

## **Presbytery of San José**

### **POLICY: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONGREGATIONS AND FORMER PASTORS**

#### **Policy Statement**

A minister departing a church shall prepare the congregation for an orderly transition of pastoral responsibilities and communicate the limitations of his/her relationship with that congregation.

#### **Rationale**

It is important that the transference of loyalty and requests for service from a departing minister to an arriving minister be clearly communicated.

“COM shall serve as an instrument of presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between ministers and churches. . . . to the end that . . . the welfare of the particular church may be strengthened, that the unity of the body of Christ may be made manifest” (G-11.0502i)

#### **Committee on Ministry Responsibilities**

Upon notification of a minister’s intent to leave, COM shall remind the minister of his/her responsibilities as stated herein. COM shall conduct an exit interview with the departing minister to review his/her relationship with the congregation and assess the congregation’s current status. COM shall assist and advise the congregation throughout its period of pastoral transition.

#### **Minister Responsibilities**

1. When a minister leaves a church, the minister shall announce, both in writing and by public announcement, to the officers and the congregation that, after leaving the church, he or she is no longer their pastor, and is not available for pastoral services. Exceptions shall be only at the invitation of the current or interim pastor, after consultation with the parties concerned.
2. The departing minister should not attempt in any way to influence the church in the selection of a successor, or to influence the policies of the successor(s).
3. Visits to and within the former church community should be at a minimum, and the current or interim pastor should be called and apprised beforehand of the visit.
4. If the former minister is in contact with members of the congregation, there should be no criticism of the activities of the present pastor or other staff members.

5. If upon leaving the church, the minister continues to reside in the immediate area, he or she shall notify the local morticians that he/she is not to be contacted for funeral services connected with the church, but that such requests are to be directed through the current or interim pastor.

### **Session Responsibilities**

In the event of any incident with regard to a former minister, the session is encouraged to make written contact and counsel with COM.

### **Additional Responsibilities/Information**

N/A