

FLINT RIVER PRESBYTERY CHURCH DISMISSAL POLICY

The Church of Jesus Christ is one church. "The unity of the church is a gift of its Lord and finds expression in its faithfulness to the mission to which Christ calls it. The church is a fellowship of believers which seeks the enlargement of the circle of faith to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone." BOO G-4.0201 "There is one body and one Spirit....one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:4&5

As Presbyterians, we adhere to a connectional system of government. It is our desire and prayer that all of the churches of Flint River Presbytery remain in Flint River Presbytery regardless of any decision or controversy in our denomination. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the former Presbyterian Church U.S., and some civil courts have established that all property (real and personal) of a specific church is held in trust for the Presbyterian Church. (See Chapter 8 of the PCUSA constitution and Chapter 6 of the PCUS constitution in effect at the time of reunion.)

Flint River Presbytery will consider requests for dismissal to another Reformed church on a case by case basis and **may** choose to grant some or all of the property held in trust to the departing particular congregation. The process and agreements required by this policy are **pre conditions** for such consideration. No dismissal to independent status will be considered, and churches that choose to become independent or to not meet these pre conditions will be dissolved by Flint River Presbytery

If a congregation desires to consider being dismissed to another Reformed body, the Session shall call a congregational meeting to debate this question. "Shall the (Name) _____ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) request dismissal to another Reformed body of its choice?" The Clerk of Session shall notify the Stated Clerk of Flint River Presbytery 10 days in advance of the date and time of this called congregational meeting. All members on the active roll of the church must be notified in writing of the meeting and its purpose at least 10 days in advance. The quorum for this meeting will be at least one third of the active membership and the congregation must vote approval by a two thirds majority of those present and voting to continue the process.

The secretary of the congregational meeting must notify the Stated Clerk of Flint River Presbytery of the decision to continue the process for dismissal and the results of the vote. The Presbytery shall determine the powers to delegate to an administrative commission for oversight of the church requesting dismissal but shall not preclude any party to be heard by the whole Presbytery.

The members desiring to be dismissed shall determine the terms of admission to the Reformed body to which they desire to join and secure a conditional acceptance agreement for presentation to both the congregation and Flint River Presbytery. This action must be reported to the Presbytery Stated Clerk.

A second congregational meeting will be held no earlier than six months and no later than nine months after the initial vote for reconsideration of the dismissal question. All members on the active roll of the church must be notified in writing of the meeting and its purpose at least 10 days in advance. The quorum of the second meeting will be at least one third of the active membership of the congregation. The second meeting shall be moderated by a Presbytery member designated by Council. The moderator shall require a roll call vote and record the division by name. The results of this vote will be used as one factor in determining the Presbytery's action.

Any members of the congregation who vote to remain in Flint River Presbytery will be given care and consideration in accordance with the Book of Order.

The departing church member group must agree to pay -a lump sum equal to the church's average annual pledge to presbytery for the preceding five (5) years, in order that the impact on the mission of Flint River Presbytery may be minimized.

The departing church member group must agree to repay any funds received from Flint River Presbytery, the Synod of South Atlantic, or the General Assembly during the previous ten (10) years.

There shall be a financial analysis of the value of all property held by the departing church; and after considering the interests of the PC(USA), and the property as a tool for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world, an agreement shall be negotiated between the Administrative Commission and the departing church as to consideration for that interest. This consideration shall be reported to the presbytery prior to the vote to dismiss.¹

The congregation of the departing church shall not sell, transfer, or otherwise dispose of any property to any entity outside the PCUSA during this process or within the preceding three years of initiating this process without obtaining the permission of Flint River Presbytery.

The departing church shall agree not to contest the actions of the Presbytery during the process except through the Rules of Discipline, and if the Presbytery grants property to the departing church member group they, or the entity admitting them, shall agree not to dispute the Flint River Presbytery decisions in any civil action.

**The pre conditions stated above are necessary for dismissal request consideration but should not be considered as sufficient to provide dismissal with any right to property. A major consideration will be the impact on the future mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church USA in the local area. The presbytery shall make the decision about dismissal or dissolution and the disposition of all property in each separate case after careful consideration of all the circumstances.
(G-11.0103i and G-8.0600).**

Adopted August 26, 2006
¹Amended November 13, 2012