

## **Southern Ohio Synod Pastoral Ethics**

The events surrounding the resignation of a Pastor from a congregation, and the move to a new place of ministry are often difficult. Some studies say that feelings of grief, sorrow, hostility often occur in both the pastor and her/his family and in the congregation as the process of separation moves along to acceptance and well-wishing. It is understandable and needs to be worked through.

However, it is necessary that official pastoral relationships conclude with the effective date of resignation. This means that the pastor must make clear that she/he will not be able to conduct any official pastoral acts (weddings, funerals, etc.) in the congregation during the vacancy without the invitation and approval of the interim pastor, and when a new pastor is called, without his/her approval.

It is also necessary that pastors leaving congregations for new ministries understand that the synod staff will be working with the congregation to assess the strengths of the congregation and its program and to evaluate the kinds of abilities and skills needed in a new pastor to continue the congregation's growth and development. The synod staff will be recommending candidates to the Call Committee on the basis of this work, as well as the departing pastor's analysis of the congregation's needs and their own perceptions and experience.

It is very important that the departing pastor resists the request of the members for suggestions about possible pastors, and refrains from evaluating the candidates suggested by the synod. The synod does not expect that the Call Committee or others in the congregations will be in contact with the previous pastor or others to discuss the process of ministry plans. The synod staff members will be grateful for any suggestions made directly by the previous pastor to the synod staff member.

- S14.11            Each congregations of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking steps leading to the extending a call to a prospective pastor.
- S14.11.01        The call process shall be under the supervision of the bishop.
- S.14.14            Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial function therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.
- S.14.15            The parochial reports of each congregation shall be kept in a separate book, which shall remain its property. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his/her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:
  - a. Installation in another field of labor, or
  - b. The issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.
- S.14.16            The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
  - a. installation in another field of labor,
  - b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.
- S.14.17            During service to a congregation, a vice pastor shall have the right and duties of a regularly called pastor. The vice pastor may delegate the same in part to a vice pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The vice pastor and any ordained ministers who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the vice pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible are in order.