

## CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP AND VALIDATION OF MINISTRY POLICY

The presbytery shall determine the continuing members of the Presbytery of Huntingdon [G-2.0502]. A continuing member is a minister received into ongoing membership in presbytery. The Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Huntingdon shall annually review the status of all clergy under its jurisdiction and make recommendations to presbytery regarding the validation of ministries. In fulfillment of G-2.0503, it shall evaluate the status of its clergy according to the following criteria:

### A. GENERAL MATTERS

**Continuing Member Status:** In addition to the “Criteria for Ministry of Continuing Members” found in G-2.0104 (Gifts and Qualifications of Persons) and G-2.0503a (Qualities of Ministries), the following shall apply:

1. **Attendance at presbytery meetings:** A continuing member shall take the initiative in establishing an active relation to the presbytery, evidenced by regular attendance. Regular attendance shall normally be understood to consist of attendance in at least three (3) of the meetings each year and request for an excuse for all absences. Honorably Retired members are encouraged to attend meetings but are not required to request an excuse for all absences from regular stated meetings. Exception to this rule may be made for those limited by health or geographic circumstances.
2. **Participation:** A continuing member shall participate responsibly in the life of a congregation of this presbytery and ecumenical relationships.
3. **Committee service:** A continuing member shall exhibit and implement willingness to serve in the elected entities of the presbytery. Exception to this rule may be made for those limited by health or geographic circumstances.
4. **Sacramental responsibilities:** All continuing members are permitted and encouraged to officiate at the sacraments when invited by a session or the presbytery.
5. **Preaching the Word.** A continuing member shall make her or himself available to preach the Word when her or his duties permit.

Ministers are to exercise diligence and discernment in the study of Scripture, “listen for the voice of God through the discipline of daily prayer, theological reflection on the message of the gospel, exhibit sensitivity to the context of the congregation, be attentive to what the Spirit is saying to the church, demonstrating awareness of events in the world, and practicing consistent and personal obedience to Jesus Christ.

The presentation of the proclamation of others as one’s own is both plagiarism and a denial of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and is unacceptable in continuing members of this presbytery. Continuing members are expected to proclaim the Word given to them, rather than using sermons created by others, except under the most extraordinary circumstances. When using substantial portions of the language of others, credit must be given. This requirement extends to ruling elders and anyone occupying a pulpit of the Presbytery of Huntingdon. Plagiarism may be considered reason to terminate a contract, dissolve a call, or remove an individual from Approved Pulpit Supply.
6. **Call:** A continuing member shall be:
  - a. under documented and approved call or contract to a particular congregation or council position;

- b. entering a work defined in G-2.0503a, for which the presbytery shall give its permission by validating it as a ministry “in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church”;
- c. honorably retired;
- d. a member-at-large who has been previously admitted to the Presbytery of Huntingdon, but without intentional abandonment of ministry is no longer engaged in an occupation that complies with all criteria in G-2.0503a and this policy; or
- e. a member-at-large who is actively seeking a call or contract to an installed or temporary pastoral relationship, or willing to serve in such a position if requested by the presbytery or its appropriate committee.

**Annual review:** A continuing member shall participate in an annual review with a subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry.

**Due process:** Any continuing member has the right to appear at the meeting at which his or her case is discussed, to submit evidence, to participate in the discussion, and to have the aid of Presbyterian counsel (as defined in the Rules of Discipline) in presenting her or his case. However, the Committee on Ministry retains the right of recommending to presbytery, which reserves and retains the right of determining the continuing membership of its members.

**Attend and report:** If a continuing member shall be absent from the sessions of the Presbytery of Huntingdon for a period of one year and shall neglect to report to the presbytery concerning residence and work, the presbytery, after making an effort to locate and counsel with the minister, shall then, without prejudice to the minister, delete that person’s name from the roll of membership, and upon request of a session dismiss that person to a congregation.

**Civil matters:** A continuing member shall fulfill legal requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania including, but not limited to, compliance with standards for mandatory reporters of child abuse, including regular training and current background checks and clearances.

**B. VALIDATED MINISTRIES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE CHURCH:** The criteria for determining a validated ministry under the jurisdiction of the church shall be based upon whether the service complies with all the criteria enumerated in G-2.0503a and affirmatively meets all the following standards:

1. Is a ministry primarily one of the following: governing body work; mission work; a community ministry; chaplaincy or pastoral care; pastoral counseling, pastoral education or health care service; and which ministry is related by organization, accountability and structure to the PC (USA), or one of its seminaries or other educational institutions related to the PC (USA).
2. Is a ministry that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministry of others, and relates to the service of people rather than the production of goods or of profits.
3. Is a ministry that makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination.

4. Is a ministry carried out in accountability for its character, conduct and performance results to a management committee, board of directors, or others responsible for the overall results of the total ministry program.
5. Is a ministry carried out in accountability for its character and conduct and answerable to the presbytery for agreed-upon end results or activities with a review of the ministry on a yearly basis.
6. Is a ministry that will allow the member to participate actively in the worship and service of a congregation of this presbytery.
7. Is a ministry that will allow the member to establish an active relation to the presbytery, as defined by attendance at meetings of the presbytery and service in the entities and work of the presbytery.
8. Is a ministry that is supportive of the mission of the presbytery.

**C. VALIDATED MINISTRIES BEYOND THE JURISDICTION OF THE CHURCH:** The criteria for determining a validated ministry “in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church” shall be based upon whether the service complies with all the criteria enumerated in G-2.0503a and affirmatively meets all the following standards:

1. **Mission-oriented:** Is a ministry primarily one of the following: mission work; a community ministry; chaplaincy or pastoral care; pastoral counseling, pastoral education or health care service; a ministry related by organization, accountability and structure to other denominations with which the PC(USA) is in correspondence; related to a seminary or other education institution acceptable to the presbytery; related to a non-denominational, ecumenical or interfaith organization dealing with housing programs, rural or urban issues, drug or alcohol addiction, marriage and family problems, or similar social issues; related to a national or international organization such as a council of churches; or another ministry of service acceptable to the presbytery.
2. **Supportive of presbytery:** Is a ministry that is supportive of the mission of the presbytery.
3. **Service-oriented:** Is a ministry that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministry of others, and relates to the service of people rather than the production of goods or of profits.
4. **Theological:** Is a ministry that makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination.
5. **Accountable to boards:** Is a ministry carried out in accountability for its character, conduct and performance results to a management committee, board of directors, or others responsible for the overall results of the total ministry program.
6. **Accountable to presbytery:** Is a ministry carried out in accountability for its character and conduct and answerable to the presbytery for agreed-upon end results or activities with a review of the ministry on a yearly basis.
7. **Congregation:** Is a ministry that will allow the member to participate actively in the worship and service of a congregation of this presbytery.

8. **Presbytery participation:** Is a ministry that will allow the member to establish an active relation to the presbytery, as defined by attendance at meetings of the presbytery and service in the entities and work of the presbytery.
9. **Ecumenical participation:** Is a ministry that will allow the member to participate responsibly in ecumenical relationships.

**D.PROCESS FOR VALIDATING MINISTRIES:** The process for validating specialized ministry shall be as follows:

1. Each person requesting validation of his or her ministry must make written application to the Committee on Ministry.
2. The Committee on Ministry will assess the application for validation based upon how it meets the criteria. If the application is approved, the Committee on Ministry will recommend to presbytery that the ministry be approved as a “Specialized Ministry.” Persons requesting validation of their ministry will be notified of the date on which the Committee on Ministry will consider their application.
3. In addition, each person serving in an approved validated ministry will be sent an Annual Review Form each year. Such persons must submit a completed Annual Review Form to the Committee on Ministry by the date specified each year. Persons requesting re-validation of their ministry will be notified of the date on which the Committee on Ministry will consider their application.
4. Applicants for validation of ministry shall be required to submit documentation of appropriate liability insurance annually.

**E. PERMISSION TO LABOR OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS:**

1. A minister member of this presbytery who wishes to engage in ongoing work which is outside the geographic bounds of the Presbytery of Huntingdon or which is not under its jurisdiction shall request permission of the Committee on Ministry to labor outside its bounds.
- 2.No minister shall engage in such work outside the geographic bounds of this presbytery or which is not under its jurisdiction without the permission of the Committee on Ministry.
- 3.The Committee on Ministry shall not permit a minister to engage in ongoing work which is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery or which is properly under the jurisdiction of another denomination without consent of that presbytery or denomination.
4. The stated clerk shall inform ministers who seek permission to labor outside the bounds of this presbytery that they must first seek permission to labor within the bounds of the other presbytery or denomination. This permission shall be granted annually. The stated clerk shall report each instance of the granting of permission to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

## **F. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

1. **Criteria for Members-at-Large:** A member-at-large is a minister 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 and those of this policy for validation of ministry. A minister 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. 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, be supportive of the mission of the presbytery and report annually to presbytery.
  - b. A member-at-large is entitled to voice and vote at presbytery and hold office, and to officiate at the sacraments when invited by a session or the presbytery.
2. Members from other presbyteries shall not be received into membership of the Presbytery of Huntingdon in order to seek or while seeking a ministry call, contract, or parish associate relationship within the bounds of the presbytery nor while awaiting qualification to become Honorably Retired.
3. Members from other presbyteries may be considered for membership in the Presbytery of Huntingdon if they are the spouse of a minister who has received an approved call or contract to a particular congregation or governing body position.
4. The Committee on Ministry shall review each previously approved member-at-large status annually. Each minister granted member-at-large status shall be requested to submit an annual report to the Committee on Ministry by the date specified each year. Persons requesting continuation of their member-at-large status will be notified of the date on which the Committee on Ministry will consider their application. Failure to submit a report may be considered by the Committee on Ministry in its determination of status.

## **G. ORDERLY RELEASE FROM OFFICE**

If the continuing member of the presbytery is unwilling to be designated a member-at-large, then the member should seek release from the exercise of ordained office until he or she receives a call to ministry that fulfills all criteria.

If the continuing member is unwilling to be designated a member-at-large and does not seek release from the exercise of ordained office and is not honorable retired, or if the Committee on Ministry determines the continuing member should not be a member at large, the Committee on Ministry shall determine that the continuing member has failed to engage in validated ministry and shall report these facts to the stated clerk, who shall report to presbytery as required by G-2.0508.

The minister so designated shall not have voice or vote in meetings of presbytery, except when the matter under consideration pertains to his or her relationship to the presbytery. If after three years, the minister 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.

## **H. CURRENT MEMBERS CHANGING STATUS:**

**Disability:** Ministers who are granted disabled status shall be transferred to the member-at-large roll of presbytery. Disability status in the PC(USA) is predicated on full disability status, which precludes membership on presbytery committees, teams and entities.

**Without call or contract:** As soon as the stated clerk becomes aware that a minister member is changing his or her employment situation within the presbytery without accepting a call or relationship within a congregation, or that a minister member is seeking a change of status from one roll of the presbytery to another, the stated clerk will send the minister a copy of this policy with instruction to the member to request placement on one of the rolls of presbytery or release from ordered ministry through application to the Committee on Ministry.

**Request for release:** If a minister against whom no inquiry has been initiated pursuant to D-10.0101 and D-10.0201, against whom no charges have been filed, and who otherwise is in good standing shall make application to be released from the exercise of the ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament, the presbytery shall delete that person's name from the roll of membership, and upon request of a session dismiss that person to a congregation.

**Presbytery-initiated deletion from rolls:** If the presbytery determines that a minister is no longer engaged in a validated ministry and no longer fulfills the criteria for membership at large and is not honorably retired, that individual 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. If, after three years, the minister does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, or the presbytery is no longer willing to grant membership-at-large status, 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. The Committee on Ministry shall attempt to notify the individual of the date of the meeting at which the individual's status will be considered.

**Effect of release or deletion:** Release from the exercise of ordered ministry requires discontinuance of all functions of that ministry. The designations that refer to ministers shall not be used.

### **Renunciation of jurisdiction:**

- a. When a minister of Word and Sacrament (or authorized representative) submits to the stated clerk of the presbytery of membership a written statement renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, the renunciation shall be effective upon receipt.
- b. When a minister of this presbytery persists in work disapproved by this presbytery, the presbytery through its Committee on Ministry shall consult with the minister and shall give notice of its disapproval. If after opportunity for consultation and upon a second written notice of disapproval, the minister persists in the work, the Presbytery of Huntingdon may then conclude that he or she has renounced the jurisdiction of this church.
- c. When a minister of this presbytery accepts or continues membership of any character in another denomination, except as provided for in the Form of Government, the presbytery shall record the fact and delete the minister's name from the roll.

### **Effect of renunciation of jurisdiction:**

- a. Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the minister from membership and ordered ministry and terminate the exercise of that ministry. Renunciation of jurisdiction requires discontinuance of all functions of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The designations that refer to ministers shall not be used.

- b. The stated clerk shall report the renunciation, delete his or her name from the appropriate roll and take such other administrative actions as may be required.
- c. When a former minister has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former minister shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation under the jurisdiction of this presbytery,

**Restoration after release:**

1. Restoration to the exercise of ordained office is possible without re-ordination for ministers who were in good standing, against whom no inquiry had been initiated, and against whom no charges had been filed at the time of release, by:
  - a. application to and approval of the presbytery that granted the release,
  - b. reaffirmation of ordination vows, and
  - c. resumption of a ministry that qualifies for continuing membership in presbytery.
2. No judgment of failure on the part of the minister is implied in release, with or without restoration, from the exercise of ordained office.
3. Restoration under this provision is not available to ministers who renounced the jurisdiction of this church.

**Ministers temporarily excluded from ordered ministry**

1. **by action according to the Rules of Discipline:** Ministers who have been temporarily excluded from ordered ministry shall refrain from the exercise of any function of ordered ministry, including participating and voting in meetings and from holding or exercising any office. The presbytery may, if no appeal from the case is pending, declare any pastoral relationships in which the minister is involved, dissolved. Any petition to be restored to ordered ministry shall follow the processes and procedures of the Rules of Discipline.
2. **by failure to maintain up-to-date background checks and clearances and Commonwealth-mandated child abuse recognition and reporting training.** When a minister has failed to provide the presbytery with documentation of up-to-date background checks and clearances and training in child abuse recognition and reporting, the stated clerk will report the failure to Committee on Ministry, which will place a note to that effect in the minister's permanent files. This failure to comply with Commonwealth requirements will be communicated in reference checks. In addition the Committee on Ministry may:
  - a. place the minister on temporary unpaid administrative leave.
  - b. temporarily exclude the minister from the exercise of ordered ministry. Ministers who have been temporarily excluded from ordered ministry shall refrain from the exercise of any function of ordered ministry, including participating and voting in meetings and from holding or exercising any office.
  - c. recommend, if the failure is not remediated within three months, that the presbytery declare any pastoral relationships in which the minister is involved, dissolved. Any petition to be restored to ordered ministry shall follow the processes and procedures of the Rules of Discipline.