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## **Presbytery of Detroit Committee on Ministry Leadership Model**

“The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. Human beings have no higher goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever, living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God’s mission.” (Book of Order, F-1.01)

From this foundation of our faith the Detroit Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry seeks to set forth a model of establishing relationships between our congregation and ministers through a liaison model of connection.

### **Role of Liaisons**

#### **Church Liaison Responsibilities**

- Liaison’s primary responsibility is to build familiarity and trust with the pastor(s)/ CRE, clerk of session and session of the church and to be responsive to their needs and questions as they arise.
- Conduct a session visit at least once every three years. When a church is in a pastoral transition, COM is consistently in touch with the congregation.
- Request copies of session agendas and minutes for an easy way to be in the loop on significant developments for prayer and encouragement.
- Visit (by phone or in person) with the pastors of your assigned congregation regularly (at least twice per year) to check-in and encourage.
- Worship at least once a year with the church. This is difficult when the liaison is a minister serving another congregation or in a different geography. In that case you will want to find another way of being together with the congregation for worship or a special event—maybe a picnic, special evening program, etc. If you are in a geographic locale that makes it difficult to visit in-person explore ways to connect remotely (due to COVID many churches are now providing video or audio recordings of their service)
- Receive and read church publications (newsletter, e-newsletter, website, Annual congregational report, etc.)
- Serve as liaison to Pastor Nominating Committee when your assigned congregation is searching for a pastor or associate pastor.
- Provide the COM Transitions Manual to the Session and PNC. When questions arise familiarize yourself with who from COM or Presbytery staff you can direct the questions to which you do not know the answer.
- Act as the primary liaison for communication between COM and congregation.

- Provide updates to Cluster co-chairs about church's ministry and developments as needed.
- Reach out to Cluster co-chairs regarding the congregation where additional support or guidance is necessary.

### **Liaison responsibilities when a church is in pastoral transition**

Purpose is to help session and PNC to lead congregation through a healthy good-bye to a full-term, fruitful pastoral calling.

- Be a stabilizing and consistent presence during pastoral transition.
  - ▣ Work with the session to encourage and equip their leadership through all stages of the transition:
    - Planning a healthy good-bye, resignation/retirement
    - Searching and contracting with interim/temporary pastors
    - Conducting mission studies
    - Electing the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)
  - ▣ Work with the PNC through its process of discernment and search:
    - Orienting the PNC to the PCUSA search process
    - Training the PNC to effectively work together
    - Advising on the development of the Ministry Information Form (MIF)
    - Encouraging PNC to explore diversity in potential candidates
    - Assisting PNC recruit pastor candidates through all effective channels
    - Praying with and for PNC as it seeks to discern who God has select to be the next pastor
- Help session and PNC anticipate next steps and make strong leadership decisions for congregational health and growth during the transition.
- Encourage and assist the new pastor, session, and congregation to begin a faithful, effective and fruitful ministry.

### **Role of Clusters**

The Committee on Ministry will organize its work in three geographic clusters. Each cluster will be facilitated by a teaching elder and a ruling elder and ideally in two different COM classes.

Clusters will meet regularly to hear updates from liaisons and to determine action items that will go to the Leadership Team. Cluster meetings should ordinarily be prior to COM meeting, and if possible accessible electronically.

Clusters will continue to appoint Session moderators, and approve pastoral contracts for interims and temporary pastors. Clusters will be charged to meet with interim pastors serving congregations in their cluster for updates and supervision.

When a congregation enters a pastoral transition and prepares to seek interim pastoral leadership, PIFs for the interim search will come from the presbytery via the General Presbyter or the COM Chair. The liaison will be the contact person with the interim search to provide PIFs through this process.

When a PNC proceeds to final candidate face to face interviews, the liaison is responsible for ensuring all candidates have passed an “exec check” before travel plans are made. The liaison and at least one other member of the cluster (ideally a ruling elder and a teaching elder as a pair if possible), the transfers coordinator and the general presbyter meet with each of the final candidates (ideally in person when the candidate is visiting but electronic meetings also work). Neither of the two COM members should have a relationship with the church or with the candidate. At that time, each final candidate will complete a background check release form. Those forms will be held until the PNC has discerned their first choice and at that time, the background check will be run on that candidate. The background check will be run by the presbytery staff and cost paid by presbytery funds. If there are concerns on the background check, the general presbyter will contact the liaison and the PNC to discuss next steps.

If there are no concerns, an offer is made. If the first candidate does not accept the call, the next candidate’s background check is run prior to an offer being made and the process repeats.

Clusters will also handle transfers for Teaching Elders coming to a previously-validated ministry in that region and for pastors who want to join “at large” and reside in that region. The cluster will consider any request for a new validated ministry in that region and will report a recommendation to the Leadership Team for final consideration.

When a congregation hires an interim or supply pastor, or calls a Teaching Elder, the liaison will be a primary contact for that new person.

Presbytery of Detroit  
Committee on Ministry Responsibilities

The Committee on Ministry's primary responsibility is faithfulness to God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. First and foremost, the Committee on Ministry is an expression of the church of Jesus Christ. The Committee on Ministry is a community of the Holy Spirit. In every deliberation, decision, and action, the Committee on Ministry seeks to embody the "one another's" of the New Testament.

One of the most telling examples of the connectional nature of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is the Committee on Ministry. We recognize we need each other to follow Jesus Christ. We need each other to discern God's will and intention. We need each other to decide the way forward. We need each other to serve as witnesses for God's love, grace and justice.

The Presbytery of Detroit calls and charges the Committee on Ministry to provide leadership and guidance to the Presbytery in the area of pastoral leadership.

- Through the Committee on Ministry, the Presbytery of Detroit ordains, installs, receives, transfers, dismisses, retires, removes and disciplines its members who are Teaching Elders.
- Through the Committee on Ministry, the Presbytery guides congregations in calling new Teaching Elders.
- Through the Committee on Ministry, the Presbytery provides moderators for congregations, commissions Ruling Elders to limited pastoral service, recommends temporary pastoral leadership for congregations, and oversees congregations without Teaching Elders.
- Through the Committee on Ministry, the Presbytery encourages, guides, and resources congregations in many other areas of ministry and mission.
- Through the Committee on Ministry, the Presbytery promotes peace and justice within congregations and inquiries into the source's difficulty and division.

**Guidelines for Operations**

- The Committee on Ministry consists of 30 people, in approximately equal numbers of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders.
- The quorum for a Committee on Ministry meeting is one-half of the active members plus one.
- A term is three years. Members may be nominated to serve a second consecutive term.
- The leadership structure is decided by the Committee on Ministry cabinet.
- The Committee on Ministry meets once a month and when called in special meeting.
- Presbytery Executives source the Committee on Ministry.

**A Committee of Ministry (COM) Liaison is appointed for every congregation.**

- All COM members serve as liaisons to congregations.
- The liaison is the first point of contact for COM matters.
- The liaison should contact the clerk of session and/ or moderator at least bi-annually and as often as circumstances warrant.
- Common assignments include:
  - making arrangements for clearance and exit interviews
  - guiding congregations through the pastoral transition process
  - monitoring temporary pastoral relationship contracts and renewals
  - interpreting COM policies and procedures to sessions and clergy
- The liaison makes reports, brings necessary actions and requests for additional resourcing to COM as warranted.
- The liaison is expected to report conflict and/or other extraordinary circumstances, beyond the liaison's responsibilities or capability, to the Cluster co-chairs.
- The liaison contacts the Stated Clerk for counsel, whenever a congregation is considering a person with extraordinary circumstances or from outside the PCUSA denomination for a pastoral position, to ensure that the process complies with Book of Order and the Transition Manual requirements.

**Leadership and guidance of the Committee on Ministry is provided by the COM Cabinet.**

- COM Cabinet is made up of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Cluster Co-Chairs. Presbytery Executives are ex-officio.
- Chair of COM develops the Agenda for COM Cabinet meeting.
- COM Cabinet assigns liaisons to congregations.
- COM Cabinet reviews annually the Terms of Call for Teaching Elders.
- COM Cabinet assigns liaisons to congregations.
- COM Cabinet arranges for annual review of terms of call.
- COM Cabinet oversees the ongoing review of COM process and procedures.
- COM Cabinet ensures the Church Leadership Connection services are being utilized correctly
- COM Cabinet establishes the Pastoral Response Team to respond to sexual misconduct issues, providing on-going training within the Presbytery of Detroit, ensure that new members, CRE's, Christian Educators, and Presbytery Employees receive training.
- COM Cabinet inquiries into churches going through conflict or transition.
- COM Cabinet provides orientation for new COM members and ongoing training of all COM members.

## **Resources for COM**

### COM Chair

- Establish Agenda for COM meeting
- Establish Agenda for COM Cabinet Meeting
- Processes governing body correspondence.

### COM Cabinet

- Minutes of the COM
- Develops and maintains a list of pastors available for interim ministry and other temporary positions; ensuring that initial reference checks have been completed before communicating availability to liaisons. (It is understood that a contextualized clearance interview is required for all pastoral positions in the Presbytery.)
- Updates policies and procedures and other official COM documents

### Executive Presbyter

- Support to the committee
- Provides leadership and insight to enhance the committee's effectiveness and relationships within the Presbytery and its congregations.
- Advises the committee as it addresses conflict, transitions, and particular concerns within congregations.
- Conducts governing body reference checks and consults with liaisons regarding reports to PNCs.

### Associate Executive

- Support to the committee

### Stated Clerk

- As needed, parliamentarian for COM and consultant on Book of Order.
- As needed, ensures that motions to Presbytery are correct as to content and form.
- Processes calls, dissolutions, and transfers.

### Director of Operations/Presbytery Support Staff

- Office support staff
- COM webpage
- Maintains COM files as it relates to contracts and terms of call, annual reports, personal information, PIFs, exit interviews of churches they have served, and other materials relevant to their tenure in the Presbytery. Files of clergy who have left the Presbytery or who have died are kept in the clergy archives. The COM chair and liaisons may make an appointment to look at clergy files. Files may not be taken out of the Presbytery Office. Ensure receipt of minister



- information form and receipt for sexual misconduct policy.
- Compiles annual terms of call report to be published in the Presbytery docket.