

RECEIVING MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

Ministers of Other Denominations

There is a great deal of confusion about PC(USA) policies and procedures related to ministers of other denominations. Congregations seeking pastors may want to consider non-Presbyterians, Presbyteries are contacted by "OD ministers" seeking pastoral work, and Churchwide Personnel Services receives PIFs from such persons every week. The Formula of Agreement with the RCA, ELCA, and UCC further complicates the picture. Amendment E, recently approved by the presbyteries has made a further change and attempted to make the Book of Order clearer.

In Brief –

Ministers from other denominations may only serve Presbyterian (USA) churches at the discretion of the presbytery and under certain circumstances.

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 PCUSA congregations.** This includes the positions of Pastor, Associate Pastor, Co-Pastor, and Designated-Pastor.

Ministers of other denominations may serve in **temporary positions** such as Sunday-to-Sunday 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.

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 $\frac{3}{4}$ vote. Ministers of other Reformed churches ordained for 5 or more years only need a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote.

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. Ministers in the process of transferring to the PC(USA) must meet requirements **including ordination exams** before they may use Church Leadership Connection.

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More Information –

Formula Partners

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 and examination by the C.O.M. 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.

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.

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.¹

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 C.O.M. 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 (U.S.A.). 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).

¹ 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

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Transfer of membership to PC(USA)-

In order to become a PC(USA) 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
- ✓ Pass PCUSA standard ordination exams;

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.

AT THIS POINT THEY MAY ENTER A PERSONAL INFORMATION ONLINE IN CLC FOR REFERRAL

We cannot accept Ministers of Other Denominations who have not passed PCUSA 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 PCUSA
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Furnish evidence that they have been officially removed from the roll of the other denomination

REMEMBER:

1. Each Presbytery decides the circumstances for receiving ministers of other denominations.
2. Presbyteries are under no obligation to permit ministers of other denominations to serve within its bounds.
3. The information below refers ONLY to ministers ordained in other denominations. A process to exempt candidates from passing ordination examinations must be submitted to Synod for approval before the Presbytery proceeds (G-14.0313b).
4. Recognizing the previous ordination of a minister of another Christian denomination is referenced in G-15.0202.


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AN INFORMATIONAL TABLE

Members of other denominations, when applying for membership in a presbytery, shall furnish credentials and evidence of good standing acceptable to the presbytery or its appropriate committee, and shall submit satisfactory evidence of possessing the qualifications of character and scholarship required of candidates of this church. They shall

- 1) **Present a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and a theological degree from an institution acceptable to the presbytery;**
- 2) **Answer satisfactorily the questions on the examinations required of candidates for ordination;**
- 3) **Articulate their Christian faith and demonstrate an acceptable knowledge of theology and of the government of this church (G-11.0404a).**

Waiver of the foregoing requirements (G-11.0404b)

Categories 	May serve before transfer to PCUSA	Exemption from presenting a college degree and/or theological degree G-11.0404a(1)	Exemption from passing the Ordination Exams G-11.0404a(2). Must have failed exams on two previous attempts G-14.0313b
Formula Partners ELCA RCA UCC G-11.0405b	Installed, Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Interim Pastor, Organizing Pastor	RCA pastors would transfer under G-11.0404b, UCC and ELCA pastors under G-11.0405a	RCA pastors would transfer under G-11.0404b, UCC and ELCA pastors under G-11.0405a.
Other Reformed Churches ordained less than 5 years G-11.0404b	Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Interim Pastor	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Course of study to complete requirements	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Course of study to achieve competency
Reformed Churches ordained 5 years or more G-11.0404b	Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Interim Pastor	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Course of study to complete requirements	Exemption by $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of those present
Corresponding denominations G-11.0405a	Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Interim Pastor	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Course of study to complete requirements	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Course of study to achieve competency
Other Christian denominations G-11.0404a	Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Interim Pastor	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Course of study to complete requirements	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Course of study to achieve competency
Immigrant Ministers from denominations in correspondence G-11.0404f	Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Interim Pastor	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Provide educational opportunities for successful ministry in presbytery	$\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present. Provide educational opportunities for successful ministry in presbytery