PACKET #1

SAYING GOODBYE

CONTENTS

Saying Goodbye P1-2
COM Liaison Meeting with the Session P1-3-4
Outline of the Congregational Meeting P1-5
A Service of Dissolution P1-6-7
Service of Worship and Recognition of Honorable Retirement P1-8-9
A Minute for Mission P1-10-11
Exit Interview with the Pastor by COM Representative P1-12-13
Guidelines for Former Pastors P1-14
Statement of Ethics for Former Pastors P1-15
SAYING GOODBYE

CHECKLIST

( ) Pastor notifies Presbytery (Committee on Ministry) of intention to leave.
( ) COM Moderator or Stated Clerk sends a copy of “Checklist for departing Pastors” and the “Guidelines for former Pastors” a copy of their signed “Memorandum of Understanding: Statement of Ethics for former Pastors” (if available) to the Pastor.
( ) The church’s COM Team appoints a Liaison for the church.
( ) Pastor meets with Session to request a congregational meeting. If possible, the COM liaison or their representative should be present. *(P1-9-10)*
( ) The COM liaison, at the invitation of the pastor, meets with Session to discuss dissolution of the pastoral relationship. If a meeting does not take place, this information will be communicated by letter to Session.
( ) Announcement of the congregational meeting is given on two successive Sundays. *(See G-7.0303b)*.
( ) Pastor meets with Session or Personnel Committee to negotiate termination agreements (dates, payments, benefits, etc.)
( ) Congregation meets and votes to concur in the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. The A. Committee on Ministry liaison or a designated representative attends the meetings and is available to present the contents of the Minute for Mission (Sample script available). If a liaison or representative cannot be present on that Sunday, a Minute for Mission will be given at one of the first two worship services after the pastor has left.
( ) Committee on Ministry votes to recommend concurrence in the dissolution of the pastoral relationship and reports their action to Presbytery.
( ) An exit Interview is conducted between Pastor and Committee on Ministry Representative(s).
( ) Guidelines for ethical behavior are shared and discussed, in relationship to their future plans.
( ) Congregation and Pastor celebrate the end of a shared ministry. *(See sample Service of Dissolution, *(P1-12-13)* and/or The Book of Occasional Services.)*
( ) Session continues pension payments up to a year or until temporary pastoral services are secured by a minister member enrolled in the plan. These funds do not directly benefit the pastor, but assist a general fund used to help finance the Medicare supplement program for the benefit of all retired members. For more information, contact Benefits Services Department 800-773-7752.
COM LIAISON MEETING WITH THE SESSION

Be sure to discuss the following items with the Session:

( ) The COM liaison will represent the Presbytery, sharing information, giving counsel, serving as a communications link between the congregation and the larger church.

( ) Review the Checklist and Flow Chart with the session.

( ) The Session will call a congregational meeting. The Session needs to act by voting to: "call a special congregational meeting on ____ (date)_______, for the purpose of concurring with the request of Rev. _____________to dissolve the pastoral relationship, effective ____ (date)_______, and to ask that Presbytery of Denver concur with this request."

( ) The Pastor has the responsibility of notifying the congregation of his/her decision to leave; the session notifies the congregation of the date of the congregational meeting.

( ) The Session makes arrangements, in consultation with the liaison or COM, to provide a different moderator for the congregational meeting. This is not necessary, but advised. It is helpful when someone else can fill the role of moderator when the current moderator is planning to leave.

( ) The Session will discuss the following terminating arrangements with the Pastor:
• date through which Pension Board payments will be made
• (Note: Pension payments will continue to be paid by the church at a reduced rate during the vacancy period)
• date through which the Pastor will be available for pastoral services
• date of the final Sunday
• unused vacation leave (It is customary for the pastor to either use this leave or cash it out. Sometimes the pastor will use unused vacation following a final Sunday in order to continue to receive some salary during a move. Sometimes the pastor will accept a check and the final day of work is also the final day of salaried employment.)
• unused continuing education leave (It is not customary to use or "cash out" unused continuing education leave or other expense accounts.)
• Refer to the "Sample Agreement for Termination and Separation," Committee on Ministry Handbook, PC(USA), pp. 6-18.

( ) Discuss how the Session helps the church say goodbye. Encourage purchasing copies of Saying Goodbye, a book by Ed White (Alban Institute, 1990). This will help the Session identify some of the factors at play in a leave taking, for both the Pastor and congregation. The pastor and congregation may experience feelings associated with grief over loss events. Shock, denial, anger, and hurt are common. The Session needs to be prepared to help the congregation move through this time, recognizing that individuals will be in different places at any one moment.

( ) (a) Who are the individuals in need of special care? (Often elderly members may experience a deep sense of abandonment. Consider making personal visits on particular members.)
(b) In addition to the Service of Dissolution, how will the congregation celebrate and say "thank you" to the Pastor (a party, dinner, the giving of gifts, and a service of worship)?

- a book of letters from church members, friends, Presbytery and community associates
- a church family photo album
- a quilt from the church family
- a cash gift
- recognition as Pastor Emeritus if Pastor is retiring. (G-14.0620) (Generally best done post the Pastor’s retirement.)

( ) The COM liaison is encouraged to be invited to be present for and participate in the final Worship Service.

( ) Discuss how the Session makes arrangements for pulpit supply. Contact the Presbytery Office to receive information on the current honorarium and a list of pulpit supplys.

( ) The COM will make arrangements to have a liaison present at the congregational meeting to dissolve the relationship or at one of the first two worship services after the pastor has left, if desired, to offer a Minute for Mission during the service.

( ) The Session will make arrangements with the COM to explore options regarding temporary pastoral leadership through an Interim Pastor, Temporary Supply, etc.

( ) The Session will notify the Board of Pensions about the termination date.
OUTLINE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Purpose – To Dissolve relationship

SAMPLE

( ) Call to Order - Establishment of a Quorum

( ) Opening Prayer

( ) Moderator or Clerk: Read the stated purpose of the congregational meeting.

( ) MOTION: To concur and to request the Presbytery of Denver to concur in the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between Rev. ______________ and the __________________ Presbyterian Church, effective ______(date)__________.

( ) COM Representative discusses the information found on the Minute for Mission informational piece.

( ) Announcements

( ) MOTION: Approve minutes of the meeting.

( ) MOTION: To adjourn.

( ) Closing Prayer
A SERVICE OF DISSOLUTION

SAMPLE

Session Representative:
Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share the time of farewell with friends (a friend) who are leaving.

Presbytery Representative:
In ____________, 20__, the congregation called the Rev. __________ to serve as its Pastor (Associate Pastor). This week that service comes to an end.

Pastor: I thank all of you members and friends of ______________ Presbyterian Church. Your kindness and support, your caring and love have sustained me over these past years, and I shall remember you with deep gratitude.

Presbytery Rep.: Good Christian people, I bid you now pray for the saving presence of our living Lord: In this world.

Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.

Presbytery Rep.: In this congregation
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.

Presbytery Rep.: In this community
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.

Presbytery Rep.: In the homes and hearts of all your people
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.

Pastor: I bid you to pray with me now for the mercy of the Lord: For things not finished

Congregation: LORD HAVE MERCY.
Pastor: For expectations not met
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.
Pastor: For wounds not healed
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.
Pastor: For gifts not given
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.
Pastor: For promises not kept
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.

Session Rep.: I bid you to pray in thanks for our journey together in this place: For friendships made, for joys celebrated and for times of nurture and growth

Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.
Session Rep.: For wounds healed, expectations met, gifts given and promises kept
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.
Session Rep.: For each other, and for God's love which has sustained us
Congregation: BE PRESENT, LORD.
Session Rep.: Do you, the members and friends of ______________ Presbyterian Church of ______________, now release the Rev. _____________ from his/her service as your Pastor (Associate Pastor)?
Congregation: WE DO, WITH THANKS TO GOD.
Session Rep.: Do you, ______________, now recognize and accept the completion of your ministry with this people as their Pastor (Associate Pastor)?
Pastor: I do, with thanks to God.
Presbytery Rep.: On behalf of Presbytery of Denver, I witness to the words spoken here: words of thanksgiving, of forgiveness and release. The Presbytery celebrates with you all that has been found here of new life and hope in your journey together as Pastor (Associate Pastor) and people and we pledge to you, our brothers and sisters, our continued support and prayers. I declare, with thanks to God for the life and ministry of this congregation and the ministry of its faithful servant ______________, and with a sense of hope for God's abiding grace in the future that the pastoral relationship is now dissolved and that this pulpit is declared vacant as of ______________, 20__.
Pastor: And now our journeys lead us on in separate ways, yet always bound together with all who call Christ Lord. God in peace.
Congregation: GO IN PEACE.

Presbytery Rep.: So, with God's help and love, may your works be blessed and your labors fruitful, as you offer yourselves gladly into the service of our common Lord. Let us pray together:

All: O GOD, OUR ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS ARE ROOTED IN YOUR LOVE. YOU ARE ALPHA AND OMEGA, BOTH BEGINNING AND END. SO, WHETHER NEAR OR FAR, WE ARE ALWAYS HELD BY YOUR LOVE AND SO ARE SAFE FROM ANY LASTING LOSS. END THIS TIME TOGETHER WITH YOUR BLESSING, TOUCH ALL MEMORIES WITH YOUR GRACE AND PEACE. HELP US TO LIVE IN THE NEW FUTURES YOU GIVE US WITH COURAGE AND GLAD HEARTS. AND GRANT THAT, IN EVERY NEW TIME YOU GIVE US, WE MAY OFFER YOU OUR HIGHEST AND OUR BEST. TOGETHER, ALWAYS, IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. ALLELUIA! AMEN.
SERVICE OF WORSHIP AND RECOGNITION OF HONORABLE RETIREMENT
(For use at the January Presbytery Assembly)

SAMPLE
(or see Book of Occasional Services, pages 279-281)

CALL TO WORSHIP

MODERATOR: There are different gifts,
But it is the same Spirit who gives them.
There are different ways of serving God,
But it is the same Lord who is served.
God works through different people in different ways,
But it is the same God whose purpose is achieved through them all.

PRAYER: By Your will, O God, we go out into the world with good news of
Your undying love and minister among Your children to show the wonders of Your grace. We
pray for all who minister for You. Replenish them with the truth of Your doctrine, endue them
with holiness of life and strengthen them with the knowledge of your care and fellowship. May
they be brave, glad and hopeful in Your presence; through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

DECLARATION

MODERATOR: In the name of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, we
recognize the honorable retirement of ____________ in accordance with the
Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the action of this Presbytery.

Remembering that God alone is the Judge of the stewardship of
everyone's gifts and life, we, the members of the Presbytery of Denver, express our appreciation
for your faithful service and acknowledge the privilege we enjoyed in serving with you.

Beloved in Christ, inasmuch as God's good news has brought you
to years of Christian maturity in the gospel ministry, the Presbytery of Denver, in granting your
request of retirement, desires to make public acknowledgement of your service to the Kingdom
of God.

Here a member of the Presbytery, and a member of the congregation make appropriate remarks
about the life and ministry of the person being honorably retired, setting forth pertinent
information about college and seminary education, marriage, family, pastorates, other forms of
ministry, or special contributions to the church. The person retiring may be given an
opportunity to respond. The Moderator shall ask the Presbytery to stand and respond
appropriately.

LITANY OF RECOGNITION

O God, Creator of all things visible and invisible and Lord of history, You have called us by the
voice of the Church to serve Jesus Christ and revealed to us this work for which we have been chosen

Thanks be to God.

Holy Spirit, You have given us the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be a unique and
authoritative witness to Jesus Christ and we have accepted them to be God's Word for us.

Thanks be to God.

Master and Teacher, You have enlisted us in Your service and instructed us by the church and
her confessions so that we might lead others, be a friend, love our neighbors and work for
reconciliation in the world.

P1-8
Thanks be to God.
Lord of the church, Your servant, _______________, stands today among us after serving long and well in your church. This life and ministry have revealed the Risen Christ to many, provided many personal satisfactions, warmed individual hearts in close relationship, and brought self-worth and dignity through love shared.

Thanks be to God.
God, in whom we live and have our being, continue to give Your servant and loved ones a full measure of Your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYER
Eternal God and Lord of us all, through the ages women and men have been called to witness to Your love and to give evidence of Your kindness to Your people. We honor such servants today. Your church has been enriched by their wisdom, their energy, their sensitivity, their love of Your Word, and their obedience to Your Spirit. Your strength has been made evident in their weaknesses. Your forgiveness has been illustrated in their failures. Your power has been visible in their strengths and virtues. Their lives have unveiled Your splendor for Your people to see You at work in the lives of Your servants. For your manifestation in their lives and ministries, we give You thanks, O Lord.

We are grateful that the years ahead for these servants will be less filled with pressure and tedium, and that they may enjoy a new measure of Your peace. Help them to be happy stewards of their leisure. Bless them with good health. Teach them new uses of their time. Continue to use them for the constructive purposes of Your Kingdom. Surround them with the continued comradeship of their friends and colleagues. As they have served You with joy and faithfulness, may they continue to know the happiness of Your presence with them. May they cheerfully conform in all things to Your blessed will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF RETIREMENT

The certificate of honorable retirement is presented by the Moderator, Stated Clerk, or Chair of the Committee on Ministry. The retiree is asked to offer the benediction.

BENEDICTION
A MINUTE FOR MISSION

SAMPLE

On behalf of the Presbytery of Denver and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, I bring you greetings this morning.

(1) When a pastor leaves a charge there are bonds of affection between the minister and members of the church which continue to be cherished. Relations of friendship continue, but the pastoral relationship does not. In order to spare ministers and church members from embarrassment, and to encourage the new pastoral relationship that will be established, the Presbytery directs that the church be reminded of these requests:

   When any minister resigns from a pastorate or retires from service, or becomes a pastor emeritus, the minister should cease to perform such functions of a pastor as funerals, baptism, and weddings, unless invited to officiate in such capacity by the pastor or by the moderator of the session.

   In short, church members should not request a former pastor to perform pastoral duties. If requested, the pastor should tactfully decline, unless the request is made, without prompting, by the Moderator of Session.

(2) As you begin a new journey as a congregation, I am here today to tell you that, in the Presbytery, you will have a partner along the way. We are a connectional church and one of the most visible ways we express our connectedness is in the calling of ministers to serve our pulpits. There are many decisions that lie ahead and, as you make those decisions, the Presbytery will do its very best to support you and guide you.

(3) I am also here to give you an idea of the steps that lie ahead. As a Representative from the Committee on Ministry, I have already met (will be meeting) with your Session. Their first task will be to arrange for temporary supply and pastoral care. This temporary arrangement may last anywhere from a few weeks to several months. The Presbytery will assist them in locating guest preachers.

(4) We are encouraging you to do what the majority of our churches are doing when faced with a change in pastors: select a trained Interim Pastor to see you through the transition time. An Interim Pastor is one who can give you steady preaching and pastoral care, is willing to live and work among you for an interval and then move on to assist another congregation in transition. Your Session has considered (will be considering) the selection of an Interim Pastor. The Presbytery will assist in providing names of Interim Pastors to consider. Your session will be considering various options related to pastoral service, based on your needs.

(5) When the time comes to begin your active search, a Liaison from the Committee on Ministry will be appointed and you will go through three phases. The first phase is a "Congregational Preparation Phase." In this case, all of you will be asked to help shape a vision for the kind of ministry you want and the kind of minister you will need to lead you. You will be conducting a time of reflection on the ministry of your church – in our Presbytery this is called the 12 Questions: Strategic Planning for Churches Seeking A Pastor— The questions will help you focus on your needs as a congregation and your general goals for the future. The Presbytery will help you assess your needs through their work with the Session or its appointed Committee.
The second phase could be called the "Search Phase." This begins with the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee, followed by the completion of some papers that will be used in establishing conversation with potential candidates. The Pastor Nominating Committee will be elected by you and trained by the Committee on Ministry through, your Liaison Team. The Pastor Nominating Committee will then advertise the position, receive names of potential candidates, read papers, talk with references, and eventually interview several finalists. During this phase, you should hear periodic reports from the Committee, even though most of the work is of a confidential nature. The Presbytery, the Committee on Ministry, the Synod, and the General Assembly all work together to help you in this phase.

The final phase is the "Candidating Phase." At this point, the Pastor Nominating committee will select a candidate to present to you. A committee of the Presbytery must examine and approve all the candidates. Then the Pastor Nominating Committee will ask the Session to call a congregational meeting and present information to you about their candidate. The candidate will be asked to preach. And at the congregational meeting, you will be asked to endorse or not endorse the committee's nominee. Assuming that you select the nominee, then the Presbytery will be requested to approve the call. After this is completed, plans can be made for your new minister to begin his or her work. You'll notice that I said, "his" or "her." In today's church, it is a very real possibility that your next pastor could be a woman. In fact, we in the Presbyterian Church insist that every church use a fair process of consideration of anyone. That is perhaps the only "ground rule" that the Presbyterian Church (USA) asks. As your new pastor begins work, the Presbytery will be with you to celebrate at his/her installation to office. This kind of change can be difficult for a congregation. The Committee on Ministry seeks to make this transition time as easy as possible. Please know that you are in our prayers. Thank you.
EXIT INTERVIEW WITH THE PASTOR
By COM Representative

Please include the information such as the following in your conversation/report with the departing Pastor. A written report needs to be submitted to the Presbytery Stated Clerk’s office within two weeks of the interview.

1. Date of exit interview
2. Minister's name
3. Name of church
4. Number of members
5. Average worship attendance
6. Job title
7. Date of call
8. Date of dissolution of relationship
9. Performance evaluation by Session or Personnel Committee
10. Names of Exit Interviewer/s
11. Beginning salary
12. Final salary
13. Initial package payment
14. Final package payment
15. Reasons for leaving (be specific)
16. Duties outlined in call
17. Duties added after call
18. Was the position what you expected when you were called? Why or why not?
19. What attracted you to this church?
20. What duties were easiest to accomplish?
21. What duties were the most difficult?
22. What did you like most about the position?
23. What did you like the least?
24. What did you like most about the church?
25. What did you like least about the church?
26. In what church activities did you participate?
27. In what church activities did you not participate?
28. Did you feel comfortable in the church and with the congregation?
29. Do you think the church is healthy and has grown, or is it a problem church? (Explain)
30. Please comment on the current staffing pattern at the church (overstaffed/understaffed, full-time/part-time, competency, etc.)
31. Do you feel you were treated fairly by:
   a. Session
   b. Other ministers on staff
   c. Educator
   d. Youth Director
   e. Personnel Committee
   f. Others
32. How do you feel about the continuing education opportunities?
33. Would you suggest any change in the call, duties, and benefits for the next pastor?
34. Does the church have strong lay leadership in the congregation?
35. In the Session?
36. Is the church’s lay leadership too strong?
36. Are there any strong cliques, splits, or beliefs in membership?
37. Are there troublemakers in staff or membership?
38. How would you characterize the theology of the congregation?
39. What qualities and interests will be most important in the new pastor?
40. Do you have concerns, suggestions, etc. you would like to discuss?
41. Where did you exercise your gifts within the Presbytery of Denver?
42. How did you feel supported by the Presbytery?
43. Are they any messages you would like to convey to the COM regarding you or your congregations’ relationship to the Presbytery?
44. If you lived in a manse, comment on the condition, maintenance, etc.
45. Are pension payments current?

Review the “Guidelines for former Pastors” a copy of their signed “Memorandum of Understanding: Statement of Ethics for former Pastors” (P1-14)

44. Do you have any final comments?

Pastor ______________________________ Date: ______________
Comments by interviewers.

Interviewer ___________________ Interviewer __________________
Date: ______________

Submit written report to Stated Clerk within two weeks of the exit interview
GUIDELINES FOR FORMER PASTORS

1. The COM is charged to review ethical guidelines for pastors and churches in transition, making them available to every minister member of Denver Presbytery.

2. In response to the Book of Order (G-14.0630, G-11.0412) and our review of guidelines from the Alban Institute, other presbyteries and the Standards of Ethical Conduct approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998), the COM proposes the following guidelines for Denver Presbytery.

The times of change and transition can be a complicated mix of hope and celebration as well as grief and renewal. It impacts the congregation, the former pastor and the incoming pastor in different ways. Each has a significant role to play in making the transition as healthy as possible.

These guidelines are offered in the spirit of honoring all three entities with care and compassion in upholding the church.

a. The former pastor shall select a new church to attend on a regular basis.

b. The former pastor shall encourage his/her family to select another church in which to hold membership.

c. The former pastor shall refrain from all conversations about the incoming pastor or the church. The intent is to provide protection for the former pastor while allowing the incoming pastor to establish necessary relationships within the congregation.

d. The congregation shall honor the call of the incoming pastor by refraining from conversation about the church or requesting pastoral functions from the former pastor.

e. The congregation will handle questions and disagreements that change creates with the incoming pastor.

f. The incoming pastor shall be responsible for all pastoral functions including visitation, weddings, funerals, baptisms and any other church functions. Any participation by the former pastor in any pastoral function shall be at the discretion and initiation of the incoming pastor, rather than by a church/family member or by the former pastor.

g. The COM is available for consultation, interpretation, or resolution as needed by the congregation, the former pastor, or the incoming pastor.
Committee On Ministry  
Presbytery of Denver  
Memorandum Of Understanding  
Statement of Ethics For Former Pastors  
Adopted by the Presbytery of Denver May 22, 2007

When a pastor leaves a church, there are bonds of affection between the minister and members of the church which continue to be cherished. Relationships of friendship continue, but the pastoral relationship does not.

The Committee On Ministry recognizes there are potentially difficult situations involving the relationship of the minister and his/her former congregation. This also applies for associate pastors and temporary pastor situations. In order to assist the pastor and the congregation to avoid awkward situations and to encourage the new pastoral relationship that will be established, the following ethics have been adopted by the Committee On Ministry:

1. For the health and welfare of the church, it is important that the former pastor and his/her family find another church to attend. The former pastor's continued presence in the life of the church almost always hinders the congregation and the incoming pastor in developing the necessary relationship for successful ministry. This can be a difficult and painful event for the former pastor and his/her family. However, considering the needs of the church, the best interests of all involved are better served by the former pastor and family participating in another church.

2. The former pastor shall avoid all conversation and communication with church members about the new pastor, as well as problems and issues regarding the former church. If approached, the former pastor needs to tactfully explain that ethics do not permit such a discussion.

3. Participation by a former pastor for any pastoral function shall be only at the initiation and invitation of the moderator of session, in consultation with the Committee On Ministry. In almost every instance, the former pastor should avoid participation in funerals, weddings, baptisms, etc. in the former church. This practice will be difficult, but if the first invitation is accepted there is little reason to refuse other requests. At all times, the former pastor should remain sensitive to possible tension that can arise from his/her presence in the former church.

In short, church members should not request a former pastor to perform pastoral duties. If requested the former pastor should tactfully decline.

4. The Committee On Ministry welcomes and encourages consultation, interpretation or resolution regarding these ethics as needed by session, congregations, former pastors or incoming pastors.

5. Representatives of the Committee On Ministry shall review and provide a copy of these ethics to departing pastors and to sessions prior to—the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee. In addition, a letter regarding these ethics shall be shared with the congregation.

6. Representatives of the Committee On Ministry shall inform incoming pastors and provide them with a copy of these ethics prior to their reception into the Presbytery of Denver. A signed verification shall be retained in COM files.

7. Incoming pastor's verification: I hereby verify that I have received a copy of the Statement of Ethics For Former Pastors. I further verify that I fully understand and will abide by the Statement of Ethics For Former Pastors.

Date ________________________________
Signature ____________________________

P1-15