

Covenant of rust

Ministerial Ethics for Cumberland Presbyterians

*A Study Guide for Ministers & Congregations of
the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*

SECOND EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

“Ethics:” Treating others the way you want to be treated.

BUT we don’t always do that; we sometimes act out of selfishness, peevishness, anger, self-pity or vengeance.

Well then, what about –

“Ethics:” Doing the right thing for the right reason.

BUT we don’t always know the right thing to do, and our motives can be hidden, even from ourselves.

So, we all need a moral compass, a guide for ethical behavior.

This study, “Covenant of Trust,” is intended for use in Cumberland Presbyterian churches. It engages both the minister(s) and members of the congregation. Its purposes are:

- To define ethical standards of ministry that are clear to the minister(s) and congregation,
- To help the session and congregation better understand stresses in the ministry and the parameters of accepted ministerial conduct,
- To help congregations explore ways they can healthily support their minister(s),
- To define accountability between the minister(s), session, congregation and presbytery, guided by “The Constitution” and “Rules of Discipline” in the *Confession of Faith for Cumberland Presbyterians*,
- To aid in the creation of an atmosphere of trust and protection based upon mutual understanding, mutual integrity and reciprocal caring.

The study should include the minister(s) and as many members as possible or at least the session and other leaders. And don’t forget to include older youth; they often bring a different perspective.

An appropriate setting would be other than Sunday morning, possibly in conjunction with a light meal or dessert. Classes should not extend beyond one hour; 45 minutes would be preferable.

If possible, the study should be led by someone other than the congregation’s minister. This would leave him/her free to think and participate. Leaders might be a member or members of the congregation or another minister.

The more everyone understands the code of ministerial ethics, the greater the trust quotient will be between the minister(s) and congregation.

In the Appendix session, there is an evaluation tool titled, *Minister and Session Evaluation Tool*, developed by the Reverend TJ Malinoski, Evangelism & New Church Development and the Doctor Reverend Pam Phillips-Burk, Pastoral Development Ministry Team Leader. This is a thorough evaluation process for a minister and church session in a four-part process. An important part of the evaluation is the development of, or review of the minister’s job description, as well as specific,

measurable goals set by both the minister and session. These tools will guide the evaluation process.

Session 1

WHY STUDY MINISTERIAL ETHICS?

Politicians, scientists, business leaders, everyday citizens, and our ministers increasingly find themselves in situations where they really do not know what to do. As a result, ethics has become a boom industry, and moral failure a regular front-page phenomenon. Conventional wisdom seems glaringly inadequate in the face of our environmental, technological, political, economic, and social situations (Wind 1991, 9).

What is the State of Pastors in America?

According to the Barna Group, the challenges of pastoring in the 21st century are significant. In their 2017 report they call the church to understand that before he or she is a church leader, a pastor is a human. And nothing about being a pastor precludes church leaders from the full human experience—good, bad, and ugly. Their *State of Pastors* contains the findings of a comprehensive, whole-life assessment of U.S. pastors. It reveals where church leaders are most in need of healing and encouragement:

- It is not uncommon for spiritual leaders to face doubt. 1 out of every 4 pastors has experienced a period during their ministry when they significantly doubted their faith.
- Most pastors are faring well, but 1 in 3 is at risk of burnout. More than one-third of pastors are at high or medium risk of burnout, and three-quarters know at least one clergy colleague whose ministry ended due to stress.
- Nearly half of pastors face some sort of relational risk. 43% of pastors are at high or medium relational risk, whether they are experiencing challenges in marriage, family, friendships, or other close relationships.
- Families usually weather the challenges of ministry. Pastors report greater marital and parental satisfaction than the general population, though half say their current tenure has been hard on their family.
- Pastors are not immune to mental health struggles. One in five pastors has struggled with an addiction - most commonly to pornography - while almost half have faced depression (2017, 10-11).

Scripture & Reflection

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:1-2 NIV)

For some people it would be problematic that the congregation is studying about their ministers' code of ethics, as if it were a private matter. In reality, ministerial ethics is a public matter, not only because it is on the front-page but because we minister in a congregation and in a community, and not only that but also in a family, denomination and in collegial relations.

“Ethics have to do with standards of conduct, and moral judgments. They deal with right and wrong. They call for decisions. These decisions have to be based on something solid and true. For the Christian this includes the Ten Commandments, the life and teachings of Jesus, the principle of love, the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and a sense of responsibility” (Pepper 2007, 133).

This study guide has been developed to help Cumberland Presbyterian congregations understand the

unique moral role of the ministers and the ethical responsibilities of their vocation. Hopefully, this knowledge will also help congregations be active participants in helping ministers, members of the congregations, and the church as a whole to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The Christian church has over time developed numerous ministerial codes to help the ordained minister to be most effective in ministry and to understand the different responsibilities related to the ethics of ministry.

Many of the provisions of this covenant used here are taken from ministerial codes, edited to include the most significant emphases, principles and specific guidelines, in each category. It also includes references to the *Confession of Faith* and *Constitution* of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

There are a total of 12 sessions; each class has been developed for 45 minutes to one hour. The intent is to allow people to reflect, discuss and comprehend.

Reflection Questions

1. What were your first thoughts when you were asked to participate in a study on ministerial ethics? What are your thoughts now after the first session?
2. According to the Bible text, what are the expectations for the minister to live a “worthy” life or what should they be? Are they the same or different from that of the laity?
3. How do you feel about studying ethics from the perspective of the minister and the perspective of the laity?
4. Name some ways this study can benefit the congregation, your minister, and the whole denomination?

Session 2

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MINISTERIAL ETHICS

To be a Christian minister means assuming certain basic obligations common to all clergy. These norms guide those called to serve toward an ethical ministry and stress the areas in which ministers are uniquely vulnerable (Trull and Carter 2004, 196).

Basic Assumptions about Ministerial Ethics

The following basic assumptions about ministerial ethics have been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*:

1. “Most ministers want to be persons of integrity, persons whose professional lives uphold the highest ethical ideals.
2. Developing moral character and ethical conduct is a difficult process.
3. Every minister needs training in ethics and spiritual formation.
4. There is an art to doing ethics, one that can also be learned.
5. The central moral choice facing the Christian minister is the same one facing all professionals: Will I be an enabler or an exploiter? Ministers, like doctors and lawyers, must be sure that the service they render is given to enable, not to exploit financially, sexually, or in any other way.
6. A ministerial code of ethics, if used appropriately, is beneficial to ministers and to the communities they serve” (2004, 17-18).

Scripture & Reflection

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the

right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. (Colossians 3:1-6 NRSV).

As Paul has stated, certain conduct is expected after doctrine has been understood. If someone surrenders to Christ, it should have practical implications in the person's life. This is true especially if you have been called to the ordained ministry.

In the Cumberland Presbyterian Church the same is expected: *"The persons who fill this office should be sound in the faith, exemplary in conduct, and competent to perform the duties of the ministry"* (COF 2.61).

From biblical times to the present, the moral character of the minister of the gospel was expected to be exemplary and "above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:3). Being a good pastor has always meant more than just maintaining minimal standards. It is a calling to maximum discipleship. *"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ,"* asserted Paul (1 Cor. 11:1). Ministerial ethics does not end when a pastor walks out the office door. In many ways it just begins (Trull and Carter 2004, 19).

The complexity of life, given the big scientific, political, economic and socio-cultural changes, propels the Christian person to a mindset and a radical lifestyle. This mind and radical life is required precisely because the mind and life of this αἰῶνι (century/world) works against the values of the Kingdom of God (Villafañe 2006, 7).

The ethics of the minister involve many areas of responsibilities: responsibilities related to their self, their family, their congregation, their colleagues, their denomination, and to their community. In session 3, we will reflect upon the significance of the ordained ministry before moving on to explore all of the various areas related to a minister's ethical behavior.

Reflection Questions

1. What are your thoughts regarding this statement by Trull and Carter, "Most ministers want to be persons of integrity, persons whose professional lives uphold the highest ethical ideals?"
2. What does it mean to be raised with Christ? What are the things that are above?
3. What is the implication of "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God?" How do you think we will be revealed in Christ's glory?
4. How can one put to death whatever in him or her is earthly?
5. What kind of things are fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed?
6. Discuss whether ethics is a matter character or conduct?
7. Does "who I am" determine "what I do", or does "what I do" shape "who I am"?
8. Is a person born having moral values or are they taught those values? What is the difference between morals and ethics?

Session 3

THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

According to Morris Pepper, the following experience is common to all people who experience God's call to the ordained ministry: "There is an urgent sense that God is calling us. It never lets up. It is a drawing, a wooing, a tugging, coming strongly at times, weaker at others, but never abating altogether. There is often, but not always, resistance and reluctance and excuse, and sometimes, refusal. Finally, it becomes a conviction that we are chosen, called and commissioned by God to the ministry of Word and

Sacrament” (2007, 21).

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

The following are the official statements of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church regarding the ordained ministry:

- “The office of minister of word and sacrament is unique in the life of the church as to responsibility and usefulness.
- God calls persons and sets them apart for this ministry.
- The persons who fill this office should be sound in the faith, exemplary in conduct, and competent to perform the duties of the ministry.
- Persons who become ministers of the word and sacrament are due such respect as belongs to their office, but are not by virtue of their office more holy or righteous than other Christians.
- They share in the same vocation that belongs to all Christians to be witnesses to the gospel in word and deed.
- They differ from other Christians only with regard to the office to which they are called, which is their station in life” (COF 2.61).

Scripture & Reflection

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:4-5 NRSV)

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" (Isaiah 6:8 NRSV)

The experiences of Jeremiah and Isaiah are usually considered the model for other people’s personal experience in relation to God’s call to the ordained ministry. What is most important in both cases is that it is God who takes the initiative in calling women and men to the ordained ministry.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church believes in an internal call. God moves on the hearts of persons, drawing them toward ordained ministry. Yet, this internal call needs the external confirmation of the church. As the person moves toward ordination, he/she will do so in the company of others who are charged with overseeing their growth. These people will help discern if ordination is in fact their vocation in life. Just as God acts to call people personally, God acts through the corporate body of the church to support their work and confirm their call.

So, what do people do when they sense God may be calling them to ordained ministry? The following is the process:

1. First, they talk with their pastor or someone in leadership.
2. After talking with the pastor, they will meet with the session. This is the first official step in becoming a candidate for ministry.
3. The presbyterial committee on the ministry/preparation will meet with the person after they receive the session’s letter of recommendation.
4. The committee has the responsibility to recommend the person as a CANDIDATE at the next meeting of presbytery.
5. Once the committee is satisfied with the person’s growth and development, he/she will be recommended for LICENSURE by the committee.
6. Once educational requirements are complete and the committee is satisfied with the person’s progress, he/she will be eligible for ORDINATION.

7. To be ordained, the person must receive a formal call to ministry from a congregation, hospital, hospice program, university, etc., and must sustain examination by presbytery (PDMT 2012, 19-20).

Sometimes, a person becomes a candidate, a licentiate, even ordained, only to discover that he or she is not called to ordained ministry. In fact, most ministers struggle to understand their calling. Therefore, it is important for a probationer to have mentors such as their pastor, church session, or presbytery committee in their journey.

Reflection Questions

1. Who has taken the initiative in Jeremiah's call? How was Isaiah's call different?
2. What was God's expectation in Isaiah's case?
3. How can we be a congregation that treats God's call in the lives of our ministers with utmost respect while recognizing that their service with us is a blessing from God?
4. How do we, together with our ministers, answer God's call in our lives to serve Christ's Church and Kingdom?
5. How can one hear God's spoken word at a specific time?
6. Have you ever been a part of someone's call to ordained ministry? As a friend? As an elder? As a family member? As a church member?
7. How can we foster the gifts for ordained ministry within our congregation?
8. On discovering one has not been called, the entire church-and especially those who discover they have not been called-can use help at this point. How can we help the church to understand such people can have valuable roles to play, and help them understand they have valuable contributions to make?
9. Write on a slip of paper the names of people who you think possess the gifts/skills for ordained ministry. Pray for them to be open to God's call.

Session 4

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO SELF

The overall health of any church or ministry depends primarily on the emotional and spiritual health of its leadership. In fact, the key to successful spiritual leadership has much more to do with the leader's internal life than with the leader's expertise, gifts, or experience (Scazzero 2010, 20).

Ministers' Responsibilities to Self

The following sample codes have been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*:

1. Maintain physical and emotional health through regular exercise, good eating habits, and the proper care of the body.
2. Nurture devotional life through a regular time of prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and meditation.
3. Continue to grow intellectually through personal study, comprehensive reading, and attending growth conferences.
4. Manage time well by properly balancing personal obligations, church duties, and family responsibilities, and by observing a weekly day off and an annual vacation.
5. Be honest and responsible in finances by paying all debts on time, never seeking special gratuities or privileges, giving generously to worthwhile causes, and living a Christian lifestyle.

6. Be truthful in speech, never plagiarizing another's work, exaggerating the facts, misusing personal experiences, or communicating gossip.
7. Seek to be Christlike in attitude and action toward all persons regardless of race, social class, religious beliefs, or position of influence within the church and community (Trull and Carter 2004, 259-260).

Scripture & Reflection

Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! (1 Corinthians 9:24 NLT)

I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:27 NLT)

Ministers' primary responsibility is to their self. This means that as Paul says, he/she is in a race and only he/she will answer to God for his/her whole person.

Lee Lebsack, a minister who coaches pastors, said in his website that early in his ministry he realized the need to feel good body, soul and spirit. If he was going to have the emotional, physical and spiritual strength to help others, it had to begin in his own life. The key was to have a balance. If one area is off balance, it weakens the rest. "If I feel good about myself," he said "I will feel good about others. If I feel bad about myself, I will take it out on others." His style of coaching includes the whole person, because it takes the whole person to be fulfilled completely. He questions "What about your personal devotions? What about your prayer schedule? What about your exercise time? What about your nutritional care? What about proper rest? What about bad habits? What about outside interests? As a coach, you can't take someone on a journey you haven't been on yourself."

Reflection Questions

1. What do you think about these ministers' responsibilities to their self? Are they incidental or intentional?
2. What is the race that we are running? What is the prize? What is the goal in this race?
3. How could Paul have disciplined his body to keep it under control? What was his motivation to do that?
4. How can we help our minister to maintain responsibilities to their self, especially in relation to their physical and emotional health and devotional life?
5. How can we recognize our ministers' need for rest and time away from work? Share ways we protect their time to have a day off and to have family time?
6. Discuss way that we as a congregation can provide time and financial support for study, continuing education, and refreshment away from pastoral duties? (Consider conferences, retreats, and sabbaticals. A sabbatical is a release from the routine duties of the call for the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of the minister.)
7. Explain the concept that "every member is a minister" rather than the expectation that the minister is always on call?
8. Differentiate between a true pastoral crisis and a need which can wait until a more appropriate time. Name some examples of a crisis requiring a pastoral response. Name some examples of a pastoral issue that can wait.

Session 5

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO FAMILY

The Cumberland Presbyterian *Confession of Faith* says, “God created the family as the primary community in which persons experience love, companionship, support, protection, discipline, encouragement, and other blessings. It is the normal relationship into which children are born” (COF 6.15). “The primary relationship in a clergy family is the relationship between the minister and spouse. That husband—wife bond must be stable and strong before the family can be stable and strong” (Trull and Carter 2004, 271).

Ministers’ Responsibilities to Family

The following sample codes have been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*:

1. Be fair to every member of the family, giving them the time, love, and consideration, they need.
2. Understand the unique role of the spouse, recognizing that his or her primary responsibility is as marital partner and parent to the children, and only then as church worker or assistant to the minister.
3. Regard children as a gift from God and seek to meet their individual needs without imposing undue expectations upon them.
4. If single, be discreet in dating practices, especially in relation to members of the congregation (2004, 260, 262).

Scripture & Reflection

That’s why a man will leave his own father and mother. He marries a woman, and the two of them become like one person. (Genesis 2:24 CEV)

So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women. God gave them his blessing and said: Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. (Genesis 1: 27-28 CEV)

As we have seen in Genesis the primary relationship in the family is the relationship between minister and spouse. This is key for a minister to have healthy and intentional relationships with others.

Part of the challenge for ministers and their spouses is that their marriages are considered a model for church families. “Healthy marriages can model to others how a couple can remain in love, stay married, and function as a Christian couple even when dealing with stress, long work hours, inadequate income, and the demands of children.” Conversely, a minister’s marriage can present problems, when the model is negative rather than positive.

“Minister’s children also often find themselves in the spotlight. Minister’s children are no different from other children. They face the same stresses and temptations as others, and they experience the same disappointments and failures as others.”

Regarding the single minister, “a church should not expect a single minister to spend more time in ministry just because he or she does not have a spouse and a family. A church should call a person to ministry on the basis of that person’s dedication to Christ and the ability to perform the tasks required” (Trull and Carter 2004, 71).

The Confession of Faith says, “The church recognizes and ministers to people living in a variety of family patterns, including those persons who by choice or circumstances are single. It seeks to embrace each person and all groups of persons within the family life of the covenant community” (COF 6.16).

In essence, we can say that the same principles of ethical behavior and personal integrity apply to both the single and the married minister (2004, 73).

Reflection Questions

1. What do you think about these ministers' responsibilities to their family? Are they incidental or intentional?
2. Why does a man leave his own father and mother when he marries a woman? What is the meaning of "becoming like one person?"
3. What is the meaning of men and women being like God? What is the implication of being blessed by God as man and woman?
4. What is the intention of having children in the family?
5. How can we help protect our minister's family from undue stresses?
6. What are the single minister's responsibilities to their family?
7. What boundaries should a single minister have if they are dating a church member? What would be important if they are dating a non-church member?
8. What consideration should be given to a pastor who has responsibility for an aging parent(s) or other dependent family member?

Session 6

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO CONGREGATION

"The way a minister and members view one another depends on the relationships they have with one another. To a large degree, those relationships depend on the ministry skills the minister displays with them. Some of these skills are personal—the personal integrity of the minister. Others are professional—the ministering ability of the minister" (Trull and Carter 2004, 89).

Ministers' Responsibilities to the Congregation

The following sample codes have been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*:

1. Seek to be a servant-minister of the church by following the example of Christ in faith, love, wisdom, courage, and integrity.
2. Faithfully discharge time and energies as pastor, teacher, preacher, and administrator through proper work habits and reasonable schedules.
3. In administrative and pastoral duties, be impartial and fair to all members.
4. In preaching responsibilities, give adequate time to prayer and preparation, so that the presentation will be biblically based, theologically correct, and clearly communicated.
5. In pastoral counseling, maintain strict confidentiality, except in cases where disclosure is necessary to prevent harm to persons and/or is required by law.
6. In evangelistic responsibilities, seek to lead persons to salvation and to church membership without manipulating converts, proselytizing members of other churches, or demeaning other religious faiths.
7. In visitation and counseling practices, never be alone with a person of another sex unless another church member is present nearby.
8. Do not charge fees to church members for weddings or funerals; for nonmembers, establish policies based on ministry opportunities, time constraints, and theological beliefs.
9. As a full-time minister, do not accept any other remunerative work without the expressed consent of the session.
10. In leaving a congregation, seek to strengthen the church through proper timing, verbal affirmation, and an appropriate closure of ministry (Trull and Carter 2004, 260-261).

Scripture & Reflection

Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel. They are alert to the condition of your lives and work under the strict supervision of God. Contribute to the joy of their leadership, not its drudgery. Why would you want to make things harder for them? (Hebrews 13:17 MSG)

A minister's responsibilities to the congregation are a big task. Our concern is how to make it easy for them to accomplish this charge. Sometimes our differences with our pastor are not theological or work related, but relational.

According to the Constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, "a minister who is called to be the pastor of a particular church is responsible to:

- a. lead the people in public worship;
- b. pray for and with them as their mouth to God;
- c. read the scriptures to the people and proclaim to them the word of God;
- d. administer the sacraments;
- e. bless the people from God;
- f. teach the scriptures to the children, youth, and adults;
- g. visit the people, especially the poor, the sick, the dying, and those with other critical needs;
- h. counsel with persons in their preparation for marriage;
- i. share in the personal witness of the church to unbelievers and those out of fellowship with the church;
- j. counsel with people, in light of the scriptures, about their personal needs and problems;
- k. counsel with disturbed and broken families;
- l. and with the elders who comprise the session, lead and govern the church in all its ministries" (COF 2010, 29-30).

Reflection Questions:

1. Sometimes pastors are considered "the hired help." What are your thoughts about that reference?
2. What does it mean to be responsive to our pastoral leaders?
3. How is our minister alert to the condition of our lives?
4. What does it mean that a minister works under the strict supervision of God?
5. How can we contribute to the joy of our ministers vs. their drudgery?
6. What are things that congregations might do that add to the drudgery of ministers?
7. What do you think is the proper level of expectation we should have of our pastors?
8. Take a moment right now to pray for your pastor and their family.

Session 7

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO CHURCH LEADERS

"Good relationships among ministers and church leaders are crucial, and trust is essential for these relationships to survive. "The main concern is getting the work of the church done without worrying about who gets the credit. Working as a team with a spirit of collegiality accomplishes that goal" (Trull and Carter 2004, 129).

Ministers' Responsibilities to Church Leaders

The following sample codes have been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*:

1. Strive to relate to all church leaders as partners in the work of God, respecting their ministry and cooperating with them.
2. Be supportive of, and loyal to, fellow church leaders, never criticizing them publicly or undermining their ministry.
3. Recognize one's own role and responsibility to the church leaders and do not feel threatened or in competition with any other minister of the church.
4. Maintain good relationships with others in ministry working in specialized ministries (2004, 62).

Scripture & Reflection

We work together for God. (1 Corinthians 3:9 WE)

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. (Romans 16:3 NIV)

When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. (1 Corinthians 16:10 NIV)

According to the *Confession of Faith*, "Jesus Christ as Lord and Head of the church has entrusted the government of the church to officers who make those decisions that will guide the life and ministry of the covenant community. These officers have the responsibility to serve the church, to examine and receive members into the communion of the church, to care for and nurture them in the faith, and to discipline with love and justice those who offended the gospel and the laws of the church" (COF 5.32-5.33).

"The officers of a particular church are the minister in charge, who is ordained to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments; the elders who are members of the session, who are elected and ordained as the representatives and leaders of the people; and the deacons who are members of the diaconate, who are elected and ordained to care for the poor and others in need" (COF 2.31).

Churches sometimes have other ministers working as assistant/associate minister, or youth minister, etc. In addition, churches may have a music director, Christian education coordinator, etc. Churches can also have paid and unpaid staff, as well as volunteer leaders.

The ministers and all these church leaders "can provide the congregation with a model of servant ministry through their relationships with each other and by their performances of their responsibilities."

If church members see the ministers and church leaders "who are constantly putting each other down, circumventing each other for a place of greater recognition in the church, and unable to relate well with their fellow ministers, they will have great difficulty in understanding what it means to be servants in Christ's name" (Tuck 1981, 20).

Morris Pepper said, "don't set elders against deacons, or vice versa, to get your own way." This applies also to other ministers and staff in the church. "We are using negatives in these statements because we know that some of these means have been used for selfish ends. We need strong "no-nos" to put a stop to it. Pray God will give you grace and integrity enough to prevent ever setting groups in the church against each other to achieve your aims" (2007, 135).

"The servant image provides a model which is patterned after our Lord's own ministry. When all church leaders are committed to this kind of ministry, they can serve as a catalyst for the whole congregation" (Tuck 1981, 20).

Reflection Questions

1. How do we see our ministers and church leaders relating and working together in our church?

2. How does our congregation view the positions of the pastor vs. the elders, deacons, associate/youth/music minister?
3. What was Paul's philosophy regarding ministers and leaders working together?
4. How does the church at Corinth see the ministry of Timothy? Should those views have been different?
5. What differences, if any, did Paul see between himself and others working with him in ministry?
6. How can we be supportive of ministerial and leaders' relations?

Session 8

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES

“Ministers are accountable to God for their personal lives and ministries. They are also accountable to other ministers. What one minister does can impact the ministry of many others, even though they may not serve in the same denomination. Ministerial accountability to one another, to the ministerial profession, and to God is vital to the work of the kingdom of God. Being a good minister involves relating to colleagues in cooperation rather than in competition” (Trull and Carter 2004, 120-121).

Ministers' Responsibilities to Colleagues

The following sample codes have been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*:

1. Endeavor to relate to all ministers as partners in the work of God, respecting their ministry and cooperating with them.
2. Seek to serve colleagues and their families with counsel, support, and personal assistance.
3. Refuse to treat other ministers as competition in order to gain a church, receive an honor, or achieve statistical success.
4. Refrain from speaking disparagingly about the person or work of any other minister, especially the predecessor or successor.
5. Enhance the ministry of the successor by refusing to interfere in any way with the church formerly served.
6. Return to a former church field for professional services, such as weddings and funerals, only if invited by the resident pastor or session.
7. Treat with respect and courtesy any predecessor who returns to the church field.
8. Be thoughtful and respectful to all retired ministers and, upon one's own retirement, support and love one's own pastor.
9. Be honest and kind in recommendations of other ministers to church positions or other inquiries.
10. If aware of serious misconduct by a minister, contact responsible officials of that minister's church body and inform them of the incident (Trull and Carter 2004, 261). “A complaint of misconduct on the part of a CP minister should be reported to the stated clerk of the presbytery or a member of the disciplinary commission” (COF 3.401).

Scripture & Reflection

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be

rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9 NIV)

Relations between Cumberland Presbyterian ministers occur at pastors' meetings, presbyterial meetings, or at General Assembly, when ministers are elected as commissioners from their presbyteries. Other events where ministers can gather and build relationships include The Symposium, camps, conferences, retreats

Indirect relationships occur when a minister leaves a congregation and takes a new one or retires. Though the relationship between the former pastor and the congregation is formally terminated, due to the intricacies of church life, a relationship between a new and old pastor is often created. These relationships happen when a minister moves, takes a different position, or retires and stays in the same congregation.

The majority of complaints from ministers regarding ethics are related to other ministers' ethics: stealing members from other congregations, not being ethical regarding leaving a church or coming back to a former church without letting the new pastor know and receiving permission, staying in touch with members of the former church, etc. Congregations need to understand the professionalism that must be maintained between pastors.

Morris Pepper wrote in his *Introduction to Christian Ministry*, "Stay away from where you have been a pastor. Once you break the pastoral relationship with a congregation, you are no longer their leader. Don't meddle with what is going on and don't criticize your successor. Turn it over to him or her. It is no longer your church. It is under the responsibility of someone else. If you do visit any members or are asked to do funerals or weddings, do so only after consulting with the present pastor" (2007, 134).

A retired minister staying in the community should attend the congregation she/he served only with the permission of the successor pastor and session. In addition, the retired minister should assume no leadership role or voice opinions on the operation of the congregation.

Reflection Questions

1. What are your thoughts regarding a minister's responsibilities to colleagues?
2. As a congregation, have we ever contributed to difficulties between two ministers? If so, how?
3. How can we prevent these kinds of issues between colleagues?
4. Who were Apollos and Paul, and why were they compared?
5. Is one ministry more important than another in the kingdom?
6. Discuss 1 Corinthians 3:8 and why it is important in the context of a minister and their colleagues.
7. What is the meaning of being co-workers in God's service?

Session 9

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO DENOMINATION

"As ministers of the mission of the church, we no longer act simply as private individuals but as representatives of the church. No matter how charismatic or prophetic we might be, we must represent more than our personal insight. As public representatives of the church, we must consider how our actions affect the overall well-being of the community" (Gula 1996, 57).

Vows of the Cumberland Presbyterian Ministers at their Ordination

The following are the questions that Cumberland Presbyterian ministers must answer affirmatively at

their ordination:

1. “Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired word of God, the authority for faith and practice?”
2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church/Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America as containing the essential doctrines taught in the holy scriptures?
3. Do you approve of and promise to uphold the government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church/Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America?
4. In participating as a minister in the judicatories of the church, do you promise to share in a responsible way in the decisions that are made, to abide by those decisions, and to promote the welfare of the church?
5. As far as you know your heart, have you been induced by the Holy Spirit to answer the call to the ministry from love of God and neighbor and a sincere desire to glorify God and advance his Kingdom in the world?
6. As God may enable you, do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church, irrespective of any opposition that may arise to you on that account?
7. Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, and endeavor to so conduct yourself both privately and publicly as not to give offense to Christ and his church?” (COF 6.36).

Scripture & Reflection

They drew names, and Matthias was chosen to join the group of the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26 CEV)

Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. (Acts 22:14-15 NIV)

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is a connectional denomination. All ordained ministers are members of their presbyteries and are expected to attend presbytery meetings and to conduct themselves privately and publicly according to their call.

Morris Pepper said, those called to be ministers of word and sacrament “are summoned to serve in and through the church, and beyond, under proper authority. Biblically, the church is both the agent and the authenticating voice of the call. The church has always been the one to legitimize the call. There is no effective calling, nor authoritative ordination, apart from the church. When Jesus was no longer present in body, the apostles became the body to call and authorize. Remember the eleven, under God’s guidance, acting to make Matthias an apostle? Also remember Paul’s conversion. As powerful and convincing as it was, God used those in the church to authenticate the commission Paul had received. He was sent to Annanias of Damascus who helped Paul understand what had happened to him. Be aware of any tendency in yourself, or any act on the part of others, to assume authority independently of the church!” (2007, 20).

The basic responsibilities a minister should have to a denomination are to love, support and cooperate with the faith community of which he/she is part, to recognize the debt owed to the denomination for its contribution to his/her life, ministry and church, and to work to improve the denomination in its efforts to expand and extend the kingdom of God (Trull and Carter 2004, 262).

Reflection Questions

1. What is significant about a minister’s ordination vows?

2. What is expected of a minister regarding the denomination?
3. What does it mean that “Mathias was chosen” by them?
4. What do we mean when we said that we believe in the internal call and the external call?
5. What is the meaning of ordination?
6. What is expected of CP ministers regarding Presbytery meetings? Why?
7. How do we as a congregation encourage our minister to be faithful to his/her duties at a denominational level? Presbytery level? Synodical level?
8. Discuss the various leadership roles your pastor has filled in the different judicatories.

Session 10

MINISTERS’ RESPONSIBILITIES TO COMMUNITY

“Christian involvement in a community must always be realistic. Every culture is corrupted by sin. At the same time, the gospel of Jesus Christ is powerful. Societies can be transformed. These two realities create a healthy tension between Christian ideals and appropriate social action” (Maston 1974, 174).

Ministers’ Responsibilities to Community

The following sample codes have been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*:

1. The primary responsibility of the minister is to be the pastor of your congregation and never neglect ministerial duties in order to serve in the community.
2. Accept reasonable responsibilities for community service, recognizing the minister has a public ministry.
3. Support public integrity in the community through responsible prophetic witness and social action.
4. Obey the laws of the government unless they require disobedience to the law of God.
5. Practice Christian citizenship without engaging in partisan politics or political activities that are unethical, unbiblical, or unwise (Trull and Carter 2004, 261-262).

Scripture & Reflection

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18-19 NIV)

According to the *Confession of Faith*,

- “The purpose of civil government is to enable God's creation to live under the principles of justice and order. As it faithfully upholds the welfare of God's creation, civil government lies within the purpose of God and functions as a useful instrument to enable people to live in harmony and peace.
- It is the duty of people to participate in civil government in such ways as are open to them, especially in exercising the right to vote. It is the duty of Christians to enter civil offices for which they are qualified and for the purpose of working for justice, peace, and the common welfare.
- Civil government and persons elected to civil office may not assume control over or administration of the church in matters of faith or practice. Yet their duty is to protect the

religious freedom of all persons and to guard the right of religious bodies to assemble without interference.

- The covenant community, governed by the Lord Christ, opposes, resists, and seeks to change all circumstances of oppression-political, economic, cultural, racial-by which persons are denied the essential dignity God intends for them in the work of creation.
- The covenant community affirms the lordship of Christ who sought out the poor, the oppressed, the sick, and the helpless. In her corporate life and through her individual members, the church is an advocate for all victims of violence and all those whom the law or society treats as less than persons for whom Christ died. Such advocacy involves not only opposition to all unjust laws and forms of injustice but even more support for those attitudes and actions which embody the way of Christ, which is to overcome evil with good.
- God gives the message and ministry of reconciliation to the church. The church, corporately and through her individual members, seeks to promote reconciliation, love, and justice among all persons, classes, races, and nations” (COF 6.27-6.32).

Reflection Questions

1. What are a ministers’ responsibilities to the community?
2. Do you believe that ministers are called into the community to work actively for societal changes? Explain your beliefs.
3. Who took the ministry described in Luke 4 as his own?
4. Why did the Lord anoint Jesus? For what purpose?
5. Are these words from Luke 4 also related to the ordained minister? How so?
6. Are these benefits only for the people of the church? Explain.
7. Should a minister join civic organizations? Why or why not?
8. Should a pastor run for public office or become actively involved in a political campaign? Why or why not?
9. How can a minister be a prophet in our community without being political?

Session 11

MINISTERIAL SEXUAL ETHICS

“While our sexuality is a good gift for ministry, making us alive, energetic, and connecting to others, it can also become a tragic instrument of abuse, exploitation, and disorder” (Gula 1996, 93).

Ministerial Sexual Ethics

The following code on sexual conduct have been offered by Gula as a set of aspirational goals toward which we all can strive to realize in our ministry:

1. “We are to witness in all relationships the chastity appropriate to our state in life, whether celibate, married or single.
2. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have a professional responsibility. Prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to all forms of overt or covert seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that sexually abuses, exploits, or harasses another person.
3. We are to provide a safe place for people to be vulnerable without fearing that sexual boundaries will be violated.

4. We strive to be aware of our own and another's vulnerability in regard to sexuality, especially when working alone with another.
5. We bear the greater burden of responsibility for maintaining sexual boundaries in the pastoral relationship, for we hold great power.
6. We must not initiate sexual behavior and must refuse it even when the other invites or consents to it.
7. We must give preference to the perspective and judgment of those who are vulnerable and dependent on us in order to determine whether touching would be an appropriate expression of pastoral care.
8. We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, since we cannot control how physical touch will be received. That is, we are to take into account how age, gender, race, ethnic background, emotional condition, prior experience, and present life situation affect how touching may be received and interpreted.
9. We should become familiar with the dynamics of transference and countertransference which can make us vulnerable to violating sexual boundaries.¹
10. We strive for a greater self-awareness in order to recognize the sexual dynamics at work for us in pastoral relationships and to heed the warning signs in our lives which indicate when we are approaching boundary violations.
11. We should satisfy our needs for affection, intimacy, attraction, and affirmation outside the pastoral relationship.
12. We should seek supervision or other professional help to remain focused on our professional responsibilities and to hold firm to the sexual boundaries of the pastoral relationship.
13. We must report clear violations of sexual conduct to the appropriate ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and then do what we can to see that justice is done for the victim, the offender, and the community from which the victim and minister come" (Gula 1996, 149-150). "A complaint of misconduct on the part of a CP minister should be reported to the stated clerk of the presbytery or a member of the disciplinary commission" (COF 3.401).

Scripture & Reflection

Abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22 NKJV)

You are God's people, so don't let it be said that any of you are immoral or indecent or greedy. (Ephesians 5:3 CEV)

Sex and sexuality are difficult words for some. The reality is that we need to talk about them in church. As Gula has said, sexuality is good but can be used badly. For that reason, we as a church need to have some ethical codes regarding sexuality and guidelines regarding relations and ministry.

Some useful definitions related to sexual misconduct that could help us understand what could happen are:

- "**Sexual Abuse** refers to using persons who lack the ability or will to protect themselves (a child, the elderly, or a physically or emotionally disabled adult) for sexual stimulation by the person responsible for their care."
- "**Sexual exploitation** is fundamentally a betrayal of trust in the professional relationship by using one's personal, professional, or physical power to develop a romantic relationship with someone under one's care or to use that person for one's own sexual stimulation and satisfaction."

¹ In transference, the person seeking pastoral help will project onto the minister unmet needs or unresolved conflicts that are rooted in a prior relationship with some other significant person, such as a parent. In countertransference, the ministers unmet needs, feelings, or unresolved personal conflicts get superimposed onto those of the one seeking help. Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 1996, 110-111.

- **“Sexual harassment** is using one’s power to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to exchange sex for some other favor. It also involves creating an intimidating, offensive working environment through unwelcomed verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature” (Gula 1996, 94-95).

Reflection Questions

1. What are your thoughts about a ministerial code of sexual ethics?
2. Gula states that “sexuality is a good gift for ministry.” How can it be used for both good and evil?
3. What is the meaning of abstinence?
4. How can a congregation establish and observe appropriate boundaries in pastoral ministry? What is the pastor’s role? What is the role of the congregation?
5. Why does the pastor bear the “greater burden of responsibility” in maintaining appropriate boundaries in the pastoral relationship?
6. How can a pastor, or church member, give careful attention to the issue of touch?

Session 12

A COVENANT OF TRUST FOR CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIANS

The *Confession of Faith* for Cumberland Presbyterians states, “By word and action God invites persons into a covenant relationship. God promises to be faithful to the covenant and to make all who believe his people. All who respond with trust and commitment to God's invitation find the promise sure and rejoice in being members of God's people, the covenant community” (COF 1.03).

The Covenant Community

God’s people, the covenant community, is the context for ministry where the Holy Spirit shapes our understanding of ministry and ministerial ethics. The following sample covenant community has been adapted from the book *Ministerial Ethics: A Covenant of Trust*:

1. Ministry is rightly described by plural rather than singular modifiers; ministry is *ours*, not *mine*. While we ordain some to the ministry of word and sacrament, we expect the whole covenant community to participate in ministry, and we honor the contributions of every member.
2. Ministry presupposes trusting relationships. In the face of the many things that tend to fracture the fellowship, the New Testament calls us to trust in and live by the unity which is ours in Christ.
3. Ministry is framed by the promise of mutual commitment and accountability. We are covenant-bound to support each other in building up the Body of Christ and to expect faithfulness and competence in ministry.
4. Ministry envisions individual and cooperative initiatives held together in creative tension. We covenant neither to always wait for someone else to act on ministry opportunities nor to always assume that no one else is able and willing to act.
5. We function as a *community*. We are not autonomous individuals who happen to come together on certain occasions because we hold similar interests. We are Christ’s Body called to bear witness in our communal life that the Word became flesh and lives among us. The way we minister or fail to minister to one another and to the world in large measure corroborates or undermines our communal witness.

6. We subordinate personal agendas to building up the whole Body. In fact, our willingness to work selflessly for the good of the community authenticates our covenant to live as community. Among other things, this means we resist every move to splinter the community into competing special interests. We covenant to talk with each other and not about each other in the interests of common ministry (BGCT 2005, 9).

Scripture & Reflection

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1-6 NIV)

According to Trull and Carter, the overarching purpose of a ministerial code of ethics is accountability.

- The first purpose is to “provide guidelines that reflect the values of ministry. Ministerial ethics affirms that to be a Christian minister means assuming certain basic obligations common to all clergy. These norms guide those called to serve toward an ethical ministry and stress the areas in which ministers are uniquely vulnerable.”
- The second purpose, relates to the competency of the pastor and requires at least two essentials: “ministry skills and mental and spiritual health.”
- The third purpose states that a “code of ethics can support and protect an individual minister.”
- “A final purpose of an ethical code for ministers is to define the moral necessities of the ministerial profession. For the person planning to become a minister, as well as for the lay person, a written code explains the ethical expectations of the pastoral vocation” (2004, 195-197).

Reflection Questions

1. Why is it important to have a ministerial code of ethics?
2. Do you think a code of ministerial ethics is a help or hindrance? Why?
3. What is Paul urging us to do in Ephesians 4? Why?
4. What is the result if we do as Paul suggests? What results if we don't follow Paul's advice?
5. How important are humility, kindness, patience and support in relationships in the church? Why is important that relationships in the church exhibit these traits?
6. What does it mean to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace?
7. What does it mean to be one body and one spirit?
8. How can the minister be accountable to the congregation? How can the congregation be accountable to the minister?
9. Does a code of ethics help in this accountability? Why or why not?
10. What are the consequences of failing to have a code of ministerial ethics?
11. Take a moment to pray for your pastor (and his/her family). Include in the prayer other church leaders – elders, deacons, teachers).

Appendix

MINISTER/SESSION EVALUATION PROCESS for Annual Review by Session/Personnel Committee

A thorough evaluation process for a minister and church session is a four-part process described in each section below. It is important that the minister and session both understand the work/tasks that are being evaluated. It is important that a Minister's Job Description be reviewed annually, and that specific, measurable goals be set by both the minister and session. These tools will guide the evaluation process.

I. Job Description - Minister

The Constitution of the *Confession of Faith* describes the general responsibilities of a minister. Having a job description provides detailed information about what the church and minister expect from each other in the relationship.

_____ There is a job description in place. The responsibilities have been reviewed and there will be no changes in the coming year.

_____ There is a job description in place and the following changes have been made (list those changes below)

_____ There is no job description, and we are working on this step before moving forward in the evaluation process.

II. Annual Goals for the Church/Minister/Session

Year: _____

List those goals here and use them as a guide and reference for the evaluation process (Step III)

III. Evaluation for Minister

Instructions:

The purpose of the Minister Evaluation Form is to examine the performance of the minister of a particular church. This evaluation is categorized into two sections. Section A is to be completed by the session or representative group from the session. Section B is to be completed by the minister. Complete Section A by using the Evaluation Rating Definitions below.

Evaluation Rating Definitions

1. **Outstanding:** Performance is consistently exceptional and exceeds in the contribution and service to the church
2. **Exceeds Expectations:** Performance is routinely on task with role and responsibilities as minister
3. **Meets Expectations:** Performance is regularly competent, dependable and effective
4. **Below Expectations:** Performance fails to meet role and responsibilities as minister
5. **Unsatisfactory:** Performance is consistently below standards and immediate improvement is required

SECTION A: MINISTER EVALUATION (BASED ON 2.63 OF THE CONSTITUTION) 1 2 3 4 5

- **Worship Development and Leadership**

Develops liturgy (forms, choice of hymns, prayers, etc.) that is appropriate to the congregation and community. Conducts meaningful prayers of people. Administers the sacraments.

- **Preaching**

Preaching is solid theologically and biblically, applies to issues and experiences people are concerned about and gives worship a sense of what they need to take with them to live God's message. Effective and interesting delivery and organization, varied approaches, well focused.

- **Pastoral Care**

Provides appropriate pastoral care to members of the congregation, especially in crisis situations. Refers to other professionals as necessary. Helps develop climate of lay pastoral care. Promotes opportunities for friendship and mutual support among members. Participates as appropriate.

- **Education**

Teaches or leads classes or groups as appropriate. Encourages all ages and groups to participate in opportunities provided by the church to grow spiritually. Helps strengthen the Christian education ministries. Raises the importance of stewardship among the congregation and serves as an example for stewardship and tithing.

- **Administration**

Demonstrates effective organizational skills (teamwork, communication, planning). Works with the session to develop a vision for the congregation and sets measurable goals for accomplishing that vision. Serves as moderator of the session and has regular session meetings. Consistently attends presbytery meetings and represents the church in higher judicatories. Serves on presbyterial and/or denominational committees/teams when appropriate to do so.

- **Mission Leadership (Outreach and Evangelism)**

Gets personally involved and encourages others to get involved in mission activities. Leads the church in supporting local, presbyterial, and denominational mission efforts. Organizes and participates in effective outreach to newcomers. Works with leaders to effectively publicize church activities. Gives attention to newcomers, facilitates an initial or renewed commitment to Christ, assimilation into the church.

SECTION B: MINISTER'S SELF EVALUATION

In this separate section, the minister is asked to do a self-evaluation. It is designed to be discussed with the Session/Personnel Committee.

1. What are some of your significant accomplishments since your last evaluation?

2. What concerns do you have about the congregation and your job expectations?
3. What are your most important objectives for next year?
4. What are your proposals or ideas for professional development for next year?
5. What additional resources (monetary, spiritual) or assistance do you feel is necessary to help make you more successful?
6. What have you done specifically for self-care this past year? What do you plan to do in the coming year? How many days off per week do you take? Did you take all of your vacation time in the past year? How can the church help you in your efforts of self-care?
7. How is your own spiritual life? How can the session or church help you in your personal spiritual growth?
8. Other Comments:

_____ Date: _____
Minister

_____ Date: _____
Elder

IV. Elder and Session Evaluation Form

Name: _____

Evaluation Period of twelve (12) months: _____

Date Completed: _____

Instructions:

The purpose of the Elder and Session Evaluation Form is to examine the performance of the elder and session of a particular church. This evaluation is categorized into two sections. Section A is to be completed as a self-evaluation of his or her role as an active elder in their church. Section B is to be completed by the same elder and is evaluating the Session he or she is serving on. Both sections are to be completed by using the Evaluation Rating Definitions below.

Evaluation Rating Definitions

1. **Outstanding:** Performance is consistently exceptional and exceeds in the contribution and service to the church

2. **Exceeds Expectations:** Performance is routinely on task with role and responsibilities as elder and/or session
3. **Meets Expectations:** Performance is regularly competent, dependable and effective
4. **Below Expectations:** Performance fails to meet role and responsibilities as elder and/or session
5. **Unsatisfactory:** Performance is consistently below standards and immediate improvement is required

SECTION A: OFFICE OF ELDER EVALUATION (AS TAKEN FROM 2.70 AND 2.92 OF THE CONSTITUTION) 1 2 3 4 5

- Attentive to persons who have not confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior including those who are spiritually weak and those who need to be instructed in the faith.
- Visitation of persons in their homes, praying with them and for them; especially for the sick, those in mourning and others in need.
- Encouraging persons by word and example through participation of one's time, talent and financial resources in the worship, study and witness of the church.
- Communicating with the minister(s) of concerns within and outside the church that need his or her attention.
- Engage and participate in study and preparation of the office of elder to enhance and perform the duties of office.
- Promote peace, unity, purity and general welfare of the church and share in a responsible way, decisions that are made and abide by such decisions.

Comments:

SECTION B: SESSION EVALUATION (AS TAKEN FROM 2.51 AND 4.5 OF THE CONSTITUTION) 1 2 3 4 5

Administrative

- With the approval of presbytery, call a minister to serve the church.
- Receive members into the church.
- Grant letters of dismissal, which when given for parents shall always include the names of baptized children.
- Ordain and install elders and deacons when elected and require these officers to devote themselves to their responsibilities.
- Examine the proceedings and supervise the work of the deacons (as applicable).
- Encourage the stewardship of church members, order and supervise collections for Godly purposes, and in general, oversee the finances of the church.
- Hold title to the property of the church and execute all transactions required by civil law.
- Keep accurate record of session's proceedings such as congregational meetings, marriages, baptisms, additions, deaths and dismissions of church members.

Comments:

Judicial and Disciplinary

- Resolve questions of doctrine and discipline in the congregation.
- Admonish or suspend members found guilty in a disciplinary hearing, subject to appeal of presbytery.

- Elect representatives to higher church judicatories and require on their return a report of their diligence and the decisions of the judicatory.
- Observe and carry out the injunctions of the higher judicatories.

Comments:

Evangelism and Discipleship

- Christian education, including study of the scriptures for Christian growth.
- Personal witness to unbelievers and to those out of fellowship with the church.
- Encourage parents the importance of presenting their children for baptism.
- Stewardship of time, talents, and money, and the care and the use of the properties of the church.
- Establishing and giving oversight to church schools, Bible classes, fellowship and other organizations within the church, with special attention giving to nurture of the children.
- Initiating and coordinating the best measures for promoting and extending the work of the church.
- Leading the people and participating in the ministry of the church beyond the bounds of the local congregation; and in such other ministries as appear needful.

Comments:

Worship and Sacraments

- Assembling and leading the congregation in public worship, including praying, singing of praises, reading the scriptures, presenting tithes and offerings, preaching the word, and celebrating the sacraments.
- Assemble the congregation and provide for worship when there is no minister.

Comments:

Fellowship and Congregational Care

- Providing activities of fellowship appropriate to the family of God.
- Visitation of the sick and homebound.
- Pastoral care of families, especially disturbed and broken families.

Comments:

Areas That Rate Outstanding:

Areas Which Need Immediate Improvement:

Plan of Action Towards Improvement:

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