

Brethren Benefit Trust Retirement Readiness Seminar
Clergy Ethics in Retirement Presentation
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Resources for Clergy Retirement Ethics

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Statement, “Guidelines for Ministerial Service and Membership in a Former Parish” from 2008, available at:

<https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2018/09/guidelines-former-parish.pdf>

Ecumenical Resources for Clergy in Retirement:

- 50 Ways to Improve Pastoral Transitions – This resource is available from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary and can be accessed here:
<https://www.churchleadership.com/50-ways/50-ways-to-improve-pastoral-transitions-2/>
- Closing a Pastoral Ministry – This resource from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) dates from 2003, includes a wealth of helpful resources, and is available here:
https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/06162723/Closing_A_Pastoral_Ministry.pdf
- Ethics for Retiring Pastors and Those Replacing Them – Originating with the Ministers Council, an organization within the American Baptist Churches USA, this resource is available at:
<http://ministerscouncil.com/resources/best/ETHICS-FOR-RETIRING-PASTORS.pdf>
- Ethical Guidelines for Ministers Departing from Congregations is a resource from the Maine United Church of Christ and has special mention of the complexities of departing ministers and social media practices. Dating from 2015, this resource can be found here:
<https://www.maineucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Ethical-Guidelines-for-Ministers-Departing-from-Congregations-MESA.pdf>
- Sample Retired Pastor Covenant – this sample comes from the Southern Ohio/Kentucky district – see the document on the following page

RETIRED PASTOR'S COVENANT WITH THE _____ CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN INVOLVING SERVING IN A LEADERSHIP POSITION

As a retired pastor and previous pastor of the _____ Church of the Brethren and currently an active member, the following is a covenant that I am proposing in order to enter into a Leadership position with the _____ Church of the Brethren.

It is important that the current Pastor, _____, be the pastor in all ministry issues of the church to insure the health of the congregation.

As a retired pastor, I am still accountable to the Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders as adopted by Annual Conference July 2008. The Code contains three areas of ethical Integrity:

- 1. Integrity of the Ministerial Life**
- 2. Integrity of the Ministerial Call**
- 3. Integrity of the Ministerial Relationship (Fiduciary Responsibility)**

The following taken from the Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders is part of the content of **Integrity of the Ministerial Call** which concerns retired pastors.ⁱ

2 n. I acknowledge that education is a lifelong process, and will seek out opportunities to continue to grow spiritually and in ministry skills.

2 o. I will honor the ministry of clergy colleagues in our denomination and in the larger Christian community, striving to work with them in a collegial manner....I will only perform ministerial services, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, anointing, pastoral counseling, and critical pastoral care, in another congregation at the request of the current pastor and thus build up the ministry and mission of the body of Christ in that place.

2 p. I will honor the ministry of pastors in my former parishes. It is inappropriate to be involved in the pastoral ministry of a congregation after leaving it or upon retirement, or to perform ministerial services, or to cultivate such relationships with former parishioners, if it hinders the ministry of the congregation and pastor. I will only perform ministerial services, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, anointing,

pastoral counseling, and critical pastoral care at the request of the current pastor.

2 q. Whenever serving in a category of ministerial leadership other than pastoral or congregational ministry (i.e., chaplain, professor, denominational leader, retired, etc.), I will honor the ministry of my pastor and congregation by being aware of my informal authority. I will not exert undue influence in the internal workings of my congregation.

2 r. In the event of a complaint against me, I will participate in the denominational process for dealing with complaints of ministerial misconduct.”

If this covenant is accepted by the congregation through the Leadership Team, I look forward to leading the _____ team for the 20__–20__ term.

My leadership will be in line with the position description for the _____ team leader as found in the _____ (congregations) Church of the Brethren polity manual.

The _____ Ministry team position description includes the following duties:

Other ministries may include:

Current Pastor

Leadership Team Chair

Moderator

Retired Pastor/Serving in this capacity:

A copy of this document will be kept in the church office and a copy will be sent to the _____ District Executive/Ministry Commission.

ⁱ Section C. pg. 6-7 of Ethics in Ministry Relations paper. Accessed 10/17/2016 from <http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/documents/ethics-in-ministry-relations.pdf>