

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FORMER PASTORS

Approved July 2026

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to clarify the role of the former pastor. *In the Book of Order, 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 the session."* A former pastor is former, not a present pastor, and shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of the session.

During any time period when the church is without a person in a pastoral role, the ruling elders shall call either the moderator or the presbytery office for guidance. This is to ensure that the church members receive adequate pastoral care. Please honor the former pastor's decision to sever ties with the congregation. The people of the congregation will need encouragement to move forward.

The secondary and equally important purpose of this policy is to enable the new pastor, no matter what kind of pastoral position this pastor occupies, to bond with the congregation.

This document shall be shared with the pastor and session by the representatives of the presbytery as soon as they hear of the proposed departure.

PASTOR PROVISIONS:

Since it is often difficult for a pastor and members of the congregation to break the bonds built over the years of ministry together, the Presbytery of Huntingdon requires all pastors as they leave the congregation to adhere to the following:

1. If I am called by a parishioner about a pastoral concern, I will explain that I can no longer be involved, and he/she should go to the moderator/pastor or session to let them know the concern.
2. If a member of the congregation approaches me with a concern about the present moderator/pastor, I will tell him or her to talk to the current moderator/pastor or session to let them know the concern.
3. If I am asked to officiate at a baptism, wedding, funeral or worship experience or provide pastoral care or any other kind of pastoral leadership, I will defer to the pastor/moderator.
4. The former pastor shall share this resolution with the session/congregation before the dissolution of the pastoral relationship is final. This agreement shall be reviewed with the pastor at the exit interview. The Committee on Ministry shall review this statement with the session at the first meeting after the pastor has left.
5. The pastor is required to acknowledge receipt of a copy of this policy and to signify her or his willingness to abide by its provisions by signing a copy of this policy and returning it to the presbytery office at the time of the conclusion of his or her pastoral relationship. The minister of Word and Sacrament or commissioned ruling elder may perform no further pastoral duties in this presbytery until this form has been signed and returned to the presbytery office.
6. Failure to abide by the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action and will result in note(s) being placed in the minister of Word and Sacrament's or commissioned ruling elder's presbytery files and will be communicated in reference checks.

I acknowledge receipt of the above policy and agree to abide by its provisions.

Signature of former pastor

Date

SESSION PROVISIONS:

1. It is the session's responsibility to provide pastoral care for the members of the congregation. They will refer members with need of pastoral services to the current pastor and/or moderator. At all times they will make clear that former pastors are not to be invited to provide pastoral services unless invited by the current pastor.
2. If the session receives information that a former pastor has been called by a parishioner about a pastoral concern, the ruling elders of the session will explain that the former pastor can no longer be involved and that the parishioner should contact the current moderator or pastor.
3. If a member of the congregation has a concern about the present moderator or pastor, he/she should be directed to contact the current pastor or session directly to let them know the concern.
4. The session is required to acknowledge receipt of this policy and to signify its willingness to abide by its provisions by signing a copy of this policy and returning it to the presbytery office at the conclusion of the pastoral relationship. The form will also be signed by a representative of the presbytery.

The session acknowledges receipt of the above policy and agrees to abide by its provisions.

Signature of clerk of session

Date of action