

**THE PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
POLICY AND PRACTICE**

**ARTICLE I
POLICY**

Section 1.01: General

The policies of the Committee on Ministry represent the authority vested in it by the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. In carrying out such policies the Committee on Ministry is acting as the Presbytery in all measure and manner. All additions, deletions or changes to policy must be approved by the Presbytery. No policy of the Committee on Ministry shall be contrary to the provisions of the *Book of Order*.

Section 1.02: Function

The Committee on Ministry shall execute the various functions necessary to carry out the mission and ministry of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, in accordance with *Section 3.07* of the *PMV Policy and Practice*. Specifically, the Committee on Ministry shall be the agency by which the Presbytery becomes *Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Pastors and Congregations (G-3.0307)*.

Section 1.03: Committee Size

Membership of the committee shall be nine teaching elders and nine ruling elders, elected in three classes of six persons, for terms of three years each, renewable for one term.

One member of the committee shall be chosen to serve as representative to the Participation, Representation and Diversity committee.

Section 1.04: Quorum

One more than one-half of the current voting members shall constitute a quorum. All proceedings from meetings with no quorum present must be ratified at the earliest subsequent meeting in which there is a quorum.

Section 1.05: Budget

The operating budget for the Committee on Ministry shall be determined and approved by the Presbytery. As part of the budget process, the committee shall provide its funding request annually to the Presbytery Trustees.

Section 1.06: Authority to Act as Presbytery

The Committee on Ministry may act as the Presbytery of the Miami Valley in the following matters:

1. Establishing new pastoral positions within congregations
2. Finding in order calls issued by churches for installed pastoral positions
3. Establishing, approving and overseeing temporary pastoral relationships between sessions and teaching elders
4. Approving examinations of teaching elders transferring from other presbyteries into the Presbytery of the Miami Valley
5. Approving examinations for membership into the Presbytery by persons not yet ordained to the office of teaching elder, contingent upon their subsequent ordination
6. Receiving and enrolling teaching elders for membership in the Presbytery of the Miami Valley
7. Dissolving of pastoral relationships where the congregation and pastor concur
8. Approving and annually reviewing *validated ministries beyond the jurisdiction of the church*
9. Annually reviewing teaching elders engaged *all forms of validated ministry* or as members-at-large, as required by *G-2.0508 Failure to Engage in Validated Ministry*
10. Appointing moderators of session where the position is vacant
11. Authorizing teaching elders in validated ministries not connected to a congregation to celebrate sacraments
12. Granting permission for teaching elders to labor within or outside the bounds of the Presbytery
13. Dismissing teaching elders to other presbyteries
14. Establishing terms, and providing annual review, of minimum compensation for teaching elders, certified Christian educators, and commissioned ruling elders
15. Approving and overseeing relationships between sessions and certified Christian educators
16. Overseeing relationships between sessions and pastoral affiliates
17. Approving administrative commissions to ordain and/or install
18. Authorizing a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service or to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery, and reviewing such commission annually, pursuant to G-2.1001; and carrying out the responsibilities of the presbytery in G-2.1004 (Added 5/10/16)

All actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery by the Committee on Ministry shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

Section 1.07 Communication and Access

The Committee on Ministry shall be open to communication and access at all times to teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders, certified Christian educators, and ruling

elders who are members of sessions of congregations of the Presbytery. Communication shall be directed to the committee either through the chair, or the liaison to the congregation.

Section 1.08: Liaisons

Each congregation in the Presbytery shall be assigned a member of the Committee on Ministry as *liaison*, who shall be the normal point of access to the Committee on Ministry by teaching elders, ruling elders, certified Christian educators and sessions.

Section 1.09: Triennial Visits

At least one time every three years, the Committee on Ministry, through the liaison, shall visit with each session, pastor, educator, as well as other key persons of the pastoral staff, to discuss the ministry of the congregation, as well as to understand how the presbytery might better equip the congregation in its Christian service and mission.

Section 1.10: Pastoral Service in Advance of Ordination

Candidates for ordination may not begin service in positions to which they will be ordained prior to having been examined and approved by the Presbytery for ordination.

Section 1.11: Ordination to a Temporary Pastoral Relationship

Temporary pastoral relationships are between the session and pastor, unlike installed pastoral relationships which are calls from the congregation. In addition, temporary pastoral relationships are not the normative expectation for persons seeking ordination. In order for the Committee on Ministry to approve temporary pastoral relationships for candidates for ordinations, the following shall ensue:

1. The Committee on Ministry shall work closely with the church and the candidate to ensure that both fully understand the implications and challenges of a candidate entering ministry in a temporary relationship.
2. The Committee on Ministry shall determine if the ordination is appropriate for both the particular church and the candidate in the case that is under consideration.
3. If the temporary relationship is for an interim position the candidate will be subject to conforming to the Interim Ministry Training policy of the Committee on Ministry.

Section 1.12: Interim Ministry Training and Accountability

Teaching elders serving as interim pastors to congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley must be trained through a program endorsed by the

Association of Presbyterian Ministry Specialists (APIMS) or another approved by the Committee on Ministry.

Teaching elders who have not taken the interim ministry training prior to beginning interim pastor service must complete Part I of the training within the first six months of the commencement of the interim ministry, and must complete the Part II prior to the approval of an interim ministry contract with another congregation.

Interim pastors shall be accountable for their work to the Presbytery through Committee on Ministry. Such accountability shall include providing regular written quarterly reports as well as participation in a Presbytery sponsored Interim Ministry Collegium.

Section 1.13: Family Leave

1. Theological Grounding:

God created us to be in relationship with one another, to care for one another, and to participate in families. We are required to honor our father and mother, and to care for our children and kin. Thus, provision is made when a pastor needs to be absent from work in order to care for both self and family.

2. Purpose:

- a. To provide sessions and other employing agencies minimum guidelines for a pastor's family leave to be included in all call packages.
- b. To ensure that clergy receive fair and equitable leave when required. It is anticipated that clergy will only use this policy when needed, and not abuse the generosity of the church.

3. Guidelines:

a. Medically Certified Disability:

Pastors who are, according to certification of a licensed physician, temporarily disabled shall refer to the Committee on Ministry for direction.

b. Family Leave:

When a pastor needs to take extended leave due to the needs of a family member, the Session or appropriate employing agency should be informed as soon as possible. Situations that may fall under this heading include, but are not limited to, an extended hospitalization/rehabilitation, the need to place a family member into long term care, and the need to take care of property in the event of

death. Family leave may be up to 12 weeks in length, during which time the pastor should receive full effective salary and full Pension dues. If additional leave is required, the pastor will negotiate for such leave with the Session or appropriate employing agency.

c. Maternity Leave:

When a pastor becomes pregnant, the Session or appropriate employing agency should be informed within 12 weeks of a physician's confirmation of the pregnancy. Maternity leave should ordinarily begin with the physician's certification that the pastor can no longer perform her duties and end when she is medically released by her physician to return to her professional duties. This is ordinarily an 8 week period, during which the pastor should receive full effective salary and full Pension dues.

In the event of medical complications, the pastor should make arrangements for additional leave with the Session or employing agency, under the terms of the Medically Certified Disability paragraph of this section.

d. Paternity Leave

If a pastor's spouse becomes pregnant, the pastor should notify the Session or employing agency within 12 weeks of a physician's confirmation of the pregnancy. A request for paternity leave should be made no later than a month before the requested leave is to begin. Paternity leave may be up to 8 weeks in length, during which time the pastor shall receive full effective salary and full Pension dues. If additional leave is necessary, it may be arranged under the terms of the Family Leave paragraph of this section.

e. Adoption Leave

Recognizing that the adoption of a child requires as much of a transition as the birth of a child, a pastor who is adopting should be granted leave commensurate with maternity or paternity leave. If additional leave is necessary, it may be arranged under the terms of the Family Leave paragraph of this section.

f. Military Leave

Pastors who serve in the Military Reserves shall ordinarily settle on all details regarding their military requirements in a Mobilization Agreement as part of their terms of call. These details should include the annual two-week training period and what compensation the church will provide during that time. It is recommended that the

pastor not take a cut in salary for those two weeks, so that if the military reimbursement is less than the pastor's salary, the church makes up the difference. Further information is available from the Board of Pensions.

4. Assistance for Churches

The Committee on Ministry will seek to provide assistance to help churches unable to meet the financial obligations outlined above in the event that their pastor requires leave. This assistance is to assure that the pastor does not feel pressured to return to work prematurely and the church is able to secure sufficient pastoral care during the pastor's absence. Individual sessions will apply to the Committee on Ministry when such cases arise, and each case will be judged on its own merits.

Section 1.14: Pastoral Succession in Congregations

While the *Book of Order (G-2.0504c)* permits pastoral succession in certain cases, and under certain condition, the authority to grant such permission rests with the Presbytery. Therefore the policy of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley in such matters is as follows:

1. Pastoral Succession and Associate Pastoral Relationships:

Associate pastors of a congregation may not serve as the next installed pastor of that congregation.

2. Pastoral Succession and Temporary Pastoral Relationships:

a. *Interim pastors* of a congregation may not serve as the next installed pastors of that congregation.

b. *Stated supply* and *organizing pastors* of a congregation may serve as the next installed pastor of that congregation, if so recommended by the Committee on Ministry, and approved by a seventy-five percent (75%) majority vote by the Presbytery.

Section 1.15: Counsel for Teaching Elders, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators in Times of Transition

For teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders, and certified Christian educators undergoing difficulties in times of transition and change, the Committee on Ministry may require and provide companion groups to assist in self-care, accountability, spiritual development, and healing.

It is not intended that, nor appropriate for, the companion group provide any form of therapy. The Committee on Ministry encourages each person in the midst of a time of transition to seek appropriate outside professional counseling. When possible, the Committee on Ministry may assist in obtaining such counseling.

Further, the Committee on Ministry may also require teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders, and certified Christian educators under such difficulties to undergo psychological and professional assessment at a qualified facility specializing in clergy health and ministry development. The cost for such assessments required will be borne by the Presbytery.

Section 1.16: Validated Ministries Under the Jurisdiction of the Church

The *Book of Order* (2.0503) recognizes three categories of membership in the Presbytery for teaching elders:

1. Engaged in validated ministry
2. Member-at-large
3. Honorably retired

Validated ministries under the jurisdiction of the church shall be all installed or temporary pastoral positions; staff of the Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly; staff of organizations either directly relating to a governing body, or ecumenical organizations one of the partners of which is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

All persons in validated ministries under the jurisdiction of the church shall abide by all provisions of *G-2.0503a*.

Section 1.17: Validated Ministries Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Church

In general, a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church is best understood as one in which the performance of the work, or the work itself, is not accountable to the Presbytery.

The Committee on Ministry, responding to requests for validation of ministries beyond the jurisdiction of the church shall consider each request as unique and shall evaluate the request *on its own merits*. Such ministries shall include educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministers, missionaries, partners in mission, and other specific tasks and roles appropriate to the ministry of the church.

It shall be the responsibility of the teaching elder requesting such validation to demonstrate how this ministry conforms to the *Book of Order* (*G-2.0503a*):

When ministers of the Word and Sacrament are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They

shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

Further, since validated ministries beyond the jurisdiction of the church must be reviewed annually to continue validation, persons in such ministries shall provide annually the Committee on Ministry confirmation of their continued conformance to all provisions of *G2.0503a* with the exception of the provision requiring accountability to the presbytery.

Section 1.18: Head of Staff

During a time of vacancy in the *head of staff* position in a multi-staff congregation, no person may be appointed as temporary head of staff without the counsel and approval of the Committee on Ministry.

Section 1.19 Pastoral Affiliates

A pastoral affiliate is a teaching elder who serves in a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, a member-at-large, or honorably retired who desires to build and maintain a relationship with a particular congregation in keeping with the ordination to ordered ministry.

The pastoral affiliate relationship is between the teaching elder and the session, but must be made upon nomination by the pastor, to whom the pastoral affiliate will be directly responsible and accountable. The relationship shall be approved by the Committee on Ministry.

Pastoral affiliates may serve with or without remuneration, as determined in the agreement with the session. The pastoral affiliate relationship ceases upon the departure of the pastor.

Section 1.20: Ethical Conduct (Revised 02/09/2013)

Standards of ethical conduct are expected of all followers of Christ, and for those in Christian service, the highest standards must be maintained. Among the questions asked to persons being ordained to *all ordered ministries* in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), are the following:

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

The responsibility to keep, and abide by, standards of ethical conduct lies at the heart of an affirmative response to these questions. In 1998, the 210th General Assembly adopted

church-wide standards, by which all teaching elders, ruling elder, and deacons must abide:

Life Together in the Community of Faith, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted by the 210th General Assembly, 1998

These standards apply as long as the ordered ministry is maintained, whether or not in active service or retirement. For teaching elders leaving pastoral positions this is extremely important. The end of a pastoral relationship is a time of adjustment for pastor and congregation alike. This sacred relationship is valid and in force only so long as the pastor is in office; it is not intended to be life-long as far as pastoral ministry is concerned. Therefore, when the date ending a pastor-congregation relationship arrives, the pastoral ministry of the departing pastor ends.

All teaching elders, at the commencement of membership in the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, shall be required to confirm in writing that that have read, and understood all the provisions of the aforementioned *Standards of Ethical Conduct*, a copy of which shall be provided by COM.

All teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders, as part of the process of concluding pastoral relationships shall also be required to confirm (or re-confirm) in writing a similar understanding.

Section 1.21: Sexual Misconduct

Teaching elders, either in validated ministries or enrolled as members-at-large, as well as those whose status is honorably retired but who wish to engage in ministry and service to others in the Presbytery, along with commissioned ruling elders and certified Christian Educators are bound by the provisions of the policy for *Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct* of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley.

Section 1.22: Criminal Background Checks

All teaching elders seeking membership in the Presbytery related to service in a validated ministry; all commissioned ruling elders beginning a pastoral relationship in the Presbytery for the first time; all certified Christian Educators beginning educator positions in the Presbytery for the first time, shall undergo a criminal background check which shall be conducted by an outside, independent organization specializing in ecclesiastical institutions.

This will also apply to all teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders and certified Christian educators, currently or formerly serving in the Presbytery, who have not undergone a criminal background check, but who are planning to serve in new positions within the Presbytery.

Criminal background check reports are considered extremely confidential are read only by the Executive Presbyter, unless there are specific and compelling reasons to share them with the subjects themselves or the chair of the Committee on Ministry. Such reasons shall pertain to information that might disqualify a person from serving, or require clarification because of a specific concern raised in a report. The only information provided to sessions and search committees shall be whether or not the subject is “all clear.”

Reports are resealed after reading, with the seal and dated signed by the Executive Presbyter and stored under lock for a period of one year from their receipt, after which they are destroyed. In no cases shall reports be shared with outside agencies, even at the request of the subjects.

Section 1.23: Staff Support

The Executive Presbyter, and when necessary, the Stated Clerk, shall serve as staff support without vote.

Section 1.24: Marriage and Freedom of Conscience (Added 09/08/2014)

The 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) issued an Authoritative Interpretation of the *Book of Order W-4.9000*, concerning marriage with respect to a teaching elder’s (or commissioned ruling elder’s) authority to perform same-gender marriages in jurisdictions where legally permitted. The Authoritative Interpretation reads, in part:

In no case shall any teaching elder’s conscience be bound to conduct any marriage service for any couple except by his or her understanding of the Word, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley, in covenant, commits itself to uphold all of its members’ rights of conscience as stated in the Authoritative Interpretation and detailed in *G-2.0105 (Freedom of Conscience)*, specifically vowing:

1. No teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder shall be compelled to officiate at any Service of Christian Marriage in which an individual’s understanding of scripture dictates that doing so is a violation of conscience.
2. The right of a session *not to permit* any Service of Christian Marriage on congregational property shall not be abridged when such permission, based on the session’s understanding of scripture, is a violation of conscience.
3. To extend these vows to the proposed changes to the *Book of Order W-4.9000* passed by the 221st General Assembly and awaiting ratification by presbyteries, should such ratification occur.

Section 1.25 Pastoral Counseling (Added 11/14/15)

General:

Pastoral counseling has always been part and parcel of a pastor's work and ministry, and always should be. Rudimentary counseling training is now part of nearly every mainline seminary curriculum. This policy is not intended to restrict the normal and appropriate pastoral concern and care that Teaching Elders routinely provide to members of their congregations. Rather it is intended to provide clear institutional structure and professional limitations to pastors who provide counseling beyond normal and routine pastoral care. There is a danger of pastors getting into counseling situations beyond their training of pastoral ministry.

The modern pastoral counseling movement takes very seriously the tremendous moral, ethical, professional, clinical, and legal responsibility borne by those who counsel others. The Committee on Ministry also takes seriously the responsibility of those who counsel others. This policy is offered, first and foremost, to protect those vulnerable persons who place their trust in a pastor's care as well as to guard the pastor, local church, and Presbytery from any damaging litigation.

1. Training/Certification:

Pastors shall not represent themselves as "counselors" or "therapists" if they do not have professional certified credentials. A few M.Div. or D.Min. counseling courses and/or some Clinical Pastoral Education training is not sufficient to make such a claim. No pastor within the Presbytery should be counseling for a fee without either being properly certified in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) (or be currently in an accredited counseling training program working towards AAPC certification). Pastors properly certified by another recognized counseling oversight organization (not the AAPC) must be approved for counseling practice beyond pastoral care by the Committee on Ministry.

2. Type of Counseling Offered:

Pastors serving local churches, unless specially certified with standard recognized counseling credentials, shall restrict their counseling to brief, supportive pastoral care rather than engaging in long-term or in-depth counseling or therapy with parishioners or persons in the community. Unless otherwise approved by the Committee on Ministry, it is the policy that if a person needs more than four (4) consecutive counseling sessions with a pastor, an outside professional referral is in order.

3. Fees:

It is not appropriate for any pastor to charge parishioners for counseling, and any charging of fees for counseling outside the congregation should be limited to those pastors appropriately certified to do professional counseling.

4. Setting:

Any pastor doing counseling in any church facilities should be seriously mindful of all the pitfalls such ecclesial settings represent (there are many). Any counseling setting should ensure confidentiality of the counselee. The place should be safe, secure, quiet and yet not too remote or isolated. All counseling shall be done where the normal routine of church functions will not be disruptive or compromise a professional setting.

5. Record Keeping:

All counseling records should be kept in a secure locked place which insures confidentiality. Any Teaching Elder doing counseling for a fee must keep up to date on what State of Ohio law requires regarding clinical record keeping.

6. Supervision:

No one is qualified to do ongoing counseling unless they have undergone significant professional and accredited supervision. Completing counseling course work without in-depth supervision is never enough. If a pastor is going to engage in ongoing counseling, ongoing supervision with a certified supervisor is a must, unless they have reached Diplomate status in AAPC, or the equivalent status in another oversight organization approved by COM.

7. Malpractice Insurance:

A pastor doing any counseling (but especially for a fee) shall be added onto the church's regular malpractice insurance policy via a special rider, and all clergy doing counseling for a fee must secure their own personal malpractice insurance policy.

8. Confidentiality:

All pastors doing counseling shall inform themselves of all state laws regarding confidentiality, and every pastor shall be familiar with what current state law requires in regard to what to do in the case of someone becoming suicidal/homicidal, and what to do if a pastor learns of physical, sexual, or child abuse.

9. Boundaries:

The issue of personal and professional boundaries is one of the most difficult issues with which any pastor wrestles, and it is further complicated and exacerbated when a pastor chooses to do in-depth counseling rather than supportive or consultative pastoral care with parishioners or friends in the community. For this reason, pastors serving churches shall keep a well-defined "wall of separation" between those who are parishioners and those who are counselees. Pastors should focus their pastoral work on pastoral care rather than in-depth, long term counseling.

10. Referrals:

All pastors in the Presbytery shall visit and acquaint themselves with the nearest local mental health center and have on file a current list of local professional therapists or pastoral counselors to whom they feel comfortable making referrals. Additionally, it would be helpful to have a current list of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings available as well as NA and AA's 24-hour hotline numbers.

11. Code of Ethics:

All Teaching Elders doing counseling for a fee must sign AAPC's Code of Ethics, with a copy being submitted to the local session and to the Committee on Ministry.

12. Clinical Backup:

All pastors counseling persons for a fee must secure professional therapeutic backup whenever they are out of town.

Section 1.26 Benefits for Pastoral Positions (Added 11/12/16)

General:

As the *Book of Order G-2.0804* provides for specific benefits in Terms of Call for installed pastors, it shall be the policy of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley to provide fair and just benefits for all persons serving in all pastoral positions whether installed or temporary.

Existing Pastoral Relationships:

For all Existing Pastoral Relationships in the Presbytery of the Miami Valley (in place as of November 12, 2016), provided benefits shall be continued as currently structured, until the position is vacated, or there is a substantive change in the Terms of Service

(i.e., hours worked per week). In such cases new benefits shall be negotiated by pastors and sessions in consultation with, and with approval by, the Committee on Ministry.

Installed Pastors:

In accordance with the Book of Order and Board of Pensions regulations, all installed pastors, whether full time or part-time, must be enrolled in the Pastor's Participation program of the BOP (formerly called the *Traditional Plan*).

Interim Pastoral Relationships (20 hours or more per week):

1. PCUSA teaching elder Interim Pastors (20 hours or more per week) shall be enrolled in the *Pastor's Participation* program of the BOP (formerly called the *Traditional Plan*). Should the interim pastor be honorably retired, then the applications of post-retirement (i.e., vacancy dues, etc.) benefits will apply.
2. Temporary members of presbytery who are ministers in other denominations serving as Interim Pastors (20 hours or more per week) may be enrolled in the *Pastor's Participation* program of the BOP or in the equivalent program of the Minister's denomination. This option may only be chosen by the minister.

Other Temporary Pastoral Relationships (20 hours or more per week):

1. PCUSA teaching elders serving in other Temporary Pastoral Relationships (i.e., Stated Supply) (20 or more hours per week) may be enrolled in the *Pastor's Participation* plan of the BOP or in the *Menu-based* program of the BOP, however, participation in the *Menu-based* plan must provide for equivalent benefits as in the *Pastor's Participation* plan (Pension, Death and Disability Insurance, PPO Medical Insurance).
2. Temporary members of presbytery who are ministers in other denominations serving in Temporary Pastoral Relationship (20 hours or more per week) may be enrolled in the *Pastor's Participation* program of the BOP, the *Menu-based* program of the BOP or in the equivalent program of the Minister's denomination. This option may only be chosen by the minister.
3. Specific circumstances may arise in which exceptions to the above requirements seem both practical and necessary (i.e., retired pastors; pastors with medical coverage provided through a spouse's employment, etc.). In those cases, such benefits will be determined in consultation with, and approval by, the Committee on Ministry.

Other Temporary Pastoral Relationships (fewer than 20 hours per week):

Benefits for all persons serving in Temporary Pastoral Relationships (fewer than 20 hours per week) will be negotiated with sessions, in consultation with, and approved by, the Committee on Ministry. Benefits for such positions may come from the *Menu-based*

program of the BOP or other non-denominational providers. Persons serving in non-installed positions that are fewer than 20 hours per week are not eligible for the *Pastor's Participation* program of the BOP.

Budget Planning:

During a search for a new pastor (20 hours or more per week) Pastor Nominating Committees, Interim Search Committees, and Sessions, for planning purposes shall set the costs of benefits using the rates in the *Pastor's Participation* program of the BOP. The Committee on Ministry will provide assistance as needed to determine such planning costs.

(End of Article I)

ARTICLE II PRACTICE

Section 2.01: Schedule of Meetings

The committee shall meet regularly on the last Tuesday of each month at a time and place to be determined by the committee. The committee may meet in special session as needed. All actions taken by the Committee on Ministry shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

Section 2.02: Denominational Guidance

All work of the Committee on Ministry shall be in conformance with the *Book of Order*. While general guidance for the work of committees on ministry is provided in the *Committee on Ministry Advisory Handbook*, prepared by the *Office of Vocation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, no recommendation in the *Advisory Handbook* shall be contrary to the policies of the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley.

Section 2.03: Pastoral Transition Guidance

Guidance for the work of the Committee on Ministry during times of pastoral transitions shall be provided by the *Pastoral Transitions Manual* prepared by the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. The *Pastoral Transitions Manual* shall be made available to interim pastors, sessions and search committees for congregations in times of pastoral transition.

Section 2.04: Pastoral Succession Process

As stated in Section 1.14 of *Committee on Ministry Policy and Practice* the Presbytery of the Miami Valley shall permit the exception to pastoral succession (*G- 2.0504c*) *only* as it pertains to *stated supply* and *organizing* pastors. Further, the Committee on Ministry

shall have the sole responsibility to assess the advisability of such exceptions and to make recommendations to the Presbytery for its action.

1. With respect to *stated supply* pastors, in order for any exception to be considered, the following criteria must be met:
 - a. The stated supply pastor relationship has been in effect a *minimum* of two years.
 - b. There must be evidence that the congregation can assume the full cost of an installed pastoral relationship for *three years*, providing the necessary financial data that might be requested by the Committee on Ministry for its assessment. In no case shall any *reorganizing* or *re-appropriation* of funds or allocations adversely affecting the program, mission and outreach of the congregation be understood by the Committee on Ministry as proof of financial accountability in this process.
2. Should these criteria be met, the session shall be guided through a sequential process by the Committee on Ministry:
 - a. The congregation shall meet to request the exception. This action must receive a *minimum* vote of 90%.
 - b. The Committee on Ministry shall meet with the session, to review the shared ministry; to establish three-year ministry goals; and to understand how this exception might affect the life of the congregation.
 - c. The session will prepare a brief report outlining these findings. This report will provide the basis for the Committee on Ministry's recommendation to the Presbytery.
 - d. The Presbytery will take action on the recommendation. The action must receive a three-fourths majority vote.
3. With respect to *organizing* pastors, the Committee on Ministry shall receive the counsel and recommendation of the administrative commission for the new church development, before recommending to Presbytery that a succession exception be granted. In accordance with *G-2.0504c*, a three-fourths majority approval by the Presbytery shall be required.

(End of Article II)

(End of Committee on Ministry Policy and Practice)