

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**  
**A VALIDATED MINISTRY FOR MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

FORM OF GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVES (In the order of references below)

- Ref. 1: G-11.0407, G-11.0408
- Ref. 2: G-11.0406 a
- Ref. 3: G-11.0406 b
- Ref. 4: G-14.0403 a,b,c,d,e
- Ref. 5: G-14.0405 b (9)
- Ref. 6: G-14.0515 a,b,c,d
- Ref. 7: G-11.0502 a,b
- Ref. 8: G-11.0406 c, G-11.0415 a,b
- Ref. 9: G-11.0414 a,b,c
- Ref. 10: G- 6.0203

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

A member-at-large is a minister of the Word and Sacrament who has previously been admitted to the presbytery or another presbytery as an active member, 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-11.0403. (Ref. G-11.0406b)

THE PURPOSE

These guidelines are to help the COM to determine, in a caring and responsible way, if a clergy person is in compliance with the criteria prescribed in the Book of Order for those who wish to be continuing members of presbytery as members-at-large. This category is for those not serving primarily in one of the following categories:

1. In a validated ministry within a congregation.
2. In a validated ministry in other services of the church
3. In a validated ministry in a service beyond the jurisdiction of this church.
4. Honorably retired.  
(Ref. 1. G-11.0407, G-11.0408) (Ref. 2: G-11.0406 a)

GUIDELINES: For continuing membership as a member-at-large. (Ref. 3: G-11.0406 b)

1. When the Book of Order refers to "the ministry of a continuing member", it is quite clear that this has reference to the primary work-relationship, occupation, or employment of that minister. The Presbytery interprets this to mean half time or more. (Ref. 4 G-11.0403 a,b,c,d,e)
2. The minister must be able to continue to affirm the ordination vows, noting especially question 9. (Ref. 5 G-14.0405 b (9))
3. "The ministry shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of presbytery" (Ref. 4 G-11.0403 e). The presbytery interprets this to mean that the minister shall have attended at least half the meetings of presbytery annually, unless excused by the Committee on Ministry for less attendance for a particular reason. The minister may volunteer or serve on a committee or task group of presbytery as invited.

4. "The ministry shall include responsible participation in the worship and service of a congregation." (Ref. 4: G-11.0403 e).

The presbytery interprets this to mean that a member-at-large serving in an approved validated ministry shall also be related to a specific congregation, except when in a temporary situation.

The minister should request the Session of a particular church, through the pastor, to be related to that church as a presbytery "Member-at-Large" minister for:

- a. worship attendance, with participation as called upon;
- b. or in addition, agreed upon limited volunteer service;
- c. or in addition, a broader presbytery designated relationship as a "Parish Associate". This relationship is strongly recommended. (Ref. 6: G-11.0515 a,b,c,d)

These above relationships do not constitute a "Validated Ministry".

5. The Committee on Ministry must report to Presbytery annually the type of work in which each minister of the presbytery is engaged. An annual report is required from each "Member-at-Large". (Ref. 7: G-11.0502 a,b).

A minister may be classified as a "Member-at-Large" when:

- a. Actively seeking a "Validated Ministry" position for which that person is qualified.
- b. The Board of Pensions has approved a temporary disability or for a prolonged illness.
- c. The minister is pursuing graduate study for a validated ministry position.
- d. In a non-church employment while serving in a presbytery approved validated part-time position, normally requiring twenty hours or more per week. (Any approved Tent Making Ministry).

These ministers also may be considered for active ministry membership if all additional requirements for such classification are met.

- e. As an educator, chaplain, pastoral counselor, campus minister, missionary, partner in mission, evangelist, administrator, social worker, consultant, or other human service or specific tasks appropriate to the ministry of the church, when there is evidence that tasks in those positions are being carried out in a Christian environment or from a Christian perspective (Ref. 10: g-6.0203).
- f. These ministers (A-E) also may be considered for active ministry membership if all additional requirements for such classification are met.

6. The Committee on Ministry may recommend to Presbytery that an exception be made when there are temporary family responsibilities or other individual circumstances which cause a minister not to comply with all the criteria for member-at-large. (Ref. 3: G-11.0406 b.)

7. The General Assembly has made the following interpretations:

- a. 1987 - Self employed ministers in private counseling practice cannot be in active category because they are not accountable to an institution or organization.
- b. 1989 - A career as a physician in private practice does not qualify for the status of member-at-large.

## OTHER CATEGORIES OF MINISTRY

1. Inactive Status is for a minister now engaged in an occupation that does not comply with all the criteria. in G-11.0403 (Ref. 3.) After three years the minister is deleted from the roll of Presbytery. (Ref. 8: G-11.0406 c, G-11.0415 a,b)
2. A minister may make application to be released from the exercise of the ordained ministry. No judgement of failure on the part of the minister is implied in this action. The minister may be restored, without reordination, upon resumption of a ministry that qualifies that person for continuing membership in presbytery. (Ref. 9: G-11.0414 a,b,c)

**Reference 1**

## G-11.0407-Rolls

The stated clerk shall maintain four rolls, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are active members, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are members-at-large, one listing the names of all the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the presbytery and who are inactive members, one listing all Certified Christian Educators within the bounds of the presbytery who are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings, and a fifth roll listing those who have been deleted from the other rolls. On or before December 31 of each year, the presbytery shall determine the category of membership of each continuing member in accordance with the relevant sections of this chapter and cause appropriate record of such determination to be made.

## G-11.0408-Validated Ministries

A minister of the Word and Sacrament who is an active member of presbytery may be engaged (1) in a validated ministry within congregations of this Church, (2) in a validated ministry in other service of this Church, (3) in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of this Church, or may be (4) honorably retired.

**Reference 2**

## G-11.0406-Continuing Members

## a. Active Member

An active member is a minister of the Word and Sacrament who has been admitted to the presbytery in accordance with G-11.0401, and is now engaged in ministry that complies with all of the criteria in G-11.0403 without exception. An active member may be engaged in a validated ministry within congregations of the Church (G-11.0409), in a validated ministry in other service of this Church (G-11.0410), in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of this Church (G-11.0411), or may be honorably retired (G-11.0412). An active member is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office.

**Reference 3**

## G-11.0406-Continuing Members

## b. Member-at-Large

A member-at-large is a minister of the Word and Sacrament who has previously been admitted to the presbytery or another presbyter as an active member, 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-11.0403. 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 because of family responsibilities or other individual circumstances which presbytery recognizes as important. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-11.0403 as possible and shall be encouraged to become a parish associate in a congregation. A member-at-large is entitled to

take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office. The status of each member-at-large may be granted by the presbytery upon the minister's application and shall be reviewed annually.

#### Reference 4

G-11.0403 a.b.c.d.e.-Criteria for Ministry of Continuing Members

A presbytery shall determine the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who shall be its continuing members. In making this determination the presbytery shall be guided by all the following criteria:

- a. The ministry of continuing members shall be in demonstrable 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 Church.
- b. The ministry shall be one that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministries of others.
- c. The ministry shall give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word. This will normally require the Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent and the completion of the requirements for ordination set forth in G-14.0402.
- d. The ministry shall be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and to organizations, agencies, and institutions.
- e. The ministry shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the presbytery and in the worship and service of a congregation.

#### Reference 5

G-14.0405 b-Ordination Service/Constitutional Questions

The member presiding shall then ask the candidate to answer the following questions:

- (9) Will you be a faithful minister, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, and caring for people? Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the governing bodies of the Church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

#### Reference 6

G-14.0515 a.b.c.d.

a. Parish Associate

A parish associate is a minister who serves in some validated ministry other than the local parish, or is a member-at-large, or is retired, but who wishes to maintain a relationship with a particular church or churches in keeping with ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Such persons, already qualified as continuing members of presbytery, may serve as parish associates. The relation shall be established, upon nomination by the pastor, between the parish associate, the session, and the presbytery. The parish associate shall be responsible to the pastor, as head of staff, on an "as needed, as available" basis and with or without remuneration.

b. Designation Made Under Supervision of Committee on Ministry

The designation of parish associate shall be made under the supervision of the committee on ministry at the request of the session of a particular church, the consent of the parish associate, and the approval of the presbytery. No formal call shall be involved. Any change in relationship must be approved by the presbytery. Ordinarily no more than one parish associate will be related to a particular church.

## c. Annual Review

The committee on ministry shall review the designation once each year to insure

- (1) that the time and energy required as a parish associate will not interfere unduly with the work of the person in his or her principal function;
- (2) that installed leadership of the particular church be protected in its effective functioning;
- (3) that the parish associate continue to meet the criteria for continuing membership in the presbytery based on other than this relationship to a particular church.

## d. When Pulpit Is Vacant

The agreement between the session and the parish associate shall, whenever a pulpit becomes vacant, be terminated upon due notice by the session or the parish associate with the approval of the presbytery.

**Reference 7**

G-11.0502 a.b.-Responsibilities

The committee shall serve the presbytery in the following ways:

- a. It shall visit regularly and consult with each minister of the presbytery. It shall report to the presbytery annually the type of work in which each minister of the presbytery is engaged. It shall require an annual report from every minister performing work which is not under the jurisdiction of the presbytery of a higher governing body of the Church.

**Reference 8**

G-11.0406 c-Inactive Member

An inactive member is a minister of the Word and Sacrament who has previously been admitted to the presbytery or another presbytery as an active member, but is now voluntarily engaged in an occupation that does not comply with all of the criteria in G-11.0403. The presbytery may, at the minister's request or on its own initiative after notifying the minister in person or by certified mail at the last known address, determine that the minister's category of membership is that of inactive member. An inactive member is not entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery or to speak, vote, hold office, or serve on committees, except that the inactive member may speak when the matter under consideration concerns that minister. The continued status of each inactive member shall be reviewed annually up to three years. If at the end of three years the minister has not been restored to active membership or membership-at-large, the presbytery shall delete that person's name from the appropriate roll of presbytery and may give that person a certificate of membership to a particular church. (G11.0414)

G-11.0415 a.b.

## a. Minister to Be Placed on Inactive Roll

If a minister shall be absent from the sessions of the presbytery of membership for a period of one year and shall neglect to report to that 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, place that minister's name on the inactive roll.

**b. Within Other Bounds**

A minister of the Word and Sacrament who has received permission to labor outside the bounds of the presbytery of membership but has not received permission to labor within the bounds of the presbytery of labor shall, after a period of two years, be placed on the inactive roll.

**Reference 9**

G-11.0414 a.b.c.

**a. Release from the Exercise of Ordained Office**

If a minister concerning whom no inquiry has been initiated pursuant to D-7.0200 and D-7.0800, 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 ordained ministry, the presbytery shall delete that person's name from the appropriate roll of presbytery and give that person a certificate of membership to a particular church. The presbytery shall retain a roll of persons so deleted with date of deletions, date of ordination, and place of ordination. No judgment of failure on the part of the minister is implied in this action.

**b. Discontinuance of Functions**

Release from the exercise of the ordained office of a minister of the Word and Sacrament requires a discontinuance of all functions of that office. the designations reverend, minister, pastor, or other similar term shall not be used. The status of a minister who has been so released shall be the same as any church member.

**c. Desire to be Restored**

Should a person released under this section later desire to be restored to continuing membership in presbytery, that person shall make application to the presbytery that granted the release, and upon approval of that presbytery, the reaffirmation or ordination vows, and resumption of a ministry that qualifies that person for continuing membership in presbytery, the person shall be restored to the exercise of the ordained office without reordination.

**Reference 10**

G-6.0203-Teachers Chaplains, and Others

When ministers are designated as educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministers, missionaries, partners in mission, evangelists, administrators, social workers, consultants, or in other specific tasks appropriate to the ministry of the Church, they shall evidence a quality of life which helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall exercise pastoral care of those for whom they are responsible and shall seek to fulfill their ministry by serving Christ and their fellow men and women, strengthening the Church and equipping it for concern and service to the life of the human community. In addition to fulfilling the particular responsibilities to which they are called, they shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships, and shall be eligible for election to the higher governing bodies of the Church and to the boards and agencies of those governing bodies.