

SEPARATION ETHICS POLICY PRESBYTERY OF WINNEBAGO

For Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation

Approved August 2007

The life of every congregation is punctuated by the coming and going of pastors; and the professional life of most pastors is punctuated by several changes in positions. For both the congregation and the pastor, it is important for these transitions to take place in as healthy a manner as possible.

Pastors and congregations form unique, personal bonds and relationships during their times of ministry together. When a pastoral relationship is dissolved or ended, it is understandable that the pastor and his/her former parishioners would like to stay in touch and continue the relationship they have enjoyed. However, doing so makes it more difficult for congregations to begin forming new bonds and relationships with their new pastor.

Therefore, the Presbytery of Winnebago rejects any pastoral activities which invade another teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder's call without a specific invitation from that minister, including returning to a former calling body for pastoral services. It is affirmed that this applies to all members of Winnebago Presbytery, including interim pastors, commissioned ruling elders, and student pastors.

"After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session." (G-2.0905)

The Presbytery opposes any fostering of informal relationships in congregations in which a former pastor has served, which, in the perceptions of the current pastor, session, or the Presbytery harm the ministry of the current pastor or pastors. This is particularly applicable to social media/on-line interaction. The departing pastor should exercise discipline in order to find ways to remove undue social media visibility.

See COM Procedures for implementation and forms.