

# Plymouth Congregational UCC

## LCP-2 Personnel Policy

### Change History

DATE	CHANGE	MADE BY
3/20/13	Modified for new governance. Also changed eliminated “ordained” distinction in ministerial staff and removed reference to Assistant Minister.	LM
7/23/13	Hiring policy inserted as XIII.B. Prevention of harassment and abuse policy inserted as XIV.	LM
8/23/13	Vacation on calendar basis, study leave by PC, ordained to ministerial in a few cases in benefits. All based on PC review.	LM
4/9/14	Changed to reflect benefits for 80% FTE or more employees.	LM
1/12/15	Approved by Leadership Council	LC
1/14/18	Major revisions undertaken by the Personnel Committee	HC
6/10/19	Further revisions approved by the Leadership Council	HC
5/19/22	Revisions by Personnel Committee including changes in vacation leave policy, approved by the Leadership Council	BR, ML, Pers. Ctee
8/2024	Personnel Committee edits sent by Eldon to Moderator	ES
6/15/25	Modified to cover all ministers equally and reflect current staffing and performance review methods	TS
9/16/25	Approved by Leadership Council	CD

## Personnel Policy

### Preamble

The purpose of this document is to define the Personnel Policy. Further, it is to provide for the administration of the policy and to ensure that the employment, supervision, development, recognition, and separation of all Plymouth staff members are fair, uniform, and within the provisions of the constitution of Plymouth.

### I. Introduction

- A. Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ acknowledges the importance of all its staff members in the life of our church. All staff members are encouraged to see the whole church’s functioning as being facilitated by their specialized area of emphasis.
- B. **Administration of Plymouth:** The Minister’(s) administrative role is defined in the current job description(s). The Leadership Council shall be the executive body of the church, with fiduciary, legal, personnel, and strategic planning responsibilities.

## 1. Ministerial Staff

- a. Minister(s) shall be called for an indefinite term. When a vacancy occurs in a minister position, a committee to be known as the Pastoral Search Committee shall be elected by the congregation to seek a candidate. The constitution of the local church and policies of the Leadership Council shall describe the election and work of the Pastoral Search Committee.
- b. When a Minister has been selected and has accepted the call, the Committee on Ministry of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the UCC (RMCUCC) shall convene an Ecclesiastical Council for the purpose of recognizing and installing the Minister in accordance with the established usage. The Minister shall become a member of the church and the minister's ecclesiastical standing shall be transferred to the Conference at the first opportunity.
- c. The Ministerial Staff may be referred to as Pastoral Staff with the same meaning.

## 2. Program Staff

- a. Program staff are staff members who have areas of responsibility relating to worship, congregational nurture, and Christian formation. They include, but are not limited to, such positions as director of music and director of youth or adult formation. Program staff are exempt from the wage and hour provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and do not receive overtime pay. To be classified as exempt, the staff member must meet the primary duty test of the executive, administrative, or professional classification and be paid a weekly salary in excess of the amount set by the Department of Labor's regulations.
- b. The hiring of program staff and the description of their areas of responsibility shall be the task of the Leadership Council, working closely with the Minister(s) and the Personnel Committee. Appropriate boards may also be involved in the creation of job descriptions and serving on search committees. Ad hoc committees may be appointed to aid in the hiring process.

## 3. Administrative and Building Staff

- a. Administrative and building staff are staff members who assist the ministers and the program staff or who maintain the church building and grounds. They include, but are not limited to, such positions as office manager, business manager, and custodians.
- b. Administrative and building staff shall be hired by the Minister(s).

## II. Scope

This personnel policy covers all employed staff members of the church. The Minister(s), in consultation with the Personnel Committee, reserves the right to waive or modify any particular policy in the event of a specific hardship with any staff member.

## III. Overview

The staff of Plymouth plays an important role in the life of the church. Staff members are expected to show Christian consideration and cooperate with all other staff members,

members of the congregation, and the general public, even under trying circumstances. All staff members are encouraged to support the mission of the church and share a common interest in the development and success of the church. Plymouth staff members should be interested in, and in basic harmony with, the programs and goals of the church.

#### IV. **Federal and State Laws and Regulations**

##### A. TITLE VII - Equal Employment Opportunity

Plymouth is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity. To the extent permitted by law, the church recruits, hires, trains, promotes, and compensates individuals and makes personnel decisions without regard to race, color, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability unrelated to the individual's ability to perform the job.

##### B. Policy Against Sexual Harassment

Please see LCP-8 Safe Church Policy (see Plymouth's [website](#)).

##### C. Immigration Reform and Control Act

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 requires that employers hire only individuals who are authorized to work in the United States. All persons hired by Plymouth must present evidence of U.S. citizenship or eligibility to work in the United States by completing Section 1 of Form I-9 no later than the first day of work for pay and give supporting documentation to Plymouth. Plymouth will complete Form I-9 Section 2 no later than the third business day after the employee starts work for pay. All staff members will fill out an Employment Eligibility (I-9) form, which will be kept in their personnel file.

#### V. **Responsibility**

- A. **As described in the current job description(s)**, the Minister(s) have primary responsibility for the administration of these policies and procedures. The Minister(s) may take problem-solving action, keeping the Personnel Committee and Leadership Council informed of significant outcomes that may indicate the need for mediation or for revision of these policies.
- B. Each staff member is responsible for reading and understanding these policies and procedures. The supervisor will provide copies to each staff member.
- C. All staff members are responsible for furnishing their supervisor with necessary information regarding dates for vacation, sick days taken, leave of absence days, etc. A record of this information will be maintained by the supervisor.

#### VI. **Employment Status**

##### A. Job Descriptions

All staff members of Plymouth shall have job descriptions. Staff members have the responsibility to perform the job as outlined in the job description, including additional duties as assigned.

##### B. Initial Review Period

All new staff members, other than ministerial staff, are “probationary” for the first six months of employment. This policy allows Plymouth to determine whether the staff member is able to satisfactorily perform the work assigned. It also enables staff members to review their positions with Plymouth. If the staff member’s work is not satisfactory during this period, employment will be terminated. All new staff members are given a written review by their supervisor at the end of the Initial Review Period.

C. **Benefits Eligibility**

Full-time staff members are eligible for full employee benefits. Full-time employment shall be for a minimum of 40 hours per week. Benefits for eligible employees are effective from the date of hire.

VII. **Compensation**

- A. Salaries for all staff members shall be determined by the Leadership Council in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Minister(s).
- B. Salaries shall be reviewed at least once annually by the Personnel Committee in advance of the adoption of the new budget.
- C. **Hours:** Staff members may be asked to work hours at times other than the regularly scheduled work week. Staff members may adjust their regular work day to a different schedule with prior approval of their supervisor.
- D. **Lunch:** Staff members are entitled to an unpaid lunch break as prescribed by law. Lunch periods may not be accrued for use on other work days.
- E. **Overtime:** Every attempt should be made to complete work assignments during normal work hours. Overtime needs to be preapproved by the staff member’s supervisor. Overtime begins when a non-exempt staff member works more than 40 hours in a one-week, Sunday to Saturday, period. Paid holidays, paid leave days, paid vacation days, and unauthorized absences, during which the staff member does not work, will not be counted as hours worked in computing weekly overtime. Overtime shall be compensated at the rate of time-and-a-half.

VIII. **General Employment Expectations**

Staff members should feel free to discuss any problems or concerns at any time with their supervisor.

A. **Attendance**

If staff members are to be late or absent from work, it is their responsibility to contact their supervisor within the first scheduled hour of work. Absenteeism includes failure to report, late arrival, or early departure without authorization.

B. **Use of Church Property**

No Plymouth staff member shall use any Plymouth property, equipment, vehicles, or other materials for personal use without prior permission from the Minister(s).

C. **Confidentiality**

All staff members will sign a confidentiality agreement with Plymouth Church.

## D. Conduct

All Plymouth staff members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects favorably on themselves and on the church, demonstrating tact, courtesy, and good judgment. During working hours, staff members are expected to devote their energies and attention to the service of the church and not to personal affairs. Staff members are expected to present an appropriate appearance at all times.

## IX. Benefits

The benefits provided to employees of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ as described below are subject to review and may change based on costs and availability of coverage.

### A. Time Off

Paid time off benefits are available to staff who have a regular work schedule of 12 or more hours per week. Paid time off is not available to temporary or seasonal employees. Computation of overtime is on work hours only, not on hours taken as leave.

#### 1. Vacation

Vacation benefits are based on years of service:

For ministerial staff:

From hire to 5 year anniversary: 4 weeks per year

From 5 year anniversary: 5 weeks per year

For non-ministerial staff:

From hire to 5 year anniversary: 3 weeks per year

From 5 year anniversary: 4 weeks per year

The above vacation benefits are prorated based on each employee's normal schedule of work hours.

*Examples:* A full-time (40 hours schedule) employee's week of vacation is 40 hours. A half-time (20 hours schedule) employee's week of vacation is 20 hours.

Employees accrue vacation leave from their date of hire evenly throughout the year. Each pay period's accrual amount is credited to them on the last day of the pay period; employees who terminate prior to the last day of the pay period are not awarded a vacation accrual for the hours worked during that partial pay period. The amount of vacation earned and unused can accrue to a maximum of the employee's annual accrual rate plus one week.

*Examples:* An employee who earns vacation at a rate of 3 weeks per year can accrue up to 4 weeks of unused vacation. An employee who earns vacation at a rate of 4 weeks per year can accrue up to 5 weeks of unused vacation.

If unused vacation time reaches this ceiling, the employee ceases accruing additional vacation time until they use vacation and draw their accrued time below the ceiling. They begin accruing vacation leave again immediately upon drawing their unused time below the ceiling. Vacation time accrues on all work time and routine paid time off, including

holidays, vacation, sick, jury duty, study, and sabbatical leaves. Vacation time does not accrue during a personal or medical leave of absence or long-term disability leave.

Receiving pay in lieu of vacation time is not an option, with the exception that a terminating employee shall receive payment of accrued vacation as regular taxable earnings on the final paycheck, calculated by that employee's equivalent hourly rate of regular compensation (including salary and housing allowance) applied to the number of accrued hours being paid based on Colorado law.

The timing of staff absences will be arranged in such a manner as to ensure proper coverage of work tasks at the church.

## 2. Holidays

- a. Plymouth Church recognizes certain days during the year as paid holidays for its salaried staff members. The schedule of holidays shall be as follows:

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	Third Monday in January
Presidents' Day	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth	June 19
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday & Friday in November
Christmas Day	December 25
One Floater Day	Taken by each eligible staff member on a date of their choosing

- b. Any holiday that falls on a Saturday or Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.
- c. If work is required of hourly staff (whether or not they are PTO eligible) on a holiday, it shall be compensated at the rate of time-and-a-half.

## 3. Sick and Disability Leave

Sick leave benefits are accrued by staff members at the rate of 12 days per year, with each day being one-fifth of the employee's normally scheduled work week. The number of hours accrued is prorated based on each employee's normal schedule of work hours.

*Examples:* A full-time (40 hours schedule) employee accrues 12 days at 8 hours per day (96 hours) per year. A half-time (20 hours schedule) employee accrues 12 days at 4 hours per day (48 hours) per year.

Staff members accrue sick leave from their date of hire evenly throughout the year. Each pay period's accrual amount is credited to them on the last day of the pay period; staff members who terminate prior to the last day of the pay period are not awarded a sick leave accrual for the hours worked during that partial pay period. The amount of sick leave earned and unused can accrue to a maximum of 100 days (20 weeks) as defined above.

If unused sick leave reaches this ceiling, the employee ceases accruing additional sick leave until they draw their accrued time below the ceiling. They begin accruing sick leave again immediately upon drawing their unused time below the ceiling.

Sick leave may be used for personal or immediate family member illness or medical appointments. (Immediate family consists of spouse or partner, children, parents, brothers, sisters, or other relatives living in the same household.)

Sick leave accrues on all work time and routine paid time off, including holidays, vacation, sick, jury duty, study, and sabbatical leaves. Sick leave does not accrue during a personal or medical leave of absence or long-term disability leave.

Staff members terminating employment will not be paid for accrued and unused sick leave.

#### 4. Jury Duty

Full-time and part-time-staff members are excused for jury duty and will receive full salary while serving.

#### 5. Leave of Absence

- a. Full-time staff members may request to interrupt their employment for a period of time. Such a leave of absence may be granted by the Minister(s) with approval of the Personnel Committee.
- b. During a leave of absence, salary is not paid. Benefits will be continued at the employee's expense.

#### 6. Study Leave

Ministerial staff shall be granted up to two weeks annual study leave with pay (prorated for part-time ministerial staff) within the following guidelines:

- a. Study leave is not additional vacation, but it may be taken in conjunction with vacation.
- b. Study leave must be directly related to career goals and objectives as well as the development of skills that are useful to Plymouth. Therefore, it is granted only when clearly identified targets have been agreed upon for the particular study leave being requested.
- d. Satisfactory provisions must be made to cover the staff member's work.
- e. Study leave, if granted, must be used within the period designated and is not cumulative from year to year.
- f. A request for study leave for the Minister(s) will be reviewed and may be granted by the Personnel Committee or their supervisor. A brief written report on the specific accomplishments of the leave will be presented to the Personnel Committee and their supervisor.
- g.
- h. Plymouth may provide time off and cover payment of fees and expenses for staff members' job-related growth experiences, including continuing education, upon

the recommendation of the supervisor and the approval of the Minister(s), and subject to the availability of funds.

#### 7. Sabbatical Leave

- a. In its commitment to the growth and development of its ministerial staff, Plymouth, through its Personnel Committee, shall administer a sabbatical leave program.
- b. Ministerial staff, after each five years of service, may apply for a sabbatical leave with full salary and benefits for up to three months. In consultation with the Personnel Committee and their supervisor and with the approval of the Leadership Council, ministerial staff may be granted a three-month sabbatical leave at full salary or a six-month sabbatical leave at half salary and half benefits. Regular accrued vacation may be granted in addition to the sabbatical leave. Full salary shall be paid for vacation.
- c. A written plan for the use of the sabbatical leave shall be developed in consultation with the Personnel Committee and shall be implemented after the approval of the Leadership Council.
- d. A brief written report on the sabbatical experience will be submitted to the Personnel Committee and Leadership Council within three months of return.
- e. Sabbatical leaves may not be taken simultaneously by two ministers of the church. The ministers not on sabbatical leave will be responsible for all pastoral services during a sabbatical leave of the other minister on the staff. If additional or replacement pastoral services are needed in the absence of one of the ministers, Leadership Council should allocate an appropriate amount each year in the church budget for the purpose of replacing the minister.
- f. It is expected that a person will continue in the service of Plymouth Church for a period of at least one (1) year following the sabbatical leave.

#### 8. Bereavement Leave

Plymouth Church allows a maximum of five days of paid leave for staff members (pro-rated for part-time staff members) following the death of a member of their immediate family in order to attend to needs related to the loss, including legal and family matters, funeral or memorial services, and other obligations. Immediate family consists of spouse or partner, children, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, or other relatives living in the same household. One day of paid leave is granted upon the death of other relatives.

In the event more time is needed, the Minister, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, may grant additional days of paid leave or unpaid excused absence. In the case of the Minister(s) needing extra time, the Leadership Council, with recommendation of the Personnel Committee, may grant additional days of paid leave or unpaid excused absence.

#### 9. Parental Leave

A full-time or part-time staff member who has at least six months of continuous service is eligible for parental leave in the period immediately preceding and following the arrival by birth, adoption, or guardianship of a child as follows:

- a. Staff members taking parental leave must use up all accumulated vacation time and all but two weeks of accumulated sick leave first. A staff member is then eligible for up to three months leave at 50% of normal pay. Any approved leave beyond three months will be leave without pay.
- b. The staff member should normally apply for the leave at least one month in advance of the expected arrival of the child, specifying the amount of leave time desired.
- c. Benefit coverage will continue at the expense of the church during the parental leave period, up to three months; after three months the coverage may be continued at the staff member's expense.
- d. If both parents are employed by Plymouth, parental leave will not be granted simultaneously.
- e. Upon completion of parental leave, staff members will be eligible to return to their position.
- f. Any salary increase action for which the staff member may become eligible in the course of the leave will be effective on return to employment.
- g. A written plan for parental leave must be submitted to their supervisor and Personnel Committee (and in the case of the Minister(s) taking parental leave, to the Leadership Council and Personnel Committee) requesting parental leave.

## 10. Military Duty

Any staff member called to temporary active duty, such as National Guard or Civil Air Patrol, will be excused for this purpose without pay.

### B. Other Benefits

#### 1. Annuity and Retirement Fund

All ministerial staff shall be enrolled in an appropriate pension plan. Plymouth will make contributions to the ministerial staff members' plan at the rate of 14% of base salary or the figure currently suggested by the denomination's pension boards. Ministerial clergy contribution will be at the rate established by the United Church of Christ Pension Boards.

All full-time staff members in other employment categories shall be enrolled in an appropriate pension plan. Plymouth will make contributions to the ministerial staff members' plan at the rate of 7% of base salary.

#### 2. FICA

- a. Plymouth shall pay the employer's share of FICA payroll employment taxes for all staff members, as required by the law.
- b. Ordained members of the clergy are generally not subject to the FICA system of paying for Social Security and Medicare, but instead pay for these programs through self-employment tax, under SECA. The SECA self-employed tax system applies double the rate paid by lay employees, including what would be both the "employee" and "employer" share under the FICA system. In line with UCC

guidelines, Plymouth provides an offset allowance based on half the self-employment tax rate (i.e., the same rate the church pays as employer for lay employees). The allowance is calculated on the sum of salary and housing allowance and is included as extra taxable earnings on each paycheck.

### 3. Housing Allowance

Plymouth shall annually designate a housing allowance based on the minister's election approved by the Leadership Council a portion of the total compensation paid to ministers or provide a parsonage, in accordance with Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. Such designation must be made prospectively, for earnings not yet paid, not retrospectively for earnings already received. The designation shall be recorded in the minutes of the Leadership Council.

### 4. Group Health, Dental, Vision, Disability, and Life Insurance

- a. Plymouth Church shall provide and pay the premiums for health, dental, vision, disability, and group life insurance through its designated insurance carrier(s) to all settled ministerial staff and to non-ministerial staff working 80% or more FTE (full time equivalent). Non-ministerial staff members working less than 80% FTE may elect to participate in these insurance plans at their own expense, subject to the insurance carrier's underwriting guidelines.
  - b. For ministerial staff, the church extends health, dental, and vision insurance coverage at the employer's expense to the minister's spouse and dependents, upon successful completion of enrollment in such plans.
  - c. Non-ministerial staff may add spouses and/or dependents to their insurance coverage at the employee's expense upon successful completion of enrollment in such plans. The additional expense for such extended coverage will be deducted through a pre-tax payroll deduction on the employee's paycheck.
  - d. Enrollment in these group insurance plans must be made within the enrollment period as defined in the policy of each plan, including open enrollment periods.
  - e. A staff member may not elect to receive a salary adjustment in lieu of health insurance coverage.
5. The church may provide for short-term counseling for staff members in conflict resolution, stress management, finance or substance abuse areas at the discretion of the Minister(s). If the Minister(s) needs such services, the Personnel Committee and Moderator may approve such services.

### 6. Worker's Compensation

Staff members who are injured during the hours of employment on the job will be covered by the Colorado State Workers' Compensation Act. Every injury, no matter how trivial, must be reported immediately to the Minister(s) or their supervisor or benefits could be lost.

## X. **Problem Solving**

Plymouth desires to maintain an open and frank atmosphere in which questions, suggestions, problems, or complaints can be raised without fear of reprisal. Staff members are encouraged

to raise questions and suggest improvements at any time, including suggestions for improvements in these personnel policies.

Staff members who encounter problems or difficulties with another staff member, or who have suggestions or questions, are always encouraged to work first and directly with that staff member. If the issue cannot be resolved on a personal level, the following steps should be followed:

- Staff members raising the issue or question should consult their own supervisors and ask for assistance in resolution;
- If a staff member has a complaint against their immediate supervisor and direct conversation does not lead to resolution, the staff member may take the complaint directly to the Minister(s).
- If the issue is unresolved, staff members and supervisors should consult the Minister(s);
- If the resolution proposed by the Minister is unacceptable to those involved, the Minister will propose a conversation among staff members and the Personnel Committee or a trained mediator;
- Should that conversation be unproductive, staff members may resort to the grievance procedure outlined below.
- If a staff member has a complaint against the Minister(s) and the Minister(s) is their immediate supervisor, they should submit their complaint to the Personnel Committee. In such a circumstance, the Minister will recuse themselves from participating in deliberations regarding the complaint.
- If no resolution is reached at this point, the Personnel Committee will take the complaint to the Moderator team consisting of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Past Moderator, for further discussion, investigation, and final resolution.

## **XI. Grievance Procedure**

Plymouth is committed to treating staff members honestly and fairly within the parameters of these personnel policies. If staff members feel that a personnel policy has been applied incorrectly, or if the processes in Section X have been exhausted, they may file a formal grievance, which will be handled as follows:

- The staff member should submit a written grievance to the Minister(s), the Personnel Committee and the Leadership Council;
- The Minister(s), Personnel Committee and Moderators will gather information from all parties involved and shall prepare a written response within twenty days. The response of the committee is final.
- In the event that a staff member desires to file a grievance against the Minister, that staff member should submit a written grievance to the Personnel Committee. The process will then proceed as described in the final two bullet points under Section X, Problem Solving.

## **XII. Performance, Feedback, and Reviews**

All staff members employed by Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ are to be reviewed annually, or more often when requested by the staff member, supervisor, or Personnel Committee.

Strict standards of compassionate openness, honesty, and confidentiality are expected of all involved. There are two different processes. There is a feedback and review process for ministers and one for other staff members.

### **A. Congregational Feedback for Ministers**

The Leadership Council will engage in an annual review of the Minister(s).

The Personnel Committee will conduct an annual process to provide feedback from members to the ministers that shall include the following:

- The Personnel Committee shall devise a review process that includes feedback from members of the congregation and the staff, including all ministers. Any written reviews of feedback forms must be signed in order to be considered. Those persons submitting reviews or feedback forms will be given the option to have their names shared with the ministers.
- Any written review or feedback forms will be sent to the Personnel Committee. The forms will be kept in a secure location and destroyed one year after the review is completed.
- The Personnel Committee will compile the responses and create a summary document about each minister.
- The summaries will be sent to an evaluation committee of the Leadership Council that will include the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Past Moderator, and a member of the Personnel Committee. The Leadership Council committee will conduct personal interviews with each minister based on the summary documents and a written self-evaluation. Each minister will have access to their summary. The committee will determine how to handle any negative comments from the congregation or staff that are deemed appropriate for attention.
- It shall be the responsibility of the Moderator to report to the congregation that the feedback process has taken place.

### **B. Performance Reviews**

All non-ministerial staff members working 50-percent time or more are to be provided a review annually. The process will be conducted by the direct supervisor of the staff member with Personnel Committee assistance if requested by the direct supervisor or the staff member.

All staff members will write a self-evaluation of their work during the previous year. The self-evaluation will be based on their job descriptions and the goals they set with their supervisor. New goals for the upcoming year will be established.

The Minister(s) is responsible for ensuring that all staff members receive timely and helpful performance evaluations.

### XIII. Separations

#### A. Resignations

1. Should a member of the ministerial staff desire to dissolve the pastoral relationship, that person shall notify the Moderator in writing, who, in turn, shall submit the resignation to the Leadership Council. When accepted, the resignation shall become effective at the end of sixty days, unless otherwise agreed upon by both the Minister and the Leadership Council.
2. All other staff members may resign by submitting a resignation letter to their supervisor at least fourteen days before the effective date, or otherwise by mutual agreement.
3. If a staff member voluntarily resigns, a final paycheck will be issued on the next regular payday following the last day worked. If a staff member is dismissed, a final paycheck will be issued on the last day worked as required by Colorado law. If the staff member is insured, insurance will continue through the last day of the month terminated. Retirement contributions will cease with the staff member's agreed-upon end date. Staff members should keep the Church informed of address changes so that W-2 forms and other mail can be properly forwarded.
4. When a staff member working 50-percent time or more resigns or retires, the Personnel Committee should arrange for an exit interview in executive session.
  - a. The exit interview should be conducted with a minimum of two members of the Personnel Committee, excluding the Minister(s), unless requested by the staff member. The staff member may request addition of a member of Leadership Council, and also ask for exclusion of an interview member based on cause.
  - b. When a ministerial staff person resigns, a member of the Committee on Ministry of the Rocky Mountain Conference may be invited to the exit interview if requested either by the minister or the church.

#### B. Dismissal

In cases of unsatisfactory performance, the corrective action process is:

- **Verbal discussion:** In the first instance of a minor offense, a verbal discussion is conducted with the staff member by a supervisor. The staff member has an opportunity for comment, and specific recommendations are made for correction and follow-up.
- **Written notification:** If the same or more serious offenses occur, a written notice shall be given by the supervisor, stating the exact nature of the offense(s), specifying possible future disciplinary action, and again making specific recommendations for correction and follow-up. A copy of the notice is placed in the staff member's file. The staff member is required to read and sign the formal notice and has the right to appeal to the Personnel Committee if the member feels that the notice is unjustified.
- **Dismissal:** If unacceptable behavior continues, termination of a staff member may follow.

- **Ministerial staff:** The relationship between the church and an ordained minister may be dissolved by either party through written notice of intent sixty days prior to the effective date. If it is the church's intent to terminate the employment of an ordained pastor, such action shall require a majority vote of the congregation at a meeting duly called for that purpose. Notification of the severance of the relationship between an ordained minister and the church shall be sent by the Moderator to the Conference Minister and to the chair of the Committee on Ministry of the Rocky Mountain Association. Because the relationship with an interim minister is different from a called minister, the process for terminating a relationship with an interim minister is spelled out in their hiring agreement.
- **Program staff** may be terminated by a majority vote of the Leadership Council upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee.
- **Administrative and building staff** may be terminated by the supervisor after consultation with the Leadership Council.

#### XIV. Hiring Policy

- A. Members of Plymouth are generally considered ineligible to be considered or hired as permanent church staff. However, under certain circumstances members can be hired as temporary staff.
- B. Members of Plymouth permanent staff are welcome to join the congregation, and will sign a policy statement at the time of hiring to affirm their understanding that:
  1. Their staff responsibilities are primary;
  2. They must take care to separate the voice used to express personal opinions as a congregational member from that used to give opinions as a professional staff member concerning congregational decisions: and
  3. They will be asked to take a hiatus from Plymouth programs and worship when they leave a position.
- C. Temporary staff members will be subject to the expectations found in B, 1 and 2 above. Should it be considered beneficial to the church community, temporary staff may become permanent at the request of the Minister(s) and with the permission of both the Personnel Committee and Leadership Council.
- D. When a permanent staff member leaves, that person will be asked to take a hiatus from Plymouth programs, including, but not limited to worship, social events, committees, and meetings.
  1. In the case of program and administrative staff members, the Personnel Committee shall set the duration of the hiatus during the exit interview with the staff member. If the staff member does not choose to attend the exit interview, the Personnel Committee will determine the length of the hiatus. The staff members will sign a statement of understanding that will reside in their personnel file. Staff members may again serve as a volunteer after hiatus in the same areas in which they have previously held professional responsibilities unless the Personnel Committee and/or Leadership

Council believe such action would be harmful to the church community. Each situation will be considered separately as it arises.

2. In congruence with the prevailing customs and ethics of the UCC, ministerial staff who wish to return to Plymouth's congregational life after prior permanent service at Plymouth, must first be in consultation with the Rocky Mountain Conference as well as Plymouth's Personnel Committee, Leadership Council, and the Minister(s). Decisions concerning renewing participation in Plymouth programs will be made after such discussions.

#### **XV. Variances**

In consultation with the Personnel Committee, Leadership Council reserves the right to issue variances to this document when needed.

### **Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding**

I have received, understand, and agree to the contents of this Personnel Policy.

Staff Member Signature:

Date:

Staff Member Name: