regarding the RTF's recommendations. This opinion shall be obtained through the medium of paper ballots, which shall present a simple choice: 'in favor of' or 'not in favor of' the RTF's recommendations. The results of the congregational advisory vote shall be reported to the presbytery. The results of this consultation do not constitute the final decision concerning dismissal. The final decision to dismiss the congregation is made solely by the presbytery, which is subject to the leading of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

STEP 5: PRESBYTERY VOTE ON DISMISSAL

Recommended Timeframe: 1 month

At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the West Jersey Presbytery the presbytery shall hear the final report of the RTF. The presbytery may discuss the report and recommendation in full during the first reading. The matter will be decided by a simple majority vote of the Presbytery at the second reading of the report. If the decision to dismiss is passed, the departing church will move immediately to satisfy all financial obligations to the Presbytery. Once these terms have been met, the process moves to its final stage.

STEP 6: GRACIOUS DISMISSAL

If the vote for separation passes and all financial obligations are satisfied, the church will be dismissed by the Presbytery of West Jersey as an act of worship. Thanksgiving will be given to the time we were privileged to be partners in ministry. A blessing will be given to the church that is leaving and the churches that remain. As part of that worship, the historical contribution that both parties have made to their common ministry will be celebrated. The Presbytery and the departing church will enter into a new covenant that promotes grace, mercy, forgiveness, peace, a renewed commitment to the mission of the church of Jesus Christ and the understanding that the door to reconciliation remains open eternally. Encouragement toward the day when God will reconcile all of us to himself will be our final word of hope to each other.

**Approved September 19, 2017**

The responsibilities and duties of the Council shall be as follows:

1. The Council shall coordinate the meetings of the Presbytery including the recommendation of a proposed agenda for each meeting of Presbytery.
2. The Council shall consult with the Presbytery committees, commissions, and task forces giving advice and counsel to them regarding their stated duties.
3. The Council shall coordinate the work of the Presbytery committees, commissions, and task forces as they relate to areas of mutual concern and areas of potential duplication of effort.
4. The Council shall review all requests for expenditures of Presbytery funds beyond those included in the annual budgets of Presbytery and report recommendations to Presbytery regarding these requests prior to their consideration by Presbytery.
5. The Council shall nominate annually or as need the chairpersons of standing committees, commissions, and task forces.
6. The Council shall organize subcommittees and task forces responsible to Council as deemed necessary by the Council to carry out its duties and responsibilities.
7. The Council shall consider an administrative budget for the following calendar year and recommend to Presbytery an equitable apportionment among the churches to fund the administrative budget.

**PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY**

**COMMISSION ON MINISTRY –MANUAL OF OPERATIONS**

## Adopted September 19, 2017

The responsibilities of the Commission on Ministry shall be to seek to support the mission and ministry of the presbytery, report all actions taken and fulfil the responsibilities listed in the Book of Order G-2.05, G-2.08, G-2.09, G-2.10 and G-3.03 by:

- a. Serving as pastor and counselor to the Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (MWS) (also known as teaching elders), commissioned pastors (also known as CRE) and Certified Christian Educators of the presbytery; facilitating the relations between congregations, MWS, CRE and Certified Christian Educators and the presbytery; and settling difficulties on behalf of the presbytery when possible and expedient.
- b. Exercising oversight of churches without pastors and MWS without churches in accordance with presbytery's policies.
- c. Acting with the authority of presbytery to:
  1. Find in order calls issued by churches;
  2. approve and present calls for MWS;
  3. approve the commission of a ruling elder to limited pastoral service within a particular congregation and annually review such commissions;
  4. approve the examination of the MWS transferring from other presbyteries as required by the Book of Order (G-3.0307);
  5. dissolve the pastoral relationships in cases where the congregation and the pastor concur;
  6. grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of presbytery;
  7. dismiss MWS to other presbyteries;
  8. appoint moderators for vacant churches or when the session is without a moderator;
  9. annually review the work of all MWS engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation and the status of member-at-large MWS and designate membership status for the coming year for all such MWS;
  10. grant non-congregationally based MWS permission to administer the sacraments within their validated ministries provided that their validated ministry has been reviewed and approved by Commission on Ministry within the past year;
  10. approve the requests of MWS to be designated honorably retired;
  11. maintain a pulpit supply list for the use of congregations needing to fill their pulpit on a particular Sunday;
  12. approve administrative commissions for the purpose of ordaining and/or installing MWS;
  13. evaluate the adequacy of the terms of call of the MWS and Certified Christian Educators and CRE annually;
  14. consult with Stated Clerk on pastors needing Boundary Training and annually monitor compliance with the Boundary Training policy;
  15. express presbytery's concern for those receiving pensions and their relationship with the Presbyterian Board of Pensions;
  16. serve as presbytery's agent to military and institutional chaplains;
  17. process all applications for credentials of persons from other denominations prior to any consideration of the applicant by a church within the presbytery in consultation with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry;

18. promote and encourage the continuing education of the presbytery's clergy, commissioned pastors, and CCE's and promote their mental and spiritual health;
19. consult when requested with other committees or commissions of the Presbytery;
20. approve the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Summer Chapels.

**The Commission on Ministry may refer above items to Presbytery as needed.**

**All such actions must be reported at the next stated meeting of Presbytery and may be reversed by Presbytery.**

**The Commission on Ministry shall also:**

1. Recommend to Presbytery minimum requirements for pastoral compensation.
2. Recommend to Presbytery an ethics policy regarding the relationship between congregations and their former pastors and monitoring compliance with the policy.
3. Make recommendations to Presbytery regarding the requested dissolution of pastoral relationships where either pastor or congregation do not concur.
4. Present for approval to Presbytery calls for pastoral service to Candidates certified ready to receive a call.
5. Present for approval to the Presbytery any other policies it deems beneficial to its work.

Commission on Ministry  
West Jersey Presbytery

Adopted September 19, 2017

Few circumstances in their professional lives challenge Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (hereafter referred to as "pastors" in this document) to exercise more wisdom and judgment than the ones raised when leaving a congregation. Somewhat ironically, the most difficult transitions are often those

involving congregations in which the pastor has been warmly loved and appreciated. In addition to making a professional move, the pastor and her/his family are leaving supportive friends and community. The dynamics of the transition involve many in addition to the pastor and family, including the congregation, the session and staff, and certainly the new pastor or interim pastor who will soon begin to fill the void. When the transition involves the retirement of a pastor who elects to remain in the community and perhaps even in the community of the church, the issues become even more complex and challenging.

The *Book of Order* offers brief but important guidance in the matter of transitions: (G-2.0905) *“After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.”*

While such transitions involve a number of entities (sessions, congregations, etc.), COM believes that the burden of responsibility for creating a healthy transition lies primarily with the professional behavior of the pastor who is leaving. Pastors must view the process of separation and transition as perhaps a final, but critical part of their ministry to the congregation they have served. Not to do so and act accordingly is a violation of professional ethics.

Practically, the exiting pastor must work to educate the session and congregation on the Presbyterian understanding of the transition. She/he ought to take great care in expressing her/his support of the process and the role that presbytery plays in it. Emotionally and spiritually, the exiting pastor can play a positive role in the welcome the interim or installed pastor will receive. Explaining the process and the reasons for it will also assist the exiting pastor in drawing and maintaining proper boundaries. The former pastor who works to make a good and positive transition also leaves the congregation with a final and selfless example of the love and care of the Good Shepherd for the beloved flock.

The following are brief guidelines based on the *Book of Order* and growing out of the experience of the COM. Representatives of the COM may review this policy statement with each pastor who is leaving/retiring from a congregation in the West Jersey Presbytery. The information below will also be presented to the Session of the congregation affected by the move (prior to the election of a PNC) as a part of the transition meeting conducted by the Stated Clerk. In addition, a pastoral letter regarding these guidelines shall be shared with the congregation. A sample letter and liturgy crafted by the Commission is attached.

### **The Presbytery of West Jersey**

### **Ethics for the Retiring/Departing Pastor**

**Adopted September 19, 2017**

When Presbytery dissolves the pastoral relationship, that relationship is ended. Only the pastor duly installed by Presbytery or the pastor approved by the Presbytery for temporary service is authorized to perform pastoral duties among a particular congregation.

a. The **retiring** pastor should make known his/her intentions with the Session of the church between 3 and 6 months prior to the retirement date. This allows the Session time to begin planning how to proceed for the interim time without a called pastor and to find ways to celebrate the ministry of the retiring pastor in such a way as to provide a fitting and mutually satisfactory good-bye. The retiring pastor should also be in contact with the Commission on Ministry (COM) and the Executive Presbyter as to his/her plans for retirement.

b. The departing pastor should make known his/her intentions as soon as possible to facilitate the actions that are needed to terminate the pastoral relationship.

c. The retiring/departing pastor should draft a letter to the congregation that explains to them the upcoming retirement/departure and the fact that the pastoral relationship ceases upon retirement/departure and that the functions of the pastor for that congregation are ended. This should be accomplished in a firm but pastoral manner. A sample letter is attached to this policy.

d. If a retiring/departing pastor moves to another community the following actions are advised:

1. It is essential to refrain from all pastoral contact, **including electronic and social media.**
2. The retired/departed pastor shall remain sensitive to possible tensions that can arise from his/her presence within the congregation. The retired/departed pastor should make every effort to be supportive of his/her successor. Contacts from members of the former congregation shall always be referred to the Moderator of the session of the church.

e. And if a retiring/departing pastor remains in the community, these **special guidelines** also need to be followed:

1. It is **strongly recommended** that the retired/departed pastor become active in the work and worship of another congregation.
2. A former pastor shall refrain from all pastoral functions and not accept any leadership responsibilities in his/her former church, including: teaching, visitation, or pulpit supply.
3. A former pastor shall refrain from formal or informal participation in our comment on the work of a pastor nominating committee (PNC).
4. Any invitations to participate in weddings or funerals or special services for members of the church should be taken under advisement with the stipulation that the former pastor assists and does not officiate. This invitation shall come from the Moderator of Session, with the approval of the COM.
5. The conducting of funerals of non-members, defined as "persons never connected with the congregation," might continue to be done, so long as the services do not occur in any place other than the funeral home or cemetery.
6. Weddings shall not be performed, given the context of the need for approval of weddings by the council of the church.

f. A former pastor may not continue to live in a manse or church-provided housing following the



termination date of service, nor may purchase said housing without the permission of the Commission on Ministry. Exceptions to this may be only in short-term, extenuating circumstances, not to exceed one month.

**Guidelines for the Congregation of the Retiring/Departing Pastor**

- a. Members of the congregation should not request a former pastor to perform pastoral duties.
- b. While there continues to be a bond of affection between members and the former pastor, members should not discuss, nor should the former pastor encourage discussion about, church business, issues, personalities, or events.
- c. Congregations should be encouraged to celebrate with the retiring/departing pastor the achievements within his/her time in the church and the parting should be within the bounds of mutual affection, admiration, and respect.

**The Role of the Commission on Ministry**

- a. The COM shall receive the request for retirement or departure and shall counsel the pastor in regard to the necessary steps forward to begin the process of closure with the congregation. In the case of retirement, the COM will counsel on the application for Pension benefits and determining whether to grant Honorably Retired status to the retiring pastor, with the retirement being approved by the Presbytery, as per the *Book of Order*.
- b. The COM shall counsel the Session of the church as to procedures necessary for calling interim pastors and called pastors and for providing continuing pastoral care for members of the congregation.
- c. The COM shall enforce the above statement for guidelines for retiring/departing pastors and shall respond immediately to any complaints involving the above statement for guidelines by counseling with the retired pastor and the congregation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission on Ministry

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Revised 9/2017**

**2018 COMPENSATION POLICY  
PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY**

## 2018 Base effective salary \$50,995 – 1%

### **Policy Summary**

Every church of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is obligated to review annually with its pastor(s) the adequacy of his/her/their compensation (Book of Order G-2.0804). Additionally, by the action of the General Assembly, each Presbytery may set minimal salary requirements and has the power to enforce such standards. It is the policy of the Presbytery of West Jersey that its member churches shall provide equitable compensation of pastors and shall meet or exceed the minimum amounts specified for certain of the terms included in the compensation package. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Ministry to propose these minima to the Presbytery for approval. Also, the Committee on Ministry conducts a salary review early in each calendar year to determine the compliance of the compensation with the minima. In situations where the Presbytery minima are not met, full approval of the compensation package is withheld until the situation is corrected.

This policy defines minimum compensation for full-time positions. Part-time minimum compensation is adjusted by the percentage of full-time worked. Full-time is defined as 48 hours per week.

### **Minimum Compensation Requirements:**

The following table summarizes the minimum requirement for annual pastor compensation, Mandatory adjustments apply to these figures.

Part Time Adjustment (PTA) indicates the percentage of the full-time figure (part time hours/48).

	<b>Full Time (48 hrs/week)</b>	<b>Part Time</b>
Effective salary	\$50,995	FT * PTA
Vouchered expense account	\$3,000	FT * PTA
Continuing education	2 weeks	2 weeks
Continuing education expenses	\$750	\$750
Pension and Medical Dues	Full	Full

Details are provided below. It is recommended that congregations use the Pastor or Associate Pastor Compensation Spreadsheets to determine the exact minimum requirements. These spreadsheets are available on the Presbytery web site.

## **Definitions for the Compensation**

**Effective Salary** is the amount the church pays the pastor in Salary and Housing, plus any other payments to the pastor, except (1) professional expenses reimbursed through an expense account; (2) SECA Relief (up to 50% of a minister's SECA obligation); (3) honoraria; (4) pension dues and (5) premiums paid for additional group medical coverage. (In effect; the amount on which dues must be paid to the Board of Pensions.)

**Base Effective Salary:** The figure set for the year by presbytery as the minimum Effective Salary for a pastor, not including the mandatory adjustments, such as for experience and congregation size (see below). The Base Effective Salary for a full time position for 2018 is \$50,995. No church may extend a call for less than this base, plus the required Adjustment Factors, during 2018.

**Salary:** The cash salary paid to the pastor, plus any deferred compensation such as annuities. For calls including a manse, the **Cash Salary** must equal at least the **Effective Salary** divided by 1.3. (70% of the effective salary)

**Deferred Compensation:** Payments the church makes into a plan, other than the Presbyterian Pension plan, from which the pastor will later derive income.

**Housing:** Either the housing allowance provided by the church or the "fair rent value" of the manse provided by the church. A value of 30% of the effective salary is typically used.

**Fair Rent Value:** As defined by the Board of Pensions on Page 9 of the publication "Understanding Effective Salary, August 2012. It is part of effective salary for pastors living in manses, and is not subject to federal income tax. However, it is subject to self-employment tax. **Fair Rent Value** is the fair market value of the use of the manse and utilities.

**Housing Allowance:** The portion of **Effective Salary** designated to pay housing expenses.

**Professional Expense Account:** An amount designated in the terms of call for reimbursement to the pastor for particular professional expenses. Expense accounts of at least \$3,000/yr are required in the terms of call for automobile. Other expenses may be added. Expenses to be reimbursed must be stated in the Session minutes prior to the start of the year covered by the terms of call. Expense items are not to be paid in cash as part of compensation. They will be paid by approved voucher only.

**Adjustments:** The two factors used to adjust the **Base** upward to obtain the minimum **Effective Salary** for a particular pastor or associate pastor. (Discussed later in document)

**SECA (Self Employment Compensation Act):** The pastor's Social Security payments, as required by the IRS, as a self-employed person. Most pastors are covered by the **Self-Employment Compensation Act** (Social Security). This means pastors are regarded, for Social Security purposes, as self-employed.

As such, they pay the full Social Security tax rather than splitting the 15.3% tax with their employer. While churches may not pay half of the Social Security tax (FICA) for pastors as for other employees, churches may elect to provide **SECA Relief**.

**SECA Relief:** An amount paid to the pastor toward his/her payment of the Self Employment (Social Security) tax. **SECA Relief** is not required in the terms of call, but consideration of it is encouraged by the Committee on Ministry. Pension dues are not paid on SECA Relief so long as it does not exceed 50% of the pastor's SECA obligation. Any amount of compensation above that 50% is subject to pension dues. **SECA Relief** does not count in **Effective Salary**, nor may it be used instead of full payment of minimum **Cash Salary**. For income tax purposes, **SECA Relief** is considered to be salary. Income tax and SECA tax must be paid on SECA Relief.

**Honoraria:** Sums given (not by the church) to the pastor in appreciation of professional services. They are not included in **Effective Salary**.

**Pension Dues:** paid by the church on the pastor's **Effective Salary**: For 2018, the rate is 37% of Effective Salary (25% for medical coverage, 1% for death + disability, and 11% for pension). Installed Pastors is greater than 20 hours is mandatory.

**All pastors currently in called positions participating in the Board of Pensions shall continue to provide that coverage at the same level. All new calls and contracts are open for negotiation. Of primary interest is ensuring that the pastor has medical coverage through the Board of Pensions, an exchange or spouse medical plan. This will be part of negotiation between COM, the pastor and the congregation. Other forms of benefits will be open for discussion.**

**Employers are urged to talk to the Board of Pensions directly for their particular participation plan.**

**Additional Medical Coverage:** Under recent changes approved by the General Assembly, direct payment by the church to the pastor for medical expenses not paid by the pension plan because of the deductible are to be included in **Effective Salary**. Payments into a group medical plan (third party) are not however in **Effective Salary**, and are exempt from dues.

**Vacation:** All calls [pastor positions] shall include a minimum vacation of 4 hours per week (for a total of 4.3 weeks for the year). Earned vacation time must be taken within a particular calendar year, In very unusual circumstances earned vacation time may be taken in the following calendar year with prior approval of the Session. The vacation can be taken in shorter segments with prior Session approval, but no more than five Sundays may be used.

**Continuing Education:** All calls, shall contain a minimum of **two weeks leave with full salary each year** for the purpose of continuing education. A **reimbursement expense account of at least \$750 per year** shall be included. Continuing education time cannot be extended past three years (thus providing a maximum six week period for study). Scheduling the leave time shall be arranged in consultation with the Session, and postponing continuing education time from one year to another must be done with prior approval of the Session. **This will be paid by voucher and not given as cash compensation.**

**Sick Leave: Full time** Pastors and associates are entitled to ten (10) working days of sick leave each calendar year, cumulative up to one hundred and twenty (120) days. No compensation shall be provided for unused sick leave.

**This shall be prorated for part time depending on the terms of the contract (three days a week means 6 sick days a year, etc.)**

**Leave of Absence:** These policy statements represent a **minimally equitable policy** on leaves of absence. It is anticipated that individual churches will not feel limited by them and will respond to the need for pastoral leaves of absence responsibly and generously:

1. **Medically Certified Disability:** Pastors who are, according to certification of a licensed physician, temporarily disabled shall receive full effective salary and pension for a period of such disability, not to exceed 13 weeks, at which time if disability continues, application may be made for disability benefits from the Board of Pensions for members of the Pension Plan. This policy shall apply to all medically certified disability, including pregnancy and pregnancy-related disability.
2. **Parental Leave:** Upon the birth or adoption of a child, the Session or appropriate governing body shall grant a pastor parental leave. The length of leave (recommended 12 weeks, minimum of 8 weeks) shall be determined by the Session or appropriate governing body. The leave typically begins at birth or placement of a child. An earlier start date may be considered in consultation with the pastor, physician, and Session or appropriate governing body. The expectant or adoptive parent shall inform the Session or appropriate governing body as soon as they are medically or legally capable to allow the session or appropriate governing body adequate time to find leave coverage. During this parental leave period, the pastor shall receive full effective salary plus full Pension dues. In the event the family has a pregnancy with medical complications, the pastor shall make arrangements for additional leave with the Session or appropriate governing body, under the terms of the **Medically Certified Disability** paragraph of this policy.
3. **Voluntary Personal Leave:** In addition to the paid leave provided in **Medically Certified Disability** and **Parental Leave** paragraphs of this policy, a pastor may, on request, be granted unpaid leave of up to eight weeks for convalescence and recuperation. Also, a pastor may, on request, be granted unpaid leave of up to eight weeks for family or child care and similar personal situations. During such voluntary leave times, the church shall pay pension dues on the full effective salary specified in the call.
4. **Granting Leaves of Absence:** Whenever a **Leave of Absence** is granted by a church the Commission on Ministry shall be notified as to the time and terms agreed upon. The Commission on Ministry will, on request, provide consultative services for churches involved in problems relating to the granting of **Leaves of Absence**.

**Guidelines for Pulpit Supply Fees: 2018 = \$168.00.** A guest preacher shall be paid an honorarium and in addition be reimbursed for travel expenses. The minimum honorarium for one service shall be at least one-third of one percent (0.33%) of the Presbytery's **Minimum Effective Salary**. Example: 2018 Presbytery minimum base \$50,995 x 0.0033 = \$168.00. For additional services on the same day the honorarium should be increased by \$50.00 per service.

**Moderators of Sessions without a Pastor:** Pastors who are requested to moderate a session meeting or a congregational meeting when a congregation is without a pastor shall normally be paid an Honorarium of \$60.00 per meeting in addition to normal travel expenses. If there is any question, please contact the Presbytery office for additional guidance.

**Part-Time Pastors:** Part-time Pastors shall be compensated similarly to full-time pastors with salary and other forms of compensation being proportional to the amount of time agreed upon compared to the time requirements of a full-time position. All details of the agreement shall be entered into the call. The fraction of full-time is to be stated in the call. The Presbytery uses Hours as the unit of measurement of a pastor's work load. (A reminder) The average full-time is 48 hours a week. Half-time is thus 24 hours.

#### **Determination of Minimum Compensation**

The Salary Policy seeks to assure that all parish pastors are paid equitably. With this purpose in mind, minimum **Adjusted Base** salary levels have been established.

Every year the Presbytery sets a (minimum) **Base Effective Salary** to which all **Adjustment Factors** are added to calculate the minimum **Total Compensation**. Any change of base, such as a cost-of-living increase, is passed on to all pastors.

The **Base Effective Salary** includes all the elements that make up a pastor's **Total Compensation** (value of the use of manse, including utilities, and cash salary; or housing allowance, including utilities, and cash salary).

A. **Pastors:** Two adjustments are required to determine the pastor's **Adjusted Base** (minimum compensation):

1. The base must be increased one-third of one percent (0.33%) for each year of pastoral service since the pastor's ordination. This is called the **Experience Adjustment**. (Example: 15 years of service increases the base by 5%). This experience adjustment does not increase after thirty years when the base adjustment reaches 10%.

2. The base must be increased 1/10 of one percent (0.001) for each active church member in excess of one hundred. This is called the **Size Adjustment**. (Example: Pastor's church has 300 members. Subtracting 100 gives a figure of 200, which is then multiplied by 0.001 to give an adjustment of

0.20 (20%). The **Size Adjustment** does not increase beyond 600 members, when it reaches .50 (50%).

B. **Associate Pastors** are to be called at not less than the minimum salary plus one-third of one percent of the minimum for each year of service since ordination.

After the initial call, the minimum for a given year will be based on the **Presbytery Base Effective Salary** for that year **modified by the two adjustments listed below.**

1. Same as the **Experience Adjustment** for #1 solo pastors.
2. The base adjustment must be increased 3% for each year served as an associate pastor in the calling church. This is called the **Tenure Adjustment**. (Example: An associate pastor has completed 6 years in the calling church. This means that the tenure adjustment is equal to 3% (0.03) per year multiplied by 6 years, giving an adjustment of 18% (0.18). Additionally, the associate pastor was ordained 12 years ago which requires a 4% (0.04) experience adjustment. The pastor's adjusted base thus becomes 1.22.

When the adjustment factor reaches 1.60, no further increase occurs for any pastor or associate pastor. For associate pastors this limit occurs in 17 to 18 years.

No pastor may be called to a church for a total effective compensation which is less than that specified by this salary policy.

**Pastors with a housing allowance provided** are to be paid in cash, part of which is salary and the remainder is designated "housing allowance." This designation of the amount that is housing allowance by the appropriate church board is important to assure its non-taxable status. The adjusted base, described above, is the minimum amount that a pastor receiving a housing allowance can be paid.

**Pastors provided with the use of a manse** are compensated with salary (including deferred payments) plus "fair rent value" for the manse (including utilities). The sum is called **Effective Salary**.

## **GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS' CONTINUING EDUCATION AND STUDY LEAVE**

The Compensation Policy for Pastors of the Presbytery of West Jersey provides for two weeks annual study leave. Planned continuing education is of great value in helping ministers maintain and improve the skills required for their ministry. The Presbytery of West Jersey expects its ministers to use their study leave and participate in planned continuing education each year as provided by their terms of call.

The Presbytery has adopted on May 16, 2000, the following guidelines for use by pastors and churches or employing agencies in providing annual continuing education or study leave:

1. Study leave time and expenses may be used annually or accumulated in accordance with the terms of call. The money and time budgeted for continuing education shall be used only for continuing education as defined in the terms of call. Study leave time and expenses may be accumulated up to three years, but require prior approval of session.
2. Study leave time may not be used for vacation purposes.
3. Travel, food, lodging, registration, and related expenses incurred during study leave are reimbursable expenses for continuing education. Churches are strongly encouraged to provide sufficient funds to cover adequate expenses for two weeks of study leave.
4. In addition to study leave expenses as provided in the terms of call, the church or employing agency shall:
  - a. Continue the pastor's full negotiated salary
  - b. Pay the cost of pulpit supply (one Sunday for each weeks of study leave used by the pastor; normally the Sunday following the study leave time)
  - c. Pay for any other necessary pastoral services during the study leave time.
5. While ministers are ordinarily free to choose the nature of and location of their study leave, ministers are strongly encouraged to report to both their session and congregation about their use of study leave time.
6. Study time credit accrues to an individual pastor in direct relation to the call to a particular church. Should the pastor accept a call to another church or employing organization, any study time credit that has been earned in a particular ministry setting he or she is leaving shall automatically be forfeited and shall have no cash surrender value.

**GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL COMPENSATION  
IN THE PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY  
(November 2002)**

The following guidelines are intended to assist churches in providing adequate and appropriate compensation for their pastors and associate pastors. The assumption is that these churches are paying more than the presbytery minimum and are looking for help in assessing what is suitable and honorable for their ministers of word and sacrament. The considerations presented here are suggestive; they are not required. Churches are encouraged to consider these guidelines in going beyond the compensation minimums as adjusted for experience and congregational size.



A. Comparable Positions

The work of a pastor is unlike any other. Nevertheless, there are similarities to some other kinds of work that may help churches to establish a basis of comparison. There are several factors to consider.

1. Education required

Pastors and associate pastors must have a master of divinity or its equivalent in order to be ordained.

2. Skills required

Some of the basic skills needed in order to serve as a pastor or associate pastor include public speaking, teaching, counseling, program development, managing and administration, as well as possessing and continuously enhancing the core knowledge of theology and biblical interpretation.

3. Public image

Pastors continually relate to the public as role models and spokespersons.

B. Job Complexity

While all pastors work diligently, often sacrificing free time and serving at unusual hours, the degree of difficulty and the types of skills required vary considerably from position to position. The following factors illustrate some of the differences.

1. Staff oversight

The number of paid and volunteer staff who are directly supervised

2. Program oversight

The number and significance of programs for which the pastor is directly or indirectly responsible

3. Ministry to individuals

The number of persons – children, youth and adult – to whom the pastor or associate pastor is expected to give regular pastoral care

4. Special competencies

Skills for the particular position beyond what is generally required of pastors: This may include giftedness in youth ministry, ability to engage in community development, unusual excellence in preaching, high administrative and managerial expertise, etc.

B. Base salary

Applying all of the factors above regarding comparable positions and job complexity should enable churches to arrive at a base salary for their pastor and associate pastor positions. In a few cases, an honest evaluation for the position will rate it at the presbytery minimum. In a few cases at the other extreme, the evaluation will determine that the position is worth three or four times the presbytery minimum. After carefully assessing the base salary for that position, churches should weigh the value of personal advancement and achievement, as described below.

- C. Advancement and achievement  
Pastors and associate pastors should be rewarded for continuing faithfulness and increasing competence in their work. The following factors should be considered in addition to any cost of living increase the church may offer.
1. Experience  
Churches should recognize the value of the number of years in ordained ministry, and in some cases, other work prior to ordination, that contribute to improvement in the quality of ministry. Various presbyteries have recommended an increase above the base salary between 1/3 and one percent per year since ordination.
  2. Tenure  
Continuity in the same position is generally valuable for the church, since the disruption of changing the pastoral leader and the loss of experienced and knowledgeable ministry during the search period are costly to a church's ongoing ministry. Churches may decide to reward tenure in the same congregation either by a set factor each year or by special financial recognition at other regular intervals.
  3. Education  
An advanced degree beyond the master of divinity increases the pastor's effectiveness and is rightly rewarded by churches. In addition, the prudent use of continuing education opportunities may have added special competencies which, while no additional degree was rewarded nevertheless increases the value of the pastor's work.
  4. Exceptional contribution  
In certain years a pastor or associate pastor may have rendered unusually effective service to the church, which the church will want to recognize with a one-time bonus.
- B. Other ways to honor pastors  
In addition to an appropriate salary, churches should consider other ways to lighten the load of their pastors and associate pastors.
1. Ample funds for professional expenses  
Too often pastors forego expenditures for books, subscriptions, business meals, or continuing education, or else they purchase such items out of their own pockets, because the church does not set a reasonable figure for professional expenses.
  2. Home equity allowance  
When churches provide a manse, it is always appropriate to provide some means for the pastor or associate pastor to build up an equity account that can be used in the future for housing or retirement.
  3. Reimbursement of medical or dental expenses  
Payment of medical deductibles or dental expenses is another way to provide additional income to the pastor or associate pastor. Such payments should either be included within

effective salary (subject to tax and pension/medical dues) or arranged through additional third-party insurance.

4. Increased leave for continuing education  
While two weeks per year for continuing education is the norm, an additional week may be highly valued by certain pastors.
5. Additional vacation and days off  
After a certain number of years the church may provide additional vacation or additional Sundays free from pastoral responsibility.
6. Sabbatical  
A sabbatical policy offers significant time away for study and personal refreshment after a certain number of years of service in the same church. Presbytery adopted a Sabbatical Leave Policy in 2008 and should be followed.

B. General principle

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor,\* especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. (I Timothy 5:17 NRSV)

\*or compensation (see footnote in NRSV)

This admonition raises questions about pastoral compensation. Surely, it means churches should be eager to pay their pastors as much as they can, rather than as little as the presbytery permits. There is the first and primary question: Are we trying to pay as well as we can or to get away with paying only what we must? What is our attitude toward our pastor and toward his or her compensation?

What does the consideration of “double honor” mean in a church whose members are not wealthy or affluent but struggle financially themselves? How can they compensate their pastor fairly and generously, not begrudgingly or jealously? In a church with many affluent or wealthy members, the pastor may be one of the more poorly paid people. At least, the compensation should reflect the living costs in the area, but some further questions need to be asked. Should the pastor have to scrape by while the church members live very well? How do we decide what someone’s work is worth to us? Is it merely a matter of “the going rate?” How do we value what the pastor does, and how does that value translate into compensating the pastor fairly and faithfully?

The minimum terms of call may be helpful as starting points, but the admonition from the New Testament requires of us both attitudes and actions that go well beyond meeting minimums to satisfy the presbytery. A better goal would be to have the satisfaction of knowing pastors are being paid, not minimally, but appropriately and well.

## **The Finance Committee of the Presbytery of West Jersey Manual**

**Approved September 19, 2017**

The responsibilities and duties of the Finance Committee shall be as follows:

### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Oversee the monthly Financial Statements
2. Recommend changes to the chart of accounts or approve recommendations of the bookkeeper.
3. Report financial status to the trustees and the Presbytery at each meeting.
4. Identify two people annually to audit the accounts and ensure it is completed in a timely manner.
5. Report status of annual audit to the Council for inclusion in their minutes.

### ANNUAL BUDGET

1. Review the current and future needs of the presbytery and compile a budget to present to the Presbytery Council for approval in September.

### INVESTMENTS

1. Review the presbytery investments annually to ensure they still adhere to the Investment Policy.
2. Modify the investments as appropriate to ensure optimum income within the policy guidelines.
3. Review the Investment Policy annually to determine if it should be updated.

### INSURANCE

1. Review the presbytery insurance policy annually to ensure it remains current with the needs of the presbytery.
2. Every five years shop for a better policy in accordance with presbytery requirements.

### CONGREGATIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. Promulgate and distribute educational information to churches to assist them in maintaining good, efficient and responsible policies and procedures. Examples: Guidelines on handling church funds. Guidelines on finding and evaluating an adequate insurance policy. Et cetera.

### OTHER DUTIES

1. Review and ensure adherence to guidelines for Covenant Agreements between churches and other organizations not officially affiliated with that church which are renting space in their facilities.

Policies of the Finance Committee:

#### BILL PAYING

1. Authorized check signers will consist of the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and one member of the Finance Committee.
2. Only one signature is required on checks that are for approved recurring expenditures included in the mission and administrative budget.
3. Two signatures are required on all other checks.

**PERSONNEL POLICIES for  
THE PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY of the  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)  
(Effective 1 June 2015)**

These Personnel Policies have been designed as a guide to ensure consistent, fair and uniform treatment of all employees; it is not a contract between any employee and the Presbytery, and the Presbytery has the right to modify its policies, both written and unwritten, at any time as it deems to be appropriate.

THE PRESBYTERY IS AN AT-WILL EMPLOYER, WHICH MEANS THAT EMPLOYEES' EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESBYTERY IS FOR NO DEFINITE PERIOD AND MAY BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE AND WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE, AT THE WILL OF EITHER THE PRESBYTERY OR THE EMPLOYEE.

#### I. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

##### A. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Serve as Presbytery's Personnel Committee including personnel policy development, and receiving reports and staff reviews from the Executive Presbyter (hereinafter referred to as the EP).
2. Consult with the EP or the incumbent in that position, and Presbytery committees on personnel issues.

3. Develop with EP and propose to Presbytery a staffing pattern to effectively achieve the objectives and mission of the Presbytery.
4. Develop staff position descriptions consistent with approved staffing pattern.
5. Work under the EP, who, while an employee, is recognized as the head-of-staff and supervisor of all staff.
6. Develop personnel policies and procedures which comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, and are consistent with the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Presbytery of West Jersey.

B. MEMBERSHIP

Five (5) members, of whom two (2) shall be Teaching Elders and three (3) Ruling Elders. The EP shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee.

1. Rights:

- To establish basic work goals consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws and the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Presbytery of West Jersey.
- To establish and administer a personnel system which can meet the needs of the Presbytery.
- To establish an overall staffing pattern designed to achieve the basic goals of the Presbytery and to draft position descriptions and personnel qualifications required to meet these goals.
- To recommend alterations in the Presbytery's staffing pattern as needed.
- To establish and administer processes for compensation and benefits, evaluations or reviews, dismissals or terminations and all other phases of employment.
- To expect and encourage employees to be productive in their assigned functions and to exercise appropriate discipline when necessary.
- To establish rules necessary to govern the working environment and conditions.
- To amend, modify or change these personnel policies at any time.

2. Responsibilities:

- To be faithful to the purposes and mission of the Presbytery. To establish and maintain open communication with employees on matters concerning their employment and the interests of the Presbytery.
- To assure that the policies and administration of the personnel system are consistent with the applicable federal, state and local laws.
- To provide equal opportunity for all employees consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws.
- To provide adequate and equitable compensation to all employees.

II.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

A. EMPLOYER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To provide suitable working conditions.

- To establish and administer a process for the hearing and resolution of complaints and/or concerns which cannot be resolved by the EP as the supervisor of staff.

### 3. Expectations of Employees:

- To give the best performance in his/her assigned functions.
- To understand his/her role and functions in the context of the mission and purposes of the Presbytery.
- To take initiative to insure that employee opinion is presented to the appropriate forum dealing with the personnel system.
- To honor the commitment to work goals and objectives agreed upon by his/her participation in the personnel system.
- To suggest possible improvements concerning staff functions, and act in accordance with the Presbytery's rules and regulations.
- To maintain a procedures manual for his/her position in consultation with the EP.

## B. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Presbytery affirms its commitment to equal opportunity for all individuals. Decisions about recruiting, hiring, training, promotions, compensations, benefits, and similar employment decisions will be made in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Consequently, there shall be no inequity nor discrimination in areas of: race, creed, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, religious affiliation (except in positions where religious affiliation is determined by the Presbytery to be a bona fide qualification for employment), nor physical, mental or medical disability unrelated to the ability to perform the functions required by the position.

## C. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND CHILD PROTECTION

The Presbytery prohibits, and will not tolerate sexual harassment. This policy applies to sexual harassment by members of the same gender as well as opposite genders. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;



- submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a factor in employment decisions affecting an individual; or
- the conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's employment or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment environment.

Some examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the circumstances, include but are not limited to, the following:

- repeated and unwelcome suggestions regarding, or invitations to, social engagements or social events; or
- any indication, expressed or implied, that any aspect of employment conditions, depends or may depend on the granting of sexual favors or on a willingness to accept or tolerate conduct or communication of a sexual nature; or
- unwelcome or coerced physical proximity or physical contact which is of a sexual nature or sexually motivated; or
- the deliberate use of offensive or demeaning terms which have a sexual connotation; or
- inappropriate remarks of a sexual nature.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been sexually harassed by another employee, a supervisor, or any other person encountered in the course of employment should report that conduct immediately to his or her supervisor, to a Member of the Personnel Committee, or to the EP.

Every complaint or report of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated. Although investigations will be conducted with sensitivity to confidentiality issues, investigative information will be communicated as appropriate to those who have a need to know. If the investigation indicates that a violation of this policy has occurred, timely and appropriate action will be taken.

Within the first year of employment all employees are required to participate in Sexual Misconduct and Child Protection learning opportunities sponsored by the Presbytery and will be required to sign off on the Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct and Child Protection Policies, which indicates agreement to uphold the policies and will refrain from prohibited behaviors.

All full-time, part-time and contract employees and volunteers shall abide by the Policy on Personal Boundaries and Sexual Harassment and Child Protection Policy of the Presbytery of

West Jersey.

Retaliation or reprisal against employees who report sexual harassment claims or child protection claims, or who participate in investigations of sexual harassment or child protection claims is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any violation of this policy will be treated as a serious matter and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

#### D. HARASSMENT

The Presbytery prohibits, and will not tolerate, conduct that shows hostility or an aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other applicable classification prohibited by law, and that:

- has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
- has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Some examples of conduct which may constitute harassment, depending on the circumstances, include, but are not limited to the following:

- epithets or slurs; or
- threatening or intimidating acts; or
- written or graphic material; or
- written, verbal or physical acts that purport to be jokes or pranks.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been harassed by another employee, a supervisor, or any other person encountered in the course of employment should report that conduct immediately to his or her supervisor, to a Member of the Personnel Committee, or to the EP.

Every complaint or report of harassment will be promptly investigated. Although investigations will be conducted with sensitivity to confidentiality issues, investigative information will be communicated as appropriate to those who have a need to know. If the investigation indicates that a violation of this policy has occurred, timely and appropriate action will be taken.

Retaliation or reprisal against employees who report harassment claims, or who

participate in investigations of harassment claims is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any violation of this policy will be treated as a serious matter and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## E. INTERNET POLICY

The Presbytery provides Internet access (including e-mail) to its staff members and to assist and facilitate business communications and work-related research. These services are for legitimate business communications and work-related research. These services are for legitimate business use only in the course of assigned duties. All materials, information and software created, transmitted, downloaded or stored on the Presbytery's computer system are the property of the Presbytery and may be accessed only by authorized personnel.

The Presbytery prohibits and will not tolerate inappropriate use of the Internet. Inappropriate Internet use includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- transmitting obscene, harassing, offensive or unprofessional messages;
- accessing, displaying, downloading, or distributing any offensive or inappropriate messages including those containing racial slurs, sexual connotations or offensive comments about race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other classification protected by applicable law;
- transmitting any of the Presbytery's confidential or proprietary information, including member data or other materials covered by the Presbytery's confidentiality policy.

The Presbytery reserves the right to monitor employee use of the e-mail system or the Internet at any time. Employees should not consider their Internet usage or e-mail communications on the Presbytery's time or computer systems to be private. Personal passwords are not an assurance of confidentiality, and the Internet itself is not secure.

Any software or other material downloaded into the Presbytery's computers may be used only in ways consistent with the licenses and copyrights of the vendors, authors or owners of the material. Prior written authorization from the EP is required before introducing any software into the Presbytery's computer system.

Only authorized staff members may communicate on the Internet on behalf of the Presbytery. Employees must not express their opinions or personal views in such a way as to suggest that he or she is speaking on behalf of the Presbytery. Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## F. CONFIDENTIALITY

During the course of their employment with the Presbytery, employees may have access to information of a sensitive or confidential nature. All employees are in a position of trust and

have an obligation to the Presbytery and to those persons to whom we minister. The strictest confidentiality of such information must be maintained. Unauthorized use or disclosure, even if inadvertent, compromises both the Employee and the Presbytery and can seriously erode the

confidence of others. Information regarding the Presbytery and persons to whom we minister are to remain confidential, both during the term of an employee's employment and after an employee is no longer employed by the Presbytery.

G. MEDIA INQUIRIES

All requests for information about the Presbytery from newspapers, television, radio, or other media should be directed to the EP. An appropriate response to a media inquiry would be, "I'm not the best person to answer that question. May I contact the appropriate person and have that individual get back to you?"

H. COMPENSATION

The Presbytery shall establish and administer a compensation program that is fair and equitable and compliant with applicable federal, state and local wage and hour laws.

I. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

The Presbytery shall establish and administer a process whereby authorized expenses incurred by employees in the performance of their assigned functions are reimbursed through a uniform voucher system.

J. EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES. TERMINOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Exempt and Non-Exempt Categories

In accordance with the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable State laws and local wage and hour laws, there are "exempt" and "non-exempt" positions of employment. Employees who are subject to federal, state or local wage and hour laws are referred to as "non-exempt" employees. Those in administrative, management, or supervisory positions who are not subject to such regulation are referred to as "exempt" employees.

The normal work week for full-time employees is 28 hours. Normal office hours are 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Thursday. The EP is responsible for scheduling a 7-hour work day with appropriate time for lunch. Persons employed in non-exempt positions shall be reimbursed for any hours worked in excess of 28 hours per week by receiving compensatory time off. Compensatory time must be approved by EP prior to accumulating and/or receiving time off. Compensatory time must be used within one calendar year from the time it is earned. For any hours worked over 40 hours per week, compensatory time will be paid at one and a half hours.

Persons employed in exempt positions are not paid overtime wages.

No employees (exempt or non-exempt) are covered by unemployment insurance.

## 2. Teaching Elders

In accordance with Federal and State statutes and Church policy, ordained clergy are considered "self-employed persons" under provisions for Social Security. However, for income tax purposes Teaching Elders are not "self-employed persons", and their eligible income will be reported on W-2 Forms to the Federal and State Internal Revenue Service. They are not subject to withholding of certain taxes, nor are they covered by government unemployment insurance. They are, however, included in all other policies which apply to "exempt employees" except where excluded by Federal or State law.

## 3. Elected Executive Staff

- a) All Presbytery executive staff shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of the Form of Government of the PCUSA and the Standing Rules of the Presbytery.
- b) Election of the EP, Stated Clerk, and other full-time executive staff shall be at the will of the Presbytery.

## 4. Benefits

Non-exempt staff who work a regular schedule of 28 hours per week are entitled to benefits including credit toward vacation and sick leave. Employees who work less than 28 hours per week, or who are employed intermittently, shall be considered "part-time" with limited benefits, or "temporary" employees, not eligible for benefits. If an employee is not sure of his or her classification, please ask the EP.

## 5. Term Of Employment

Unless an employee is elected for a specific term, or has a contract designating the term of employment, all employment is at the will of the Presbytery.

### K. POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

A position description, subject to periodic review, shall be required for every position (exempt and non-exempt), and approved by the Personnel Committee. Position descriptions shall be kept current and shall be reviewed and altered when necessary.

### L. CALLS FOR TEACHING ELDERS

All staff members who are Teaching Elders of the PCUSA shall be provided with a written call stating the terms of employment. Such call is to be prepared by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.



In accordance with the Form of Government of the PCUSA, changes in the terms of the call or contract of ordained staff must be approved by the Presbytery.

#### M. SALARY ADMINISTRATION

Salaries of all positions (exempt and non-exempt) shall be recommended by the EP for approval by the Personnel Committee and the Presbytery.

#### N. PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Generally, annual reviews of the EP and the Stated Clerk will be conducted by the Personnel Committee and reported to the Presbytery. Performance review and evaluation of all other staff shall be conducted by the EP and reported to the Personnel Committee, generally on an annual basis.

Generally, six-month reviews of performance for newly hired EP and Stated Clerk will be conducted by the Personnel Committee and reported to the Presbytery.

Generally, a three-month review of performance for all other newly hired staff will be conducted by the EP and reported to the Personnel Committee.

#### O. PERSONNEL RECORDS

A complete file for each employee shall be maintained in the office of the EP. Such files are confidential, with access limited to the EP, the Personnel Committee, the individual for whom the file is maintained, and anyone authorized by the Presbytery in personnel matters.

Personnel files shall be maintained for at least 5 years following separation from employment. Employees shall have access to their own file in the presence of the EP or his/her designee. After the 5 year period from the employee's separation, the files will be maintained in with the records of the PCUSA Historical Society.

#### P. SEPARATION POLICIES

The term "separation" shall refer to any termination of the relationship between employee, exempt or non-exempt, and the Presbytery as employer.

##### 1. Voluntary Separation

The Presbytery requests that it be provided with two weeks written notice for non-exempt employees, or four weeks written notice for exempt employees whenever possible. At the discretion of the EP, however, the period of written notice may be waived. Employees shall receive the cash equivalent of their unused earned vacation time at the date of separation. Personal Time Off and accrued Sick Time will not be reimbursed.

## 2. Termination of Employment

The Presbytery endeavors to provide two weeks written notice of employment termination for non-exempt employees, or four weeks written notice for exempt employees when appropriate and possible. As set forth above, THE PRESBYTERY IS AN AT-WILL EMPLOYER, WHICH MEANS THAT EMPLOYEES' EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESBYTERY IS FOR NO DEFINITE PERIOD AND MAY BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE AND WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE, AT THE WILL OF EITHER THE PRESBYTERY OR THE EMPLOYEE. This paragraph is not intended to, and does not, alter the nature of the at-will relationship.

Cause for dismissal may include, **but are not limited to:**

- a) Unsatisfactory performance;
- b) Insubordination, including, but not limited to, refusal to day any work function which the employee is capable of doing, and which falls within the scope of his/her position description;
- c) Misuse of Presbytery property or funds;
- d) Unexcused absence;
- e) Tardiness;
- f) Sexual misconduct;
- g) Violation of or failure to observe employer policies and practices;
- h) Dishonest or unethical conduct;
- i) Illegal conduct; and/or
- j) Any other conduct deemed to constitute cause.

## 3. Paid Administrative Leave

If allegations of sexual misconduct by a Teaching Elder on the staff of the Presbytery are received, the provisions of the Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Policy regarding possible paid administrative leave shall apply.

## 4. Reduction In Force

Separation due to reduction in force because of the discontinuation of a project, or

retrenchment in budget, or for other circumstances arising out of no fault of the employee, is at

the discretion of the Presbytery, as employer. Written notice of such separation shall come from the EP and the Personnel Committee.

#### 5. Death In Service

For employees who are covered by the Benefits Plan of the PCUSA, death benefits are provided through the Benefits Plan, PCUSA.

#### 6. Exit Interview

Prior to the employee's separation, for any reason, an employee may be invited to, but not required to, attend an exit interview. The exit interviews are a personnel process in which the employee who is being separated meets a member of the Personnel Committee and also with the EP to review the course of employment.

Additional purposes of the exit interview are:

- a) To demonstrate to the staff person the Presbytery's support and concern for the employee as a person.
- b) To obtain information which the Presbytery can use to improve employee- employer relations and communication.
- c) To obtain information which will influence the efforts of the Presbytery in seeking replacement personnel.
- d) To obtain information regarding changes and suggestions for said position.

### Q. BENEFITS

#### 1. Social Security

All non-clergy members of staff are covered by the Federal Old Age and Survivors Benefits Act, (Social Security). The employee's share of the tax is withheld from the wages of non-clergy members of staff, and is reported to the Internal Revenue Service.

#### 2. Pensions

All employees, exempt and non-exempt, may be covered under the terms of the Benefits Plan of the PCUSA for which dues are paid by the Presbytery as part of the employee's compensation package.

#### 3. Health Insurance

Health benefits may be provided for all employees working 20 or more hours a week

under the terms of Benefits Plan of the PCUSA. [A copy of the Benefits Plan of the PCUSA may be obtained at Board of Pensions.

4. Vacation (spacing issue)

Vacation with pay is provided for all employees. Employees are encouraged to use the vacation time to which they are entitled for their personal benefit as well as their work effectiveness and health. Consequently, vacation time is not cumulative, but must be used within the calendar year, except with special approval by the EP. While every attempt will be made to schedule vacation times as requested, the time of each employee's vacation must be approved by the EP

Vacation time for non-exempt employees will be calculated as earned, or pro-rated, according to length of service:

<u>Number of Years</u>	<u>Days' Vacation</u>	<u>Monthly Accrual</u>
0 to 5	8	.66 days
6 to 10	12	1 day
11 or more	16	1.33 days

All newly hired employees will be eligible for prorated vacation time for the calendar year in which hired following 3 months of employment.

Exempt employees' vacation time shall be granted as stipulated in the terms of their call or contract.

5. Holidays And Sick Leave

It shall be the policy to grant ten (10) holidays and four (4) days of sick leave per year. Sick time may be accumulated up to eight (8) days.

6. Worker's Compensation Insurance

All employees shall be covered by the Worker's Compensation Law of the State of New Jersey, which provides certain benefits in case of an on-the-job accident. Presbytery pays the premiums for such insurance.

7. Disability Benefits Insurance

Disability benefits for permanent and total disability are provided for those employees who are enrolled in the Traditional Benefits Plan of the

PCUSA after a 90-day waiting period. Employees covered by Social Security may receive Social Security disability benefits.

## 8. Leaves Of Absence

Leaves of absence may be provided when approved by the EP under the following circumstances:

- a) For a regular training period of the United States Armed Forces, up to 2 weeks per year.
- b) For jury duty, up to 2 weeks per year. (Pay for short term military duty or jury duty by an employee will be deducted from his/her salary.)
- c) For personal or family emergencies, e.g. bereavement, or personal business which cannot be attended to outside of working hours, up to 3 days per year.
- d) For maternity leave or adoption of a child, according to the Maternity Leave policy of the Presbytery.
- e) For paternity leave or adoption of a child, according to the Paternity Leave policy of the Presbytery.
- f) For required military service for an employee who has been employed by the Presbytery for at least 3 months. Upon return, effort will be made to place the employee in a position with the same seniority, status and salary as when he/she left.
- g) For personal reasons such as extended maternity/paternity leave or family responsibilities including bereavement. Extended leaves may be granted at the discretion of the EP in consultation with the Personnel Committee. Pension dues, annuity contributions, and health insurance premiums will not be paid by the Presbytery for any such leave exceeding 4 weeks.

Any other reason for which a leave of absence may be required under federal, state, or local law.

All requests for leaves of absence must be submitted to the EP for approval.

## R. OFFICE PROCEDURES

### 1. Hours

The normal work week for full-time employees is 28 hours. Normal office hours are 9:00



AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Thursday. The EP is responsible for scheduling a 7-hour work day with appropriate time for lunch

## 2. Employee Supervision

All personnel are under the supervision of the EP. Each employee is also part of the office "team", and may be called upon to perform functions other than his/her regular assignments. Assignment and coordination of the work in the Presbytery Office is the responsibility of the EP, except as noted otherwise in a job description.

### RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

These Personnel Policies are presented as a matter of information only and are not to be construed as a contract between any employee and the presbytery. Employment and compensation can be terminated WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE AND WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE, at any time, at the option of either the Presbytery or the employee. Also, new situations develop constantly and it is understood that the Presbytery may change, rescind, or add to any policies, benefits, or practices as described herein, from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion with or without prior notice.

I will familiarize myself with the document in this handbook and agree to observe these policies in all respects.

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Personnel Policies for The Presbytery of West Jersey of the Presbyterian Church (USA) on the date shown below, have read it, have understood it, have had it explained to me if requested, and have had an opportunity to ask questions about it.

Employee's Name (Print):

Employee's Signature:

Date:

