

**Presbytery of Milwaukee Policy on  
Enrollment of Ministers of Other Christian Churches for Temporary Service  
And Validation of Ministry  
Approved by the Presbytery on \_\_\_\_\_**

If, during the approved search process, a session identifies a pastor who is not a minister of the Word and Sacrament or a Commissioned Pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to serve as its pastor, the session may request that the Presbytery of Milwaukee (“Presbytery”) approve a minister of “another Christian church” (G-2.0506) to serve their congregation in a temporary pastoral relationship. Service by individuals who are minister members of denominations in full communion or correspondence with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is governed by the Book of Order, not this policy.

The Presbytery may validate the ministry of a minister of another Christian church to service in a temporary pastoral relationship when the following conditions have been met:

- satisfaction of the requirements of preparation for such service according to the Presbytery’s own rules; and
- enrollment as a temporary member of the Presbytery, having affirmed the order and discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a manner satisfactory to the Presbytery.

The minister shall be subject to examination by the full Commission on Transitional Ministry (CTM). Following successful examination, CTM will recommend validation of the applicant for temporary pastoral service by the Presbytery on the floor of Presbytery allowing for questions and clarification. A member of the Presbytery may request examination of the minister of the floor of Presbytery. Final approval shall be by vote of the Presbytery.

The Presbytery, in its validation, may authorize the minister to preach and lead worship, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. The Presbytery, in its validation, may also authorize the minister to moderate the session of the congregation with which he or she is approved to serve and to moderate congregational meetings, after a period of evaluation by a member of the Presbytery and the CTM.

Approval of a validated ministry is valid for up to one year and authorizes the holder to perform only the ministerial functions named in the validation for the requesting congregation. The validated ministry may be renewed for successive one-year terms upon agreement of the congregation’s session, the minister, and the Presbytery through its agency or commission, following a review by CTM at the end of each term. The CTM may at any time withdraw the validation of the minister and request the presbytery to remove the minister from its rolls for reasons it deems good and sufficient.

By enrolling in the Presbytery, the individual is accountable to the Presbytery and subject to its jurisdiction for all purposes, including discipline. While enrolled temporarily in the Presbytery, the individual may also retain membership in their other denomination or Christian church. Enrollment in the Presbytery will end once the individual’s validated ministry has concluded.

During the tenure of the temporary service and once enrolled in the Presbytery, the individual shall ordinarily attend all meetings of the Presbytery and be seated as a minister with voice and vote.

The rules which guide this policy shall be approved by the Presbytery. The CTM is authorized to develop additional procedures or guidelines within these rules that it deems necessary to implement the policy.

## **AUTHORITY**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved an authoritative interpretation (AI) of G-3.0104 and G-3.0201 to replace the 1992 authoritative interpretation (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 308, paragraph 21.088, *Req. 92-10*). The new AI guides the policy of the Presbytery of Milwaukee in the enrollment and validation of ministries of ministers of other Christian churches.

The Book of Order (G-2.0506) permits presbyteries to enroll a minister of another Christian church as a temporary member for a period of service, either in a temporary pastoral relationship or in an installed position (Formula of Agreement ministers only).

The function of a minister and the moderator of a session is more than simply to provide pastoral services and conduct meetings according to standards of parliamentary procedure. The minister and moderator are the presence of presbytery and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in that congregation and council (session). The moderator ensures that the congregation's session continues to be a member church and council which at times acts as the whole church, as noted in F-3.0201 through F-3.0203:

- “The particular congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church, called the church” (F-3.0201).
- “This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament)” (F-3.0202).
- “These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation. These councils are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council ...” (F-3.0203).

The church expects its ministers to be guided by our polity and abide by its discipline so that they are equipped to define and interpret the Constitution in any setting where decisions are made relative to the denomination. Sessions must make decisions that are constitutional. Presbyterian ministers are accountable for the advice they give. Non-Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers cannot be so held.

The *Book of Order* defines a council as consisting of “presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament” (F-3.0202)). Thus, a basic quality of our polity is that a council consists of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament making decisions together. The 1992 AI concluded that to permit ministers who are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to moderate sessions would jeopardize this fundamental principle of Presbyterian polity.

However, the Constitution permits a presbytery to “enroll a minister of another Christian church who is serving temporarily in a validated ministry in this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement (*Book of Order*, Appendix B; G-5.0202), when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery’s own rule.” (G-2.0506). Installed ministers have answered the constitutional questions of W-4.0404 and have thus placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), enabling them to serve as moderator.

Accordingly, under G-2.0506 and the 2018 AI, a presbytery may also validate the ministry of a member of “another Christian church” to service in a temporary pastoral relationship, including as session moderator, when the following conditions have been met:

- enrollment as a temporary member of a presbytery, having affirmed the order and discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a manner satisfactory to the presbytery;
- satisfaction of the requirements of preparation for such service according to the presbytery’s own rules, including its “rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience” (G-3.0201). A presbytery may require training in Presbyterian polity and other areas in these rules.

Per the 2018 AI, this interpretation shall also apply to temporary members of a presbytery serving as moderator of a congregational meeting.

**Commission on Transitional Ministries**  
**Rules for Enrollment of Ministers of Other Christian Churches for Temporary Service**  
**And Validation of Ministry**

Pursuant to the Presbytery of Milwaukee's Policy on Enrollment of Ministers of Other Christian Churches for Temporary Service and Validation of Ministry, the Commission on Transitional Ministries ("CTM") was authorized to apply these rules to implement this policy. No part of these rules should be interpreted as inconsistent with the policy.

Eligibility

To qualify for enrollment and validation, applicants must have been invited by the requesting session to apply and must meet the following requirements:

1. Applicants must have been ordained and practicing ministers of their Christian churches for at least 5 years and must demonstrate significant experience and involvement in that denomination in a majority of the following areas: administering the sacraments; conducting worship services; providing spiritual leadership; participating in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church; providing pastoral care; and managing a local congregation or institution.
2. Applicants must receive endorsement from the requesting session. The session must endorse and support the applicant throughout the application process and service to the Church. Upon receipt of the application, the CTM will contact the session to arrange for a visit to discuss the responsibilities of the session for endorsing the applicant, specifically:
  - a) Endorsement by the session means that it has reviewed the applicant's application, examined the person with regard to their motives for seeking this ministry, and has been made fully aware that the person intends to fulfill the validation process.
  - b) The session, in its endorsement, agrees to support both the applicant and their ministry as a temporary pastor. This shall include providing the applicant with fair compensation in accordance with the Presbytery's guidelines for Commissioned Pastors.
  - c) The Clerk of Session and at least one other member of the session must participate with the applicant in training related to Presbyterian polity.
3. Applicants must complete an application, which includes preparation of a statement of faith. The applicant shall send the completed application to the Stated Clerk for the Presbytery of Milwaukee (the "Presbytery"). The application shall include an acknowledgement that the applicant must sign the Presbytery's standard covenant among the pastor, Presbytery, and session of the requesting congregation affirming the jurisdiction, order, and discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); acknowledging the responsibilities of enrolled members of the Presbytery; committing to the requirements for validation of their ministry for temporary service; acknowledging the limits of the validation; agreeing that the validation may be revoked at any time by the Presbytery on the same grounds as removal of a Presbyterian

minister under a temporary relationship with a session; and specifying the terms of the contract.

4. Applicants must complete the Safe Gatherings certification process or another Presbytery-approved process for the protection of children and vulnerable adults and must undergo a background check.
5. Following its meeting with the session, the CTM will hold a face-to-face interview with the applicant.
6. Applicants must demonstrate to a credentialing team of CTM members (or others designated by CTM) that they have sufficient knowledge of the following subjects: Old and New Testament Study and Interpretation; Reformed Theology; Worship and Sacraments; Presbyterian Polity; Preaching; Pastoral Care; and Christian Education. Demonstration may be through transcripts from colleges, universities, seminaries or Bible colleges, or other relevant experience. If this knowledge cannot be demonstrated at the time of application, the Presbytery will assign a mentor who will offer tutoring to the applicant until such knowledge can be demonstrated. The applicant may also be directed to appropriate academic coursework where necessary and applicable.
7. Applicants must complete a psychological assessment by a Presbytery-approved consultant. The applicant, congregation, and Presbytery will each assume one-third of the cost for this assessment. Before the process continues, applicants must grant permission for the information gained in the assessment process to be shared with the CTM.
8. Following approval by the Presbytery, the applicant will not moderate session or congregational meetings for a period of six months. A member of the Presbytery, appointed by the CTM, will moderate these meetings providing an opportunity for the applicant to demonstrate their knowledge of Reformed Theology and Presbyterian Polity. The member and the CTM will perform an evaluation at the end of the six month period, at which time the member may continue to moderate these meetings or the applicant may be given permission to take over these responsibilities.

CTM may not validate the ministry until all requirements have been met; except, however, if the only remaining requirement is demonstration of substantive knowledge in the subjects specified above, CTM may grant permission to the minister to preach as pulpit supply in the requesting congregation when invited by the session and while instruction is being provided.

Once all requirements are met, CTM shall bring the request for validation, with its recommendation, to the floor of the Presbytery at a regular or special meeting and shall answer any questions of the Presbytery related to its recommendation and the applicant. If the Presbytery approves validation of the temporary ministry, then CTM shall request that the Stated Clerk enroll the pastor as a minister member of the Presbytery. The individual will be notified in writing when all requirements for enrollment and ministry validation have been met. If the term of the validated ministry is renewed for an additional term, opportunities for continuing education will be provided. Individuals covered by this policy will be considered eligible for the Presbytery's continuing education funds.

Individuals whose ministry has been validated for temporary service will be assigned a liaison by CTM for the duration of their validated ministry and a mentor who is a minister of the Word and Sacrament in good standing with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Oversight of the enrolled temporary minister rests with the CTM, as with any other contracted minister member of the Presbytery.

As the role of a Temporary Supply Pastor is, by its title, temporary, and a reflection of pastoral transition and discernment within a congregation, oversight of the process and minister rests with CTM, although CTM may engage other members of the Presbytery as needed in its oversight.