

Dear Partners in Ministry at First Presbyterian Church:

For your convenience and review, here is a statement, from Dr. Rebecca Blair, Stated Clerk of the PEI, following up from the Congregational Meeting July 26:

### **What is a Bridging Pastor?**

The bridging pastor process allows carefully selected pastors and churches to be matched through the partnership of the Ministers and Congregations Commission and a special search committee working on behalf of the church. The Bridging Pastor is an experienced pastor with a particular skill set, contracted in a Temporary Pastoral Relationship, who serves in complex or conflicted transitional ministry settings. This pastor's role is to serve as a bridge following the early phase of the interim process in which conflicts and church cultural features are identified and engaged by an interim pastor and the church session, and working through the later phase of the interim process that focuses on systemic renewal and relational reconciliation. The aim of this service is to complete the preparation process for the congregation to call an installed pastor.

In accord with the PEIA policy on Temporary Pastoral Relationships, the Bridging Pastor relationship shall be established by contract between the session of the church to be served and the pastor, as full-time pastoral service, reviewed on a yearly basis by the session in partnership with the MCC with the contract to be approved by the MCC before the contract becomes effective.

### **What is the Process to Call a Bridging Pastor?**

The process for selecting a Bridging Pastor begins with the selection of a Bridging Pastor Search Committee for the specific task of selecting a Bridging Pastor only. The Presbytery's Ministers and Congregations Commission provides guidance to the Bridging Pastor Search Committee concerning the essential skill set of the Bridging Pastor articulated in the documentation to be shared with potential candidates. The MCC and the Bridging Pastor Search Committee partner to carefully consider 2-3 candidates whom the MCC has identified. Only these candidates may be considered.

In choosing to use the Bridging Pastor option, the session is agreeing to select one of the candidates offered by the Presbytery's MCC. Once established, this relationship will be reviewed by the MCC for renewal annually to ensure that the agreed-upon activities are taking place, the ministry is benefitting the church, and the terms of contract are agreed upon.

Temporary Pastoral Relationships are defined by G-2.0504b and c in the Book of Order. These relationships shall be established by contract between the session of the church to be served and the pastor for one-year increments and shall be approved by MCC on behalf of the

Presbytery before such contracts become effective. Any extension of such contract may be entered into by the session and the pastor and shall be approved by MCC before becoming effective. Such approval shall not be granted by MCC until after an acceptable review of the ministry is conducted.

In Partnership,

Pastor Mark