

Expectations for Faithfulness in Ministry for Teaching Elders and Certified Christian Educators

(This is not a document from which we will bring any allegations to the Stated Clerk or Session. We seek to create a shared understanding of responsible behavior.)

In obedience to the Triune God, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, as members of the Presbytery of the James, we expect ourselves as teaching elders and certified Christian educators to affirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for our lives and ministries and to commit ourselves with God's help to fulfilling the following:

- I. We will strive to conduct our lives in a manner that is faithful to the gospel. Therefore, we will:**
 - A. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
 - B. Be honest and truthful in our relationships with others;
 - C. Be faithful, keeping the covenants we make;
 - D. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
 - E. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of our ministries, our commitments to family and other primary relationships, and our need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
 - F. Refrain from abusive or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
 - G. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
 - H. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

- II. We will strive to conduct our ministries in a manner that is faithful to the gospel. Therefore, we will:**
 - A. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with compassion and courage, speaking the truth in love;
 - B. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
 - C. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of the positions of responsibility we hold;
 - D. Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from exploiting relationships for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment or abuse, child abuse, and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
 - E. 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 or as otherwise required by applicable law;

- F. Recognize the limits of our own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
- G. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
- H. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise our ministries;
- I. Be faithful stewards of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to us;
- J. Observe appropriate limits for receiving honoraria, compensation from personal business endeavors and gifts or loans from persons other than family to the extent such receipts might compromise our ministries;
- K. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom we are accountable for our ministries;
- L. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors including mandatory sexual misconduct and boundary training or other training as required by the presbytery;
- M. Deal honorably with the record of our predecessors and upon leaving positions speak and act in ways that support the ministries of our successors;
- N. Provide services for and participate in ministry settings where we previously served only upon prior invitation of the moderator or appropriate council as defined in the *Book of Order*; and
- O. Consult with the Commission on Ministry in the presbyteries of our residence regarding our involvement in any ministry setting during retirement.

III. We will strive to be partners with others in the ministry and mission of the church universal in a manner that is faithful to the gospel. Therefore, we will:

- A. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic Church;
- B. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;
- C. Respect existing congregational relationships and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
- D. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, with respect for other faith traditions.

This document is adapted from the report submitted by the Special Committee on a Professional Code of Ethics to the 210th General Assembly (1998). The report, as approved, is titled "Life Together in the Community of Faith."

- A. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
- B. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and
- C. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).