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**Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC)  
Life Long Learning/Continuing Education Policy**

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God –what is good, acceptable and perfect.*

– Romans 12: 2 (NRSV)

*I will seek to grow in faith, knowledge, and the practice of ministry through intentional continuing education, study, and devotional life.*

– UCC Ministerial Code of Ethics

In the UCC, we value and require an educated clergy. It's been part of our DNA through all our predecessor bodies and that continues today. We encourage clergy to keep informed, to be well-read, and to commit to their own program of life-long learning and continuing education.

The ethical and professional practice of ministry is an art. And like most professional arts, the best practitioners regularly seek educational opportunities so as to always improve their practice of ministry.

The expectations proposed by this document are designed to:

- cultivate an expectation of, and a culture of, pastoral excellence among all authorized ministers serving in PSEC,
- encourage authorized ministers to continually improve their practice of ministry,
- prevent potential ethical breaches and/or pastoral abuse,
- educate all PSEC ministers about the sometimes changing legal and ethical requirements they are expected to uphold as ministers

These expectations are fulfilled on a three year cycle. Clergy entering the Conference through transfer of standing must complete the boundary training portion of that requirement within one year of their transfer, and are required to renew that training on a three year cycle.

**Continuing Education Expectation for Authorized Ministers and Members-in- Discernment:**

1. 6 hours in pastoral ethics

An exception is made for clergy who have completed the basic boundary training in this Conference. In this case shorter renewal trainings, covering advanced topics, may be offered by the Conference to fulfill this expectation. It may be fulfilled for

- those Authorized Ministers in specialized ministries by professional boundary training offered by other professional organizations.
2. 40 total contact hours every three years (20 hours for Part-time ministers).  
The selection of coursework is determined by each individual but should have some direct application to improve the practice of ministry as guided by the Association COM. Examples of Continuing Education include (but are not limited to): Workshops at Association, Annual Conference And National Synod Meetings; Courses and workshops at local seminaries and colleges; online leadership courses; community workshops/lectures; clergy retreats.

[A **contact hour** consists of 50-60 minutes. A CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU) consists of ten (10) contact hours/credits.]

Completion of continuing education expectations will be part of the Periodic Support Consultations conducted by the Association Committees on Ministry.

*It is the responsibility of authorized ministers to report, with documentation, the completion of continuing education events to their Association Committees on Ministry and to maintain a career-long file of that documentation.*

Draft Date: September 12, 2015

Revisions: March 17, 2016

Church and Ministry Council approval: June 15, 2016

Potential Implementation Plan:

- 1) Distribute and discuss at Church and Ministry Council December 16, 2015 with expectation that COM's would review and make changes to be reported at February 2016 Church and Ministry Council meeting.
- 2) A final draft of the policy would be adopted by the Church and Ministry Council at the June meeting.
- 3) Association Committees on Ministry would email and post mail Continuing Education Document by September 2016 with letter of introduction and explanation that the document would be considered at Association Ministerium meetings and Fall Association meetings.
- 4) Continuing Education document would be placed on Conference webpage and emailed to all Conference Authorized ministers the first week in October 2016.
- 5) Association COM's begin implementation January 2017.