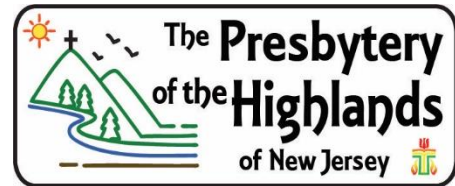


SEPARATION ETHICS COVENANT



By signing this form, the departing/retiring pastor (hereafter referred to as "former pastor") and the congregation, through the Clerk of the Session, indicate that after separation each party will seek to act in ways that promote the good health of the other. When questions arise as to whether certain interaction is appropriate, each party will discuss them with the COM liaison or the Presbytery Leader. Both sides affirm that although the relationships of friendship continue after departure, the pastoral relations do not.

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.*"

Ethics for the Former Pastor

1. It is essential to refrain from all pastoral contact in order to foster a healthy transition for both former pastor and congregation.
2. The former 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 present pastor or the Session of the church.
3. It is strongly recommended that the former pastor and his/her family become active in the work and worship of another congregation.
4. A former pastor shall refrain from all pastoral functions and not accept any leadership responsibilities in his/her former church including teaching, visitation, pulpit supply, weddings, funerals or baptisms. 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 only come from the new pastor.
5. A former pastor shall refrain from formal or informal participation in or comment on the work of a pastor nominating committee.
6. The conducting of funerals of nonmembers 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.
7. A former pastor should not participate in any in person or online church activities, including Sunday worship, unless specifically invited to do so by the new pastor.

8. For a former pastor, the following actions are advised:

- Refrain from all pastoral contact, **including electronic and social media.**
- Remain sensitive to possible tensions that can arise from his/her presence within the congregation. The former 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.

Ethics for the Congregation of the Former Pastor

1. Members of the congregation should not request a former pastor to perform pastoral duties nor invite the former pastor to in person or online church activities.
2. While there continues to be bonds 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.
3. Congregations are encouraged to celebrate with the former 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 Committee on Ministry

The COM shall enforce the above guidelines and shall respond immediately to any complaints involving the above guidelines by counseling with the former pastor and congregation.

Signed by

Clerk of Session _____

Date:

Print name:

Pastor _____

Date:

Print name:

COM liaison _____

Date:

Print name: