**Presbytery of Arkansas**

**Guidance Regarding Additional Compensation**

**To Pastors upon Dissolution of the Pastoral Call**

The *Book of Order* guidance for the dissolution of a pastoral call can be found in G-2.0901-G-2.0903. The *Book of Order* is clear that the final dissolution of the call is made by the Presbytery, but the dissolution may be initiated by the pastor, the Session, the congregation/Session, or the Presbytery. In an effort to take seriously the care of pastors when a call comes to an end, this document addresses what times, if any, additional compensation beyond the terms of call may be appropriate and offers suggested guidance as decisions are made for both the care of the pastor and the congregation.

*Normally* when the dissolution of the call is **initiated by the pastor** (for reasons of taking another call, retirement, leaving the ministry, transferring to another denomination, etc.), no additional compensation beyond the terms of call is paid to the pastor.

There are times when the **session/congregation initiates the end of the pastoral relationship.** These times may include the need for a reduction in work force and financial capability of the congregation, the pastor’s illness or incapacitation, or a mutual understanding with pastor, session and congregation, among other reasons. The session/congregation, with the help and approval of the Presbytery, may prayerfully consider some additional compensation beyond the terms of the call in order to assist the pastor in the continuance of their ministry and to support the pastor and the pastor’s family as they move forward.

Unless otherwise detailed in a formal severance agreement at the beginning of a call, *normally* the amount of additional compensation will be a minimum of one month and a maximum of six months of effective salary, including pension, medical and death/disability but not to include reimbursable accounts (auto books, study leave, etc). Unused vacation within the year (but not study leave) may be offered. ~~Wisely, the agreement may include the length of time that the pastor has served the congregation so that a longer term pastor would receive more compensation, particularly if reasons of ill health or congregational circumstances make continued full-time pastoral work impossible.~~ A suggested consideration ~~for a pastor who has served the church for 1-3 years is 2 months of effective salary, including pension, medical and death/disability, and above 4 years of service from 2-6 months of effective salary, including pension, medical and death/disability.~~  for compensation is one month’s pay for each year served (up to six years).

In all deliberations about additional compensation there should be a written and signed document which includes:

Reasons (which may be simply mutual agreement) for the dissolution

Terms of the dissolution (amount of salary to be paid, housing arrangements, vacation to

be paid)

Pension/medical to be paid, any special financial arrangements

The time and date of separation (when ministry duties end, date for congregational

meeting, date for removal of personal property)

Other agreed upon ‘terms’ ~~should~~  could include:

Waiver for right to pursue legal action (unless the agreement is not fulfilled)

All benefits will be discontinued when the pastor receives another call or other full

or equal employment.

Both the pastor and members of the congregation and Presbytery are encouraged

to take care in the sharing of information regarding the dissolution,

speaking with respect for the pastor and for the congregation.

Normally the additional compensation will be paid monthly and not in a lump

sum.

In the event that a pastor is dismissed for cause such as clearly demonstrated and **documented** unsatisfactory performance, abuse or misconduct, misappropriation in the care of church property or funds, or criminal conduct, ordinarily no additional compensation will be paid, but care should be taken for the pastor’s family’s well-being.

Normally the dissolution of the call will be initiated by the pastor or session/congregation; however, through the work of the COM, the Presbytery may call and conduct a congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship. Any agreement for additional compensation ~~should~~ may reflect the guidelines above.

**Presbytery of Arkansas**

~~February~~ 2022, March 2022