

Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY



VALIDATED MINISTRIES

Approved by COM on August 7, 2012

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VALIDATED MINISTRIES IN THE PRESBYTERY OF EASTERN VIRGINIA

I. Purpose

The intent of this document is to provide the Commission on Ministry personnel with quick and simple guidelines for the ministry and work of its members in determining who shall be the continuing members of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia. In making this determination the presbytery shall be guided by the *Book of Order*, G-2.0503, Categories of Membership, and the written criteria developed by the Presbytery for validation of ministries within its bounds.

II. Definitions

A. A teaching elder who is a member of presbytery may be engaged in a validated ministry; may be a member-at-large; or may be honorably retired.

1. *Engaged in a Validated Ministry*

A validated ministry shall:

(a) 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 church;

(b) serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;

(c) give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word;

(d) be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and

(e) include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G-5.0201).

When teaching elders are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all teaching elders engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.

2. *Member-at-large*

A member-at-large is a teaching elder who has previously been engaged in a validated ministry, 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-2.0503a. A teaching elder 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 due to family responsibilities or other individual circumstances recognized by the presbytery. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of 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 member-at-large shall be reviewed annually.

3. *Honorably Retired*

Upon request of a member of presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age or physical or mental disability. A honorable retired teaching elder is a full member of the presbytery without obligation to undertake an active ministry and without further review by the presbytery. Honorably retired teaching elders are encouraged to use their experience in creative and meaningful ways. The status of honorably retired may be granted because of physical or mental disability, or upon the Rule of 60 (age plus cumulative ordained service). An annual review is not required.

III. Criteria

A. A teaching elder “engaged in a validated ministry in other service in this church” includes members of presbytery, synod, and General Assembly staff of this church or of an organization related to one of these governing bodies; as partner in mission in connection with a church outside the United States of America; or as a minister serving an organization sponsored by two or more denominations, one of which is this church. The approval of PEVA is required before accepting a call to such ministry but no annual review is required. Changes in terms of call are reported to presbytery.

B. Teaching elder designations for those “engaged in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church” include educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministries, missionaries, partners in mission, evangelists, administrators, social workers, or consultants. Annual written report is required.

C. The Presbytery may validate other ministries based on the criteria set forth in the *Book of Order*, G-2.0503:

- “a. 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 church;
- b. serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;
- c. give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word;
- d. be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any other organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and’.
- e. include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA)..”

D. Teaching elders who serve in some validated ministry other than the local parish, or who is a member-at-large, are encouraged to become a parish associate in order to help fulfill the requirements of G-2.0503a.

IV. Process of Validation

A. By October of each year, the Vice Moderator for Pastoral Care will forward the Annual Report of Teaching Elders in Non-Parish Ministry (Appendix A) to those ministers “engaged in a validated ministry in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church” and members-at-large.

B. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Vice Moderator for Pastoral Care will review and make a recommendation as to the validation and category to the Commission on Ministry. The Presbytery at its Stated Meeting of January 26, 2002 granted validation approval to the COM.

C. If one or more of the criteria cannot be met the continuing member shall seek release from the exercise of ordained office (G-2.0507) until a call to ministry that fulfills all criteria is received. Restoration to the exercise of ordained office is possible without re-ordination and is in no way judgmental.

D. Recommendation for transferring a teaching elder to the inactive roll will require approval by the Presbytery. A letter to be sent to the concerned teaching elder, registered mail - returned receipt requested, notifying him/her of the proposed action and inviting that minister to speak to the Presbytery, if they so desire, on why they should not be placed on the inactive roll.

E. All forms should be completed and reported by the January Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

APPENDIX A ANNUAL REPORT OF TEACHING ELDERS IN NON-PARISH MINISTRY

Date _____

Name _____ Preferred Phone No. _____

Home Address _____

Name of Church/Agency/Company/Occupation _____

Address _____

Title/Position _____ Work Phone _____

E-mail _____

NOTE: Read the enclosed paper on Continuing Membership in Presbytery (Appendix B), based on the *Book of Order*, before proceeding.

1. Fulfilling the requirements of the *Book of Order*:

A. Matters relating to G-2.0503a

1. In what ways are you fulfilling your ministry by serving Christ and your fellow men and women through your current work?

2. In what ways are you exercising pastoral care for those for whom you are responsible in your current work?

3. In what ways are you strengthening the church and equipping it for concern and service through your current work?

4. a. My congregational or Specialized Ministry Service is indicated with a number below: In the past year I have (# of times)

preached _____
served communion _____
performed baptisms _____
performed weddings _____
officiated at funerals _____
taught church school or led retreats _____
done hospital/shut-in visitations _____

- b. In my relationship to this presbytery, I serve on the _____ Commission/
Committee/Team

My committee and presbytery attendance is indicated below:

I have attended ____ committee meetings in the past year.

I have attended ____ Presbytery meetings in the past year.

5. In what ways are you actively participating:

a. In a local Presbyterian congregation?

b. In Presbytery?

c. How else would you be interested in serving in Presbytery?

B. Matters pertaining to G-2,0503a

Do you certify that in your current work (yes or no):

1. Your ministry is in demonstrable conformity with the Mission of God's people as set forth in Holy Scripture, *The Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*?

_____ (if not, explain)

2. Your ministry serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others?

_____ (if not, explain)

3. Your ministry gives evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word?

_____ (if not, explain)

4. Your ministry is carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the Presbytery in addition to any organization, agencies, and institutions served?

_____ (if not, explain)

C. Other Matters:

1. Are you engaged in work which falls under the jurisdiction of another Presbytery of our church? _____ If yes, have you been given the necessary permission by PEVA to "labor within its bounds"?

2. Is your Presbytery of residence (if other than PEVA) aware of your ministry?

3. Are you considering transfer of membership to another Presbytery? _____ If yes, when and which Presbytery? _____

4. If you are living outside the geographic bounds of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, why do you wish to retain membership in the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia?

II. Do you have any specific requests of Presbytery's Commission on Ministry?

III. Please share any personal experiences or goals which you feel would be helpful for the Commission on Ministry to know.

IV. Do you wish to have a personal meeting with the Commission on Ministry or its representatives to discuss your current work, your current or future classification, or any other matter?

V. Classification Request: (check appropriate spaces)

___ 1. I request the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia to approve and validate my current work as a valid form of ministry, until December 31, 201_, in accord with the criteria of G-2.0503. My current work is _____.

___ 2. I request the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia to classify me as follows, to be effective until December 3, 201_: (Choose one category)

___ Active member with validated ministry with a congregation.

___ Active member with validated ministry in other service to the PC (USA).

___ Active member with validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the PC (USA).

___ Member-at-large

___ Member not engaged in a validated ministry.

___ 3. Because I live outside the geographic bounds of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, I request permission to engage in work outside the bounds of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia. (You must first get permission of the Presbytery within whose bounds you intend to work.)

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return to: Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, Attn: COM, 801 Loudoun Ave, Portsmouth, VA 23707-3216

APPENDIX B CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP IN PRESBYTERY FOR SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

According to the *Book of Order*, G-2.0503, a teaching elder is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or honorably retired. The presbytery shall review annually the work of a teaching elders engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation and the status of member-at-large. The review shall determine that the member-at-large is complying with as many of the criteria of a teaching elder engaged in a validated ministry as possible which are that they:

- a. 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 church;
- b. serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;
- c. give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word;
- d. be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organization, agencies, and institutions served, and;
- e. include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA).

Believing that individuals could interpret these criteria differently and knowing that a member-at-large has all the rights of a teaching elder engaged in a validated ministry, the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia approved that:

- a. all teaching elders engaged in validated ministries are considered "active" members of presbytery. Others will be designated as member-at-large unless they do not meet the criteria above;
- b. all teaching elders in non-parish ministries must file an annual report to presbytery;
- c. any specialized teaching elders laboring within the bounds of presbytery will be expected to:
 - attend presbytery meetings;
 - serve as an active member of a presbytery committee; and,
 - participate in the worship and service of a congregation.

Failure to engage in validated ministry may result in determining that the teaching elder does not have voice or vote in meetings of presbytery, except in matters pertaining to their relationship, and after three years may have their name deleted from the roll of membership (G-2.0508).