

ALBANY PRESBYTERY
CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP AND VALIDATION OF MINISTRY POLICY

Preamble

Minister members of Albany Presbytery may be engaged in validated ministries within congregations (G-11.0409); within governing bodies of the church, ecumenical agencies, specialized ministries under the control of the church, and interdenominational agencies (G-11.0410); or engaged in validated ministries beyond the jurisdiction of the church (G-11.0411).

In a 2005 ruling, the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) of the General Assembly directed each presbytery to formulate a policy clarifying its implementation of the *Book of Order* provisions for validated ministries beyond the jurisdiction of the church.

Albany Presbytery recognizes that validated ministries beyond its congregations are important to its mission to the world. Celebrating the contributions of those who minister beyond the pastoral office, we commit ourselves to finding new ways in which those contributions might enrich the life of the presbytery.

Committee on Ministry Responsibilities

Toward that end, the Committee on Ministry shall visit periodically with those engaged in validated ministries beyond the congregation in order to (1.) offer pastoral support and explore ways in which the presbytery might serve them and their ministries; (2.) familiarize the presbytery with the work done on its behalf in these ministries and explore ways in which the presbytery might benefit more deeply from them; and (3.) assist members in validated ministries in assessing how their work discharges the responsibilities of ordination to ministry of Word and Sacrament. *These visits shall occur at least once every three years, and shall take place at the site of the member's validated ministry.*

Continuing Member Responsibilities

For their part, members of presbytery engaged in validated ministries shall fulfill the responsibilities for continuing members outlined in G-6.0100, G-6.0200, and G-11.0400.

As stated in G-6.0203, “When ministers are designated as educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministers, missionaries, partners in mission, evangelists, administrators, social workers, consultants, or in other specific tasks appropriate to the ministry of the church, they shall evidence a quality of life which helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall exercise pastoral care of those for whom they are responsible and shall seek to fulfill their ministry by serving Christ and their fellow men and women, strengthening the church and equipping it for concern and service to the life of the human community.”

1. Accountability: G-11.0403 requires that a validated ministry “shall be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and to organizations, agencies, and institutions.” Members of presbytery who engage in these ministries shall satisfy this requirement in part by participating in the aforementioned meeting with COM, and by filing a written report on their ministries in years when a visit with COM is not scheduled. COM may permit members to satisfy additional measures of accountability offered by their host agencies or institutions (e.g., boundary training) in lieu of equivalent presbytery requirements.

2. Responsible Participation: G-11.0403 also requires that a validated ministry “shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the presbytery and in the worship and service of a congregation.”
 - a. For members engaged in ministry within congregations of Albany Presbytery, “responsible participation” normally requires attendance at all stated meetings (or a request for excuse in emergencies) and a willingness to serve in the committee structures of the governing bodies.
 - b. Recognizing that the particular circumstances of validated ministries beyond congregations of this church can make attendance at stated meetings difficult, Albany Presbytery expects members in validated ministries to attend as many meetings as possible and to request excuse when conflicts arise.
 - c. Members in validated ministries beyond the congregation shall remain eligible for election to the higher governing bodies of the church and to the boards and agencies of those governing bodies (G-6.0203 and G-11.0403) and shall exhibit willingness to serve in those capacities as responsibility to their local ministries allows.
 - d. If scheduling conflicts make attendance at stated meetings particularly difficult for a member in validated ministry beyond the congregation, COM may work with the member to identify service in the presbytery (e.g., committee work, task force service, teaching) that might substitute for attendance at stated meetings as “responsible participation.”
 - e. Those involved in ministries outside of a congregation are expected to participate in the worship life of a local congregation or congregations.

PROCESSES FOR COM USE REGARDING ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ROLLS (G11.0407)

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

1. Stated Clerk to send a letter and annual report form to members-at-large in October of every year noting those members-at-large whose status is defined by family responsibilities or illness/disability, etc. The letter will:
 - a. Include language of G-11.0406b (and five criteria cited in G-11.0403).
 - b. Cite Presbytery policy regarding attendance (#1) and service (#2) with reference to the individual’s actual attendance and known service.
 - c. Request a written response by November 1 that includes indication of desire to continue as member-at-large.
2. If written response is received, a two-member subcommittee of COM will review the response and, if warranted, meet with the member to discuss his/her activities vis a vis G-11.0403. Recommendation for continuing (or not) at large status made by this subcommittee to COM.

3. If written response is not received, COM will send, via return receipt requested a letter, indicating intent to place the minister on inactive status effective upon action at the first stated meeting of Presbytery in the next calendar year.

VALIDATED MINISTRY

The intent of this process is to support creativity and the “doing of new things” while also conforming to G-11.0411. Ultimately, a minister serving in a validated ministry continues in direct relationship with COM and the Presbytery. His or her gifts and experiences are to be shared with the larger body and celebrated by that body.

1. Central to COM decision to validate one’s service is *clear accountability*. It is expected that the minister with validated service will have an ongoing relationship a congregation or congregations. His or her ministry must occur under the supervision of a governing body approved by COM.
2. The individual private practice of counseling, psychotherapy, holistic healing, therapeutic massage etc. does not meet the requirements for validation because it lacks this direct accountability relationship. Practices which are associated with churches which provide accountability and oversight would be eligible for consideration.
3. For those seeking validation for the first time, a two-member subcommittee of COM will meet with the individual minister to review the requirements for validation as set forth in the Presbytery-approved policy on continuing members and validated ministries. This review shall be in relationship to the actual documented work of the minister. The subcommittee shall make recommendation to COM for or against validation.
4. Each year COM will arrange to meet with 1/3 of ministers engaged in validated ministry. COM will send a letter in October of each year to those not being visited including an outline for written report by that minister to COM. Deadlines for receipt of that annual report shall be November 1.
5. COM will review every visit and report received and make an annual determination regarding continuation of validation.
6. Should a report not be received, COM will notify the minister of its intent to withdraw validation effective January 1 of the new calendar year.



NOTE: Any minister who is denied member-at- large or validated ministry status by COM may appeal this decision to the Presbytery.

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES

Active Member:	G-11.0406a
Members-at-large:	G-11.0406b
Validated Ministry:	G-11.0408
Criteria for Ministry of Continuing Members	G-11.0403

Adopted by Presbytery 06.13.06