

ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Introduction

Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16)

The new life takes shape in a community in which people know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no person has any ground on which to stand, except God’s grace. (9.22, Confession of 1967)

We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to standards of responsible conduct in all of life. We affirm, on the basis of both Scripture and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), that the behavior of church leaders must be exemplary. These ethical standards are an attempt to make public some ethical assertions that for the most part have been unwritten. In the past, cultural norms provided sufficient support that it could be said that “everyone knew” what constituted proper and /or expected behavior. However, waves of change have swept through our society. Now, it has become important to make explicit what was implicit to encourage the trust relationship essential to effective ministry.

A. **Purpose.** The purpose of these standards for the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler is to :

1. Declare and maintain the highest standards for professional ministry in accord with *Book of Order* G-6.0106.
2. Safeguard the church, the church’s members and staff from abuse through any form of misconduct and abuse or false accusations of wrong-doing.
3. Seek justice by assuring effectiveness of the church’s administrative, investigative, and judicial processes in determining truth, protecting the innocent, and dealing appropriately with those who victimize others.
4. Promote healing of all persons who have been the victim of such abuse and congregations where misconduct has occurred, and working to restore relationships broken by the misconduct, and seeking to bring healing to those who are found guilty of misconduct.
5. Address questions and concerns by establishing a Consultation Team which will be available when situations or accusations of misconduct arise.
 - a Its purposes are pastoral rather than judicial.
 - b It will be appointed by and accountable to the Coordinating Team.

B. **Application.** These standards apply to all members of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler including Ministers of Word and Sacrament, commissioned lay pastors, and any person who is approved for service in and for the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler. It shall be the responsibility of Sessions to set their own standards for staff members in congregations.

C. General Assembly Standards of Ethical Conduct. The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler adopts the “Standards of Ethical Conduct” adopted by the 210th General Assembly (1998). It is to be understood that the guidelines of that document are not substitutes for the provisions of Scripture or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

D. Named Behaviors Not Comprehensive. These standards are not intended to be all-inclusive, nor are they intended to be a comprehensive commentary on the constitution of the church or civil law. No one should conclude, therefore, that what is not included is therefore permitted. Rather, these standards reflect some areas in which problems tend to arise.

Resources

The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics, Stanley Hauerwas, University of Notre Dame Press, 1984

Theology and Christian Ethics, James M. Gustafson, Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press 1974

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Standards for Minister Members of Presbytery

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. (Romans 12.6-8)

Concerning the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven which the Lord gave to the apostles, many babble many astonishing things, and out of them forge swords, spears, scepters and crowns, and complete power over the greatest kingdoms, indeed, over souls and bodies. Judging simply according to the Word of the Lord, we say that all properly called ministers possess and exercise the keys or the use of them when they proclaim the Gospel; that is, when they teach, exhort, comfort, rebuke, and keep in discipline the people committed to their trust. (5.096, Second Helvetic Confession)

A. Background Checks. The calling or employing body is responsible for contacting references for prospective ministers and employees.

B. Privileged Clergy Communication. In accordance with *Life Together in the Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*[see Appendix B], clergy maintain confidentiality and privileged communication in that they “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.” Exceptions to confidentiality and privileged communication may occur when the recipient waives the right of confidentiality. Additionally, confidentiality must be waived in order to warn or protect someone who is in danger. Clergy should be aware that the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Acts requires clergy to report abuse or neglect of children. Child abuse is always a matter of grave concern and clergy should take care to consult other clergy,

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Presbytery staff or legal counsel when encountering any situation involving child abuse or neglect [see Appendix C for resources]. Action must be taken when there is abuse or neglect of any person who is presumed to have limited ability to care for themselves. Clergy must also breach confidentiality when persons who are receiving pastoral care pose a life-threatening danger to themselves or others.

C. Sexual Behavior. Sexuality is a gift of God and integral to human personhood. However, sexuality can become the basis for oppression when trust relationships are breached and persons are abused. Sexual behavior can be defined as “any physical contact or bodily movement intended to express or arouse erotic interest” (Rutter, 1986, p. 16). Misuse and inappropriate expressions of God’s gift of sexuality are sinful and are not condoned. Some of these are:

1 **Sexually Offensive Behavior.** Ministers must take care to avoid either sexually overt or sexually-oriented language or behavior. Possession of sexually-oriented materials might provide a hostile environment for others. Inappropriate sexual references and behavior can intimidate and sexually harass others. “For the pastor, accountability and self-awareness which are required to prevent misconduct, entails a keen sense of vocation derived from a divine call to the ministry” (Grenz & Bell, p. 133).

2 **Sexual Misconduct.** Sexual misconduct involves an abuse of authority and power and the misuse of a trust relationship. It confuses the pastoral and personal relationship between the pastor and any other person. Even when another initiates sexual contact, the pastor’s compliance involves an abuse of power in which the professional relationship is abandoned. “Parishioners look to a pastor to meet their needs for guidance, counsel, support, and care. In seeking help from someone who is a designated authority, who offers to provide these services, and who holds power, parishioners are vulnerable and thus able to be harmed or taken advantage of.” (M. Fortune, 1992). Because the pastoral relationship is one of trust, the minister is required to be conscious of his/her professional responsibility to maintain appropriate relationships and interpersonal boundaries.

3 **Sexual Harassment.** Sexual harassment consists of “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission). It is important to note that a single sexual advance may constitute harassment and is not limited to the workplace or employment environment. Hostile environment sexual harassment involves the creation of an intimidating environment which might include repeated requests for sexual favors, demeaning sexual inquiries and vulgarities, offensive language, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or degrading nature, as well as sexually offensive or sexist signs, cartoons, jokes, calendars, literature, photography, or graffiti.

D. Child Abuse: According to Pennsylvania Child Abuse Law, child sexual abuse includes “an act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to, or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of, a child under 18 years of age” as well as “any recent act, failure to act or series of such acts or failures to act by

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a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to, or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of, a child under 18 years of age.” According to Pennsylvania Law, members of the clergy are designated as mandated reporters, and are required to report child abuse “when, in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession, they come into contact with children who they have reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of their medical, professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused child.” It is advisable for all clergy and persons working with children to obtain and submit Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form (CY-113) and Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check Form (SP 4-184). (See Appendix C.)

1 **Child Pornography:** According to US Code Title 18 Part I Chapter 110 Section 2256 child pornography is “any visual depiction, including any photograph, film, video, picture, or computer or computer-generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, where (A) the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; (B) such visual depiction is, or appears to be, of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; (C) such visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or (D) such visual depiction is advertised, promoted, presented, described, or distributed in such a manner that conveys the impression that the material is or contains a visual depiction of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct.”

E. Violence. Verbal, physical, and emotional violence by pastors or church leaders or other clergy is clearly unacceptable. Violence is the “exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse.” (Miriam-Webster) Verbal violence is “injury by or as if by distortion, infringement, or profanation.” (ibid.) Emotional violence (sometimes called *bullying*) is “intimidation through threats, insults, or aggressive behavior.” (ibid.) Pastors and church leaders should seek ways to prevent violence from occurring within the Presbytery or the congregation.

F. Domestic Violence. According to Pennsylvania state statute, domestic violence involves “attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury, placing another in fear of imminent bodily injury, false imprisonment, and physically or sexually abusing children” by a family or household member. Family and household members include “a spouse or former spouse, persons living as spouses, parents and children, other related persons, current or former sexual or intimate partners, and persons who share biological parenthood.”

G. Substance Abuse. Any abuse of alcohol or prescription drugs is unacceptable. The possession (apart from a doctor’s prescription) and distribution of “controlled substances” is illegal.

H. Financial Responsibility. Ministers are expected to be responsible in personal and professional financial matters. When a minister borrows money, he/she is expected to repay the debt as agreed when undertaken. Ministers should not use church or members’ funds, accounts, and/or resources for personal or private advantage. Ministers should not serve in the capacity of signing checks on church accounts,

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except in the case of specifically designated funds, e.g. pastoral discretionary or petty cash accounts.

I. **Collegiality.** All Ministers of the Word and Sacrament vow “to be governed by our church’s polity” to “abide by its discipline” and “be a friend among...colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit.” They promise to “further the peace, unity and purity of the church” and they further promise to “work for the reconciliation of the world.” Such covenantal relationships incarnate the Body of Christ to the world and promote wholeness and healing in the body of the presbytery.

Resources

Fortune, M. (1992) *Is nothing sacred? When sex invades the pastoral relationships.* San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Grenz, S. J. & Bell, R.D. (2001). *Betrayal of trust; Confronting and preventing clergy sexual misconduct.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Rutter, Peter (1986). *Sex in the forbidden zone: When men in power --- therapists, doctors, clergy, teachers, and others --- betray women’s trust.* Los Angeles, Jeremy P.

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Standards for Relationships with Congregations

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4.11-13)

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,

everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,

*sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.*

The same Spirit

who inspired the prophets and apostles

rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,

*engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,*

*feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.*

(A Brief Statement of Faith)

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A. Services for Members of Another Church. Pastors are often called upon to perform pastoral services for a person or a family who are not members of his/her congregation. Such services may include but are not limited to the following: officiate at weddings or funerals, counseling regarding baptism or provide personal, marital, or family counseling. When this request is made the minister should ascertain whether they are members of a particular church. If the person or family are members of another congregation, they should be urged to procure the services of their own pastor. Before the pastor makes a decision to perform such pastoral services, he/she should contact and discuss it with the other pastor. (See Appendix A.)

B. Calling on Members of Neighboring Churches. The pastor's first responsibility is to the members of the congregation which he/she serves and should concentrate his/her calling on members of that congregation in their homes, hospital, nursing home or other facility. The pastor should seriously consider the implication of making a pastoral call on a person who is a member of another congregation even if asked to do so by a family member or a member of his/her congregation. If such a call is made, the pastor should contact the non-member's pastor and inform her/him about the nature of the visit.

C. Multiple Staff Relationships. In ministerial staff relationships, as in all intra-church relationships, each staff member is responsible to contribute to the welfare of the whole church. Staff members are expected to speak directly about their differences and problems to the individual(s) with whom they differ and, if necessary, to the session's personnel committee, assigned committee, individual supervisor or advocate. Innuendo and gossip are unacceptable. If a minister is working on a staff and concludes he/she is unable to manage relationships with other staff members in an effective manner, then he/she should consult with the COM for assistance to help resolve the conflict.

E. Ministers Who Leave A Particular Church

It is recognized that potentially difficult situations can arise involving the relationship of a minister to his/her former congregation(s). By making it clear to a congregation that he/she will no longer be available to provide pastoral services, a former pastor helps a congregation in its transition to new pastoral leadership.

1. When the relationship between the pastor and the congregation is dissolved, the pastor shall announce clearly to the congregation that he/she will no longer be the pastor and, therefore, will not be available for any pastoral duties. It is expected that the pastor's family will be sensitive to issues related to closure. It is also expected that the pastor will speak and act in ways that support the ministry of his/her successor.
2. A retired Pastor will consult with the Committee On Ministry regarding any involvement in ministry he/she conducts within the bounds of the presbytery. The retired Pastor is expected to seek membership with the presbytery within whose bounds he/she resides.
3. A former pastor is expected to abide by the mandates stipulated in the *Book of Order* (G.14.0606): "Former pastors and associate pastors may officiate at services for members of a particular church, or at services within its properties, only upon invitation from the moderator of the session or, in case of the inability

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to contact the moderator, from the clerk of session.” This same passage should be read to the congregation at the time of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. (See Appendix A)

D. Special Gifts and Honoraria. If there is a specific financial arrangement for a pastor’s services, it shall be determined in advance in consultation with the Session. A pastor often receives additional honoraria beyond her/his terms of call. Examples may include stipends for funerals, weddings, special lectures or presentations. Honoraria for the administering of the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper are not to be accepted. Further, many churches demonstrate their support for their pastor(s) and other staff by various bonuses. Pastors need to take care that such gifts do not take on an obligatory nature and remember that all income is taxable according to state and federal tax laws.

E. Standards for Ministers in Interim Positions. The interim ministry has some unique issues. The interim pastor shall work in cooperation with the Committee On Ministry in preparing a congregation for a new pastor and in preparing for his/her departure from the congregation. Persons who serve in an interim capacity are governed by the ethical standards that apply to called pastors.

F. Standards for Specialized Ministers of the Presbytery. All ministers who fall into the category of General Assembly’s listing of "other ministers" should respect the position of the installed pastors regarding all functions within the community. Weddings, funerals, and administration of the sacraments of church members are not to be performed by specialized ministers unless an invitation has been offered by the pastor, the session, or by permission of the presbytery.

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Standards on Matters of Conscience

If a minister comes to the point in his or her faith and life when in good conscience it is no longer possible to abide by the polity of our denomination, he or she must determine if they are being called out of the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (USA).¹ It is unethical to encourage elders and church members to leave the denomination. (See *Book of Order* G-6.0108a)

Resources

Cultivating Wholeness: A guide to care and counseling in faith communities, Margaret Kornfield, New York: Continuum, 1998.

¹ “Very early in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, even before the General Assembly was established, the plan of reunion of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia contained the following sentences: “That when any matter is determined by a major vote, every member shall either actively concur with or passively submit to such determination; or if his conscience permit him to do neither, he shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion without attempting to make any schism. Provided always that this shall be understood to extend only to such determination as the body shall judge indispensable in doctrine or Presbyterian government.” (Hist. Dig. (P) p. 1310.) (Plan of Union of 1758, par. II.)” (G-6.0108 b)

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Interim Pastor's Manual, Alan G. Gripe, Louisville, Geneva Press, 1997.

Shared Wisdom: Use of the self in pastoral care and counseling, Pamela Cooper-White, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

The Right Road: Life Choices for Clergy, Gwen Wagstrom Halaas, M. D., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

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Consultation Team

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves to be paid." Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest also may stand in fear. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I warn you to keep these instructions without prejudice, doing nothing on the basis of partiality. Do not ordain anyone hastily, and do not participate in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. (1 Timothy 5.17-22)

A. Purpose. The Consultation Team will provide a safe place to explore questions or concerns that arise in the ethical life of the members of Beaver-Butler Presbytery.

B. Sub-Committee of Coordinating Team. The Consultation Team will be a sub-committee of the Coordinating Team who shall appoint six members to serve three-year terms to the Consultation Team. They may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.

C. Tasks to be addressed by the Consultation Team

1. **Advisory Role.** The Consultation Team will provide resources and polity avenues for addressing the concerns of those who utilize the team. The Consultation Team shall be an advisory group only and its work should not be construed as that of a judicial body or professional counseling source. The Consultation Team may offer resources for those who wish to use professional counseling by providing the names of professional services and/or agencies in the area. Members of the Consultation Team may serve as a resource to clergy and members of congregations when questions or concerns arise about these standards.

2. **Confidentiality.** The Consultation Team shall keep all matters before them in confidentiality except in such cases that local, state or federal law requires mandated or required reporting.

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Disciplinary, Judicial and Administrative Processes

A. Disciplinary Process. All allegations of misconduct will be investigated through the appropriate process. In cases of members under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler, judicial processes as provided in the *Rules of Discipline* will be followed. In cases involving employees, the provisions of the personnel policy will be followed. For employees who are members of Presbytery of Beaver-Butler, both personnel policy provisions and disciplinary processes will apply.

B. Administrative Process. Following an accusation of misconduct against a staff member of the presbytery or a member of presbytery serving a church or agency, the appropriate committee shall consult with the accuser, the accused, and the involved session or board of oversight to ascertain whether the circumstances would be aided by the person accused being advised to take an administrative leave. If the person accused refuses and the presbytery believes it imperative, the presbytery may proceed under G-11.0103o or the personnel policy to remove the person. The Committee On Ministry may also request that an administrative commission be appointed to deal with the discord caused by the alleged misconduct. The Committee On Ministry will help congregations find interim or supply pastors trained in responding to congregations where abuse has occurred. The Committee On Ministry also will appoint persons to work carefully with the session to recognize and deal with denial and anger that typically accompanies abuse allegations.

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Policy Awareness

*O LORD, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?
Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart;
who do not slander with their tongue,
and do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;
in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honor those who fear the LORD;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.*

(Psalm 15.1-5)

“Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” (I Cor. 1:30.)

As Jesus Christ is God’s assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so in the same way and with the same seriousness is he also God’s mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance

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from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures.

We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords—areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.

(8.14-15, The Theological Declaration of Barmen)

A. Policy Distribution. These standards shall be distributed to all candidates, ministers, lay pastors, employees, members of units and committees, and sanctioned entities of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler. These standards shall be made available to all persons who accuse others of misconduct as well as those accused of misconduct. They shall be made available from the Stated Clerk.

B. Affirmation of Receiving Policies. All candidates, ministers, lay pastors, employees, members of units and committees, and sanctioned entities of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler are required to sign and submit a written acknowledgment (“Acknowledgement of Standards”) indicating that they have received a copy of these standards. Such acknowledgment will be kept in the clergy person’s personnel file and/or with the Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk will report annually to the presbytery the names of those who have not submitted the form and communicate to their session or employer their failure to comply.

C. New Minister of the Presbytery. All ministers receiving new calls within the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler shall complete the Personal Information Form currently being distributed by the Church Leadership Connection of the PC(USA), including Sexual Misconduct Information or its successor form. A copy of these policies shall be presented to new ministers of this presbytery upon acceptance into the presbytery. He/she will sign and submit the same acknowledgement of receiving these standards at that time.

D. Presbytery-wide Affirmation. The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler and all its committees, units and organizations are expected to adhere to these standards.

E. Training. The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler will provide periodic workshops on ethical standards for all ministers, candidates, and elders serving as commissioned lay pastors in the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler. These persons shall be required to attend. Employees and volunteers of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler will be encouraged to attend. The Stated Clerk will report to Presbytery of Beaver-Butler the names of those ministers, candidates and elders serving as commissioned lay pastors who have not attended a workshop and communicate to their session or employer their failure to attend. The Consultation Team will plan and promote these workshops. The Consultation Team will review and approve other training events to meet this training requirement on an annual basis. The content of the workshop may include some or all of the following:

1. Introducing the members of the Consultation Team.
2. An explanation and review of the “Ethical Standards of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.”
3. A review the General Assembly’s standards of ethical behavior.
4. A discussion of the broader issues in ethics such as professional behavior, current

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state of various ethics policies, and ethical conduct in the workplace.

5. An overview of the issues regarding confidentiality in pastoral care.

6. Discussing emerging topics, e.g. bio-medical ethics.

7. Exploring why each congregation needs its own statement of ethical standards and reviewing and discussing existing congregational ethical policies.

8. Explaining why each congregation needs its own liability insurance for misconduct.

Suggestions of the types of resources available for: personal, emotional and family problems; drug and alcohol addiction; and sexual addiction.

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Acknowledgment of Standards

This attachment to the Ethical Standards of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler is to be signed by all candidates, ministers, lay pastors, members of units and committee, and employees of the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.

By signing this attachment, you acknowledge that you have received, read, understood, and agree to follow the Ethical Standards adopted by the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler. The Stated Clerk will report to Presbytery of Beaver-Butler the names of those who have not submitted the form, and communicate to their session or employer their failure to comply.

Signed: Date: _____

This document will be kept in your personnel file or with the Stated Clerk

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Appendix A

Guidelines for the Relation of Ministers

To their Former Congregations

The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler recognizes that potentially difficult situations arise involving the relationship of a minister to his/her former congregations. (When we speak of ministers, we refer not only to pastors, associate pastors, and assistant pastors, we also include interims, stated supplies, and session moderators.) The *Book of Order* provides guidance about the matter (G-14.0606):

“Former pastors, associate pastors, and assistant pastors may officiate at services for members of a particular church, or at services within its properties, only upon invitation from the moderator of the Session or in case of the inability to contact the moderator, from the Clerk of Session.”

By making it clear to a congregation that he/she will no longer be available to provide pastoral services, a former pastor helps a congregation in its transition to new pastoral leadership. While it is advisable to keep contacts with a former congregation to a minimum, especially in the first year, under no circumstances should a former pastor participate in any way with the function of the Pastor Nominating Committee.

I. When the pastor moves to another community

a. During the first year, it is advisable for the former pastor to refrain from all pastoral contact. However, in the event of an emergency or unusual circumstance, it is permissible for the former pastor to accept an invitation to perform a pastoral function after seeking counsel of the Executive Presbyter and the Committee on Ministry when such a request is made. If an associate or interim is present, leadership should be shared.

b. Services planned prior to the announcement of departure (such as a wedding, homecoming, church anniversary) may proceed as planned but with caution. The Session must still issue an invitation and plans should be shared with the congregation making clear the exceptional nature of this participation.

c. After the installation of the new pastor, the former pastor shall refrain from all pastoral contact. However, if an invitation to participate in any pastoral function is extended by the Moderator of the Session with the concurrence of the Session, it is advisable that the former pastor seek counsel of the Executive Presbyter and the Committee on Ministry before accepting the invitation.

d. At all times, the former pastor shall remain sensitive to the possible tensions that can arise from his/her presence in the former parish. The former pastor should make every effort to be supportive of his/her successor. The former pastor shall encourage persons who contact him/her with concerns about his/her successor to address them to their new pastor or the Session or the Committee on Ministry.

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II. When the Pastor remains in the same community

When former pastors and their families live in the same community, either following retirement or in the case of a change of vocation/calling, the potential for tension is greatly increased. This constant presence can be an unhealthy reminder of a pastoral relationship that no longer exists. It increases the temptation to live in the past, or to bring issues and complaints to the former pastor. Therefore special guidelines need to be followed.

- a. If there are options for church membership and participation in another congregation, the former pastor and his/her family shall become active in the work and worship of another congregation. Remaining in the same congregation can lead to tensions and difficulties that no one intends, but nevertheless cannot be avoided.
- b. A former pastor and his/her family can be most helpful to his/her successor and family as they strive to be accepted in their new situation. A former pastor and his/her family can also be the most difficult problem a successor and family must face. A former pastor and family should be sensitive to the new pastor and family, encouraging them and helping them in any way, even if that means physically withdrawing from the congregation.
- c. A former pastor should refrain from pastoral functions and not accept any position of leadership in his/her former church including teaching, nor attend meetings of the Session, Deacons, or any committees unless invited by the Session and moderator of Session. Such invitations should not be extended or accepted except under extraordinary circumstances.
- d. A former pastor shall not officiate at any celebration of the sacraments, weddings, funerals, or other functions involving members of his/her former church unless invited by the moderator of Session or Clerk of Session. Such invitations should not be extended or accepted except under extraordinary circumstances. However, in the event of an emergency or unusual circumstance, it is permissible for the former pastor to accept an invitation to perform a pastoral function after seeking counsel of the Executive Presbyter and the Committee on Ministry when such a request is made.
- e. A former pastor shall avoid formal or informal participation in or comment on the work of the Pastor Nominating committee.

It is the responsibility of the pastor who is leaving a congregation to make clear to the Session and the congregation the above guidelines. Printed copies shall be distributed to the Session prior to the pastor's departure. The Committee on Ministry's liaison with the congregation will see that these guidelines are made clear to the pastor and congregation.

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Appendix B

Life Together in the Community of Faith:
Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers
in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998)

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, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's

grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my public ministry. Therefore I will:

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

I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry. Therefore I 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 my office and positions of responsibility I hold;

Ethical Standards 17

4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my 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 my 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 my ministry;
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
11. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;
12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry;
13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;
15. Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by presbytery;
16. Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the presbytery and provide pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and
17. Consult with the committee on ministry in the presbytery of my residence regarding my involvement in any ministry setting during my retirement.

I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore I will:

Ethical Standards 18

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.

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Appendix C
Child Abuse Resources

- **Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Forms** can be obtained by calling (717)783-6211. They can be downloaded at:
<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/child/childabusenelect/003671038.htm>
- **Pennsylvania Childline** (for reporting abuse) 800-932-0313 (24 hours, 7 days per week)
- **Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth, and Families** / One Smithfield Street / Suite 400 / Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2225 / 412-350-5701

Office Locations

- Child Protection/Intake - 412-473-2000, 400 N Lexington Street, Point Breeze
- Central Regional - 412-350-3600, 1401 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh (Downtown)
- Eastern Regional - 412-473-1100, 400 N. Lexington Street, Point Breeze
- Mon Valley Regional - 412-664-8900, 332 Fifth Avenue, McKeesport
- Northern Regional - 412-323-6100, 1972 Clayton Avenue, Pittsburgh (North Side)
- Southern Regional - 412-488-8500, 2400 East Carson Street, Pittsburgh (South Side)
- Adoption - 412-473-2300, 400 N. Lexington Street, Point Breeze
- Foster Care - 412-473-2400, 400 N. Lexington Street, Point Breeze

- **Beaver County** / Children and Youth Services / 1080 Eighth Avenue / Beaver Falls, PA 15010 / (724) 891-5800 / Fax: (724) 891-5801 / <http://www.bccys.org/>

- **Butler County** / Second Floor, County Government Center / 124 West Diamond Street / P.O. Box 1208 / Butler, PA 16003 / 724-284-5156

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