

# **WHEN TO INITIATE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CLOSING A CHURCH**

***"For Everything There Is A Season..."***

**One of the most solemn responsibilities of a presbytery is to assist a congregation in their discernment of whether the time has come to close/dissolve? the church. This responsibility lies with the session of the church, the Committee on Ministry and General Council, with the primary leadership coming from General Council (responsible for the mission/vision of the presbytery.) Another partner in these conversations may be representatives from Evangelism and Renewal.**

**Knowing when the time has come to initiate these conversations is difficult. Below are listed some indicators that would alert all parties that the time to initiate consultation is imminent:**

- active membership roll falls below 25**
- no members under the age of 70**
- inability or failure to submit session records for review**
- inability or failure to file annual statistical report**
- no regular pastoral leadership**
- expenses consistently exceed income**
- inability or failure to maintain church facility**
- inability or failure to send a commissioner to presbytery meetings**
- inability or failure to elect and/or install elders**

**The above list is not meant to be exhaustive . Other significant signs may be added at later dates.**

**The presence of one or more of the above indicators may initiate the consultation. It is hoped that the session of the church would take the lead and seek counsel from the presbytery. And, just because these conversations have begun does not mean that closure is a mandate. That conclusion will only be reached after all other avenues for renewal are exhausted.**

**In the event that the decision to close is reached and is to be recommended to the presbytery, the expectation is that the congregation will find creative ways to celebrate the ministry of the church – its history and mission – with the presbytery. The presbytery will work with the church's leadership in all ways possible to be sure that the affairs of the church are handled with dignity and respect as the life-cycle of the church's ministry comes to conclusion.**