

Classis Supervisor Responsibilities

Book of Church Order Directives Addressing Classis Supervisor

The classis shall appoint one of its ministers as supervisor of all proceedings of the consistory of a church without an installed minister. The classis shall determine the appropriate responsibilities for the supervisor.

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Sec. 3 (BCO pp. 33-34)

The commissioned pastor shall be authorized to preach the Word and celebrate the sacraments. The classis may authorize the commissioned pastor to any or all of the following functions:

- a. Serve as presiding officer of the consistory, at its request and may be appointed supervisor of that consistory.

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Sec. 8a (p. 57)

Holland Classis Policy and Practice

In the Holland Classis, the Church Support and Supervision Committee (CSS) is charged to supervise churches without an installed minister or senior minister. The committee is responsible for the appointment of a Classis supervisor to the local church.

The role of the Classis Supervisor is to serve as a link between the Classis and the consistory. It is there to fill the void created by the vacancy of the installed minister position. The appointee assists with supervising the processes used to administrate the church and search for a new pastor. As a representative placed there by the Classis, the Supervisor visibly and personally shows the continuing interest of the Classis in the ministry of the church. The Supervisor conveys the support of the Classis for the church providing resources that the church may not otherwise be able to access.

The Classis recognizes that each church situation has its unique circumstances. The Classis policy and role description cannot and should not attempt to cover all possible scenarios that may be faced by the Supervisor in a particular setting. CSS expects its supervisors to use personal integrity and wisdom to address the situations that may arise. Furthermore, the supervisor is to consult with the CSS committee when clarity is needed.

Ministers and Commissioned Pastors are members of the Classis when they are received into the ministry of the church. Therefore the Classis has a significant stake in the decision of who is called as the pastor. The Classis is responsible for the care of the pastor. This means that the Classis has a significant interest in the compensation provisions of the call to ministry.

Goals or Outcomes

It is the intention of Holland Classis to achieve the following goals through a pastoral transition process. We recognize that these results may take longer time than the transition period itself to be seen.

- There has been a good closure with the previous pastor, including: exit interview, proper grieving, healing of hurts and mending of divisions.
- There is a good fit between the new pastor and the congregation; an appropriate match of needs and strengths to advance the clearly defined vision of the congregation.
- There is a healthy relationship between the classis, pastor, congregation, staff and consistory.
- The congregation is engaged in more outreach and is more aligned with the Classis' vision to *sow new congregations, serve our community and support one another in ministry.*

Process for the appointment of a supervisor

1. This committee is instructed by the BCO that it shall appoint a minister of Classis Holland as supervisor of a consistory without an installed minister.
 - a. If the consistory requests, the CSS committee will appoint a classis supervisor to a church that has a senior (or lead) minister vacancy though other installed ministers are serving the church. CSS believes it is in the best interest of the church to appoint a supervisor when a senior/lead pastor vacancy exists in order to minimize potential conflicts of interest.

- b. The request for a classis supervisor can be made any time after the pastor's impending departure has been announced.
2. Whenever a consistory enters a search process for a minister or commissioned pastor, the CSS committee shall be informed of the action. The CSS will designate a classis supervisor for the calling process so that communication and accountability lines are established. The supervisor may be the pastor (or one of the pastors) of the church.
3. CSS will discuss the appointment with the consistory before the appointment is confirmed. For example, CSS may provide three names from which the consistory may prioritize the order; or the consistory may provide three names which CSS may prioritize. CSS wants a partnership with the consistory in this assignment. Typically, the appointment will not be a surprise to the consistory when it is announced. However, it is the appointment of the Classis and CSS will make the arrangements with the supervisor.
4. In the event that either the designated supervisor or the consistory wish to have a new supervisor appointed, such requests shall be made to CSS.

Appointment of a Commissioned Pastor as a Classis Supervisor

1. CSS may appoint a Commissioned Pastor of the Classis as presiding officer of the consistory that the Commissioned Pastor is serving, if:
 - a. The consistory requests this appointment in writing to the CSS committee, and
 - b. An installed minister is not otherwise serving the church.
2. The Commissioned Pastor may only serve as a Classis Supervisor at the church to which that pastor is commissioned. The appointment is part of his/her commissioning.

Role and Responsibilities of the Supervisor

1. Consistory. The supervisor shall keep informed about the actions of the consistory. The Classis supervisor is the presiding officer of the consistory. The supervisor may defer the task of presiding to someone else present, but always retains the title.
 - a. The supervisor shall attend meetings of the consistory, as needed or agreed, but shall always receive notice, the agenda and the minutes for each meeting.
 - b. If the congregation has engaged the services of an Interim or Transition Minister, that minister may lead the meetings. However, if the Classis supervisor is present, the Supervisor is the presiding officer. The supervisor may defer this responsibility to the Interim minister.
2. Search Process. The supervisor shall provide leadership to the Pastoral Search Team (PST), assisting them in their self-study and search for a new pastor.
 - a. The supervisor shall attend meetings of the PST, as needed or agreed, but shall always receive notice, the agenda and the minutes for each meeting.
 - b. If the congregation is utilizing the services of an Interim Minister, that individual may serve as a resource to the search process, but does not replace the Classis supervisor.
 - c. Classis interview. The supervisor shall notify the Classis Coordinator when a finalist candidate is scheduled to meet in-person with the consistory. The Classis will arrange for an in-person interview with the candidate during the time the candidate is in town.
 - d. When a call is issued, the supervisor will be responsible to see that all the particulars of the call meet the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* and the classis minimum standards for salary and benefits compensation.ⁱ

- e. Normally, the supervisor presides at the congregation meeting where the affirmation vote to call the minister/commissioned pastor is acted upon.
3. Communication Link.
 - a. The supervisor shall send reports of the actions of the consistory and PST to the chair of CSS, generally bi-monthly. CSS may provide a report form for the supervisor to use.
 - b. The supervisor shall consult with CSS when unique circumstances seem to call for a change in the normative responsibilities of the supervisor.
 - c. The supervisor shall confer with the Interim/Transition Minister to identify and address issues within the church. Together they develop a strategy to resolve the issues.
 4. Other services may be agreed-upon by the Supervisor and the Consistory with the approval of the CSS committee.
 - a. The supervisor shall not be expected to perform pastoral duties, unless specific contractual arrangements are made between the supervisor and the consistory with suitable compensation for these services. Provision for such ministerial services may be arranged by the consistory through an agreement with the Interim Minister, another area minister or a theological student under the care of the classis.
 - b. The supervisor may preach/lead worship at the church occasionally and receive the normal honorarium provided to guest preachers.
 5. Remuneration. For services rendered, the church shall provide suitable compensation to the supervisor.
 - a. CSS recommends that the consistory compensate the supervisor at a rate of \$50.00 per Consistory or Search Committee meeting attended or \$200 per month whichever seems more equitable. The supervisor shall submit an account of the meetings attended to the church treasurer once per month, if the *per meeting* rate is chosen.
 - b. It is recognized that the supervisor may attend additional less formal meetings than the called consistory and PST meetings, and may not be compensated for each of these meetings.

Steps to complete during the Transition Period

A church may be guided through these steps either by the Classis supervisor, CSS team and/or Specialized Transition Minister. The classis normally prefers that the following steps be completed before a Call to a new pastor is signed and delivered to that person.

1. Ending Well

When the pastoral relationship with a congregation ends well, healing and preparation for the next pastor is accelerated. The following actions may happen:

 - a. A classis team will conduct an exit interview with the departing pastor.
 - b. A classis team will conduct an exit interview with the consistory.
 - c. Complete and submit a Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship to the CSS.
 - d. Complete a *Covenant for Our On-Going Relationship* between the departing pastor and the consistory with CSS approval.
 - e. Negotiate a Severance Agreement when necessary and secure CSS approval.
 - f. Aid the church in saying farewell, expressing appreciation, and when applicable, sending/commissioning their pastor to a new call.
 - g. Provide means for the congregation to heal. The departure of a pastor can be accompanied by feelings of grief, anger, hurt, fear, uncertainty, division and abandonment.

- h. Prepare a consistory for possible attrition in attendance and giving, and possible attempts to seize improper influence by individuals in the congregation.
- i. Make sure that plans and assignments are in place to cover the basics such as pastoral calling and preaching.

2. Who are we?

During a time of leadership transition, it is necessary for a church to honestly look at who they have become; to define “what is.” This phase is devoted to clarifying their strengths and challenges. Either the consistory will be actively involved in the following steps or a Transition Team may be formed to guide the process.

- Perform a self-study that includes analysis of congregational and community data.
- Conduct congregational forums to listen to the concerns and dreams of the members.
- Complete a health assessment such as Natural Church Development (NCD), Reveal, or review by a team of STMs.
- Review internal systems and organizational structures to evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness.

3. Where do we go from here?

It is now time to discern God’s call, with an accurate assessment of congregational and community needs and assets, the task is to clarify direction and define leadership needs.

- Define the mission, vision and values of the congregation.
- Complete a congregational profile.
- Write a position description for the next pastor.

4. Who will lead us there?

With clarity regarding the present, an agreed directive for the future, and a profile for the new pastor, it is time to launch the search process.

- Determine the search process, including the size, accountability and make-up of the Search Team, its working budget, communication and confidentiality expectations, and any other boundaries that will define their work.
- Assure that provision is made for this entire process to be upheld in prayer. This is a spiritual decision.
- Recruit, train and commission the Search Team.
- At the appropriate time, make sure that the following have been checked: primary references, second tier references, stated clerk of candidate’s current classis, criminal records, credit, etc.

5. Discerning, Deciding and Negotiating

After reading piles of profiles, conducting interviews and site visits, it’s time to come to a decision.

- Remember to notify the Classis Coordinator to schedule an interview between the classis committee and the leading candidate before the consistory or congregation registers their final vote.
- Once an official vote has been taken and the terms of the call have been negotiated, submit the completed Call Form with all the necessary signatures to the Classis Leader. Before submitting the form, confirm that the terms of the call meet current classis minimum salary guidelines.

6. Beginning a New Relationship

Now that the match has been made and the new pastor has arrived, it’s time to make it official and celebrate.

- Schedule an installation service. This is an official a classis event, however it is the classis' value to make it as personal for the congregation and new pastor as possible. In order to provide time to adequately inform the other churches in the classis and secure a presiding officer, please contact the Classis Coordinator at least 3 weeks before the proposed date.

7. Beginning Again

In order to get things started on the best foot, it is important that adequate orientation and helpful connections are made early in the new pastorate.

- A member of CSS or the supervisor will meet with the new pastor monthly for the first 6 months. They will help orient them to the congregation and to the community. This should include the location of area hospitals, counseling services, and other local resources.
- Holland Classis expects each of its pastors to be in a peer learning network and/or coaching relationship. The Classis Coordinator, with the Minister S & S Committee, can assist to make these connections.
- Pastors and their families often need some time and space to grieve what they have left behind. Although they may be excited to begin a new call, they have left friends, home, schools and fond memories.
- It is also recommended that the new pastor meet with the Search Team one more time after 6 months to check in with their expectations.
- It is recommended that 6 month reviews be set up for the 1st two years of a new pastorate in order to catch misunderstandings early and provide mutual affirmation during the early stages of this new relationship.

ⁱ RCA Call Form and the compensation standards are found on the Holland Classis website or may be obtained from the Classis Coordinator. The completed and consistory signed call form shall be delivered to the Classis Coordinator so that the Classis President and Stated Clerk may sign the call form and forward it to the candidate.