

Administrative Commission

When a Congregation Concludes Its Ministry

Administrative Commission Responsibilities

HOW THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION IS ESTABLISHED:

1. Presbytery votes to concur with the recommendation that is brought by the Commission on Ministry which has pastoral oversight function. The recommendation is to request the presbytery to appoint an Administrative Commission to implement the recommendation that a particular congregation be dissolved. This commission is appointed to oversee the ending of the ministry.
2. The moderator and members of the Administrative Commission are recommended by the Commission on Ministry and approved by the Vision Team. The action will be reported to the Presbytery in the omnibus motion.
3. If possible, the Administrative Commission should include an Elder currently serving on Session from the church being closed.
4. The Commission is convened in a timely fashion by the moderator.
5. The Vision Team, or the Administrative Commission, shall determine the date upon which services of worship shall cease and the date of dissolution, noting that the church is not dissolved until the conclusion of the final worship service.
6. The commission shall at its first meeting elect a clerk from among its members who shall work with the Stated Clerk to appropriately record and transmit the actions of the commission.
7. The Stated Clerk, by nature of the office, shall be an ex-officio member of all commissions of presbytery and shall be a resource person to the commission in the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

The membership of the commission should include presbytery members who have working knowledge of financial affairs, property management, congregational development, and pastoral care. Each of the following duties should be executed in consultation with the Session of the church which has voted to end its ministry, if possible.

1. Arrange for the pastoral care of church members.

1. Work with the Session to identify where members wish their membership to be transferred.
2. Appoint a pastor in consultation with the Commission on Ministry to be responsible for pastoral care until membership is transferred or a clear decision is made to cease being an active member of any congregation.

3. The Clerk of Session shall affect the transfer by letter of members requesting transfer to corresponding churches until dissolution of the congregation.

4. The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery shall affect the transfer by letter of any remaining members to corresponding churches for one year after the dissolution of the congregation.

II. Determine the Legacy Investment of the Congregation

Through the Legacy Investment, a congregation that is dissolved experiences resurrection. Through the Legacy Investment, a congregation perpetuates mission and ministry beyond the life of the congregation. The Legacy Investment can represent up to 50% of the net proceeds from sale of the property and contents of a dissolved congregation. The use of the investment should be based on the missional impact the congregation has had in the community. Please note: This does not have to be done at all if the congregation does not have a relationship with any outreach programs. The congregation is assured that the money will be used by the presbytery for missional outreach.

1. The Administrative Commission will meet with the former Session to help determine what local organization(s) will receive a Legacy Investment. Ideally, the organization(s) will be one(s) the congregation began, participated in, or supported.

2. The desire of the session to use the Legacy Investment will become a part of the final worship service, and part of presbytery minutes.

3. The Legacy Investment purpose and amount (expressed in percentages with a maximum of 50% of the net sell price) will be communicated to the Administration Team and the Presbytery office staff.

4. The Presbytery Staff will be responsible for completing the Legacy Investment and issuing payment to the appropriate mission after the sale of the property.

III. Plan a final worship service celebrating the life and ministry of the congregation.

1. Set the date and the time for the service.

2. Allow ample time for the date to be publicized and invitations issued.

3. Decide what special features the service should include.

4. Determine whether the celebration of the Lord's Supper would be appropriate.

5. Consider structuring the service using the resources from the Book of Occasional Services which has a service on Vacating of a Church Building, including the dissolution of a church.

6. Identify a possible preacher and other participants.

7. Former pastors/preachers might be invited.

8. Ordinarily, at least one representative from the church should be included in the planning of and participate in the final worship service.

9. Ordinarily, at least one representative from the Administrative Commission should be included in the planning of and participate in the final worship service.
10. Ordinarily, the Stated Clerk and the Presbytery Leader (or another Presbytery representative) should be included in the final worship service.
11. Identify favorite hymns of church members.
12. Consider possibilities for special music, including: the church choir, if one exists; soloists from church, presbytery, or community; a community or presbytery choir; instrumentalists; or a bagpiper (if that is in the church's tradition).
13. Arrange for ushers, parking lot attendants, and elders to serve Communion (if needed).
14. Type and print bulletins, if required.
15. Arrange for preparation of communion elements, if needed.
16. Arrange for any needed cleaning of facility before and after the service.

IV. Publicize the service ending the ministry of the church.

1. Have church members make a "guest list" of relatives, friends, former members, etc. whom they wish to invite to the celebration.
2. Write an article to be included in the Presbytery e-newsletter.

V. Arrange for the reception following the worship service.

1. Identify the location for a reception.
2. Decide how the food will be provided (Caterers? Church members?).
3. Determine what financial resources the congregation has to pay for the reception.
4. Appoint a group to take charge of decorating and other arrangements.
5. Gather memorabilia to display.
6. Plan any type of program, toasts, etc.

VI. Ascertain the financial status and outstanding financial obligations of the Session.

1. Conduct a financial review of the Treasurer's books for the last 12 months.
2. Determine location of checking accounts, savings accounts, endowment accounts, Sunday school accounts, women's group accounts and any other financial resources.
3. On endowment or memorial accounts, determine if there are any bequest stipulations and who has access to the funds.
4. Have all accounts closed, transferring any balances to the primary church checking account (to meet any outstanding obligations) or to the presbytery.

5. If any church accounts remain open, submit new signature card(s) for accounts with an officer of the presbytery designated as signatory (usually the Treasurer or Stated Clerk).
6. Determine any outstanding debts/obligations.
7. Publish in local paper a public notice to the effect: *The Church of MO/IL will end its ministry on or about (date). Any outstanding debts/financial obligations must be submitted in writing to the church treasurer at (address) by the close of the business day (date).*
8. Authorize the payment of all financial obligations.
9. Provide a "statement of contribution" to all current year contributors.
10. If the church owns any stocks, bonds, certificates, or other financial instruments have ownership of such transferred to the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.
11. Following the dissolution, transfer all remaining account balances to the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy and close any remaining church accounts.

VII. Secure the Session records.

1. The History Team of the Presbytery will resource the Administrative Commission and the Session as they review items of historical significance.
2. Locate all Session minutes, the church register, and other financial and legal records (i.e., incorporation papers, personnel, financial for the last 7 years, blueprints) to be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery for appropriate disposition.
3. The Clerk of Session will hand these symbolically to a representative of the Stated Clerk at the conclusion of the Presbytery's recognition of the ministry of the church.

VIII. Secure the legal rights to the property.

(The GLPBY Administration Team will assist with these functions under the direction of the AC.)

1. Assist the Presbytery staff in securing a clear title to the property through resolutions prepared in the presbytery office.
2. Provide a copy of the sales contract to the Presbytery office and the Administration Team who will then send on to the Vision Team.
3. Inquire of the former Session to determine if they know of any deed restrictions or stipulations for the property.
4. Presbytery staff will work with the title company for the title/deed transfer to the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. The Administrative Commission should note that it happens.
5. Presbytery staff will list the property on the Presbytery's property and liability insurance coverage and will ask the Administrative Commission to obtain the information on the current coverage, company, policy number, address and phone number of the insurance

carried by the church so that the staff can terminate the current policy making sure the property is covered under the Presbytery's insurance first.

6. Different counties have differing rules regarding the notification of the County Assessor's Office. We do not know that the property will no longer be used as a church as of the dissolution date. This will depend on the new owner/buyer. Discover if the congregation is incorporated. If so,

- a) Locate the Articles of Incorporation
- b) Publish a public notice to dissolve a corporation in the local newspaper
- c) Adopt and publish the following motion:
- d) "Pursuant to G-4.0203 / G-4.0205 of the *Book of Order* (the constitution) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbytery of Giddings Lovejoy is the legal successor of the Presbyterian Church in MO/ IL. (Exception: G-4.0208)

IX. Secure the building and property.

The Commission on Ministry will make a recommendation about the appropriate use of the real property consistent with the presbytery's strategy for mission in the area. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Administrative Commission. If it is determined that the building and land will serve no ministry purpose, and is to be sold the following steps will be followed:

1. Arrange for the disposition of furnishings. The Session, with the concurrence of the Administrative Commission and in consultation with the History Team, may arrange for the disposition of furnishings, communion ware, hymnals, Sunday School supplies, pulpit, lectern, and communion table, etc. These may be given away, sold by the piece, or bids may be received for the entire lot of furnishing. The History Team of Presbytery shall be consulted and concur with the decision to dispose of any item thought to be of historic value. It is recommended that at least one appraisal by an antiques dealer/estate assessor be obtained before accepting any bids.
2. After items have been removed by family members, these decisions should be documented in detail in both Session, History Team, and Commission minutes.
3. Ascertain which utilities should remain connected and which may be disconnected and make these arrangements with the proper companies. Change ONLY the address for the billing for the utilities to the address of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy effective on the dissolution date of the congregation. It may be necessary to maintain heat during the winter to avoid damage. Electricity and water should remain on. Arrangements should be made to drain the water pipes if the utilities can be turned off.
4. Secure the building and recover keys from anyone who does not need access.
5. If distribution of keys is widespread and any contents are valuable, consider having the locks changed.
6. Make provisions through the Property Committee for a caretaker until the final disposition of the property, including mowing of lawn and maintenance of any sidewalks.

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7. After the closing worship service remove or cover any identifying signage, if possible, and the cornerstone, if possible, checking for a time capsule.

X. DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION

1. The Administrative Commission is dissolved upon the completion of its work.
2. The Administrative Commission reports to Presbytery in writing all actions taken.
3. The Administrative Commission submits all minutes to the Stated Clerk for inclusion in the minutes of presbytery.