

Policy on Membership Status and Validated Ministries

Preamble: As the Lord has set aside through calling certain members to be Minister of the Word and Sacrament, so the church confirms that call through the action of the presbytery. The presbytery shall determine whether a particular work may be helpful to the church in mission and is a call to validated ministry requiring ordination as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament. In the performance of that ministry, the Minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be accountable to the presbytery. Minister of the Word and Sacrament have membership in the presbytery by action of the presbytery itself, and no pastoral relationship may be established, changed, or dissolved without the approval of the presbytery. (G-2.0502)

Each presbytery determines the Minister of the Word and Sacraments who are its members and validates the ministries in which they are to be engaged. It shall be guided in this determination by written criteria developed by the presbytery for validating ministries within its bounds.

Categories of Membership

A Minister of the Word and Sacrament is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, be a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery or be honorably retired. G-2.0503.

Minister of the Word and Sacrament as Defined in G-2.0501

- *Preachers and teachers of the Word:* they shall preach and teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service.
- *Font and table:* they shall interpret and “show forth” the mysteries of grace in word and action, lifting the people’s vision toward the hope of God’s new creation.
- *Pastors:* they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life.
- *Presbyters:* they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ’s body through devotion, debate and decision.

A. Validated Ministry

Requirements for Validated Ministry from the Book of Order

The Presbytery shall determine whether a particular work may be

- *helpful to the church in mission and*
- *is a call to validated ministry requiring ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament (G-2.0502).*

Noting that it is the ministry, not the person, who is validated, the following requirements of the Book of Order must be met:

1. Demonstrate conformity with the mission of God’s people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, The Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order of this church;

2. *Serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;*
3. *Give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word;*
4. *Be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and*
5. *Include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G.5-0201).*

When Minister of the Word and Sacraments are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

Requirements of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

In determining which Minister of the Word and Sacraments have validated ministries, the membership subcommittee shall be guided by the requirements of G-2.0503a and the following requirements:

1. If a Minister of the Word and Sacrament's primary place of employment is not within the bounds of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area then, in addition to each annual report, there must be a separate written request for permission to labor outside the bounds of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.
2. Each Minister of the Word and Sacrament will provide evidence of the performance of ecumenical, ecclesiastical, and/or religious activities reflective of the status of ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament that may include, but are not limited to, preaching and administering the sacraments.

Process of Validation

The work of the COM's sub-committee known as the Membership Committee is responsible for recommending to the COM that the ministry of a Minister of the Word and Sacrament engaged in a specialized ministry outside the jurisdiction of the church be validated.

The person seeking validation for a given work shall submit a job description, information on accountability for their work, and address each of the five requirements from the Book of Order in writing.

The membership sub-committee shall review the written application for validation, follow up as needed, and bring a recommendation to the COM.

Annual expectations of Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in a Validated Ministry

1. Submit their annual report each year.
2. Attend at least one presbytery meeting each year.
3. Participate in a presbytery committee on a regular basis (on a committee for 3-6 years and then off for 1 or 2 years before taking another assignment).
4. Be up to date on boundaries and ethics training required by the Presbytery.
5. Show evidence of engagement in the life of a congregation of the presbytery or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA).
6. Provide evidence of the performance of ecumenical, ecclesiastical, and/ or religious activities reflective of the status of ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament that may include, but are not limited to, preaching and administering the sacraments.
7. Will ordinarily maintain his/her permanent and or primary residence within the bounds of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Ministries we will *not* ordinarily validate:

- Positions outside the bounds of the Presbytery (we ordinarily encourage people to belong to the presbytery in which they serve). The notable exceptions are transitional/interim positions and service to the greater church.
- Doctoral studies
- Positions that have no accountability structure.

B. Members At-Large:

Requirements for Members At-Large from the Book of Order

A member-at-large is a Minister of the Word and Sacrament who has previously been engaged in a validated ministry, and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G2.0503a.

- *A Minister of the Word and Sacrament may be designated a member-at-large because he or she is limited in his or her ability to engage in a ministry fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry due to family responsibilities or other individual circumstances recognized by the presbytery.*
- *A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of a congregation.*
- *A member-at-large is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office.*
- *The status of member-at-large shall be reviewed annually. G-2.0503b*

Requirements of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

1. Each year, the membership sub-committee of the COM shall receive all annual reports of Minister of the Word and Sacraments who are members-at-large, and the COM shall report annually the list of Members-at Large in the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

2. Persons may be granted at-large status upon annual review for a maximum of five years, at which point the person shall be invited to meet with the Membership Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry regarding future vocational plans.
3. The COM will act upon the recommendation of the Subcommittee as to whether to continue the person as a member-at-large or to remove them from the roles.

Annual expectations of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are Members at Large

1. Submit their annual report each year.
2. Attend at least one presbytery meeting each year.
3. Participate in a presbytery committee on a regular basis (on a committee for 3-6 years and then off for 1 or 2 years before taking another assignment).
4. Be up to date on boundaries and ethics training required by the Presbytery.
5. Show evidence of engagement in the life of a congregation of the presbytery or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA).
6. Provide evidence of the performance of ecumenical, ecclesiastical, and/ or religious activities reflective of the status of ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament that may include including, but are not limited to, preaching and administering the sacraments.
7. Will ordinarily maintain his/her permanent and or primary residence within the bounds of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

C. Honorably Retired Members

Requirements of Honorably Retired from the Book of Order

Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age or physical or mental disability. G-2.0503c

Presbytery Encouragement for Honorably Retired Members

1. Honorably Retired members of presbytery are encouraged to participate in the presbytery as they are able.
2. Honorably retired members are asked to complete a form each year to keep the presbytery up to date on activities and address, etc. by completing the Annual Report of Honorably Retired Members.

D. Failure to Engage in Validated Ministry or Meet Criteria for Member at Large

From the Book of Order

A Minister of the Word and Sacrament whom the presbytery determines no longer to be engaged in a validated ministry (G-2.0503a) or to fulfill the criteria for membership-at-large (G-2.0503b), and who is not honorably retired (G-2.0503c), shall not have voice or vote in meetings of the presbytery, except when the matter under consideration pertains to his or her relationship to the presbytery.

Names of such persons shall be reported annually to the presbytery by the stated clerk.

If after three years the Minister of the Word and Sacrament does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, the presbytery may delete that person's name from the roll of membership and, upon request of a session, dismiss that person to a congregation. G-2.0508.

Policy of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

1. The Committee on Ministry may, at its discretion, remove the validation of a ministry if a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church fails to meet the annual expectations spelled out in this policy.
2. The Presbytery reserves the right not to validate any ministry of a Minister of Word and Sacrament who is laboring within the bounds of the Presbytery and fails to participate in the presbytery or a in a local congregation of the PC(USA) or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA).
3. If after three years from the approval of this policy for those already on the membership rolls in one of these categories or three years of membership in the Presbytery, a Minister of the Word and Sacrament does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or continued member-at-large, the COM will inform them that their recommendation to the presbytery will be to remove them from the roll of membership and transfer them to a local congregation.