

**POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT
FOR “SEPARATION ETHICS POLICY”**

On August 13, 2016 (not yet adopted), the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks approved the “Separation Ethics Policy: When Pastor/CP and Congregation Say Good-bye” which explains the separation ethics to departing teaching elders/CPs and the sessions. A copy of the document is attached.

Unless otherwise indicated, this policy of the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks applies to all teaching elders/CPs currently in pastoral positions and all churches in the bounds of this Presbytery. It is essential that all who are subject to the Policy and its procedures read and understand the policy, acknowledge that they have done so, and formally acknowledge that they are bound by the Presbytery’s discipline in the matter.

Violations of this policy may result in the following:

- 1. Face to face meeting with COM moderator and COM church liaison
- 2. Face to face meeting with the entire COM
- 3. Action through judicial process

Please complete the form below and return to:

The Office of the Stated Clerk – Presbytery of Plains and Peaks
7257 W. 4th St. – Unit 4
Greeley, CO 80634

-----DETACH AND RETURN-----

_____ I have received a copy of the “Separation Ethics Policy: When Pastor/CP and Congregation Say Good-bye” as adopted by the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks in August of 2016. We have read it, we understand it, and we acknowledge that the policy and procedure applies to us. We also acknowledge that we are bound by the Presbytery’s discipline in the matter.

Violations of this policy may result in the following:

- 1. Face to face meeting with COM moderator and COM church liaison
- 2. Face to face meeting with the entire COM
- 3. Action through judicial process

Signature of Departing Teaching Elder/CP	Printed Name of Departing Teaching Elder/CP
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Date

Signature of Clerk of Session	Printed Name of Clerk of Session
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Date

Separation Ethics Policy: When Pastor/CP and Congregation Say Good-bye

Because the pastoral relationship can become very important and deeply personal to people in the congregation, the dissolution of any pastoral relationship may become a highly charged experience. It always means a change for the life of the congregation and the pastor involved. The Presbytery desires the best possible outcome for the future of the pastor and congregation, therefore, in light of the *Book of Order* and the best of our traditions, the following policy represents what the departing pastor/CP and the congregation will want to do as they face the situation of pastor and congregation saying, "good-bye."

The Committee on Ministry shall review this Presbytery of Plains and Peaks policy statement with the departing pastor/CP and with the session at the meeting at which the pastor announces his/her resignation or as soon as possible thereafter. A pastoral letter regarding this policy shall be shared by the session with the congregation within a week of the pastor's resignation and reviewed at the Congregation meeting when the dissolution of the relationship is approved.

Members of the congregation should remember that no matter how much they are attached to their former pastor, that person is no longer their pastor. Members should not call on him/her for any pastoral services such as officiating at weddings, conducting funerals, or administering baptisms, until twelve months after the next called pastoral leader (installed pastor, CP, or temporary supply) is in place. Care should always be made to confer with the current pastoral leader, who is the moderator of the Session, before inviting a former pastor to offer any type of pastoral services. This doesn't mean friendships must come to an end. The former pastor need not be excluded from the continuance of special friendships with members of the congregation as long as it does not disrupt the ministry of the interim or next pastoral leader (installed pastor, temporary supply, or CP).

The session should give support to the departing pastor/CP as well as assist in interpreting the meaning of the end of the pastoral relationship to the congregation. As a caring expression of closure, it is appropriate for the session to arrange for an occasion when the congregation and pastor/CP may formally say good-bye. The session will want to be sensitive to the feelings of loss that may be experienced by members of the congregation. The session and members should be slow to be critical of their departing pastor/CP or of other church members to the new pastor. Additional session leadership is often needed from the ruling elders during the transition period.

The departing pastor/CP, whether living nearby or far away, shall always make sure that parishioners know that the relationship with the congregation will come to an end. Continued pastoral functioning (counseling, calling, conducting weddings, funerals, or baptisms) is not appropriate. Nor is it appropriate for the departing pastor to render opinions or judgments about the ministry of the former church or new pastor to members of the congregation. Participation in the worship or fellowship life of the former congregation shall always be in accordance with the *Book of Order* and officiated by invitation only.

The former pastor/CP shall remain sensitive to the possible tensions which can arise from her/his presence in the former parish. This can lead to an unhealthy reminder of a pastoral relationship that no longer exists, increasing the temptation to live in the past and to attempt to involve the former pastor/CP in the current issues of the congregation. Because of this, the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks has adopted the following guidelines:

- The former pastor/CP shall not be involved in the life of the church during the ministry of the interim pastor and for twelve months after the arrival of the next pastoral leader (installed pastor, CP, or temporary supply).
- The former pastor/CP shall strive to be consistent when responding to requests to officiate at any services for members of their former congregation. Participation in any service for members of the pastor's former

congregation may only come at the invitation of the current pastoral leader (installed pastor, CP, or temporary supply).

- The former pastor/CP shall do no visitation or have any contact that could be interpreted in any way as pastoral with members of the former parish unless invited by current pastor. Be sure not to interfere with the life of the church through your social media presence.
- The session shall, whenever possible, counsel with the former pastor's/CP's family regarding their work and worship in the life of the congregation, or another congregation. The session may request the assistance of the COM in offering this counsel.

The interim pastor and newly installed pastor should remember that the ties that bind the members of a congregation to a former pastor have been forged through the unique experience of the pastorate and should recognize that the congregation's affection for the former pastor/CP as an individual does not prevent the development of bonds with the interim or next installed pastor. The interim and next installed pastor should refrain from any criticism of the former pastor/CP.

This policy pertains to former installed, temporary, interim, and CP relationships with churches in the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks and shall be monitored and enforced by the Committee on Ministry as authorized by the Presbytery.