

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Q: Are things told to me in confidence in my capacity as a pastor confidential?

A: Yes. Iowa law recognizes a “testimonial” privilege for certain clergy communications. Iowa Code §522.10(a) says:

[A] member of the clergy shall not be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication properly entrusted to the person in the person's professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable the person to discharge the functions of the person's office according to the usual course of practice or discipline.

This privilege does not belong to the clergy member. It belongs to the person who made the disclosure and may be waived by that person.