

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA POLICY FOR VALIDATED MINISTRY

The Presbytery of Florida is called to serve God using our gifts and skills to excite, encourage, equip, and empower our congregations and clergy in ministry and mission.

To fulfill our mission, we recognize the criteria which The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has approved for determining who will be continuing minister members of presbyteries. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of a presbytery include active members, members-at-large, and inactive members.

It is required that presbyteries shall have a policy for validation of ministries carried on by its active members within the bounds of its presbytery. This policy sets out the standards and procedures by which ministers of the Word and Sacrament shall be continuing active members of presbytery (G-11.0403). Qualification for continuing active membership is based on the ministry in which the member is engaged. Approved ministries are called validated ministries.

There are four designations of validated ministries in presbyteries in which an active member of presbytery may be engaged (G-11.0409): (1) a ministry within congregations of this church (G-6.0202 and G-14.0513), including organizing pastor (G.14.0513 f.), (2) a ministry in other service of the church (G-11.0410), (3) service beyond the jurisdiction of the church (G-11.0411), and (4) honorably retired (G-11.0412).

Criteria for determining the validation for ministry of continuing active members (with the exception of honorably retired ministers [see G-11.412 b.]) are that the ministry must

- a. Be in demonstrable conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in scripture, our constitution (G-11.0403 a-e and G-6.0104 Forms of Ministry), and the mission of Florida Presbytery (see Appendix A);
- b. Be one that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministries of others;
- c. Give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word. This will normally require a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent from an acceptable seminary and completing requirements for ordination set forth in G-14.0402 if not already ordained;
- d. Be carried out in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and employing organizations, agencies or institutions. Accountability to presbytery for non-parish ministry requires the filing of an Annual Report to the Committee on Ministry for Non-Parish Minister Members (G-11.0502 a.).
- e. Be a responsible participant in the life of the presbytery and will be part of the worship of one of presbytery's congregations to the extent possible. Parish Associate relationships are encouraged for all non-parish ministers and for sessions and pastors for consideration.

The Application Process

If a continuing member who is not honorably retired cannot meet one or more of the criteria, he or she can request to be designated either a member-at-large (G-11.0406 b.) or an inactive member (G-11.0406 c.) of presbytery.

An ordained minister in another denomination who wishes to become a member of Florida Presbytery based on his or her non-parish ministry shall contact the Chairperson of the Committee on Ministry. A copy of this policy statement shall be sent to the applicant with a request for a written explanation of how the proposed ministry meets the criteria, responding to the five qualifications above. The response will be sent to the Chairperson of the Committee on Ministry. After the Committee or its sub-committee reviews the application and interviews the applicant, the full Committee either approves or disapproves the application and reports to presbytery on the action taken.

If the Committee on Ministry declines to validate a specialized (non-parish) ministry, the applicant may appeal to presbytery and, if denied, to the judicial process.

If one receives approval for a particular specialized (non-parish) ministry, one may not take up a different specialized ministry without approval of presbytery through the Committee on Ministry. Validation is attached to a particular work and not to the individual.

APPENDIX A

The calling to mission of God's people is broad and comprehensive. All members of the church are called to ministry, but the calling which applies to these standards for ministers is one that requires ordination to the Word and Sacraments. While this does not limit the work to which we are called, it does set a standard of competence and function and expectation.

Consideration of forms of ministry that presbytery should address are: mission projects, schools, chaplaincies, pastoral care and counseling and education services, health care facilities and services, governing bodies, agencies, mission and ministry units, seminaries, professor of Bible, international organizations, programs dealing with housing, the farm crisis, drug and alcohol addiction, marriage and family problems.

In all instances, the qualifications should include whether or not the work provides opportunities to articulate the Christian faith. Are theologically informed skills needed to carry out the work? Does the work require the application of theological competence in communication, interpretation, or the care and nurture of persons' growth in spirituality?