

Statement of Faith by Rev Joseph Tagliaferre

1 I believe in God, who made the heavens and the earth. God made man and woman in
2 the image of God and desires a relationship with all humanity.

3 I believe in Jesus, Gods son, both human and divine. Jesus was the grace and love of
4 God personified in our world. If we believe in Jesus, our sins our forgiven through him,
5 and we have communion and fellowship with God. Jesus was raised from the dead and
6 thus provides for us the assurance that our relationship with God will continue throughout
7 eternity. Jesus spent his life on earth, living the will of God for his life, in the life he
8 lived; we see an example of how we should live.

9 The Holy Spirit is God's presence moving in the world today. The spirit works in the
10 hearts of the people of the world to provide a way to know God intimately in our spirits.
11 Those that believe in God find the Holy Spirit to be a comfort, and a source of strength
12 and assurance.

13 The church is the body of Christ on earth. The church is God's hands, feet, eyes and
14 ears in the world. The church is called to proclaim the good news of Christ and Gods
15 love. This is done in a variety of ways including but not totally inclusive by teaching,
16 worship, prayer and mission. When the church does these things it becomes the true
17 instrument of blessing to the world, but it is at its best work when reaching out to those in
18 need through mission work. In an every changing world the church is challenged to
19 remain relevant while maintaining the basic tenants of our historical roots.

20 The Bible is the inspired word of God, recorded so that we might understand the
21 history of our relationship with God and teaches us about the relationship between God
22 and humanity throughout the ages, and provides us with guidance for our daily lives.

1 **A Process for Discerning God's Will**
2 **In the Relationship Between**
3 **The Kiskiminetas Presbytery and Its Member Congregations**
4 **When Member Churches Seek Dismissal from the Presbyterian**
5 **Church (U.S.A.)**

6 **PREAMBLE**

7 Being a presbytery made up mostly of smaller congregations nestled in the rolling hills of
8 Western Pennsylvania, Kiskiminetas Presbytery is relational. When we gather, we like to talk,
9 we like to eat, we like to worship, and we like to support one another in mission and ministry in
10 Jesus' name. We know each other, and when we disagree, we do it agreeably. Withdrawal
11 from our corner of the communion of the saints is not the normal course of action.

12 These are not normal times, however, that we are living in. The church and the world
13 are changing in ways our forbearers in faith could never have imagined. Our congregations,
14 pastors, and members are dealing with issues inside and outside of ourselves which were not
15 issues for us a decade ago. The relational fabric of our life together in Christ is being pulled in
16 different directions. The prospect of change is frightening for some. Others are experiencing a
17 crisis of conscience. The threat of being torn apart is real for this portion of the Body of Christ.

18 In response to that threat, and to the changing landscape of the church and the world,
19 the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas offers what follows as a means of enacting reconciliation where
20 possible between the presbytery and its constituent congregations, and as a means of
21 facilitating gracious separation where efforts at reconciliation fail.

22 The Kiskiminetas Presbytery seeks to serve God by developing, encouraging,
23 supporting, and celebrating our common ministry given to us by Jesus Christ. Our work is best
24 accomplished in organic spiritual unity found in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of
25 God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (*2 Corinthians 13:14*).

26 We recognize that we live in a time when our unity in Christ is being tested and our
27 ability to work together in mission is being tried. We covenant that even in times of
28 disagreements and conflict we will seek to uphold one another, build up one another, respect
29 one another, and love one another, to the end that the mission of Christ be fulfilled. Together
30 we seek to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church, minimizing confrontations while we
31 seek to discern and follow the will of Christ.

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33 The Kiskiminetas Presbytery is committed to pursuing God's mission with pastors,
34 Sessions, and congregations who are seeking or considering dismissal from the denomination.
35 Whether God's mission takes the form of dismissal or mutually accepted recommitment to the
36 presbytery-congregational relationship, it is the will of this Presbytery to create a gracious
37 context and process in which the will of God is sought for the life, ministry, and calling of the

1 particular congregation. The Presbytery commits itself and invites all its congregations to pursue
2 a broad understanding of God's mission with a graciousness befitting those who claim Jesus as
3 Lord.

4 **Guiding Principles for Reconciliation and Gracious Dismissal**

5 The 218th General Assembly General Assembly (2008) expressed its will that
6 Presbyteries and Synods make available to lower governing bodies and local congregations a
7 process that exercises the responsibility and power "to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in
8 consultation with their members" (then BOO G-11.0103i) with *consistency, pastoral*
9 *responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, openness, and transparency*. This policy is an
10 attempt to accomplish these goals by observing the following principles:

- 11 1. Our goal in any disagreement is to seek gracious reconciliation through
12 compassionate, direct, open communication between representatives of
13 Presbytery and the session/members of a congregation that may feel
14 disenfranchised. If after the normal process and means of dialogue are exhausted
15 and dismissal is requested, the Presbytery will act in a pastoral, rather than an
16 adversarial role.
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- 18 2. As followers of Christ, respect for all parties is expected in a spirit of graciousness,
19 transparency, trust and openness. We recognize that Jesus is the Head of the
20 Church and Lord of the conscience and therefore seek to uphold the integrity of
21 each person's/congregation's conscience as shaped by Jesus Christ.
22
- 23 3. Our witness as the body of Christ is diminished and damaged when disagreements
24 become personal attacks, are dismissive of one another, and/or when civil litigation
25 is necessary. Therefore, we will seek to state the issues clearly, present facts and
26 convictions with humility, and avoid civil litigation when possible. Our desire is to
27 maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the ministry and mission of each
28 congregation and the Presbytery.
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- 30 4. Although the Book of Order sets out property rights, it is not the basis of our
31 spiritual unity. This Presbytery believes we can, in mutual regard and guided by
32 the Spirit, create greater wholeness in conversation with one another on issues of
33 property and assets.
34
- 35 5. As a Presbytery, we recognize that the Book of Order provides that congregations
36 may leave the Presbyterian Church (USA) in possession of their property. We
37 further recognize that under the Book of Order, a congregation has the right to
38 seek dismissal by the Presbytery through the action and request of its session. We
39 are reminded that the Presbytery is the only body empowered to approve a
40 congregation's dissolution, split or dismissal. We ask that all congregations act
41 with love, forbearance, dignity and discretion, should they find themselves led by
42 the Spirit of God to pursue dismissal.

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2 Pastoral care for elders, members and clergy of a church seeking dismissal will be a priority.
3 The best method for doing this will be determined by a joint commission of elders, members,
4 and clergy of a disaffected church and presbyters so assigned for this purpose.

5

6 The history of the church, from the beginning, has been a history of controversy. Men and
7 women of good will and sincere faith sometimes disagree. Paul and Barnabas had to separate
8 for a season in order to continue their respective ministries (*Acts 15:39*). The church of Jesus
9 Christ is divided into three great traditions: Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox. The Protestant
10 tradition is again divided into Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed (Presbyterian) and Anabaptist
11 communions. In recent generations, we have also witnessed the reuniting of bodies that were
12 once separated. God, in his wisdom, has permitted the church to grow through and in spite of
13 these actions.

14 In all matters relating to this subject, the following three questions will be deemed paramount:

- 15 a. Is God leading this particular congregation to seek dismissal from the
16 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or toward restoration of fellowship with the
17 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? And,
- 18 b. If God is leading this congregation to seek dismissal from the Presbyterian
19 Church (U.S.A.), how can that be accomplished in a way that honors Jesus
20 Christ and strengthens both the congregation and the Presbytery?
- 21 c. If God is leading this congregation toward restoration of fellowship with the
22 Presbyterian Church (USA), how can that be accomplished in a way that
23 honors Jesus Christ and strengthens both the congregation and the
24 Presbytery?

25 The Presbytery asks that any Session seeking or considering dismissal from the denomination
26 will covenant with the Presbytery to enter into a defined process of mutual discernment to
27 determine God's purpose. To seek God's will requires significant time and energy. We believe
28 that a matter of this magnitude deserves focused attention and prayer by the Presbytery and
29 local congregation whatever the specific outcome may be. This process should take no less
30 than four months and may take more than one year.

31 The Presbytery is committed to this process and covenants to avoid litigation wherever and
32 whenever possible. In fulfillment of Resolution 04-28 adopted by the 218th General Assembly,
33 we recognize that the exercise of the process to "divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in
34 consultation with their members" (former *Book of Order*, G-11.0103), if accomplished by
35 litigation, "is deadly to the cause of Christ ... and our witness to Christ in the world around us."
36 Therefore, we will carefully follow the principles of consistency, pastoral responsibility,
37 accountability, gracious witness, openness, and transparency.

1 Presbytery and the Session will work together to create a media plan, designating who will
2 provide information to the media from the Presbytery and the Session, and committing to work
3 in concert on such contacts in order to maintain a witness to Christ in the world. It is
4 recommended that neither party speak to the media until the process is completed and the
5 outcome is agreed. In a similar manner, all documents that may become part of the public
6 domain shall be developed together by the Discernment Team.

7 The Trust Clause (G-4.0203) is meant to reflect the church's organic unity as it fulfills "The
8 Great Ends of the Church", strengthening its ability to guide its member churches into their
9 witness to the broader community. Because the trust clause is meant as a means of witness to
10 our unity in the covenant of common mission, it is incumbent upon the Presbytery to act in a
11 pastoral manner rather than in an adversarial manner to its member churches in regard to its
12 provisions.

13 **PROCEDURE**

14 A Session wishing to initiate this procedure shall put the matter to a vote at a special Session
15 meeting called for this purpose. If the majority of the Session votes to initiate the discernment
16 procedure, the Clerk of Session shall contact the Presbytery office and inform the Stated Clerk
17 of this desire. Both parties may then begin the work of recruiting member representatives for a
18 Discernment Team.

19 The Discernment Team shall consist of four representatives from the church and four
20 representatives from the Presbytery. The Session of the congregation shall choose the
21 representatives from the church, reporting to the Presbytery Council; the Presbytery Council
22 shall then choose representatives from the Presbytery insuring parity between teaching elder
23 and ruling elder representatives. The Discernment Team shall meet together at least four times.

24 The Presbytery Council shall appoint the moderator, whose purpose is to facilitate the
25 conversation so that each team member has an equal chance to participate. The moderator
26 shall have an equal voice and vote with the other members of the Discernment Team. The
27 General Presbyter, the Moderator of Presbytery, and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery shall be
28 ex officio members of the Discernment Team and shall attend meetings as available. The
29 moderator shall make sure that the Discernment Team receives appropriate orientation to
30 include reviewing the process, the history of the presbytery in relationship to the congregation,
31 and the larger issues surrounding this particular process.

32 The Discernment Team will meet at least four times within a six-month period. Team members
33 should prepare for two hours at each meeting. Members of the congregation who are not
34 serving on the Discernment Team are strongly encouraged to attend team meetings in order to
35 listen to the content of the discussion. In each meeting, time shall be provided for input from the
36 congregational members present. This feedback will help determine the content of the third and
37 any subsequent meetings.

38 First Meeting

1 During the first meeting, Discernment Team members will exchange extended
2 introductions, sharing a portion of their faith stories and their understanding of the
3 spiritual and theological issues at stake in the conflict between the church and
4 the Denomination/Presbytery. The first meeting will primarily be a listening
5 session.
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7 Scripture teaches us to “honor everyone (*1 Peter 2:17*). We recognize each
8 participant in this process as a child of God, possessing a conscience formed by
9 the Spirit of Christ under the guidance of Scripture. Presbyterian tradition
10 recognizes that there are “truths and forms with respect to which persons of good
11 character and principle may differ” and with regard to these differences it is our
12 Christian duty “to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other” (F-3.0105).
13

14 Second Meeting

15 The second meeting will consist of a discussion of the relationship between the
16 congregation and the presbytery, including a conversation of shared events
17 between the congregation and presbytery and a sharing of how those events
18 have been interpreted by various parties. It will also be appropriate during this
19 meeting for members of the Presbytery team to offer to those present reasons for
20 remaining in the current covenant relationship between Kiskiminetas Presbytery
21 and the congregation.
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23 *“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not*
24 *seen...Yet these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive*
25 *what was promised, since God has provided something better.... (Hebrews 11: 1,*
26 *39) We are called by Scripture to view our history through the lens of faith,*
27 *seeking to discern God’s redemptive work in our own history in Jesus Christ. In*
28 *this process, we lay before God the history of the congregation and the*
29 *presbytery, asking God to guide, reveal, redeem, lead, and forgive.*

30 Third Meeting

31 The third meeting will consist of a guided dialogue, facilitated by the moderator of
32 the Discernment Team, on foundational theological issues. Members will be
33 invited to share their personal understanding of various theological issues. The
34 purpose of this discussion is to determine how much common theological ground
35 exists between the congregation and the Presbytery/denomination. Are the
36 theological differences confined to certain issues or do the conflicts run deeper to
37 ecclesiological, Christological, or other foundational theological issues?

38 *Estrangement and alienation between Christians are a consequence of sin. We*
39 *cannot say to one another “I do not belong to the body” or “I have no need of*
40 *you” (1 Corinthians 12:14, 21). All of us must be willing to hear from each other*
41 *the ways that we have hurt, excluded, and offended. Then we must admit our sin*
42 *and ask God for the grace of repentance and the mercy of forgiveness.*

1 Fourth and Subsequent Meetings

2 The content of the fourth and subsequent meetings will be determined mutually
3 by the members of the Discernment Team. In determining the content of these
4 meetings, the team will consider feedback received from congregants who have
5 observed the discernment process.

6 It is the Presbytery's hope that through this process we will remember the
7 consolation we have from love, the sharing in the Spirit we have enjoyed, and the
8 compassion and sympathy we have for one another. Further, we will strive to do
9 nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better
10 than ourselves. We will not look to our own interests but to the interests of others.
11 *Above all else, we will seek to have within us the mind of Christ who came as*
12 *servant to all. (Philippians 2:1-11)*

13 After completing the required sessions, the Discernment Team shall make a report and
14 recommendation to the congregation and to the Presbytery regarding the future of the
15 relationship between the Presbytery and the congregation. If the Discernment Team perceives
16 that the congregation and the Presbytery are still called by God to work together in covenant
17 relationship and recommends restoration of fellowship between the congregation and the
18 Presbytery, it is the Presbytery's hope that the church will be led by this recommendation and
19 that both parties will work together to craft a process to heal the broken relationship (see
20 Appendix B). If, after completing this process, the Discernment Team believes that the wisest
21 course is for the congregation and Presbytery to no longer work together in covenant
22 relationship and recommends dismissal to another Reformed body, it shall report this to the
23 Presbytery Council which may then decide to ratify, on behalf of Presbytery, a session's
24 decision to call a congregational meeting to vote on whether the congregation wishes to seek
25 dismissal from the denomination as described in Appendix A. In the event that the Discernment
26 Team cannot arrive at a majority decision, then the Team shall submit reports from both
27 perspectives to the Presbytery.

28 These policies and procedures shall take effect immediately upon approval by the Presbytery.
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1 **APPENDIX A**

2 **Process of Seeking Dismissal to another Reformed Body**

3 Upon completion of the discernment process described in above, a Session and congregation
4 desiring to enter into the process of dismissal shall follow this procedure:

5 1. The Session shall call for a meeting of the congregation. Advance notice for the meeting
6 shall be by written letter to each member on the active roll of the congregation, as well as
7 through Sunday worship announcements. The letter shall be mailed at least thirty days in
8 advance of the meeting date, and public worship announcements shall be made at all
9 worship services between the date of the call and the actual congregational meeting.
10 Representatives of the Presbytery (members of the Discernment Team, Presbytery
11 Council, the Executive Presbyter, and Stated Clerk) shall also be invited to the meeting,
12 with the right to address the body gathered.

13 2. A quorum for this congregational meeting shall be twenty-five percent of the active
14 membership, the attendees being recorded by name.

15 3. The Session shall make a written presentation to the congregation pertaining to the
16 intention of the session and the vote of the Presbytery. The Presbytery shall also make a
17 written presentation. These documents shall be reviewed by the Discernment Team. All
18 members present, as well as the representatives of Presbytery, shall have the right to
19 speak. When the discussion is concluded, the vote shall be taken, by written ballot of the
20 active members of the congregation present. At least two-thirds (67%) of those present and
21 voting must vote in favor of requesting dismissal to another Reformed body in order for the
22 proposal to be passed.

23 4. If a motion requesting dismissal is passed with at least the requisite majority, then the
24 Presbytery Council shall begin a process of negotiation with the Session in regard to the
25 terms of dismissal. (See Appendix C for Guiding Principles) This process should be
26 concluded within a reasonable time, but at most within six months from the date of the
27 congregational meeting per item 3 above. The terms of dismissal agreed upon in this
28 negotiation process must then be returned to the congregation for a subsequent
29 congregational meeting, called and announced in the same manner as required for the
30 prior meeting, and with at least ten percent of the congregation present of the active
31 congregation present, accepted by a simple majority of those present and voting, in order
32 to be the effective decision of the congregation.

33 ****NOTE:** In the event that the vote for the terms of dismissal, as worked out by the
34 Presbytery and the congregation, does not attain the required level of affirmative votes,
35 then two choices remain open to the congregation at this time.

- 1 a. It may, through its authorized representatives continue to negotiate with the
2 Presbytery to seek different terms for dismissal, and then offer these to the
3 congregation for another vote (under the same terms as the previous meeting and
4 voting requirements); or
- 5 b. It may choose not to pursue dismissal further at this time, in which case it must, by
6 appropriate congregational meeting and vote (under the same rules outlined above
7 for congregational meetings), rescind its earlier action requesting dismissal. Should
8 this all take place, Presbytery shall continue to work with the congregation with the
9 goal of reducing dissatisfaction and enhancing the relationship between the
10 Presbytery and the congregation.
- 11 ~~5. Desiring not to impede the ministry of either the departing congregation or the Presbytery,~~
12 ~~the departing congregation shall remit to the Presbytery a sum equal to three times the~~
13 ~~annual amount of the Presbytery portion of per capita at the time the initial congregational~~
14 ~~meeting is held. The use of this money shall be determined by the Presbytery Council.~~
- 15 6. A congregation that is approved for dismissal may take its name with it.
- 16 7. In the event that any congregation is approved for dismissal under the terms of this policy,
17 the Presbytery and the congregation shall take all steps possible in order to provide for the
18 pastoral care and congregational life of those members who do not wish to depart the
19 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their protection and nurture shall be a matter of paramount
20 concern to both the departing congregation and to the Presbytery.
- 21 8. In the event that any congregation's request for dismissal is approved under the terms of
22 this policy, the Presbytery shall, in conjunction with the congregation, hold a final worship
23 service of commissioning, to celebrate our common life in Jesus Christ and to pray for the
24 effectiveness and well-being of both the congregation and the Presbytery. Those departing
25 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be commissioned by the Presbytery to further their
26 work for the kingdom as they go forward in ministry. The service will be jointly planned by
27 members of the Presbytery Council and the Session, and all congregations of the
28 Kiskiminetas Presbytery shall be invited.
- 29 9. A congregation being dismissed shall pay off any loans outstanding to any entity of the
30 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any bequests or endowments naming the Presbytery or the
31 P.C. (U.S.A.) as the beneficiary shall be transferred to the Kiskiminetas Presbytery. Matters
32 of loans of the congregation held by non-Presbyterian entities are the responsibility of the
33 congregation, and the Presbytery shall be legally relieved of any responsibility related to
34 such loans.
- 35 10. A congregation being dismissed shall be required to close out its financial and membership
36 books as of the official date of dismissal. Such records shall be submitted to the
37 Presbyterian Historical Society to be copied at the cost of the departing congregation (G-

1 9.0406). The original documents shall be returned to the congregation when such copies
2 have been completed.

3 11. A congregation being dismissed shall be required to work with the Presbyterian Church
4 (U.S.A.) Board of Pensions to facilitate a clean transition at the time of dismissal.

5 12. A congregation being dismissed shall work closely and diligently with the Presbytery to
6 assist in the transfer of membership of members who do not desire to remain with the
7 disaffiliating congregation.

8 13. There are some practical considerations to be addressed should a congregation be
9 approved for dismissal. These are listed for information, but are not binding for the purposes
10 of this policy.

11 a. The status of the minister(s) currently called or employed by the congregation:
12 whether they shall remain with the congregation and transfer their ministerial status
13 to the new denomination, or whether they choose to remain within the PCUSA, and
14 may need to look forward to seeking a new call.

15 b. The status of any insurance policies held by the congregation with instrumentalities
16 of the PC (U.S.A.) may need to be changed.

17 c. The tax status of a congregation as a non-profit tax-exempt organization may need
18 to be re-established under the new denomination to which the congregation is being
19 dismissed.

20 d. The corporate status of the congregation may need to be revised.

21 14. If a congregation or its leadership preemptively files suit in a civil court against the
22 Presbytery, the Kiskiminetas Presbytery will answer the suit. Likewise, if a congregation or
23 its leadership abandons these processes before completion, it is within the purview of the
24 Presbytery to establish an administrative commission to work toward resolution of these
25 matters with the congregation. All policy considerations listed in this document also apply to
26 an administrative commission.

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1 **APPENDIX B**

2 **Guidelines for Restoration of Fellowship and**
3 **Recommitment to Presbytery-Congregational Relationship**

4 In hope that God leads those involved to seek a restored fellowship and a recommitment to the
5 presbytery-congregational relationship, the following are presented as minimal guidelines for
6 marking and sealing that recommitment:

- 7 1. The Discernment Team shall meet with the Session to chart a course for the future
8 relationship between the Presbytery and the congregation. Issues that have been raised
9 in the course of discernment shall be included in the ongoing conversations between the
10 two parties. The Discernment Team shall make every effort to arrive at resolutions that
11 restore the integrity and appreciation of the covenant relationship that the congregation
12 shares with the Presbytery.
- 13 2. The Presbytery shall conduct a public service of worship and recommitment to shared
14 fellowship and ministry with participation from Presbytery and congregation.
- 15 3. The testimony of members of the Discernment Team and congregation shall be shared
16 at the congregational and presbytery level.
- 17 4. Any minority that leaves the congregation shall be blessed and commissioned in the
18 hope of maintaining bonds of peace.

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Appendix C

Releasing Property Claims:

It is the presbytery's intent in adopting this policy that congregations who faithfully follow it as a way of discerning if God would have them affiliate with another Reformed denomination are not engaged in a schism and that therefore the presbytery's understanding is that G-8.600 (Property of a Church in Schism) and G-8.0601) do not apply to congregations faithfully following this process.

If a session chooses not to follow this Gracious Reconciliation policy or abandons these processes before completion, then the Property of a Church in Schism will apply.

The dismissal of a church from the presbytery will be a traumatic event in the life of the congregation and the presbytery. In an effort to mitigate this trauma, the actions of the presbytery and its administrative commission shall always be focused on the preservation and advancement of ministry throughout the process of negotiation and after the congregation is dismissed.

~~In the service of this aim, the presbytery by its sole discretion may or may not determine that it is in the best interests of all parties and honors the Constitution to release claims to some or all of the property held in trust by the congregation seeking dismissal. Such a release of claims shall in no way be interpreted as an abdication of the presbytery's responsibilities under G-8.401 or G-8.0601 to administer the property of the dissolving congregation for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Rather, a release of claims may be granted by the presbytery only in those circumstances in which the presbytery determines that the church has followed this policy and is seeking release to another Reformed body whose organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this church.~~

Ordinarily a congregation will be dismissed with a release of claim for property and assets, including endowment funds, pursuant to the "Mitigating the Impact of Dismissal" formula listed below (10% of the previous three (3) years reported contributions).

A congregation being dismissed shall pay off any loans outstanding to any entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any bequests or endowments naming the Presbytery or the P.C. (U.S.A.) as the beneficiary shall be transferred to the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas. Matters of loans of the congregation held by non-Presbyterian entities are the responsibility of the congregation, and the Presbytery shall be legally relieved of any responsibility related to such loans. If the administrative commission finds that repayment of the loans for which the presbytery has responsibility cannot be achieved prior to the scheduled dismissal, it shall suspend the dismissal process until a viable plan to repay the loan is established.

1 ***Mitigating the Impact of Dismissal on the Mission of the Presbytery:***

2 Because we are bound by our common confession of faith to "the performance of such duties,
3 public and private, as to conduce to the mutual good, both in the inward and the outward man"
4 (Westminster Confession, *The Book of Confessions*, 6.147), both the presbytery and the
5 congregation seeking dismissal are called upon to act toward each other in ways that mitigate
6 the impact of the dismissal on their respective ministries.

7 The presbytery's ability to sustain ministry is related to its financial health. In turn, that financial
8 health depends upon the generosity and support of its congregations. The dismissal of a
9 congregation from the presbytery has both an immediate and an ongoing negative impact on
10 that health and the ministry it sustains.

11 In view of this fact, any resolution to dismiss a congregation from its membership in the
12 presbytery shall include a plan for mitigating the financial impact on the presbytery of the loss of
13 the congregation. ~~While the specific content of the plan shall be mutually agreed by the~~
14 ~~presbytery, council, or an administrative commission, and the session of the congregation~~
15 ~~seeking dismissal, This means that ordinarily the dismissed congregation shall remit to the~~
16 ~~Presbytery a sum equal to 10% of the last three (3) years total reported contributions as~~
17 ~~reported in the year-end General Assembly statistical reports and paid by the date of dismissal.~~

18 It is expected that the plan will include the following provisions as previously stated:

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20 > Should the pastor(s) of the dismissed congregation wish to remain in the
21 PC(U.S.A.), the disaffiliating congregation must provide the pastor(s) with
22 a minimum of one year's salary and benefits in order that they will not be
23 grievously harmed by the actions of the congregation.

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25 > The dismissed congregation will be required to close out its financial and
26 membership books as of the official date of dismissal and file all reports
27 required by the Presbytery for statistical record-keeping.

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29 > The dismissed congregation will be required to work with the Presbyterian
30 Board of Pensions to close any final legal effect a clean break as of the
31 time of the dismissal.

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35 The members of the Task Force on Gracious Separation for the Kiskiminetas Presbytery hereby
36 express their appreciation to other presbyteries that have walked this path before us, especially
37 the Donegal Presbytery. Their hard work has provided the major building blocks on which we
38 have crafted this process.

Proposal from Presbytery Council Task Group On Scheduling

November 12, 2011 – 1st Reading
January 14, 2012- 2nd reading and Vote

Charge: to assess the rhythms of presbytery business and fellowship to

- save on time and travel involved in attending meetings;
- make the most of our time together; and
- keep our time together productive and meaningful.

Recommended New Schedule: (details on next page)

- presbytery meet in February, May, September, November
- council meet in April, June, October, December
- committees meet in January, March, May, August, October, December

Transition Timeline:

- council approved plan in October for presentation to presbytery
- present plan to presbytery from council in November, 2011
- vote on plan at presbytery in January, 2012

- maintain scheduled presbytery 2012 January and March meetings
(Five meetings in 2012, four per year beginning in 2013)
- move to the new schedule for presbytery meetings in May, 2012
- COM and council begin 2012 under the new schedule

Recommendations for New Schedule:

- that presbytery council be given authority to approve waivers

- that quorum for presbytery meetings be 5 pastors and 5 elders from
8 different churches of the presbytery

- that candidates for ordination, and ministers transferring from other
PCUSA presbyteries, and ministers ordained by one of our
"Formula of Agreement" partners be examined at a stated meeting of the
presbytery or a called meeting held in conjunction with a meeting of COM
or council.

- that ministers of other denominations be vetted by COM and
examined at a stated or called meeting of the presbytery

Rationale:

- New schedule allows opportunities for Teaching Elders to participate in worship
and communion as well as fellowship and sharing among Teaching and
Ruling Elders

- July is the only month with no meeting (allows for timely actions to be taken)

page 2, Report of Presbytery Task Group on Scheduling

Detail on Presbytery Meetings:

February - day meeting (due to weather considerations)
including communion, necrology report, installation of new moderator,
approval of overtures, corporation meeting

May - evening meeting
including mission focus, commissioning of mission teams and
commissioners and voting on amendments

September - evening meeting
including communion, first reading of budget, GA report and
mission reports

November - day meeting (due to short daylight hours)
including election of officers, approval of budget

Detail on Council Meetings:

April - "Big Picture" meeting with date to be set after Easter

June - audit report received and budget presented

August - focus on visioning, amendments to be presented

December - final actions on amendments

Detail on Committee meetings

- to be scheduled in January, March, May, August, October and December
- change in meeting place may be considered, taking into account distance
for committee members to travel and opportunities for carpooling

Task Group members: Mary Marks King, Bob Goossen, Debbie McCanna