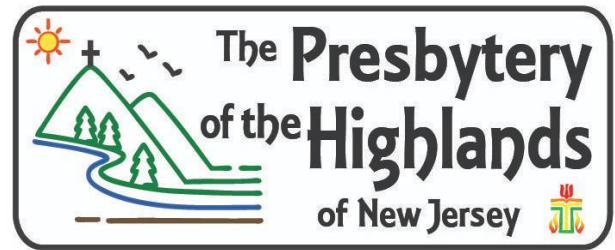


**LIFE TOGETHER IN THE
COMMUNITY OF FAITH:
Standards of Ethical Conduct for
Ordained Ministers of Word and
Sacrament in the Presbytery Church
(USA)**



As an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.

Section 1

I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my public ministry.

Therefore, I will:

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service.
2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others.
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows.
4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God.
5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my office of ministry, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal.
6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs.
7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

Section 2

I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry.

Therefore, I will:

1. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love.
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries.
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my office and positions of responsibility I hold.
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry.
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. 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.
7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights.
9. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise my ministry.
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me.
11. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family.
12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry.
13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors.
14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor.
15. Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by presbytery.
16. Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the presbytery and provide pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and
17. Consult with the committee on ministry in the presbytery of my residence regarding

my involvement in any ministry setting during my retirement.

Section 3

I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal.

Therefore, I will:

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
 2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry.
 3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
 4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.
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Addendum to Ethical Standards #11 – Clarification

Purpose:

In response to several inquiries, conflicts, and instances of confusion, the Commission on Ministry has added this addendum to clarify Ethical Standard #11. This clarification addresses appropriate limits for honoraria and other financial-related matters.

11. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family.

- Appropriate Honoraria for weddings, funerals, and similar occasions is \$500 or less.
- Loans from church members or other individuals, other than family members, are never appropriate.
- Gifts from individual church members valued at \$500 or more is not appropriate; gifts from individual church members to curry special favor and/or exert undue influence are never appropriate regardless of value; solicitation of gifts by ministers is never appropriate.
- Personal Business Endeavors, that are not normally associated with pastoral ministry, should not distract the pastor from his/her/their pastoral responsibilities nor target the congregation for financial support.

- Ethical practice is that pastors should not provide fee-based services for on-going counseling treatment or certified spiritual direction sessions to members of the church community. Pastors should refer individuals or couples to licensed professional counselors as soon as possible if on-going treatment is deemed necessary.
- It is not appropriate for a pastor to serve as an executor of a member's estate, in those cases where there are no other options, you must advise the Committee on Ministry.
- Any issues, concerns, or questions about the limits of this policy are to be directed to the COM liaison or presbytery leader or stated clerk.

Addendum and clarification to the Ethics Policy for the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey Section II, 4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry.

Our Presbyterian polity is built on a foundation of underlying trust. Our Book of Order states:

G-1.0102 The Fellowship of the Congregation The polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presupposes the fellowship of women, men, and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The organization rests on the fellowship and is not designed to work without trust and love.

Elected members and appointed resource staff persons, in their election or appointment, are trusted to uphold the expectations of the presbytery; the presbytery affirms its trust and expectation that each member will follow their conscience and act in accordance with the scripture, the Book of Order, and their best discernment of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Presbytery, therefore, instructs all persons called to ministry within the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey “to conduct all matters so that conflict of interest and exploitation are avoided.”¹

Members shall avoid conflicts of interest, potential conflicts of interest, and situations that give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest exists when a person in a decision-making process has an interest, direct or indirect, that could reasonably be expected to compromise their judgement, decisions, or actions. Any concern regarding conflict of interest may be directed to the moderator of the group to which they are involved, or the presbytery stated clerk.

It is proposed that “one should abstain from voting in any matter where s/he has direct personal interest not common to the rest of the assemblage.”²

¹ Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky Standards of Ethical Conduct, paragraph 2.

² Roberts Rules of Order, 45.4

Approved by Presbytery of the Highlands March 2024

CERTIFICATION OF ADHERENCE

THE POLICY ON STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT The Presbytery of the Highlands

I, (print name) _____

certify that I have received and read the Presbytery of the Highlands **Standards of Ethical Conduct** that I am aware of the standards of the Presbytery, and that I will make a sincere, good-faith effort to comply with this policy.

Signed

Date

Please return signed form to The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, 390 Route 10 West, Randolph, NJ 07869 or send scanned signed copy to office@highlandspresbyterynj.org