

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina Guidelines for Congregations Considering A Request to Presbytery to be Dismissed

1. The Congregation shall consider the Biblical imperatives to unity in these passages: John 17: 21; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:4-6, 15-16.
2. Individual members, including officers (deacons, elders and ministers) may, at any time, unite with other Reformed denominations following provisions in the Book of Order – (BOO: G-10.0102)
3. Congregations may be dismissed by Presbytery only to another Reformed denomination recognized by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly (PCUSA).
4. Congregations considering a request to be so dismissed, shall follow these steps:
 - a. The Session shall meet with representatives from the Committee on Ministry. (BOO: G-11.0500)
 - b. The Session shall call a Congregational meeting to be held no earlier than February 2007. Due notice shall be given orally from the pulpit at regular church services on two successive Sundays, the first of which shall be at least ten days prior to the meeting. Prior notice shall be given in the parish newsletter or bulletin. At least 25% of the active members of the Congregation shall be present. Representatives appointed by Presbytery (the Committee on Ministry -COM- and Presbytery staff acting on its behalf) shall be present throughout and shall have the right to speak. The question to be discussed is “Shall the _____ Presbyterian Church request dismissal to another Reformed body?”

Ample time shall be provided for both speakers wanting dismissal and those wanting to stay with the PCUSA.

No type of vote for any purpose shall be taken at this meeting.
 - c. The Session – no sooner than three months and no later than six months after the first meeting described above – may call a second Congregational meeting. Due notice shall be mailed to all members of the Congregation at least thirty days prior to the meeting, and shall be given orally from the pulpit at regular church services on two successive Sundays, the first of which shall be at least ten days prior to the meeting.

At least 50% of the active members shall be present.

Representatives appointed by Presbytery (COM and staff acting on its behalf) shall be present throughout and shall have the right to speak.

The question to be discussed is “Shall the _____ Presbyterian Church request Presbytery to dismiss it to this Reformed body: _____?”

Ample time shall be provided for both speakers wanting dismissal and those wanting to stay with the PCUSA.

After discussion and prayer, a secret written ballot shall be taken on this question, the only choices being “Request dismissal” or “Do NOT request dismissal.”

If three-quarters of those active members present and voting vote to request dismissal, the request shall go to Presbytery.

If any member, present and voting, contests the regularity of the second meeting, he or she shall send the details of the allegation to the Stated Clerk of Presbytery, who shall convene the Permanent Judicial Commission to render a decision.

- d. At the meeting of Presbytery to consider a request for dismissal, the Presbytery shall
- Hear from representatives from the Congregation in favor of dismissal;
 - Hear from representatives of those wishing to remain in the PCUSA, reserving to Presbytery the right to determine “the true church” (BOO: G-8.0600)
 - Hear from the representatives appointed by Presbytery (COM and staff) who were present at the second Congregational meeting, and who may also recommend a decision to Presbytery;
 - Be informed of any financial contributions to this Congregation by the Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly;
 - Be informed what provisions will be made for those members who wish to remain in the PCUSA and for any Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Christian Educators or Commissioned Lay Pastors associated with the Congregation;
 - Be informed how the Congregation’s dismissal would affect the mission and ministry of the Church in this Presbytery.

After discussion and prayer, the Presbytery shall vote by written ballot on this question, “Shall the _____ Presbyterian Church be dismissed to this Reformed body: _____?,” the only choices being “Yes” or “No.” If three-quarters of those commissioners present and voting vote in favor of dismissal, that shall be the action of Presbytery.

- e. If the Presbytery approved dismissing a Congregation to another Reformed body, that Congregation may also petition Presbytery to dismiss it with all or some of its property. If so requested, Presbytery shall (at the same or the next Presbytery meeting)
- Hear from representatives from the Congregation in favor of the petition;
 - Receive a recommended decision from a task force (that shall include some with financial expertise) appointed by the chairs of the Coordinating Council and the Committee on Ministry and the General Presbyter, detailing appropriate financial terms in the light of the needs of the Congregation, those wishing to continue in the PCUSA, and the overall mission of Presbytery.

After discussion and prayer, the Presbytery shall vote by written ballot on this question: “Shall the _____ Presbyterian Church be dismissed to this Reformed body: _____, with these financial arrangements for its property:

 _____.

The only choices shall be “Yes” or “No.” If three-quarters of those present and voting vote in favor, the Congregation shall be dismissed with the approved financial arrangements for its property, provided that if the Congregation is not still a member of the specified Reformed body at any time within ten years, the dismissed property shall revert back to Presbytery.

5. These guidelines shall be reviewed by the COM and the Presbytery before the end of January 2009.