

1 **PRESBYTERY DE CRISTO POLICY P1 OF COMMITMENT TO PURSUING**
2 **RECONCILIATION WITH MEMBER CHURCHES SEEKING GRACIOUS**
3 **DISMISSAL FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

4
5 **PROLOGUE**

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7 The mission of Presbytery de Cristo is to pray together, worship together and work together to
8 fulfill Christ's commission in the Southwest and beyond. Our journey of faith is lived out in the
9 unity found in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy
10 Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

11
12 We confess that as the Church of Jesus Christ “. . . *we are all members of one body*”
13 (Ephesians 4:25). In his correspondence with the Christians at Corinth, Paul describes the
14 Church of Jesus Christ as being like a human body, in which each part is distinct and important.
15 And so we take very seriously any discussion or desire by a particular congregation to seek
16 dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Throughout our history, Presbyterians have
17 honored but also struggled with the tension between unity and diversity. We preach and seek to
18 practice the idea of mutual forbearance, which we find in the Book of Order described in this
19 way:

20
21 . . . *we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of*
22 *good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty*
23 *both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward*
24 *each other (F-3.0105).*

25
26 Nevertheless, in the course of our common life together, there are occasions when a
27 congregation or a portion of a congregation believes that for its own good, health and integrity it
28 must end its relationship with the larger body. Such a decision must be entered into thoughtfully,
29 prayerfully and with profound trust and openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. Such decisions
30 are wrenching and painful for all concerned. This policy is offered for the Presbytery de Cristo
31 and its congregations with deep respect for the gravity of these situations.¹

32
33 Presbytery de Cristo is committed to pursuing reconciliation with pastors, sessions and
34 congregations who are seeking or considering dismissal from the denomination. Whether that
35 reconciliation takes the form of mutually accepted recommitment to the presbytery-
36 congregational-denominational relationship or dismissal to another Reformed body, Presbytery
37 de Cristo is committed to creating a gracious context and process in which the will of God is
38 sought for the life, ministry and calling of the particular congregation and the presbytery. We
39 pledge to respect and love one another in the Spirit of Christ. We seek to further the peace and
40 unity of the Church as we strive to discern Christ's will for us. Together, we are the body of
41 Christ; we are God's Church; we are the instruments of the Holy Spirit. Presbytery de Cristo
42 commits itself and invites all its congregations to pursue this understanding of reconciliation with
43 a graciousness befitting those who claim Jesus as Lord.

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¹This policy has in part been developed in response to the urging of the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that presbyteries develop a process to assist congregations and the presbytery at those
times when a congregation considers leaving the denomination and that such process reflect the principles of
consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, and openness and transparency.

- 45 In all matters relating to this subject, the following three questions are paramount:
46 a. Is God leading this particular congregation to seek dismissal from the
47 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or toward renewed and restored fellowship with the
48 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? And,
49
50 b. If God is leading this particular congregation to renewed and restored
51 fellowship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), how can that be accomplished
52 in a way that honors Jesus Christ and strengthens the congregation, Presbytery
53 de Cristo and the denomination? Or,
54
55 c. If God is leading this particular congregation to seek dismissal from the
56 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), how can that be accomplished in a way that
57 honors Jesus Christ and provides a gospel witness to the broader unity of the
58 Church of Jesus Christ?
59

60 The presbytery asks that any session actively considering dismissal from the denomination
61 covenant with the presbytery to enter into a defined process of mutual discernment through the
62 formation of a discernment team from the presbytery and the concerned congregation
63 (see "Discernment Procedure for Seeking Reconciliation"). Such discernment will require
64 significant commitment of prayer, time and energy by all parties, but a matter of this magnitude
65 deserves such attention. The presbytery and the congregation will benefit from the process
66 whatever the specific outcome may be.
67

68 **DISCERNMENT PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING RECONCILIATION**

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70 In gratitude to Jesus Christ, Presbytery de Cristo and its churches strive to be the people of God
71 in this time and place. Presbytery de Cristo may develop a plan that cares for and includes the
72 pastor(s) and all members of the congregation to ascertain the sense of a session/congregation
73 wishing to explore dismissal from Presbytery de Cristo and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
74 We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and it is our intent that God's grace might be manifest
75 throughout the following discernment process.
76

77 This discernment process may be difficult for the local session/congregation and the presbytery.
78 Paul said, "*Love does no harm to its neighbor*" (Romans 13:10b). We believe and trust that
79 Christ's love will shape and soften our rough edges as we share our various understandings of
80 God's truth. In the Church, we are bound to people with whom we do not always agree, but with
81 whom we are united by the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus. Our responsibility is to live out
82 that love with one another. We seek and expect of ourselves to have respectful conversations
83 in the discernment process that will bear witness to our shared faith in Jesus Christ.
84

85 The presbytery shall authorize the Commission on Ministry to recruit members for a
86 discernment team, as outlined in this document when notified by a session wishing to initiate
87 this discernment procedure with communication from the clerk of session to the Stated Clerk
88 and the moderator of the presbytery's Commission on Ministry or its successor². .
89

90 If presbytery leaders should become aware that a congregation is in serious disagreement with
91 the denomination prior to any such session action described in the previous paragraph,

²All subsequent references to the "Commission on Ministry" in this policy shall be understood to mean the "Commission on Ministry or its successor."

92 presbytery shall authorize the Commission on Ministry to offer visitation to the session and/or
93 congregation, as may be most appropriate. The purpose of the visitation is to provide an
94 opportunity for conversation between the parties with the goal of maintaining peace, unity and
95 healthy fellowship within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The session is not obliged to accept
96 the offer of visitation and, if it decides to not accept the offer, the session's or congregation's
97 privileges under this policy are neither compromised nor diminished.

98
99 The discernment team shall be composed of eight members: four members from the requesting
100 congregation and four members appointed by the moderator of the Commission on Ministry.
101 The four members from the congregation shall be appointed by the session, with two members
102 being ruling elders in active service on the session and two members from the greater
103 congregation. The team members appointed by the moderator of the Commission on Ministry
104 shall consist of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, of which two shall be in active service
105 on the Commission on Ministry and two from the greater presbytery.

106
107 The discernment team shall select its own moderator from outside the discernment team itself,
108 but this person may not be a member or teaching elder associated with the concerned
109 congregation nor a current member of the presbytery's Commission on Ministry or board of
110 trustees. The moderator is not a voting member of the discernment team. The sole purpose of
111 the moderator is to facilitate conversation within the discernment team and to ensure that each
112 team member has an equal and adequate chance to participate.

113
114 The moderator and moderator-elect of presbytery, the Stated Clerk, and the moderator of the
115 requesting church shall be *ex officio* members, with voice but without vote, of the discernment
116 team and may attend all meetings as available.

117
118 The Commission on Ministry having taken action to form a discernment team, "the purpose of
119 which is to address the concerns of 'Congregation X' that is exploring dismissal from the
120 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" At this point in the process, the report shall not disclose to the
121 presbytery the identity of the congregation seeking discernment.

122
123 The discernment team shall covenant to meet together for as much time, and as frequently as
124 necessary, in order to achieve consensus on a path forward. The discernment process may be
125 shortened or lengthened to meet the needs of a current set of circumstances.

126
127 The content of initial meetings of the discernment team shall include but not be limited to the
128 subjects outlined below. At the discretion of the discernment team, members of the concerned
129 congregation who are not serving on the discernment team may attend discernment team
130 meetings in order to listen to the content of the discussion. The discernment team may elect to
131 listen to feedback from any observing congregants. Topics and questions for discussion at initial
132 discernment team meetings shall include:

133
134 Extended introductions by each discernment team member, sharing their faith
135 stories and their understandings of the issues at stake in the difficulty between
136 and among the congregation, presbytery and denomination.

137
138 What are the reasons and major issues for the congregation's expressed desire
139 to separate from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

140
141 What are the foundational theological issues underlying the request for
142 dismissal?

143 How much common theological ground exists between and among the
144 congregation, presbytery and denomination?
145

146 Are the theological differences confined to certain specific issues or do the
147 differences run deeper to Christological, ecclesiological or other foundational
148 theological issues?
149

150 In what ways does the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) assist in
151 the discernment process and in the clarification of the reasons and issues
152 surrounding the request for dismissal?
153

154 What are the opportunities and avenues for reconciliation between and among
155 the congregation, presbytery and denomination?
156

157 In light of the foregoing topics of discussion, is reconciliation a realistic option
158 between and among the congregation, presbytery and denomination?
159

160 These initial discussions are predicated on the understanding that, consistent with the polity of
161 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial
162 Commission, a congregation can be dismissed, only to another Reformed body recognized by
163 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
164 A congregation cannot be dismissed to independent status.
165

166 Subsequent to these initial discussions, the discernment team shall make a written report and
167 recommendation to the presbytery's Committee on Ministry regarding reconciliation and report
168 such recommendations to the session.
169

170 The presbytery may recommend renewal and restoration of fellowship between and among the
171 congregation, presbytery and denomination if parties perceive that the congregation and the
172 presbytery are still called by God to serve together in covenant relationship. If confirmed by the
173 Commission on Ministry, the discernment team shall continue to work with the
174 session/congregation to craft a process to heal the broken relationship (see Appendix A). The
175 Commission on Ministry shall report this decision and actions to presbytery.
176

177 If, however, after completing initial discussions, the discernment team perceives, in consultation
178 with the Committee on Ministry, that God is no longer calling the congregation and presbytery to
179 serve together in covenant relationship and thereby, recommends dismissal to another
180 Reformed body. If confirmed by the Commission on Ministry and at the direction of the
181 presbytery, a seven (7) member Administrative Commission shall be appointed to continue to
182 work together to implement the process for seeking dismissal as outlined in Appendix B. The
183 members of the administrative Commission shall be selected by the Commission on Ministry,
184 Presbytery Pastor and Stated Clerk and include the members of the discernment team
185 appointed by the Commission on Ministry. The Commission on Ministry shall at this point in the
186 process disclose to the presbytery the identity of the congregation seeking dismissal.
187

188 Where a congregation or its leadership abandons these processes before completion, according
189 to G-3.0109b, G-3.0301, G-3.0303, and G-4.02, the presbytery may wish to invest this
190 Administrative Commission, as defined above, with the authority of original jurisdiction.
191 Presbytery de Cristo will answer any suit where a congregation seeking dismissal or that
192 congregation's leadership preemptively files suit in a civil court against the Presbytery.
193

194 These policies and procedures shall take effect immediately upon approval by the presbytery.

195 **APPENDIX A**

196

197 **Guidelines for Renewal and Restoration of Fellowship and**
198 **Recommitment to Presbytery/Congregational/Denominational Relationship**

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201 In the hope that God leads those involved to seek a restored and renewed fellowship and a
202 recommitment to the presbytery/congregational/denominational relationship, the following are
203 presented as minimal guidelines for marking and sealing that recommitment:

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205 1. Conduct a public service of worship and recommitment to shared fellowship and ministry,
206 with participation from the presbytery and the congregation. Representatives of the Office
207 of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also shall be invited to
208 participate in this service of worship and recommitment.

209

210 2. Share stories and testimonies from members of the discernment team and congregation
211 at the congregational and presbytery level (and beyond, if appropriate).

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213 3. In the hope of maintaining the bonds of love, peace and friendship, bless and commission
214 (to the extent possible) any minority that leaves the congregation.

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APPENDIX B

Process for Seeking Dismissal to Another Reformed Body

Upon completion of the process described in “Discernment Procedure for Seeking Reconciliation,” a session and congregation desiring to enter into the process of dismissal shall follow this procedure:

1. The session, together with the Administrative Commission, shall provide notice of a gathering of the congregation to hear and discuss the session’s proposal that the congregation be dismissed to another denomination, with the name of the proposed receiving denomination explicitly stated. The proposed receiving denomination shall be another Reformed denomination recognized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Advance notice for the gathering shall be by written letter to each “active member” (G-1.0402) of the congregation. The letter shall be mailed at least thirty days in advance of the gathering date. Public announcements shall be made at all worship services between the date of the notice and the congregational gathering. Reminders of the forthcoming congregational gathering may also be sent by Internet communication. Representatives of the presbytery (moderator and moderator-elect of presbytery, and board of trustees and the stated clerk) also shall be invited to the gathering, with the right to address the body gathered. To the extent technologically feasible, contemporaneous and simultaneous aural communication shall be provided for individuals not able to be present.
2. The congregational gathering will provide an opportunity for the session to explain and answer questions regarding its proposal, which shall have been distributed to the active members in the notice of the gathering described in Paragraph 1 of this Appendix B. All members present or participating by alternative technology as well as the representatives of the greater presbytery shall have the right to speak. When the discussion is concluded, the gathering shall be closed and no further action shall be taken at that time.
3. Subsequent to the congregational gathering, the Administrative Commission shall poll the active membership of the congregation by way of a mailed opinion survey or a series of small group gatherings for personal interviews/discussions, with the purpose of determining the opinions of the active members regarding the proposal of the session that the congregation be dismissed to another Reformed denomination. If less than 51 percent of the active members support the session’s proposal, further discussion of dismissal shall cease and the Commission on Ministry and the session shall renew efforts toward reconciliation.
4. If 51 percent or more of the Active Members support the session’s proposal to seek dismissal to another Reformed denomination, then the presbytery may authorize the Commission on Ministry to begin a process of prayerful and considerate negotiation with the session to determine the terms of dismissal through the Administrative Commission. A thorough written record of these negotiations shall be maintained in the files of the presbytery. The parties shall during these negotiations be mindful of the interests of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as expressed in the property trust clause (G-4.0203):

All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General

296 *Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a*
297 *corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether*
298 *the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or*
299 *retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and*
300 *benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*
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302 In addition, in negotiating the terms of dismissal, the parties shall be instructed by the decision
303 of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case
304 221-03, Wilbert Tom, David Hawbecker, and Thomas Conrad, Appellants (Complainants) v.
305 Presbytery of San Francisco, Appellee (Respondent), Frequently Asked Questions Gracious
306 Dismissal Policies After Tom vs PBY of San Francisco (GAPJC Remedial Case 221-03),
307 Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 221-08
308 Presbytery of New York City Appellant (Respondent) vs Various Appellees (Complainants) and
309 Advisory Opinion The Trust Clause and Gracious Separation: Implementing the Trust Clause for
310 the Unity of the Church, as well as by subsequent decisions of the Permanent Judicial
311 Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Authoritative Interpretations and other
312 decisions of the General Assembly. The negotiations shall make specific provision for the
313 continuing care by Presbytery de Cristo of any minority that does not want to depart from the
314 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with said provision including monetary and/or property
315 considerations as may be necessary. Finally, negotiation of the terms of dialogue and dismissal
316 shall give consideration to the economic value of the property to the presbytery and the
317 denomination.³ The determination of economic value may consider mitigating factors such as,
318 but not limited to, the financial health of the congregation, existing financial encumbrances on
319 the property, proportion of active members favoring departure from the Presbyterian Church
320 (U.S.A.), and any alternative plans by the presbytery for the property. The Presbytery acts as a
321 Trustee, based on the Trust Clause, which is an Express Trust in favor of the PC (U.S.A.) and
322 therefore must exercise due diligence which means individual assessment and validation of the
323 congregation's spiritual and financial needs and history. Any continued indebtedness
324 guaranteed by the presbytery, synod, or the PC (U.S.A.) will be seriously considered in the final
325 negotiations.

326
327 The discussion considerations listed above are based on the polity foundation that all
328 conversations and actions regarding issues of dismissal/dissolution shall be undertaken in
329 accordance with Book of Order, Book of Order Annotated Edition, and relevant Permanent
330 Judicial Commissions cases. The following summary of pertinent decisions shall be considered
331 when pursuing such conversations and actions.

- 332
333 A. Each case must be considered on a case-by-case basis. (PJC [2014, 221-03, Tom et al
334 v. Pby of San Francisco]).

³ In determining the property value, the means shall be dictated by the circumstances. Ideally, the best method of so determining is for there to be one or more appraisals of the property by (a) licensed or certified appraiser(s), but the Presbytery, through COM and Administrative Committee, may elect to use a less formal and quantitative method based on its knowledge and understanding of the specific property and the community in which it is situated. In simplest terms, the cost of determination should not be significant in terms of the probable value of the property. The ability to liquidate the value in the property and the liability and cost of maintaining the property and expenses of preparing the property for liquidation are proper economic considerations of the Presbytery, as well as the likelihood that the Presbytery would itself have future use for the property. The value of the property is what is agreed between a willing buyer and a willing seller; the departing congregation may be the only realistic "willing buyer," but such a determination should be accepted only after careful thought and discussion.

- 335 B. When dismissing a particular congregation within its geographic region, the presbytery
336 must fulfill its fiduciary duty under the Trust Clause (G-4.0203) to consider the interest of
337 the PC(USA) as a beneficiary of the property.
- 338 C. A full fiduciary review must be undertaken in all cases (PJC [2014, 221-03, Tom et al v.
339 Pby of San Francisco]).
- 340 D. There is no unilateral right of a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation to depart from
341 the denomination or its presbytery of membership. No authority is given to a
342 congregation or to session to vote to leave the denomination. (GA [218th, Item 4-20]; see
343 also PJC Sundquist v. Heartland, Remedial case 210-02, 2008. See G-1.0503 and G.-
344 3.02).
- 345 E. Presbyterian Churches may only be dismissed to another reformed denomination. The
346 other option that a congregation has which desires to leave the PC(USA) is to seek to be
347 dissolved. Those people may then reconstitute themselves as whatever type of
348 community that they desire. It may be possible for the Presbytery to then sell or rent
349 them the building at a negotiated rate, or otherwise work to seek the viability of that
350 congregation (G-4.0205). The procedure for dissolution in this type of case, shall be the
351 same as the procedure for dismissal in this policy. (This policy shall not guide
352 dissolutions of local congregations for other reasons.)
- 353 F. It is important for the presbytery to prayerfully discern and consider the mission of the
354 church in its district and of the whole church as it decides whether to dismiss or dissolve
355 a congregation (G-3.0301; G-3.0303a).
- 356 G. The full presbytery, meeting in plenary, has exclusive right to determine the final terms of
357 dismissal/dissolution (G-3.0301a).
- 358
359
- 360 5. The presbytery authorizes the Commission on Ministry to continuously consult with the
361 board of Trustees of Presbytery de Cristo and the Stated Clerk regarding the negotiations.
362 The presbytery may authorize the terms of dismissal agreed upon in this negotiation
363 process, subsequent to approval by the board of trustees of the Presbytery de Cristo of any
364 financial, monetary or property elements in the terms of dismissal, to be presented to the
365 session for their consideration and acceptance.
366
367
- 368 6. In order for the negotiation process (Paragraphs 4 and 5 of this Appendix B) to proceed in
369 an orderly fashion, session/congregation seeking dismissal shall provide to the presbytery
370 copies of session records (e.g., minutes and registers) and all executed documents
371 concerning the congregation's incorporation and bylaws, real property and other assets,
372 including, but not limited to, current deeds of trust, loan agreements, liens, property and
373 casualty insurance, and statements of tangible and intangible assets. Minutes of all
374 meetings recorded as a part of the discernment process and dismissal process shall be
375 recorded by the Clerk of Session and turned over to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery.
376 Representatives of the presbytery, in particular the presbytery's board of Trustees and
377 Stated Clerk, shall review these documents to determine if Presbytery de Cristo, Synod of
378 the Southwest or any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entity are named therein and/or are
379 exposed to any liability claims which exist or may arise under these documents.
380
- 381 7. A church being dismissed shall be required to pay off all loans or Church Mortgage Grants
382 outstanding to any entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or to have entered into a
383 schedule of payments or other agreement to satisfy or discharge all such loans, with said
384 schedule or agreement satisfactory to all parties. Matters of loans of the congregation held
385 by non-Presbyterian entities are the responsibility of the congregation, and the presbytery

- 386 shall be legally relieved of any responsibility related to such loans.
387
- 388 8. A church being dismissed shall be required to close out its financial and membership books
389 as of the official date of dismissal, and to file all reports required by the presbytery for
390 statistical record-keeping.
391
- 392 9. A church being dismissed shall be required to work with the Presbyterian Board of Pensions
393 to affect a clean break as of the time of dismissal.
394
- 395 10. A church being dismissed shall work closely and diligently with the presbytery to assist in
396 the transfer of membership of members who do not desire to remain with the congregation
397 approved for dismissal. Their protection and nurture shall be a matter of paramount concern
398 to both the departing congregation and the presbytery.
399
- 400 11. Prior to finalization of the dismissal process, presbytery's board of trustees shall retain legal
401 counsel to review the settlement agreement.
402
- 403 12. Whether a church that is approved for dismissal may take its name with it is subject to the
404 negotiation process described above in Paragraph 4 of this Appendix B, but in any case the
405 name of the departing congregation shall not include reference to the Presbyterian Church
406 (U.S.A.) or any of the variant forms of the denomination's name.
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- 409 13. The presbytery may, in conjunction with the congregation, hold a final worship service of
410 commissioning, to celebrate our common life in Jesus Christ and to pray for the
411 effectiveness and well-being of both the congregation and the presbytery. Those departing
412 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be commissioned by the presbytery to further their
413 work for the kingdom as they go forward in ministry. Members of presbytery's Commission
414 on Ministry and the session shall jointly plan the service, and all congregations of Presbytery
415 de Cristo shall be invited.
416
- 417 14. Report of the Administrative Commission
418 The Administrative Commission shall report to the presbytery, to include the following:
419 A. The results of its full fiduciary review.
420 B. What recommendations the Administrative Commission brings regarding the
421 request for dismissal/dissolution, based on the guidelines noted above.
422 C. What recommendations the Administrative Commission brings regarding (1) any
423 financial transactions to occur between the congregation, the presbytery, the
424 synod and/or all General Assembly entities, (2) what provisions will be made for
425 those members who wish to remain within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and
426 (3) what provision will be made for any Teaching Elders, Christian Educators,
427 inquirers, candidates, or Commissioned Ruling Elders associated with the
428 congregation who request to remain within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
429 D. An assessment from the Administrative Commission regarding how the
430 congregation's dismissal/dissolution may affect the larger mission and ministry of
431 the Presbytery.
432 E. If the Administrative Commission and the Session of the Church seeking
433 dismissal/dissolution have been unable to reach negotiated terms for
434 dismissal/dissolution, the Administrative Commission may recommend to
435 Presbytery approval for the Administrative Commission to assume original
436 jurisdiction of the Session in order to seek resolution of the situation. (G-3.0303)

437
438 It should be noted that renegotiation of the terms for dismissal/dissolution through use of
439 amendments from the floor of Presbytery, though allowed under our polity, would
440 invalidate months of work between the Administrative Commission and the congregation.
441 Therefore, the proposal shall be presented with the hope that everyone present will
442 acknowledge, understand and honor that the terms of dissolution/dismissal have been
443 reached by good faith negotiations between the Administrative Commission and the
444 congregation.

445
446 15. The Presbytery Vote

447 After hearing the report of the Administrative Commission, the Stated Clerk shall move the
448 following: "The _____ Presbyterian Church shall be dismissed to the following Reformed
449 body, _____, with the financial arrangements and other provisions listed as part of the
450 Report of the Administrative Commission;" OR "The _____ Presbyterian Church shall be
451 dissolved with the financial arrangements and other provisions listed as part of the Report
452 of the Administrative Commission." Following discussion and prayer, vote will be taken by
453 written ballot. The only choices shall be "Yes" or "No."

454
455 If two-thirds of those present and voting vote in favor of the motion, the congregation shall
456 be dismissed/dissolved in accordance with the financial transactions and other provisions
457 approved by the presbytery.

458
459 16. Actual Departure

460 The Administrative Commission and the Session shall execute a contract outlining the
461 entire terms of the departure, including the obligations of both the departing congregation
462 and the Presbytery.

463
464 A final worship service will be conducted in which representatives of the presbytery, the
465 congregation and the new Reformed denomination will meet, worship, and transfer the
466 congregation to its new denominational home or dissolve the congregation. As part of this
467 worship gathering, both representatives of the presbytery and the departing congregation
468 will offer prayers on each other's behalf, give thanks for the years of ministry shared
469 together, and share words of blessing even as we go separate ways.

470
471 17. There are some practical considerations to be addressed if a church is approved for
472 dismissal. These include but are not limited to:

- 473
474 a. The status of the pastor(s) currently called by the congregation: whether they shall
475 remain with the congregation and transfer their ministerial status to the new
476 denomination, or whether they choose to remain within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),
477 and thus need to look forward to seeking a new call (see Appendix C).
478
479 b. The status of any insurance policies held by the church with instrumentalities of the
480 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may need to be changed.
481
482 c. The tax status of a church as a 501(c)(3) non-profit tax-exempt organization may need
483 to be re-established under the new denomination to which the congregation is being
484 dismissed.
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486 d. The corporate status of the church may need to be revised.
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Appendix C

Status of Teaching Elders Associated with Congregations Being Dismissed

If a congregation is approved for dismissal from the presbytery and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a teaching elder serving the congregation may choose to continue serving the congregation or seek another call within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If a teaching elder requests transfer to the Reformed body to which the congregation is requesting dismissal, this transfer may be approved unless the teaching elder is the subject of a pending judicial or investigative action (D-10.0105). If the teaching elder chooses to stay within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the call to the congregation may be dissolved at the time of the congregation's dismissal and the teaching elder may be enrolled as an at-large member of presbytery, which will allow the teaching elder to continue to seek calls within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The teaching elder must make this choice at the time of the congregation's dismissal.

Certified Approved by 2/3 Majority
Stated Clerk

Adopted October 19, 2013
As Revised May 5, 2016 and Recertified 10/4/2019

539 Presbytery Meeting 4/23/2016
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