



PRESBYTERY OF GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY
POLICY ON
VALIDATION OF MINISTRIES

Committee on Ministry
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Contents:

- 1.0 Preamble
- 2.0 Criteria for Validation of Ministries
 - 2.1 Ministries within the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 - 2.2 Ministries beyond the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- 3.0 Process of Validation
- 4.0 Review of Validated Ministries
- 5.0 Other Options Available If Not Validated
- 6.0 Ordination to Validated Ministries
- 7.0 Attachments

POLICY ON VALIDATION OF MINISTRIES IN THE PRESBYTERY OF GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY

1.0 Preamble

2.0

The purpose of this policy is to outline the criteria used by the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy in determining calls to validated ministries. Each Presbytery is responsible for determining the ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) who are its members and validates the ministries in which they are to be engaged. The Form of Government also instructs that Presbyteries shall determine the mechanisms and processes for ruling elders seeking to be commissioned to pastoral service.

In the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, the principles concerning validation for ministry are guided by the most current *Book of Order*, including G-2.502, G-3.306, and G-2.503, the mission statement of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, and the six Great Ends of the Church in F-1.0304. In making decisions regarding the validation of ministries, the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy reflects both on its mission, vision and values and the mission of the larger church.

A minister of the Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder) is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, or a member at large, or honorably retired. A ruling elder serving in a ministry beyond the jurisdiction of this church may request that the ministry be validated for commissioned service.

We rejoice in the diversity of forms of ministries within the Presbytery and celebrate the work of our teaching and ruling elders who are in service to the broader ministries of the church or who serve beyond the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We recognize their participation in the church's ministry and value the impact that educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministers, missionaries, partners in mission, evangelists, administrators, social workers, consultants, or others engaged in ministry have on the transformational ministries of this Presbytery.

It is the responsibility of the Presbytery to act on behalf of the church in confirming the calling Christ has given to certain members to serve as Ministers of the Word and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service. According to the Form of Government, the Presbytery is responsible for determining whether a particular

work is helpful to the church's mission, and whether ordination as either a teaching or ruling elder is required for the fulfillment of that work. In the performance of that ministry, the Minister of the Word or commissioned elder shall be accountable to the Presbytery (G-2.0502).

2.0 Criteria for Validating Ministry

Recognizing the variety of forms in which ministry to Jesus Christ may take, the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy shall apply the following criteria and processes in validating the ministries of ministers of the Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service. As outlined in G-2.503, 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 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- (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 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or a church in correspondence with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-5.0201).

2.1 Validation of Ministries Under the Jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The ministries of those serving as pastors to churches in the jurisdiction of the Presbytery are automatically validated by virtue of their call and approval by presbytery. The validation of such ministries is affirmed upon initial approval of the call by the presbytery and does not require further review of the validation.

2.2 Validation of Ministries Beyond the Service of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Ministries in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church will be reviewed by the Presbyter's Commission on Ministry (CoM) in order to ascertain:

- a. If the ministry itself is consonant with the mission of the presbytery;
- b. the status of the minister or ruling elder in the ministry being reviewed pertaining to sense of call, suitability for the position, and capacity to fulfill all Constitutional criteria while serving in the ministry;
- c. if the ministry makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination;
- d. if the ministry is carried out in accountability for its character, conduct and performance to a board of directors, a management committee, or others responsible for the total ministry program.

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all ministers of the Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) and commissioned ruling elders engaged in validated ministries beyond the jurisdiction of the church.

3.0 Process of Validation

The minister or ruling elder seeking to have a ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church will request a meeting with the Commission on Ministry, and, if appropriate, the commissioned pastor oversight team. Members of a team appointed by the CoM will conduct a face-to-face interview with the applicant.

Those who seek to validate a call to a particular ministry shall:

1. Provide a mission statement from the employing organization,
2. Provide a job description demonstrating evidence that the ministry is consistent with the criteria named above and in the *Book of Order*,
3. Provide a contract for services or other document stating the financial terms and benefits of the call;
4. Describe the structures of accountability and oversight present within the ministry;
5. Affirm their desire to participate in the worship life with either a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation or church in correspondence with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
6. Affirm their willingness to participate in the life of the Presbytery;
7. Provide evidence of professional liability insurance;
8. And undergo a background check according to Presbytery policy.

Following the interview; the team will make a recommendation to the entire Commission as to whether or not this ministry should be validated. The Commission shall act on behalf of the presbytery and make a report to the presbytery.

If the recommendation is not to validate the ministry, the minister or ruling elder may request an additional meeting before the entire Commission on Ministry

prior to consideration by the presbytery. The CoM will take steps to ensure due process by providing applicants with an opportunity to be heard by members of the CoM with notice of at least three weeks prior to the date of the meeting unless shorter notice is mutually agreed upon. (See Section 5.0, below, for options if not validated.)

At any meeting with members of the Commission on Ministry, the burden remains with the “minister (ruling elder) to demonstrate that the proposed ministry should be validated” and the appeal may include the review and consideration of “relevant materials from prior years for the purpose of showing a pattern that has continuity with present” circumstances. (GAPJC [General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission] decision in Williamson v. Presbytery of Western North Carolina, Remedial Case 217-7, 2006).

4.0 Review of Validated Ministries

Once the ministry has been validated, the Presbytery shall contact each minister in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction annually. In addition, there shall be a face-to-face review with the minister at the discretion of the CoM or other group designated by the Vision Team. Ordinarily those reviews shall be conducted on a triennial basis. Annual reports will be required from each minister performing work which is not under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or higher governing body of the church.

5.0 Other Options Available If Not Validated

By constitutional authority, the presbytery determines those ministers who are to be its continuing embers. The presbytery also has the responsibility for determining if a ruling elder's ministry meets the qualifications for validation. If the decision of the presbytery is not to validate a ministry, the presbytery has the authority to designate the member as a member-at-large or inactive member, or a ruling elder eligible to be commissioned. Those who are inactive members of Presbytery shall be removed from the rolls of Presbytery after three years unless they have been restored to active ministry.

According to G-2.0508, any minister whom the presbytery determines is no longer engaged in a validated ministry, or who does not fulfill the criteria for membership at large, or who is not honorably retired 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. The stated clerk shall report the names of such persons to the presbytery annually, and if the minister does not meet the criteria, the presbytery may delete the person's name from the roll of membership.

6.0 Ordination to Validated Ministries Beyond the Jurisdiction of this Church

Candidates for ministry who receive calls within the bounds of this Presbytery designated as educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministers, missionaries, partners in mission, evangelists, administrators, social workers, consultants, or other ministries meeting the criteria for validation shall be ordained by this presbytery, provided they meet all requirements for ordination and the requirements of G-6.0203. The presbytery shall make diligent inquiry to determine their participation in the life and ministry of a congregation.

Ordinarily, a first call to a ministry in a congregation of another denomination will not constitute a validated ministry. However if a candidate who is under care of this Presbytery, who has been deemed sufficiently knowledgeable of the polity, doctrine, theology and confessions of this church by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, has been invited to serve in a denomination which is a partner with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the orderly exchange of ministers, that candidate's call may be considered for validation for ordination only at the request of the inviting denomination, after the inviting denomination has determined the candidate to be suitable for the work to be undertaken. Such a ministry must be within the boundaries of this Presbytery to be considered. The call must meet the criteria for validation in this policy as well as all constitutional requirements of this denomination for ordination. The Commission on Ministry shall review the terms of call to ensure that they meet the minimum salary, continuing education, and benefit requirements of this Presbytery. The candidate shall remain accountable to the Presbytery and shall participate in an ongoing mentoring relationship with an active member of this Presbytery as designated by the Commission on Ministry in active dialogue with the Dynamic Leaders Team, as well as participate in all reviews of ministry conducted by the Commission on Ministry.

7.0 Attachments

The following references shall be used as part of the discernment process in validating and reviewing validated ministerial calls within the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

The Mission of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy:

The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy lives to steward a future of God's possibility.

The Great Ends of the Church:

The Great Ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Helpful questions for considering whether a teaching or ruling elder's ministry should be validated:

1. Does it meet the criteria listed in G-2.0503a?
 - a. Does the ministry 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 denomination?
 - b. Is it a ministry that serves and aids others, and enables the ministry of others?
 - c. Does the ministry show evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word?
 - d. Is it carried out in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and other organizations, agencies and institutions served? What are the structures of accountability?
 - e. Will the teaching or ruling elder participate in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery? Is there evidence of their participation in the life of a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation or church in correspondence with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

2. What about the teaching or ruling elder's "quality of life" (G-2.0503) demonstrates a sharing of the good news?
3. What sort of theological framework undergirds the ministry, and how does undertaking the ministry require theological education or training?
4. Will the teaching or ruling elder participate in the Presbytery's required trainings on boundaries and dismantling racism and privilege?
5. How can the Commission on Ministry assist and encourage the teaching or ruling elder's participation in Presbytery?
6. How will the administration of Sacrament be authorized for ministries not governed by the Session?
7. How will the ministry be reviewed by the Presbytery?
8. What is the nature of the institution where the ministry occurs? What structures of accountability for fair employment practices are present? Is there evidence of professional liability insurance?