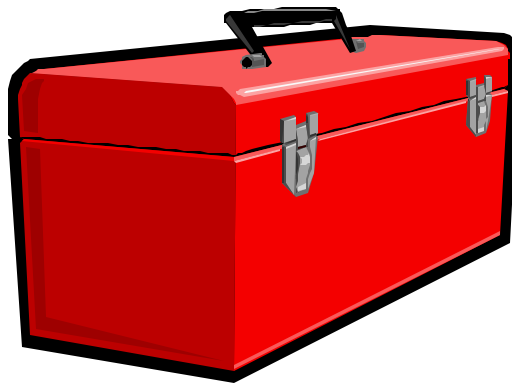


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TOOLBOX

for

Presbytery Committees on Ministry
and Pastors

www.pastoralcarenetwork.org

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The Toolbox An Introduction

The *Book of Order* has a major section on the responsibilities of the presbytery committee on ministry (G11.0500). The task is described in these words: “Each presbytery shall elect a committee on ministry to serve as pastor and counselor to the ministers and certified Christian educators of the presbytery, to facilitate the relations between congregations, ministers, and certified Christian educators, and the presbytery, and to settle difficulties on behalf of presbytery when possible and expedient.”

When you consider the complexity of the relationships in and among churches, the above task is a difficult challenge. From an overall perspective, the task of the committee on ministry is to nurture the regional Body of Christ in their efforts to reflect Christ in its ministry.

The Presbytery Pastoral Care Network (www.pastoralcarenetwork.org) and the Office of Location of the Presbyterian Church (USA) are providing this toolbox as an aide to assist you in accomplishing this task. Not everything in this booklet will apply to your situation and not every strategy will work in your particular case. We hope that you will strengthen the value of this resource by sharing with us resources and strategies that you have found valuable in your work.

The Presbytery Pastoral Care Network thanks you for the work you are doing on behalf of the Body of Christ. As part of being a connectional church, accept this as a resource from those who care about your work. When you feel overwhelmed, remember that God’s grace is made perfect in our weakness. Be prepared to be surprised at what God can do through your committee.

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Physical

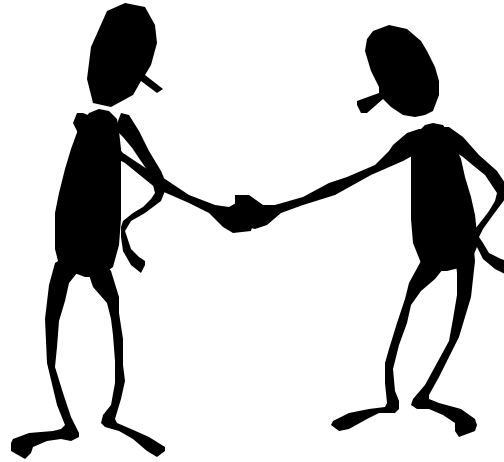
Emotional

Family

Financial

Spiritual

Vocational



Pastor/Educator

Note to Pastors on Combating Isolation

To help church professionals combat the debilitating problem of isolation, a committee on ministry could suggest strategies to employ such as the following:

1. Don't burn your former bridges. Keep close phone and/or Internet contact with best friends or close family members.
2. Seek new friendships in social and community settings that fall outside of the boundaries of your local congregation. You will not develop outside of church friendships without actively placing yourself in social situations where friendships may develop.
3. Form cordial and friendly relationships with church members but be judicious about divulging too much personal information. Other church members get jealous of the clergy and spouse's "in church" relationships. Also, many a clergy family has felt betrayed by a *close friend* when church conflicts surface.
4. Seek other clergy (clergy spouses) for support and fellowship.
5. Make it a priority to have some personal, outside of church interests, hobbies, sports, or goals. Pursue your passions!
6. Therapy is good for the soul. Don't neglect your emotional self, especially if you are in pain.
 - Become part of a clergy (or clergy spouse) support group, lectionary study group, spiritual formation group, book club, etc.
8. If single, date outside of your church's membership.
 - If married or in a relationship with a significant other, have a set weekly "date" night.
10. Take all of your vacation time and study leave and make sure it's away from your local community.
11. Your calendar is your friend. Schedule your recreation as you would your church committees. Take your weekly days off. On those days, "Thou shalt do no church work!" (Eleventh Commandment)
12. If married, make a list of future goals and activities that you would like to experience together (e.g. hiking in the Andes, skydiving, kayaking the Amazon, picnicking in a secluded meadow, bird watching, gardening, etc.).
13. Seek out someone to be your pastor and/or spiritual director.

What other creative suggestions can you add? Share these strategies with other pastors and spouses. Be willing to contact your presbytery committee on ministry if problems arise.

Self-Care During Disaster Recovery

(“A” = Acute/Initial stages of disaster; “R” = Long-term Recovery)

1. **A** – Pace yourself. You will be running on adrenalin.
 - a) Take frequent breaks. Even Jesus got away from the crowd. Find a quiet place to rest and pray.
 - b) Exercise frequently – take 5:20 minute walks.
 - c) Drink lots of water.
 - d) Take multiple vitamins (vitamin C and B complex).
 - e) Don't forget to eat. (Avoid lots of junk food).
 - f) Minimize your intake of caffeine and alcohol.
 - g) If you are on any vital medications, don't forget to take them!
2. **A** – As a leader/supervisor, you will need to “tap out” people on the relief lines and insist that they take breaks and do some of the above self-care items. **Don't argue** when someone taps **you** on the shoulder and reminds **you** to take time for yourself, whether you think you need it or not! (The perception of time “Stops” during a disaster. Go by the clock.)
3. **A** – **Do** not try to perform a task that is beyond your competency/skill range. This is especially important when dealing with those who are showing symptoms of severe trauma. Refer to mental health professionals. You will have enough to do just to maintain the spiritual care of your congregation.
4. **A** – Find someone to “debrief” with at the end of each day.
5. **A&R** – Schedule 2 hours of “wind down” time before bed and get 8 hours of sleep. Remember, you are in it for the long haul.
6. **A&R** – Go see a “no brainer” movie once every two weeks. The break from reality will be good for you as will anything that can bring appropriate humor and laughter in the midst of the losses.
 - **A&R** – Don't hesitate to “call for back up.” There will be plenty of churches and organizations willing to help out in any way they can.
8. **A&R** – If you are heavily invested in recovery efforts, have someone preach for you every other week. Working on a sermon and coordinating disaster relief efforts can lead to becoming overwhelmed.
 - **A&R** – Remember “the priesthood of all believers.” Put your people to work assisting with worship services and other church maintenance activities. Don't feel as though you have to do it all – delegate!
10. **R** – Do not neglect your family! Your family needs you. If you neglect them, you may have a domestic disaster on the home front long after the recovery period is over.
11. **R** – As in a military deployment, role reversals occur within the home. Bills need to be paid, children need transportation, and home repairs are ongoing. Continue an ongoing conversation with your spouse concerning household responsibilities, problems, and issues. Don't turn your spouse into a single parent and be sure to acknowledge your spouse's contribution to the effort of disaster relief.
12. **A&R** – Tend to your own spiritual need on an ongoing and daily basis.

Parenting for Pastors

It is not unusual for parents to “fear the judgment of others” in their parenting techniques – especially when their children “misbehave.” This anxiety can be magnified when a whole congregation is watching. We know that the pastor and family are often the focus of some strong opinions from the congregation. Parenting issues are no exception. If the pastor and spouse feel confident in their methods of effective discipline, then they will be better able to parent without undue concern or anxiety.

Parenting is a challenging task. Children don't come with directions stamped on them – so parents may struggle with how to parent effectively. Parents often look back at how they were raised as either a positive or negative example of how they want to parent their own children. This historical information is not usually enough to understand the complex task of effective parenting. If parents understand and demonstrate effective parenting techniques, mutual respect and cooperation will result. The goal of discipline is self-discipline: to guide children to be responsible and cooperative.

Resources:

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting by Dinkmeyer and McKay

The New Approach to Discipline by Dreikurs and Grey

Children: The Challenge by Dreikurs and Stolz

Family Evaluation Game

This game is designed to assist a family in talking about the pressures of being part of a family in which at least one member is a pastor.

Get a pack of 3 x 5 cards and develop some probing questions to place on each of the cards. Shuffle the cards and put them as a deck on the table. When it comes to a person's turn, s/he rolls a die and the number that shows up determines how far down the deck s/he counts to pull the question that s/he will answer. Each time a question is answered, bury the card back in the deck before the game continues.

Some sample questions might be:

1. Describe a time this past year when you were glad that you were part of this family.
2. Talk about a pressure you felt because the minister of the church is you or part of your family.
3. Share something that happened at the church this past year that made you proud to be part of the church.
4. Describe something that either did or would make you angry if it happened at the church.
5. Identify either a person or a situation at the church for which you think the family should pray.
6. Was there a time this past year when the congregation needed the pastor and it meant that some family experience needed to be changed? How did you feel?
- Whether you are the pastor or a family member, name four things that are good about being a pastor.
8. Name four things that make being a pastor difficult.
- If you were to pray for one thing to change in your family, what would it be?
10. What are some fun things that you like to do with the family?

After you have experienced the game, add a variation by letting each member make up two or three additional questions for the pile. It would be good if you had 20-30 questions.

With a slight adjustment to the questions, this game could be played by a childless couple, a family with teenagers, or one with small children. The idea is to have a framework that allows the family to evaluate, both positively and negatively, their experience of being in a family where one member is a pastor. It would be good to play a version of this game a couple of times a year.

Mayo Clinic Embody Health
www.presbyterianwellness.com

A Web based program providing:

- Online 15-minute questionnaire that identifies risk factors based on currently recognized medical guidelines.
- Financial incentive on completion of the questionnaire (\$25 gift card).
- A personalized report will highlight risks and strengths and point you to more information, tools, and programs to make positive changes.
- Preventive Incentive Program

All members and spouses receive their annual health exam and appropriate medical tests and screenings without paying copay.

Nurse Line

CareAllies/Smart Choices: **800-237-3015**

- Access 24/7 experienced registered nurses who are supported by physicians as needed.
- Seek advice about health symptoms you may be experiencing or a diagnosis you have received.
- Get help to make decisions about health, including recommending when you should go directly to the emergency room.
- Ask about treatments suggested by your physician.
- Learn ways to improve your healthy lifestyle.

Smart Steps Disease Management Program

Disease Management Services: 888-277-2003

This program supports members, spouses, and eligible dependents living with chronic conditions. Under Smart Steps, an assigned nurse care specialist works with you and your physician to help you avoid or delay the onset of complications and control your chronic diseases such as:

- Diabetes
- Cardiac conditions
- Chronic pulmonary obstructive disease
- Targeted conditions (for example, fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis)
- Lower back pain
- Depression
- Specialty oncology case management

Telephone Coaching Program (EAP)

(Board of Pensions)

Stress Management

Telephone program: 866.640.2222

- Dedicated wellness coach.
- Individual telephone coaching.
- Convenient evening and weekend coaching hours.
- Workbook and toolkit.
- Support available 24/7.

Or you can do it online: 866.503.361

- Work online at your pace for up to six months.
- Have six private online discussions/support sessions.
- Access personalized online assessments, tools, workbook, trackers, guides and links.

Weight Management Program

866-640-2772

A non-diet approach, building confidence.

Helps participants become more active, eat healthier, and change habits.

- Personal healthy living plan.
- Individual telephone coaching.
- Dedicated wellness coach.
- Convenient evening and weekend coaching hours.
- Workbook and toolkit.
- Support line available 24/7.

Mayo Clinic Tobacco Quitline

888-642-5566

- Professional counselor will talk about how ready you are to quit using tobacco.
- You will set a quit date.
- You'll receive a self-paced workbook, helpful quit tips and strategies for staying quit.
- Counselor will make several follow-up calls.
- OTC nicotine replacement therapy will be sent free of charge.
- Certain prescription medications are covered, subject to benefit plan provisions (i.e., Chantix).

Physical

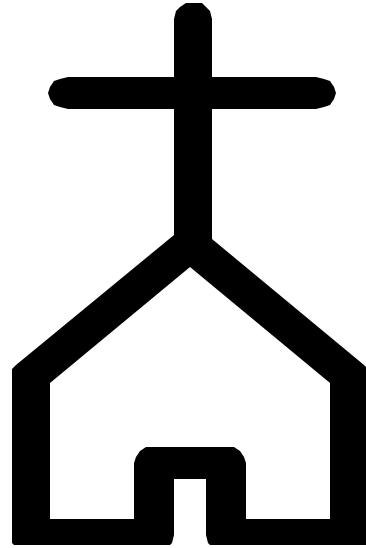
Emotional

Family

Financial

Spiritual

Vocational



Congregation

How Well Do You Know?

Below are a list of tasks that the pastor or educator performs regularly. First as individuals and then as a group, estimate the number of hours your group thinks is required for each task.

TELEPHONE, E-MAIL, CORRESPONDENCE	_____
ADMINISTRATION	_____
SUPERVISION OF STAFF AND/OR VOLUNTEERS	_____
COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING THE DAY	_____
COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD AT NIGHT	_____
WORSHIP PLANNING AND CONDUCTING	_____
SERMON PREPARATION AND PREACHING	_____
PRIVATE PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE	_____
CHURCH SCHOOL PLANNING	_____
TEACHER/OFFICER TRAINING	□□□□□□
HOSPITAL OR CRISIS VISITING	_____
HOME VISITING	_____
TEACHING	_____
COUNSELING	_____
SPECIAL EVENT PLANNING AND PARTICIPATION (weddings, funerals, seasonal events, etc.)	_____
YOUTH MINISTRY	_____
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	_____
SERVICE AND MISSION WORK	_____
COMMUNITY WORK WITH OTHER CHURCHES	_____
EVANGELISM AND WITNESS	_____
DENOMINATIONAL WORK	_____
TOTAL HOURS	_____

Things Taken for Granted: What Pastors (and Their Families) Give Up for the Sake of Their Congregations

Care of pastors requires that sessions, committees on ministry, and judicatories be attentive to the dynamics of sacrifice and service inherent in being a pastor.

Pastors are Christians, but their experience of church is quite different from that of the typical church member. Laypeople may take the following considerations for granted, but these are things that pastors and their family members often give up for the sake of their congregations:

- Choosing which church to attend.
- Joining a church school class or having a small group experience.
- Sitting beside their spouses and children during worship and being able to comfort each other or celebrate together like normal families.
- Friendships with congregants that are not influenced by professional responsibilities.
- Being able to take the phone off the hook at night (or even being able to put the children to bed).
- Higher salaries commensurate with their skills.
- Taking a long weekend.
- Planning a vacation without worrying about whether a church member will become ill or die.

Some of these simple things are inherent in pastoring, others are the result of pastors setting poor boundaries or sessions not taking the time to inquire about a pastor and his/her family's needs.

Together, the loss of several of these things can take a toll on a pastor and his/her family.

Acknowledging that pastors, and often their families, make these kinds of sacrifices out of their commitment to the greater good of the church can help sustain pastors and their families. But what else can be done?

The following possibilities are starting points for governing bodies, initial attempts to address complicated dynamics that are hard to address at the formal level. But,

Wouldn't it be great if....

- The terms of call included boundaries for pastors and their families such as how late or how early congregants could call the pastor for normal matters; the understanding that a pastor should not come back from a vacation for a funeral; and a commitment to avoid church business on a particular night or nights (which is something everyone might enjoy).
- Pastors and congregations felt more comfortable if the pastor left the chancel area during, for example a choral anthem, in order to be with her/his family for part of the service.
- Congregations transformed the annual review of the pastor's compensation into an annual recovenanting service that lifted up the pastor and his/her family and the sacrifices they are making.

Positive Evaluation

In training congregations to be more effective in caring for their ministerial staff, one aspect would be to help the session to develop a positive evaluation process.

Such a process needs to be aware of two aspects. First, it needs to be approached as an evaluation of the whole ministry of the church rather than that of an individual employee. Responsibility and accountability should be addressed not only for the pastor, DCE, or musician but also for the session, deacons, members, etc. In any given area of church life, almost all of the above mentioned people can contribute or detract from the success of ministry. To identify an area, for example worship, and to reflect on what each position can do to strengthen ministry in that area can be a positive conversation.

Second, there is an approach to such an evaluation that can generate creativity. It begins by recognizing how easily a negative comment can shut down a person's ability to hear. So, the positives need to outnumber the negatives, and the responsibility for the negatives needs to be spread out as a group responsibility.

For example, if the concern was that the church is not growing in membership, the conversation would begin by noting what the various entities are doing that makes the church attractive to visitors. Then the conversation would consider the weaker areas and what each entity could do that might attract more people into membership. This is far superior to focusing on what someone is not doing that is preventing the church from growing. It recognizes the corporate nature of the church.

Another area of exploration and evaluation would be to use the mission study that is often recommended when a congregation is searching for a pastor and adapt it to enable the pastor and the congregation to evaluate where they are headed and changes that might be valuable on significant anniversaries of the church. To focus on anniversaries of the church avoids the implication that the real focus is on the pastor's effectiveness and maintains the perspective of the whole ministry in which the pastor and the congregation together are engaged.

Humor and Staff Bonding

Churches with large staffs often find the staff meetings so agenda driven that they neglect the human bonding that can strengthen their witness. It would be a good investment for a congregation to fund at least four staff suppers at which the staff can focus on each other rather than tasks.

Humor can be an effective nurturer of relationships. A good beginning conversation would be to ask each staff member to tell a story about something that happened to them in the ministry that, at least in retrospect, they thought was funny. The head of staff can set the tone by telling some stories that have happened to him/her. The common experience is to discover that as each tells a story, it will trigger the memory of another story in someone else's life.

Another element of the evening would be for each person to bring with them one of the best religious jokes that they have heard. Again it is likely that after sharing a few jokes, it will trigger the memory of other jokes.

You might ask each person to bring a picture relating to churches and have the whole group come up with the best caption for the picture.

While it would need to be done carefully, if the place for the dinner allowed for some privacy, it might relieve some tension for each staff member to mimic a member of the congregation and see if the others can guess who it is they are mimicking.

A version of religious charades in which a staff member acts out a biblical verse, a hymn, or an event at the church could be enjoyable.

Holy seasons are always stressful for church staffs. Invite each staff member to create elements for a new special season in church life. Call it something like "The Holy Season of Joy." Suggest that it will run for four weeks and allow each staff member to draw upon his/her expertise and his/her wicked sense of humor to design the various elements for the season. As a group, assign responsibilities for each staff member. What would worship, music, education, sermons, food, etc. look like in such a season? How would the congregation act in ways that bring out the joy in the congregation? Have fun designing the season.

A couple of alternatives suggest themselves: (1) Invite spouses to be part of the event. (2) Invite another staff of a neighboring church to join in an evening of joy.

Congregational Sabbatical Experience

The conversation leading up to a pastor's sabbatical provides an excellent time for the congregation to explore how they might share in their own experiment of Sabbath time. We know that many congregational families find themselves denying time with their family because of both their professional commitments and their participation in church and other community activities. Unlike the Puritan emphasis on the Sabbath that is part of this country's religious heritage, the European tradition places more emphasis on the Sabbath being a time for renewal of relationships. You are to take time to focus on your relationship with God, but also you are to spend time and energy in visiting and caring for your human relationships as well.

Building on the conversation about the pastor's sabbatical, the congregation can place a renewed emphasis on family within the congregation during the pastor's sabbatical. As the pastor interprets the sabbatical plans to the congregation, s/he can also offer a sabbatical possibility for the congregation in which families within the congregation would take a time each week to focus on relationships within the family. It might be a Monday evening or a Sunday afternoon or evening, but it would be an agreed upon time for the whole congregation.

Three weeks out of each month the congregation would agree to forgo meetings or activities at the church and suggestions could be made for family relational activities appropriate to families with various age groups in them. Couples without children would also be encouraged to have a special night in which they focused on each other either at home or go on a date. The single person could arrange to get together with other singles for a fun experience.

On the fourth week of each month, there would be a churchwide activity that would focus on the celebration of the church family. It might be a time to bring in someone who could introduce music in a relational fashion or even a recreational specialist. The idea would be to have a night of intergenerational joy. In a normal three-month sabbatical, there could be three church family fun nights and a fourth one when the pastor returned. This would be a time to hear about the sabbatical and to share in their reactions to their own sabbatical experience. Maybe, by that time, the congregational sabbatical could become a habit that all would like to continue

Following the sabbatical, the pastor could work with some small groups of laity to explore what each had learned in the Sabbath experience. Using the contributions from both the lay and the clergy, a sermon series could be developed to engage the whole congregation in reflection.

Does the Pastor's Spouse Have a Pastor? Caring for the Pastor's Spouse

A pastor once lamented, "My wife was the only person in the congregation without a pastor." He recognized the unique qualities of both pastor-congregant and husband-wife relationships, and he, a solo pastor, understood that he could not be his wife's pastor. Even in multi-staff churches, dynamics between the ministers may preclude a spouse from having a pastor in the church. Further, because both men and women now are pastors and because many spouses are working, the older supportive forms of clergy wives' groups have generally not survived, often leaving clergy spouses isolated.

Yet they need care, too. Spouses report that they have unique challenges in the congregation. Sometimes they are viewed as extensions of the pastor, or congregants treat them as the pastor's secretary. This can get even worse when, for example, a spouse is part of a church school class that has members who are in tension with the pastor. Some regret having to live a model marriage or having to present a model family life when what they often want is to be normal, to have a normal family, to be recognized as a normal member of the congregation. Sometimes when the pastor is always away from the home, they have neither pastor nor spouse. Ultimately, they are often the uncredited partners who handle family needs evenings, weekends, and holidays, thereby making the pastors' public ministries possible. The stress put on marriages by the demands of ordained ministry threatens both marriages and the church.

How can sessions and committees on ministry support the pastor's spouse? Every situation is unique, but here are some general principles and possibilities:

- **Stress the responsibility of the pastor to his or her family:** Pastors are often tempted to put the church first for a number of reasons: sense of call, ego needs, a demanding congregation. Pastors may need a governing body to help set appropriate boundaries that will make it possible for the pastor's spouse to have a spouse.
- **Triennial visits need to inquire about the pastor's family:** COM visitors need to ask the session, not just the pastor, about how the clergy spouse is doing. Heightening session awareness may be a helpful first step. A session member can be a liaison with the spouse, if that is appropriate.
- **Presbytery point person:** Some presbyteries have a designated person as the clergy spouse care coordinator or minister.
- **Educating congregations:** Pastors' spouses have a right to be normal Christians. They should be treated as other members of the congregation, not held up as role models (or lightning rods).
- **Who will be the spouse's pastor?** The spouse may need to develop a relationship with someone outside the denomination, as s/he might not feel comfortable with someone from within the denominational system. Spouses lose many normal rights as clergy spouses, and they should be encouraged to feel free to develop their own forms of discipleship and spirituality even if this is not connected to the clergy person's own church.

Resources:

http://www.pbygrandcanyon.org/ministries/clergy_spouse_support.html for one presbytery's example.

<http://www.janerubietta.com/clergy.html> for Pastor's Wives Ten Most Wanted (A Wish List).

Determining Fair Compensation

Every presbytery has the responsibility to ensure that their pastors' terms of call include adequate financial compensation, along with meeting the requirements of federal and state tax laws. Normally, a committee on ministry will recommend a minimum compensation requirement for full-time calls and communicate that to congregations.

Advocating for fair and adequate compensation for pastors serving small membership congregations is especially difficult. A presbytery could set aside some agenda time at a presbytery meeting, or a specially arranged meeting of congregations of similar size, to honestly discuss these difficulties, recognizing both the challenge for the pastor and the church. Part of the design could include preparing a typical budget of expenses for a modest family in their community, including rent, utilities, food, transportation, etc. to demonstrate what a clergy family needs as reasonable income. Whatever the format, presbyteries need to take an active role in educating and guiding all congregations about compensation issues. This is a critical way that the presbytery can support the pastors.

When addressing compensation issues, presbyteries need to have resources in mind to suggest to sessions and congregations about conducting honest and constructive annual reviews of terms of call (several of these resources are available through the Presbytery Pastoral Care Network Web site: www.pastoralcarenetwork.org).

Other good resources to help presbyteries address the complexity of pastor compensation issues include:

- A section in the *COM Advisory Handbook* that is available through the Location Office of the GAC, <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/finances.htm>.
- A series of articles on clergy salaries in the 2002 Sept/Oct issue of *Congregations: Learning, Leading, Changing* published by The Alban Institute, <http://www.alban.org/conversearch.aspx>.
- Comparative statistics on ministers' compensation compiled in 2008 by the Board of Pensions, www.pensions.org.
- Information on compensation is at <http://www.pcusa.org/clc/statistics/compensation.htm>.
- The Web site for comparing cost of living across the country is at bankrate.com.

Local and regional government data on cost of living for adequate housing in the communities where ministers serve and the annual inflationary factors that should be considered when determining compensation for ministers. A helpful website is: [http://web.pensions.org/Publications/pensions/Home/Forms 20 26 20Publications/Booklets 20 26 20Brochures/ClergyEffectiveSalaries 200 .pdf](http://web.pensions.org/Publications/pensions/Home/Forms%2026%20Publications/Booklets%2026%20Brochures/ClergyEffectiveSalaries200.pdf)

Medical Policy for Churches

The COM recommends that each congregation develop a policy with respect to staff members in case they should incur a serious illness or disability.

A sample policy for your guidance is provided:

It is the policy of our church to be faithful to our staff as they are faithful to us. If an accident or illness should occur that necessitates a staff person being absent for an extended period of time for recovery, we will negotiate with him/her for a leave with pay. If the condition fits within the category of disability, we will assist in accessing the disability support from the Board of Pensions and seek to compensate him/her for the difference between what the Board of Pensions provides and his/her regular salary. This time of absence will not be considered part of his/her education leave or vacation. If it is cost prohibitive for us to cover the person's areas of responsibility during this time, we will seek assistance from presbytery. The intent of this policy is to support our staff in recovery and restore the person to active ministry.

When a member of our church staff becomes pregnant, within the restrictions of our financial capability, it is our desire to provide for that person an appropriate pregnancy leave while continuing her pay and benefits. Normally such a leave would be about two months, but after that time, we also recognize that there will need to be flexibility with working schedules to allow for doctor's appointments, etc.

In both of the above cases, we are assuming that both the staff person and the church officers are trying to arrive at an agreement that is best for the church and the staff member. Because we are Christians and know that our decisions in such areas are a testimony to the faith we proclaim, we seek to demonstrate love of neighbor while being sensitive to the needs of both the church and the staff member. If it becomes difficult for us to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement, we will invite a member of the committee on ministry or other appropriate person to assist us in arriving at an agreement that reflects our faith as members of the Body of Christ.

"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Board of Pensions
2000 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-3208
Phone: 800-333-5252
Fax: 215-581-6215
www.pensions.org

Session Guide for Professionals in Crisis

(for session clerks and moderators of personnel committees)

When a member of the church's professional staff experiences a crisis, the church experiences a crisis. The church's response can be delayed or inadequate and can further exacerbate the matter for all concerned. We are referring to any type of crisis that might happen to anyone else.

Churches are best equipped to deal with illness or with the death of the church professional or a family member because we experience those regularly and without shame in the life of the church family.

Other problems such as:

Financial problems

Family problems (separation, divorce, children in trouble)

Reduction in mental powers and

Mental illness (clergy are particularly prone to depression)

are painful for most people to name, and church professionals are often more hesitant than laypeople to discuss these because they are expected to be "above all that." More difficult still are issues of **sexual malfeasance**.

Prevention is better than a cure, but when troubles arise, the session, through its personnel committee, should have both a plan for ministering to the staff person and a plan for maintaining the church's stability and carrying on the church's ministry.

The following guidelines for church sessions and congregations may be helpful:

Call the presbytery and ask for the staff member responsible for ministry and congregational support and inform that person of the situation. S/he will be able to help determine if there are any *Book of Order* questions that need to be addressed. S/he will also be able to assist in locating a supply pastor or interim pastor if the church's pastor will not be able to fulfill the pastoral office for a time. The care and support of the church professionals subcommittee often has a crisis advisory team that can be employed as needed.

If there are legal issues, the session and/or church professional may need to consult with an attorney. The presbytery executive or staff member will be able to assist you in finding legal counsel.

Issues of sexual misconduct will be referred to the committee on ministry's sexual misconduct subcommittee. Such issues will be investigated with discretion and handled with dispatch. The Board of Pensions provides a 24-hour nurse consultation service (**800-237-3015**) and financial, legal, and mental health referral services through an Employee Assistance Program (**866-640-2772**). These are available to any enrolled participant in the Board of Pensions medical plan.

Please provide the same kind of compassionate response to your staff member and family as you would to any member of the congregation. This includes acknowledging the difficulty, asking directly how the church can be helpful, assisting with the needs at home (food, transportation, child care, etc.), and giving pastoral care directly or asking a trusted colleague of the church professional to do so.

Physical

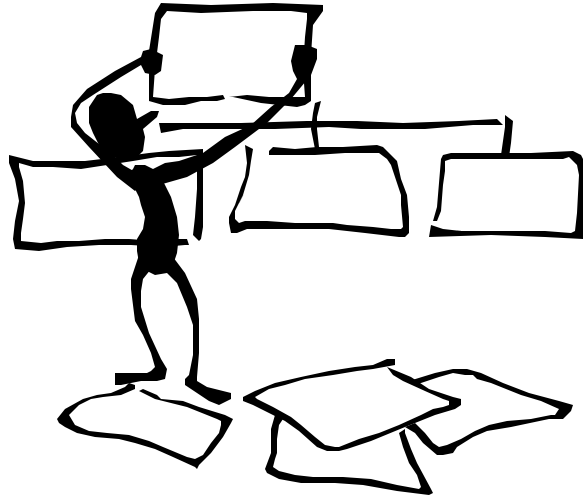
Emotional

Family

Financial

Spiritual

Vocational



Presbytery
COM

Moving Beyond Crisis Management

To move beyond the crisis management approach to giving oversight to ministers, a presbytery must make the active pastoral care of pastors, Christian educators, presbytery staff, and other church professionals a priority within the life and structures of the presbytery. An important first step is for the presbytery to recruit, train, and equip a cadre of caregivers who serve as advocates for the church professionals both on an individual level and within the structures of the presbytery as well. Over the years, presbyteries have developed a number of pastoral care models to accomplish this work (www.pastoralcarenetwork.com).

Next, set realistic goals for the work of the pastoral care providers, taking into consideration the number of church professionals enrolled in the presbytery and the scope of their responsibilities. Some of the questions that might be asked in this process are:

1. Do we expect our pastoral care providers to establish relationships with all church professionals in our presbytery and to have regular visits with them about their ministry? If so, what will it take for this to be accomplished in our presbytery?
2. To whom will the pastoral care providers be accountable for their work, and how will they report their activity?
3. Do we expect the work of our pastoral care providers to extend to retired pastors and their spouses?
4. How will the pastoral care providers interface with the committee on ministry, the presbytery executive or staff, and COPMs so that confidentiality is maintained and care can be provided when needed?
5. What training and resources will our presbytery make available to the pastoral care providers? Will the pastoral care work with church professionals become a funded line item within the presbytery's annual budget?

To help presbyteries create tangible ways to provide care and support for their church professionals, this toolbox contains a variety of resource materials that have been developed by the PPCN for your consideration and use. There are obviously many other topics and issues that can be and need to be addressed by a presbytery to provide care and support for our church professionals. The PPCN has experienced members of the network who can come to your presbytery to help address these issues at the local level.

The materials in this toolbox are designed to address the following topics or issues:

1. Strengthening the emotional intelligence of pastors in the practice of ministry.
2. Encouraging constructive feedback and annual evaluations as a means to promote healthy pastoral relationships within congregations.
3. Developing pastor appreciation opportunities within congregations.
4. Adopting presbytery personnel policies that support the work of pastors and educators.
5. Initiating the formation of pastor or educator support groups and collegial networks.
6. Teaching family systems theory and conflict resolution techniques for effective church work.
7. Helping church professionals find help when they need it: Creating supportive intervention systems to address personal issues, family issues, compensation and financial issues, etc.
8. Creating a presbytery pastoral care crisis fund to provide financial assistance to church professionals and their families when difficulties occur.
9. Providing spiritual direction for busy church professionals.
10. Creating strategies for helping ministers move from surviving to thriving in ministry.

Grid to Evaluate COM Pastoral Care

The Presbytery Pastoral Care Network (PPCN) has developed a helpful brochure that is available on our Web site in which four models of pastoral care are delineated. Go to www.pastoralcarenetwork.org. Which model is most emphasized by your presbytery? What conditions have led you to that model? What is missing that is picked up by the other models?

Using the following grid, look at the areas that are part of your plan in caring for pastors and those that you would like to include. Thinking of each of the four entities on the left column of the grid, brainstorm creative ways that each might build support in these six areas as defined below.

Responsibility of which entity?	Physical	Emotional	Family	Financial	Spiritual	Vocational
Presbytery						
Congregation						
Staff						
Pastor						

Physical and Emotional Health

It is vital for ministry that members of the church staff maintain themselves physically and emotionally. Doing so testifies to the way in which all members can care for the gift of life God has given each of us.

Family Health

We expect that the families of our pastors/educators will be models of health and faith for the rest of the congregation. Those very expectations often put stress on the family. In addition, the schedule and demands of ministry increase the stress on the pastor's or educator's family.

Financial Health

When congregations struggle with budgets and clergy and educators are reluctant to advocate for their own salary, the financial stress increases on their families. Judicatories can assist in helping church staff and congregations arrive at a just and fair compensation that maintains the health of the pastoral relationship.

Spiritual Health

Spiritual leaders are called to be the mediators of God's spirit breathed into the congregation. If a person only breathes out, s/he soon runs out of breath. If clergy/educators are to avoid becoming cynical or even angry at the disappointments of ministry and avoid the dangers of egotism that come from public praise, it is important that they develop a discipline for attending to their own spiritual life.

Vocational Health

Clergy/educators enter the ministry with a great deal of idealism. They believe that God is calling them to express their love of God in a way that serves others and can make a difference in the world around them.

The demands of ministry can create tensions that distance them from the enthusiasm of their original call. If they lose touch with the why of their call, they can forget the value of continuing to struggle with the challenges of ministry. They find themselves involved in labor that either distorts or is contradictory to their call. The result can be cynicism, anger, defeat, or despair.

Presbytery Nurture of the Sense of Call

The following is suggested as a means by which either presbytery staff or members of the COM can nurture the sense of call among the clergy and educators and build bridges in the process. It takes place at lunches with three or four clergy/educators at a time and can be spread out over several years depending on the number of clergy living in the presbytery.

The presbytery person selects three or four pastors and/or educators to have lunch with him/her. It is made clear that the topic of conversation is looking at the pressures that affect our understanding of our call. The group is deliberately chosen to reflect at least some theological diversity, and each participant should be serving a different church. All participants are asked to set aside two hours for the lunch. The leader explains that s/he wants to have an informal but intentional conversation with them about their experience of God's call and how it is experienced in their particular setting. S/he begins by reading the baptism and temptation story from Matthew 3:13-17 and 4:1-11. This combination lays out both Jesus' experience of call and the temptations that he confronted in living out that call.

With that as a background, invite each person to tell his/her story of being called, beginning with the person who convened the meeting. Having heard these stories of call, invite them to explore some of the pressures and/or temptations that they experience that compromises that call.

Again, to establish a climate of honesty, it would be good for the convener to begin this conversation. If it seems as if there is not a sufficient climate of trust this early in the conversation, an alternative to this last step would be to have the group discuss in general some of the pressures that can compromise that sense of call. This invites a more general exploration of the subject that may be more comfortable in such a short period of time.

The third part of the conversation is to share what resources they have discovered that helps to strengthen them as they continue to respond to their call and to resist the temptations to distort their response as well as accept forgiveness when they feel they have done so. It is appropriate to conclude with shared prayer so that each might lift up concern for the others as they join in responding to God's invitation in their lives.

A variation on this procedure would be to invite a mix of educators and/or musicians with the clergy to share the experience. While it could be of value to have a multi-staff experience this together, it is also valuable to experience this among staff from different churches.

This procedure could then be repeated with new configurations across the presbytery.

Creative Triennial Visits

The *Book of Order* mandates that the COM arrange for a triennial visit to each congregation in the presbytery. The value of these triennial visits is enhanced if there have been prior positive exchanges between the churches and the presbytery COM. Consider possible ideas to build partnerships between congregations and the Committee on Ministry.

In the age of computers, the COM could gather a series of “touchstones” with respect to pastors and DCEs, such as ordination dates, anniversaries, birthdates, etc. and send a reminder to the congregations with respect to their staff. COM could gather touchstones in congregational life and occasionally send the congregation a congratulatory message with respect to anniversaries, significant mission involvement, gifts shared with presbytery, etc. The gathering of such data is one of those defined tasks that the right volunteer(s), not necessarily a member of the COM, would do with pleasure.

The COM could emphasize the connectionalism of the Body of Christ by designing a joint visit with two congregations where each could hear what the other is doing in ministry. Every three years a new set of congregation-to-congregation visits could be designed. One variation would be a mini-mission fair to involve several small congregations, guided by a COM visitor, to celebrate the potential of all the congregations. You are looking for opportunities for the congregation to feel good about their work as well as to see the potential for being a stronger part of the larger church

Whether during the visit, in a video, or through other communication, the resources that are available through the COM to assist in various areas should be identified.

It will be helpful for the COM representative to make note of particularly creative ministries that might be shared with the whole presbytery. (See the section on presbytery appreciation.)

In preparation for these visits, the COM needs to brainstorm the potential signs to look for that could signal a potential “hot spot” that might need to be addressed at a later date such as:

- The lack of ease with which the pastor and the session seem to communicate.
- The negative impression that elders might have of presbytery.
- Areas of ministry that they are reluctant to discuss.

While the triennial visit is normally not the time to engage in serious problem solving, it should be made clear that the COM is available to do that if it is desired.

No visit or communication should be made without identifying the people and addresses by which the congregation can contact the COM and presbytery staff when they do have concerns.

Presbytery First Call Pastor Program

(based on program of Greater Atlanta Presbytery)

Three Components of Program

1. **Personal Support:** In the first year, “first call” pastors will participate with a group of other “first call” colleagues under the direction of a professional, clinically licensed group facilitator. These groups will provide opportunities for:
 - A “safe place” for discussing concerns, frustrations, victories, fears and insights.
 - A diminished sense of isolation.
 - A way to promote self-care.
 - A way to encourage personal, emotional, and spiritual growth.
 - A place to exchange ideas, garner support, and build relationships.

2. **Professional Support:** All “first call” pastors will participate in a two-year program of quarterly, overnight retreats (noon, day 1—noon, day 2) centering around each participant’s “case study” related to the specific topic assigned. (The first retreat will focus on each participant’s prepared spiritual autobiography.) At each retreat, a resource person in that area will also provide content about the topic. Possible themes include:
 - Spiritual autobiography.
 - Leadership style assessment, systems approach to congregations.
 - Nurturing disciplines of body, mind, and spirit.
 - Preaching.
 - Administration, staff relations, stewardship, personnel.
 - Conflict awareness.
 - Case studies.
 - Putting it all together – evaluation, networking, what next?

3. **Support from Mentors:** An assigned mentor for two years will:
 - Encourage professional behavior.
 - Offer friendship and encouragement.
 - Listen to personal problems.
 - Help the pastor to “know the ropes.”
 - Offer wise counsel.
 - Pray with and for the pastor.
 - Attend quarterly retreats.
 - Model a high level of competence.

Congregational Support

When a congregation extends a call to a “first call” pastor, the terms of the call will include the pastor’s participation in the “First Call” program. A member of the congregation, possibly the chair of the pastor nominating committee that recommended extending the call, will serve as a liaison between the congregation and the “first call” pastor during his/her participation in the program.

The congregation will be requested by the presbytery committee on ministry to include \$360 (12 meetings at \$30) in the call for the personal support component of the program. The congregation will also be requested to designate \$360 of the pastor’s continuing education fund to pay room and board for the quarterly overnight retreats each year for the two-year duration of the program.

First Call Bibliography

Spiritual Autobiography

To Will God's Will, Ben Campbell Johnson

Remembering Your Story: Creating Your Own Spiritual Autobiography, Richard Lyon Morgan

Writing Your Spiritual Autobiography, Richard B. Patterson

The Story of Your Life: Writing A Spiritual Autobiography, Dan Wakefield

Clergy Self Care: Spiritual, Emotional, Mental, Physical

[*Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self, and Others*](#), Donald R. Hands and Wayne

L. Fehr

Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith, Henri J. M. Nouwen with Michael J. Christensen and Rebecca

Laird

Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry, Roy Oswald

Working the Angles, Eugene Peterson

Obstacles and Challenges in Ministry

[*Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior*](#), Arthur Paul Boers

[*Difficult Conversations: Taking Risks, Acting with Integrity*](#), Katie Day

[*Discover Your Conflict Management Style, Revised Edition*](#), Speed B. Leas

[*The Pastor's Survival Manual: Ten Perils in Parish Ministry and How to Handle Them*](#), Kenneth Moe

Learning Skills and Cultivating the Art of Ministry

[*Beating Burnout in Congregations*](#), Lynne M. Baab

Preaching as Testimony, Anna Carter Florence

[*Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*](#), Lawrence W. Farris

[*How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry*](#), Kevin E. Lawson

[*New Beginnings: A Pastorate Start-Up Workbook*](#), Roy M. Oswald

[*Entering the World of the Small Church, Revised and Expanded Edition*](#), Anthony G. Pappas

[*Inside the Small Church*](#), Anthony G. Pappas

[*When God Speaks through Change: Preaching in Times of Congregational Transition*](#), Craig A. Satterlee

The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church, Lyle E. Schaller

Mentoring Relationships

[*Letters to Lee: Mentoring the New Minister*](#), Paul C. Clayton

The Elements of Mentoring, W. Brad Johnson, Charles R. Ridley

Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction, Randy D. Reese, Keith R. Anderson

[*The Competent Pastor: Skills and Self-Knowledge for Serving Well*](#), Ronald D. Sisk

Relationships With Former Congregation

(adapted from policy of Salem Presbytery)

When a pastor leaves a congregation, it is advisable to keep contacts with the 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 to refrain from all pastoral contact. However, until a new pastor is called, it is permissible to accept the invitation of the moderator or the clerk of session in the absence of the moderator to officiate/participate in weddings, funerals, and the sacraments.
- b. Services planned prior to the announcement of departure may proceed with the concurrence of the session.
- c. After the installation of the new pastor, the former pastor may be invited by the new pastor to assist in funerals, weddings, and the sacraments. Before accepting an invitation, a former pastor is advised to seek the counsel of another pastor or of presbytery staff.
- d. The former pastor shall remain sensitive to the possible tensions that can arise from his/her presence in the former parish. S/he should make every effort to be supportive of his/her successor. S/he should encourage persons who might contact him/her with concerns about his/her successor to address them to the new pastor or the session or the committee on ministry.

II. When the pastor remains in the same community:

The constant presence can be an unhealthy reminder of a pastoral relationship that no longer exists. Therefore special guidelines need to be followed:

- a. If there are options for church membership and participation in another congregation, it is strongly recommended that the former pastor and his/her family become active in the work and worship of another congregation.
- b. If there are not other options for church membership and participation, especially during the first few months after the new pastor and family arrives, clergy and family are encouraged to seek alternate worship opportunities.
- c. A former pastor should refrain from pastoral functions and not accept any position of leadership in his/her former church including teaching; nor should the pastor attend meetings of the session, deacons, or any committees unless invited by the session and the moderator of session. Except under extraordinary circumstances, such invitations should not be extended or accepted.
- d. An invitation to officiate or perform pastoral functions in a former church is an opportunity to demonstrate support and loyalty to a successor. Former pastors should offer to assist rather than officiate when asked.
- e. Before accepting any invitations, a former pastor is advised to seek the counsel of another pastor or of presbytery staff.
- f. A former pastor should avoid formal or informal participation in or comment on the work of the pastor nominating committee.

Presbytery Sabbatical Policy

It is presbytery's responsibility to interpret the need for sabbaticals.

There are some unique features to being a pastor. First, the pastorate often involves a rollercoaster of emotional experiences throughout any given week. They move from the privilege of celebrating the birth of a child to visiting a grieving set of parents because their child has been involved in a traffic accident or talking to someone who has just been laid off from his or her job. Then the pastor must create a weekly worship experience including a well-researched sermon, teach a class to adults, or organize a teenage retreat. In addition, he or she may also be involved in budget planning, editing a newsletter, and monitoring a dozen committees run by volunteers who often look to the pastor for leadership. In the midst of such activities, the pastor must try to be responsive to a variety of sometimes conflicting voices within the congregation. All of these sometime support and sometime are in conflict with what the pastor senses as God's call in his or her life.

Most pastors feel privileged to be involved in the variety of challenges of the ministry but regularly experience a range of emotional experiences from exaltation to devastation with a fair amount of tedium and at times teeth-grinding patience that is required of the ministry. Unlike many very demanding professions, the pastor does not get the normal two-day and occasional three-day weekend that is common in our society. In addition to adding stress to the family's life, it also takes a strong emotional toll on the personal well-being of the pastor.

Churches benefit from spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy pastors. Often sabbaticals enable pastors to remain in a congregation for a longer period of time. Congregations often discover new leadership and a sense of collegiality in the ministry during the pastor's sabbatical.

Presbytery can offer a seminar for clergy and other church professionals that would include:

- Exploring the value of sabbaticals.
- Reviewing different models of sabbaticals.

- Interviewing those who have experienced sabbaticals.
- Creating an interpretive plan for educating the congregation.
- Examining necessary planning stages in preparation for a sabbatical.
- Creating a check list for the congregation in preparing for a sabbatical.
- Identifying resources, financial and human:

Lilly Foundation clergyrenewal@yahoo.com or 311-161-302

Louisville Institute ([www.louisville-](http://www.louisville-institute.org/Grants/programs/sgpldetail.aspx)

[institute.org/Grants/programs/sgpldetail.aspx](http://www.louisville-institute.org/Grants/programs/sgpldetail.aspx) - 31k

Board of Pensions: www.pensions.org and look for Sabbath Sabbatical Support

Grants

Other forms of presbytery support can include:

- A qualified list of retired pastors that could provide coverage for a church during a sabbatical.
- A list of people and congregations with positive sabbatical experiences in all sizes of churches.
- Financial and personnel resources to assist small congregations in offering sabbaticals.

Resources

- The Location Agency has some excellent resources on sabbatical leave: <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/ministrydevelopment/sabbatical.htm>
- Richard Bullock and Richard J. Brueshoff, *Clergy Renewal: the Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning*, Alban Institute.
- Donald R. Hands and Wayne Fehr, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others*, Alban Institute, 1994.
- Sample sabbatical policies are available to assist congregations. (www.pastoralcarenetwork.org).

Pastoral Care Guide for Presbytery Financial Assistance

Presbyteries, whether large or small, often struggle to find ways to provide pastoral care to their ministers and educators when a financial emergency occurs. Even when legitimate needs arise, it is difficult for a presbytery to provide financial assistance to their church professionals:

- The primary responsibility for the financial well-being of church professionals is lodged with the congregation and the financial terms of call that the congregations agreed to support.
- Ministers/educators are often reluctant to ask their presbytery for assistance, especially when it comes to financial problems where accountability issues might come into play.
- Presbytery budgets rarely allow for funds to be set aside to assist ministers with unforeseen financial needs.
- Presbyteries often rely on the Board of Pensions to cover the medical expenses that members may encounter and/or seek special grants from the Board of Pensions when unusual financial circumstances or needs occur.
- There is uneasiness within the structures of a presbytery in making judgments with regard to the legitimacy of a church professional's financial need and the responsibility of the presbytery to help.

Presbyteries cannot escape the fact that church staffs are low-paid servants of the church and that the presbytery is charged with the pastoral care and support of them.

Issues do arise when a church professional has a personal, family, or vocational crisis that cannot be addressed without some financial assistance from the larger church community that a presbytery represents. In these cases, effective pastoral care depends on a presbytery having the ability to provide financial assistance.

Aside from budgeting each year a prescribed amount for financial assistance for ministers, some presbyteries have developed a "Pastoral Care Crisis Fund" to insure that they can help their ministers when emergencies arise. The COM decides the parameters for the disbursement of funds. This pastoral care crisis fund is usually managed by the committee on ministry, a designated presbytery staff person, or a pastoral care team that communicates that such a fund exists to help in crisis situations.

This fund is often supported by a portion of the offerings that are collected at ordination and installation worship services held within the life of the presbytery. In this way congregations learn over time that they are collectively responsible for and contribute to the well-being of all the members of presbytery, especially when a crisis might occur. Depending on the amount of funding that is collected for this pastoral care crisis fund over time, the designated managers of the fund are able to proactively express care and assistance for those who get caught in a crippling financial situation.

COM Pastoral Care During Disasters

Committees on ministry have a special responsibility towards pastors and their families during times of disaster. Out of their sense of pastoral duty and care, pastors resist assistance and relief and often will not take a break. Some steps to consider are:

1. Organize retired pastors and ministers at large who are not in the designated disaster area to partner with particular pastors whose churches are recovering from a disaster. This person can be assigned to relieve the pastor from some of his/her responsibilities (preach on some Sundays, assist in pastoral care, or administer congregational and community relief efforts).
2. In areas prone to possible disasters (hurricanes, floods, wildfires), COMs can assist in arranging/assigning churches within a disaster prone area to partner churches located in geographically safe areas. These churches can be responsible for the care and shelter of their partner congregation should there be the need for an evacuation.
3. Encourage congregations to know the special needs and disabilities of their members and urge them to develop an emergency call tree that can be activated if needed. Particular elders or deacons can be assigned a special needs member to look out for.
4. Have a disaster relief fund available to assist the immediate needs of pastors where churches have been destroyed and income has been cut off.
5. Plan a mandatory two or three day retreat three to four weeks into a long term disaster for pastors (and spouses). Request that PDA come in to lead workshops on disaster self care. Be sure to include an ample amount of ROR in the retreat.
6. Request ahead of time from members of presbytery free use of vacation homes so that pastors and their families can have a low cost weekend away from disaster related responsibilities.

Resources:

www.pcusa.org/pda	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
http://www.redcross.org/	The American Red Cross
http://www.fema.gov/ Administration	The Federal Emergency Management
http://www.icisf.org/ Foundation	The International Critical Incident Stress
www.churchworldservice.org	Church World Service
www.greencross.org	Green Cross Academy of Traumatology

COM Combating Isolation

These are a variety of suggestions on how the committee on ministry can assist the clergy and educators in combating the debilitating issue of isolation in the ministry.

1. Make use of and promote Board of Pensions and denominational resources for clergy wellness.
2. Make available clergy and educator support groups and clergy spouse support groups.
3. Contract with local resources to provide confidential therapy services for clergy, educators, and their families.
4. Encourage "Facebook" or other online support/interest groups.
5. Write boundary expectations into calls and covenants for clergy and educators whereby the congregation agrees that their spending time with spouse and family is expected, days off are protected, and participation in the activities and leadership within the local community is encouraged.
6. Either in the church's call or the presbytery's budget have funds available for clergy/educators recreational activities or hobbies.
 - Form a pastoral care team and/or have a designated pastor to pastors and chaplain for spouse of clergy or educator.
8. Be creative in sponsoring clergy and educator retreats and outings (cruises, fishing contests, golf matches, tickets to concerts and civic events, tours or trips).
 - Arrange for corporate contract membership fees for the YMCA, YWCA, or a health club within the bounds of presbytery.
10. Sponsor health fairs and wellness contests for clergy/educators and their families.
11. Form a mentor/colleague program with means for accountability to make sure contacts are being made. (Don't forget retired pastors and ministers serving in a setting other than the local congregation.)
12. Develop a "First Call" program for new clergy retention and wellness.
13. Sponsor annual clergy, clergy/spouse, and educators retreats.
14. Consider sponsoring quarterly district luncheons.
15. Acknowledge clergy/educators' anniversaries, birthdays, ordination dates, etc.
16. Sponsor continuing educational workshops and courses for clergy/educators that have nothing to do with congregational ministry (beginner's golf or tennis lessons, foreign language series, "how to" water ski, fish, snow ski, bowl, sail, or bird watch – use your imagination!)
- 1 Make sure spiritual resources are available and their use encouraged by clergy/educators and their spouses.
18. Sponsor movie/theatre/concert groups.

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction is an ancient tradition. Its purpose is to nurture a growing relationship with God through dialogue and practices that open persons to greater awareness of the leading, healing, and transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

With a spiritual companion's support, men and women take greater responsibility for growing in faith, engaging in spiritual practices, and finding deeper connections at all levels of their relationships in daily life. Spiritual directors, or companions as they are often called, are trained and experienced in listening deeply to the desires of human hearts. They are a resource for persons who are restless and want to live fuller lives.

Spiritual direction is not directing another to act or pray in any one particular way. It is not a substitute for psychotherapy or pastoral counseling, though there are occasional overlaps. Spiritual companionship follows ethical guidelines with appropriate boundaries and confidentiality. A fee is normally charged, but it is a modest one and is negotiable. Usually, spiritual direction takes place in a once a month meeting. The question posed by Mary Oliver in her poem "The Summer's Day" serves as a guide for this ministry of care: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

Some suggestions for the presbytery committee on ministry:

1. Post on the presbytery Web site a list of spiritual directors in the presbytery and their contact information. Local seminaries, religious orders, pastoral care and counseling offices, etc. may have spiritual directors.
 2. Make reference to Spiritual Directors International, www.sdiworld.org for resources and directors.
 3. Search "spiritual formation" and "spiritual direction" on the Presbyterian Church (USA) Web site, pcusa.org for resources.
 4. Provide presbytery staff members with a list of spiritual directors within the presbytery for referral.
 5. Encourage your presbytery and local congregations to set aside funds to assist pastors and educators with the cost of spiritual directors.
 6. Organize a panel discussion on the ministry of spiritual direction and spiritual practices to be held at a presbytery meeting or a presbytery continuing education event.
- Plan a retreat for clergy/educators where a spiritual director(s) would work one on one or in small groups with those attending.

Clergy Heartbreak

Clergy heartbreak occurs when a pastor no longer has high expectations for his/her church. Living in the tension of the already/not yet of God's reign, clergy long for their churches to be vigorous witnesses to the good news of the gospel. God blesses us with power for the task and peace in our hearts. Life abundant is available. Yet a particular church may seem so far from what a pastor is hoping for. And, sadly, after years of trying to lead a congregation, a pastor may come to believe that her/his church will never be able to move forward, never live into its mission, never be a "real" church.

Clergy heartbreak sets in. In contrast to clergy burnout (where the pastor is likely to leave the ministry altogether), the pastor still preaches, still visits, and still administers, but there is little fire left. Lower expectations have settled in, lower expectations for the church and lower expectations for his or her own ministry. If the pastor does not think that much will happen, what is the church likely to think? How is a church likely to respond?

Frustration, per se, is not a sign of clergy heartbreak. The key sign is lowered expectations and a pastor's conviction that a given church is incapable of improving.

A congregation has a right to a pastor whose "heart is in it," a pastor who will challenge them to expect more from God and to attempt more for God. A pastor and congregation may continue to "function," but a congregation is called to thrive.

The committee on ministry needs to be prepared to discern with the pastor whether or not he or she can reasonably expect to be renewed for this kind of leadership in this particular setting. If the answer is that renewal is possible, here are some strategies that the pastor and the committee on ministry can develop with the session:

- Conduct a "leading causes of life" review of the church (concentrating on current strengths, not problems).
- Provide focused leadership training with outside instructors to provide a fresh voice.
- Lead a mutual ministry review (perhaps as part of a triennial visit) that looks at how the entire church, not just the paid staff, is doing in ministry.
- Consider if pastoral overfunctioning and congregational underfunctioning has been one of the dynamics. The COM may need to encourage the pastor to step back and even step away from some things in order to promote congregational development.
- Determine if a sabbatical for the pastor can become an occasion for the church to do some of its own work in identifying and assessing its mission.

What if a pastor cannot reasonably be expected to be renewed in this setting? The pastor may need encouragement (even permission) to seek a new call. The committee on ministry is in a position to help the pastor see that he or she is not "abandoning" the congregation but rather acting faithfully. Indeed, part of the current dynamic may be that the pastor is no longer a good fit for what this community needs. It is helpful to remember that the church is not the pastor's church, but Christ's.

RESOURCES

Gary Gunderson and Larry Pray, *Leading Causes of Life*, Abingdon, 200□

A Lunch of Humor

The diversity of theological positions in any given presbytery presents a challenge in building a sense of community. We know that Jesus said one of our most effective witnesses to the world is to demonstrate how we love each other in a manner reflective of how Jesus has loved us. Laughter and humor can be an effective antidote to some of the relational poison that has been affecting us.

Can't you just see Jesus poking someone in the ribs and saying, "Heh, Mr. Priest, you do that straining bit very well. I doubt that a gnat could ever make it through your procedure. But if you are not careful, you are going to end up swallowing that camel that has just slipped into your cup." Jesus' jocular comment was surely meant to puncture the pretentiousness of this activity in the temple. We know that we can take ourselves too seriously.

A simple suggestion that any presbytery leader or member of presbytery could take would be to have a lunch of humor. Invite several clergy to have lunch together. Make sure that there is theological diversity among the group. It would probably be possible to ask some cooks in a specific congregation to prepare the meal. That would surely be a gracious act that most congregations could accomplish if the group was of reasonable size.

Invite the participants to name some of the "gnats" and some of the "camels" that are part of their ministry. What are the things that people get overly serious about that in the larger scheme of things are not that important? What are some of the important things that sometimes can get overlooked?

An alternative would be to invite each participant to bring their best religious joke or story and a humorous story that they have experienced in their own ministry. The leader should have a set of his or her jokes and stories, but the objective is to get as many clergy as possible to contribute.

Food and laughter can be healing contributors to any community. If a presbytery were able to arrange several of these lunches across the presbytery, it would build better relationships that would help when the more difficult issues arise.

Presbytery Gift Weekend

Mission Presbytery offers a gift of grace to their pastors. They hold a *Get-Away-Weekend* drawing sponsored by their pastoral care division twice a year during their presbytery meetings.

In preparation, the pastoral care division sends a letter to the clerks of session of every church that has an installed pastor(s) asking the clerks to share the communication with the session about appreciating their pastor(s) by nominating their pastor(s) for an all-expense-paid weekend (2 nights lodging, meals, and transportation anywhere within the bounds of Mission Presbytery that they choose). The letter explains that the presbytery will conduct a special drawing of names at the next presbytery meeting. The letter stipulates that the nomination from the session must include a paragraph detailing what they appreciate most about their pastor. The session also agrees to grant on behalf of the congregation an additional Sunday off for the pastor, not to be considered either as vacation or study leave, if s/he is selected in the drawing for this *GetAway-Weekend*.

The pastoral care division asks the sessions to turn in their nominations to the presbytery office a week before the presbytery meeting, and the nominations are put in a box for the drawing. During the presbytery meeting, the drawing is preceded by a conversation about the importance of congregations caring for their clergy persons.

Following the presbytery meeting, the pastoral care division sends a letter to every pastor who was nominated for the drawing, along with the words of appreciation the session had written about her/him, expressing the presbytery's joy and gratitude for the good work s/he is obviously doing in the church.

The funds for the *Get-Away Weekend* come from the pastoral care division's budget, and this normally does not cost more than \$400-\$500 per weekend. There are ways to make this more inexpensive, but Mission Presbytery believes it is money well spent and helps emphasize both the presbytery's recognition of the work that pastors are doing and the pastoral care division's efforts as well.

If You Have Never Felt...

(to be presented during a presbytery meeting)

I would like all who have served in the ministry as pastors or educators for five years or more to please stand.

First of all, on behalf of God's church, I want to thank you for your service. I know that it is not easy.

- Now I would like all of those who have never had their day off interrupted or been called back from vacation for some need in the parish to sit down.
- I would like all of those who are standing and who during your years of service regularly have had the equivalent of a two-day weekend at least twice a month to please sit down.
- Please sit down If you have not had at least a few weeks during the year when in the same week you had to prepare a sermon, visit someone critically ill in the hospital, counsel a deeply troubled parishioner, celebrate a new birth, hear a complaint about a relatively trivial issue in the church, and help plan and carry out some church event.
- If you have never felt deeply hurt by a parishioner's criticism or felt despair about the lack of progress in your church, please sit down.
- If you have never worried that the demands of your faith have been costly to the family that you love, please sit down.
- If you have never felt guilty about your inability to help a church be more faithful, please sit down.
- If you have regularly felt guilty about having a job where you only had to work one day a week, please sit down.

These are your servants of the Lord. Rise and sing with me the *Doxology*:

Spouse's Prayer to God

(to be read at presbytery meeting by a woman from a place out of sight)

Dear God,

My husband Joshua is in a bad place in his life right now, a hard place. He's 48 years old. We have one child still in college and one who could use some help with graduate school next year. In our current situation, we can afford to help both children because I am working part time as a church educator, and my husband is the pastor of a 250 member church. "A preacher killer" is what some people call a church that size. It's too small to support a lot of extra staff, like an associate minister or a director of Christian education, but it's too big for the minister to visit members *and their relatives* as often as they think proper.

I took this part time education position because the church I'm serving couldn't afford full time and benefits. I took this position 5 years ago because we needed the money to pay college tuition and all. Some of the folks at my husband's church weren't very happy about it. I was a very active church volunteer and always directed the vacation church school program. Now, I'm not even there on Sunday mornings, so my husband's got his hands full.

Mrs. X., a minister's widow, told me my place was in my husband's church supporting him. I almost told her if the church supported him adequately, rather than comparing his salary favorably with that of public school teachers, I might not have taken this job. But she wouldn't understand. She was a child during the Great Depression and thinks today's ministers' salaries are astronomical.

But this prayer isn't about me; it's about Joshua. He's depressed, he's exhausted, and he's discouraged. He works 6 – 6^{1/2} days a week, never less than 10 hours per day. He works at least 3 nights a week, either in meetings or visiting members or potential church members. He's not getting any exercise. His blood pressure is up. And Sunday night the session dealt him a heavy blow. Two of the current session members thought it would be nice to honor Joshua's 10th anniversary serving this church with a 3-month sabbatical in addition to his 4 weeks of vacation and 2 annual weeks of study leave. That would allow 4 months that Joshua could get away, get some rest, meditate, pray, and read some of the books and theological works he never has time for now.

Joshua was all excited at the prospect. But the session voted "No" resoundingly. They couldn't afford for him "to do nothing" for 4 months. He already had more vacation time than most people get *and* that 2 weeks of study leave. Then, several members pointed out areas where they felt Joshua was lacking:

- Not enough visiting.
- Too many interchurch and community activities.
- Not enough wit and humor in his sermons to attract younger members.

They don't understand how hard he works. They don't know how many of our nights and family dinners are interrupted by church members' phone calls. They don't know that we stayed in town for our last summer vacation because we didn't see any point in leaving, since the last 3 times we've tried to get away, Joshua was called back due to a death or crisis with a church member. They don't know how idealistic, how enthusiastic, how in love with you and the church he was when he first graduated from seminary. They don't know how tired he is, how drained he is, how he sometimes wonders if anyone cares as much for the ministry of Jesus Christ as they do for the hymns in the old red hymnal and trying to avoid taking a turn in the nursery.

I'm worried about him, Lord. He got online last night and downloaded the Pastor Information Form materials in order to start looking for a new call. I don't want to move, and he doesn't either. He deeply loves the people in this church, but sometimes he needs a word of thanks to receive some support himself when his morale is low. He's always the giver. But sometimes he needs to be human, to feel appreciated, to hear that he's doing a good job.

I love this town, this church, and the one I'm serving. Our son is a student at a state university and so is nearby. Our daughter is working this year to save money for seminary but insists she's going to do a Ph.D. and teach New Testament afterwards because "church ministry is too hard."

Dear God, how can I help my husband? How can I help this church realize they may lose a wonderful man and pastor? I know Ezekiel once ran away from Ahab and Jezebel and ran away from you because the job of prophesying had become too hard. You sent Ezekiel back. Joshua is a faithful, dedicated servant of you, Lord. But he needs to know that what he's doing matters. He needs to feel that people in the church value him and his gifts. He needs your inspiration and support more than he ever did when he was younger. Help us, O God. In the name of your Son and your Spirit, I pray to you. Help my husband Joshua. Amen.

God's Call in Retirement

Not all retired pastors are interested in responding to a new call within their ministry, but some would find satisfaction in a new form of ministry. The presbytery might want to meet with retired pastors to build a community of ministry in a variety of areas. A gathering might want to explore some of the following possibilities:

- Visiting pastors when there is illness in their families.
- Participating in a prayer group of retired pastors who would offer regular prayer on behalf of local churches and the larger church.
- Providing occasional services at retirement homes.
- Serving as a mentor to a younger pastor.
- Covering for a pastor in times of emergency.
- Making some pastoral visits on behalf of presbytery to some local congregations.
- Providing sabbatical support for a small church pastor.
- Teaching a class for a limited period at a church or retirement home in a particular subject of their choice.
- Assisting in conflict management on behalf of presbytery at a local church.
- Being an adjunct liaison with a candidate for ministry in seminary.
- Serving on a committee of the larger church.
- Providing spiritual support to one or more clergy in presbytery.
- Assisting certified lay pastors to reflect on their experience.
- Other creative ideas that emerge from the pastors.

The meeting might begin with a prayerful exploration of the meaning of ministry in retirement. The above list could provide a second stage of exploration as together the clergy seek to respond to God's call in new circumstances.

Part of the exploration should include questions such as:

- Would you be interested in an occasional meeting of retired pastors to explore the meaning of vocation for retired Presbyterian ministers?
- Are there ways that presbytery can support you in responding to the call that you currently feel?