

# The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

## Ministerial Guidelines for Retiring

Retirement is a very personal decision. If you are married, the decision should be made in careful consultation with your spouse. The decision should not be made in haste. You are encouraged to make final decisions about retirement only after much thought and prayer about all of the implications.

### **When May I Retire?**

Full retirement benefits are available to vested members of the Benefits Plan at age 65. You may retire as early as age 55 for pension benefits. However, these benefits are actuarially adjusted as a result of the early retirement option. Full retirement benefits begin at age 63 for credits accrued under the Board of Annuities and Relief of the PCUS.

You may defer commencement of your pension beyond the Normal Retirement Date but no later than the required beginning Date. This is called “Post-Normal Retirement Age Option”. This may have a significant positive impact on the pension you will receive.

If you are not working, you must initiate your retirement pension by April 1 following the calendar year in which you attain age 70 ½.

All retirement benefits will begin on the first of the month. This means that if a member retires, for example, on March 15, his or her retirement benefit will not begin until the first of the following month, April 1. Mid-month commencement dates are not possible.

You are *urged* to contact The Board of Pensions prior to making a decision regarding retirement. The telephone number of The Board of Pensions is 800-773-7752. The website of The Board of Pensions is [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org).

For purposes of Social Security retirement benefits, the full retirement age gradually increases from age 65 eventually reaching age 67 for persons born after 1959.

You are *urged* to contact the Social Security Administration prior to making a decision regarding retirement. The telephone number of Social Security is 800-772-1213. The website of Social Security is [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). Online filing for retirement benefits is safe, easy, and is the most convenient method of filing. You can also apply for disability benefits over the Internet. Medicare’s website is [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

### **What Should I Do as I Think About Retiring?**

- A. You are encouraged to participate in one or more Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars offered by The Board of Pensions. It is strongly suggested that you participate in a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar a number of years prior to age 65. It is also strongly recommended that you again participate in a Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar of The Board of Pensions after

age 60. Consult the web site of The Board of Pensions or call the Presbytery Office for information about Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars offered by The Board of Pensions.

- B. When you begin to think of the possibility of retiring in the next two or three years, contact our General Presbyter to find out if the presbytery will hold a workshop for those nearing retirement. This would be an excellent and informative event for you and your spouse. In such a workshop you will learn the process of retirement within this presbytery, up to date information about the details of retirement, and have an opportunity to clarify your expectations regarding the early post-retirement years.
- C. You may obtain from The Board of Pensions the booklet *Information for Members Planning to Retire*. Another helpful booklet is *Guide to Social Security and Medicare*. [[www.imercer.com/socialsecurity](http://www.imercer.com/socialsecurity)]. The Mercer Guide is a simple explanation with easy-reference benefit tables.
- D. Talk with and decide with your spouse the location of your first home in retirement. The location that you determined in earlier years may not be appropriate at this stage of your life.
- E. Consider with your spouse the financial assets and liabilities that you will have in retirement.

Assets include: Social Security Benefits, Pension Benefits from the Board of Pensions and other sources, and other retirement plans and financial assets that you and your spouse have accumulated.

Those retiring as members of the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina may be eligible to participate in the Kate B. Reynolds Fund. Eligibility is defined as active service as a member of presbytery for the last five years of ministry or a total of ten years of ministry served while a member of a presbytery within North Carolina. Another requirement is maintaining membership in a presbytery within the state of North Carolina. Funds from the Kate B. Reynolds Fund are normally distributed in June and December. As of 2012 eligible persons receive approximately \$2,000 a year. For more information, contact the General Presbyter/ Stated Clerk.

Liabilities may include: mortgage on your home, cost of purchasing a home following retirement, credit card balances, and other debt that you may carry into retirement. Consider the assets and liabilities that are in your name, jointly in your name and that of your spouse, and in your spouse's name. There are excellent sources that you can find on the World Wide Web that will assist you in your consideration of your assets and liabilities.

- F. Consult with your Regional Service Team at the Board of Pensions to learn about different types of individual healthcare coverage available to you and your spouse in your retirement years. Be certain that you understand the options, cost, and extent of healthcare coverage after you retire and especially if you and/or your spouse are thinking of retirement prior to age 65.

- G. There are several very knowledgeable persons in our presbytery who are willing to assist you as you begin to consider retirement. You may obtain their names from our General Presbyter/Stated Clerk.

### **What is a Good Time Line?**

- A. The Board of Pensions offers the following suggestions. [*Information for Members Planning to Retire*, Page 6]
- Contact your local Social Security office four months before the date of retirement. It normally takes at least three months to establish Social Security retirement benefits. [Note: the length of time may vary and may be shorter.]
  - Request a retirement application package from the Board of Pensions at least 90 days before retirement to allow sufficient time for processing. You must complete the Retirement Pension Application, the Application for Election of Pension Option and a tax withholding form to begin receiving pension benefits. Allow time to obtain the required certification of retirement from your employing organization. This certification is given by our General Presbyter/Stated Clerk after the Committee on Ministry has given approval. You can obtain a Retirement Application Packet by calling your Regional Service Team of the Board of Pensions at 800-773-7752.
  - Your Retirement Application Packet will include a pension quotation. Your request for a packet must include the expected date of retirement, birth dates for you and your spouse, and your current address.
- B. Contact the General Presbyter/Stated Clerk of our presbytery at least four months before your anticipated date of retirement. Ask for an appointment and consult with the General Presbyter/Stated Clerk of our presbytery *before* you talk with *any person* related to your congregation.

### **What If My Doctor Tells/Suggests That I Should Retire?**

Consider exploring the possibility of **disability** with the Board of Pensions if your doctor tells/suggests that you should retire. It may be to your financial advantage to draw from the Board of Pensions disability benefits rather than a pension. Disability benefits from the Board of Pensions are solely at the discretion of the Board of Pensions. The Board of Pensions makes the decision after consulting with your doctors.

### **Does The Presbytery Have Policies Regarding How Ministers Relate to Their Former Church(es)?**

**Yes!** Policies are available regarding how former pastors, retirees as well as others who move on, relate to the church(es) previously served. You may obtain the policies by contacting our General Presbyter/Stated Clerk or the Administrative Assistant of Presbytery. It is **never** too early to have these policies as you begin to think about retirement.

## **What Will I Do With My Time in Retirement?**

This is a very personal decision that should be made in consultation with your spouse. It is wonderful if you have a hobby you love. The days, weeks and months can be long in retirement if you cannot fill the time with meaningful activities. This is especially true if your health continues to be good. Ministers in retirement enjoy many various activities. These include: a hobby; golf, tennis, or other sport; various volunteer activities; travel (but you will quickly realize that you probably will not travel most or all of the time); serving as a Temporary Supply, Stated Supply, Interim Pastor or Parish Associate; work in committees of presbytery or the synod; begin a second career. The list of possible activities in retirement is long and is limited only by limits of imagination and/or creativity.

It is the responsibility of each person to push their imagination and creative thinking in exploring potential retirement activities.

A good idea is to take the week long **Interim Pastor Training** if you are *remotely* considering the possibility of serving as an Interim Pastor from your home or “away from home” following your retirement. More information about Interim Pastor Training can be had by talking with the General Presbyter/Stated Clerk of our presbytery or with the Committee on Ministry.

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