



A Formula of Agreement

The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Principles, Policies, and Procedures



Participating Churches

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • Presbyterian Church (USA) • Reformed Church in America • United Church of Christ

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A Formula of Agreement

The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament

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Judicatories or governing bodies:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Reformed Church in America

United Church of Christ

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An introduction to “The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers”

The following document is the result of collaborative work done by the churches participating in *A Formula of Agreement*. It is intended both for those interested in serving in a congregation of a Formula of Agreement partner church, as well as judicatory leaders seeking guidance in the implementation of such service.

For those who seek to serve there are five basic steps to follow:

1. Read the “Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament” carefully.
2. Contact your regional governing body (or judicatory) for authorization to make yourself available for service under the process.
3. Use the ministerial profile or mobility forms of your own church body.
4. After authorization by your church body to make yourself available for service, contact a regional staff person of the partner church in the region or area you wish to serve and follow that church’s procedure.
5. Do not contact a congregation directly unless directed to by the appropriate regional or judicatory official of that congregation’s church body.

As the “Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament” makes clear, the process is for the sake of the mission of God. It is not for the convenience of those who may wish to serve in another church body. It is always to be understood to be at the *invitation* of the receiving church body.

Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Background and Affirmations

Through adoption of *A Formula of Agreement*, the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Church of Christ entered into a relationship of full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America entered into a relationship of full communion with the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Church of Christ. Among other things, full communion means that the four churches “recognize each other’s various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament.” (All references to ministers or ordained ministers herein refer to ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament in the four churches.)

Orderly exchange (provisions for availability) of ordained ministers is for the sake of participation by the four churches in the mission of God, and can be an important sign of our unity in Christ. This particular provision of full communion seeks to allow and encourage the more effective use and deployment of our churches’ ordained leaders in order to enhance our shared ministry and mission. It encourages those in our churches who are responsible for the deployment of ordained ministers to draw on the available ministers of the other participating churches to meet mission needs.

Ordained ministers in one church may be invited or may express their desire to serve in another church; they do not have a right to serve in the other church. The orderly exchange of ordained ministers is understood to be at the invitation of the receiving church and subject to that church’s polity and procedures.

A Formula of Agreement, with its commitment to full communion, exists to foster orderly exchange of ordained ministers for extended service in ministries in participating churches while they remain ministerial members of their own churches. It does not directly address the transfer of ministerial membership. When it does seem appropriate for a transfer of ministerial membership, such transfer will be authorized according to the polities of the two churches. Full communion may encourage occasional service by ordained ministers in participating churches, but that service continues to be authorized according to the polities of each of the four churches. Means of implementing orderly exchange need not be identical in each participating church. The existing polity of each church continues to be respected. It is important, however, that provisions parallel each other as much as possible and that each church be familiar with and conversant about the provisions of the others. The four churches will need to continue conversations toward clarification of church policies in order to enhance the orderly exchange of ministers and to find ways to celebrate visibly our full communion relationship and the recognition of the ordained ministries of the four churches.

Principles of Agreement

Seeking to promote greater understanding among the participants in *A Formula of Agreement*, representatives of the four churches offer the following principles to guide implementation efforts.

1. An ordained minister of a full communion church may be eligible to engage in extended service in any position open to a minister in another participating church except as noted otherwise in the polity of either church.
2. It is important to the faithful and orderly exchange of ordained ministers among the four churches of *A Formula of Agreement* that one who would serve in a congregation of another church first be formed and educated for ministry in one's own tradition, and have experience in serving in that church's ordained ministry. Such experience and grounding in one's own tradition are seen to be essential prior to serving in a setting of another tradition; therefore, such service is not intended for a first call.
3. To be eligible to serve in another of the participating churches, an ordained minister will demonstrate to the appropriate regional body of the inviting church knowledge of and an appreciation for the history, polity, theological and liturgical identity, practices of ministry, and discipline of that church. The minister will also be expected to preach, teach, administer the sacraments, and participate in the governance of the church in a manner consistent with that knowledge and appreciation.
4. In evaluating the availability of ordained ministers for service, regional bodies of each participating church will do so in accordance with the stated intentions in *A Formula of Agreement*.
5. Placement, supervision, and evaluation procedures of the inviting church shall be observed.
6. Approval for extended service shall occur only in consultation with, and concurrence of, the sending body. When granting concurrence for an ordained minister to serve in another church, the sending body will do so in accordance with the stated intentions in *A Formula of Agreement*. The minister remains accountable to the sending body for continuation of ministerial status.
7. Responsibility for pastoral care of ordained ministers is shared by the inviting and sending bodies: in the ELCA, the synod; in the Presbyterian Church (USA), the presbytery; in the Reformed Church in America, the classis; and in the United Church of Christ, the conference and association.
8. In a disciplinary review or judicial process, the ordained minister remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as appropriate.
9. Each church will develop a provision whereby an ordained minister may be granted full participation, which may include privilege of voice and vote, in the appropriate regional body of the church in which the ordained minister is serving.
10. An ordained minister serving in another of the participating churches will continue to participate in the pension and benefits program of the sending church.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Full Communion Continuing Resolutions

For the implementation of church-to-church relationships of full communion, the following continuing resolutions in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* apply:

8.72.11.

An ordained minister of this church, serving temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers — upon endorsement by the synodical bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster — under policy developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a.** A Letter of Call may be issued to an ordained minister of this church, serving temporarily in such a church body, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council, in accord with the Table of Sources of Calls (ELCA churchwide continuing resolution 7.44.A96.b.).
- b.** A Letter of Call may be issued to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister of this church, serving temporarily in such a church body, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council, in accord with the Table of Sources of Calls (ELCA churchwide continuing resolution 7.52.A95.b.).
- c.** A Letter of Call issued by the Church Council or a Synod Council for service in a church body with which the Churchwide Assembly has established a relationship of full communion shall be governed by churchwide constitutional provision 7.43. and churchwide bylaw 7.43.01.
- d.** A Letter of Call to an ordained minister of this church or to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who serves in a congregation of another church body, under a relationship of full communion, or an institution of such a church body on the territory of the synod, may be issued by the Synod Council. A Letter of Call to an ordained minister of this church or to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who serves in a national or international agency or institution of another church body, under a relationship of full communion, may be issued by the Church Council.

8.72.12.

An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be authorized by the synodical bishop to serve in a congregation or other ministry of this church. Such service shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or other employing entity and the ordained minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation or other employing entity. Any such service shall be in accord with churchwide policies developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

8.72.13.

Whenever an ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to serve or is serving in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly, or whenever an ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been so declared and established is to serve or is serving in this church, a full sharing of relevant information concerning such ordained minister's experience and fitness for ministry is expected between the synodical bishop (or other appropriate office or entity) of this church and the appropriate person, office, or entity in the other church. Relevant information related to fitness for ministry shall include, but is not limited to, any information concerning disciplinary proceedings or allegations that could result, or could have resulted, in disciplinary proceedings.

8.72.14.

An ordained minister from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ordained minister's service in a congregation of this church, in accord with ELCA churchwide bylaw 8.72.12.

8.72.15.

The availability of ordained ministers from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be understood normally in three categories: availability to serve in an occasional situation; availability to meet an extended need, including service in "yoked parish" settings; and availability for a transfer of roster status.

- a. Occasional service:** An occasional situation is defined as one in which an ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synodical bishop.
- b. Extended service:** An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited to serve as the pastor of an ELCA congregation for an extended period of time, yet remain an ordained minister of his or her present church body. Such a person would be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the "Confession of Faith" in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synodical bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of the ELCA in a given situation.
- c. Transfer:** An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ordained ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and be approved through the candidacy process for admission to the roster. Such an ordained minister would then become an ELCA pastor upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in an ELCA congregation or other setting.
- d. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.22. and bylaw 7.31.11. , ordained ministers on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church's "Confession of Faith," as well as abide by this church's standards and policies for ordained ministers.**

8.72.16.

An ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, while serving in an ecumenical setting, remains subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists is understood by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the church body in which the ordained minister is rostered or holds ministerial membership. Such an ordained minister, while serving in an ELCA congregation or other ministry, is expected to abide by the standards and policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America related to ordained ministers.

Policies and Procedures Related to the Availability of Ordained Ministers Between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Church Bodies with which a Relationship of Full Communion has been Established

Background

The Lutheran-Reformed proposal for full communion adopted by the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, *A Formula of Agreement*, declared, “that they [the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America (RCA), and the United Church of Christ (UCC)] recognize each other’s various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament.”

In accord with the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, policy related to the orderly exchange of ordained ministers between the participating church bodies is developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such policy would apply to ordained ministers of this church who, while being retained on the roster of the ELCA, would serve temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established, and to ordained ministers of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established who would serve temporarily in a congregation or other ministry setting of this church.

I. Ordained Ministers of Another Church Body Serving in the ELCA

Occasional Service

An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synodical bishop.

Extended Service

An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited by the synodical bishop to serve as the pastor of an ELCA congregation for an extended period of time, yet remain an ordained minister of another church body. Such a person will be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the “Confession of Faith” of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and to live in a manner consistent with the expectations of this church as stated in “Vision and Expectations-Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synodical bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of the ELCA or its ecumenical partners in a given situation.

Service in a congregation of this church or employing entity shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the ordained minister, for a stated period of time in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation. Extended service is reviewed annually by the Synod Council or Church Council.

Upon the recommendation of the synodical bishop and approval by the Synod Council, the synodical bishop authorizes an extended service ministry.

Upon such authorization the ordained minister enters service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through an entry rite to be developed which acknowledges the ordained minister's service as pastor in a congregation or other setting of ministry in this church.

The Rite of Installation is not used as that rite is for use only for a regularly called ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

An ordained minister who is approved to serve in an extended service ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be granted voice and vote in a synod assembly.

At any time for the sake of the ongoing ministry, the synodical bishop may withdraw authorization for service-or the congregation, employing agency or ordained minister may terminate a contract for extended service-after consultation with the other parties to the contract.

Transfer of Roster Status

An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ordained ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America under the policy of "Admission to the Roster of Ordained Ministers of Persons Ordained in Another Christian Tradition" for consideration of approval by a synodical candidacy committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Such an ordained minister would then become an ELCA pastor upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in an ELCA congregation or other approved setting. Roster status in more than one church body at a time is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

II. Ordained Ministers of the ELCA Serving in Another Church Body

An ordained minister of this church, serving for an extended period of time in a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists, may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers upon the recommendation of the synodical bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster.

III. Procedures for Availability of Ordained Ministers

A. Resources

The Division for Ministry recommends resources such as the following to assist synodical bishops in familiarizing ordained ministers of another church body with the life and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

- *The Book of Concord*;
- *Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, particularly chapters, 2-7, and 9;
- *Vision and Expectations — Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*;
- *The Use of the Means of Grace*;
- *Lutheran Book of Worship*;
- *With One Voice*;
- *Christian Dogmatics* (Braaten and Jensen);
- *The Lutherans in North America* (Nelson);
- *One Great Cloud of Witnesses* (Almen).

B. Assessment

Authorization for extended service is given by the Synod Council, on the basis of the synodical bishop's assessment of the ordained minister's suitability for service. The bishop may wish to appoint a panel to assist in this determination. The Division for Ministry recommends that this not be a responsibility of the full synodical candidacy committee, although members of the committee may serve on the panel.

C. Pension and Medical Insurance

A determination of the ordained minister's medical and disability insurance will be made. (The basic principle that has been established is that an ordained minister remains in his or her parent church body's pension and benefits plan. The congregation or other ministry setting being served contributes to the pension and benefits plan of the ordained minister's parent body.) Similarly, an ordained minister of this church serving in another church body will need to determine that Board of Pensions (or another comparable plan) coverage is provided by the employing body.

D. Accountability and Pastoral Care

An ordained minister of another church body is accountable to the jurisdiction or judicatory in which the ordained minister is "rostered" or in other ways a member. Similarly, an ordained minister of this church serving in another church body remains on the roster of this church and is accountable to the synodical bishop of the synod in which rostered. The synodical bishop is responsible for appropriate pastoral care and leadership for a congregation served by an ordained minister of another church body in the same manner as when the congregation is served by an ordained minister of this church (ELCA constitutional provision 10.31.A.3.).

E. Exchange of Information

The assessments, authorizations, and reviews necessary to the orderly exchange of ordained ministers between church bodies with which a relationship of full communion exists require the complete and continuing disclosure to the synod of all information concerning the past and present ministry of ordained ministers serving in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or of ELCA ordained ministers serving under call from the Synod Council or Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Such disclosure must include any disciplinary proceedings concerning such ordained ministers, including discipline related to conduct during service in the ELCA by an ordained minister of another church body.

F. Source of Call

An ordained minister of this church serving in a congregation, local, or regional ministry setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the Synod Council in which the ordained minister is rostered. An ELCA ordained minister serving in a national ministry setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the ELCA Church Council. This call is subject to annual review by the Synod Council or Church Council.

G. Recognized Status of an Authorized Minister

An ordained minister of another church body serving in a congregation or other ministry of this church needs to be appropriately recognized. While not a member of this church nor included in the Roster of Ordained Ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, an ordained minister of another church body shall have a recognized status within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, will develop a recommended nomenclature for this status.

IV. Titles

The usual title "pastor of (insert name of congregation)" would be used for ordained ministers serving in an ELCA congregation. The professional title of "The Rev." for an ordained minister also would be understood as applicable, in view of that ordained minister's officially recognized status in a church body with which the ELCA has a relationship of full communion.

Adopted by the Church Council as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 1998 [CC98.04.03].

Glossary of Terms — Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Associate in Ministry

One of the three categories of rostered lay ministers in the ELCA. Associates in Ministry are called and commissioned for service in congregations, agencies, schools and institutions of the ELCA. Their primary areas of service are education, music and the arts, administration, service and general ministry.

Bishop

A bishop is an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA, given the responsibility to provide pastoral care and leadership in a synod and its congregations, and seeks to strengthen the unity of the Church. The bishop is the chief executive officer of the synod, elected to a term of six years and may be reelected.

Bishop's Assistant or Associate

A person who assists the synodical bishop in carrying out the responsibilities of the office. A bishop's assistant or associate may be an ordained minister, a rostered lay minister, or a layperson.

Bishop, Presiding

An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament who is a teacher of the faith of this church and provides leadership for the life and witness of this church. The Presiding Bishop is the chief executive officer of the churchwide organization, and is the chief ecumenical officer of the church. The presiding bishop is elected to a six-year term and may be reelected.

Book of Concord

The *Book of Concord* is the 16th century statement of the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (the most recent edition was published in 2000). Within it is the Augsburg Confession, which the ELCA accepts as a "true witness to the Gospel," as well as other confessional writings that the ELCA considers "further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church."

Church Council

The Church Council of the ELCA is its board of directors, serving as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly. The Church Council meets at least two times each year, and is composed of the four churchwide officers (presiding bishop, vice-president, secretary and treasurer) and 33 other persons, elected to six year terms by the Churchwide Assembly.

Churchwide Assembly

The Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization. It reviews the work of the churchwide officers and churchwide units. It establishes churchwide policy and adopts the budget for the churchwide organization. It has the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA. The Churchwide Assembly meets biennially in regular session.

Churchwide Organization

The churchwide organization functions interdependently with the congregations and synods of the ELCA. It is responsible for developing churchwide policy, standards for leadership, including ordained and rostered lay ministries, and the coordination of the work of the ELCA both globally and throughout the territory of the ELCA.

Conference of Bishops

The Conference of Bishops is composed of the bishops of the 65 synods, the presiding bishop, and the secretary of the ELCA. The conference meets at least two times each year and is a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies may be developed and shared concerning pastoral leadership, care and counsel for the synods. The Conference of Bishops reviews recommendations from the Division for Ministry pertaining to policies and programs related to the rosters of ordained ministers, and the three rosters of lay ministers (associates in ministry, deaconesses and diaconal ministers).

Confession of Faith

The ELCA Confession of Faith confesses the Triune God, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God, accepts the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church, and accepts the Augsburg Confession and the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord as valid interpretations of the faith of this church.

Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions

The basic commitments of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as its organizational outline, structural patterns, and rubrics of governance are expressed by its constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions. These documents govern the life of the ELCA as congregations, synods, and churchwide organization.

Deaconess

One of the three categories of rostered lay ministers in the ELCA and an outgrowth of the European Deaconess movement of the 19th century. ELCA deaconesses are called and consecrated, and serve in congregations, agencies and institutions of the ELCA. They are members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, and participate in the life of that community.

Diaconal Minister

One of the three categories of rostered lay ministers in the ELCA, established in 1993. ELCA diaconal ministers are called and consecrated, and serve in congregations, agencies and institutions of the ELCA. Their focus for ministry is the extension of the church's ministry of witness and care into the world.

Evangelical

From the Greek word for "gospel" and its German derivative. Original designation for the early reformers that is still used in German-speaking areas for non-Roman and non-Orthodox Christians. Historically unrelated to twentieth-century evangelical movements in the United States.

Lutheran Book of Worship

Lutheran Book of Worship (1978) is the primary worship resource for use within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its liturgical texts and patterns of worship are considered the norm within the ELCA. It is supplemented by the worship resources, *With One Voice* (1995), *Libro De Liturgia Y Cantico* (1998), and *This Far by Faith* (1999).

Membership

The 2002 membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is 5.1 million baptized members in 10,766 congregations. There are 17,725 ordained ministers (11,147 active and serving under call), 1,061 associates in ministry (638 active and serving under call), 69 deaconesses (28 active and serving under call), and 61 diaconal ministers (56 active and serving under call).

Ministry

The ELCA affirms the universal priesthood of all its baptized members and commits itself to the equipping and supporting of all its members for their ministries in the world and in this church.

Occasional Services

Occasional Services, published in 1982, is a companion to *Lutheran Book of Worship* and provides services for specific occasions and specific situations, as distinguished from services of worship of a more general character.

Ordained Ministry

The ELCA confesses that within the people of God and for the sake of the Gospel ministry entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament. To carry out this ministry, the ELCA calls and ordains qualified persons.

Pastor

The normal term used to describe an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament. A parish pastor serves in a congregational setting. The term pastor may be used to describe an ordained minister serving in a non-congregational setting as well.

Principles of Organization

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America understands itself as one church, recognizing that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of the ELCA are interdependent partners sharing responsibility in God's mission.

Representational Principle

Among the principles of organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has determined that at least 60 percent of the members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards and other organizations shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, the lay members shall be 50 percent female and 50 percent male, and that, where possible, the representation of ordained ministers shall be both female and male. It is also determined that a minimum goal of 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

Region

There are nine geographic regions within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognized as a partnership among groups of synods within the region and the churchwide organization.

Sacramental Practices

The Use of the Means of Grace (Augsburg Fortress, 1997) was adopted for "guidance and practice" by the Fifth Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a "statement on the practice of Word and Sacrament."

Synod

There are 65 synods (similar to Episcopal Church dioceses) in the ELCA. Each synod, in partnership with the churchwide organization, bears primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of the ELCA in its territory.

Synod Assembly

The Synod Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the synod, with a regular meeting held at least biennially (with most synod assemblies meeting annually). All ordained ministers and all rostered lay ministers are voting members, as are representative lay members from every congregation within the synod.

Vision and Expectations

The ELCA Church Council adopted the document "Vision and Expectations — Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" in 1990 as a statement of this church about the vision for ordained ministry in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the expectations of those who serve in that ministry. It is used primarily in the candidacy process.



Presbyterian Church (USA)

Processes and resources for exchange of ministries with participating churches *A Formula Of Agreement*

I. Provisions for ministry by ministers of Formula churches in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The following provisions are governed by the general principle of Presbyterian polity that *the Presbytery decides who shall be members and approves calls for service in churches.*

A. Service in union and federated churches, ecumenical parishes, cooperative ministries, and temporary services to Presbyterian congregations.

1. Covered by G-11.0405a (section of the Form of Government section of the *Book of Order*).

Presbytery approves call of union or federated church to a minister to serve as pastor or associate pastor, or appoints a minister to serve in a temporary ministerial capacity in a Presbyterian church, or approves the invitation of a cooperative specialized ministry to a minister to serve in that ministry.

- b. The minister may be enrolled in presbytery with the rights and privileges of membership (voice, vote, serve on committees, hold office) during that service.

2. The minister may not be called to an installed ministry in a Presbyterian church by virtue of this membership in a presbytery.
3. The minister must be in good standing with a governing body of jurisdiction in the church of which he/she is a member.
4. The governing body with jurisdiction over the minister approves the ministry according to its applicable procedures.

B. Installed ministry in a Presbyterian congregation.

1. G-11.0405b provides an exception, for ministers from Formula churches, to the general rule that only ministers of the Presbyterian Church (USA) may be called and installed as pastors, co-pastors, designated pastors, and associate pastors in Presbyterian congregations (except those covered in A above).
 - a. Presbytery approves the call of the congregation using the procedures of G-14.0500.
 - b. The minister is installed as pastor, co-pastor, designated pastor, or associate pastor.
 - c. The minister may be enrolled during this service as a member of presbytery with all rights and privileges.
2. The minister must be in good standing with a governing body of jurisdiction in the church of which he/she is a member.
3. The governing body of jurisdiction approves the ministry according to its applicable procedures.
4. The minister remains a member of her /his church, subject to the discipline of that church, and continues under the benefits plan of that church.

C. Reception of a minister of a Formula church as a minister member of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

1. Ministers seeking to transfer church membership from another church will be considered under the applicable provisions in G-11.0405b, G-14.0310b-d, and G-14.0303a-c.
2. Ministers of the Reformed Church in America will have to meet the requirements of G-11.0404 a, b. Essentially these requirements will be the same as those for ministers of other churches, but does allow for an exception to the examination requirements if the minister has been ordained more than five years.
3. Ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ “will have to meet the requirements of G-11.0404 a, c, d, (covering ministers of churches which hold the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity).”
4. Ministers seeking transfer will need to be in good standing in their own churches and be granted dismissal by the governing body of jurisdiction.
5. This is not an avenue for avoiding candidacy requirements in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

II. Service by a Minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in another Formula Church.

A. Service in union and federated churches, ecumenical parishes, cooperative ministries (governed by G-11.0410).

1. Approval of invitation for service is by supervising judicatories of all participating churches.
2. Presbytery approves call of union or federated church to a minister to serve as pastor or associate pastor, or approves the invitation of a cooperative specialized ministry to a minister to serve in that ministry.
3. The minister may accept membership or participation in the supervising judicatory for the duration of the service. The invitation for such membership or participation is at the discretion and according to the provisions of the inviting church.
4. The minister remains a member of his/her presbytery, subject to the discipline of this church, and continues under the benefits plan of this church.

B. Temporary service in a congregation of another Formula church (governed by G-11.0411).

1. Approval of invitation for service is by the supervising judicatory of inviting church according to provisions of that church.
2. Presbytery validates (approves) temporary ministerial service in a congregation of a Formula church. Presbytery reviews service at least annually and may withdraw approval.
3. The minister may accept membership or participation in the supervising judicatory for the duration of the service. The invitation for such membership or participation is at the discretion and according to the provisions of the inviting church.
4. The minister remains a member of his /her presbytery, subject to the discipline of this church, and continues under the benefits plan of this church.

C. Installed ministry or extended service in a congregation of another Formula church (governed by G-11.0405b).

1. Approval of invitation for service is by the supervising judicatory of inviting church according to provisions of that church.
2. Presbytery validates (approves) extended ministerial service in a congregation of a Formula church. Presbytery reviews service at least annually and may withdraw approval.
3. The minister may accept membership or participation in the supervising judicatory for the duration of the service. The invitation for such membership or participation is at the discretion and according to the provisions of the inviting church.

4. The minister remains a member of his /her presbytery, subject to the discipline of this church, and continues under the benefits plan of this church.

D. Transfer of a minister member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to a judicatory of a Formula church.

1. A minister may request transfer of ministerial membership to another of the Formula churches under the provisions of G-14-507b, 15.0201 and .0202.

2. Such a minister will remain on the rolls and under the authority of his/her presbytery until notice is received from a judicatory of a Formula church that the minister has been enrolled or rostered.

A minister may not be transferred if any disciplinary matter is pending.

III. Resources

A. At the Presbytery level

1. Executive or General Presbyter
2. Stated Clerk
3. Committee on Ministry
4. Committee on Preparation for Ministry

B. At the Synod level (applicable for ministries that cross presbytery boundaries)

1. Synod Executive
2. Stated Clerk
3. Appropriate Committees (synod structures vary dramatically)

C. At the General Assembly level

1. General Assembly Council - Churchwide Personnel Services - 502-569-8550
2. Office of the General Assembly
 - a. Governing Bodies, Ecumenical, and Agency Relationships Department - 502-569-8360
 - b. Constitutional Services Department - 502-569-5433

D. Information about Staff serving in positions listed above.

1. Presbyterian A – Z Directory <http://www.pcusa.org/search/search-a-b.htm>
2. Lists of Presbytery and Synod Executives and Stated Clerks (call 502-569-8550).
3. Lists of Presbytery ministry committee moderators (call 502-569-8550).

Pastoral Call Process in the Presbyterian Church (USA)

In the Presbyterian Church (USA) all pastoral relationships require the approval of the congregation, the minister, and the presbytery. From the beginning of a search process, all three are involved in discerning whether a call will be established. The presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM) authorizes a congregation to begin a pastoral search and guides the church through the process it determines appropriate. The session or Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) completes a Church Information Form (CIF) describing its mission and needs for leadership. The COM approves circulation of the CIF through the national Internet-based referral system “Church Leadership Connection.”

A Presbyterian Church (USA) minister completes a “Personal Information Form” (PIF) and receives authorization from his or her Presbytery Stated Clerk to submit it to Church Leadership Connection in Louisville. The attestation form includes a statement that the pastor is a minister in good standing, having no pending charges against him or her.

Congregational PNCs consider candidates that come to them by several means.

1. Presbyteries use Church Leadership Connection to match and refer PIFs to PNCs of churches within their bounds.
2. Presbyteries pass along documents from ministers interested in serving in their area.
3. They receive self-referrals from ministers interested in serving them in response to advertising or listing through Church Leadership Connection.

However the documents come to a PNC, most presbyteries will require that ministers must sign the Presbyterian Church (USA) sexual misconduct statement and submit the “attestation form” with signature of Stated Clerk (or equivalent) on their documents to be considered by congregations.

Ministers of Formula Partners may submit their denominational resume papers to the presbytery for consideration by a congregational Pastor Nominating Committee. In the spirit of orderly exchange, they are advised not to contact congregations directly, but to work through the presbytery in which they wish to serve.

The PNC reviews PIFs and selects those of interest for consideration.

PNC checks references listed on the PIF.

The Presbytery Executive or Committee on Ministry Moderator of the calling presbytery does a reference check with his or her counterpart in the presbytery (or equivalent) of which the pastor is a member.

The PNC interviews the candidates that seem most appropriate for their ministry needs. The interview process may involve a visit by the PNC to a candidate’s present congregation if this can be accomplished confidentially or the presbytery may arrange for the candidate to preach in a “neutral pulpit.” The candidate will be invited to visit the church and community, also in a confidential visit.

Once the PNC has selected the pastor of its choice, the presbytery or its Committee on Ministry will examine the pastor “on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of the Presbyterian Church (USA).”

The PNC will report to the congregation and the congregation will vote to call the pastor.

The Pastor is introduced at a meeting of Presbytery and the Presbytery will appoint a commission to install the pastor in a special service of worship in the calling church.

The Pastor is installed by the Presbytery Commission (Usually within a few weeks of beginning work in the church).

Glossary of Terms — Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Book of Confessions

The confessional portion of the *Constitution* of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The confessional statements included range from the Nicene and Apostles Creeds, through sixteenth century Reformed confessional documents, to “A Brief Statement of Faith” adopted in 1991 as part of reunion of churches.

Book of Order

The procedural portion of the *Constitution*. It includes the Form of Government, Directory for Worship, and the Rules of Discipline.

Call

Used two ways in the *Book of Order*: either as the formal action of a congregation, electing by vote a pastor or associate pastor for the congregation, or as the less formal approval of a presbytery for a minister’s service in a number of settings. (G-11.0400 and G-14.0500)

Commissioned Lay Pastor

Presbyterian elders who have been given a particular commission to provide pastoral services in a congregation or to do some other presbytery-authorized ministry under the guidance of a minister mentor. A CLP may be authorized to perform substantially all the functions of ordained ministry. (G-14.0801)

Committee on Ministry (COM)

The committee required in the structure of every presbytery by the *Book of Order* for oversight of ministers and of pastoral relationships, including care for congregations without permanent pastors. Also oversees Commissioned Lay Pastors. (G-11.0500)

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

The committee required in the structure of every presbytery by the *Book of Order* for supervision and support of those in preparation for ministry as ministers of Word and Sacrament.

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Also *Constitution*. The guiding documents for doctrine and practice in the Presbyterian Church (USA). See *The Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order* above.

Deacon

The ordained office in the Presbyterian Church (USA) the focus of which is on compassionate care for members and non-members. A session may assign additional duties to deacons.

Disciplinary process

Provisions in the Rules of Discipline for resolving conflicts involving governing bodies (remedial cases) or for resolving questions of fitness for ministry in relation to allegations that the person has committed an offense (disciplinary cases).

Elder

In Presbyterian polity, governance is by presbyters (ministers of Word and Sacrament and Elders). Elders are elected from the membership of the congregation and serve on session and participate with ministers in presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly. Parity is a principle for participation in those bodies (half elders, half ministers).

Executive

The chief administrative and/or mission staff person of a presbytery or synod may be called Executive Presbyter or Synod Executive.

General Assembly

The highest governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA), representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the church.

Installation

Formally used in the *Book of Order* for the worship service at which a pastoral relationship is formally established between a congregation and a pastor or associate pastor. Also used formally for the worship service marking the beginning of service of elders on the session of the congregation or deacons in service in the congregation. Used also for services marking the beginning of service of officers and staff in the church.

Minister of Word and Sacrament

The ordained office with responsibility for preaching, administering the sacraments, providing pastoral care, and guiding with elders the spiritual life and mission of a congregation. Ministers may engage in a wide variety of ministries upon the approval of the presbytery. (G- 11.0400)

Presbytery

The regional body with jurisdiction over the churches in a geographical area [an exception: presbyteries identified with an ethnic language constituency] and over the ministers whose church membership is held in the presbytery. (G-11.0000)

Session

The elected governing body of a local congregation, consisting of the pastor who serves as moderator, other installed pastoral staff, and the elders elected from and by the congregation. (G. 10.0000)

Stated Clerk

The elected officer of a presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly who keeps the minutes and records of the governing body, and is the chief correspondent for the governing body in ecclesiastical matters.

Synod

The governing body with jurisdiction over a number of presbyteries. The focus of synod function has varied from being strictly ecclesiastical or programmatic. (G-12.0000)



The Reformed Church in America

The Orderly Exchange of Ministers of Word and Sacrament Policy Paper

The purpose of this paper is to outline ways to implement within the Reformed Church in America the orderly exchange of ordained ministers between denominations. This paper is being distributed along with the paper, *Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Ministers of Word and Sacrament*, which has been written by representatives from the four churches of the *Formula of Agreement*. Three sections follow below: I. Background, II. Categories of Service, and III. Procedures for the Exchange of Ministers. The majority of this paper is devoted to ministers from other denominations serving within the Reformed Church in America. Reformed Church in America ministers serving outside of the Reformed Church in America may be subject to similar policies and procedures found in the polity of other denominations. The authority of this paper is derived from its sources.

I. Background

In June of 1997, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America approved the *Formula of Agreement* (FOA), a document that declares “full communion” between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and three churches of the Reformed tradition: the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA), and the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Prior to this action, the General Synod passed an important resolution clarifying the effect of approving the *Formula of Agreement* on our relationship with the two other Reformed denominations. The *Formula of Agreement* does not establish a new and different relationship between the Reformed churches. General Synod declared that, by virtue of our Reformed polity and the fellowship shared in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, our relationship with the UCC and the PCUSA remains the same in accord with our own understanding of “full communion,” which we define as “full table and pulpit fellowship and the recognition of each other’s ministries, in keeping with the authority and responsibilities of the classes and the consistories.” The General Synod went on to say, “Specifically, this means for the Reformed Church in America that admittance to the pulpit is governed by the classis and admittance to the Lord’s Table is governed by the board of elders. This understanding is in keeping with the RCA doctrinal standards, the RCA *Liturgy*, and the RCA *Book of Church Order*.” (1997 MGS, p. 185)

Along with other commitments, full communion is understood to mean that the four churches “recognize each other’s various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament.” The phrase “to recognize each other’s ministries” means that the *four* FDA churches recognize as *valid* each other’s ordination to the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament, the Office of Deacon, and the Office of Elder. This means that reordination is not required when a minister moves from one denomination to another. The phrase “orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament” speaks about the *availability* of ordained ministers to serve across denominational lines. Ordained ministers in one church *may be invited* to serve in another church; they do not have a *right* to serve in the other church. The word “exchange” is a technical term that is meant to affirm the validity of the ordination of ministers of Word and Sacrament. It carries the meaning of eligibility and interchangeability — that ministers may be eligible and available to serve in one denomination for an extended, but limited time, while retaining membership in another, following the polity of each denomination.

In 2002, a new section was added to the *Book of Church Order* that will allow consistories to call ministers of Formula churches to become pastors of the local congregation.

II. Categories of Service

In a conversation with the other FOA churches in March of 1999, three categories of service for ordained ministers were identified: 1) occasional service, 2) extended service, and 3) transfer of membership. All three are possible means for ministers to serve in a denomination other than the one in which they were ordained. However, the goal of the FOA was not to encourage ordained ministers to transfer membership from one denomination to another. The FOA seeks to allow a more effective use and deployment of the ordained leaders of each denomination on an *occasional* or *temporary* basis in order to enhance our shared ministry and mission. The paragraphs below identify the sections of the RCA *Book of Church Order* (BCO) that apply to each category of service and provide some commentary on their application.

Occasional Service

An ordained minister of another denomination may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an RCA congregation on an occasional basis. The governing body of the local congregation (consistory) is given the authority to decide whether or not to invite a specific person to preach or administer the sacraments following the provisions printed below.

Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Sec. 9

The consistory of a church may invite or permit ministers of other denominations whose character and standard are known to preach for them. Ministers of other denominations or their counterparts whose character and standard are not known shall not be engaged to preach in a local church until they have furnished to the consistory written evidence of recent date of their good ministerial standing and of their authorization to preach the Word. The consistory shall then determine whether to issue an invitation to preach. Ordinarily, an ordained minister shall perform the preaching of the Word or a theological student appointed pursuant to the *Government of the Reformed Church in America*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 7. In special circumstances, an elder commissioned by the classis as a preaching elder may preach. However, a consistory may authorize, in occasional or special circumstances, other persons to preach.

The consistory has significant freedom in deciding whether a person is qualified to preach in a particular local church. However, the consistory acts under the supervision of the classis and the classis may intervene if the principles above are not followed.

Extended Service

A minister of a *Formula* church may serve a congregation of the RCA for an extended period. The first, and primary, way would be through the call of a consistory to serve a congregation. The relevant section reads:

Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Sec. 4

A consistory may call a minister of a communion that is a partner in the *Formula of Agreement*. The classis shall install the minister according to the office for installation in the Liturgy but shall not receive the minister into the classis. The minister shall be *ipso facto* a temporary member of the classis.

A called minister in the RCA is installed as pastor and teacher of a congregation. Installation confers a connection that can only be dissolved by mutual request of the minister and consistory (except under certain conditions) and with the approval of the classis. Arrangements for ministerial compensation are set out in the instrument of the call and are reviewed by the classis only if new arrangements fall below the threshold set out in the call. The call binds minister and congregation in mutual accountability.

In becoming a temporary member of the classis (see below), the minister receives the privilege of voice and vote at the classis. He or she cannot, however, represent the classis in higher “judicatories, assemblies, agencies or commissions” of the RCA. Furthermore, he or she does not subscribe to the Declaration for Ministers, as that would make her or him subject to discipline at levels including deposition from office and excommunication. However, ministers from *Formula* churches would agree to act in a manner consistent with the declaration, and accept the counsel and admonition of the classis. In effect, it would be to subject oneself to “admonition and rebuke,” the lowest form of discipline. It is understood that while a classis of the RCA cannot suspend or depose from office, in cases where such would be appropriate, the classis could require termination of the ministry with the local congregation.

A second option for extended service may be rendered under a contract between the RCA congregation and the ordained minister. A minister may be invited to serve as an assistant minister or as the only ordained minister of a church. All contracts must be approved by the consistory of the local congregation *and* the classis of which that congregation is a member.

Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2 (Assistant Ministers)

Sec. 4. A consistory may contract with one or more assistant ministers to serve along with its minister(s) serving under a call. The contract(s) shall follow the guidelines established by the classis. The assistant minister shall be installed by the classis as a minister under contract, but shall not be *ipso facto* a member of the church or the consistory.

Assistant ministers serve under contracts. Associate ministers serve under approved calls. A contract is not the same as a call. Calls are extended for an indefinite period of time and require membership within the RCA, except as provided for within the framework of the FOA. Contracts are temporary and must be reviewed annually by the classis. The minister under contract may or may not be a member of the classis. The RCA assistant ministers may or may not be installed, depending on whether they are members of the classis. The installation of an assistant minister has a different effect than the installation of a minister serving under a call from a church. When a classis approves a contract between an assistant minister and a church, it approves the provision for dissolution of the relationship contained in the contract. Each classis is free to establish guidelines for the approval of contracts with regard to the length of contract, minimum salary guidelines, the dissolution process, and any other requirements that the classis may adopt. For ministers serving under a call, the classis may dissolve the relationship between the minister and the congregation only by their mutual consent or by a two-thirds vote of the classis delegates.

Although assistant ministers are always ministers under contract, not all ministers under contract are assistant ministers. Since the term “stated supply” was abandoned in 1987 (see 1987 MGS, p. 179t), at least three types of ministers under contract can be found in the BCO:

1. Ministers serving churches without an installed pastor,
2. Specialized interim ministers (SIMS), and
3. Assistant ministers serving on staff in churches.

The following sections of BCO speak about ministers under contract:

Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7 (Ministers Under Contract)

Sec. 4. The classis, at the request of a church or with its consent, shall appoint one of its ministers or a minister of another classis, or of another approved body, the minister under contract of a church that is without an installed minister. The appointment shall be for a term of not more than one year. It shall be subject to renewal after proper review by the classis. The minister under contract shall perform the duties and receive the financial support that is agreed upon and shall report to classis whenever that body shall require it.

Sec. 5. The classis shall determine whether a minister under contract who is also a member of the classis shall be appointed supervisor of the church served. The minister under contract shall preside at meetings of the consistory of the church if invited by the consistory to do so, but shall not have the right to vote.

Sec. 8. A church shall not enter into a contract with a minister or a student except by approval of the classis. Between sessions of classis the approval may be given by the president and the clerk of the classis.

Sec. 9. The approval of the classis shall be required before a church and a competent minister, or ministers, may contract for the purpose of maintaining public worship, under that church’s direction, in a place or pulpit in any locality, or provide assistance for its own installed ministers. In such cases a formal call is not required, though the classis shall review all contracts annually. Ministers employed by such contracts may or may not be required to be members of the classis.

Notice the words “of another approved body” in Sec. 4 above. The RCA does not maintain a list of approved bodies. *Formula* churches meet these criteria along with other Reformed bodies. All ministers will be expected to

preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in a RCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the RCA doctrinal standards, the RCA liturgical standards, and the RCA *Book of Church Order*.

Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 13 (Temporary Membership)

Sec. 15. A minister of another denomination whose ordination meets the criteria of Chapter I, Part II, Article 12, Section I, whose good standing has been certified by that denomination, and who serves with the approval of classis as a minister under contract, an assistant minister, a minister in a cooperative specialized ministry in which classis shares sponsorship, or a minister to a congregation composed of denominational units at least one of which is associated with the classis may upon request and with the approval of classis, hold temporary membership in the classis. Such temporary members shall have the rights and privileges of membership for the period of the approved service, but may not represent their classis in the higher judicatories, assemblies, agencies, or commissions of the Reformed Church in America.

Temporary members shall not subscribe to the declaration, but, in accepting temporary membership, shall agree that in their duties approved by the classis they will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the declaration and accept the counsel and admonition of the classis.

Transfer of Membership

An ordained minister of another denomination who desires to serve indefinitely within the RCA may apply for a transfer of membership. An ordained minister is received and installed by a classis only after accepting an approved call. An entire article of the *BCO* has been written to provide guidance for the transfer process.

***Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 12.
(Reception of Ministers and Licensed Candidates from Other Denominations)***

Sec. 1. A classis shall recognize as valid only such ordination in another denomination as is able to meet the following conditions: intended to be within and to the ministry of the catholic or universal church; performed by a duly organized body of Christian churches, and by the authority within such body charged with the exercise of this power, accompanied by prayer and the laying on of hands.

Sec. 2. A classis shall not receive any licensed candidate or minister under its care from any body of professing Christians that maintains doctrines opposed to those of the Standards of the Reformed Church in America, unless that licensed candidate or minister shall make a complete and explicit declaration in writing renouncing such doctrines as being contrary to the Standards.

Sec. 3. When an application is made for admission to the classis by a licensed candidate or a minister from another denomination, the classis shall determine whether the applicant's educational qualifications are equal to those required in the Reformed Church in America, and it shall subject the applicant to such examination before classis as shall demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the theology, history, government, and disciplinary procedures of the Reformed Church in America; understanding of and adherence to the *Standards* of the Reformed Church in America; and loyalty to its agencies.

Sec. 4. When an ordained minister of another denomination wishes to be considered for a call from a congregation in the RCA, that minister shall furnish the stated clerk of classis with the following:

1. a completed Minister's Profile form;
2. copies of academic degrees;
3. a seminary transcript;
4. names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five persons who are qualified to comment on the applicant's ministry;
5. a statement from the applicant which attests to knowledge of Reformed Church history, readiness to adhere to the Standards of the RCA, and a basic knowledge of and readiness to support Reformed Church agencies and institutions.

Prior to becoming a serious candidate for a call from a congregation in the Reformed Church in America, an ordained minister who is affiliated with another denomination shall meet with the appropriate committee of a Reformed Church classis, which shall determine whether, in its judgment, the minister is able to meet the requirements set forth in the *Book of Church Order*, Part II, Article 12. Sections 1, 2, and 3 above. The committee's judgment, whether positive or negative, shall be sent by the stated clerk to the Office of Ministry and Personnel Services for attachment to the applicant's Minister's Profile form and such distribution as may be appropriate.

If the committee's judgment is negative, the classis may appoint one or more of its ministers to assist the applicant in preparation for a second meeting with the classis committee, which shall take place not less than six months after the initial meeting. The committee may also require additional formal study prior to a second meeting.

When an ordained minister who is affiliated with another denomination has met with a classis committee in order to determine whether the minister is qualified to be considered for a call to a Reformed church, and the committee is not satisfied with the minister's qualifications, any subsequent meetings for the same purpose shall take place within the same classis, unless the classis specifically requests another classis to act on its behalf.

When a classis is requested to approve a call to a minister who is affiliated with another denomination, prior to its examination of the applicant it shall obtain full information from the chairperson of the committee which reviewed the applicant's qualifications, as outlined in b, c, and d above.

Sec. 5. A licensed candidate from another denomination shall not be ordained as a minister before serving in a supervised ministry for a period of up to twenty-four months. The classis shall petition the General Synod to provide this superintendence through the board of trustees of an RCA seminary or the Theological Education Agency, which will determine the length of the period of supervision.

This article sets up a lengthy and complicated procedure with significant requirements for any ordained minister who is considering a transfer to the RCA.

III. Procedures for the Exchange of Ministers

In dialogue with the other FOA churches, it was agreed that the "orderly exchange of ministers" should allow ordained ministers to serve a church in another denomination for an extended time while retaining membership within the denomination of origin. The rationale for this agreement includes the need for flexibility in the process of sending and receiving ministers and the requirements of insurance plans and pension benefits. The other FOA churches have made provision for extended service without a transfer requirement. The RCA faces several difficulties in implementing this agreement.

The Nature of Calls and Contracts

The use of contracts for ministers serving churches has been a matter of debate in the RCA. In 1995, a paper on Clergy Contracts was adopted as a study resource for understanding the difference between contracts and calls. (See 1995 MGS, pp. 209-212.) The paper states, "It is clear the issuance of a call and the provisions which surround the call to the minister are intended to be normative for congregations of the Reformed Church in America." The RCA is faced with the difficulty of providing a means of extended, but temporary, service by ordained ministers of other denominations that does not violate its theological sense of a call to ministry.

An understanding from the ELCA of the source of a call may be helpful in resolving this difficulty. All ministers must serve with a commitment to a call that they have received from God. The FOA churches have agreed that approval for extended service shall occur only in consultation with, and concurrence of, the sending body. When ordained ministers serve outside of their denomination, the question arises of who should issue and approve a call. For the ELCA, a call issued to a minister that holds ordination in another denomination should be understood to have its origin in the sending denomination. For example, an ordained minister of the ELCA serving in an RCA congregation as a minister under contract serves under a letter of call from the ELCA Synod Council in which the ordained minister is rostered (or has membership). An ordained minister of the RCA must receive approval before accepting a contract with an ELCA congregation (as a specialized ministry). The approval of the ministry (or call) by the sending body allows the minister to continue an active status within the sending denomination. The contract establishes the particular understandings that have been reached between the minister and the receiving congregation and its supervising body and supplements the call of the sending body.

A Formula of Agreement

A practical difficulty within the *BCO* is the limit of contracts to no more than one year for RCA churches without an installed minister. (It can be argued that no such requirement exists for assistant ministers; a classis may approve a multi-year contract for an assistant minister as long as it includes an annual review.) In a church without an installed pastor, the *BCO* says, “The appointment shall be for a term of not more than one year.” It may be helpful to amend the *BCO* by dropping that sentence. Although all contracts are subject to review by the classis each year, a classis could then approve a multi-year contract as part of an extended service arrangement with an ordained minister from another denomination. The annual review by the classis would include the constitutional inquiry to ensure that the salary, housing, arrangements for professional development, and all other benefits received by the minister meet the terms of the original contract, subsequent revisions thereof, and the minimum standards of the classis.

Approval Process for Contracts

A consistory is charged with executing a call upon a minister of Word and Sacrament. It is most unusual for a consistory to work through a search committee that will sort through possible candidates, conduct interviews, and arrange to hear candidates preach. The consistory is required to “endeavor to hear the mind of the congregation” concerning candidates for the pulpit. After a candidate is selected by a consistory, the classis must approve the call. Only then is the call fully approved and can be offered to the candidate for his or her response.

In adopting the *FOA*, it was understood that nothing in the document changed the method of the RCA for accepting ministers from other denominations. The classis, under the superintendence of the General Synod, has the responsibility and authority to examine all candidates for ministry and make a determination of whether a minister of another church (or the RCA) is fit for the ministry of Word and Sacrament within the classis. The *BCO* contains a lengthy process for the reception of ministers and licensed candidates from other denominations. It gives little guidance for the approval of contracts. The classis may adopt its own procedure for the approval of contracts and may include some of the requirements for the reception of ministers from other denominations in the contract approval process. Within the RCA, the classis is responsible for evaluating whether or not a candidate has a knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, theological and liturgical identity, practices of ministry, and discipline of the RCA.

The Supervision of a Church

When a minister under contract serves an RCA church that has no installed minister who is serving under a call, another minister appointed by classis serves as that church’s supervisor, unless the classis determines that a minister under contract who is also a member of the classis shall also be the supervisor. (See *BCO*, 1, II, 7, 5 above.) Before a minister from another denomination may function as the supervisor of a congregation, the classis must make the minister a temporary member of classis. Temporary membership establishes a level of accountability that qualifies a minister to serve as a supervisor. Since the RCA has agreed to provide an opportunity for full participation in the classis for a minister from another denomination serving a RCA church, appointment as the supervisor of the church is the next logical step.

Form of Installation

A minister of a *Formula* church who is called to serve a congregation will be installed as pastor and teacher of that congregation. Prior to the installation, the consistory is required to publish the name of the candidate for three weeks to allow time for objection to the installation. The installation will follow the appropriate rite in the *Liturgy* (itself part of the Constitution of the RCA). The rite includes an interrogation of the candidate and concludes with a declaration of installation. However, a minister of a *Formula* church will not read the “Declaration for Ministers of Word and Sacrament” by which the minister is received as a member of the classis.

Accountability and Pastoral Care

An ordained minister of the RCA remains subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the RCA while serving in a church of another denomination. An ordained minister of another denomination serving within the RCA is understood to be subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the denomination in which the minister holds membership. However, a minister serving a church within the RCA shall agree that in their duties approved by the classis they will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the *Declaration for Ministers* and accept the counsel and admonition of the classis. For installed ministers of *Formula* churches in an RCA

congregation, this would mean that should the classis judge that the minister is unfit for ministry, that minister's service to the local congregation would be terminated. The RCA classis would expect to cooperate with the relevant body of the sending denomination in any disciplinary action that body might judge appropriate. All contracts should make it clear that the service of a minister may be terminated by the classis if the classis decides that the conduct of a minister makes them unfit for ministry within the RCA. The classis is responsible for the pastoral care of each enrolled minister and the minister's immediate family. Following the principles of the orderly exchange document, pastoral care of ministers who are serving under contract in RCA churches will be shared by the denomination of membership and the RCA classis.

Pension and Medical Insurance

The FOA churches have agreed that an ordained minister will participate in the pension, health, and other benefit plans of the denomination of membership, not the denomination of service. It is anticipated that an RCA congregation will be able to contribute to the pension and insurance plan of another denomination when a minister from another denomination serves an RCA congregation. Similarly, an ordained minister of the RCA serving in another denomination will be able to arrange for payment of the RCA insurance premiums and contributions to the RCA pension plan. Due to insurance and pension regulations, the transfer of membership would make such an arrangement impossible, so it is critical that ministers who are available for extended service be given the opportunity to retain their membership within their denomination of origin and continue the insurance and pension coverage that they have.

Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship

The conclusion of a pastoral relationship between an installed minister and a congregation takes place by means of a process called "dissolution." Under normal circumstances, a consistory and minister jointly request of the classis that a member of the classis be present at a meeting of the consistory at which the request for dissolution will be voted. In attesting to the joint nature of the request, the member of the classis presents the request to the classis, which then votes to approve (or deny) the request. Only then is the minister released from her or his relationship to the congregation. However, either the minister or the consistory may request of the classis a dissolution without the agreement of the other party. In such instances the matter is set before the classis in full and open session for the decision of the classis.

RCA Ministers Serving in Other Denominations

An ordained minister of the RCA may serve in another denomination on a temporary basis while retaining membership within the RCA. Ministers who serve in this manner are considered "specialized ministers." In order for ministers to retain their ordination within the RCA, all forms of ministry must be performed under the jurisdiction or with the approval of a classis of the RCA. Following the principles of the orderly exchange agreement, the classis is required to take an active role in the approval process for the sending of RCA ministers to other denominations. Ministers that serve in other denominations while retaining their membership in the RCA remain subject to the discipline of the RCA classis that holds their ordination. However, it is understood that the receiving body has the authority to dissolve the relationship between an RCA minister and a congregation of that denomination without the need for approval by the RCA classis.

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, most of this paper is devoted to the questions that may arise when ministers from other denominations serve within the RCA. The RCA is learning from the other FOA churches what policies and procedures they will use in receiving ordained ministers from the RCA. This paper attempts to address the RCA church order issues regarding the orderly exchange of ministers. Other issues are equally important. We are committed to continue conversations both within the RCA and with the FOA churches to clarify our policies and procedures in order to enhance the orderly exchange of ministers.

A Summary of the Pastoral Search Process Reformed Church In America

The following steps in the search process are detailed in the *Pastoral Search Handbook*:

- Conclusion of Minister's Relationship
- Appointment of Classis Supervisor
- Pastoral Leadership during the Interim (Specialized Interim Minister)
- Appointment of a Search Committee
- Preparation of the Self-Study
- Preparation of the Church Profile Form
- Preparing for Candidates (information packet)
- Interviewing Candidates
- Checking Candidate's References
- Hearing a Candidate Preach
- Procedures for Considering a Seminarian
- Recommending a Candidate to the Consistory
- Seeking the Will of the Congregation
- Negotiating the Call
- Installation

The first step in the search process is the selection of a search committee. The consistory is responsible for the selection of the search committee. The search committee's tasks begin with preparation of a self-study and church profile form. The profile form is sent to the Office of Ministry Services and also to the regional synod office. These offices will return minister profiles of possible candidates. Also, congregations may solicit from church members and local clergy the names of potential candidates.

The search committee reviews the profiles, checks primary and secondary references, and conducts telephone and personal interviews. The personal interview should take place at the calling church with time for the candidate to tour the church facility, the parsonage, if the church has one, and the community. This interview should include only members of the search committee and the candidate.

After the initial interview process, if both parties are interested in exploring the relationship further, the search committee is ready to observe the candidate leading worship and preaching. It is suggested that an opportunity for the candidate to preach in a nearby church be provided instead of going to the candidate's church.

Only one candidate should be recommended to the consistory. The candidate is invited to meet the congregation and to lead a worship service. The congregation is involved in the final decision. If the congregation vote is positive after having met the candidate, the consistory can make the official call with the approval of the local classis. When a call is extended, it should include details of the position that may not be included in the standard form of the call. The call should also clarify salary and benefits, housing allowance, and who will be responsible for incidentals such as utilities and auto expenses.



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Provisions Regarding *A Formula of Agreement*

The United Church of Christ has the following provisions that provide for an “orderly exchange” of ordained ministers as called for in *A Formula of Agreement*. Long-standing ecumenical commitments have influenced the ecclesiastical procedures in the United Church of Christ and allow the ministry provisions outlined in *A Formula of Agreement* to be implemented in the United Church of Christ.

Occasional Service

An ordained minister of another formula communion may, when invited, preach or administer the sacraments in a United Church of Christ congregation.

A United Church of Christ ordained minister may accept an occasional invitation to preach or administer the sacraments in a congregation that is part of another formula communion. No further authorization is necessary on the part of the United Church of Christ.

Extended Service

A calling body of the United Church of Christ may invite an ordained minister of another formula communion to provide extended ministerial service to that calling body. The minister remains an ordained minister in the other communion.

The pastor serving a United Church of Christ local church may be granted Dual Standing by the United Church of Christ association. The ordained minister retains ecclesiastical credentials in the other communion and is extended United Church of Christ collegial support while serving a United Church of Christ calling body. Dual Standing may be withdrawn at any time by the association and Dual Standing ceases when the minister is no longer serving the calling body for which it was granted.

Upon the appropriate invitation of another formula communion and with the concurrence of the United Church of Christ Association that holds the minister’s ordained ministerial standing, a United Church of Christ minister may accept a specific invitation to serve a calling body of another formula communion while retaining ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. It is the expectation of the United Church of Christ that United Church of Christ ministers on extended service as pastor of a local congregation in another formula communion will hold local church membership in the congregation being served. When serving in another formula communion, the minister will apply for and receive the appropriate authorization of that communion.

Transfer Of Ministerial Credentials

Some persons will be lead by personal faith and vocational pilgrimage to transfer their ministerial credentials permanently to another formula communion. The United Church of Christ understands such a move of ministerial credentials to another formula communion to be a permanent transfer whereby the person becomes a member of the ordained ministry of another communion. Persons who move beyond occasional or extended service and serve permanently, indefinitely, or in succeeding periods of extended service are encouraged to consider a permanent transfer of ministerial credentials.

An ordained minister of another formula of agreement communion who wishes to enter the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ applies for Privilege of Call. Upon approval by the appropriate committee on the ministry of an Association of the United Church of Christ the person is granted Privilege of Call. This enables the

person to enter the search and call process of the United Church of Christ. Upon receiving and accepting a call to ministry that is accepted by the committee on the ministry as a valid call within the United Church of Christ the person is granted ordained ministerial standing. The person has now entered the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ. The new United Church of Christ ordained minister then relinquishes ordination credentials in the previous communion.

A United Church of Christ ordained minister who desires to enter the ordained ministry of another formula communion follows the processes and procedures required by that denomination for entrance into the ordained ministry of that communion. Upon receipt of credentials in another communion, the individual is expected to resign ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. If necessary, the association where the individual held United Church of Christ ordained ministerial standing terminates the person's ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ because the person has entered the Ordained Ministry of another communion.

Privilege of Call Process — United Church of Christ

Used when an ordained minister of another formula communion wishes to enter the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ, by applying for Privilege of Call.

The ordained minister from another formula communion formally applies to the Association Committee on the Ministry and submits the following materials to the Committee:

- A letter requesting privilege of call and requesting an interview with the Association Committee on the Ministry
- A paper setting forth the person's theological perspective
- A paper on the history, theological roots, polity and practice of the United Church of Christ
- A statement of reasons for leaving the other formula communion and for seeking to enter the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ
- Certification of ordination
- Verification of current ecclesiastical status, comparable to ordained ministerial standing, in the other formula communion
- Certification of education attainment, including a bachelor's degree and a Master of Divinity degree or their equivalents
- Documentation of ability, skills, knowledge and specialized training for ordained ministry
- At least five letters of reference. One should be from an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and one from the person in the candidate's formula communion who is the counterpart of the United Church of Christ Association or Conference Minister

The candidate meets with the Association Committee on the Ministry to be examined.

The candidate makes a presentation to an ecclesiastical council, describing his or her commitment to and preparation for ordained ministry and reasons for seeking privilege of call in the United Church of Christ.

If granted privilege of call by the ecclesiastical council, the person prepares a Ministerial Profile that will be circulated by the office of Parish Life and Leadership.

The person with privilege of call seeks a call to a local church of the United Church of Christ.

Following acceptance of a call to a local church within an Association, the ordained minister with privilege of call applies to the Association for ordained ministerial standing.

The ordained minister cooperates with the local church in requesting and the Association in planning and holding a service of installation.

Ordained ministerial standing is granted.

Search and Call Process in the United Church of Christ

1. The heart of the Search and Call process in the United Church of Christ is discernment – discernment of local church search committees as to who God is leading them to consider – and discernment of candidates as to where God would see their skills/gifts to be most appreciated.
2. Persons authorized to do so complete a “Ministerial Profile” form and “Ministerial Information Summary”. The Ministerial Profile includes “Background Disclosure” from the pastor and eight (8) written references. Forms are submitted to the office of Parish Life and Leadership in Cleveland.
3. A Congregation seeking a new pastor completes a “Local Church Profile” and submits it to the conference/association of which it is a member.
4. Congregations seeking a new pastor are listed in “UCC Employment Opportunities,” circulated by subscription monthly.
5. Candidates who hold ordained ministerial standing in the UCC (or In-care Standing, if in the last semester of their theological education and approved by the Association in which they hold standing to circulate their profile) may have their “Ministerial Profile” circulated. Neither the candidate nor the office of Parish Life and Leadership sends these directly to the congregation. Rather, the candidate requests the conference/association staff of the Conference in which the congregation seeking a new pastor resides to send that profile to the congregation in which s/he is interested. The conference/association staff automatically sends that profile to the specified congregation.
6. The “Search Committee” of a local congregation seeking a new pastor reviews the profiles, checks additional references by telephone, contacts candidates it wishes to pursue, sends local church profile and other information about the church/community, conducts interviews of a selected number of candidates, hears them preach and experiences their worship leadership.
7. The “Search Committee” recommends a final candidate to the congregation for vote. The candidate is invited to preach during worship on a designated Sabbath, after which a special meeting of the congregation is convened to vote on the candidate. If approved, the congregation and candidate enter into covenant with one another for a new ministry.
8. The Committee on the Ministry of the Association in which the congregation holds standing considers a request to transfer the ministerial standing of the “called pastor” into that Association.
9. At some point during the first year of service, the local church requests that the Association install the minister as Pastor and Teacher.

Glossary of Terms — United Church of Christ

Association

An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ in which all local churches in a geographical area and all ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers have their standing. (Constitution; United Church of Christ; Paragraph 38)

Background Disclosure

The last part of the ministerial profile, giving ministers opportunity to make a conscientious assertion about their ethical performance of ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ and are given space for relevant commentary. (Ministerial Profile; Part V; Paragraph 1)

Call

A Call is the official invitation from a local church or other calling body to a particular ordained or commissioned minister of the United Church of Christ to fulfill a leadership position in its midst. (Manual on Ministry © 2001; United Church of Christ; Section 10; Page 10)

Called Pastor

The called pastor of a church is that person extended an official Call by a local church or other calling body.

Calling Body

A calling body is an organization or institution (a local church, Conference, pastoral counseling center, etc.) that seeks the services of an ordained, commissioned, or licensed minister of the United Church of Christ.

Committee on the Ministry

The Committee on the Ministry (in some associations called Church and Ministry Committee) is the body in an Association or Conference which is delegated responsibilities for church and ministry concerns among which are included the authorization, review, and discipline of ordained, commissioned, and licensed ministers in that Association. (Manual on Ministry © 2001; United Church of Christ; Section 10; Page 11)

Conference

A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ, which is composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area, all Ordained Ministers holding Standing or ordained ministerial partner Standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association, all commissioned ministers in its Associations, and those licensed ministers who have been granted voting membership in its Associations. (Constitution; United Church of Christ; Paragraph 46)

Conference Minister

The Conference Minister is the pastor and chief executive officer of a Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Congregational meeting

A congregational meeting is an official gathering of a congregation, called to make organizational and fiduciary decisions for the church, as well as extending an official call to pastoral leadership or terminating such Call.

Dual Standing

An Association may grant Dual Standing to an ordained, commissioned or licensed minister from another denomination who is engaged in any of the following ministries: serves as pastor of a local church of the United Church of Christ; serves an agency or Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ; serves as a pastor of a yoked charge or a federated church which is affiliated with the United Church of Christ; serves in an ecumenical

A Formula of Agreement

The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament

ministry, one constituent of which is a local church or agency of the United Church of Christ. (Bylaws; United Church of Christ; Paragraph 143)

Ecclesiastical Council

An ecclesiastical council is an official meeting of an Association for the purpose of authorizing ministry and acting on questions of discipline. (Manual on Ministry © 2001; United Church of Christ; Section 10; Page 11)

In Care

In Care is the relationship that exists between a student preparing for Ordination, his or her local church, and his or her Association. The purpose of the In Care relationship is to provide support, counsel, and assistance to the student during the time of the student's academic preparation for the ordained ministry. (Manual on Ministry © 2001; United Church of Christ; Section 10; Page 12)

Installation

Installation is that act whereby an Association, in cooperation with a local church, officially endorses and celebrates the Call of a new minister to that Local Church or other officially recognized calling body.

Local Church

The basic unit of the life and organization of the United Church of Christ. There are approximately 6,000 congregations in full standing with the denomination.

Local Church Profile

The instrument provided by the office of Parish Life and Leadership to local churches, provides search committees with the necessary forms to develop a lengthy informational document that can then be sent to prospective candidates for a ministerial position.

Ministerial Profile

The ministerial profile is an instrument provided by the office of Parish Life and Leadership of the United Church of Christ that, when completed, allows ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers to have their personal, academic and ecclesiastical information sent to local churches or other calling bodies that are searching for leadership in the United Church of Christ.

Ordained Ministerial Standing

Ordained Ministerial Standing is the authorization granted by an Association to an ordained minister to exercise all the prerogatives of that ministry within the United Church of Christ. Ministerial Standing is granted at the time of ordination and may be transferred from Association to Association. (Bylaws; United Church of Christ; Paragraphs 109.B115)

Parish Life and Leadership

The office of Parish Life and Leadership, within Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ, provides support, encouragement, and advocacy to strengthen the communal life of congregations and those who provide leadership.

Privilege of Call

Privilege of Call is the authorization granted by an Association to an ordained minister of another denomination to seek a Call to a local church of the United Church of Christ and, upon receiving a Call, to apply for Ministerial Standing. (Bylaws; United Church of Christ; Paragraph 141)

Sacraments

The United Church of Christ recognizes two sacraments – Baptism and Holy Communion (Constitution; United Church of Christ; Preamble, Paragraph 2)

Search Committee

A search committee is a committee formed within a church to assist the congregation to secure new pastoral leadership at the time of a pastoral vacancy.

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