

## **New Castle Presbytery Policy on Validating Specialized Ministries**

G-11.0403 gives to each presbytery the determination of who will be its continuing members (i.e., its minister members). Presbytery is required to develop written criteria for the validation of all ministries carried on within its bounds which are not pastoral positions related to a particular congregation or are not presbytery staff positions. The criteria are to fit within the following standards:

- The ministry must be demonstrable conformity with the mission of God's people set forth in scripture and our constitution, specifically G-6.0104 (Forms of Ministry).

While the ministry is one, specific forms of ministry may emphasize special tasks and skills and the ordering of the offices of ministry shall reflect this variety. There may be forms of ministry in which primary emphasis is given to proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments, forms that stress deeds of love and mercy, forms that are primarily educational, administrative, legislative, or judicial, and forms that are primarily prophetic.

- It is to be a ministry that serves others and fits within the definitional parameters set by G-6.0203: educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministers, missionaries, evangelists, administrators, social workers, consultants, or...other specific tasks, appropriate to the ministry of the church.
- The ministry shall be carried out in accountability to the presbytery and other organizations, agencies or institutions. Accountability to the presbytery is routinely achieved by the filing of a Specialized Ministers Report annually with the Stated Clerk's office and a face-to-face interview with the Committee on Ministry. Specialized ministers who do not report on their work annually or participate in the interview process may be re-designated by the COM as at-large members of presbytery.
- Because of the requirement of "accountability to other organizations, agencies, or institutions", no specialized ministry which does not clearly describe accountability to a supervisor, a Board of Directors, etc., will be approved.
- The minister will be a responsible participant in the life of the presbytery and will be part of the worship life of one of presbytery's congregations. Parish Associate relationships are encouraged for specialized ministers, and specialized ministers are commended to the attention of pastors and sessions for consideration as Parish Associates.

## **The Process:**

An ordained minister who wishes to be received as a minister member of presbytery on the basis of his/her conduct of a specialized (non-parish-based) ministry will communicate with the Chairperson of the Committee on Ministry. The Chairperson or designate will send a copy of this policy statement to the applicant along with a request for a written explanation of how their proposed ministry meets the criteria for validation in the presbytery. This response will be referred to a subgroup of the COM and appropriate staff for consideration.

If the recommendation is to validate the ministry and receive the minister on that basis, this recommendation must be approved by the Committee on Ministry and reported to the presbytery. The minister would be received by the presbytery in accordance with the current procedure.

If the Committee on Ministry declines to validate a proposed specialized ministry, or decides to withdraw approval previously given, the minister may appeal the decision to the presbytery. Presbytery's decision will determine and settle the matter except for the minister's access to judicial process. A specialized minister who has been received on the basis of a particular ministry may not take up a different specialized ministry without presbytery's approval given through the Committee on Ministry.

When a minister engaged in a validated specialized ministry leaves that work, he/she is automatically designated as an at-large member of presbytery pending further changes; this is an action taken by the Stated Clerk of the presbytery and does not require any action by COM.

## **Points of Information Regarding Specialized Ministers:**

Specialized Ministers are not required to be enrolled in the pension plan. A specialized minister who wishes to be enrolled must be employed at least 20 hour/week and have presbytery's approval of the ministry, which must be conveyed to the Board of Pensions in writing so that coverage can be obtained.

A specialized minister's compensation is not subject to approval by the Committee on Ministry, unless the minister is a staff member of presbytery, synod, or GA. Otherwise, the minister is engaged in a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church (G-11.0411).

Either the specialized minister or his/her employer may submit to the Committee on Ministry a request for designation of a housing allowance which would be excludable from income taxes.

**Criteria for determining a Validated Ministry  
In Service Beyond the Jurisdiction  
(G-11.0411)**

The criteria for determining a validated ministry in Service Beyond the Jurisdiction (G-11.0411) shall be based upon whether the proposed ministry for validation meets all of the following standards:

- Is a Mission project or other form of ministry  
Chaplaincy  
In some form as the nature of pastoral care  
Pastoral Counseling  
Pastoral Education  
Health Care  
Service  
A ministry related to another denomination with whom the PCUSA is in correspondence  
Is a ministry related to a seminary acceptable to presbytery  
Is related to a non-denominational organization  
Is related to an international organization
- 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 products.
- Is a ministry carried out in accountability for its character, conduct and performance results to a management committee, board of directors or to others responsible for the overall results of the total ministry program
- Is a ministry that makes active and effective use of the Biblical and theological training that is required for ordination.
- Is a ministry carried out for its character and conduct and is answerable to the presbytery for agreed upon results or activities with a review of the ministry on a yearly basis and a face to face review every three years.
- Is a ministry that will allow the continuing member to participate actively in the worship and service of a congregation of this presbytery or in a congregation of a denomination in which the PCUSA is in correspondence.
- Is a ministry which will allow the minister to participate in the life of the presbytery.

## **Committee on Ministry Process for Validated Ministries Beyond the Jurisdiction of New Castle Presbytery**

1. COM will send a letter/form, with the Stated Clerk, in March of every year along with a copy of the criteria. COM will request a written response by April 30<sup>th</sup>. The member is to indicate in what ways she/he continues to be in compliance with the policy and whether or not she/he desires to continue in the position of Validated Ministry Beyond the Jurisdiction of New Castle Presbytery.
2. If a written response is received, the Validation and Credentials subcommittee will recommend continuing (or not) the active membership status to COM not later than September 30<sup>th</sup>. (Every three years a face-to-face interview with the minister will be conducted by the sub-group as part of the process). COM will report, as appropriate to New Castle Presbytery.
3. If a written response is not received by April 30<sup>th</sup>, COM will send a letter indicating the intent to place the minister on the inactive roll effective the first stated meeting of the following year.

### **What happens if one or more criteria cannot be met?**

**If one or more criteria cannot be met, the continuing member should ask to be designated either a member-at-large or an inactive member of New Castle Presbytery.**

**Removal from the exercise of office is possible/likely.**

**Restoration to the exercise of office is possible without re-ordination. Steps towards restoration are possible and in no way judgmental. They are permissive if the re-ordination is not necessary.**