



RETIRED CLERGY EXPECTATIONS

It is the responsibility of the retiring cleric, for the good of the Church, to create healthy boundaries with the parish and parishioners they previously served after they retire.

1. The responsibility belongs to the cleric retiring to make clear that the pastoral relationship has ended. Which means the cleric will:
 - a. not get involved in the search process
 - b. not discuss any parish business with anyone after they leave
 - c. not share opinions about the congregation, its ministers, business or its ministries
 - d. refrain from criticism of the leaders, vestry, staff, priest or deacon
 - e. not engage in conversation about the congregation, its leaders, or its ministry with any parishioners. *In other words, talk about your lives, and what is happening, but do not discuss the church.*
 - f. when asked by parishioners, decline from visiting people in the hospital, being a participant or preacher in funerals, weddings, and other liturgies.

2. It is the expectation that the retired cleric will make plans to attend another church with their spouse and minor children until at least a year after the next settled priest's tenure, or for an associate or deacon for at least the first year of their retirement.

3. If the cleric would like to explore returning to their prior congregation they should begin the conversation with the Bishop. With the Bishop's blessing the conversation can move forward by the retiring cleric contacting the priest-in-charge to discuss this possibility, the obstacles, and how their return might affect the congregation's health. In this conversation expectations, boundaries and accountability will be clearly defined.

4. If it is agreed the boundaries named in #1 are still in effect, the retired clergy may attend and will:
 - a. not share opinions or weigh in on matters regarding the congregation, its liturgy, its ministries, or its leaders.

- b. not write long discursive emails or letters to the clergy person expressing your anger or displeasure.
- c. not criticize and keep all opinions to yourself. You must show support to the present clergy.
- d. not approach the clergy leader asking to participate in liturgies, but will only participate if invited by the current clergy.
- e. would not visit people in the hospital, unless asked to by the current clergy.
- f. If a parishioner brings to the retired cleric any concern or pastoral request the cleric will refer them directly to the current clergy or in the absence of a clergy person the appropriate lay leader. Then contact the current clergy person, to let them know about this request and that you didn't engage but referred this person to their care.
- g. If a parishioner wants to talk to the retired cleric about the ministries and business of the church the cleric will politely tell them that would be crossing a boundary and encourage them to talk to the current clergy and lay leaders.

Essentially if you attend your prior church you can not share or express your opinions but simply participate in worship, participate in fellowship, and stay out of politics or issues that arise. Whenever a parishioner tries to triangulate you refer them to your current clergy.

What is allowed when invited to return by bishop and current cleric to your prior congregation?

- To fellowship and to share your lives and what is going on in other's lives
- Attend Church's social functions keeping the healthy boundaries
- Participate (not lead) in outreach ministries, or fellowship events that are important to you.