

A Policy Statement from the Committee on Ministry on Transferring Membership to the Presbytery of New Harmony from Other Denominations

The Committee on Ministry (COM) has adopted the following policy regarding the transfer of ministers from other denominations who desire to become members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The full process is laid out in the *Book of Order G-2.0505* which basically requires any minister seeking membership in the PC(U.S.A.) to fulfill the same requirements that we demand of our own candidates for ordination. The list of those requirements is found in *G-2.0607*.

Recognizing *both* that there are allowances for exceptions (*G-2.0610*) and that ministers who have served for many years have often demonstrated mastery of many of the qualifications for which the standard ordination exams test, the COM may recommend to the Presbytery of New Harmony (NHP) waivers of certain of the requirements that we expect of our own ordination candidates for those ministers. All final discernment about what requirements may and may not be recommended for a waiver rests with the COM.

The COM may present to NHP for membership, subject to the $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote for exceptions to the usual practice, ministers who:

1. Possess an M. Div. degree from an accredited seminary or school of theology.
2. Present proof of ordination from another Christian denomination or body and are in good standing in that denomination or body and are willing to surrender that membership upon joining the PC(U.S.A.).
3. Have been called to a work within NHP.
4. Demonstrate the qualifications of character and scholarship the PC(U.S.A.) expects of candidates for ministry. If a minister has served less than 10 years, the minister must pass the Biblical Content Exam. If a minister has served more than 10 years, COM may waive this requirement.
5. Show evidence of having satisfactorily passed at least one year of Ancient/Koiné Greek or Ancient Hebrew in seminary or in college. (With this qualification the COM may recommend that the normal requirement of having studied both Greek and Hebrew in seminary be waived by NHP). For someone who has become a minister as a second career and did not study Greek or Hebrew, and for those whom the COM otherwise believes there is a valid reason not to make taking one of these languages a requirement, the minister must show satisfactory evidence to COM of exegetical skill in the English language.

6. Pass the Ordination Exams in 1) Reformed Theology, 2) Reformed Worship and Sacraments, and 3) Presbyterian Polity. The COM may choose to waive these requirements for ministers who have served more than 10 years in another Reformed tradition.
7. Have been examined and approved by the COM, and fulfilled any other requirements as determined by the COM.

The COM has the right to add to these list of requirements or ask NHP for further waivers based on their interviews with a minister and an assessment of what they believe is needed for a pastor to have fruitful ministry within the PC(U.S.A.).

The COM liaison to a church's Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) should advise the church seeking pastoral leadership that, in order not to raise the hopes of a PNC if they become seriously interested in a minister who may not meet NHP's requirement for transfer, any non-PC(U.S.A.) minister that self-refers to a church must have an interview with the COM prior to a second conversation or interview with the PNC. The COM will provide guidance to the PNC after their interview with the minister about whether or not the PNC can continue to pursue conversation with this minister.