



Guidelines for the Transfer and Employment of Ministers of Other Christian Churches

Use of internet-based referral system by ministers of other Christian churches

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) internet-based referral system, “Church Leadership Connection” (CLC), is available for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers only. Ministers of other Christian churches, including *A Formula of Agreement* partners (The Reformed Church in America, RCA; The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA; The United Church of Christ, UCC) and the Korean Presbyterian Church in America, KPCA), are encouraged to contact presbyteries in which they seek to serve in temporary positions. Ministers in the process of transferring to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must be authorized by the committee on ministry (COM)/presbytery and meet all of the PC(USA) ordered ministry requirements before they may use CLC. **For more information see G-2.0506 and BOO Appendix B, G-5.0202.**

A. **Only Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers and ministers from partner churches with whom we are in covenant relationship** (ELCA, RCA, UCC and KPCA) may serve as installed pastors of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations (*Book of Order*, G-2.0506).

B. Ministers of other Christian churches may serve in temporary positions.

C. Presbyteries have no obligation to allow ministers from other Christian churches, including those of churches in full communion or in correspondence with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to serve their churches. Ministers of other denomination should serve as a part of the mission strategy of the presbytery.

D. **Ministers of other Christian churches who wish to become Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers must meet the *Book of Order* requirements in G-2.0505, Transfer of Ministers of Other Denominations.** Waiver to ministers of other Reformed churches ordained for five or more years need a two-thirds vote of the presbytery.

E. **Formula Partner and Covenant Ministers** (ELCA, RCA, UCC, and KPCA) may be installed and serve Presbyterian churches while remaining members of their home Christian churches. Reference checking and examination by the COM should take place just as it would for any Presbyterian minister seeking a call within the presbytery. The minister is installed (if home denomination allows) and is enrolled as a member of the presbytery with all rights and privileges.

F. **Accountability**—Formula of Agreement partner ministers and covenant relation ministers remain accountable to the sending body for continuation of ministerial status. The inviting and sending bodies share responsibility for pastoral care of ordained ministers. They are accountable to the presbytery of call for their ministry with the church. It is hoped that when such relationships are established, the mid council representatives would partner in supporting the minister.

G. **Financial Arrangements**—Formula of Agreement partner ministers and covenant relation ministers remain members of their denomination’s medical and pension plans. Presbyterian congregations will pay dues to the insuring entity. It is expected that salaries will be the same as would be paid to a Presbyterian minister.

Transfer of membership to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

In order to become a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister, a minister of another Christian church (including A Formula of Agreement partners and covenant partners) must:

1. Be an ordained minister.
2. Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and a theological degree from an institution acceptable to the presbytery of call (*Book of Order*, G-2.0607b–c).
3. Pass Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) standard ordination exams. The presbytery, by a three-fourths vote, may waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations (G-2.0610).
4. A presbytery can accept a minister of another Christian church after the constitutional conditions have been met. They will be required to provide attestation of “good standing” from an authorized official of his or her present governing body.
5. The Ecumenical and Agency Relationships office will request, in behalf of the presbyteries, the required “good standing” letter. To complete the transfer they must:
 - Have a call to appropriate work in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
 - Be examined and approved by the presbytery of call.
 - Be examined on their Christian faith, in theology, and in the system of government of this church, and at the discretion of the presbytery in other subjects.
 - Answer the ordination questions in the affirmative.
 - Furnish evidence that they have been officially removed from the roll of the other Christian denomination.

New immigrant fellowship and congregations

In the case of ministers for immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery may, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that group requires it, recognize the ordination and receive as a member of presbytery a new immigrant minister who furnishes evidence of good standing in a Christian denomination. For more information, see G-2.0505a(1).

It is essential that the committee on ministry (COM) meet with each non-Presbyterian minister to assess theology and practice of ministry, understandings of Presbyterian government, and their intentions as well as to explain the presbytery’s goals for the church and resources available to the minister. It is wise for the COM to get involved early in a relationship between a congregation and a non-Presbyterian pastor rather than be faced with the unpleasant task of telling a church the pastor with whom they have built a relationship cannot serve them.

The Office of the General Assembly website maintains the list of churches that are “in correspondence” <http://oga.pcusa.org/ecumenicalrelations/relationships.htm#correspondence>. A confirmation of a church “in correspondence” status can be requested from the Ecclesial and Ecumenical Ministries office at (888) 728-7228 ext.5431.