

## CHAPTER TWO

## ORDERED MINISTRY, COMMISSIONING, AND CERTIFICATION

## G-2.01 ORDERED MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

*G-2.0101 Christ's Ministry*

The Church's ministry is a gift from Jesus Christ to the whole Church. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God's new creation. Christ's ministry is the foundation and standard for all ministry, the pattern of the one who came "not to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:28). The basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions. Members and those in ordered ministries serve together under the mandate of Christ.

*G-2.0102 Ordered Ministries*

The Church's ordered ministries described in the New Testament and maintained by this church are deacons<sup>a</sup> and presbyters (**ministers of the Word and Sacrament**<sup>b</sup> and ruling elders<sup>c</sup>). Ordered ministries are gifts to the church to order its life so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish. The existence of these ordered ministries in no way diminishes the importance of the commitment of all members to the total ministry of the church.

The government of this church is representative<sup>d</sup>, and the right of God's people to elect presbyters and deacons is inalienable. Therefore, no person can be placed in any ordered ministry in a congregation or council of the church except by election of that body.

Ordination to the ministry of deacon, **ruling elder, or minister of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elder)** is unique to that order of ministry.

*G-2.0103 Call to Ordered Ministry*

The call to ordered ministry in the Church is the act of the triune God. This call is evidenced by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the individual conscience, the approval of a community of God's people, and the concurring judgment of a council of the Church.

*G-2.0104 Gifts and Qualifications*

a. To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, ruling elders, and **ministers of the Word and Sacrament**—God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God's people and the concurring judgment of a council of the church.

b. Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G-2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.0404). Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

*G-2.0105 Freedom of Conscience*

It is necessary to the integrity and health of the church that the persons who serve it in ordered ministries shall adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity as expressed in this Constitution. So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained. It is to be recognized, however, that in entering the ordered ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek, or serve in, ordered ministry. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the council in which he or she is a member.<sup>1</sup>

**G-2.02 DEACONS: THE MINISTRY OF COMPASSION AND SERVICE**

*G-2.0201 Deacon Defined*

The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture<sup>e</sup> is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress<sup>f</sup>. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> Very early in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, even before the General Assembly was established, the plan of reunion of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia contained the following sentences: 'That when any matter is determined by a majority vote, every member shall either actively concur with or passively submit to such determination; or if his conscience permit him to do neither, he shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion without attempting to make any schism. Provided always that this shall be understood to extend only to such determination as the body shall judge indispensable in doctrine or Presbyterian government.' (Hist. Dig. (P) p. 1310.) (Plan of Union of 1758, par. II.)

*G-2.0202 Under Authority of the Session*

Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons. In either case, their ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session. Deacons may also be given special assignments in the congregation, such as caring for members in need, handling educational tasks, cultivating liberality in giving, collecting and disbursing monies to specific persons or causes, or overseeing the buildings and property of the congregation. Deacons shall assume other duties as may be delegated to them by the session, including assisting with the Lord’s Supper. (W-3.0414). A congregation by a majority vote may choose not to utilize the ordered ministry of deacons. If the congregation has neither a board of deacons nor individually commissioned deacons, the function of this ordered ministry shall be the responsibility of the ruling elders and the session.

**G-2.03 RULING ELDERS: THE MINISTRY OF DISCERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE***G-2.0301 Ruling Elder Defined*

As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share<sup>g</sup> in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with **ministers of the Word and Sacrament**, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline<sup>h</sup> and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as **ministers of the Word and Sacrament**, and they are eligible for any office.

**G-2.04 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS***G-2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons*

Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session. The pastor shall serve *ex officio* and without vote. When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of

the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.

*G-2.0402 Preparation for Ministry as a Ruling Elder or Deacon*

When persons have been elected to the ordered ministry of ruling elder or deacon, the session shall provide a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine them as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church; and the duties of the ministry. The session shall also confer with them as to their willingness to undertake the ministry appropriate to the order. If the examination is approved, the session shall appoint a day for the service of ordination and installation.

*G-2.0403 Service of Ordination and Installation*

The service of ordination and installation shall focus upon Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church, and shall include a sermon appropriate to the occasion. The moderator of session or person authorized to preside shall state briefly the nature of the ministry of ruling elder and deacon. The act of ordination and installation takes place in the context of worship. The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.04) shall be followed.

*G-2.0404 Terms of Service*

Ruling elders and deacons shall be elected to serve terms of no more than three years on the session or board of deacons, and may be eligible for reelection according to congregational rule. However, no ruling elder or deacon shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years, and a ruling elder or deacon who has served six consecutive years shall be ineligible for election to the same board for at least one year. Election shall be to classes as nearly equal in number as possible, with the term of only one class ending each year. The presbytery may, upon written request and by majority vote, grant a congregation a waiver of this limitation on terms.

Once ordained and while they are active members of any congregation of this denomination, ruling elders or deacons not in active service on a session or board of deacons continue to bear the responsibilities of the ministry to which they have been ordained, except as provided in G-2.0406, G-2.0407, or in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

*G-2.0405 Dissolution of Relationship*

A ruling elder or deacon may resign from the session or board of deacons, with the session's consent. On ceasing to be an active member of a congregation, a ruling elder or deacon ceases to be a member of its session or board. When a ruling elder or deacon, because of change of residence or disability, is unable for a period of one year to perform the duties of the ministry to which he or she was installed, the active relationship shall be dissolved by the session unless there is good reason not to do so, which shall be recorded.

*G-2.0406 Release from Ministry as a Ruling Elder or Deacon*

If a ruling elder or deacon who is in good standing, against whom no inquiry has been initiated, and against whom no charges have been filed, shall make application to the session to be released from the exercise of the ordered ministry, the session of the congregation in which he or she holds membership, upon granting the release, shall delete that person's name from the appropriate register of ruling elders or deacons of the congregation. No judgment of failure on the part of the ruling elder or deacon is implied in this action. Release from the exercise of the ministry of ruling elder or deacon requires a discontinuation of all functions of that ministry. The status of one so released shall be the same as any church member. Should a person released under this section later desire to be restored to that ordered ministry, that person shall make application to the session that granted the release, and upon approval of the session, that person shall be restored to the exercise of the ministry from which he or she was released without re-ordination.

*G-2.0407 Renunciation of Jurisdiction*

When a ruling elder or deacon submits to the clerk of session a written statement renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, the renunciation shall be effective upon receipt. When a ruling elder or deacon persists in work disapproved by the session, the session shall consult with him or her and shall give notice of its disapproval. If, after having been provided opportunity for consultation and upon written notice of its disapproval, the ruling elder or deacon persists in the work, the session may then conclude that the ruling elder or deacon has renounced the jurisdiction of this church.

Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the ruling elder or deacon from membership and ordered ministry and shall terminate the exercise of the ministry. The renunciation shall be reported by the clerk of session at the next meeting of the session, which shall record the renunciation, delete the name of the ruling elder or deacon from the appropriate register, and take such other administrative actions as may be required by this Constitution.

**G-2.05 MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT: THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING AND PASTORAL CARE***G-2.0501 Minister of the Word and Sacrament Defined*

**Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elders and pastors)** shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith **in word and deed** and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). They may serve in a variety of ministries, as authorized by the presbytery. When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall preach and teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. When they serve at font and table, they shall interpret **and “show forth”** the mysteries of grace **in word and action, lifting** the people's vision toward the hope of God's new creation. When they serve as pastors<sup>1</sup>, they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life. When they serve as presbyters, they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ's body through devotion, debate, and decision.

*G-2.0502 Presbytery and the **Minister of the Word and Sacrament***

As the Lord has set aside through calling certain members to be **ministers of the Word and Sacrament**, so the church confirms that call through the action of the presbytery. The presbytery shall determine whether a particular work may be helpful to the church in mission and is a call to validated ministry requiring ordination as a **minister of the Word and Sacrament**. In the performance of that ministry, the **minister of the Word and Sacrament** shall be accountable to the presbytery. **Ministers of the Word and Sacrament** have membership in the presbytery by action of the presbytery itself, and no pastoral relationship may be established, changed, or dissolved without the approval of the presbytery.

*G-2.0503 Categories of Membership*

A **minister of the Word and Sacrament** is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or honorably retired.

a. *Engaged in a Validated Ministry*

A validated ministry shall:

(1) demonstrate conformity with the mission of God’s people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, *The Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order* of this church;

(2) serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;

(3) give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God’s Word;

(4) be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and

(5) include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G-5.0201).

When **ministers of the Word and Sacrament** are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all **ministers of the Word and Sacrament** engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.

b. *Member-at-large*

A member-at-large is a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** who has previously been engaged in a validated ministry, and who now, without intentional abandonment of

the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G-2.0503a. A **minister of the Word and Sacrament** may be designated a member-at-large because he or she is limited in his or her ability to engage in a ministry fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry due to family responsibilities or other individual circumstances recognized by the presbytery. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of a congregation. A member-at-large is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office. The status of member-at-large shall be reviewed annually.

c. *Honorably Retired*

Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age or physical or mental disability.

G-2.0504 *Pastoral Relationships*

When **ministers of the Word and Sacrament** are called as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation, they are to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commends the gospel to all persons and that communicates its joy and justice. They are responsible for studying, teaching, and preaching the Word, for celebrating Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for praying with and for the congregation. With the ruling elders, they are to encourage people in the worship and service of God; to equip and enable them for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world; to exercise pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled, and the dying; to participate in governing responsibilities, including leadership of the congregation in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness in the decision-making life of the congregation, and its task of reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole. With the deacons they are to share in the ministries of compassion, witness, and service. In addition to these pastoral duties, they are responsible for sharing in the ministry of the church in councils higher than the session and in ecumenical relationships.

a. *Installed Pastoral Relationships*

The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A **minister of the Word and Sacrament** may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call. When a congregation determines that its strategy for mission under the Word so requires, the congregation may call additional pastors. Such additional pastors shall be called co-pastors or associate pastors, and the duties of each pastor and the relationship between the pastors of the congregation shall be determined by the session with the approval of the presbytery. When a congregation has two pastors serving as co-pastors, and the relationship of one of them is dissolved, the other remains as pastor. The relationship of an associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor. An associate pastor is ordinarily not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation.

b. *Temporary Pastoral Relationships*

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a **minister of the Word and Sacrament**, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A **minister of the Word and Sacrament** employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

c. *Exceptions*

A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** currently called as an Associate Pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor, or a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting.

*G-2.0505 Transfer of Ministers of Other Denominations*

a. When a minister of another Christian church is called to a work properly under the jurisdiction of a presbytery, the presbytery, after the constitutional conditions have been met, shall recognize the minister's previous ordination to ministry. Such ministers shall furnish credentials and evidence of good standing acceptable to the presbytery, and shall submit satisfactory evidence of possessing the qualifications of character and scholarship required of candidates of this church. (G-2.0607 and G-2.0610). In exceptional circumstances the following provisions will apply:

(1) 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 denomination, even though at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, and provide such educational opportunities as seem necessary and prudent for that minister's successful ministry in the presbytery.

(2) A minister of another Reformed church who has been ordained for five or more years may be granted an exemption for some or all of the examinations required of candidates for ordination by a two-thirds vote of the presbytery.

b. Upon enrollment, the minister shall furnish the presbytery with evidence of having surrendered membership in any and all other Christian churches with which the minister has previously been associated.

*G-2.0506 Temporary Membership in Presbytery for a Period of Service*

A presbytery may enroll a minister of another Christian church who is serving temporarily in a validated ministry in this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement (*Book of Order*, Appendix B; G-5.0202), when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery's own rule.

*G-2.0507 Release from Ministry as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament*

When a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** against whom no inquiry has been initiated pursuant to D-10.0101 and D-10.0201, against whom no charges have been filed, and who otherwise is in good standing shall make application to be released from the exercise of the ordered ministry of **minister of the Word and Sacrament**, the presbytery shall delete that person's name from the roll and upon request of a session dismiss that person to a congregation. Release from the exercise of ordered ministry requires discontinuance of all functions of that ministry. The designations that refer to **ministers of the Word and Sacrament** shall not be used. The person so released shall engage in the ministry shared by all active members of congregations. Should a person released under this section later desire to be restored to the ordered ministry of **minister of the Word and Sacrament**, that person shall apply through the presbytery which granted the release, and upon approval of that presbytery, the reaffirmation of the ordination questions, and the resumption of a ministry that qualifies that person for membership in the presbytery, shall be restored to the exercise of the ordered ministry as a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** without re-ordination.

*G-2.0508 Failure to Engage in Validated Ministry*

A **minister of the Word and Sacrament** whom the presbytery determines no longer to be engaged in a validated ministry (G-2.0503a) or to fulfill the criteria for membership-at-large (G-2.0503b), and who is not honorably retired (G-2.0503c), shall not have voice or vote in meetings of the presbytery, except when the matter under consideration pertains to his or her relationship to the presbytery. Names of such persons shall be reported annually to the presbytery by the stated clerk. If after three years the **minister of the Word and Sacrament** does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, the presbytery may delete that person's name from the roll of membership and, upon request of a session, dismiss that person to a congregation.

*G-2.0509 Renunciation of Jurisdiction*

When a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** (or authorized representative) submits to the stated clerk of the presbytery of membership a written statement renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, the renunciation shall be effective upon receipt. When a

**minister of the Word and Sacrament** persists in work disapproved by the presbytery having jurisdiction, the presbytery shall consult with the **minister of the Word and Sacrament** and shall give notice of its disapproval. If after having been provided opportunity for consultation and upon written notice of its disapproval, the **minister of the Word and Sacrament** persists in the work, the presbytery may then conclude that he or she has renounced the jurisdiction of this church.

When a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** accepts or continues membership of any character in another denomination, except as provided in this Constitution, the presbytery shall record the fact and delete the **minister of the Word and Sacrament's** name from the roll.

Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the **minister of the Word and Sacrament** from membership and ordered ministry and shall terminate the exercise of that ministry. The renunciation shall be reported by the stated clerk at the next meeting of the presbytery, which shall record the renunciation, delete her or his name from the appropriate roll, and take such other administrative actions as may be required by this Constitution, including public communication of such a renunciation.

Whenever a former **minister of the Word and Sacrament** has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former **minister of the Word and Sacrament** shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) **unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward and resubmits to the disciplinary process.**

## **G-2.06 PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

### *G-2.0601 Nature and Purpose of Preparation*

It is important that those who are to be ordained as **ministers of the Word and Sacrament** receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the presbytery. For this purpose, a presbytery shall enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become **ministers of the Word and Sacrament** and with their sessions and congregations. This relationship shall be divided into the two phases of inquiry and candidacy.

### *G-2.0602 Time Requirements*

To be enrolled as an inquirer, the applicant shall be a member of the sponsoring congregation, shall have been active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least six months, and shall have received the endorsement of the session of the sponsoring congregation. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.

### *G-2.0603 Purpose of Inquiry*

The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as **ministers of the Word and Sacrament** to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.

*G-2.0604 Purpose of Candidacy*

The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as **ministers of the Word and Sacrament**. This shall be accomplished through the presbytery’s support, guidance, and evaluation of a candidate’s fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination<sup>1</sup>.

*G-2.0605 Oversight*

During the phases of inquiry and candidacy the individual continues to be an active member of his or her congregation and subject to the concern and discipline of the session. In matters relating to preparation for ministry, the individual is subject to the oversight of the presbytery within the context of their covenant relationship.

*G-2.0606 Service in Covenant Relationship*

Inquirers and candidates shall, with the permission of the presbytery of care, engage in some form of supervised service to the church. No inquirer or candidate who has not been previously ordained as a ruling elder may serve as moderator of a session, administer the Sacraments, or perform a marriage service. An inquirer or candidate previously ordained as a ruling elder may be authorized by the presbytery to preside at the Lord’s Supper when invited by a session.

*G-2.0607 Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service*

A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** without approval of the presbytery of care. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a **minister of the Word and Sacrament** shall include:

- a. a candidate’s wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;
- b. a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;
- c. a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and
- d. examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.

*G-2.0608 Transfer of Relationship*

At the request of the inquirer or candidate and with the approval of the sessions and presbyteries involved, a presbytery may transfer the covenant relationship of an inquirer or candidate.

*G-2.0609 Removal from Relationship*

An inquirer or candidate may, after consultation with the session and the presbytery, withdraw from covenant relationship. A presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an individual's name from the roll of inquirers and candidates, reporting this action and the reasons to the session, to the individual, and, if appropriate, to the educational institution in which the individual is enrolled. Prior to taking such action, the presbytery or its designated entity shall make a reasonable attempt to give the candidate or inquirer an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal.

*G-2.0610 Accommodations to Particular Circumstances*

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, 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. A full account of the reasons for any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

**G-2.07 ORDINATION**

*G-2.0701 Ordination*

Ordination to the ordered ministry of **minister of the Word and Sacrament** is an act of the whole church carried out by the presbytery, setting apart a person to ordered ministry. Such a person shall have fulfilled the ordination requirements of the presbytery of care and received the call of God to service to a congregation or other work in the mission of the church that is acceptable to the candidate and to the presbytery of call.

*G-2.0702 Place of Ordination*

The presbytery placing the call to the candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain, and install the candidate.

*G-2.0703 Service of Ordination*

The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.04) shall be followed.

*G-2.0704 Record of Ordination*

The presbytery of call shall record the ordination and installation, along with written affirmation of the new **minister of the Word and Sacrament** to the obligations undertaken in the ordination questions, and enroll the **minister of the Word and Sacrament** as a member of the presbytery. The stated clerk of the presbytery shall report these actions to the General Assembly, the presbytery of care, and to the congregation of which the candidate was formerly a member.

**G-2.08 CALL AND INSTALLATION**

*G-2.0801 Pastoral Vacancy*

When a congregation has a vacancy in a pastoral position, or after the presbytery approves the effective date of the dissolution of an existing pastoral relationship, the congregation shall, with the guidance and permission of the presbytery, proceed to fill the vacancy in the following manner.

*G-2.0802 Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee*

The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee that shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee’s duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation.

*G-2.0803 Call Process*

According to the process of the presbytery and prior to making its report to the congregation, the pastor nominating committee shall receive and consider the presbytery’s counsel on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call. When the way is clear for the committee to report to the congregation, the committee shall notify the session, which shall call a congregational meeting.

*G-2.0804 Terms of Call*

The terms of call shall always meet or exceed any minimum requirement of the presbytery in effect when the call is made. The session shall review annually the minister’s terms of call and shall propose for congregational action (G-1.0501) such changes as the session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the presbytery’s minimum requirements. The call shall include participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly.

*G-2.0805 Installation Service*

When the congregation, the presbytery, and the **minister of the Word and Sacrament** (or candidate) have all concurred in a call to a permanent or designated pastoral position, the presbytery shall complete the call process by organizing and conducting a service of installation. Installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship. A service of installation occurs in the context of worship. The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.04) shall be followed.

**G-2.09 DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS**

*G-2.0901 Congregational Meeting*

An installed pastoral relationship may be dissolved only by the presbytery. Whether the **minister of the Word and Sacrament**, the congregation, or the presbytery initiates proceedings for dissolution of the relationship, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation to consider the matter and to consent, or decline to consent, to dissolution.

*G-2.0902 Pastor, Co-Pastor or Associate Pastor Requests*

A pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor may request the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The **minister of the Word and Sacrament** must also state her or his intention to the session.

The session shall call a congregational meeting to act upon the request and to make recommendations to the presbytery. If the congregation does not concur, the presbytery shall hear from the congregation, through its elected commissioners, the reasons why the presbytery should not dissolve the pastoral relationship. If the congregation fails to appear, or if its reasons for retaining the relationship are judged insufficient, the request may be granted and the pastoral relationship dissolved.

*G-2.0903 Congregation Requests*

If any congregation desires the pastoral relationship to be dissolved, a procedure similar to G-2.0902, above, shall be followed. When a congregation requests the session to call a congregational meeting to dissolve its relationship with its pastor, the session shall call the meeting and request the presbytery to appoint a moderator for the meeting. If the pastor does not concur with the request to dissolve the relationship, the presbytery shall hear from him or her the reasons why the presbytery should not dissolve the relationship. If the pastor fails to appear, or if the reasons for maintaining the relationship are judged insufficient, the relationship may be dissolved.

*G-2.0904 Presbytery Action*

The presbytery may inquire into reported difficulties in a congregation and may dissolve the pastoral relationship if, after consultation with the **minister of the Word and Sacrament**, the session, and the congregation, it finds the church's mission under the Word imperatively demands it.

*G-2.0905 Officiate by Invitation Only*

After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.

**G-2.10 COMMISSIONING RULING ELDERS TO PARTICULAR PASTORAL SERVICE**

*G-2.1001 Functions*

When the presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.

*G-2.1002 Training, Examination and Commissioning*

A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.

*G-2.1003 Commissioning Service*

When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of a ruling elder to serve a congregation providing the services described above, it shall commission the ruling elder to pastoral service as designated by the presbytery, employing the questions contained in W-4.04.

*G-2.1004 Supervision*

The ruling elder commissioned under the terms of G-2.1001 shall work under the supervision of the presbytery. The presbytery may at any time withdraw the commission for reasons it deems good and sufficient. A **minister of the Word and Sacrament** shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

**G-2.11 CERTIFIED CHURCH SERVICE***G-2.1101 Forms of Certified Church Service*

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements of a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.

*G-2.1102 Presbytery and Certified Church Service*

The presbytery shall encourage sessions to make continuing education funds and time available to those seeking certification, and shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing a service of recognition at the time of certification. The presbytery may grant the privilege of voice at all its meetings to persons in certified church service.

*G-2.1103 Christian Educators*

a. *Skills and Training*

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. *Presbytery Responsibility*

The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.