

A Word to the Wise

Pastor Jess loves Alamance Presbyterian Church. The relationships she has built with us over the last seven years will last a lifetime. She will celebrate our joys and grieve our losses.

After March 15, however, her relationship with us will be fundamentally different. While she will always be our friend, she will no longer be our pastor. During this transition, there are important boundaries we must observe.

Some come directly from the **Book of Order** of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

G-2.0905: After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.

Salem Presbytery's policy makes these boundaries even clearer. Departing pastors are asked not to return to their former church for one year after the next pastor is called. Any contact with the congregation must occur with the permission of the moderator of the session.

While this may seem strict, the policy protects the congregation, the departing pastor, and the new pastor. When a pastor accepts a call to a new congregation, their pastoral responsibility belongs there. Both pastor and congregation need space

to build their own relationship without the continuing demands of the former church. Even well-intended contact can distract from the real needs of the new congregation.

If you reach out to Pastor Jess with pastoral concerns, she will respond kindly but will direct you to Pastor Kyle or another APC staff member. She will not be available for weddings or funerals and will not return to participate in church events.

Because Jess still has family in our area, you may see her in the community. Please greet her warmly and ask about her new life in Swannanoa. You can ask about book clubs or the welfare of her corgis. But it is not appropriate to discuss matters related to her pastoral role at Alamance. Please do not take offense if she declines that conversation.

These boundaries are not a punishment. They provide healthy structure for a relationship that is changing, yet still deeply meaningful.

If you have questions, please contact Pastor Kyle, who will be glad to share more about these policies and the best ways to be in relationship with Pastor Jess moving forward.

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