

# Overview - Solo Ministry

## *Pastoral Reviews & Personnel Policies*

### **PART I: Values to Guide Personnel Policies and Procedures**

- A. The church commits to the following values with respect to pastoral reviews, personnel policies, and employment decisions: nurturing trusting relationships, encouraging Pastors to be self-reflective, to engage one another in a spirit of care, humility, and curiosity, and to listen for God's leading.

### **PART II: The Pastor and the Personnel Committee**

- A. The Pastor is responsible for overseeing the overall health and vision of the congregation.
- B. The Pastor is given a job description that identifies the overarching vision of the congregation, the congregational vision for the Ministry position, the tasks of the position, and the skills expected of the person filling this position.
- C. The Personnel Committee is responsible for negotiating employment contracts, holidays, leaves of absence, salaries, etc. with the Pastor. The Personnel Committee will call together focus groups, organize reviews, and manage employment decision procedures. The Personnel Committee is accountable to the Church Council.

### **PART III: Accountability and Communication**

- A. The Pastor is accountable to the Personnel Committee, who will meet with him/her regularly to set direction and objectives and offer guidance and support if/when he/she encounters challenges.
- B. Personnel Committee members will talk directly with the Pastor if there are areas of concern that need to be addressed.
- C. The Personnel Committee will support the Pastor in areas where the Pastor is facing a challenge with respect to his/her job description/fulfilling his/her role.
- D. Where a Pastor is new to ministry, he/she will seek out a pastoral mentor through area conference.

### **PART IV: Feedback from the Congregation**

- A. The congregation gives feedback to the Personnel Committee and the Pastor via (1) focus groups, (2) yearly church health surveys, (3) direct dialogue with the Pastor, and (4) substantial reviews.

- B. The Personnel Committee will conduct substantial reviews every three years for the Pastor; the Personnel Committee will provide the congregation with a statement about the purpose, values, and process of the review. The reviews will comprise feedback from discussion groups and surveys. All congregational participants are invited to participate in this process.
- C. As part of the survey, a poll will be taken regarding the ongoing fit of the Pastor and the congregation with one another. This poll is not a vote or a referendum on the Pastor's tenure. The Personnel Committee will collate and summarize the results to be shared with the Pastor and congregation. Neither the Pastor nor the congregation will receive any raw data.
- D. If more than 15% of the congregation expresses significant concern, the Personnel Committee, the Church Council and the Pastor will strategize how to proceed. This might lead to developing a plan to address the concerns of the congregation or bringing the Pastor's ministry at the church to a close.

## **PART V: Ongoing Employment Decisions**

- A. The Church Council will have the final authority regarding the ongoing employment of the Pastor.
- B. Following the substantial reviews, the Personnel Committee is responsible for following up on the outcomes of the reviews with the Pastor and the congregation.

## **Part VI: Conflict Resolution among Church Leaders**

- A. The Pastor and members of lay leadership are encouraged to be self-reflective and talk directly with one another whenever conflict situations arise.
- B. Leaders who are in a conflict may consult the Pastor—or a third party if the Pastor is one of the parties in the conflict—who will help the parties understand and manage or resolve their conflict.
- C. If the conflict situation is not resolved, the parties in dispute will talk with the Personnel Committee, who will contact the area conference. The Personnel Committee together with area conference will discern how best to proceed, possibly calling in an external conflict specialist.

## **Part VII: Matters of Ministerial Misconduct**

- A. If a Pastor is accused of ministerial misconduct (See *A Shared Understanding of Ministerial Leadership*, page 55 ff), the Personnel Committee will refer the complaint to area conference and follow the process as outlined there.