

Policy for Validation of Ministries
Within the Bounds of Salem Presbytery

The *Book of Order* (G-3.0306) requires that a presbytery develop written criteria for validation of ministries within its bounds. Presbytery has the authority to validate ministries only within its bounds. Presbytery may grant permission for a minister member to labor “outside the bounds” of presbytery or in a ministry that is not under the presbytery’s jurisdiction as long as presbytery is in compliance with G-2.0502:

G-2.0502 Presbytery and the Teaching Elder

As the Lord has set aside through calling certain members to be Ministers 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. Ministers 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.

Categories of Membership (G-20503)

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

Validated Ministry Defined(G2.0503a)

“A validated ministry shall:

- (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 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-5.0201).”

Ministry within Congregations of this Church

All pastoral relationships to particular congregations which Commission on Ministry (COM) has approval responsibilities are considered validated ministries.

Ministry Beyond the Jurisdiction of The Church

The *Book of Order* states,

“When Ministers of the Word and Sacrament 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.

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all Ministers of the Word and Sacrament engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.” (G-2.0503)

Applying or Renewing For Validation of a Ministry

A Minister of the Word and Sacrament who is seeking the validation of a ministry shall prepare the application for validation in which they will explain in writing how the ministry meets the above five standards. Prior to adopting a recommendation regarding a particular request for validation of ministry, the COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight, will normally meet with each person seeking initial validation of their ministry.

The COM Task Force shall review the application to determine whether, in its judgment, the ministry in question does meet all five standards without exception. If it does, the COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight shall recommend to presbytery validation of the ministry for a one-year term. If presbytery approves the validation of the ministry, the minister shall be a continuing, active member of the Presbytery engaged in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church.

Two months prior to the expiration of the term, there shall be, from the minister to the COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight a report of the work they are doing beyond the jurisdiction of the church. A statement of review, authored by the group responsible for the accountability of the minister, shall be provided. These reports should include a statement outlining the minister’s participation in continuing education events, a statement concerning the minister’s participation in the life of a particular church or churches and in the life of presbytery, documentation of non-profit status of the ministry (if appropriate), and the proof of current clinical licensure (if appropriate) or the other group to whom the minister and ministry are accountable.

The COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight shall review these reports. If the nature of the ministry remains unchanged from the initial plan, and if the COM Task Force finds in order all other aspects of the report, the COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight recommend to presbytery the renewal for a one-year term of the validated ministry.

If a minister serving in a validated ministry fails to provide an annual report, the COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight may not recommend to presbytery a “re-validation” of the ministry beyond the expiration date of the current term.

Member-at-Large

If the ministry does not fulfill all five standards in G-2.0503 without exception, the minister shall ordinarily be designated a member-at-large.

“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 G-2.0503a. 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-2.0530b)

Honorably Retired

Those ministers who are honorably retired and who are members of this presbytery are considered to be engaged in active ministry.

“Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age, or physical or mental disability.” (G-2.0530c)

Failure to Engage in Validated Ministry

Those ministers who fail to have their ministries recertified annually through the Commission on Ministry as validated, or as a member-at-large shall fall under these provisions of G-2.0508:

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 teaching elders 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.

