



The Presbytery of  
**DONEGAL**

## Pulpit Supply Policy and FAQ

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### **How does a preacher submit their name for inclusion on the presbytery Pulpit Supply List?**

The procedure for placement on the Pulpit Supply List is:

1. The first step is to submit the required documents:
  - a. Presbytery Pulpit Supply Enrollment form
  - b. All background clearances required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for clergy and by the Presbytery of Donegal for teaching elders
  - c. Signed acceptance of the Presbytery of Donegal Pulpit Supply policy
  - d. Signed acceptance of the Presbytery of Donegal Sexual Misconduct policy
  - e. If not a teaching or commissioned ruling elder member of the Presbytery of Donegal, verification of good standing in denomination and results of a reference check conducted with the official denominational representative.
2. When these documents have been provided, a meeting will be scheduled with the Pulpit Supply Task Group of the Presbytery of Donegal. This group will recommend whether or not to place the preacher on the Pulpit Supply list.
3. The Connecting Our Ministry Commission votes to concur with the recommendation of the Pulpit Supply Task Group.
4. Annual review forms will be sent in late October each year, and are due on December 15. Failure to return the form will result in removal from the list.

### **Who is eligible to Be Placed on the Pulpit Supply List?**

1. Current teaching elders (TE) who are members of the Presbytery of Donegal. Generally this includes retired members, those who serve in validated positions rather than congregations, and members at large.
2. Approved Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE).
3. Teaching elders who are members of another PC(USA) presbytery, with approval of their COM.
4. Teaching elders from denominations included in the Formula of Agreement (United Church of Christ, Reformed Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and PC(USA)).
5. Occasionally teaching elders from denominations with which we are in correspondence may be placed upon the list, on a case by case basis.

### **What are the professional standards to serve as a pulpit supply preacher in the Presbytery of Donegal?**

Pulpit supply preachers are endorsed by the Connecting our Ministry Commission and represent that presbytery. Pulpit supply preachers agree that they will:

1. Communicate with the congregational representative in a timely fashion regarding bulletin and worship preparation.

2. Arrive at least 20 minutes (preferably one half hour) before the scheduled start of the worship service.
3. Obtain emergency contact information in case there is a travel delay or other emergency delaying arrival. Provide cellphone number, if available, to the contact person.
4. Be mindful that one is preaching as a guest in the pulpit. While sermons rightly address the intersection of the Word of God and culture, the ways the congregation will address controversial issues is under the supervision of the congregation's installed pastor and session. Pulpit supply preachers must agree to the following policy:
  - a. Pulpit supply preachers may include in public prayer (and are encouraged to do so) local, denominational, national, and global events that are rightfully subjects of the prayer life of the congregation. Care should be taken in public prayers not to editorialize on issues of controversy.
  - b. Pulpit supply preachers may reference local, denominational, national and global events that are controversial in sermons, while recognizing that people of good faith disagree on these issues.
  - c. Pulpit supply preachers must clear the content of their sermon with the moderator or clerk of session if the preacher intends to express an opinion on a controversial topic. If in doubt on whether a statement is appropriate, check it out. Example: It is appropriate to say "We all know such and such happened this week. There are many ways to look at this, and your pastor and session will guide your conversation. Today we will include this in our prayers."
5. When feedback is provided by a congregation, this feedback will be shared with the pulpit supply preacher.
6. Failure to comply with these professional standards of conduct will be addressed by the Pulpit Supply task group, and may result in removal from the pulpit supply list.

### **What are the honorarium guidelines for pulpit supply preachers?**

- Worship and sermon preparation is a craft. It takes time, skill and commitment during the week to prepare. Sunday mornings involve travel time, worship preparation time onsite, and the actual conduct of the services of worship.
- The *minimum* honorarium for a pulpit supply preacher is \$150 for one service and \$200 for two services. Mileage at the IRS approved rate should be included in addition.
- An honorarium should be provided to any preacher filling your pulpit on any occasion when he/she is there in the absence of the pastor or at the convenience of the church and/or the pastor. Exceptions would be when a representative is in the pulpit at the request of the institution, program, or church agency whose cause is being represented and whose presence has been requested by that agency, institution, or cause.
- Example: If your pastor is to be on vacation and you request Dr. Feedmore, President of the local food bank, to fill the pulpit, an honorarium is to be provided. If, on the other hand, the food bank

requests the opportunity for Dr. Feedmore to be heard in your pulpit on behalf of the organization, there would be no honorarium provided (although a donation might be the result!)

- When members of the presbytery staff are invited to preach for routine pulpit supply coverage, this is in addition to their regular presbytery duties, and should be compensated according to the honorarium guidelines. When members of the presbytery staff are scheduled to lead worship as part of presbytery partnership with the congregation, then an honorarium is not expected. Travel expenses are always welcome to be applied to travel budgets. Examples would include the Sunday after the departure of the pastor, or to express care during a traumatic event.
- When the Executive Presbyter is scheduled to preach, this is part of the duties of the EP. No compensation is expected, although donations to mission causes in the presbytery are always welcome, as are contributions to the travel expense budget.

### **Is It Appropriate To Ask The Pulpit Supply Preacher To Officiate A Meeting Of The Congregation?**

- It is appropriate to ask a pulpit supply preacher who is a teaching elder to moderate a brief meeting of the congregation to conduct routine business. If the congregational meeting is immediately following worship and lasts less than 15 minutes, then it may be included in the honorarium (although a small increase is always appreciated for the additional time and preparation.)
- If the meeting is more substantive, this should be coordinated with the moderator of the session and COM representatives on who best should be appointed to moderate. The honorarium to officiate at a meeting of the congregation that lasts more than 15 minutes, or that is not directly before or after worship, is \$50 in addition to the pulpit supply honorarium. Mileage should be paid at the IRS standard rate unless included in the pulpit supply compensation.

### **Is a congregation in the Presbytery of Donegal required to use the pulpit supply list to engage a pulpit supply preacher?**

- No. Congregations may invite other preachers not on the list for occasional pulpit supply. Many times a session may wish to ask a member or a group in the church to conduct worship on a day when the pastor is away. Sessions should carefully check the credentials of any potential preachers from beyond the congregation to make sure the preacher is a good match for the congregation. Background clearances should be obtained for any pulpit supply preachers that will be preaching on more than one occasion. An advantage to the Presbytery of Donegal Pulpit Supply List is that all preachers on the list have already undergone background clearances in order to be approved for the list.
- When there is a vacancy for reasons other than vacation, study leave, or short term leave for family or medical reasons, Connecting Our Ministry Commission representatives will work with the session for longer term planning and stability.