

Transfers of Pastors in to Denver Presbytery

APPROVED by COM August 4, 2014

Called and Installed Positions

Ministers from PC (USA) and Formula Partner ministers (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Church of Christ and Reformed Churches) may serve as called and installed Pastors (Pastor, Associate Pastor, Co-Pastor and Designated Pastor) of churches within the Denver Presbytery. Ministers from these other denominations are eligible to transfer into Denver Presbytery to serve following the “orderly exchange” of ministers (which is defined in the formula agreements for partner ministers. Once this process is completed and the minister selected for a called and installed position, the minister will meet with the Committee on Ministry to determine “goodness of fit” and whether Denver Presbytery will receive this member.

COM will form a team (typically of three or more individuals, including as a minimum one Teaching Elder and one Ruling Elder) to interview the minister. The purpose of the interview is to assess that person’s theology and practice of minister as well as some understanding of Presbyterian government (the first constitutional condition). Additionally the interview should cover the minister’s intentions and the Presbytery’s goals for that call as well as resources available to the minister. The COM needs to be sure that the minister is aware of underlying issues, concerns or challenges in the church or congregation to which they will serve. COM will serve as a resource to this person and the church during the minister’s tenure.

If not a Presbyterian minister, Formula Ministers remain members of the home denominations while in service with Denver Presbytery. Reference checking and examination of these ministers are the same as would be for any Presbyterian ministers seeking a call within Denver Presbytery.

Ministers from denominations other than Formula Partnerships, who wish to serve in Denver Presbytery in a called and installed position, or a validated ministry, must first follow the steps described below:

- It is recommend that the candidate minister contact the Stated Clerk and/or the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry. A phone or face-to-face interview may be appropriate for the purpose of determining the specific conditions that might apply to a transfer. Since there are variety of factors (discussed below) that need to be addressed or identified, this initial interview will help the candidate minister understand the overall process.
- It may be further appropriate for the candidate to meet with a team from the Committee on Ministry to discuss the candidate’s understanding of the PC (USA). This interview would focus more upon beliefs and theology rather than simply polity. For example, ministers from conservative or evangelical denominations made need to be made aware of the PC (USA) positions on women in minister and leadership roles, the acceptance of gay and lesbian in service to the church and similar issues that could be significantly different form the candidate minister’s own denomination.
- If the candidate minister is going to be required to successfully complete Presbyterian Ordination examinations, then it may be best for the Committee on Ministry to discuss this person’s planned transfer so that any conditions unique to the potential transfer are defined in advance. It would not be fair to require a minister candidate to take these examinations and then afterward, have a COM or Presbytery decision that the candidate’s background or former denomination would eliminate the candidate from being called in Denver Presbytery. In other words, there should be a formal COM action clearly stating that if the candidate successfully

completes Presbyterian Standard Ordination examinations that he or she could be considered for a called and installed position within Denver Presbytery. However, this action is not a guarantee or assurance that such a called position would be available. Instead, it should be made clear that the candidate minister would be eligible to compete for positions within Denver Presbytery, after successful completion of ordination examinations.

- Once documentation is received confirming completion of the examinations, the person may then circulate their Ministry Information Form (MIF) for a called or installed position. *Note: A minister of another Reformed church who has been ordained for five years or more may be granted an exemption for some or all of the examinations required or candidates by a two-thirds vote of Presbytery (G-2.0505(2)).*

Ministers of other denominations can be hired into staff positions (other than called and installed positions) of Presbyterian churches through a contract with that church's Session. However, they cannot serve in a called and installed vacancy without completing the Presbyterian requirements discussed above.

Transitional Ministry

Ministers for denominations (other than Formula Partnerships) may serve in temporary positions such as Pulpit Supply, Stated Supply or Interim Pastor. Ministers in transitional roles serve under contract to the Session of the church to which they serve but are still required to be interviewed by the Committee on Ministry as described above. *Note: Exceptions or waivers to these requirements may be granted in accordance with BOO Section G-2.0610.*

The Transfer Process

To actually transfer into Denver Presbytery, a minister meeting the constitutional conditions and steps described above must:

- Have a call to appropriate work in with Denver Presbytery, including as a Pastor, Associate Pastor, Co-Pastor, Designated Pastor, Pulpit Supply, Stated Supply, Interim Pastor or Validated Ministry
- Completion of a reference check by the Presbytery staff (typically the Stated Clerk)
- Be examined and recommended by the Committee on Ministry (COM) for being received at Presbytery Assembly.

Additional Considerations

Typically, the Stated Clerk will conduct a reference check on any minister being considered for a called and installed position or transitional leadership position in Denver Presbytery. Reference checks address a wide range of issues including, but not limited to: allegations involving civil, criminal or church judicial actions related to sexual misconduct or violation of ethical boundaries; concerns about substance abuse, pornography, marital fidelity, financial misconduct, anger management, violence or other inappropriate behavior; red flags of other sorts.

Such a reference check will also include confirming with the home denomination that the minister is installed and enrolled as a member in good standing. Additionally, these ministers will remain accountable to the governing body of membership for their behavior. They will also be accountable to Denver Presbytery while serving in the called position. It is desirable for the other denomination's governing body to support the minister serving in Denver Presbytery in partnership with Denver Presbytery. Formula Partner Ministers remain members of their own denomination's medical and pension plans. The congregation to which they are serve in Denver Presbytery will pay dues to the appropriate denominational entity. It is expected that salaries a benefits (other than pension and medical) would conform to Denver Presbytery guidelines and minimums.

Ecumenical Churches

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For ecumenical churches in the Denver presbytery (Mountain View, Montbello, Columbine and Idaho Springs) non-Presbyterian ministers transferring in to those churches can be called and installed into any of those four congregations. These four congregations are covered by agreements between the Presbytery and the denominations of those churches. In these cases, the ministers are allowed membership in Denver Presbytery for the duration of their service at those churches. They may also participate in Assemblies and in the work of Presbytery committees. However, their pension and medical dues will be paid by the congregation to their own denomination as they are not eligible to contribute to the Board of Pensions.

If an ecumenical church chooses to use the Presbyterian search process for a called and installed position (*Journey Between Pastors*) they must use the process in its entirety and are subject to the same requirements as a Presbyterian pastor, except that they also retain membership in their own denomination while serving here.

For situations not addressed above, the Presbytery Staff and the Committee on Ministry may have to address unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

For Additional Guidance see also the following guidelines and policies:

Eligibility of Teaching Elders for Installed Positions

Employment of Ministers in Non-installed Positions

Interviews with Candidates/Clergy Coming into the Presbytery Guidelines

Interim Pastor Interview

Memorandum from Anne Bond "Designated Pastors" dated September 27, ????

Memo of Understanding Statement of Ethics for Former Pastors

New Pastorates Interview

Pulpit Supply

Reference Check

Sample Covenant for Temporary Pastor

Sample Covenant for Interim Pastor

Validated Ministries