

## **APPENDIX G**

### **CODE OF ETHICS FOR CLERGY, CHURCH PROFESSIONALS**

As an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, ministers and other church professions shall affirm the vows made at their ordinations, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for their life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit themselves to the following standards of ethical conduct.

These ethical standards seek to inform the laity what they can expect from clergy and other church professionals. It is recommended that Sessions of the presbytery's local churches will adopt similar standards for their own non-professional employees.

These standards do not speak to all aspects of ministers' lives. They are minimum standards, and the minister should also be guided by Scripture, personal conscience, the Book of Order, Christian tradition and peer approval. This code does articulate certain customs and practices that have been well accepted with the profession of ministry.

#### **I – PERSONAL LIFE**

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and other church professionals will conduct their lives in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with their public ministry. Therefore, ministers and other church professionals will:

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
2. Be honest and truthful in their relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants they make and honor marriage vows;
4. Report to the chair, Committee on Ministry, any divorce actions in which I may become involved;
5. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
6. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of their office of ministry, their commitments to family and other primary relationships, and their need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
7. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
8. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
9. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

#### **II – PROFESSIONAL LIFE**

Ministers and other church professionals will conduct their ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry. Therefore they will:

1. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;

2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of their office and positions held;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of their ministry;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission, unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
7. Recognize the limits of their own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
9. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise their ministry;
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to them;
11. If unmarried, refrain from dating any member or friend of a congregation where they may be serving;
12. Report to the executive presbyter or chair, Committee on Ministry any incidents where he or she is arrested;
13. Report to the executive presbyter or chair, Committee on Ministry, any civil litigation into which the minister or church professional becomes involved;
14. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;
15. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom accountable for ministry;
16. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
17. Deal honorably with the record of their predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office speak and act in ways that support the ministry of their successor;
18. Participate in the life of any former ministry setting only in compliance with the New Castle Presbytery's policy on departed pastors;
19. Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously in compliance with this policy on departed pastors; and
20. Consult with the committee on ministry in the presbytery of their residence regarding their involvement in any ministry setting during their retirement.

### III – THE LARGER CHURCH

Ministers and other church professionals will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore they will:

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;
3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and

4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

#### IV - VIOLATIONS AND SANCTIONS:

The presbytery considers that fidelity to these standards enhances the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Violations of these standards may be viewed as a breaking of ordination vows and subject to the disciplinary processes of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

#### V – CANDIDATES AND INQUIRERS

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall circulate these standards to its inquirers and candidates for the ministry. It shall make clear that these standards apply also to those under its supervision.

#### VI – CONCLUSION AND RATIONALE

Central to the vocation of Minister of Word and Sacrament is leadership of the people of God in a peculiarly Christian lifestyle which has at its core the embodiment of Jesus' words in John 15:12. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

These ethical standards are an attempt, not at setting legalistic limitations but rather guiding us all in showing the kind of love for each other that Christ has shown. So may all be encouraged to live in such a manner as to promote the health and growth of the Church, and give glory to God in Jesus Christ.