

<b>Guidelines for Pastoral Care Referrals</b>			
Source: Staff	Authority: Session	Original Approval Date: 2003  Last Review Date: -	Next Review Date: Dec. 2013
<p><b>Purpose of Policy:</b></p> <p>To ensure that information concerning pastoral care needs is communicated to those who should respond, and to provide a record of the information, including the response.</p>			
<p><b>Theological Rationale:</b></p> <p>Pastoral Care is an essential component of our ministry at Eastminster. Effective and timely communication is necessary to ensuring that the highest-possible quality of pastoral care is provided. It is important that any messages related to pastoral care received at the church office be communicated accurately and immediately to those who have responsibility for this ministry.</p>			

- 1.0** When information is received, by telephone or in person, concerning a member of the church family who is experiencing a pastoral care 'situation' (illness, bereavement, family crisis, etc), the person receiving the information should, first, respond with the caring and concern which we owe to each other as sisters and brothers in Christ and then, communicate the information to other church volunteers and staff who should respond on behalf of the congregation.
- 2.0** In each case, the person receiving the information will prepare a **Pastoral Care Referral Sheet** (yellow), including the names of the person **taking** the information, the person **providing** the information, and the person/family **about whom**, the information is given. Include details of the pastoral care 'situation' and indicate **all** action taken.
- 3.0** When information about a pastoral care 'situation' is received, it will normally be referred to both the appropriate elder and to the minister with lead responsibility for pastoral care:
  - To elder:** Using the Family List, find the name of the person/family's elder. Call the elder and pass on the information. If the elder cannot be reached by telephone, leave a note for other church staff to make the contact later.
  - To pastors:** The information will normally be given as soon as possible to the minister with lead responsibility for pastoral care. If he/she is not available, the information should be given to another member of the ministry staff or to the Ministry Locum on duty. The form of the referral should be indicated on the **Referral Sheet**.
- 4.0** When staff have responded to the pastoral care 'situation,' the **Referral Sheet** is returned to the minister with lead responsibility for pastoral care.
- 5.0** All personal information received by office volunteers and staff is to be considered **CONFIDENTIAL** and treated accordingly. Notes left for elders will be sealed, and **Referral Sheets** will be transmitted in a way which protects the confidentiality of the information which they provide.