

Pittsburgh Presbytery - Commission on Ministry  
Policy on Ministers from Other Denominations  
Sections 1-3, Adopted June 2023  
Section 4, Adopted July 2023

1. Background

Ordinarily, those serving in pastoral roles within Pittsburgh Presbytery shall be members of Pittsburgh Presbytery. However, the Book of Order provides that ministers from other denominations may be considered and serve in a pastoral position within the PCUSA. In some situations, the individual would be required to become a member of Pittsburgh Presbytery, while in other situations, the individual could choose to retain their membership within another church body. The exact requirements depend on the type of position, the individual's ministry preparation, and their ecclesiastical standing.

2. Definitions

- PCUSA Ministers: (PC(USA) Ministers of Word/Sacrament or PC(USA) Candidate for Ministry) - These individuals are currently members of or under the care of the Presbytery within the PC(USA). They can be considered for any pastoral position within Pittsburgh Presbytery.
- Orderly Exchange Ministers: (Minister members of other denominations with whom the PC(USA) has an agreement for the orderly exchange of ministers.) The PCUSA currently has agreements with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Reformed Church in America (RCA), The Moravian Church, and the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad (KPCA). Ministers members of these denominations can be considered for any pastoral position within Pittsburgh Presbytery. If invited to serve, they may transfer their membership into Pittsburgh Presbytery, or retain their membership their current ecclesiastical standing and be enrolled as temporary members of Pittsburgh Presbytery.
- Corresponding Church Ministers: (Minister members of other denominations with whom we are in correspondence) The PC(USA) currently holds membership in the World Council of Church, World Communion of Reformed Churches, the National Council of Churches, and the Christian Churches Together. Minister members of denominations who are also members of these ecumenical bodies may be considered for pastoral positions within Pittsburgh Presbytery, subject to the approval of COM. However, they would only be eligible to serve in a temporary position unless they transferred their ordination to the PC(USA)<sup>1</sup>. The review of individuals in this category is the responsibility of the Commission on Ministry, but consultation with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry is appropriate if there is a question or concern about an individual's educational qualifications.
- Other Christian Ministers: (Minister members of other Christian churches with whom the PC(USA) has no formal relationship) - Minister members ordained within an ecclesiastical body with whom the PC(USA) has no relationship are not ordinarily eligible to serve within the PC(USA). If an individual in this category wishes to serve within the PC(USA), the Commission on Preparation for Ministry will review their educational and ministry preparation credentials and advise them of any additional requirements they would need to complete to become a member of Pittsburgh Presbytery or be enrolled as a temporary member.

3. Eligibility Requirements for Pastoral Position Types:  
For Installed Positions (Installed/Designated Pastors):

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<sup>1</sup> The list of denominations that fit in this category is too many to list. In most cases, these are denominations that have similar educational requirements to the PC(USA) and maintain an ecclesiastical system of membership and accountability similar to the PC(USA).

Only PC(USA) Ministers and Orderly Exchange Ministers can serve in installed pastoral positions.

For Indefinite-Term Temporary Positions (Covenant Pastors)

- PC(USA) Ministers and Orderly Exchange Ministers are eligible to serve in long-term temporary positions.
- Corresponding Church Ministers will ordinarily need to transfer their membership into Pittsburgh Presbytery to serve in these positions. Exceptions to this rule shall be granted based on, but not limited to, the following criteria: position type, current ecclesiastical standing, retirement status, and motivations for retaining existing membership.

For Limited-Term Temporary Positions (Interim/Temporary Pastors):

- PC(USA) Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Minister Members of our Orderly Exchange Partners are eligible to serve in temporary pastoral positions.
- Minister members of other PC(USA) Presbyteries may serve in these positions, assuming appropriate permission is granted to labor outside the bounds.
- Ministers Members of Corresponding Denominations, with the approval of the COM, are eligible to serve in Temporary Pastoral Relationships so long as they have been approved for temporary membership within Pittsburgh Presbytery.

#### 4. Process for Receiving Ministers from Other Denominations

- Orderly Exchange Ministers – These individuals shall be considered in the same manner as PC(USA) candidates/ministers. Upon receipt of a call, they may, at their discretion, transfer their ordination into the PCUSA or be enrolled as temporary members of the Presbytery.
- **Corresponding Church Ministers**
  - a) Corresponding Church Ministers shall be initially vetted by COM regarding their qualifications and ecclesiastical standing.
    - i) Representatives of COM (Staff member(s) and/or liaison) shall review all written materials submitted by the individual. They shall also complete a brief screening interview with the individual which should focus on the individual's sense of call to the specific congregation as well as Pittsburgh Presbytery and the PC(USA). They shall also answer questions the individual might have regarding the process.
    - ii) A reference check to their current ecclesiastical body shall be conducted as soon as possible to ascertain eligibility for a position and gauge their potential fit. If the individual has been a prior member of the PC(USA), their previous Presbyteries of membership shall also be contacted.
    - iii) If there are any concerns regarding an individual's qualifications, the leadership of CPM shall be asked to confer.
    - iv) If there is uncertainty as to whether COM would clear a specific individual for a position, a standard COM clearance interview should be completed, even if it occurs earlier in the search process than is customary.
    - v) Upon completion of these steps, representatives of COM shall determine if the individual may be considered for a Pastoral position within the Presbytery, and inform both the PNC and the individual of that determination.
  - b) If a CCM is selected as a finalist for a pastoral position, and has not previously been cleared for the position, a standard COM clearance interview should be completed. At the clearance interview, the individual shall be reminded that any decision of the clearance team is a recommendation to the COM, not a final determination.
  - c) A meeting of the full COM shall be completed before the individual is voted on for the position by the Session (for non-installed positions) or Congregation (for installed positions), even if this requires a special meeting of the COM. The clearance team shall share their recommendation and

the individual shall be present to be examined for both theological fit within the PC(USA) and fit with a given congregation. After discussion, the COM will entertain a motion to approve the call of the individual. This vote shall be taken by show of hands. Based on the results of the vote;

- i) If the COM votes to approve the call by 75% or greater, the call shall be considered approved, the individual will be presented before the Presbytery body but will not be examined by the Presbytery body.
  - ii) If the COM votes to approve the call by greater than 50% to less than 75%, the individual shall be presented to the session or congregation for approval, stipulating that the call is pending final approval of the Presbytery. The individual shall then appear at the next stated Presbytery meeting to be examined by the body, and COM shall move that the call be approved.
  - iii) If the COM votes by 50% or less, the individual can no longer be considered for that position.
- **Other Christian Ministers** – These individuals shall be referred to CPM for review and follow the standard process for candidates for ordination under the exclusive authority of the CPM. With the approval of COM, the individual may serve a congregation in a temporary role, pending the completion of their ordination process.