

*Presbytery of Redstone Policy on Severance Provisions for
Ministers of Word and Sacrament*

In striving to do the best work together as the “body of Christ,” we sometimes come to places of disagreement where the people who are bound together in covenantal relationship need to dissolve that relationship. Among the Great Ends of the Church are the “shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God,” and the “promotion of social righteousness.” [G-1.0200] Recognizing this, and in an effort to respond to the needs of pastors and congregations whose relationships may be terminated prematurely, the Committee on Ministry (hereafter the COM) of the Presbytery of Redstone (with the approval of the presbytery) sets the following policy on Severance pay for pastors who are terminated.

1. The Severance Package for a pastor will be negotiated among the Session, the pastor, and representatives from the Committee on Ministry. Ordinarily, the presbytery’s terms of severance will be three month’s compensation, not to exceed six month’s compensation. A pastor’s length of service to a congregation should be a consideration when negotiating terms of severance. A rate of one month of severance per year of service is an acceptable standard. In any case, the church could choose to exceed the presbytery’s provisions for terms of severance.
2. Severance will include base salary, housing, utilities, and social security offset. Any pastor who is terminated (and is unemployed) has medical insurance coverage for ninety days from the date of termination, which is provided by the Board of Pensions at no charge. Any additional medical coverage, continuing pension and/or terms of call will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. In all cases churches are responsible for remitting any benefit dues that are payable as a result of the severance payments.
3. Occasions for severance may include, but are not limited to, the following situations or circumstances: unresolvable conflict between a pastor and a congregation; physical and/or mental disabilities which affect continuing satisfactory performance of duties.
4. Severance negotiations will be conducted in partnership with representatives from the COM and the Executive Presbyter (all of whom will represent the presbytery). No congregational action or negotiated settlement on severance may be taken without the prior approval of the COM, since the Book of Order [G-11.0502I] assigns to the COM the responsibility to “serve as an instrument of presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between ministers and churches.”

“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.” [G-4.0201]

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