

MINISTERS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS

A. Ministers from other denominations who wish to serve Presbyterian (USA) churches may do so at the discretion of the presbytery and under certain circumstances. (Minister maintains membership in his/her denomination.)

1. a. Only PC(USA) ministers and Formula Partner ministers (Reformed Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the United Church of Christ) may serve as installed pastors of PC(USA) congregations. This includes the positions of Pastor, Associate Pastor, Co-Pastor, and Designated Pastor.
- b. Ministers of other denominations may serve in temporary positions such as Sunday-to-Sunday Temporary Supply, as Stated Supply, or Interim Pastor.

Presbyteries have no obligation to allow other denomination ministers (including those of churches in full communion or in correspondence with the PC(USA)) to serve their churches. Thorough examination and reference checking is essential.

2. Use of Church Leadership Connection by Ministers of Other Denominations: The PC(USA) Internet-based referral system, "Church Leadership Connection," is available for PC(USA), ELCA, RCA, and UCC ministers only. Ministers of denominations other than those are encouraged to contact presbyteries in which they seek to serve in temporary positions. Note: Ministers in the process of transferring to the PC(USA) must meet requirements including ordination exams before they may use Church Leadership Connection.

3. a. Formula Partner Ministers (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Church of Christ, and Reformed Church in America) may be installed and serve Presbyterian Churches while remaining members of their home denomination. Reference checking by the General Presbyter and examination by the Committee on Ministry would take place just as it would for any Presbyterian minister seeking a call within the presbytery. The minister is installed (if home denomination allows) and is enrolled as a member of presbytery with all rights and privileges.
- b. Accountability—Formula Partner ministers remain accountable to their governing body of membership for their own behavior. They are accountable to the presbytery of call for their ministry with the church. It is hoped that when such relationships are established, the governing body representatives would partner in supporting the ministry.
- c. Financial arrangements—Formula Partner ministers will remain members of their denominational medical and pension plans, Presbyterian congregations will pay dues to the insuring entity. It is expected that salaries will be the same as would be paid to a Presbyterian minister. (For more information, consult document, "The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Principles, Policies, and Procedures," from the Office of the General Assembly. Contact the Stated Clerk's office for a copy.

4. Temporary Service as Sunday-to-Sunday supply, as Stated Supply, or Interim Pastor: Approval is at the discretion of the presbytery. It is essential that the Committee on Ministry meet with each non-Presbyterian minister to assess theology and practice of ministry, understandings of Presbyterian government, and their intentions as well as to explain the presbytery's goals for the church and resources available to the minister. It is wise for COM to get involved early in a relationship between a congregation and a non-Presbyterian pastor rather than to be faced with the unpleasant task of telling a church they cannot be served by the pastor with whom they have built a relationship.

Ministers of denominations "in correspondence with" the General Assembly may be enrolled in presbytery during temporary service in the PC(USA). The Office of the General Assembly maintains a list of churches that are "in correspondence" (members of the World Council of Churches, National Council of Churches of Christ, and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches).

B. Transfer of membership to PC(USA)

Ministers of other denominations who wish to become PC(USA) ministers must meet the Book of Order requirements in G-11.0404. Any waiver of those requirements is in "extraordinary circumstances" and can be made only by the calling presbytery with a two-third vote. Ministers of other Reformed churches ordained for five or more years require a two-third vote.

In order to become a PCUSA minister, a minister of another denomination (including Formula Partners) must:

- be an ordained minister;
- have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university
- and a theological degree from an institution acceptable to the presbytery of call; and
- pass PC(USA) standard ordination exams.

AT THIS POINT, THEY MAY ENTER A PERSONAL INFORMATION ONLINE IN CLC FOR REFERRAL. CLC cannot accept Ministers of Other Denominations who have not passed PC(USA) ordination exams since waivers from the Book of Order requirements are given only by the Presbytery of call. They will be required to provide attestation of "good standing" from an authorized official of his or her present governing body.

To complete the transfer, they must:

- have a call to appropriate work in the PC(USA);
- be examined and approved by the presbytery of call (usually) by the Committee on Ministry. They will be examined on their Christian faith, in theology, and in the system of government of this church, and at the discretion of the presbytery in other subjects;
- answer the ordination questions in the affirmative; and
- furnish evidence that they have been officially removed from the roll of the other denomination.

Waiver of requirements (see G.14.0313 and G-11.0404b). The presbytery shall not waive any of the foregoing requirements except in extraordinary cases. It shall make an exception only by three-fourths vote of the members of the presbytery present.

Ministers of other Reformed denominations (such as Reformed Church in America) may be exempted from taking standard ordination exams if they have been ordained for five or more years and if the presbytery approves by a two-thirds vote as above.

New Immigrant Fellowship and Congregations. In order to meet the pastoral needs of new immigrants, calling presbyteries may, by a three-quarter vote, enroll a new immigrant minister who does not meet the educational requirements. The presbytery must develop a plan to provide the minister with the educational opportunities necessary to support successful ministry.

Book of Order G-110404f:

In the case of ministers for new immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery may, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that constituency requires it, recognize the ordination of (G-15.0202) and enroll a new immigrant minister furnishing evidence of good standing in a denomination in correspondence with the General Assembly as a member of the presbytery, even though at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required by G-14.0310b-d. In the case of such a minister lacking such preparation, the presbytery shall undertake an evaluation of the minister's understanding of and proficiency in Bible, Reformed Theology, Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching. If the presbytery is satisfied as to the minister's preparation in and understanding of those areas, the presbytery may, by a three-quarters vote of those present, enroll that minister as a minister of the presbytery. Any presbytery taking such an action shall provide that minister with educational opportunities as seem necessary and prudent to the presbytery for that minister's successful ministry within the bounds of that presbytery. This section, when utilized, may result in exceptions to the procedures and requirements described in G-110403c, G-14.0310b-d, and G-14.0313a-c.