

## **Policy #3 – Process for an Exit Interview** **Committee on Ministry – Presbytery of Tampa Bay**

### **Background and Purpose**

The purposes of exit interviews are several and often depend largely upon the conditions surrounding a pastor's departure. The exit interview may simply provide closure and an opportunity for celebration and blessing for the pastor, the church and the presbytery. The exit interview may also serve as a kind of debriefing or unpacking of a pastor's experience with a particular church. Authentic sharing may also provide insights related to the challenges and opportunities in a given church, as well as point to appropriate qualities of its next pastor.

### **Participants**

It is suggested that pastors of congregations, interim pastors and certified educators be the focus of the exit interviews.

The liaison and COM Area Chair will meet with the pastor or educator. They will meet separately with the Clerk of Session or designee of the Clerk. More effective listening is possible with two, especially where there are concerns, problems, or hurts which need airing. The meeting with the Clerk or Designee can take place after the pastor or educator has left.

### **Timing of Exit Interview**

The Area Chair will notify the church's COM liaison as soon as possible after the resignation announcement. The liaison will then contact the pastor, educator and/or Clerk of Session to set up the exit interviews.

### **Process During Interviews**

The pastor, educator or Clerk should be told that notes from the meeting will go in a folder, filed with the presbytery and available only to the presbytery presbyter, the COM chairperson, and available, where appropriate, to the liaison to the PNC.

The process of disclosure to presbytery staff or anyone else should be defined at the beginning of the interview with the understanding that at the end of the interview the points recorded will be read back to the pastor or educator for clarification. There should be clear agreement about the information which the pastor or educator wants kept confidential and that which can be included in the written report. Both the interviewee and the two members of the COM interviewing team will sign off on the written report before it is filed.

It is strongly suggested that the Professional Support Committee consider providing an exit interview for educators other than the certified educators. Often significant needs and concerns exist within this group which need airing.

### **Sample Questions for Interviews**

Why are you leaving?

Tell me about your experience at this church?

What did you enjoy the most?

What were your greatest challenges?

How did you grow during your ministry at this church?  
How did you take care of yourself?  
What was your experience with staff relations?  
What excites you about this church's future?  
What worries you about this church's future?  
What, in your view, does this church need?  
What do you think are the church's expectations of its next pastor?  
How did your family experience the church?  
How can presbytery best support this church?  
How can the Committee on Ministry best support the next pastor?  
What can we learn from you about this church or the presbytery to increase our effectiveness?

#### Process for Saying Goodbye by the Presbytery

The purpose of this process is to assure that, so far as COM responsibility is concerned, all departing pastors and certified educators are recognized equally at the meetings of presbytery.

1. Using the newsletter, the presbytery will be notified of a pastor's or certified educator's decision to leave as soon as it is made public.
2. At each meeting of presbytery the names of each pastor and educator leaving will be read as part of the COM report given by the Chair.
3. When the pastor or educator is present at the presbytery meeting, the COM Chair, in consultation with the Moderator, will acknowledge his/her leaving with the blessing of the presbytery. When they are not present, a note should be sent by the COM Chair to the pastor or educator stating their names were read at the presbytery meeting and communicating the blessing of the presbytery in their new responsibilities.