

**Presbytery of East Iowa
Pastoral Succession Policy**

[Draft 2025; Supersedes 2015 Policy]

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the guidelines and requirements for pastoral succession within congregations of the Presbytery of East Iowa (PEIA), including installed, co-pastor, interim, and temporary relationships. It is designed to ensure orderly transitions, uphold Presbyterian polity, and promote transparency and integrity in the calling process. This policy applies to all congregations within the bounds of PEIA.

2. Governing Standards

This policy aligns with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), particularly G-2.0504 and G-2.08. Where applicable, exceptions are permitted under the provisions of G-2.0504c with the necessary approvals. In case of conflict, the Book of Order shall take precedence.

3. Co-Pastor Relationships

3.1 Dissolution of One Co-Pastor

If a congregation with co-pastors dissolves the pastoral relationship with one co-pastor, the remaining co-pastor continues in service. If the congregation wishes to maintain a co-pastor model, it must:

- a. Secure Commission on Ministry and Vitality (COMV) approval
- b. Elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)
- c. Conduct a full search for the second co-pastor
- d. Call the new co-pastor under the procedures of G-2.0801 to G-2.0804

3.2 Transition to Co-Pastor Model

If a congregation with a single installed pastor seeks to transition to a co-pastor model, it must:

- a. Receive COMV approval
- b. Elect a PNC
- c. Conduct a full search for one or both co-pastors
- d. Clearly articulate the desired leadership model in the Ministry Discernment Form (MDF)

4. Temporary Pastoral Relationships

A minister serving in a temporary pastoral relationship (e.g., stated supply, temporary pastor, Commissioned Ruling Elder) is ordinarily not eligible to be called as the next installed pastor (G-2.0504b). Exceptions may be made (G-2.0504c) only if:

- a. A full and open search process is conducted by a PNC
- b. The candidate is recommended by the PNC
- c. The call is approved by a three-fourths vote of the congregation
- d. The call is approved by a three-fourths vote of the Presbytery

All four steps are required and prior service in a temporary role does not guarantee eligibility.

5. **Intentional Interim Pastors**

An Intentional Interim Pastor is not eligible to be called as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of the congregation served. This aligns with COMV policy and best practices to preserve neutrality and focus during transitional periods.

6. **Associate Pastors**

6.1 **Ineligibility to Succeed Immediately**

Per G-2.0504a, an associate pastor is ordinarily not eligible to succeed the pastor or co-pastor under whom they served. This includes situations where the head of staff position becomes vacant.

6.2 **Requesting an Exception**

Per G-2.0504c, exceptions may be granted case-by-case. The following conditions must be met:

- a. COMV affirms the health and maturity of congregational and pastoral relationships
- b. COMV determines the inclusion of the associate as a candidate will not compromise transitional or discernment processes
- c. The associate pastor clearly articulates a spiritual sense of call to the role
- d. The PNC can conduct a full, fair, and impartial search without undue influence or perceived favoritism
- e. COMV will counsel with the outgoing pastor (if available), the associate, and the PNC to assess readiness

If an exception is granted, the associate may be considered like any other candidate. If the PNC selects the associate pastor, the call must be approved by:

- a. A three-fourths vote of the congregation
- b. A three-fourths vote of the Presbytery (G-2.0504c)

If an exception is not granted, COMV will provide a written explanation to the PNC and associate pastor. An appeal may be submitted to the Presbytery at a subsequent stated meeting.

7. **Implementation and Oversight**

This policy is administered by the Commission on Ministry. COMV is responsible for interpreting and applying the policy, evaluating exception requests, and guiding congregations through the succession process. For clarity or additional guidance, sessions or pastors may contact COMV directly.

8. **Change Log**

[To be maintained by the Stated Clerk or designated staff to track changes to the policy going forward.]