

Proposal A:

#6 CONFLICT INTERVENTION POLICY
Charleston Atlantic Presbytery

I. Purpose

The Charleston Atlantic Presbytery (CAP) Committee on Ministry (COM) has responsibility according to the Form of Government (*Book of Order, G-3.0307*) for promoting the peace and harmony of the church and to assist congregations and pastors in the prevention of destructive conflict. Disagreement is a universal experience and can be both normal and healthy. However, when a session, pastor, or associate pastor communicates in writing to COM the need for assistance in resolving a conflict, dissatisfaction, or a difficult situation, COM shall evaluate the issues and determine appropriate conflict intervention. COM shall use as guidance the Form of Government (*Book of Order, G-3.0307*), the General Assembly *Committee on Ministry Advisory Handbook*, and other Presbytery-approved policies.

II. Procedure

In evaluating the issues, COM shall consider at least the following options in developing an action plan for dealing with the difficulties:

- A. Appointing a liaison team (at least 2 persons) from COM to consult with the parties involved.
- B. Recruiting the assistance of a person skilled in conflict management to consult with the parties involved.
- C. Looking, listening, and learning about the situation with particular attention to the systemic character of the congregation and its lay and professional leadership and making recommendations for strengthening healthy functioning as well as for dealing with its conflicts.

III. Pastoral Care

The COM will oversee pastoral care during this period for all parties in the conflict: Session, pastor, other church staff, and church members.

IV. Possible Action

If the concerned parties are unable to reach a resolution of the conflict based upon its findings, the COM shall take action which may include the following:

- A. The appointment of an Administrative Commission to replace the Session as provided by the Form of Government (*Book of Order, G-3.0303e*).
- B. The calling of a congregational meeting to consider dissolution of the pastoral relationship using the following procedure:
 - 1. In preparation for calling a congregational meeting to consider dissolution, a severance agreement may be prepared, which shall be a written document, including all costs and benefits, as negotiated by the Session, minister, and COM. It is to be understood that neither the congregation nor CAP is under any obligation to make any severance payments to a departing minister even if the congregation or CAP initiates the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Any recommendation to the congregation to offer severance payments to a departing minister shall be at the discretion of the

Session and COM.

- a. An agreement normally shall provide severance payments for no more than three months if the pastoral relationship has been less than five years;
 - b. An agreement normally shall provide severance payments for no more than six months if the pastoral relationship has been more than five years;
 - c. The severance agreement shall be satisfied at the time specified or when the minister begins a new call or position, whichever comes first.
2. A congregational meeting may be called according to requirements of the Form of Government (*Book of Order, G-3.0105*) for considering a dissolution. The clerk of Session shall provide a current list of the active members of the congregation as defined in the Form of Government (*Book of Order, G-1.0402*), which shall determine the right to vote on the issues before the congregation.
 3. The moderator and clerk shall attest to the presence of a quorum of the active members following the call to order and prayer.
 4. A member of Session shall make the motion regarding dissolution and any proposed severance agreement.
 5. The motion regarding dissolution cannot be divided to allow a vote on the dissolution and a separate vote on any proposed severance agreement.
 6. A motion to make the result of a divided vote unanimous shall be out of order.
 7. A motion that adds comments of any kind to the record of the meeting shall be out of order.

V. Follow Up

After a conflict, especially where dissolution has occurred, the COM will oversee care for the congregation and its leadership, such as the following:

- A. Working with “Afterpastors” and/or Interim ministers who may be skilled in helping a congregation recover from conflict.
- B. Caring for the minister and the minister’s family who have been involved in the conflict, through counseling and vocational guidance.

(Adopted Oct. 2, 2010)