

Proposed Rationale Supporting the COM's Policy Recommendation to Presbytery Regarding Temporary Recognized Ministries

Our newly revised Book of Order grants significant authority to presbyteries to define those temporary ministry relationships that would best support the ministry and mission of their local congregations. With the exception of the new proposed designation, "Assistant Pastor," all the temporary ministry relationships the COM proposes that the presbytery recognize were previously recognized under our old Book of Order (and our existing presbytery guidelines.)

1. The COM proposes that a new temporary ministry relationship ("Assistant Pastor") be recognized. Unlike the relationship of that name that was phased out decades ago in favor of the Associate Pastor relationship, the COM defines this as a temporary, not a permanent pastoral relation, though one, like all temporary ministry relationships, that may be renewed with the approval of the Session and the COM.

2. The COM makes this recommendation to support the ministry of our mid- to large- size churches that may find the Associate Pastor relationship either too cumbersome or too costly in their current ministry context. The COM believes that authorizing the Assistant Pastor relationship will permit such congregations the nimbleness of establishing such (ordainable) relationships without electing an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee or undertaking a full and open search through the Church Leadership Connection (CLC), the call system of the PC(USA), and without requiring that Presbytery minimums be observed, a requirement that many of our congregations today may find onerous.

3. In making specific recommendations regarding the issue of succession (under what circumstances those engaged in temporary ministry relationships can succeed to installed pastorates in the churches they serve), the COM seeks to grant considerable flexibility to its respective congregations, while affirming both its own obligations of oversight and the Presbytery's right to grant final approval/disapproval with a super-majority vote (3/4) of its membership.

4. In previous *Books of Order*, permission was granted to certain temporary ministers, although not Interim Pastors, to succeed to installed pastorates in the churches in which they serve. The COM continues to acknowledge traditional understandings of Interim Ministry, in which the possibility of succession has been discouraged as undermining the goals and objectives of the interim ministry process. Nonetheless, the COM recommends that Interim Pastors be permitted to succeed to an installed designated pastor relationship in the very limited circumstance that the Presbytery concurs such succession is necessary to advance the local mission of the church.