

Supervisor Guidelines

Pastoral Relations Committee

BACKGROUND: The *BCO* mandates the following,

The classis shall appoint one of its ministers as supervisor of all proceedings of the consistory of a church without a minister or senior minister. The supervisor shall attend all formal meetings of the consistory, due notice having been given.

Part II, Art. 7, Sec. 3.

As noted consistently in our church order, a primary reason the classis provides/requires a Supervisor has to do with the three offices of the church (*Minister of the Word and Sacrament, Elder, and Deacon*). With the departure of an installed pastor, the office of Minister and Sacrament is thereby missing in that congregation. The classis purposefully enables a whole and complete ministry in the life of a vacant congregation by supplying this office on a temporary basis.

PURPOSE: A supervisor assists a congregation by providing knowledgeable support and wise counsel during the vacancy of its solo or senior pastor. The supervisor serves in the role of a liaison, advocating for and between congregation, consistory, and classis. The supervisor is responsible to help insure that an open and accountable relationship exists between the consistory and the congregation, and between the church and the classis, until such time as the pastoral vacancy is filled.

DURATION: Unless there are extenuating circumstances, a supervisor is expected to continue on in that role until such time as a new ordained pastor (solo or senior) is installed.

EXPECTATIONS:

- In churches that do not secure the services of a SIM (Specialized Interim Minister), the supervisor is to attend all regular and special consistory meetings. While scheduling may result in the occasional missed meeting, regular attendance is strongly urged and is considered to be very important.
- In churches that have secured the services of a SIM, the supervisors role may change, and yet their purpose does not. The supervisor (*and not the SIM*) is responsible to the church, and especially to classis, for wise and faithful oversight in the life of a vacant congregation. Attendance at consistory meetings in a church employing a SIM is not mandatory. However, especially in the event that the supervisor does not regularly attend consistory meetings, they are to maintain regular and ongoing contact with both the Vice President of Consistory and the SIM. The supervisor should be available and willing to attend any/all meetings of consistory to which his/her presence is requested, regardless of the presence of a SIM.
- In relation to the church's Search Committee ? a supervisor's primary task is initially to help that committee understand its task, its resources, and the process by which they will arrive at the profile of a desirable next senior pastor. Once the supervisor is assured that the Search Committee understands these things, their role in this process should diminish. It is NOT the responsibility of the supervisor to "pick" the next pastor for the congregation. A supervisor becomes overly involved in the search process at his/her own, and the congregations, peril. At

times the Search Committee may seek the supervisor's insights in evaluating a profile under consideration, and the supervisor should feel free to do so. These comments are made to help the supervisor understand that the Search Committee bears ultimate responsibility for their work and their recommendations. The supervisor is to help with process, resources, and goals. They are to be available and helpful, but must be careful not to "over-function" in this area of responsibility and relationship within the life of a vacant congregation.

- In relationship to classis, a supervisor should maintain regular verbal contact with the chair of the PRC. Written reports may be submitted as they are felt to be needed, or as a preferred means of reporting.
- The PRC works to organize (*and pay for*) a quarterly lunch for all supervisors. This is a time when you can "connect" with the PRC, as well as gain the help and wisdom of those colleagues who are also seeking to help and guide a vacant congregation. Attendance at these meetings is strongly encouraged.
- In consideration of the time and effort spent on behalf of the church, the supervisor shall respectfully receive remuneration for the services provided during his/her supervisory role. It is this committee's suggestion that the per-meeting stipend be approximately equivalent to a congregations Sunday morning pulpit supply compensation.

Approved by: Zeeland Classis Pastoral Relations Committee, 1/6/2000

Approved by: Zeeland Classis, 3/21/2000

Please also read and consider the accompanying document entitled, *Classis Supervisor* as it has been copied from the RCA Handbook for vacant congregations.

Classis Supervisor

Appointment and Role with the Consistory

"The classis shall appoint one of its ministers as supervisor of all proceedings of the consistory of a church without a minister or senior minister. The supervisor shall attend all formal meetings of the consistory, due notice having been given." Part II, Art. 7, Sec. 3

The classis has the sole authority to appoint the supervisor of an open congregation. While the classis can take into consideration requests by a congregation for a specific supervisor, the classis must appoint a minister who, from the classis point of view, has the gifts and abilities to be the supervisor of a church. A church doesn't need someone it "likes," the church needs someone who has gifts to help the congregation through this crucial period. The BCO requires the appointment of a supervisor who is a minister. Some classes appoint supervision teams consisting of a minister and a layperson.

The appointment of the supervisor should take place immediately upon the approval of the application for dissolution of pastoral relationship. It is important that the supervisor participate in consistory meetings immediately, and if possible, before the departing pastor has left.

The supervisor is usually the pastor of another congregation with full-time responsibilities. The consistory of that church should be informed of the additional service their pastor is rendering

and consent to this temporary arrangement. The supervisor will incur expenses in performing these extra services. Reimbursement should be made either by the classis or by the church receiving supervision.

The supervisor should make arrangements to meet as soon as possible with the consistory and its departing pastor. Important decisions by the consistory need to be made very quickly. The sooner an initial meeting occurs, the more likely the consistory, supervisor, and departing pastor will have time to discuss issues thoroughly and make informed decisions.

If the consistory determines that a specialized interim minister will serve the church during the pastoral vacancy, the responsibilities of the supervisor may be adjusted. It is essential that a clear division of responsibilities be worked out between the supervisor and the specialized interim minister, with the approval of the consistory.

(Classis Supervisor as copied from the RCA Handbook for vacant congregations.)