

Guidelines for Retired Clergy and Clergy at Large

Clergy persons not formally serving in the congregational setting of the church may serve as a great resource for a congregation and current pastor. The effectiveness of such a relationship is predicated on great attention to appropriate boundaries both in word and deed.

Any clergy person (retired, clergy at large, inactive, clergy working in other ministries) desiring to become a regular presence in a specific Presbyterian congregation shall at their earliest convenience make an appointment with the Moderator of the Session to discuss becoming part of the worshipping community. Such public acknowledgement is a courtesy to the pastor and the congregation. The Moderator and the clergy person shall determine as specifically as possible the boundaries of the relationship. Possible descriptions may include:

1. To worship weekly with no public role or acknowledgement as clergy
2. To serve as back up on open Sundays as needed
3. To serve as hospital chaplain in emergencies
4. To teach regularly or occasionally in Bible Study
5. To lead a yearly retreat
6. To assist as needed
7. To help with shut in members or elder
8. To help with a specialized ministry or mission

A document shall be written that describes the relationship and boundary understandings. It shall be presented to the Session for their information, input, and approval. The document is to be reviewed with the Moderator annually and approved by the Session annually. It can be amended as needed if things change.

In the event of a new Moderator the agreement is null and void and will have to be renegotiated.

Breeches of the agreement should be brought to the moderator and dealt with as directly and quickly as possible to ward off any breakdown of relationship or communication. Clear communication between the moderator and individual to determine the truth of the situation can help ward off difficulties. In the event of situations that cannot be resolved locally, the CoM will be consulted.

A new pastor developing a relationship with the congregation will expect and be expected to preside over all liturgical functions for the first year. Retired clergy, Clergy at Large, and other ordained ministers need to be clear about the appropriateness of this boundary if approached by members, and after the first year has passed, participation shall be by specific invitation from the Moderator of the Session. Receiving an invitation from the moderator of the session is a time honored practice that insures a strong relationship between the installed pastor and the congregation.

G-2.0905 Officiate by Invitation Only. 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.