

Salem Presbytery
Commission on Ministry
Policy for Validated Ministries

G.2.0502 Presbytery and the Minister of the Word and Sacrament

“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.”

In its responsibility to determine whether particular work is a call to validated ministry requiring ordination as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, The *Book of Order* (G-3.0306) requires that a presbytery develop written criteria for validating ministries within its bounds.

It should be noted that Ministers of the Word and Sacrament in validated ministries are active ministers of the Presbytery and expected to take part in Presbytery meetings where they may speak, vote, and hold office.

Definition of a Validated Ministry

The *Book of Order* explains what it means to be engaged in a validated ministry in Section G-2.0503 (2019-2021). It states:

“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.) (2019-2021, G-5.0201).*

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all ministers of the Word and Sacrament engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.”

It is the ministry that is validated, not the minister. So, for example, if the Chaplain at a long-term care facility retires, the position continues to be a validated ministry in Salem Presbytery. However, the retiring chaplain must be dismissed by the Presbytery and the incoming chaplain must be approved

by the Presbytery.

Types of Validated Ministries in Salem Presbytery

Each Presbytery determines which ministries are considered validated ministries beyond installed pastoral relationships. Salem Presbytery includes numerous and varied forms of service as Validated Ministries, as follows:

1. Congregational Ministries

- a. Temporary supply pastor, stated supply pastor, interim/transitional pastor (not installed).
- b. Organizing pastor or co-pastor of a fellowship, new church development, or 1001 new worshipping community, sponsored by this Presbytery.
- c. Pastoral ministry to a congregation belonging to another denomination with which the Presbytery is in full communion.
- d. Pastoral residency at a church or in a clinical pastoral education setting with regular, substantive supervision.

2. Denominational Ministries

- a. Staff positions of Salem Presbytery, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, or General Assembly that are related by organization, accountability, or structure to governing bodies, agencies, mission projects, ministry units, or seminaries.

3. Missional Ministries

- a. Local or international evangelism.
- b. Administration or employment in mission projects such as homeless shelters, food banks, healthcare facilities, day care programs, pre-school programs, after-school programs and human services programs.
- c. Chaplaincy in the following types of organizations: prisons; the military; a police and fire service; health care organizations; retirement and long-term care facilities, non- and not- for profit agencies that serve the poor; and programs that serve people struggling with the intersections of life.
- d. Partners in mission in connection with a church outside the United States of America.
- e. Ministers who serve an organization sponsored by two or more denominations.
- f. Nondenominational ministries that serve particular groups of people such as those who speak English as a second language and those facing discrimination due to immigration status.
- g. Nondenominational ministries that address housing inequities, addiction issues, marriage and family services; and racial, social, and economic injustice.
- h. Employment with an interdenominational organization such as Church World Service, CROP Hunger Walk, Heifer International, and the American Red Cross.

4. Educational Ministries

- a. Teaching in an institution of secondary education.
- b. Teaching at a college or university.
- c. Teaching, Chaplaincy, Admissions, and Administration at a seminary.
- d. Chaplains employed in a school serving children in grades K-12.

e. Campus Ministers at all educational levels

5. Spiritual Formation and Counseling Ministries

- a. Pastoral care or pastoral counseling within a church or with other agencies, including hospice and health care facilities, and retirement communities.
- b. Spiritual formation for individuals of all ages, including children, adults, older adults, and people with disabilities.

6. Validated Ministries outside the Jurisdiction of Salem Presbytery

Other validated ministries may be determined by the Commission on Ministry (COM) on a case-by-case basis according to the particular facts and circumstances, consistent with description of ordained office found in G-2.0101 and meeting all the standards set forth above in G-2.0503.

A validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the Presbytery must demonstrate a theological understanding of mission and ministry within the Reformed Tradition. It must also countenance the participant's full and free expression of faith.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are called to a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church shall give evidence of a quality of life that shares the Ministry of Good News. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships. They shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils (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 s/he 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 Commission on Ministry (COM), through its 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 his or her ministry.

The COM 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 Commission on Ministry Task Force, acting within its purview as a commission, shall validate of the ministry for a one-year term, and report that action to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

Two months prior to the expiration of the term, there shall be, from the minister to the COM, a report of the work s/he is doing beyond the jurisdiction of the church. That report form can be found (**INSERT LINK**).

The COM Task Force on the Care of Pastors and Retirees, MAL/Validated Oversight and Certified Christian Educator Oversight shall review these renewal reports. If all is found to be in order, the COM Task Force, acting within its purview as a commission, shall renew the validation of

the ministry for an additional one-year term, and report that action to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

If a minister serving in a validated ministry fails to provide an annual report, the ministry may not be revalidated, and the minister's membership may be re-classified as a Member-at-Large.

Member-at-Large

If the ministry does not fulfill all five standards in G-2.0530 without exception, the minister shall ordinarily be designated a member-at-large, as stated in G-2.0503b.

“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.”

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 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.