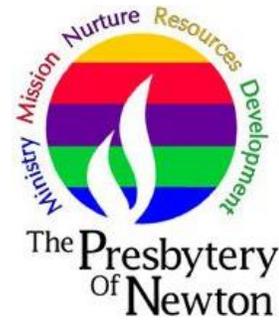


Pastoral Relationships in the Presbytery of Newton



Introduction

Our Book of Order tells us that “Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word.” **(F-1.0202)** “Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God’s new creation.” **(G-2.0101)**

Throughout human history God has called leaders to and from the faith community to lead the people of God. Abraham and Sarah, Moses, David, Andrew, Peter, James, Mary, Martha Paul, Lydia, and Timothy, just to name a few, were called to lead the people of God. Each leader was called to use his or her particular gifts in unique ways and at the same time these leaders had common purpose and focus of teaching the faithful and equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. (Eph 4:12)

As the Presbytery of Newton we recognize that God continues to call men and women to mission and ministry in unique ways and at the same time with common purpose and focus to teach the faithful and equip the saints for the work of the ministry. We express this recognition of God’s call to leaders through the following pastoral relationships:

Installed Pastoral Relationships

“The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A teaching elder may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.” **(G-2.0504a)**

When a teaching elder is installed to a full or part time designated term, the term shall be for not less than two nor more than four years. The call is renewable anytime during the last six months of the term and cannot be changed or dissolved except by consent of the presbytery, at the request of the pastor or at the request of the church by action of the congregation. Following the designated term and in consultation with the presbytery through the Committee on Ministry (hereafter “COM”) the designated pastor may be called by the congregation as the installed pastor for an indefinite period. **(cf BoO 2009-2011, G-14.0520)**

An installed pastoral relationship indicates that the call process between the congregation, pastor and presbytery has been completed with a public recognition of the new leadership.

When Teaching Elders are called as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation, they are to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commends the gospel to all persons and that communicates its joy and justice. **(G- 2.0504)**

Pastor

A teaching elder may be installed in a full time or part time pastoral relationship for an indefinite period (or for a designated term). The pastor's responsibilities are defined in **G- 2.0504**.

Associate Pastor

A teaching elder maybe installed in a full time or part time associate pastoral relationship for an indefinite period (or for a designated term) when a congregation determines that its strategy for mission and ministry requires an additional pastor(s). The duties of the associate pastor and the relationship between the associate pastor(s) of the congregation shall be determined by the session with the approval of the presbytery. The relationship of the associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor. The associate pastor is ordinarily not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation. (**G-2.0504a**)

Co-pastor

A teaching elder maybe installed as a full or part time co-pastor for an indefinite period of time (or for a designated term). When a congregation has two pastors serving as co-pastors, and the relationship of one them is dissolved, the other may remain as pastor. (**G-2.0504a**)

Bi-vocational pastor

A teaching elder may serve as a bi-vocational pastor. (A bi-vocational pastor is a person who has another occupation alongside serving in a pastoral relationship to a particular church. This can be a secular position or another type of validated ministry. In the past, the title "tentmaker" was used). A bi-vocational pastor may serve in an installed or covenant pastoral relationship.

Shared Pastor Position

From time to time, congregations may determine that their strategies for mission under the Word open them up to considering sharing pastoral services with a neighboring congregation. Following consultation with the COM and after a period of discernment led by representatives of the Missional Ministry Team (MMT), the sessions of the particular congregations may seek the approval of COM to call for congregational meetings to assess the level of support for a shared pastoral relationship. Upon a simple majority vote of each of the congregations, they shall then elect Pastor Nominating Committees (PNCs) to work together in creating Ministry Information Forms (MIFs) to be approved by COM. Although each MIF is unique to each congregation, each MIF shall clearly state that the two congregations are working together toward a shared pastoral relationship.

Following the approval of the MIFs the PNCs shall work in tandem toward the discernment of shared pastoral leadership.

Covenant Pastoral Relationships

When a church is without an installed pastor it may seek pastoral services by establishing a covenant pastoral relationship with the assistance of COM and the Presbytery Leader. Such covenant pastoral relationships may be established with a Teaching Elder or a Commissioned Ruling Elder as follows:

Transitional Pastor / Interim Pastor

A teaching elder with training in transitional/interim ministry maybe be called by the session to serve as transitional/interim pastor. The transitional/interim pastor prepares the congregation for its relationship with the next installed pastor.

Normally the Session writes a position description and preliminary terms of call which become the basis for COM recruitment of Transitional/Interim Pastors. The COM interviews potential candidates, does reference checks and the entrance interview before determining whether to forward candidates to the congregation's search committee or to the transitional/interim search committee. With the assistance of the COM liaison, the search committee does its own reference checking, listens to a sermon(s) and decides which candidate to present to session. Session votes to extend a covenant to the transitional/interim pastor. Terms are negotiated and the transitional/interim pastor begins at a mutually agreeable date. All terms of the covenant are approved by COM prior to the starting date of the transitional/interim pastor. A candidate certified ready for ordination may be considered for transitional/interim position after consultation with the candidate's Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) and the Presbytery of Newton's COM. **The transitional/interim pastor shall not be eligible for the Installed Position. In addition, Newton Presbytery requires Transitional/Interim Pastors to present certification of completing specialized training.**

Supply Pastors (Pastor, Assoc. Pastor, Co-Pastor, Bi-Vocational Pastor)

A teaching elder may serve as a Supply Pastor. The Supply Pastor provides pastoral leadership when a congregation does not intend to conduct a search for an installed pastor or is not capable of conducting a search as determined through consultation with session and COM. The process is similar to the process for transitional/interim pastors except the Supply Pastor does not have to present evidence of interim training, though such training would be an asset. A Supply Pastor covenant is written for a year, renewable annually. The Supply Pastor, in consultation with the session and COM leadership, shall determine goals and objectives for the congregation and report annually on the progress of the goals and objectives. First call Pastors are eligible for consideration for covenant supply positions.

On occasion, a teaching elder may serve as a short term Supply Pastor. Ordinarily this position involves a contract of 3-6 months, which may be renewed. This pastoral relationship is supportive when there has been trauma in the congregation or when the transitional time line looks short (i.e.

the next pastor is identified, but cannot move for a while; the interim has left a few months before a new pastor is identified; there is a sudden loss of pastoral services, etc.)

When the ministry of the Supply Pastor and the particular church thrives to such an extent that a review of the pastoral relationship is warranted, the Supply Pastor may become the permanent, installed pastor, upon the call of the congregation and concurring vote of the presbytery.

Commissioned Ruling Elder

A Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is a salaried or volunteer ruling elder interested in lay ministry, affirmed by his or her session, and trained and commissioned by the Newton Presbytery to pastoral service in a particular parish or congregation in the presbytery. Normally, a CRE provides pastoral leadership in congregations that are unable to secure pastoral leadership from an ordained teaching elder because of congregational size, geography, finances or language. CREs may also be commissioned to serve specialized ministries such as immigrant or emerging ministries. A CRE is not an ordained teaching elder, but is commissioned only to a particular congregation in Newton Presbytery and may not provide pastoral leadership or services outside of that commission or after the commission ends. As part of his or her commission, the COM will establish whether a CRE is authorized to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but may be renewed. The presbytery, through the COM, shall review the CRE commission at least annually.

Pulpit Supply

A pulpit Supply may be a teaching or ruling elder or candidate for ordination. (The Pulpit Supply list includes candidates under care of Newton Presbytery whom CPM has approved to preach. It also includes some ruling elders of the Presbytery who are trained to preach beyond their own congregational setting). A Pulpit Supply, as the name suggests, ordinarily provides worship leadership on a one-time basis for a particular church. The list of pulpit supply leaders is available through the presbytery office. COM has determined that criminal background checks shall be completed and on file for all those on the Newton Presbytery's Pulpit Supply List. In addition, those on the Pulpit Supply list shall have no more than two complaints from two different churches about their service as pulpit supply). Honoraria for pulpit supply and moderating sessions and meetings of congregations are set annually by the COM.

Parish Associate

A parish associate is a teaching elder who is retired or one who is in a validated ministry but does not have a pre-existing relationship with a particular congregation. The parish associate relationship is established by the session, in consultation with the COM. This position is without remuneration and does not require the approval of the presbytery.