

Validated Ministry in the Presbytery of Philadelphia

approved by COM on February 3, 2011

As the changing face of the church includes fewer and fewer traditional, full-time pastor and associate pastor roles, we have a decision before us. We can dissuade talented men and women from following God's call into ordained ministry, or we can offer creative opportunities for them to serve the Church. While the traditional role of the church is shifting, more than ever the world needs men and women carrying God's message of love, justice and reconciliation through both Word and Sacrament. It is unknown to us what God has in store for the future of professional ministry, and yet we are called to creatively embrace possibilities that will further God's work. Validated Ministry offers us, the Presbytery of Philadelphia, the ability to engage a changing world with transforming mission and ministry. Let us use this document and the following procedures as an opportunity for conversation with and for those whom God is calling to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

What is a Validated Ministry?

A Validated Ministry is normally a ministry outside of the ordinary congregational life that meets the criteria expressed in the Book of Order and by the guidelines of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. It shall be a ministry that serves others, aids others and enables the ministry of others. Also the ministry shall be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and to organizations, agencies and institutions.

A Validated Ministry within the Presbytery of Philadelphia will:

- proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Word and deed and may celebrate the sacraments
 - stress deeds of love and mercy
 - help to share the ministry of the good news and seek to fulfill the ministry of Jesus Christ
 - exercise pastoral care of those for whom they are responsible
 - strengthen the church
 - equip the church for service to the human community.
- (based on G-6.0104, G-6.0203 and G-11.0403)

What are some forms of Validated Ministry?

- educators
- chaplains
- pastoral counselors
- campus ministers
- missionaries
- partners in mission
- evangelists
- administrators
- social workers
- consultants

- faith based community organizers
- new church development pastors
- other specific tasks appropriate to the ministry of the church including administrative (including presbytery, synod and GA staff), legislative, judicial or prophetic positions (based on G-6.0203, G-6.0104)

What are the established Validated Ministries within the Presbytery of Philadelphia?

There are three ministries, which upon acceptance by the presbytery are Validated ministries,

- Immigrant Faith Communities as outlined in Guidelines for *Welcoming Immigrant Faith Communities*
- Missional Faith Communities (i.e. Broad Street Ministry), as outlined in *Guidelines Missional Faith Community*
- New Church Development Projects.

(see Guidelines for Welcoming Immigrant Faith Communities November 27, 2007 and Guidelines for Missional Faith Community January 2009)

The approval by the COM of a call to a Validated Ministry within a congregation (G-11.0409) shall be considered validation of that ministry.

What are the criteria for ministers serving in a Validated Ministry?

The minister must be a PC (USA) ordained minister of the Word and Sacrament, or be cleared by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to be ordained or have the credentials to become a PC (USA) minister in accordance with the Book of Order.

Also, ministers serving in a Validated Ministry must participate in the life of a local congregation, which may include being designated as a parish associate; and participate in the life of the presbytery in fulfillment of their ordination vows. Ministers serving in a Validated Ministry are encouraged to participate in the denomination beyond the presbytery as well as in ecumenical ministries.

(based on G-6.0203,G-11.0403 and G-14.0482)

If the Validated Ministry takes the minister away from this presbytery, it is expected that the minister will participate in the life of a local congregation and the local presbytery and report to the Presbytery of Philadelphia annually their involvement in the local presbytery and congregation. In the case of mission service, the minister will report annually on their work and status.

(based on G-6.0203 and G-11.0403)

Ministers serving a Validated Ministries within an immigrant and/or non-English speaking congregation or ministry will be given consideration according to the Book of Order (G-11.0404f).

Can a person be ordained to a Validated Ministry?

The simple answer to the question is yes. A person may be ordained if:

- the presbytery approves the Validated Ministry and
- the person is otherwise qualified to be ordained.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution, 218th General Assembly (2008) made the following comment:

The language of G-14.0402 in the amended Chapter 14 was not intended to change the practice under the former G-14.0401 of allowing the ordination of positions other than installed pastoral relationships. There, a position such as a mission worker, a chaplaincy, a part-time pastorate or a tent-making position is an ordainable position. The Advisory committee also commented that the language is simple and clear concerning a call to ministry as found in G-14.0482, the presbytery “shall approve the call”.

What Terms of Call are required for a Validated Ministry?

- description of the goals and working relationships
- the signature of the minister (s), representative of the presbytery and where possible of the employing agency
- financial terms

Financial terms for a Validated Ministry may or may not meet the Presbytery of Philadelphia’s minimum for a congregational call. Validated Ministry may be volunteer or part-time. The Committee on Ministry shall take into consideration the overall financial terms and the ministers’ financial health before validating the ministry.

(based on G-11.0408b and c)

What about after the ministry has been approved?

A minister of a Validated Ministry is expected to participate in the life of a congregation which may include being designated as parish associate. Also a minister is expected to remain an active member of the presbytery through participation in presbytery meetings, committee or team membership and/or events and gatherings of the presbytery community.

What is the process for approval and review?

A. Application for a Validated Ministry (Attachment A)

- 1) The minister or candidate seeking approval for a Validated Ministry shall consult with the Co-Moderators of the Committee on Ministry (COM), and complete the **Application for Validated Ministry**.
- 2) The COM Co-Moderators shall place the application on the agenda of the committee and, if deemed appropriate, schedule an interview for the minister with all or part of the COM.
- 3) The COM shall consider the application and, if approved by COM, report to the presbytery that the ministry is approved as a Validated Ministry.

B. Review of Validated Ministry

Annual Review of Validated Ministry

The minister engaged in a Validated Ministry shall submit to the COM a brief reflection (no more than 2 pages) on the ministry in the last year and anticipated changes in the work of the ministry for the coming year. COM will document receipt of the Annual Review.

The COM may interview the minister concerning the Annual Review. If deemed necessary, the interview shall include, but may not be limited to:

- Activity of the ministry
- Goals for the ministry
- Plans of the minister for continuing education
- Ways in which the presbytery can be of greater support to the minister and ministry.

Attachment A-Application for Validated Ministry
Presbytery of Philadelphia

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name of Ministry: _____

Contact information regarding Ministry: _____

Church where you are worshipping/serving? _____

In a brief essay (no more than two pages) describe how the proposed Validated Ministry will:

- proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Word and deed and may celebrate the sacraments
- stress deeds of love and mercy
- help to share the ministry of the good news and seek to fulfill the ministry of Jesus Christ
- exercise pastoral care of those for whom they are responsible
- strengthen the church
- equip the church for service to the human community.