

Presbytery of Shenandoah
Committee on Pastoral Transition
Pulpit Supply Guidelines

...The session has responsibility and power to...provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include... providing for regular preaching of the Word by a minister of the Word and Sacrament or other person prepared and approved for the work... (Book of Order, G-3.0201a)

The Maintenance of Divine Worship is a fundamental responsibility of every Presbyterian Session, and the Presbytery is committed to supporting Sessions in this important task. When pastors take vacation or study leave, fall ill, have family emergencies, or leave to accept another Call, a session or worship committee is tasked with *filling the pulpit* – that is, finding someone to preach and/or lead worship. A variety of individuals are available to serve as pulpit supply:

- A Ruling Elder of your congregation
Ruling elders are called to nurture the common life of the people of God through their gifts of discernment and governance. They should also cultivate an ability to teach the Word when called upon to do so... (W-2.0303)
- An Honorably Retired Teaching Elder
- A Minister at Large, or Teaching Elder otherwise available
- A Candidate for Ministry
subject to the approval of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)
- Ruling Elders Authorized by presbytery, but not Commissioned to a congregation.

Because the preaching of the Word is central to our worship, special care should be taken when securing pulpit supply. The Presbytery carefully reviews candidates for its **Pulpit Supply List**, which includes Presbytery staff, members at large, retired ministers, Ruling Elders, candidates for ministry, and ministers from other presbyteries or corresponding denominations. It is *strongly recommended* that Sessions seek pulpit supply from this list, which is available on the presbytery website (www.shenpres.org).

THE PULPIT SUPPLY LIST

The Pulpit Supply list is administered by the Committee on Pastoral Transition (CPT), which approves qualified persons for inclusion. The list includes the following:

- The General Presbyter/Stated Clerk
- The Associate General Presbyter
- Ministers at Large, or Teaching Elders otherwise available, at their request
- Honorably Retired Teaching Elders, at their request
- Ruling Elders Authorized by the presbytery, but not Commissioned to a congregation
- Certified Christian Educators, at their request
- Ordained ministers from corresponding denominations, subject to recommendation and approval
- Ordained ministers from denominations not in correspondence, subject to recommendation, examination and approval
- Candidates for Ministry, subject to approval by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Each applicant for pulpit supply will fill out the attached form, which is available on the presbytery website (shenpres.org). In addition, applicants shall provide:

- A current PIF, resumé or Curriculum Vitae including formal education, occupation/employment, relevant gifts and skills.
- A brief statement of faith and personal faith journey.
- *For Ruling Elders:* a letter of endorsement from home church session.
- *For Candidates:* a letter of endorsement from Session of care, and an endorsement from the chair of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).
- A signed Sexual Misconduct Self Certification Form.
- Permission and information for a background/ reference check, paid for by Presbytery.

Applicants will be interviewed by a representative(s) of CPT to assess theology, understanding of Presbyterian polity, and reasons for wanting to be included on the Pulpit Supply List. After review and approval, the Preacher's name, address, phone number and email will be available in the restricted area of the presbytery website. If for some reason a Preacher does not want their information published in this way, it can be held by Presbytery staff, as well as the chair of CPT, to be shared as needed.

The Pulpit Supply List will be reviewed at each CPT meeting, and updated as needed. In addition, CPT shall conduct an annual review of the Pulpit Supply List at its January meeting. Renewal reminders will be sent annually on or about November 1, with replies expected by December 1. Failure to respond will mean deletion from the Pulpit Supply List.

GUIDELINES FOR SESSIONS

It is the responsibility of the session to make all arrangements with the pulpit supply well in advance of the date needed. The following information should be communicated:

- Location/directions, date, time of service(s).
- Contact information for bulletin preparation, and/or worship coordinator, music director.
- Deadline for bulletin information.
- Sample of a typical Order of Worship *i.e.*, a recent bulletin.
- Style of worship; formal/traditional, casual, contemporary, etc.
- Typical pastor attire; robe, coat & tie/dress, etc.
- Hymnal and Bible translation used in worship
- Is there a children's time? Is the preacher expected to lead it?
- Does the church typically follow the Revised Common Lectionary?
- How are announcements and prayer requests handled?
- Information about audio, visual equipment or requirements.
- Anything else to make the visitor feel comfortable in your church.

Presbytery recommends sessions offer an honorarium to anyone filling the pulpit, using the following schedule:

- For congregations under 100, a minimum of \$50.00, and \$25.00 for each additional service.
- For congregations of 100 or more members, a minimum of \$100.00, and \$75 for each additional service.
- In addition, the Session shall reimburse for mileage at the current IRS rate.
- If overnight lodging is required, motel and meals should be provided at the church's expense.

Rationale:

Supplying the pulpit involves a significant commitment of preparation time by the supply preacher. Estimates of the time spent for one supply preaching date range from 3/4 of a day to 1.5 days. It should also be pointed out that supplying the pulpit should not be viewed as a gradual way to work into a more permanent relationship with a particular church. Should a church find itself engaging a supply pastor **on a regular basis**, it is highly recommended that this be discussed with the Committee on Pastoral Transition.