

1       **PRESBYTERY DE CRISTO POLICY OF COMMITMENT TO PURSUING**  
2       **RECONCILIATION WITH MEMBER CHURCHES SEEKING GRACIOUS**  
3       **DISMISSAL FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

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5       **PROLOGUE**

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7       The mission of Presbytery de Cristo is to pray together, worship together and work together to  
8       fulfill Christ's commission in the Southwest and beyond. Our journey of faith is lived out in the  
9       unity found in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy  
10      Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

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12      We confess that as the Church of Jesus Christ “. . . *we are all members of one body*” (Ephesians 4:25). In his correspondence with the Christians at Corinth, Paul describes the Church of Jesus Christ as being like a human body, in which each part is distinct and important. And so we take very seriously any discussion or desire by a particular congregation to seek dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Throughout our history, Presbyterians have honored but also struggled with the tension between unity and diversity. We preach and seek to practice the idea of mutual forbearance, which we find in the Book of Order described in this way:

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20      . . . *we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of*  
21      *good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty*  
22      *both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward*  
23      *each other (F-3.0105).*

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25      Nevertheless, in the course of our common life together, there are occasions when a congrega-  
26      tion or a portion of a congregation believes that for its own good, health and integrity it must end  
27      its relationship with the larger body. Such a decision must be entered into thoughtfully, prayer-  
28      fully and with profound trust and openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. Such decisions are  
29      wrenching and painful for all concerned. This policy is offered for the Presbytery de Cristo and  
30      its congregations with deep respect for the gravity of these situations.<sup>1</sup>

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32      Presbytery de Cristo is committed to pursuing reconciliation with pastors, sessions and congrega-  
33      tions who are seeking or considering dismissal from the denomination. Whether that recon-  
34      ciliation takes the form of mutually accepted recommitment to the presbytery-congregational-  
35      denominational relationship or dismissal to another Reformed body, Presbytery de Cristo is  
36      committed to creating a gracious context and process in which the will of God is sought for the  
37      life, ministry and calling of the particular congregation and the presbytery. We pledge to respect  
38      and love one another in the Spirit of Christ. We seek to further the peace and unity of the  
39      Church as we strive to discern Christ's will for us. Together, we are the body of Christ; we are  
40      God's Church; we are the instruments of the Holy Spirit. Presbytery de Cristo commits itself and  
41      invites all its congregations to pursue this understanding of reconciliation with a graciousness  
42      befitting those who claim Jesus as Lord.

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44      In all matters relating to this subject, the following three questions are paramount:

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<sup>1</sup>This policy has in part been developed in response to the urging of the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that presbyteries develop a process to assist congregations and the presbytery at those times when a congregation considers leaving the denomination and that such process reflect the principles of consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, and openness and transparency.

45 a. Is God leading this particular congregation to seek dismissal from the Pres-  
46 byterian Church (U.S.A.) or toward renewed and restored fellowship with the  
47 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? And,

48  
49 b. If God is leading this particular congregation to renewed and restored fellow-  
50 ship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), how can that be accomplished in a  
51 way that honors Jesus Christ and strengthens the congregation, Presbytery de  
52 Cristo and the denomination? Or,

53  
54 c. If God is leading this particular congregation to seek dismissal from the  
55 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), how can that be accomplished in a way that hon-  
56 ors Jesus Christ and provides a gospel witness to the broader unity of the  
57 Church of Jesus Christ?  
58

59 The presbytery asks that any session actively considering dismissal from the denomination cov-  
60 enant with the presbytery to enter into a defined process of mutual discernment through the  
61 formation of a discernment team from the presbytery and the concerned congregation  
62 (see "Discernment Procedure for Seeking Reconciliation"). Such discernment will require signifi-  
63 cant commitment of prayer, time and energy by all parties, but a matter of this magnitude de-  
64 serves such attention. The presbytery and the congregation will benefit from the process what-  
65 ever the specific outcome may be.

#### 66 67 **DISCERNMENT PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING RECONCILIATION**

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69 In gratitude to Jesus Christ, Presbytery de Cristo and its churches strive to be the people of God  
70 in this time and place. Presbytery de Cristo may develop a plan that cares for and includes the  
71 pastor(s) and all members of the congregation to ascertain the sense of a session/congregation  
72 wishing to explore dismissal from Presbytery de Cristo and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).  
73 We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and it is our intent that God's grace might be manifest  
74 throughout the following discernment process.

75  
76 This discernment process may be difficult for the local session/congregation and the presbytery.  
77 Paul said, "*Love does no harm to its neighbor*" (Romans 13:10b). We believe and trust that  
78 Christ's love will shape and soften our rough edges as we share our various understandings of  
79 God's truth. In the Church, we are bound to people with whom we do not always agree, but with  
80 whom we are united by the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus. Our responsibility is to live out  
81 that love with one another. We seek and expect of ourselves to have respectful conversations  
82 in the discernment process that will bear witness to our shared faith in Jesus Christ.

83  
84 The presbytery shall authorize the Commission on Ministry to recruit members for a discern-  
85 ment team, as outlined in this document when notified by a session wishing to initiate this dis-  
86 cernment procedure with communication from the clerk of session to the Stated Clerk and the  
87 moderator of the presbytery's Commission on Ministry or its successor<sup>2</sup>. .

88  
89 If presbytery leaders should become aware that a congregation is in serious disagreement with  
90 the denomination prior to any such session action described in the previous paragraph, presby-  
91 tery shall authorize the Commission on Ministry to offer visitation to the session and/or congre-

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<sup>2</sup>All subsequent references to the "Commission on Ministry" in this policy shall be understood to mean the "Commis-  
sion on Ministry or its successor."

92 gation, as may be most appropriate. The purpose of the visitation is to provide an opportunity for  
93 conversation between the parties with the goal of maintaining peace, unity and healthy fellow-  
94 ship within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The session is not obliged to accept the offer of  
95 visitation and, if it decides to not accept the offer, the session's or congregation's privileges un-  
96 der this policy are neither compromised nor diminished.  
97

98 The discernment team shall be composed of eight members: four members from the requesting  
99 congregation and four members appointed by the moderator of the Commission on Ministry.

100 The four members from the congregation shall be appointed by the session, with two members  
101 being ruling elders in active service on the session and two members from the greater congre-  
102 gation. The team members appointed by the moderator of the Commission on Ministry shall  
103 consist of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, of which two shall be in active service on  
104 the Commission on Ministry and two from the greater presbytery.  
105

106 The discernment team shall select its own moderator from outside the discernment team itself,  
107 but this person may not be a member or teaching elder associated with the concerned congre-  
108 gation nor a current member of the presbytery's Commission on Ministry or board of trustees.

109 The moderator is not a voting member of the discernment team. The sole purpose of the mod-  
110 erator is to facilitate conversation within the discernment team and to ensure that each team  
111 member has an equal and adequate chance to participate.  
112

113 The moderator and moderator-elect of presbytery, the Stated Clerk, and the moderator of the  
114 requesting church shall be *ex officio* members, with voice but without vote, of the discernment  
115 team and may attend all meetings as available.  
116

117 The Commission on Ministry having taken action to form a discernment team, "the purpose of  
118 which is to address the concerns of 'Congregation X' that is exploring dismissal from the Pres-  
119 byterian Church (U.S.A.);" At this point in the process, the report shall not disclose to the presby-  
120 tery the identity of the congregation seeking discernment.  
121

122 The discernment team shall covenant to meet together for as much time, and as frequently as  
123 necessary, in order to achieve consensus on a path forward. The discernment process may be  
124 shortened or lengthened to meet the needs of a current set of circumstances.  
125

126 The content of initial meetings of the discernment team shall include but not be limited to the  
127 subjects outlined below. At the discretion of the discernment team, members of the concerned  
128 congregation who are not serving on the discernment team may attend discernment team meet-  
129 ings in order to listen to the content of the discussion. The discernment team may elect to listen  
130 to feedback from any observing congregants. Topics and questions for discussion at initial dis-  
131 cernment team meetings shall include:  
132

133 Extended introductions by each discernment team member, sharing their faith  
134 stories and their understandings of the issues at stake in the difficulty between  
135 and among the congregation, presbytery and denomination.  
136

137 What are the reasons and major issues for the congregation's expressed desire  
138 to separate from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?  
139

140 What are the foundational theological issues underlying the request for dis-  
141 missal?  
142

142 How much common theological ground exists between and among the congrega-

143 tion, presbytery and denomination?  
144

145 Are the theological differences confined to certain specific issues or do the differ-  
146 ences run deeper to Christological, ecclesiological or other foundational theologi-  
147 cal issues?  
148

149 In what ways does the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) assist in  
150 the discernment process and in the clarification of the reasons and issues sur-  
151 rounding the request for dismissal?  
152

153 What are the opportunities and avenues for reconciliation between and among  
154 the congregation, presbytery and denomination?  
155

156 In light of the foregoing topics of discussion, is reconciliation a realistic option be-  
157 tween and among the congregation, presbytery and denomination?  
158

159 These initial discussions are predicated on the understanding that, consistent with the polity of  
160 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial  
161 Commission, a congregation can be dismissed, only to another Reformed body recognized by  
162 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.  
163 A congregation cannot be dismissed to independent status.  
164

165 Subsequent to these initial discussions, the discernment team shall make a written report and  
166 recommendation to the presbytery's Committee on Ministry regarding reconciliation and report  
167 such recommendations to the session.  
168

169 The presbytery may recommend renewal and restoration of fellowship between and among the  
170 congregation, presbytery and denomination if parties perceive that the congregation and the  
171 presbytery are still called by God to serve together in covenant relationship. If confirmed by the  
172 Commission on Ministry, the discernment team shall continue to work with the  
173 session/congregation to craft a process to heal the broken relationship (see Appendix A). The  
174 Commission on Ministry shall report this decision and actions to presbytery.  
175

176 If, however, after completing initial discussions, the discernment team perceives, in consultation  
177 with the Committee on Ministry, that God is no longer calling the congregation and presbytery to  
178 serve together in covenant relationship and thereby, recommends dismissal to another Re-  
179 formed body. If confirmed by the Commission on Ministry and at the direction of the presbytery,  
180 a seven (7) member Administrative Commission shall be appointed to continue to work together  
181 to implement the process for seeking dismissal as outlined in Appendix B. The members of the  
182 administrative Commission shall be selected by the Commission on Ministry, Presbytery Pastor  
183 and Stated Clerk and include the members of the discernment team appointed by the Commis-  
184 sion on Ministry. The Commission on Ministry shall at this point in the process disclose to the  
185 presbytery the identity of the congregation seeking dismissal.  
186

187 Where a congregation or its leadership abandons these processes before completion, according  
188 to G-3.0109b, G-3.0301, G-3.0303, and G-4.02, the presbytery may wish to invest this Adminis-  
189 trative Commission, as defined above, with the authority of original jurisdiction. Presbytery de  
190 Cristo will answer any suit where a congregation seeking dismissal or that congregation's lead-  
191 ership preemptively files suit in a civil court against the Presbytery.  
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193 These policies and procedures shall take effect immediately upon approval by the presbytery.

194 **APPENDIX A**

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**Guidelines for Renewal and Restoration of Fellowship and  
Recommitment to Presbytery/Congregational/Denominational Relationship**

In the hope that God leads those involved to seek a restored and renewed fellowship and a re-commitment to the presbytery/congregational/denominational relationship, the following are presented as minimal guidelines for marking and sealing that recommitment:

1. Conduct a public service of worship and recommitment to shared fellowship and ministry, with participation from the presbytery and the congregation. Representatives of the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also shall be invited to participate in this service of worship and recommitment.
2. Share stories and testimonies from members of the discernment team and congregation at the congregational and presbytery level (and beyond, if appropriate).
3. In the hope of maintaining the bonds of love, peace and friendship, bless and commission (to the extent possible) any minority that leaves the congregation.

245 **APPENDIX B**

246

247 **Process for Seeking Dismissal to Another Reformed Body**

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249 Upon completion of the process described in “Discernment Procedure for Seeking Reconcilia-  
250 tion,” a session and congregation desiring to enter into the process of dismissal shall follow this  
251 procedure:

252

253 1. The session, together with the Administrative Commission, shall provide notice of a gath-  
254 ering of the congregation to hear and discuss the session’s proposal that the congregation  
255 be dismissed to another denomination, with the name of the proposed receiving denomi-  
256 nation explicitly stated. The proposed receiving denomination shall be another Reformed  
257 denomination recognized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a member of the World  
258 Communion of Reformed Churches. Advance notice for the gathering shall be by written  
259 letter to each “active member” (G-1.0402) of the congregation. The letter shall be mailed  
260 at least thirty days in advance of the gathering date. Public announcements shall be made  
261 at all worship services between the date of the notice and the congregational gathering.  
262 Reminders of the forthcoming congregational gathering may also be sent by Internet  
263 communication. Representatives of the presbytery (moderator and moderator-elect of  
264 presbytery, and board of trustees and the stated clerk) also shall be invited to the gather-  
265 ing, with the right to address the body gathered. To the extent technologically feasible,  
266 contemporaneous and simultaneous aural communication shall be provided for individuals  
267 not able to be present.

268

269 2. The congregational gathering will provide an opportunity for the session to explain and an-  
270 swer questions regarding its proposal, which shall have been distributed to the active  
271 members in the notice of the gathering described in Paragraph 1 of this Appendix B.  
272 All members present or participating by alternative technology as well as the representa-  
273 tives of the greater presbytery shall have the right to speak. When the discussion is con-  
274 cluded, the gathering shall be closed and no further action shall be taken at that time.

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276 3. Subsequent to the congregational gathering, the Administrative Commission shall poll the  
277 active membership of the congregation by way of a mailed opinion survey or a series of  
278 small group gatherings for personal interviews/discussions, with the purpose of determin-  
279 ing the opinions of the active members regarding the proposal of the session that the con-  
280 gregation be dismissed to another Reformed denomination. If less than 51 percent of the  
281 active members support the session’s proposal, further discussion of dismissal shall cease  
282 and the Commission on Ministry and the session shall renew efforts toward reconciliation.

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285 4. If 51 percent or more of the Active Members support the session’s proposal to seek dis-  
286 missal to another Reformed denomination, then the presbytery may authorize the Com-  
287 mission on Ministry to begin a process of prayerful and considerate negotiation with the  
288 session to determine the terms of dismissal through the Administrative Commission. A  
289 thorough written record of these negotiations shall be maintained in the files of the presby-  
290 tery. The parties shall during these negotiations be mindful of the interests of the Presby-  
291 terian Church (U.S.A.) as expressed in the property trust clause (G-4.0203):

292

293 *All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General As-*  
294 *sembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a*  
295 *corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether*

296 *the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or re-*  
297 *tained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and*  
298 *benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*  
299

300 In addition, in negotiating the terms of dismissal, the parties shall be instructed by the decision  
301 of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case  
302 221-03, Wilbert Tom, David Hawbecker, and Thomas Conrad, Appellants (Complainants) v.  
303 Presbytery of San Francisco, Appellee (Respondent), Frequently Asked Questions Gracious  
304 Dismissal Policies After Tom vs PBY of San Francisco (GAPJC Remedial Case 221-03), Per-  
305 manantet Judicial Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 221-08  
306 Presbytery of New York City Appellant (Respondent) vs Various Appellees (Complainants) and  
307 Advisory Opinion The Trust Clause and Gracious Separation: Implementing the Trust Clause for  
308 the Unity of the Church, as well as by subsequent decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commis-  
309 sion of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Authoritative Interpretations and other decisions of  
310 the General Assembly. The negotiations shall make specific provision for the continuing care by  
311 Presbytery de Cristo of any minority that does not want to depart from the Presbyterian Church  
312 (U.S.A.), with said provision including monetary and/or property considerations as may be nec-  
313 essary. Finally, negotiation of the terms of dialogue and dismissal shall give consideration to the  
314 economic value of the property to the presbytery and the denomination.<sup>3</sup> The determination of  
315 economic value may consider mitigating factors such as, but not limited to, the financial health  
316 of the congregation, existing financial encumbrances on the property, proportion of active mem-  
317 bers favoring departure from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and any alternative plans by the  
318 presbytery for the property. The Presbytery acts as a Trustee, based on the Trust Clause, which  
319 is an Express Trust in favor of the PC (U.S.A.) and therefore must exercise due diligence which  
320 means individual assessment and validation of the congregation's spiritual and financial needs  
321 and history. Any continued indebtedness guaranteed by the presbytery, synod, or the PC  
322 (U.S.A.) will be seriously considered in the final negotiations.  
323

324 The discussion considerations listed above are based on the polity foundation that all conversa-  
325 tions and actions regarding issues of dismissal/dissolution shall be undertaken in accordance  
326 with Book of Order, Book of Order Annotated Edition, and relevant Permanent Judicial Commis-  
327 sions cases. The following summary of pertinent decisions shall be considered when pursuing  
328 such conversations and actions.  
329

- 330 A. Each case must be considered on a case-by-case basis. (PJC [2014, 221-03, Tom et al  
331 v. Pby of San Francisco]).  
332 B. When dismissing a particular congregation within its geographic region, the presbytery  
333 must fulfill its fiduciary duty under the Trust Clause (G-4.0203) to consider the interest of  
334 the PC(USA) as a beneficiary of the property.

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<sup>3</sup> In determining the property value, the means shall be dictated by the circumstances. Ideally, the best method of so determining is for there to be one or more appraisals of the property by (a) licensed or certified appraiser(s), but the Presbytery, through COM and Administrative Committee, may elect to use a less formal and quantitative method based on its knowledge and understanding of the specific property and the community in which it is situated. In simplest terms, the cost of determination should not be significant in terms of the probable value of the property. The ability to liquidate the value in the property and the liability and cost of maintaining the property and expenses of preparing the property for liquidation are proper economic considerations of the Presbytery, as well as the likelihood that the Presbytery would itself have future use for the property. The value of the property is what is agreed between a willing buyer and a willing seller; the departing congregation may be the only realistic "willing buyer," but such a determination should be accepted only after careful thought and discussion.

- 335 C. A full fiduciary review must be undertaken in all cases (PJC [2014, 221-03, Tom et al v.  
336 Pby of San Francisco]).
- 337 D. There is no unilateral right of a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation to depart from  
338 the denomination or its presbytery of membership. No authority is given to a congrega-  
339 tion or to session to vote to leave the denomination. (GA [218<sup>th</sup>, Item 4-20]; see also PJC  
340 Sundquist v. Heartland, Remedial case 210-02, 2008. See G-1.0503 and G.-3.02).
- 341 E. Presbyterian Churches may only be dismissed to another reformed denomination. The  
342 other option that a congregation has which desires to leave the PC(USA) is to seek to be  
343 dissolved. Those people may then reconstitute themselves as whatever type of com-  
344 munity that they desire. It may be possible for the Presbytery to then sell or rent them  
345 the building at a negotiated rate, or otherwise work to seek the viability of that congrega-  
346 tion (G-4.0205). The procedure for dissolution in this type of case, shall be the same as  
347 the procedure for dismissal in this policy. (This policy shall not guide dissolutions of local  
348 congregations for other reasons.)
- 349 F. It is important for the presbytery to prayerfully discern and consider the mission of the  
350 church in its district and of the whole church as it decides whether to dismiss or dissolve  
351 a congregation (G-3.0301; G-3.0303a).
- 352 G. The full presbytery, meeting in plenary, has exclusive right to determine the final terms of  
353 dismissal/dissolution (G-3.0301a).
- 354
- 355
- 356 5. The presbytery authorizes the Commission on Ministry to continuously consult with the  
357 board of Trustees of Presbytery de Cristo and the Stated Clerk regarding the negotiations.  
358 The presbytery may authorize the terms of dismissal agreed upon in this negotiation pro-  
359 cess, subsequent to approval by the board of trustees of the Presbytery de Cristo of any fi-  
360 nancial, monetary or property elements in the terms of dismissal, to be presented to the  
361 session for their consideration and acceptance.
- 362
- 363
- 364 6. In order for the negotiation process (Paragraphs 4 and 5 of this Appendix B) to proceed in  
365 an orderly fashion, session/congregation seeking dismissal shall provide to the presbytery  
366 copies of session records (e.g., minutes and registers) and all executed documents con-  
367 cerning the congregation's incorporation and bylaws, real property and other assets, includ-  
368 ing, but not limited to, current deeds of trust, loan agreements, liens, property and casualty  
369 insurance, and statements of tangible and intangible assets. Minutes of all meetings rec-  
370 orded as a part of the discernment process and dismissal process shall be recorded by the  
371 Clerk of Session and turned over to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery. Representatives of  
372 the presbytery, in particular the presbytery's board of Trustees and Stated Clerk, shall re-  
373 view these documents to determine if Presbytery de Cristo, Synod of the Southwest or any  
374 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entity are named therein and/or are exposed to any liability  
375 claims which exist or may arise under these documents.
- 376
- 377 7. A church being dismissed shall be required to pay off all loans or Church Mortgage Grants  
378 outstanding to any entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or to have entered into a  
379 schedule of payments or other agreement to satisfy or discharge all such loans, with said  
380 schedule or agreement satisfactory to all parties. Matters of loans of the congregation held  
381 by non-Presbyterian entities are the responsibility of the congregation, and the presbytery  
382 shall be legally relieved of any responsibility related to such loans.
- 383
- 384 8. A church being dismissed shall be required to close out its financial and membership books  
385 as of the official date of dismissal, and to file all reports required by the presbytery for statis-



386 tical record-keeping.

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388 9. A church being dismissed shall be required to work with the Presbyterian Board of Pensions  
389 to affect a clean break as of the time of dismissal.

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391 10. A church being dismissed shall work closely and diligently with the presbytery to assist in  
392 the transfer of membership of members who do not desire to remain with the congregation  
393 approved for dismissal. Their protection and nurture shall be a matter of paramount concern  
394 to both the departing congregation and the presbytery.

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396 11. Prior to finalization of the dismissal process, presbytery's board of trustees shall retain legal  
397 counsel to review the settlement agreement.

398

399 12. Whether a church that is approved for dismissal may take its name with it is subject to the  
400 negotiation process described above in Paragraph 4 of this Appendix B, but in any case the  
401 name of the departing congregation shall not include reference to the Presbyterian Church  
402 (U.S.A.) or any of the variant forms of the denomination's name.

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404

405 13. The presbytery may, in conjunction with the congregation, hold a final worship service of  
406 commissioning, to celebrate our common life in Jesus Christ and to pray for the effective-  
407 ness and well-being of both the congregation and the presbytery. Those departing the  
408 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be commissioned by the presbytery to further their work  
409 for the kingdom as they go forward in ministry. Members of presbytery's Commission on  
410 Ministry and the session shall jointly plan the service, and all congregations of Presbytery de  
411 Cristo shall be invited.

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413 14. Report of the Administrative Commission

414 The Administrative Commission shall report to the presbytery, to include the following:

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It should be noted that renegotiation of the terms for dismissal/dissolution through use of amendments from the floor of Presbytery, though allowed under our polity, would invalidate months of work between the Administrative Commission and the congregation.

437 Therefore, the proposal shall be presented with the hope that everyone present will  
438 acknowledge, understand and honor that the terms of dissolution/dismissal have been  
439 reached by good faith negotiations between the Administrative Commission and the  
440 congregation.

441  
442 15. The Presbytery Vote

443 After hearing the report of the Administrative Commission, the Stated Clerk shall move the  
444 following: "The \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church shall be dismissed to the following Reformed  
445 body, \_\_\_\_\_, with the financial arrangements and other provisions listed as part of the Re-  
446 port of the Administrative Commission;" OR "The \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church shall be dis-  
447 solved with the financial arrangements and other provisions listed as part of the Report of  
448 the Administrative Commission." Following discussion and prayer, vote will be taken by  
449 written ballot. The only choices shall be "Yes" or "No."

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451 If two-thirds of those present and voting vote in favor of the motion, the congregation shall  
452 be dismissed/dissolved in accordance with the financial transactions and other provisions  
453 approved by the presbytery.

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455 16. Actual Departure

456 The Administrative Commission and the Session shall execute a contract outlining the en-  
457 tire terms of the departure, including the obligations of both the departing congregation and  
458 the Presbytery.

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460 A final worship service will be conducted in which representatives of the presbytery, the  
461 congregation and the new Reformed denomination will meet, worship, and transfer the  
462 congregation to its new denominational home or dissolve the congregation. As part of this  
463 worship gathering, both representatives of the presbytery and the departing congregation  
464 will offer prayers on each other's behalf, give thanks for the years of ministry shared to-  
465 gether, and share words of blessing even as we go separate ways.

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467 17. There are some practical considerations to be addressed if a church is approved for dis-  
468 missal. These include but are not limited to:

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470 a. The status of the pastor(s) currently called by the congregation: whether they shall re-  
471 main with the congregation and transfer their ministerial status to the new denomination,  
472 or whether they choose to remain within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and thus  
473 need to look forward to seeking a new call (see Appendix C).

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475 b. The status of any insurance policies held by the church with instrumentalities of the  
476 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may need to be changed.

477  
478 c. The tax status of a church as a 501(c)(3) non-profit tax-exempt organization may need  
479 to be re-established under the new denomination to which the congregation is being  
480 dismissed.

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482 d. The corporate status of the church may need to be revised.

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488 **Appendix C**

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490 **Status of Teaching Elders Associated with Congregations Being Dismissed**

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492 If a congregation is approved for dismissal from the presbytery and the Presbyterian Church  
493 (U.S.A.), a teaching elder serving the congregation may choose to continue serving the congrega-  
494 tion or seek another call within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If a teaching elder requests  
495 transfer to the Reformed body to which the congregation is requesting dismissal, this transfer  
496 may be approved unless the teaching elder is the subject of a pending judicial or investigative  
497 action (D-10.0105). If the teaching elder chooses to stay within the Presbyterian Church  
498 (U.S.A.), the call to the congregation may be dissolved at the time of the congregation's dismiss-  
499 sal and the teaching elder may be enrolled as an at-large member of presbytery, which will al-  
500 low the teaching elder to continue to seek calls within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The  
501 teaching elder must make this choice at the time of the congregation's dismissal.

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533 Certified Approved by 2/3 Majority

534 Stated Clerk

535 Presbytery Meeting 4/23/2016

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