

National Association of Congregational Christian Churches



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Minister Disclosure File Personal Code of Professional Practice for Ministers

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As a Christian minister I give my full assent to this code of professional life as a statement of my serious intent, and my awareness of the lines and directions that bind me to a congregation I will serve, with common concern, shared hopes, and loyalties. I will endeavor to conduct my life and ministry in accordance with the life and principles of Jesus Christ.

SELF

- Because the religious life is a growing life, I will respect and protect my own needs for spiritual growth, ethical integrity, and continuing education in order to deepen and strengthen myself and my ministry.
- I commit myself to honest work, believing that the honor of my profession begins with the honest use of my own mind, skills, and time
- I will try to understand my own weaknesses and strengths. Knowing my limits, I will not hesitate to seek help in discouragement and difficulty.
- I will sustain a respect for the ministry. Because my private life is woven into my practice of the ministry, I will refrain from private as well as public words or actions degrading to the ministry or destructive of congregational life.
- Because the demands of others upon me will be many and unceasing, I will try to keep especially aware of the rights and needs of my family and my relation to them as spouse, parent, and friend.

COLLEAGUES

- I will stand in a supportive relation to my colleagues and keep for them an open mind and heart.
- I will strictly respect confidences given me by colleagues and expect them to keep mine.
- I will not speak scornfully or in derogation of any colleague in public. In any private conversation critical of a colleague, I will speak responsibly and temperately.
- I will inform my colleague in advance of any public engagement I may accept in his or her church, which might bear upon local issues or policies. I will accept no request for my service in the office of the ministry within my colleague's congregation without his or her explicit invitation or permission.

- If I am to share the ministry of a church with (an) other minister(s), I will earnestly seek clear delineation of responsibility, accountability, and channels of communication before responsibilities are assumed. I will thereafter work in cooperation and consultation with them, taking care that changing roles and relations are renegotiated with clarity, respect, and honesty.
- If I am a member of a colleague's congregation, I will in all ways honor the priority of his or her call to the ministry of that congregation, and I will carefully shun inappropriate influence which other members may tend to yield to me. I will be generous toward a colleague who is a member of my congregation.

CONGREGATION

- I will uphold the practices of congregational polity, including the autonomy of the local church and the fellowship of the churches. If I come from a tradition other than the NACCC, I will complete the **NACCC Congregational History and Polity Seminar** within the first year of my ministry. I will contact the Dean of the Center for Congregational Leadership (bmauro@naccc.org or 800.262.1620 x12) to be placed on the notification list for the next opportunity. Throughout my ministry I will teach the history, meaning, and methods of congregational polity, recognizing informed and faithful adherence of these practices as the bond preserving and reforming our free corporate religious life.
- I will respect the traditions of my congregation, enriching and improving these in consultation with the members, finding ways to meet the challenges of church members who come from increasingly-diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.
- I will hold to a single standard of respect and help for all members of the church community of whatever age or position.
- I will respect absolutely the confidentiality of private communications of members.
- I will not invade the private and intimate bonds of others' lives, nor will I trespass on those bonds for my own advantage or need when they are disturbed. In any relationship of intimate confidentiality, I will not exploit the needs of another person for my own.
- I will exercise a responsible freedom of the pulpit with respect for all persons, including those who may disagree with me.
- I will encourage by my example an inclusive, loyal, generous, and critical church leadership.
- I will take responsibility for encouraging clear delineation of responsibility, accountability, and channels of communication for the minister(s) and other staff.
- I will take responsibility for encouraging adequate and sensible standards of financial and other support for my own ministry and the ministry of all church staff.
- Prior to sabbatical or other educational leaves, I will clearly negotiate a minimum amount of time to serve as minister to the congregation upon my return before making myself available as a candidate for another pulpit.
- I will inform the board of the congregation immediately when I have accepted a call to another position.

MOVEMENT AND ASSOCIATION

- I will share and support the concerns of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.
- I will encourage the growth of our congregations and the spread of the ideals of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches tradition and fellowship.
- I will participate and encourage lay participation in meetings and activities of our Association.
- I will encourage financial support of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and its associated programs.
- I will make myself a candidate for a pulpit only with serious intent.

COMMUNITY

- In word and deed I will live and speak in ways representing the best Congregational tradition and leadership in the larger community.
- I will maintain a prophetic pulpit, offering to the community religious and ethical leadership.
- I will encourage members' participation in efforts to solve community problems.
- I will offer sympathetic support to neighboring ministers of other religious bodies.

Name of Minister (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

NACCC Division for Ministry, 2009, originally adapted from the Code of Professional Practice of the Unitarian-Universalist Ministers' Association, 1985 version

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