



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

HANDBOOK FOR CONGREGATIONS

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1 Foreword

This Handbook for Congregations is a starting point for the office bearer who is responsible for parish management, but may be unsure about procedures, confused about regulations, and doesn't understand some church language.

It describes the structure of the Presbyterian Church, and regulations and guidelines around decision-making processes in your church.

Each topic is a stand-alone section and the entire handbook should be read in conjunction with the following documents, which can be found on the PCANZ website:

[Book of Order](#)

[Code of Ethics](#)

[Guidelines for Conflicts of Interest and Bias](#)

[The Conditions of Service Manual](#)

[Supplementary provisions to the Book of Order](#)

[Resources for Elders](#)

[Church Management Support Guide](#)

[Guide for Ministry Settlement Boards](#)

[Uniting Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand \(UCANZ\)](#)

Further detail on these can be found in the next section, *Rules and Regulations*.

This handbook is not intended to be exhaustive in terms of the range of subjects covered, nor the extent to which they are dealt with. For further information, please contact the following:

[Your presbytery](#)

[PCANZ Assembly Office](#)

[Book of Order Advisor](#)

2 The Way We Work

The Presbyterian Church is divided into national, regional and local councils or 'courts', each of which has particular functions. Below is a table, which sets out the different courts that make up the Church. Refer to the Book of Order for the full range of responsibilities for each body.

2.1 Church Courts

The Presbyterian Church is governed by a hierarchy of three courts, or national level governing bodies, which exercise their authority at a local, regional and national level.

<p>Local Congregations</p> <p>Congregations provide services to their local communities. They report to their respective presbytery. They are governed by church council, comprised in the main of elders voted for by the congregation</p>	<p>Presbyteries and Te Aka Puaho</p> <p>These regional or, for Te Aka Puahou and Pacific Presbytery, cultural entities, are responsible for life and mission of congregations in their area. They are also responsible for pastoral appointments, and dissolving, creating and amalgamating parishes.</p>	<p>General Assembly</p> <p>Meets every two years, and consists of commissioners from each congregation. Is the top decision-making body of the Church.</p> <p><i>(See also Council of Assembly below.)</i></p>
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2.2 Other Church Bodies

Council of Assembly

The Council is appointed by, and responsible to the General Assembly. The Council has authority to act in the place of the Assembly for, primarily, administrative purposes and to ensure the directives of the General Assembly are carried out. A range of subcommittees and workgroups that provide oversight and guidance on issues of importance report to Council of Assembly (eg. Resource Sub-committee, Leadership Sub-committee, Doctrine Core Group).

2.3 Support For Church Courts And Bodies

Assembly Executive Secretary

The Assembly Executive Secretary (AES) is the 'general manager' of the Church and reports to the Council of Assembly. The AES fulfils key management, administrative and executive functions on behalf of the Church.

Assembly Service Team

The Assembly Service Team is a multi-disciplinary team employed to provide advice and support to parishes and presbyteries.

3 Rules and Regulations

The [Book of Order](#) sets out the policies and regulations of the Presbyterian Church.

This handbook contains only selected information, from relevant chapters of the Book of Order, which may be helpful in the context of a general guide. It should therefore be read alongside the Book of Order, and in particular:

Chapter 5: The congregation
Chapter 7: Church council
Chapter 8: Presbytery

Attached to the Book of Order are a series of documents called Supplementary Provisions. These have the status of regulations and set out the processes to be followed for specific functions and are approved by the Council of Assembly and the General Assembly. One of these is the Conditions of Service Manual.

The [Conditions of Service Manual](#) guides congregations and presbyteries/Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand (UCANZ) as they work with ministers and lay employees.

Further Supplementary Provisions are:

[Code of Ethics](#)
[Child Protection Policy](#), including [Children's and Youth Ministry Code of Ethics](#)
[Other Supplementary Provisions](#), which include additional regulations across a range of areas covered in the Book of Order.

These can all be found and downloaded at www.presbyterian.org.nz

[Guidelines for Conflicts of Interest and Bias](#) can also be found on that page, and should be read by all those in decision-making roles in a church.

Advice on ministers and lay staff is also available from your presbytery.

Another key document is the [Church Management Support Guide](#). This is not a supplementary provision to the Book of Order. It is produced by the Assembly Office team and is intended to guide those managing a parish day-to-day. It contains detailed information for day-to-day financial management of your church, along with detailed Human Resources information, covering the church's obligations to its minister, employment of lay workers, advice on payroll, current stipends, management of volunteers, and health and safety.

This is an interactive pdf, so you can search the document using keywords, and it contains links to other relevant guides.

Cooperating churches should also refer to the [Uniting Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand \(UCANZ\)](#) for Procedures for Cooperative Ventures.

4 National and Regional Courts

4.1 General Assembly

Refer: [Book of Order](#) Chapter 14.2: Purposes and functions of General Assembly

Every two years, the General Assembly meets. The Assembly develops policy and considers legislative proposals for the benefit of the whole Church. The primary purposes and functions of the General Assembly are:

- (a) to worship God,
- (b) to facilitate and resource the life, worship, and spiritual nurture of the Church,
- (c) to act in a judicial capacity as the supreme judicial body of the Church,
- (d) to act in an administrative capacity as the supreme administrative body of the Church,
- (e) to act as the legislative body of the Church, and
- (f) to deal with such other matters that the General Assembly considers appropriate.

Each presbytery commissions ministers and elders to attend the General Assembly. **It is important that your congregation is represented** if Presbytery rosters you to send a commissioner. Careful thought needs to be given as the person must be prepared to fully devote themselves to the Assembly which can last as long as five days.

Congregations need to take advantage of opportunities to have their say. Prior to an Assembly year a range of discussion documents will be sent around the Church. **Be mindful of deadlines to ensure your comments are received.**

4.2 Council of Assembly

Refer: [Book of Order](#) Chapter 14.13 Council of Assembly

The Council of Assembly is appointed by the Nominating Committee and approved by the General Assembly. The council consists of:

- A convenor and deputy convenor (elected by the General Assembly)
- One representative from each of the seven presbyteries
- One Asian/multicultural representative
- The Moderator of the General Assembly
- The convenors of the Leadership and Resource Sub-committees
- Five associate (non-voting) members: the Moderator of Te Aka Puaho, a representative of the Synod of Otago and Southland, the Assembly Executive Secretary, a representative of the Presbyterian Church Property Trustees and the Moderator of the Pacific Presbytery.

The Council of Assembly co-ordinates policy development on behalf of the General Assembly, which is implemented by its sub-committees: Leadership and Resource.

4.3 Presbytery

Refer: [Book of Order](#), Chapter 8 Presbytery which sets out the full range of functions and responsibilities for presbyteries.

As a church council, you are responsible to your presbytery. All requests by your presbytery should be complied with as it holds responsibility for the care of ministers, elders and parishioners within its bounds.

Cooperating churches should also refer to the [Uniting Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand \(UCANZ\)](#) for Procedures for Cooperative Ventures.

5 Congregation Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Church Council

Refer: [Book of Order Chapter 7, Church Council](#), which sets out the full range of functions and responsibilities of the church council.

In the Book of Order, the term **church council** is now used to describe a governing body of a congregation such as a parish or session council.

The functions of a **church council** include:

- Governance, spiritual oversight, and pastoral care of its members
- Leadership in mission
- Management of finances and property
- Compliance with the policies of the General Assembly
- Organising activities, meetings, and services for worship
- Nominating and holding elections for office bearers
- Electing elders to presbytery
- Maintaining a congregational roll
- Employing staff and lay appointees as required

The **Moderator** of the **church council** is the **minister**, or a member of session nominated by the minister.

A church council may be constituted by:

- A session and a board of managers, or
- A session and a deacons' court, or
- A session or parish council that combines the functions of a session and board of managers or deacons' court.

A board of managers or deacons' court are accountable to the church council, and guidelines for membership can be found in Chapter Seven of the Book of Order.

The members of a **board of managers or deacons' court** appoint their own **chairperson** for a term of not more than one year.

The minister (or senior minister if there is more than one) may choose to be a **member** of a deacons' court. Where a senior minister does not wish to be a member, he or she may nominate one of the other ministers in the parish.

A **board of managers or deacons' court** must administer the property and finances of the congregation, including:

- Managing all finances and property belonging to the congregation or held in trust on its behalf
- Collecting all contributions and offerings from and to the congregation
- Keeping bank accounts and any other financial records as may be necessary

- Expending monies on behalf of the congregation, including payment of stipends, salaries and honoraria
- Preparing budgets and statements of accounts, and having the accounts reviewed or audited.
- Providing a financial report when required by the session
- Raising and securing loans
- Letting any building or other property
- Appointing and dismissing administrative staff, and
- Any other function necessary for the proper administration of the property and finances of the congregation

Advice on day-to-day financial and HR management of the church can be found in the [Church Management Support Guide](#).

Properties belonging to the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand are vested in two separate trusts. The Waitaki River (North Otago) is the geographical boundary for the two trusts.

Property north of the Waitaki River is vested in The Presbyterian Church Property Trustees. Advice for these properties can be found at [Church Property Trustees Property](#).

South of the Waitaki River the legal position about property matters is defined in the Otago Foundation Trust Board Act 1992. This situation is different from that prevailing in the rest of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ, as their property matters are governed by a different Act of Parliament. Advice for these properties can be found at [Southern Presbyterians Property](#).

Chapter 7 of the Book of Order sets out alternative forms of governance for a church and the membership requirements of each of these alternatives.

Where a church council decides to vary its structure or delegate tasks to other groups or committees it is important that this is clearly recorded in the minutes of the council meeting – especially where those tasks may have legal implications such as employing staff or purchasing or selling of buildings.

5.2 Session Clerk

The role of the session clerk is no longer specifically defined in the Book of Order. However, it can be reasonably assumed that the clerk's tasks include the administration of the church council's activities as set out above.

Typically tasks that a session clerk might be responsible for include:

- Maintaining the congregational roll
- Notifying the presbytery clerk of changes of status
- Calling meetings on behalf of the minister (or Moderator where this is different) and distributing papers in advance
- Keeping a record of minutes from all meetings
- Maintaining all other session/parish records

- Producing and distributing parish notices
- Holding elections on behalf of the church council
- Delegating session duties to members
- Co-ordinating church activities
- Be the point of contact for the parish (for both other Church bodies and members of the public)
- Liaise between the minister and the congregation
- Assist the minister with leading worship

It is important for church councils and session clerks to agree at the outset the responsibilities and tasks of the clerk.

5.3 Appointing an Elder to Presbytery

Refer [Book of Order](#), Chapter 7.22 Commissioners to presbytery.

The church council may elect an elder as its commissioner to presbytery. The elder must be a member of the church council. Elders are ordinarily appointed as commissioners to presbytery for 12 months; they can be elected for a shorter time, but for no less than three months.

The church council may also elect an 'alternate' commissioner. This is an elder who will step in to attend presbytery meetings when the regular commissioner is unable to attend.

The church council must formally advise the presbytery, in writing, that they have elected a commissioner to presbytery.

Where the church council cannot elect one of its own members, it may elect an elder from another congregation within the same presbytery.

As a commissioner the elder is not a 'representative' *and must vote in accordance with their own consciences under the guidance of the Holy Spirit* (7.22 of the Book of Order).

6 Meetings

6.1 Congregational Meetings

Refer: [Book of Order](#), Chapter 5.3 Procedures relating to meetings of congregation

The minister or the church council may call a congregational meeting.

At least 10 working days' notice must be given at a service of worship.

Shorter notice may be given in the case of an emergency meeting if there are reasonable grounds to consider there is an emergency.

The Moderator of the church council may chair a meeting of the congregation. A member of the church council or presbytery may also chair a meeting where they have been appointed or deputed by the Moderator of the presbytery.

The chairperson must ensure the minutes are recorded and cannot move or second a motion. The chairperson cannot vote, with the exception of exercising a casting vote where the meeting is equally divided.

Only members and associate members of the congregation may vote at a meeting of the congregation. Voters must be physically present at the meeting (except when a meeting is held by electronic means which is in exceptional circumstances only), and neither absentee nor postal votes may be accepted.

6.2 Church Council Meetings

Refer: [Book of Order](#) Chapter 7.16 Meetings of a Church Council

The Moderator chairs church council meetings. Normally the minister is the Moderator, but where there is more than one minister it will need to be agreed on who will actually be Moderator.

The Moderator must give members of the church council not less than ten working days' notice of a meeting, in writing, which may include by electronic communication.

A quorum is one-third of the church council. However, the quorum must also be no fewer than three members and include the Moderator and a minister (if the Moderator is not a minister).

A member or associate member of the congregation may request a matter concerning the church, or the congregation generally, to be considered by the church council. The church council may choose whether or not to allow the member or associate member to speak to the matter at the meeting.

The Moderator must call a special meeting when at least three members of the church council request it. The Moderator must give reasonable notice to all members of a special meeting.

A church council meeting may be held by electronic means. The Moderator cannot move or second a motion or vote with the exception of exercising a casting vote where the church council is equally divided.

Decisions of the church council may be appealed to presbytery.

Each meeting must begin and end with a prayer and the minutes of each meeting must be recorded. The relevant section of the minutes must be made available on request to any person affected by a church council decision.

7 Church Records

7.1 Minutes

Refer: [Book of Order](#) Chapter 7.18 Minutes

The Moderator must ensure that there is a secretary of the church council and that the secretary:

- (a) accurately records minutes of the proceedings of the church council,
- (b) sets out in the minutes the names of the members present, and
- (c) on request, makes available extracts of the minutes to persons affected.

In practice, it is usually the session clerk who records and distributes the minutes of church council meetings. Set out below is a guide to producing minutes:

- Minutes should be a clear and concise account of proceedings
- State the time, date and place of the meeting either in the heading or opening sentence of the minutes
- Record that the meeting was constituted and ended with prayer
- Avoid jargon, abbreviations and acronyms
- Keep to a standard, logical format
- Record the wording of motions and amendments carefully (if you need to, ask the mover to write down their motion)
- Note that the motion was moved and seconded (record the mover's name, the seconder's name is optional)
- Use generalized phrases to convey the tone of the discussion (it is not a verbatim record)
- Use the past tense, not the present

- Record the names of those present
- Each person must be clearly identified
- List those for whom apologies were sustained

- Record confirmation of the previous minutes
- Allow adequate time for minutes to be read – try circulating them with your agenda, the week before a meeting
- Alterations should be initialled
- Major alterations should be added in full at the end and signed
- The Moderator then signs the confirmed minutes

'Extract of minutes' is a formal confirmation of a decision made and is signed by the clerk.

Extracts are used for asking presbytery to approve a call or for the sale of property etc.

Minutes are legal records and must be kept safe, and should be sent to Archives at the Presbyterian Research Centre (see below - Archives)

7.2 Rolls and Records

Refer: [Book of Order](#) Chapter 4 Membership

Congregations are required to keep up-to-date rolls of:

- Members
- Associate members

From time-to-time the congregation may be requested to submit their rolls to presbytery.

Book of Order Chapter 4: Membership sets out the conditions for becoming a member, transferring between congregations, and removing a member from the roll.

Congregations should also maintain a list of the numbers of people or families receiving pastoral care and/or are actively engaged in parish activities for statistical purposes. It is also usual to maintain a children's roll.

Other records that should be maintained include baptismal rolls and marriage registers. These types of documents are valuable not only to the parish but also the wider Church and to people researching their family histories.

Every year, the Assembly Office will request membership and financial statistics from each parish. For the membership statistics, you will be asked to provide information on the following:

- number of members and associate members, with estimation of age bands to which members belong
- average weekly attendance at worship and Christian formation groups in June, number of baptisms, dedications, confirmations, and professions of faith
- information on leadership and staff

7.3 The PCANZ Online Church Directory and PCANZ website

Refer: [Church Directory](#)
[PCANZ website – find a church](#)

The Assembly Office maintains a database of all parishes, with key personnel and contact details.

This is used for Assembly Office email lists to treasurers, session clerks etc.

This database also generates the online Church Directory on the PCANZ website, which lists contacts for all ministers, presbyteries, congregations and other Presbyterian groups. The Directory is password-protected, so contact the Assembly Office if you need access.

The information on the website with public access – to search for a church or minister - is also directly sourced from the General Assembly database.

It is therefore important to let the Assembly Office know if there are any changes to personnel such as church clerk and treasurer, or contact details. Please email info@presbyterian.org.nz

Please also remember to send any new personnel or contact details to your presbytery.

Changes to a minister's call must be advised to, and approved by, the presbytery who in turn will advise these changes to the Assembly Office on a change of status form.

In the case of a new congregation being created or an existing one dissolving, presbytery needs to advise the Assembly Office, also on a change of status form. No changes to central records can be made otherwise.

7.4 Archives

Refer: [Presbyterian Church Archives](#)

Each year congregations generate a number of records that represent important milestones in peoples' lives. Whether it is an elder's ordination or a couple's wedding, that record is significant to them and to the national church.

Every parish should have a system for archiving their records and papers. It is important to keep church records, and to keep them safe, secure, and unlikely to be damaged by the likes of earthquake, fire, or flood. To assist with this, the Presbyterian Church Archives has developed excellent resources for parishes.

If you are merging or closing a parish, it is worthwhile early on in that planning to contact the Archives, for helpful hints and for receiving records that you can no longer keep. Archives holds an extensive collection of local church records, past and present, for public perusal. Archives is happy to receive records in digital form and/or print, which you prefer to send.

8 Ministerial Vacancies

Please refer to the [Church Management Support Guide](#) for the responsibilities of a congregation towards their ministers. This covers, among other topics, standard terms of call and how to apply them, and advice on day-to-day HR matters, including payroll.

Please also read [Conditions of Service Manual](#), which is a supplementary provision to the [Book of Order](#).

This section focuses on the issues faced by congregations when a minister leaves, rather than the process to fill a vacancy which is the role of the ministry settlement board.

8.1 Reasons for a Vacancy

Chapter 10 of the Book of Order lists the conditions that may lead to a vacancy in a parish:

- death
- resignation
- retirement
- dissolution of the pastoral tie as a result of conduct found to be unbecoming under Chapter 15
- call or appointment to another ministry position
- medical, physical mental or other incapacity affecting the capacity of the minister to adequately perform the responsibilities associated with ministry settlement
- inability to perform the responsibilities associated with the ministry settlement caused by inadequacy of any kind, including an unacceptably low standard of performance of duties, or incompatibility with the congregation or a sufficiently large proportion of it, so as to seriously affect the harmony of the congregation or its ability to carry out the functions of a congregation as set out in Chapter 5
- inability of the congregation to meet its financial or other obligations to the minister under the ministry settlement
- reduction of the numbers of the congregation to such an extent that it can no longer be considered a congregation justifying ministry settlement
- in the case of a fixed term appointment, the expiration of the fixed term.

A ministerial vacancy for any reason represents a significant time in the life of a congregation and it is important that the church council addresses the congregation's needs.

8.1.1 Death

The death of a minister, or indeed anyone in a congregation, is a traumatic event. Individuals will respond differently, and the church council needs to be prepared for this. The church council will need to appoint an acting Moderator where the minister held this role, until an Interim Moderator is appointed by presbytery – an act which

may be very uncomfortable for some council members and even the congregation. The main focus is to help people adjust to the new situation.

8.1.2 Resignation

There are two types of resignation – from the charge itself, and from the ministerial roll. Often the church council will have some prior warning that the minister may be considering resignation. In this case, the minister should be encouraged to address the congregation and explain their reasons for resignation. This act will help the congregation understand what is happening and to begin the process of detaching themselves from the minister.

8.1.3 Retirement

Ministers do not have to retire at a set age. However, where the church council is aware of a minister's intention to retire, they should again ask them to address the congregation at a suitable time so that there are 'no surprises'. This is a time where the congregation needs to support the minister as they are also going through a significant change in their lives. As a minimum, the minister should be encouraged to attend independent forums on financial planning, and seek assistance from a licensed financial advisor as appropriate.

8.1.4 Dissolution of the pastoral tie

Dissolution may be the most contentious of the reasons for a vacancy as an order for dissolution is often made as a result of disciplinary action. Hopefully by the time an order is made, the groundwork will have been done by the presbytery and the church council to prepare the congregation. The church council should give thought to identifying individuals within the presbytery and congregation who might be available to provide pastoral support during this time.

8.1.5 Call to another ministry position

This is probably the most usual reason for a congregation to have a ministry vacancy. The church council should communicate clearly to the congregation when the minister's last day will be and organise a farewell event in which parishioners can be involved.

8.1.6 Medical incapacitation

Medical incapacitation is a particularly difficult issue to deal with as it raises questions of compassion towards the minister and the congregation's desire to care for them. It is important to be honest with the congregation at the outset (whilst still honouring the privacy of the minister). Be transparent and let the congregation know that the church council will make every effort to secure financial support for the minister. See the Church Management Support Guide and Conditions of Service Manual for advice regarding sick leave. You may need to emphasise to some members of the congregation that this illness is exceptional and it is unlikely in the foreseeable future that the minister will be able to return to ministry. At the same time, the church council needs to work with presbytery to ensure the minister's pastoral needs are being met.

8.1.7 Inability to carry out tasks and/or incompatibility with the congregation

This situation arises where issues develop between the minister and the congregation or other members of the leadership team that cannot be resolved. After appropriate investigations the presbytery may eventually determine that it would be in everyone's interest if the pastoral tie is dissolved. It is important to remember this will be a long process, over several months, giving the church council time to prepare the congregation.

8.1.8 Insufficient finances

It is important that a church council in this situation advises the presbytery earlier rather than later as the congregation has a responsibility to give the minister six months' notice and if it is left too late the congregation may not be able to honour this requirement.

8.1.9 Reduction in congregation numbers

Reduction in the total number of adults attending public worship to below an average of 40 per week for three consecutive months may require presbytery to appoint a commission to review the future of a congregation. Necessarily, the minister's position will be at stake.

8.1.10 Fixed-term agreement expires (applies to Cooperative Ventures)

This applies to cooperative ventures, stated supply and transition ministry situations. The congregation should still be reminded that the contract will expire and it would be useful to arrange some sort of farewell event to help the congregation separate themselves from the minister.

9 Ministry Settlement

Refer:

[Guidelines for Ministry Settlement Boards](#)
[Book of Order Supplementary Provisions Chapter 10](#)
[Conditions of Service Manual](#)
[Church Management Support Guide](#)

9.1 Church Council responsibilities

Once a congregation is declared to have a ministry vacancy, the presbytery has the responsibility to appoint a Ministry Settlement Board (MSB) to assess and determine the needs of the congregation. The convenor of the MSB will be the contact point for ministers interested in the charge.

Although the presbytery will drive the recruitment process, the church council needs to be prepared, as they will be consulted throughout. Consideration needs to be given to:

- Appointing church council representatives to the ministry settlement board
- Assisting with developing the parish profile
- Being available to meet with prospective ministers, setting aside time for them to preach etc.
- Assisting the ministry settlement board to understand the needs of the congregation.
- Providing financial information to the ministry settlement board on the parish's ability to pay for a minister, agree to terms of call etc

9.2 Ministry Settlement Board

The presbytery will appoint a Ministry Settlement Board convenor.

9.3 Interim Moderator

The presbytery will also appoint an Interim Moderator who has oversight of the congregation during the ministry vacancy, and their primary responsibility is to ensure that ministry of the word and sacrament is available to the congregation. The church council cannot expect the Interim Moderator to conduct worship personally, but the Interim Moderator and church council should together arrange rosters for the conduct of worship services.

The Interim Moderator chairs the meetings of the church council. They may appoint one of the members of the church council to moderate a particular meeting, but a meeting quorum should include a minister. (Refer Book of Order, 7.16(8) for quora.)

The Interim Moderator usually chairs congregational meetings. If they are unavailable, the meeting may be chaired by a member of the church council or a member of presbytery, but only if they have been appointed by the presbytery moderator. (Approval can usually be obtained quickly by phone or email.)

Congregational meetings in connection with filling the vacancy are called by the church council, at the request of the ministry settlement board convenor, and such meetings are chaired by the settlement board convenor.

The church council is expected to reimburse the Interim Moderator for expenses incurred, such as vehicle use. Undertaking Interim Moderator responsibilities is considered part of an active minister's commitment to the work of the presbytery, and so the minister is not paid for it. However, there may be occasions when the Interim Moderator (particularly if they are a retired minister or an elder) commits much more time than is usually expected, and some form of payment may be considered.

The Interim Moderator will consult with the parish on the most suitable arrangements during a vacancy and must approve any proposal for ministry during a vacancy.

In all cases the MSB would continue to function in all respects.

9.4 Options for ministry during a vacancy

Options for ministry during a vacancy could include the following and this information should be read in conjunction with the Book of Order Supplementary Provisions Chapter 10 and the Conditions of Service Manual. The Church Management Support Guide also offers guidance on payroll matters and also employment matters for lay appointees.

9.4.1 Pulpit supply

This is where a minister (either from another parish or denomination) provides Sunday worship. Pulpit supply is paid on a 'per service' basis – the set payment schedule, based on the PCANZ stipend can be found in the Church Management Support Guide. In this scenario, the congregation's elders would bear ultimate responsibility for pastoral care of the congregation. Note elders may administer the sacraments (if they are ordained for this).

9.4.2 Stated supply

This is a temporary appointment, up to two years, of an ordained minister during a vacancy. Here the minister takes on the full range of activities of a church minister – including preaching, pastoral care and the sacraments.

For stated supply for a period over three months, the minister must have a current certificate of good standing (presbytery can advise), and is paid according to the standard terms of call. Any church council considering stated supply must discuss this with the ministry settlement board as the appointment may impact on their activities. Presbytery approval is required regardless of length of appointment.

9.4.3 Transition ministry

This is a special type of ministry in which lay and ordained ministers undergo specific training to aid a congregation through a time of change. Normally the decision to engage a transition minister would be made by the ministry settlement board. However, the church council may recommend to the board that the congregation go

through a period of transition ministry before developing a parish profile. Presbytery approval is required for transition ministry.

Transition ministers are appointed for a fixed period up to two years. As their focus is on transition, the elders would normally take responsibility for administering the sacraments, preaching duties and pastoral visits.

The church council should negotiate an appropriate contract, for up to two years, with the proposed transition minister, and for this, regardless of length of appointment.

9.4.4 Lay Supply

Similar to stated supply, a non-ordained person is appointed for a short period during a vacancy. Because a ministry settlement board is in place, the parish must consult with the presbytery and the Interim Moderator first. Lay appointees are employees and are paid a salary (that is often proportional to the basic stipend).

Lay supply appointees are employees of the church council, and their appointment must conform with 'best practice' and relevant employment legislation. Church councils should obtain qualified advice before finalising an employment agreement, with particular regard given to the fixed-term nature of the appointment. The presbytery must approve the terms and conditions of employment for a lay supply appointee. Appointments should be for no longer than twelve months in total.

The lay supply appointee may conduct worship and undertake pastoral responsibilities but may not administer the sacraments of baptism or communion, unless that person is specifically authorised to do so under the relevant regulations.

The Interim Moderator shall still moderate the church council, and shall arrange for an ordained minister or authorised elder to administer the sacraments.

The stipend offered to a national or local ordained minister may be used as a guide when offering an employment contract to a lay worker. However, the allowances for seniority, housing and the reimbursement allowance must not be offered in a lay appointee's employment contract. These are IRD approved allowances that only apply to ministers appointed under the Book of Order terms and conditions.

10 Employing Staff and Lay Workers

Refer: [Church Management Support Guide](#) and the [Conditions of Service Manual](#) for guidance on employment matters.

11 Volunteers

Refer: [Church Management Support Guide](#) and the [Conditions of Service Manual](#) for guidance on volunteers.

12 Contractors

Refer: [Church Management Support Guide](#) and the [Conditions of Service Manual](#) for guidance on contractors.

13 Health and Safety

Refer: [Church Management Support Guide](#) for guidance on health and safety matters

14 Complaints

Refer: [Book of Order](#) Chapter 15: Discipline and [Complaints Process](#)

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand seeks to ensure that the Church is a safe and nurturing environment for all.

Rules and procedures have been developed to enable individuals and the Church to respond responsibly to any acts of inappropriate or unethical behaviour by a Church office-bearer or member.

Each presbytery has appointed contact people to support and advise anyone thinking of making a complaint regarding an officer or member of the Church. A list of contact people must be displayed on your parish noticeboard. Your presbytery will have this list.

If a complaint is criminal in nature, especially sexual offending, complainants will be encouraged to talk to the Police. The Church will support a complainant's decision, the exception being if there is an imminent and serious risk to any person, when the Church may decide to notify the Police independently. Anyone who becomes aware of offending of this nature is urged to contact the Assembly Executive Secretary immediately.

Where an officer or member of the Church is investigated by Police or found guilty in a court of law, they may still be subject to the Church's process. Where this happens, the intent of Church proceedings is to determine an appropriate order (e.g. removal from office) and not to 're-hear' the original charges.

For further information about the complaints procedures please contact one of your presbytery complaints contact people or read chapter 15 of the Book of Order.

15 Property

Refer: [Book of Order](#) Chapter 16, Property and Finance

Property responsibilities of a congregation:

1. The church council is responsible for the management and administration of all property of the congregation and must do everything necessary or appropriate for the use and management of all property associated with the life, worship, and mission of the congregation including
 - a. the care and maintenance of all property,
 - b. the provision of adequate insurance cover on all property,
 - c. determining the use of land and buildings, subject to any provisions of chapter 5 of Book of Order,
 - d. dealing with proposals for the acquisition, leasing or disposal of any property, and
 - e. obtaining the authority of the congregation regarding any proposal concerning property that would have a significant effect on the use of the buildings.
2. Before proceeding with any proposal relating to property, the church council must comply with the supplementary provisions.
3. Where a congregation is a co-operative venture, the church council must consult the partners in the co-operative venture and the Regional Forum in that region on all property matters.
4. Before making any decision to recommend buying, leasing or selling property, the church council must
 - a. take account of the life, worship and mission of the congregation,
 - b. determine whether the proposal enables the congregation to fulfil its life, worship, and mission, and
 - c. comply with the supplementary provisions and secure necessary approvals from the relevant trustees

5. The church council must regularly at intervals of not more than a year, review the following matters in respect of each property for which it is responsible
 - a. the state of repair,
 - b. the adequacy of the insurance cover,
 - c. the arrangements for public risk insurance and personal accident insurance for voluntary workers,
 - d. the value and liabilities in respect of each property, and must implement any requirements imposed by the presbytery or the supplementary provisions.

6. The church council must ensure, and regularly monitor that it complies with, all requirements of legislation in force which affect the use and maintenance of real property.

16 Further Information

PCANZ contacts

All contacts for the Presbyterian Church can be found on the [Contact Us](#) page of the PCANZ website.

Defined Terms (Dictionary of Terms used in PCANZ)

These can be found in the [Book of Order](#) Appendix 1.