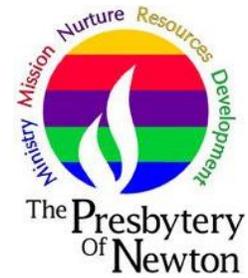


# Questions and Answers about Retirement in the Presbytery of Newton



- **When is the right time to tell my congregation I am going to retire? How much notice should I give?**
  - If you are near retirement age they are probably already wondering when you will announce or have asked you, so you should plan on having some sort of answer. According to the Board of Pensions publications, 4 – 6 months before retirement you should notify the Presbytery leader and COM Liaison. At least 3 months before you retire, you should seek approval from the congregation and Presbytery.
- **When should I contact the Board of Pensions about my retirement?**
  - The Board of Pensions needs a minimum of 3 months to process your retirement application.
- **Is there a mandatory retirement age?**
  - If you are part of the Board of Pensions you can receive your full pension at 65. (see Board of Pensions publication- *The Pension Plan: Benefits through the Stages of Life*) You are not required to retire at that age. We strongly recommend you attend the Board of Pensions retirement seminar before you decide about your retirement date.
- **When is the right time to attend a Board of Pensions retirement seminar/workshop?**
  - Plan on attending your first retirement seminar when you are about 10 years from retirement. You will learn a lot and be overwhelmed. The next time should be when you are 5 to 3 years away. Some people go a third time when they are months from retirement. There is a lot of information to absorb, so the Board of Pensions leaders recommend attending multiple times. Please don't wait to attend for the first time just before your retirement.
- **What is Pastor Emeritus?**
  - "Pastor Emeritus" is a title granted by a church to show honor and to thank their retiring pastor for years of service. Interestingly, "emeritus" is Latin for someone who has fulfilled his or her required commitment. The Pastor Emeritus has no function or role in the congregation after retirement. The session recommends to the congregation that a retiring or former pastor be granted the title of

Pastor Emeritus. The clerk of the session may report this action to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. The Presbytery does not take any action for approval or disapproval on "pastor emeritus"

- **What is Honorably Retired?**

- *G-2.0503 c Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age or physical or mental disability. When the pastor requests retirement, the COM is authorized by the presbytery to act on that request. The COM, in consultation with the retiring pastor, plan for a time at the presbytery meeting to recognize the service of the pastor. Following the approval of the COM, the pastor will be listed as Honorably Retired (HR).*

- **Can I still work in the church after I retire?**

- You can still work in the church after you retire, just not the church from which you retired or any other former congregations.

- **Can I still do funerals – weddings – baptisms after I retire?**

- You can, but not at your former churches or for former members of your congregations.

- **Why do I have to "stay away" or "disengage" from the church?**

- To disengage, according to the Board of Pensions, is to remove oneself from a position of influence in the church or a position from which one is leaving, in order to allow the new leadership to become established with no interference. Setting good boundaries in your relationships is critical to the future of the church or employing organization where you work. Leaving the church is a new adventure for both the pastor and family leaving and for the congregation looking forward to new leadership. Disengaging with the congregation is important not only for your new life and adventure but also for the congregation's journey.

- **Does staying away and disengaging from the church include coming back for special events such as weddings, funerals and baptisms?**

- When you leave you are no longer the pastor which means you do not do weddings, funerals or baptisms for members of the congregation. You do not help anyone, including yourself, by agreeing to do a wedding or funeral or baptism. It is your ethical obligation to let go of the pastor role and let the leadership of the congregation take the responsibility for providing for important events of the church. Do not say that you will come back upon invitation by the session. Say no to all requests. We know it is difficult but critically important for all parties to move forward.

- **How long should I stay away from my church?**
  - There is no one answer for the question. It is very important for the congregation to adjust and adapt to the new leadership and direction. It is your work to plan for your life after retirement which includes engaging in another worshipping congregation somewhere. Let the new leadership get established and moving in the new direction. Then let the new leadership contact you about ways or events for engaging with the congregation.
  
- **Does my spouse/family have to change his/her membership?**
  - Technically, the spouse and family do not have to change their membership. However, they should be planning with you about your retirement and how that affects them and their relationships in the church. Their role, formal and informal, will change upon your retirement. You should be considering how their roles will be affected by your retirement.
  
- **How binding is the Covenant of Separation agreement?**
  - The Covenant of Separation agreement is to assist both you and your congregation with the transition. It is hard for congregants to grasp that you will not be there for the baptism of a grandchild or the wedding of a daughter that you confirmed. Signing the agreement means that **you will step away** from the life of the congregation and let leadership move forward and let new leadership emerge. You confuse and may set back the progress of the transition by not following the agreement. It is **YOUR** responsibility to say no and to bless them in their upcoming event.