

Policy for Exit Interviews

Pastoral Relations Committee

BACKGROUND: Pastoral vacancies are both a demanding and an opportune time. It seems to us that a church and a classis benefits if/when they gain an adequate understanding of the perspective of the departing pastor regarding their years of service and/or the circumstances of their leaving. Most of the time a pastor leaves a congregation and move to a new ministry without being asked to intentionally reflect on the 'highs and lows,' joys and sorrows, accomplishments and frustrations that they have shared together usually over the course of several years. When a pastor leaves, a small investment of time could produce a significant harvest toward future ministry.

PURPOSE: The Pastoral Relations Committee believes that to conduct an Exit Interview with each departing ordained minister could be a very beneficial experience for all parties. For the *Pastor*, an interview provides the opportunity to reflect, to celebrate, and if need be, to share genuine concerns regarding their own leadership and/or conduct, or regarding situations or circumstances in the life of the church. These comments are shared with representatives of the classis, who will then share those comments and/or concerns in summary form with a congregation's leadership. *Classis* benefits by receiving information that allows for more informed decisions on behalf of and together with a vacant congregation. The *congregation* benefits from receiving information that will assist, affirm, and possibly confront situations, circumstances, decisions, and/or structures in the life of the church.

When a Senior or Solo Pastor leaves a Zeeland Classis church, that person shall be interviewed by the appointed Classis Supervisor. An approved set of exit interview questions has been included with this policy statement. Information gained by the Supervisor will be reported in summary form to both the Classis Pastoral Relations Committee and the church's Executive Committee and/or Elder Board. The church's Supervisor conducts this interview based on the hope that the information gained will assist them in their work with that congregation.

When an ordained Staff Pastor of a church leaves a Zeeland Classis church, a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall interview that individual. Again, the person conducting the interview shall present a summary to both the Pastoral Relations Committee and to the church's Executive Committee and/or Elder Board.

All summary statements are to be shared with and approved by Pastoral Relations prior to their being shared with a congregation's leadership.

Approved by: Zeeland Classis Pastoral Relations Committee, 9/14/00

Approved by: Zeeland Classis, 10/17/00