

LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH:  
STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR  
ORDAINED OFFICERS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

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.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry. Therefore 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;
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 outlined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy and defined by the Presbytery of Detroit in the document I have read and signed;
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;

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I will conduct my ministry in a manner that honors the connectional nature of the church as I begin and conclude ministries.

As I enter a new ministry I will:

1. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor.
2. Be a friend and colleague in ministry with member presbyters and ecumenical gatherings.
3. Seek out consultations from community members, Committee on Ministry, and when appropriate the former pastor.

Upon leaving a ministry or office I will:

1. Speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;
2. Refrain from and exercise due care not to influence by direction or indirection, by spoken or written word, the selection of a successor.
3. Not influence or comment upon the policies of the session and the congregation.
4. Publically announce to the congregation that the pastoral relationship is ending, and I am therefore, is not available for pastoral services.
5. Refrain from Participating in the life of the ministry setting I left or from which I have retired
6. Refuse to provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served; decline cordially invitations to perform pastoral duties in my former community (this includes pastoral calling, funerals, baptisms, and weddings)--unless such invitation comes from and is initiated by the current pastor.
7. Consult with the committee on ministry in the presbytery of my residence regarding my involvement in any ministry.
8. Consider prayerfully how I can most effectively assist the congregation and my successor as they enter into a new ministry together.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_