

**Policy for COM acceptance and review of:
Member-at-Large and Specialized Validated Ministries**

Approved 6/14/06

Approved with new Book of Order references 11/17/12

G-6.0104 describes a variety of forms of Christian 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. (Examples of such ministries include: pastor, teacher, chaplain, and other forms of ministry)

Validated Ministries are defined by the Book of Order in G-2.0503a as:

A teaching elder who is an active member of the presbytery may be engaged in (1) a validated ministry within congregations of this church, (2) 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.

The Committee on Ministry shall review and report annually to Presbytery for its approval, on all Members-at-Large and Specialized Validated Ministries. **These teaching elders shall meet face-to-face with COM or designated representatives triennially.** (Military Chaplains on active duty will be exempt for this requirement).

Note- if the COM recommends denial of the status requested by the teaching elder he or she shall be given the opportunity to appear before the COM prior to the COM's recommendation being presented to the Presbytery. He or she shall be given written notice by regular mail of an adverse recommendation at least ten days prior to its presentation to the Presbytery. He or she may then address the Presbytery before the Presbytery acts on the COM recommendation.

Member-at-Large

Members at Large are designated as such according to the criteria found in G-2.0503bb: A member-at-large is a teaching elder who has previously been admitted to the presbytery or another presbytery as an active member, and who now, through no intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G-2.05.

A teaching elder may be designated as 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 G-2.05 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.

Member-at-large status may be granted by the presbytery upon the teaching elder's application and

shall be reviewed annually. [Such teaching elders remain under the oversight of the presbytery and may be transferred in their current category of membership to another presbytery with permission of both presbyteries.]

This process will include an annual report each member-at-large will be required to fill out concerning their current status and reason he or she requests to remain a member-at-large. The report shall also include information his or her participation over the past year in the life and work of the presbytery, participation in the life of a particular church, and any other ministerial duties performed *See attached form

Deadline for the return of the forms will be October 1 of each year. Only one reminder will be sent to anyone who has not returned the completed form. Failure to return the completed form by the required date may result in termination of validated status.

Specialized Validated Ministry

The intent of this process is to support creativity and the leading of the Holy Spirit in a variety of ministerial vocations, while conforming to G-2.0503:

An teaching elder engaged in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church may be engaged in a ministerial calling consonant with the mission of the presbytery in an organization, agency, or institution in which this church has no official participation, or may serve temporarily as pastor or in some other capacity in another denomination, and may, with approval of presbytery, accept ministerial membership in that church for the period of such service without forfeiting his or her membership in the Presbyterian Church (USA) presbytery in which he or she holds membership.

Before entering upon such service the teaching elder of the presbytery shall request permission of the presbytery of membership. The committee on ministry of the presbytery shall make a thorough review of the proposed ministerial function and report its recommendation to the presbytery. The committee shall determine and report whether service complies with all the criteria enumerated in G-2.0503a, without exception. If the presbytery grants the permission requested, such permission shall be subject to review annually.

Ultimately, a teaching elder serving in such a validated ministry continues in a direct relationship with the Committee on Ministry and the Presbytery. His or her gifts and experiences are to be shared within the larger body and celebrated by that body. The renewal of his or her specialized validated ministry requires an annual report to be completed and sent to the COM. (Exception: Military chaplains in a war zone or area deemed sensitive by the military are exempt from this requirement.) This report (see attached form) is based on the Book of Order G-2.0503 and defined by the Presbytery of Lake Erie.

Deadline for the return of the forms will be October 1 of each year. Only one reminder will be sent to anyone who has not returned the completed form. **Failure to return the completed form by the required date may result in termination of member-at-large status.**

The Book of Order G-2.0503 requires that presbyteries use all the following criteria in determining who shall be its continuing members. For purposes of clarification-the bold statements are the Presbytery of Lake Erie's interpretation.

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.

Definition: Teaching Elder Members are defined according to G-2.0503.

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 requirements for ordination set forth in G.14.0402.

Definition: The ministry should provide opportunities to articulate Christian faith and where possible administration of the Sacraments.

The ministry shall be carried out in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and to other organizations, agencies, and institutions affiliated with.

Definition: The ministry must be accountable to the recognized organization, agency or institution to be validated. In addition, ministers must submit annual forms and meet face-to-face with COM triennially.

The ministry (*within bounds of Lake Erie Presbytery*) shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the presbytery, and in the worship and service of a local church.

Definition: Teaching elders must attend at least two presbytery meetings per year; participate on a Presbytery committee, and in the life and ministry of a local church.

The ministry (*outside bounds of Lake Erie Presbytery*) shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of Lake Erie Presbytery, and in the worship and service of a local church.

Definition: Teaching elders must attend at least one Lake Erie Presbytery meeting every three years and show participation in a local congregation in the area they are living in.

*Military Chaplains on active duty are exempt from triennial face-to-face visit and presbytery attendance. However, unless located in a war zone or other area deemed sensitive by the military, they will be required to fill out the annual review form.

**Application and Annual Report of Teaching Elders-at-Large and
Those Engaged in Validated Ministries
To the Presbytery of Lake Erie**

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Your Ecclesiastical Status:(choose A or B)

A. _____ **Member-at-Large-** a member-at-large is a teaching elder 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-2.0503 (see other side). Please answer the questions below and use additional sheets if necessary.

. B. _____ **Engaged in Specialized Validated Ministry-**An active member engaged in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church may be engaged in a ministerial calling consonant with the mission of the presbytery in an organization, agency, or institution in which this church has no official participation or may serve temporarily as pastor or in some other capacity in another denomination, and may, with the approval of presbytery, accept ministerial membership in that church for the period of such service without forfeiting his or her membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Presbytery in which he or she holds membership.

List all full or part-time positional held, whether secular or religious, including self-employment, for which income was earned. Describe positions and give name and address of employing agency.

_____ **Code which best describes your occupation (see attached Authorized Ecclesiastical Occupational Designations).**

FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE STATUS (ONLY)

1) Give reasons for not fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry (e.g. family's responsibilities, medical reasons, spousal employment, etc.)

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2) indicate which if any of the G-2.0503 criteria (on the reverse side) you are fulfilling, and describe how.

FOR SPECIALIZED VALIDATED MINISTRY STATUS (ONLY)

1) Please describe the ways in which your present ministry fulfills each of the above criteria, with special attention to how you used your ordination in the fulfillment of your duties. (Use additional sheets if necessary)

2) In what other religious or ecclesiastical activities have you been engaged during the past year?

3) Why do you believe the presbytery should continue you on its active rolls?

Your Location: _____ Labor within the bounds of the Presbytery of Lake Erie
_____ Labor outside the bound of the Presbytery of Lake Erie within the Presbytery
of _____
_____ Labor outside the PC (U.S.A.) in _____

Signed: _____
Date _____

Return to: Committee on Ministry
Presbytery of Lake Erie
2816 Elmwood Ave
Erie, PA 16508

Failure to return may affect your standing in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)