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INTRODUCTION

The Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees is compiled by the Ministerial Vocation Committee of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as a reference tool primarily for presbyteries of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. This Procedure Manual brings together in one place the constitutional requirements from the Book of Order, practices required by action of the General Assembly (Acts of Assembly), and advisory material. It also contains sections that are of value to Search Committees and Sessions.

This Manual is periodically revised to incorporate relevant amendments to the Book of Order and actions of the General Assembly. This edition includes amendments and legislative actions approved through the 35th General Assembly (June 2015). Material in this Edition has been re-organized to present the subject matter in a more logical fashion and has removed the outline format of previous editions for better readability. Except for chapter 1, text of the Book of Order and Acts of Assembly have been moved from the body of the chapter to the end in order to improve readability while not requiring the reader to go back and forth from the Manual to the Book of Order.

References to the Book of Government begin with “G,” to the Book of Worship with “W,” and to the Book of Discipline with “D.” Text of the references to the Book of Order may be found at the end of each chapter, cited in the order they appear in the Book of Order. Acts of Assembly referenced in each chapter will be listed following the Book of Order text in chronological order with the year the action was taken followed by the item number. For example, “85-03” designates 1985, action number 3.

Input to improve future editions is gratefully received and may be sent to epchurch@epc.org or mailed to:

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Livonia, MI 48152-7912
CHAPTER 1: THEOLOGY OF CALLING

The Call of a Christian

All Christians are called by God to participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world and to exercise such gifts as God has given them in obedience to His purpose. The call of God to be Christian demands that the choice of work be a responsible decision of faith based on several important factors:

First, the work should be appropriate to serve God’s purposes. Therefore work should be judged first on the basis of its relationship to the biblically expressed mission of the Church, and second, on the relative need in the world for that work. It is not enough to choose useful work that one likes and can do. The Christian’s work should be important to the Kingdom of God.

Second, the work should be consistent with a person’s abilities. God has created each person with an individual set of natural abilities and a unique emotional and mental pattern. All Christians should make use of testing, counseling and every other means at their disposal to learn as much as they can about themselves and their God-given gifts so they may best serve God in the vocational area for which He has fitted them.

Third, the work should be confirmed by an inner conviction that this is God’s will for their lives. By the grace of God, when Christians seek God’s will for their lives with good judgment, they begin to sense a strong conviction that one type of work is better for them than others. This is what might be spoken of as the “inner call.”

Finally, the work should be confirmed by others. One’s inner conviction is necessary, but should never be trusted alone, since this kind of inner experience may be misinterpreted. The Church is responsible for helping all its members choose work that is not merely satisfying or financially beneficial, but more importantly to choose work that honors God and reflects His will and kingdom ministry. This is what might be spoken of as the “outward call.”

The Call to the Ordained Ministry

The Reformers believed that God instituted the ordained ministry to proclaim His Word, to administer the sacraments, and to ensure the orderly government of the Church. They held that both preaching and teaching by a trained and duly authorized person are essential. The sacraments are functions of ordained ministry not because their validity is based on the Minister’s ordination, but because they must never be separated from preaching His Word, the declaration of God’s will. These elements, the right preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the practice of scriptural discipline were and still are the marks of the true Church.

How does one decide if God is calling him or her to vocational ministry? One’s own judgment? The opinions of others? The covenant community? The Reformers felt that the people of God could best make the ultimate judgment about demonstrated gifts for the ministry. They insisted that ministers be called by the Church (G.10-1).\footnote{G.10-1 It is God through the Holy Spirit who calls persons to office in the Church. This calling to office consists of three parts: first, the inward call to individuals where they bear testimony of that calling; second, the call of a local church, Church Court, or other appropriate agency to them to fill that office; third, the approval by an appropriate court of the Church.}
By this call of the Church, the Reformers meant a process which included the search for and selection of candidates, candidate preparation and the election of a candidate to be pastor by the people of the congregation. The next step was examination before presbytery, culminating in the ordination and installation of the candidate as minister. These steps comprise the “outward call,” or the call of the Church. In Calvin’s mind, the Scriptures taught that the Church has the responsibility to be the agent through which God calls people into the ministry. Moreover, his experience forcefully indicated that this biblical understanding of the call served a dual purpose: it protected the Church from weak and misguided leadership and it provided the means of securing the gifted, disciplined, prepared clergy which would be necessary for the Reformed churches. Like Luther, Calvin and his successors placed the deciding consideration upon the call of the Church.

In theory and in practice, the Reformers affirmed the right and the responsibility of the Church to choose or select candidates for the ministry. The “inner call” has frequently been given predominant consideration. The Reformers affirmed its importance, but they never acknowledged it as the sole deciding factor for admission to the ministry. Calvin defined the inner or secret call as the “good testimony of one’s heart” that allowed one to accept an office in the Church.

Some look upon the call to the ministry as an event which takes place at one time and may not be apparent to anyone other than to the one called. The Book of Government explains, however, that this calling is not only an event but a process. For the individual, this process strengthens the impetus to the ministry; for the Church it confirms the validity of the call and the suitability of the person called.
CHAPTER 2: THE OFFICE OF TEACHING ELDER

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) is governed by Ruling and Teaching Elders (G.2-1). “Teaching Elder” will be used throughout this Manual to designate the office in the EPC that is also known as “Minister” or “Minister of the Word and Sacrament.” “Pastor” is one of the varieties of calling within the office of Teaching Elder. Most ministers will serve within a pastoral ministry in a church, but some will serve in one of the other varieties of calling: teacher, missionary, evangelist, administrator or chaplain.

Pastor

The Pastor is called by the congregation as the “shepherd of that flock,” with particular responsibility to teach, preach, and lead the congregation in worship (G.9-5A). The Pastor is both a member and Moderator of the Session (G.18-2A) and ordinarily moderates meetings of the congregation (G.7-4). The call shall be approved by the Presbytery, which shall proceed with ordination and/or installation (see chapter 4, p. 23 and “Terms of Call—Minister,” p. 117).

Associate Pastor

All churches have a position of “Pastor,” and when additional Teaching Elders are called, their calling is that of Associate Pastor or Assistant Pastor. “Co-pastor” is not an office recognized by the EPC (85-05). An Associate Pastor is called by the congregation (G.10-5). The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities of the position and shall be approved by the Presbytery, which then shall appoint a Commission to proceed with ordination (if required) and installation (G.13-1A). The Associate Pastor, being called by the congregation, is a member of Session (G.18-1). Ordinarily, Associate Pastors are not eligible to succeed the Pastor. For exceptional cases, special provisions for approval by the Session and Ministerial Committee apply before approaching the Associate Pastor as a candidate (G.10-4D).

Assistant Pastor

The Assistant Pastor is called by the Session (G.10-6). This call shall be for a definite period of time and is renewable. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities of the position and shall be approved by the Presbytery, which shall then appoint an Administrative Commission to proceed with ordination (if required) and installation. While serving as an Assistant Pastor, that individual may not succeed the Pastor. The Assistant Pastor is not called by the congregation and therefore is not a member of the Session (G.18-1).

Churches may call an Assistant Pastor to serve as an Associate Pastor. This may be done without a Search Committee on recommendation of the Session and a ¾ majority approval of the Ministerial Committee. Such a transition is a change in call and requires that terms of call be approved by the congregation and the Presbytery. Because it is a change in call, the Presbytery shall appoint an Administrative Commission to conduct an installation service (G.21-1C.1(a); 02-04.6).

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2 All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
3 In this Manual, “shall” refers to actions required by the Book of Order and Acts of the General Assembly.
4 All Acts of Assembly references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
Chapter 2: The Office of Teaching Elder

**Teacher**

A Teaching Elder may be called by an appropriate outside agency/institution to serve as a Teacher. The primary purpose of such agencies should be the preparation of people for ministry or entrance into seminary (G.9-5B). In those agencies/institutions, the Teaching Elder's main responsibilities should be teaching subjects that would find a place in a seminary curriculum (e.g., Bible, theology, church history, apologetics).

**Evangelist**

A Teaching Elder may be called by a court of the church or an appropriate organization outside the church (see p. 79) to serve as an Evangelist (G.9-5C). An Evangelist may serve in an itinerant ministry, as a missionary, or as a domestic church planter. Teaching Elders serving as missionaries totally under the auspices of the EPC are considered to be serving within bounds even though their ministries may be overseas (99-10). In most cases these missionaries will be appointed by EPC World Outreach with no cooperative agreements in place with another agency. Teaching Elders serving as missionaries in out of bounds capacities do not need terms of call approved by the Presbytery.

**Administrator**

A Teaching Elder may be called to serve as administrators in church courts, an agency of the denomination, or in other Christian agencies/institutions deemed appropriate by the Presbytery (G.9-5D). Teaching Elders serving as Administrators called by church courts are considered as serving within bounds (99-10).

**Chaplain**

A Teaching Elder may be called by a court of the church, the military, a hospital, an institution, a university, or other appropriate agency to serve as a Chaplain (G.9-5.E). While the call to serve as a chaplain is approved by the Presbytery, the Military, Veterans Administration, and some institutions (particularly hospitals) require denominational endorsement from the national level of the Church as a condition of employment. The General Assembly elects a Chaplain Endorser who, with the Chaplains Work and Care Committee of the General Assembly, grants such endorsements. See chapter 7 of this Manual (p. 67) and the Chaplains Work and Care Committee Procedure Manual (a separate publication) for the theology of chaplaincy ministries and policies and procedures for chaplaincy endorsement and service.

**Temporary Pastoral Relationships**

When a pulpit is vacant, a Session may invite a Teaching Elder or a Commissioned Pastor\(^5\) to serve in a temporary capacity as Stated Supply, Interim Supply, or Occasional Supply (G.10-7C). Sessions should give serious consideration to the benefits of an Interim Supply Minister during the time in which a church is searching for a Pastor.\(^6\) A Session “invites” a pastor to serve in a temporary capacity (G.10-7A). The term “invite” is used intentionally to distinguish it from a “call.” Because a temporary pastoral position is not a “call,” 1) retired ministers may remain on the retired roll and serve in a temporary pastoral relationship, and 2) ministers from other

\(^5\) See chapter 9 for additional information on Commissioned Pastors.

\(^6\) See chapter 11 on “Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry”
denominations may not be transferred to the EPC as interim supply ministers (G.10-8C.1).

A Session may invite a non-EPC ordained minister to serve in a temporary capacity. Presbytery must approve the invitation (G.10-7A), and may authorize the non-EPC minister to administer sacraments (94-22; 14-06), but a non-EPC minister is not eligible to moderate the Session, because that minister has no standing in the EPC as a basis for serving as an officer of the church court. In such cases, the Presbytery should give due consideration to appointing a Minister of the Presbytery to serve as Moderator (G.18-2A.4) in order to strengthen the ties between the church and the Presbytery during the transition of pastoral leadership. When distance makes it difficult for a Presbytery-appointed Moderator to attend all Session meetings, a helpful practice has been for the Session to elect one of its members to serve as Moderator pro tem who consults regularly with the Moderator and serves in that capacity when the Moderator is unable to attend.

Calling a Pastor who has served in a temporary pastoral relationship

A Teaching Elder should not accept an invitation to serve in a temporary pastoral relationship with the intent of becoming the Pastor. To do so diminishes the Minister’s ability to accomplish the tasks necessary in the interim period as defined by the Assembly’s. However, in the exceptional case where it seems evident to the Search Committee that a person serving or who has served in a temporary relationship may be the one God is calling as Pastor, Book of Government 10-7B sets out special stipulations. In order to formally consider a person who has served the church in a temporary pastoral relationship (current or past), the Search Committee must seek approval of the Session and the Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery and obtain a ¾ majority vote from both.

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7 See chapter 11, “Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry.”
Chapter 2: The Office of Teaching Elder

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES

The Office of Teaching Elder

G. 2-1 The government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church shall be Presbyterian in form. This is government by Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders meeting in representative assemblies called Church Courts.

G.7-4 Moderator of meeting

A. Ordinarily, the Pastor will be the Moderator.

B. In the case of sickness or temporary absence of the Pastor or if it is deemed impractical or unwise by the Session for the Pastor to moderate a congregational meeting, the Session shall either:
   1. Appoint one of its members, with the concurrence of the Pastor, to call the meeting to order and to preside, or
   2. Request the Moderator of the Presbytery to appoint another Teaching Elder from outside the congregation to call the meeting to order and to preside.

G.9-5 The office of Teaching Elder: Within the office of Teaching Elder there are a variety of callings that require ordination. God distributes to each gifts according to the common needs of the Church. These include:

A. Pastor
   1. Titles
      A Teaching Elder may be called by a congregation to be a Pastor or Associate Pastor. Sessions may call a Teaching Elder as Assistant Pastor. These are the only recognized callings for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting.
   2. Authority and Responsibilities.
      Pastors shall preach and expound the Word, to be God’s prophet to the people and to be the people’s priest before God. Pastors shall lead the people in worship, celebrate the sacraments, and oversee the education, nurture, and mission of the church. The Pastors with the Ruling Elders shall exercise joint ministry to the needs of the flock and to all those who have need of a Pastor’s care, love, and compassion. With the active Ruling Elders, the Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) shall exercise the joint responsibility of jurisdiction. Teaching Elders shall be diligent to serve actively in the courts of which they are members.

B. Teacher: A Teaching Elder may be called to teach in an institution deemed appropriate by presbytery that has as a primary purpose the preparation of people for ministry or entrance into seminary. Such calling shall ordinarily include the responsibility for preaching the Word and administration of the Sacraments. As a Teacher, the Teaching Elder is also to serve as a pastor, caring for the spiritual wellbeing of others.

C. Evangelist: A Teaching Elder may be called by a court of the church or by some organization approved by the Presbytery to serve as an Evangelist. Evangelists may serve as missionaries, church planters, or in an itinerant ministry.
Chapter 2: The Office of Teaching Elder

1. An Evangelist serving as missionary has as a primary duty the preaching of the gospel. The Presbytery may authorize the Teaching Elder to administer the sacraments in that role. When a Teaching Elder is called by the General Assembly as an Evangelist the Presbytery may also empower the Evangelist to ordain and install Ruling Elders and Deacons to serve in emerging national churches that are not part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in accordance with applicable rules and regulations established by the General Assembly.

2. An Evangelist serving as church planter may be entrusted by the calling court to develop churches, to conduct preparational meetings of such churches, and to oversee the required preparation of Elders and Deacons.

3. An Evangelist serving in an itinerant ministry. Teaching Elders may be called to serve in a ministry of itinerant evangelism that does not involve church planting.

4. Those powers given to the Evangelist, including the power to receive and dismiss members, shall be specified by the Presbytery in writing.

D. Administrator: A court of the Church or one of its agencies may call a Teaching Elder to serve in some administrative capacity. An organization deemed proper by the Presbytery may also issue a similar call. In such cases, it is always the responsibility of the Administrator to seek opportunity to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments.

E. Chaplain: A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. The Presbytery may authorize the Chaplain to administer the Sacraments in that role.

G.9-11 The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor: A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals and provide pastoral care. Presbyteries may also approve and give appropriate powers to a Ruling Elder to serve as a Commissioned Pastor in mission churches, church planting and church revitalization works, or in chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons or other institutions.

G.10-4D Ordinarily, an Associate Pastor is not eligible to succeed the Pastor. However, should a Search Committee desire to consider an Associate Pastor as Pastor, approval by a three-fourths vote of Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee shall be required for the Search Committee to proceed.

G.10-5 The call of an Associate Pastor by a local church
A congregation may call an Associate Pastor by means of a Search Committee in the same fashion as indicated above, with the exception that the call of the congregation shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Associate.

G.10-6 The call of an Assistant Pastor by a Session
A Session, in consultation with the Ministerial Committee of Presbytery, may call an Assistant Pastor. The call of the Session shall be for a definite period of time and is renewable. The call of an Assistant Pastor may be terminated by the Session prior to that time only with the consent and approval of the Presbytery. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Assistant. The call of the Session shall always conform with the Acts of the General Assembly and follow the form approved by an appropriate committee of the General Assembly.

B. A Session, by a three-fourths vote and with the approval of Presbytery's Ministerial Committee, may recommend to the congregation that an Assistant Pastor of the local church be called as an Associate Pastor without a Search Committee being elected. The call as Associate Pastor must be approved by Presbytery and an installation service shall be conducted by the Presbytery or by its appointed Commission.

G.10-7 Temporary Pastoral Relationships

A. When there is no Pastor, a Session may invite a lawfully ordained Minister in good standing or a Commissioned Pastor to enter a temporary pastoral relationship. Although this invitation is not a call as defined in G.9-5, the invitation and authority to preach the Word, to administer sacraments, and to moderate Session must be approved by the Presbytery or by the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission.

B. Ordinarily, a person currently serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is not eligible to be called as Pastor of that church. Should a Search Committee desire to consider any person who has served in a temporary capacity since the pulpit most recently became vacant, it must secure approval by a three-fourths vote of the Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee in order to proceed.

C. Types of temporary pastoral relationships

1. Stated Supply

    A Stated Supply Pastor is invited to serve for a definite period of time of not less than one month and no more than twelve months. The Stated Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to Moderate the Church Session during the time of service. Before the end of any invited period of service, the Session may extend the invitation for an additional period not to exceed twelve months with the approval of the Presbytery or of the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission.

2. Interim Supply

    An Interim Supply Pastor is invited to serve during the period a congregation is seeking a Pastor. The Interim Supply Pastor may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Session during the time of service.

3. Occasional Supply

    An Occasional Supply Pastor is invited to serve regularly on specified days. Only the Ministerial Committee must approve.
**Chapter 2: The Office of Teaching Elder**

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**G.10-8C.1** Teaching Elder transferring from another EPC Presbytery or other church body. The receiving Presbytery shall not enroll that Teaching Elder without an approved call unless the Minister is retired and being enrolled as an Associate Member.

**G.13-1** The Ordination and Installation of Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders, and Deacons

**A. Teaching Elders**

1. Ordinarily, the ordaining/installing Presbytery will appoint an administrative commission to conduct a worship service at a date and time approved by the Court. A sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached. The person presiding shall recount the conditions necessary for ordination and/or installation, the solemnity of the event, and its importance in the life of the Church.

2. Presbyteries may also directly ordain a Teaching Elder.

**G.18-1** The Session

The entire life of the local church is under the oversight and supervision of the Session. The Session is composed of the Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) and all the Ruling Elders on active service. The Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) are full members of the Session and have the privilege of voting.

**G.18-2** Officers of the Session

**A. Moderator**

1. The Pastor shall be the Moderator and is a voting member of the Session. If the Moderator wishes to make motions or otherwise participate in debate, some other member of the Session should serve as Temporary Moderator.

2. An Associate Pastor, at the request of the Pastor and with the consent of the Session, may serve as Moderator for the Pastor.

3. If there is no Pastor or Associate Pastor or if there is no Associate Pastor and the Pastor is absent for more than one month, the Session may elect one of its members to serve as Moderator.

4. Presbytery, at its discretion, may appoint a Teaching Elder of the Presbytery to serve as Moderator when a church has no Pastor. The Presbytery may authorize its Ministerial Committee to appoint, at its discretion with concurrence of the Church Session, a Minister of Presbytery to serve as Interim Moderator of the Church Session until such time as the Presbytery can act in the matter.

**G.21-1** Committees and Commissions

**C. Administrative Commissions**

1. Authority and Responsibilities

   Administrative Commissions are appointed to perform special functions. The functions entrusted to such commissions include, but are not limited to the following:
Chapter 2: The Office of Teaching Elder

a. To ordain Teaching Elders and to install them where appropriate.

**ACTS OF ASSEMBLY REFERENCES**

**85-05** The General Assembly sustains the Permanent Judicial Commission’s opinion regarding the office of co-pastor as being non-existent. Relationships between Teaching Elders and EPC congregations sanctioned by the Book of Government are those of Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastor (Minutes, 5-40).

**94-22** A lawfully ordained minister in good standing of a non-EPC church may be authorized to serve communion in an EPC church, with the concurrence of the Presbytery. (Minutes, 14-36)

**99-10** The Assembly sustains an opinion of the Permanent Judicial Commission regarding the status of ministers who are missionaries serving totally under the auspices of the EPC and ministers serving in an administrative capacity in one of the courts of the church (G.9-5D). Ministers serving in such capacities should be classified as ministers with calls, not as ministers serving out-of-bounds. (Minutes, 19-40)

**02-04.6** Presbyteries are reminded that a change in call from Assistant to Associate Pastor is a significant change. It is the congregation that calls, not the session. An installation service is required and appropriate when such a change occurs.

**14-06** The Assembly extends the provision of Act of Assembly 94-22, “A lawfully ordained minister in good standing of a non-EPC church may be authorized to serve communion in an EPC church, with the concurrence of the Presbytery "to specifically include the Sacrament of Baptism. (Minutes, 34-56)
CHAPTER 3: THE PRESBYTERY AND THE WORK OF THE MINISTERIAL/CANDIDATES COMMITTEES

The government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is Presbyterian in form, with Teaching and Ruling Elders meeting in representative assemblies called Church Courts. The Church Courts, in their ascending order, are the Session, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly (G.2-1).^{8}

**Presbytery Membership**

All active Teaching Elders including those who are without call, out of bounds, retired, or on the Associate Member roll, are permanent members of Presbytery (G.19-2). Teaching Elders do not hold membership in a local church. For each meeting of Presbytery, Sessions elect as commissioners two Ruling Elders for each EPC minister in their congregation and any additional Ruling Elders as may be allowed through annual parity adjustment or by virtue of church membership (G.19-2A.4(a)). Ruling Elders not currently serving on Session may also be elected as commissioners to Presbytery. The only Ruling Elders who are permanent members of Presbytery are those serving as Moderator or Stated Clerk during their term of service (G.19-3A).

**Ministerial Obligation**

The Ministerial Obligation Form (G.19-4B.4, see p.116) is a signed affirmation of the Teaching Elder’s ordination vows. Two copies of the Ministerial Obligation Form should be signed, one for the Minister’s personnel file in presbytery and the second for the Minister’s personnel file in the General Assembly Office. The Ministerial Obligation Form should not only be signed by newly ordained ministers, but also by those ministers who transfer into a presbytery.

**Active Status**

Active members of presbytery are Teaching Elders who 1) have been duly examined and received by the Presbytery with an approved call to ministry, 2) are temporarily without call, and 3) are retired, but not on retired inactive or associate member status (G.19-2A.1, 2; G.19-2B.1; G.15-2A). There are circumstances, apart from a disciplinary process, under which the Presbytery may place an active minister on Inactive or Associate Status.

**Inactive Status**

For various reasons, Teaching Elders, prior to retirement, may experience a period of time when they are without a call. Because ordination and active status are tied to a call, being without call is a temporary, transitional situation. During that time the Teaching Elder, with the assistance of the Ministerial Committee, should be prayerfully and diligently seeking a new call. A Teaching Elder may, for reasons deemed valid, request to be placed on inactive status, which is effective upon the Presbytery’s concurrence (G.14-3B.1(b)). However, if a Teaching Elder who is not retired has been without approved call for more than one year, the Presbytery, after judicious consideration, may place the Teaching Elder on inactive status involuntarily, provided the vote to do so is by a two-thirds majority (G.14-3B.2). Teaching Elders on Inactive Status have

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^{8} All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
all rights and privileges of ordination temporarily set aside, including participation in presbytery meetings (G.14-3A). However, they remain beneficiaries of the pastoral care and discipline of the Presbytery. After one year on Inactive Status, the Teaching Elder may request to be restored to Active Status, provided the Teaching Elder has a valid, approved call (G.14-3B.1(b)). After five years on Inactive Status, the Presbytery may remove the Teaching Elder from office without sanction (G.14-3B.3; G.14-4B.4). Retired Inactive Teaching Elders may not be removed from the rolls of presbytery for reason of inactivity (G.15-2B).

Retired Roll

For reason of age, infirmity, or debilitating condition, Presbytery may place a Teaching Elder on the Retired Roll upon that person’s request (G.15-1). Retired Teaching Elders remain active members of Presbytery unless they have been placed on Retired Inactive or Associate Member status (G.15-2B, C). Retired Teaching Elders are eligible to accept approved invitations to serve in a temporary pastoral office (see p. 6 and Chapter 11) while remaining on the Retired Roll.

Retired Teaching Elders should attend at least one meeting of presbytery per year. If a Retired Teaching Elder cannot do so, the Presbytery may place that Teaching Elder on Inactive Status or the Teaching Elder may request Associate Member status (G.15-2B). A Retired Teaching Elder on Inactive Status has all the rights and privileges of ordination temporarily set aside. After one year, the Retired Teaching Elder on Inactive Status may request to be returned to Active Status based on resumption of participation in presbytery.

It is appropriate for presbyteries to conduct a service of worship honoring the retiring Teaching Elder. The Ministerial Committee should organize itself to fulfill its responsibility for the pastoral care of Retired Ministers (G.15-1B).

Special Conditions for Teaching Elders upon Reaching Age 70

Teaching Elders serving in any capacity in the Church must inform the Presbytery six months prior to their 70th birthday (G.14-1D). Upon reaching age 70, the current pastoral relationship is automatically terminated. At the Teaching Elder’s initiative, the calling body may elect that person annually to serve in the same capacity with the approval of the Session (if the person is a Pastor or Associate Pastor) and the Presbytery (G.14-1D.1). Teaching Elders past the age of 70 may accept a new call, upon recommendation of the Ministerial Committee and a two-thirds majority vote of the Presbytery. That call must be renewed annually (G.14-1D.2).

Associate Member Roll

Two categories of Teaching Elders may voluntarily request placement on the Associate Member Roll: 1) those serving in an out of bounds call that impedes or prevents regular or required Presbytery attendance, or 2) those on the Retired Roll. The Presbytery shall grant all such requests made within two years of the approval of the out of bounds call or placement on the Retired Roll. After two years, Teaching Elders in those two categories shall automatically be placed on the Associate Member Roll unless the Presbytery grants an exemption by a two-thirds majority vote. Exemptions must be renewed annually. The same condition applies to Teaching Elders who have been without Presbytery approved call for two years (G.19-2B.1(a)). For those without call for more than one year, the Presbytery also has the option of placing the Teaching Elder on the Inactive Roll if the person shows no evidence of actively seeking a call (G.14-3B.2).

A Retired Minister from another Reformed denomination may be received without a call as
an Associate Member, following the normal examination procedure for a minister from within the Reformed family (G.15-2C).

An Associate Member of presbytery, 1) has all the privileges and responsibilities of ordination, 2) has voice but not vote at Presbytery and General Assembly meetings, 3) may serve as a full member of a Presbytery or General Assembly committee, 4) is not eligible to serve as an officer of the court, and 5) is not counted in the annual parity adjustment for the Ruling and Teaching Elders (G.19-2B.1(b))

The Relationship of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee to the Presbytery

The Ministerial Committee is the one constitutionally required committee of the Presbytery (G.21-2). Its composition and duties are specified in Book of Government 21-2A. Presbyteries may assign responsibilities related to Candidates for the Gospel Ministry to a separate committee (G.21-2D.1(a)).

The Ministerial Committee is the pastoral arm of the Presbytery. First, it seeks to care for its member churches and ministers. Second, it gives oversight to the preparation of candidates for the ministry. The Committee stands at the outer gate to the ordained ministry—responding to applicants, screening them, and recommending whether or not they shall be admitted to processes that may eventually lead to ordination as Teaching Elders.

The Ministerial Committee is ordinarily responsible for the preparation and initial examination of Commissioned Pastors. A Commissioned Pastor is a Ruling Elder temporarily authorized by presbytery to provide pastoral leadership for churches without pastors, mission churches, church development works, hospital, hospice, prison or other specialized ministries as deemed appropriate by the Presbytery. Although commissioned by a presbytery, a Commissioned Pastor is not a member of the court unless elected as a representative by the church Session. For additional information, refer to Chapter 9 (p. 75).

The significance of the Ministerial Committee’s task calls for well-qualified people able to commit themselves to a faithful term of service. The Book of Government sets the minimum membership for the Committee at 6 (G.21-2A). The Committee should be large enough to carry out its functions without undue hardship for any, but not so big as to be unwieldy. It would be helpful if the Committee were composed of persons of varying ages and life experiences.

The Presbytery is encouraged to provide adequate funds to enable the Committee to discharge all its responsibilities. These funds should make provision for such items as 1) administration (expenses of the Committee), 2) program (expenses related to workshops, retreats, etc.), and 3) scholarship or aid funds.

Once the Ministerial Committee has been established by the Presbytery, it may structure itself in whatever way seems best suited and most efficient to fulfill its responsibilities. The following suggestions are offered:

1. Presbytery should specify in its bylaws how the Chairman is to be elected or appointed and the Committee should select a clerk. Selection of the Committee’s chairman should be made with careful consideration being given to qualifications and continuity. Due to the significant and extensive duties of the chairman, some presbyteries provide a stipend. Presbytery should provide oversight for a smooth transition between committee chairmen.
2. The Chairman should be careful to keep the Committee informed and involved and be diligent to oversee the implementation of the Committee’s work in accordance with stated policies. The chairman should keep the Presbytery’s Moderator and Clerk informed as to the Committee’s work and potential problems.

3. The Committee should meet regularly, whether in person or virtually, to fulfill its responsibilities at least as often as the Presbytery meets. If the Committee conducts phone conference or electronic meetings, it should have an agreed upon policy that ensures the real-time participation of committee members.
Chapter 3: The Presbytery and the Work of the Ministerial/Candidates Committees

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES
The Presbytery and the Work of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee

G.2-1  **The government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church shall be Presbyterian in form.** This is government by Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders meeting in representative assemblies called Church Courts.

A. These Church Courts, in their ascending order, are the Session, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly.

B. Churches may also elect Deacons, but the Board of Deacons is not a Church Court.

G.14-1D  **Dissolution by reason of age**

When a Teaching Elder serving in any capacity in the Church reaches the age of 70, that relationship shall be terminated. The Teaching Elder is obligated to notify the Presbytery six months prior to the 70th birthday.

1. Annual renewal of the pastoral relationship or call after age 70.

   The Teaching Elder who is age 70 or older is eligible, at his or her initiative, to be reelected annually in the same relationship with the approval of the calling body, the Session, and the Presbytery. When such a call is renewed, no installation is necessary.

2. Receiving a new call past age 70.

   Presbytery, on recommendation of the Ministerial Committee, by a 2/3 vote, may approve a new call for the Teaching Elder who is age 70 or older. That Teaching Elder is eligible to be re-elected in this new relationship yearly with the approval of the calling body and Presbytery.

3. Serving in temporary pastoral relationships after age 70.

   A Teaching Elder who is past age 70 is eligible to serve in a temporary pastoral relationship for a period of up to one year as approved by the Presbytery. The Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to serve as an Administrative Commission to establish such relationships.

G.14-3  **Removal of an officer to inactive membership status**

A. Inactive Membership Status

   When an officer is placed on inactive membership status, all rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside, including the right to vote and participate in the meetings of the Church Courts.

B. Special provisions for removing Teaching Elders to Inactive Membership Status

   1. Removal at the Teaching Elder's initiative

      a. When a Teaching Elder accepts a call disapproved by Presbytery, Presbytery shall place the Teaching Elder on inactive status.

      b. A Teaching Elder may, for reasons deemed valid by the Presbytery, request be placed on Inactive Membership Status. If the Presbytery concurs, the Teaching Elder shall be placed on such status. After at least
one year, the Teaching Elder may request Presbytery to be restored to Active Membership Status. The Presbytery, after careful deliberation, may do so provided the Teaching Elder has a valid call that Presbytery approves, or provided the Teaching Elder is being transferred to another Presbytery in order to receive a call.

2. Removal at the Presbytery’s initiative

When the Teaching Elder who is not retired has been without approved call for a period of one year, the Ministerial Committee shall confer with the Teaching Elder as to the Teaching Elder’s continued sense of call and expectations for future ministry. The Committee will then recommend to the Presbytery whether the Teaching Elder should remain on Active Membership Status in the Presbytery or be placed on Inactive Membership Status. The Presbytery, at its discretion and after judicious consideration, may place the Minister on the Inactive Status Roll involuntarily provided the vote to do so is by a two-thirds majority.

3. Limit for Inactive Status

A limit of 5 years shall be placed on the time during which a Teaching Elder on Inactive Status who is not retired shall remain on the roll of Presbytery. After five years, the Presbytery has the right to remove that minister from office without sanction.

G.14.4 Removal from office

An officer of the church remains ordained to the office and remains obligated to fulfill the vows of ordination. However, there are certain conditions under which the officer may be removed:

B. By removal from office without sanction

4. The Teaching Elder has been on the inactive roll for at least 5 years.

G.15-1 The retirement of a Teaching Elder

A. Eligibility for retirement

A Teaching Elder may request to be placed on the Retired Roll of Presbytery due to age, infirmity, or other debilitating condition.

B. Recognition of retirement

If the Presbytery concurs, a service of appreciation and thanksgiving should be conducted, either at the meeting of Presbytery or at the place of service of the retiring Teaching Elder. Ordinarily, a Presbytery shall appoint a special commission to conduct this service and a record of it inserted in the minutes of the Presbytery.

C. Pastoral care of retired Teaching Elders

The Presbytery shall be responsible for making an annual review of its retired members to be sure of their welfare and to rectify any deficiencies. Such annual review shall be reported to the court and recorded in its minutes.

D. Upon reaching age 70
When a Teaching Elder reaches age 70, special conditions apply as prescribed in G.14-1D.

**G.15-2 Status of Retired Teaching Elders**

**A. Active Status**

A Teaching Elder who is retired according to the provision of G.15-1 remains on the active roll of Presbytery. Membership may be transferred to another Presbytery.

**B. Inactive Retired Status**

A Retired Teaching Elder, who does not participate in the life of the Presbytery by attending at least one Stated Meeting during a calendar year, may be placed on Inactive Status at the discretion of the Presbytery. After at least one year, the Retired Teaching Elder may request Presbytery to be restored to Active Status. The Presbytery shall make the determination based on the Teaching Elder's participation in the meetings of the Presbytery and need not require a specific call to be restored to Active Status. A Retired Teaching Elder on Inactive Status shall not be removed from the Presbytery rolls for that cause and is to be afforded the same pastoral care as Retired Teaching Elders on Active Status.

**C. Associate Member Status**

A retired Teaching Elder may be granted the status of Associate Member as defined in G.19-2B.1. A retired Minister may be received from another Presbytery or another Reformed denomination as an Associate Member.

**G.19-2 Membership of Presbytery**

The Presbytery is composed of all the Teaching Elders on its roll as ongoing members, any Ruling Elder officers of the Presbytery and Ruling Elders elected by each Session as commissioners for a stated or called meeting as per G.19-2A.4.

**A. Voting Members of Presbytery**

1. Active Teaching Elders: Teaching Elders who are serving in an approved call or actively seeking a call
2. Retired (Active) Teaching Elders
3. Ruling Elder Officers of the Presbytery
4. Ruling Elder Commissioners elected by each Session
   a. The Session shall elect two Ruling Elders for each Pastor, Associate, and/or Assistant. A local church shall have no fewer than two Ruling Elders for each 500 members or major portion thereof.
   b. Disparity Correction

   When a disproportionate ratio of Teaching Elders to Ruling Elders occurs in a Presbytery, the Presbytery shall move to correct the ratio by assigning to member churches on a yearly alphabetical rotational basis the right to elect additional Ruling Elder Commissioners to the Presbytery. Associate Members are not counted as part of the ratio of Ruling and Teaching Elders.
Chapter 3: The Presbytery and the Work of the Ministerial/Candidates Committees

B. Non-voting Members of Presbytery

1. Associate Member Teaching Elders

   a. Qualifications

      The Presbytery shall establish a roll of Associate Members. A Teaching Elder who is retired or serving in a capacity outside of bounds which may impede or prevent regular and/or required attendance at Presbytery meetings may, upon request, within two years of this change in call be granted the status of Associate Member. Those who are retired, serving in a capacity which prevents regular and/or required attendance, or those without a Presbytery approved call for two years will automatically be placed on the Associate Membership roll. Presbytery, by 2/3 vote, may exempt a Minister from becoming an Associate Member for one year. This exemption may be granted to the minister on an annual basis. Presbyteries may, by 2/3 vote, receive a retired Minister from another Reformed body as an Associate Member, following the normal process of examination.

   b. Rights and Restrictions

      Associate Members are entitled to serve with voice and vote on all committees of Presbytery and General Assembly. Associate Members are entitled to serve with voice but not vote on Commissions to ordain and install pastors and to receive churches. Associate Members shall have voice but not vote at all Presbytery and General Assembly meetings. Associate Members are not eligible to serve as officers of any court but do retain all rights and privileges of ordination and are to be afforded the same pastoral care as Active Members.

   c. Temporary pastoral relationships

      Any Associate Member called to serve as Stated Supply or Interim Supply shall automatically be returned to active membership status during such service.

   d. Return to Active Status

      An Associate Member may request to be placed on Active Status. The Presbytery may do so upon recommendation by the Ministerial Committee and provided the Minister has a call Presbytery approves, or provided the Minister is being transferred to another body in order to receive a call.

   e. Transfer of Associate Members

      Associate Members, against whom no charges are pending, may transfer with the same status to another Presbytery, following the normal examination process.

2. Inactive Teaching Elders

3. Retired (Inactive) Teaching Elders

4. Teaching Elders under the sanction of suspension from office

G.19-3 Officers of the Presbytery

A. Moderator
The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be elected by that court. The person elected must be a Ruling or Teaching Elder. A Ruling Elder, once elected, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.

1. Length of Term

   Election may be for that stated meeting of the court, or, at the discretion of the Presbytery, for one year. A Ruling Elder, once elected as Moderator, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.

2. Special provisions if unable to serve

   In the event of death or inability to serve, the most recently elected Moderator shall serve until the court can elect a new Moderator. If no former Moderator is present, the Minister present with the earliest date of ordination shall convene the court until a Moderator is elected.

B. Stated Clerk

   The court shall also elect a Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk shall be a Teaching or Ruling Elder. Such election shall be for a specified period of time. If a Ruling Elder, the Stated Clerk shall be a full member of the court for the duration of the term.

G.19-4B With respect to Teaching Elders

   4. To establish a Ministerial Obligation record to which all Ministers must subscribe before being received into membership. This obligation shall consist of the ordination vows for Ministers to which shall be added a subscription as follows: “I do receive and adopt the above vows as a true statement of my faith, commitment, and obligation and I do resolve and promise to exercise my calling to the gospel ministry in obedience to those vows.”

G.21-2 The Ministerial Committee

   Each Presbytery shall have a Ministerial Committee consisting only of Teaching and Ruling Elders.

A. Membership

   The Ministerial Committee shall have at least six members and be established and maintained in such a way as to insure that the differences between the number of Teaching and Ruling Elders on the Committee shall never be greater than one.

B. Quorum

   Its quorum for action shall be a simple majority of membership, to include at least one Ruling Elder and one Teaching Elder.

C. Succession

   Eligibility to succeed will be determined by the appointing court.

D. Authority and Responsibilities

   1. With regard to Teaching Elders and Candidates
Chapter 3: The Presbytery and the Work of the Ministerial/Candidates Committees

a. It shall have the oversight of Candidates for the gospel ministry of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee.

b. It shall confer with each Teaching Elder desiring to become a member of the Presbytery, or Candidate desiring ordination.

c. It shall conduct any examination and assessment it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to Presbytery concerning the application.

d. It shall conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the Book of Government.

e. It shall report annually on the work of the Teaching Elders to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Teaching Elders approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.

f. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of remuneration of Teaching Elders, shall consult with Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to Presbytery minimum terms for the call of Teaching Elders. Requests to Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.

g. It shall review each request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship, and make a recommendation to Presbytery.

2. With regard to local churches

a. It shall counsel with local churches in securing Pastor(s). Calls shall always be placed in the hands of this Committee who shall then make its recommendation to the Presbytery. No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation that has not first consulted with the Committee.

b. It shall recommend to the Presbytery a Teaching Elder to serve as Moderator of the Session, and shall work with a congregation in securing pulpit supply. The Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to appoint, with concurrence of the Session, an Interim Moderator of the Session.

c. The Committee, or a Presbytery-designated alternate committee, shall consult with local churches receiving aid from Presbytery and shall make recommendations to the Presbytery concerning that aid.

d. Although no complaint may have been received, if in the judgment of the Committee a local church may be having difficulties or appears to be failing in its mission, the Committee has the authority to investigate and to make recommendations to Presbytery.

e. Presbytery may authorize this Committee to dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss Teaching Elders according to the Book of Order when both the congregation and the Pastor concur in the dissolution.

f. The Committee may be appointed by Presbytery to serve as a Judicial or Administrative Commission. The Committee may be appointed as an ongoing Administrative Commission to approve temporary relationships.
CHAPTER 4: PROCESS OF CANDIDACY AND EXAMINATION

The Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery has the responsibility for overseeing Candidates under the Presbytery’s care that are preparing for ordination as a Teaching Elder. The Book of Government commits this responsibility to the Ministerial Committee, but due to the extent and importance of the task, presbyteries may assign this responsibility to a separate committee (G.21-2D.1(a)). Such assignment should be noted in the Presbytery’s bylaws or standing rules.

Session Responsibilities for Candidates

The role of the Session is critical in the candidacy process, because it is in the best position to observe and affirm the potential Candidate’s gifts and calling to ordained ministry. Sessions should take their responsibility seriously, not looking to another body to say “no” to a candidate when the Session knows that it is necessary.

Any member of the Session, upon learning that a person in the congregation has a sense of call to the ministry, should discuss it with that person. The “Criteria for Candidate Evaluation” (p. 133) may be helpful in the evaluation process. If, after prayer and discussion, the applicant wants to pursue the candidacy process, the Pastor or other Session member should notify the chairman of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee (hereinafter, MCC).10

A representative of the MCC should consult with the Session before the Session formally interviews an applicant or endorses the applicant for candidacy. This gives the MCC an opportunity to instruct the Session on the qualities needed in ministers and the obligation that falls upon any endorsing church. The Session should be encouraged to seriously evaluate the applicant’s sense of call and qualifications to pursue ordination. A Session should do all it can to encourage suitably gifted members to consider pursuing ministry in the EPC. Pastors should view it as a great privilege to encourage and mentor candidates for the ministry from their own congregations. In the evaluation of applicants, Sessions should assure themselves that they can endorse the applicants in good conscience to pursue ordination as a Teaching Elder within the EPC.

The church’s responsibility for a candidate should not end when the Candidate is received by the Presbytery. An endorsing church should be willing to:

1. Provide some financial support for education.
2. Maintain regular communication during the period of training.
3. Provide pastoral support, even though presbytery is responsible for supervision of training.
4. Allow the candidate to participate in leading worship whenever possible.
5. Make annual reports to the MCC of the degree to which it has fulfilled its role as an endorsing church.

9 All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
10 Since either the Ministerial or other committee (typically named “Candidates” or “Candidates Care” Committee) may be responsible for the oversight of candidates, this Manual will use the term Ministerial/Candidates Committee (MCC) when referring to the candidacy process.
Chapter 4: Process of Candidacy and Examination

The Session shall complete the Session Endorsement Form (p.130) (called “Session Approval Form” in Act of Assembly 83-04)\(^1\) as the means to communicate its endorsement to the MCC. It is appropriate for the Session to recognize the applicant in a worship service. The Session should be well represented at the meeting of Presbytery when one of its home church members is examined for candidacy. The Session should record in its minutes when it is notified that a church member is taken under care of presbytery.

Presbytery Ministerial/Candidates Committee Responsibilities for Candidates

The MCC is responsible for guiding applicants through all the steps necessary under the Book of Government to become Candidates under care of the Presbytery and ordained Teaching Elders in the EPC. Presbyteries should encourage Candidates to enter this process as soon as possible during, or preferably before, their seminary studies.

Presbytery’s oversight of Candidates, taken in its broadest sense, includes enlistment, reception, supervision, and examination.

Enlistment

The MCC should develop ways to work with Sessions to seek out those who may be called to be Teaching Elders and present to them the opportunities, blessings, and responsibilities of the ministry of the Word.

Reception

To become a Candidate, a person must:

1. Be a member of an EPC congregation for at least six months (G.11-2A)
2. Receive the endorsement of the Session (see “Session Responsibilities for Candidates” p. 23).
3. Successfully complete the application process established by the Presbytery (G.11-2B).

The application process should include the following items:

a. Information as to the time requirements before Presbytery can act on the application
b. Application forms\(^12\)
   1) “Session Endorsement Form,” p. 130(83-04)\(^13\)
   2) “Application to Come under Care,” p. 131(83-03).
   3) Transcripts from all educational institutions attended after high school.
   4) Preliminary Questionnaire, p. 132.
   5) Statement in writing of applicant’s personal Christian experience and the events which had led to a sense of God’s call to the ministry.

\(^1\) All Acts of Assembly references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
\(^12\) Those forms required by the Book of Order or by Acts of the General Assembly are so noted.
\(^13\) All Acts of Assembly references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
6) Candidate’s Statement of Faith, Part 1, p. 137.

7) Results of any assessments of physical examinations, psychological evaluations (e.g. MMPI-2), and any assessments of emotional, intellectual, and vocational aptitudes for ministry that Presbytery may require (G.11-2B).

c. Reference check (see Reference Check Form, p. 134).

d. Background Check (98-15)

Background checks are required because of the EPC's responsibility to protect the well-being of the flock under its care and to secure the integrity of the household of faith. Further, by judicial precedent, any employer which fails to exercise due diligence and reasonable care to hire safe and competent employees exposes itself to legal liability for damages caused by employees so hired. The information requested in the background check is not confidential and is readily available on the public record, thus violating no one's privacy.14

e. Medical and psychological evaluations

The Committee should determine the cost of medical, physical, and psychological evaluations made by its approved centers or counselors and establish a policy on payment of fees, travel and other expenses. This should be explained carefully to the applicant at the start of the process. The Ministerial Vocation Committee recommends that expenses be shared equally by the endorsing church, Presbytery and applicant, because all have important commitments to the process. The MCC should determine its policies on how to handle sensitive information that may surface as a result of these evaluations.

f. Ethical affirmations

Before a candidate is ordained, the candidate must agree to and sign the “Ethical Affirmations for EPC Ministers” (p. 112). Minimally, the MCC should inform the potential candidate of this requirement and give the candidate a copy of the “Ethical Affirmations.” MCC’s may decide to have the applicant sign the form as a prerequisite to being recommended to the presbytery. Presbyteries have discretion as to when the form must be signed, but it must be signed prior to ordination (15-02).

g. Personal Interview

The MCC should have a personal interview with the applicant. The full Committee should meet with the applicant before voting on whether or not to recommend that Presbytery take this person under care.

1) The MCC should discuss the procedures it will use during the interview process. The Ministerial Vocation Committee of the General Assembly recommends that MCC and church Search Committees listen to the audio training series “Biblical Interviewing Skills” available at www.epc.org/ministries/minvo/interviewskills. MCCs should also seek input from those who have had training in the interview process.

14 There are a number of reputable agencies providing this service. The General Assembly uses “Protect My Ministry” (www.protectmyministry.com) for background checks on all its employees.
Chapter 4: Process of Candidacy and Examination

2) The MCC should establish a consensus on what it is seeking to learn about the applicant. The MCC will also need to clarify the standards that will govern the acceptability and non-acceptability of an applicant (see "Checklist for Candidate Coming Under Care of Presbytery," p.150). The MCC needs to understand that it acts as one of the important gatekeepers for the process leading to ordination. It should, therefore, take the responsibility for evaluating a prospective candidate very seriously; evaluating the applicant’s potential to serve as a Teaching Elder in the EPC.

3) Explore the applicant’s calling to ministry:

Questions for Committee before meeting: Do we understand and agree on a theology of calling? What implications are there in the idea that calling is not only an event but a process? How does this theology of calling shape our intentions toward applicants? Can we ourselves explain this theology of calling to an applicant?

Approaches during meeting with the applicant: What influences you toward this ministry? How is God working things together to help you make the decision to pursue the ministry?

4) Explore the applicant's gifts and talents:

Questions for the Committee before meeting: What personal characteristics and gifts are most needed in the ministry? How do gifts and talents relate to effective ministry?

Approaches during meeting with the applicant: What is your assessment of your own gifts and talents? How would these gifts and talents relate to your ministry? In what ways might this process of candidacy serve as an opportunity to discover and develop your gifts and talents? What would be your goals in this process? How can the Committee help you achieve them?

5) Explore vocational options:

Questions to be resolved before meeting: What are various avenues of service within the ordained ministry? What are the requirements for each avenue? How can the Committee help the applicant achieve them?

Approaches during meeting with the applicant: What do you believe God wants of you? What do you want to do in the ordained ministry? How will ordination help you to minister? Could you serve just as effectively without ordination?

6) Explaining the candidacy process:

Questions to be resolved before meeting: What are the options and requirements of candidacy? How can we reach agreement with this applicant about the nature and requirements of our mutual relationship?

Approaches during meeting with candidate: How do you wish to proceed from here? What are your plans? Do you wish to come under care of Presbytery, and under the supervision of the Committee?

h. Following the interview, the Committee votes on whether or not to recommend
receiving the applicant as a Candidate.

If the vote is positive, the Committee should notify those responsible to arrange for a place on the docket of a meeting of presbytery for examination. The Chairman should also notify and alert the Moderator to be prepared to ask the necessary questions and participate in the service of recognition (G.11-2C).

i. The Committee, after consulting with the applicant, should be prepared to present the following to presbytery:

1) Plans for recognition and reception at presbytery.

2) Name of a ministerial advisor to be appointed by presbytery (ordinarily not the Candidate’s pastor). (G.11-2E)

4. Successfully complete examination on the floor of Presbytery on Christian experience and growth, motive for seeking ordination, and sense of call to the ministry. After the examination is approved, the Candidate answers questions from the Moderator affirming a sense of call, expressing willingness to submit to presbytery supervision, and renewing commitment to live as a follower of Christ. The Moderator normally asks an appropriate member of the Presbytery to give a charge to the new Candidate (G.11-2C).

5. The Candidate’s home church should arrange for a service of recognition (G.11-2D)

Receiving a Candidate by Transfer within the EPC

Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination (G.11-2H). A Candidate may request transfer to another presbytery. If approved by the two presbyteries, the Candidate must also transfer membership to a local church within the new Presbytery (G.11-2H) and the new Presbytery must appoint one of its members as an Advisor. The MCC is responsible to see that all files and records have been forwarded from the original to the new MCC and that all necessary documents are transferred between the Stated Clerks of the two Presbyteries.

It is not unusual for a Candidate under care of one presbytery to receive a call from a local church in another presbytery. In that case, written exams are ordered by MCC of the Presbytery in which the candidate is under care, in consultation with the MCC in the Presbytery processing the call. Oral examinations are conducted by the Presbytery processing the call. The Stated Clerks of the receiving and dismissing presbyteries shall exchange official correspondence regarding the actions of each presbytery (G.10-8C.2), including the transfer of the Candidate’s files (see “Presbytery Transfer of a Candidate for the Ministry,” p.145).

Receiving a Candidate from another Reformed Denomination

A presbytery may receive a Candidate from another Reformed denomination provided that the Candidate 1) has been under care in that denomination for at least one year, 2) has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and 3) is being considered for a call by an EPC congregation (G.11-2J). In this situation, the Candidate is not subject to the six month membership requirement, which all others must fulfill (G.11-2A).

15 See section on "Examination" below.
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Supervision

The MCC is responsible for supervising and caring for candidates until they have been ordained or otherwise cease to be candidates.

Advisors

On recommendation of the MCC, the Presbytery shall appoint an Advisor to the Candidate. Advisors shall be Teaching Elders in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the same presbytery in which the Candidate is under care (G.11-2E).

Normally, the Advisor is not the Candidate’s Pastor, because the two roles are different. The Advisor, working in consultation with and reporting to the MCC, should be someone qualified to assist the Candidate in navigating the process of education, calling, and ordination. In effect, Advisors are project managers, helping Candidates move toward ordination. Advisors expedite communication between candidates and their Presbyteries (G.11-2E).

In 2012 the Ministerial Vocation Committee (MVC) of the General Assembly conducted a survey of advisors and of candidates that recently completed the ordination process in order to determine best practices. As a result of that survey, the MVC concluded that presbyteries would be well served to communicate to both Advisors and Candidates the following expectations and be diligent in reviewing the work of assigned Advisors:

1. Advisors should become acquainted with the M.Div. curriculum of the seminaries in which their Candidates are compare them with EPC educational requirements, being sure the Candidates are aware of any EPC-specific requirements beyond the degree requirements in their seminaries. Advisors should be familiar with the Reformed Reading List (see p. 138) and encourage the Candidates to study those resources in preparation for ordination, especially if the seminary does not include courses in or based on Reformed theology.

2. Advisors should contact the Candidates at least once a quarter (preferably once a month), in person whenever possible.

3. Advisors should communicate and help the Candidates accomplish the required elements of the ordination process:
   a. Preparation for written and oral examinations for ordination
   b. Psychological evaluations
   c. Medical exam
   d. Background check
   e. Personal Information Form

4. Advisors should help Candidates determine/clarify their theological convictions

5. Advisors should be alert to additional issues that Candidates may be facing, which the

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16 A few Candidates participating in the survey had little, if any, contact with their Advisors. In a few situations, they did not know who their Advisor was, pointing to the need for Presbyteries to develop appropriate accountability systems for Advisors.
Advisor may handle directly or refer to the Candidates’ pastors or other appropriate professional resources:

a. Marriage & Family issues
b. Faith & life issues (spiritual health, devotional life)
c. Financial issues
d. Emotional health
e. Character issues
f. Leadership issues

6. Advisors should assist Candidates in affirming the validity of their calls to ministry.

7. Advisors should help Candidates reflect on their field experiences.

8. Advisors should help Candidates understand the process of finding a call.

9. Advisors should submit a written report annually to the Presbytery’s MCC concerning the progress of the Candidates (see “Advisor’s Report,” p. 141). The report should include the following:

a. Time spent with Candidates
b. Ways in which communications have been maintained
c. Ways in which Candidates have been involved in the worship and work of local churches
d. Advisors should ask Candidates annually to provide a narrative of personal, spiritual and academic progress, growth in professional skills, and financial needs.

In the event that the Candidate is completing educational requirements outside the boundaries of the Presbytery, the Presbytery may consider an arrangement by which an EPC Teaching Elder closer to the Candidate visits the Candidate from time to time. In such arrangements, the Advisor is still responsible to communicate regularly with the Candidate.

Standard Educational Requirements

Ordained ministers in the EPC are expected to have a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university and a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree, including Greek and Hebrew, from a seminary approved by the Presbytery (G.11-2G; 82-07.1). Normally the Candidate is under care of the Presbytery for a minimum of one year while completing educational requirements. Sometimes, Candidates are received after completing their educational requirements. In those cases, a presbytery may shorten the normal time the Candidate is under care and proceed more quickly to examination for ordination. Grounds for shortening the normal period of time under care should be noted in presbytery minutes (02-04.5).

Exceptions to Normal Education Requirements: Extraordinary Status

Under extraordinary circumstances, the Presbytery may, by two-thirds vote, waive all or part of a Candidate’s educational requirements (G.11-2I). In such cases, the General Assembly’s
Ministerial Vocation Committee shall recommend a course of study to the Candidate to address whatever educational deficiencies may exist (82-07.2; 15-01).

**Candidate’s Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP)**

The purpose of the Candidate’s Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP) is not to offset or in any way weaken the long-accepted approach to the preparation for ministry. Those, however, who have been unable to follow the traditional track, especially at the seminary level, may follow a non-traditional track that would lead to the regular examination for ordination. This non-traditional track should maintain an appropriate degree of educational rigor and should not be considered a “short cut” to ordination.

The 35th General Assembly approved updated requirements for educational equivalency. The requirements will be effective for those candidates received under extraordinary circumstances beginning January 1, 2016. Requirements for candidates received prior to that time will not change.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Biblical Courses</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Old Testament</td>
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<td>Old Testament Survey</td>
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<td>New Testament Exegesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biblical Languages</td>
<td>Competence in Hebrew/Greek Exegesis demonstrated through an examination.</td>
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<td>12 hours made up of:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9 hours in Systematic Theology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 hours in Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical Theology</td>
<td>Competency in Reformed Theology (Westminster Confession and Catechisms) demonstrated through exam</td>
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<td>Apologetics</td>
<td>3 hours in Apologetics</td>
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<th><strong>Ecclesiastical Courses</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presbyterian History/Polity</td>
<td>EPC Book of Order study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church History</td>
<td>9 hours (emphasis on Reformation)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td><strong>Pastoral Courses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Homiletics</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
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<td>Evangelism/Disciple Making</td>
<td>6 hours made up of</td>
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<td>Evangelism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discipleship/Disciple Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Care and Counseling</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In service</td>
<td>12 hours (typically supervised ministry experience)</td>
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“Hours” = semester hours (1 sem. hr. = 45 hrs. of work – traditionally 15 hrs. in class, 30 hrs. class preparation)

Required “courses” may be taken by traditional, online, or approved guided/directed study means.

Process for determining specific CEEP requirements

1. The MCC forwards the Candidate’s file to the Ministerial Vocation Committee of the General Assembly. The file should include:
   a. A copy of the college and post-graduate transcripts of the Candidate
   b. A written descriptive overview of the Candidate’s experience and ministry to date
   c. A list of any published articles or materials
   d. Candidate’s Personal Information Form (see p. 158)
   e. Candidate’s Application Form (see p. 131)

2. The Ministerial Vocation Committee will review the Candidate’s file, make a preliminary assessment of educational deficiencies, and meet with the Candidate face to face or by video conference to review and finalize their assessment of the Candidate’s educational deficiencies. The MVC’s assessment will take into account both the Candidate’s educational background and experience.

3. The Ministerial Vocation Committee will recommend to the MCC a course of study addressing any educational deficiencies. The MCC may make modifications and is responsible for overseeing completion of requirements. The MCC must verify that requirements have been completed before written examinations are issued.

Examination

Presbyteries have the responsibility of examining Candidates for ordination to ensure that they have the competency to serve (G.12-2).
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The Book of Government stipulates mandatory areas of examination:

1. Original languages of Scripture. Evidence of coursework may fulfill this requirement (G.11-2G; G.12-2A).

2. Exegetical skills. Evidence of coursework may fulfill this requirement (G.12-2A).


4. Knowledge of (G.12-2C):
   a. Theology
   b. Sacraments
   c. English Bible
   d. Book of Order
   e. Reformed tradition
   f. Nature of the office of Teaching Elder

5. Ability to expound the Word of God effectively (G.12-2D).

Written Examinations

The six content areas required by G.12-2C (see immediately above) are covered in three written examinations approved by the General Assembly’s Ministerial Vocation Committee:

1. English Bible

2. Theology, Sacraments, and Reformed Tradition

3. Polity (Book of Order and nature of the office of Teaching Elder)

Several versions of each examination are maintained and rotated annually. The Candidate may not review or study the tests prior to the time of testing, and the examinations may not be reproduced except to ensure that copies of completed exams are not lost in the mail. Copies made for this reason should be destroyed as soon as grading is complete. Recommended study materials are available on the Ministerial Vocation page of www.epc.org.

The three written examinations shall be completed as a unit, within a three-week period. When the Candidate is ready to take the written examinations, the MCC Chair shall contact the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) using the Request for Ordination Examinations Form (p.143). Candidates may not request tests for themselves. Anticipated dates for administering the examinations should be indicated on the Request Form. In order to release the exams, the Office of the Stated Clerk shall have a current Personal Information Form on file for the Candidate and verify that all requirements have been met.

Proctors of ordination examinations must be approved by the MCC Chair. Family members of the Candidate shall not be approved as proctors. Examinations will be sent to the proctor no sooner than 21 days prior to the date of testing. If the Candidate decides not to take the tests, the proctor shall return the blank tests to the Office of the General Assembly immediately. In no case shall the examinations be held by the proctor for more than 30 days. Completed
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examinations shall be sent together by the proctor by certified mail, or other means requiring a signature, to the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) for grading.

The Ministerial Vocation Committee approves a group of exam graders. Examinations are rotated among the approved graders. Names of examinees are removed from the examinations and replaced with a numeric code before being sent to a grader. The Chair who requested the examinations on behalf of the Candidate will be notified by email and letter of exam results. The Chair, in turn, notifies the Candidate. Written examinations are held on file in the Office of the Stated Clerk and are not released to the Candidate or MCC. A score of 75% is required to sustain written examinations. If a Candidate/Transferee does not sustain one or more exams, brief comments will be included in a letter to the Presbytery MCC to assist the Candidate/Transferee in preparing to retake the examination(s). A Candidate is eligible to re-take an examination 30 days after sitting for the original exam. If a Candidate fails to pass an exam after three attempts, at least 6 months must elapse before sitting for the exam again. When the Candidate is prepared to re-take the exam, the Ministerial/Candidates Chairman shall submit a new request for examination form.

The Ministerial Vocation Committee of the General Assembly shall resolve any appeals arising from examination grading.

Oral Examinations

Following successful completion of written ordination exams, the Ministerial/Candidates Committee of the Presbytery conducts an oral examination of the Candidate and, if acceptable, brings the individual to the floor of the Presbytery for a final oral examination. Candidates are examined in the following areas:

1. Christian Experience

   A pastor leads not only through teaching and preaching, but also by way of example. The Presbytery should be satisfied that a Candidate demonstrates not only the academic achievement and necessary skills for the work of ministry, but also a vital experiential relationship with the Lord and growth in the fruit of the Spirit (G.12-2B).

2. Sermon

   The Candidate shall preach a sermon before the Presbytery on an assigned topic or Scripture, demonstrating ability to expound the Word of God effectively (G.12-2D). The MCC should communicate with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery and any other body responsible for establishing dockets for meetings, informing them of Candidates who are ready to preach. The Candidate may preach the required sermon at a meeting prior to the rest of the oral examination.

3. Knowledge

   The Candidate shall be examined orally before the MCC and before the Presbytery as a whole at a properly constituted meeting in the same areas as the written exams (G.12-2C):
   a. Theology
   b. Sacraments
c. English Bible

d. **Book of Order**

e. Reformed tradition

f. Nature of the office of Teaching Elder

4. Written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms

Candidates shall submit a written statement of any exceptions they have to the **Westminster Confession and Catechisms** (G.12-4). Presbyteries must vote to allow or disallow the Candidate's exceptions. If the Presbytery disallows any exception(s), they must also determine: 1) if the exception(s) disqualifies the Candidate from ordination, or 2) if there is a need for any restrictions on teaching those exceptions.

Presbytery minutes record the fact that exceptions were allowed or disallowed, but do not record the specific exception (03-09). This provision removes the content of exceptions from the process of review and control (G.2-4A), preserving the authority of the Presbytery to ordain Teaching Elders (G.19-4B.3).

**Termination of Candidacy**

The Candidates Committee should conduct an annual review of the Candidate roll. The normal process of candidacy is to shepherd the Candidate through the appropriate steps that will lead him/her to ordination (see section on “Supervision,” p. 28). Sometimes, however, a candidacy must be terminated.

**Reasons for Terminating Candidacy**

The following are examples of reasons for which a presbytery may terminate a person's candidacy:

1. The Candidate no longer desires to pursue ordination.

2. The Candidate no longer desires to pursue ordination within the EPC.

3. The Candidate engages in behavior or embraces beliefs which would not be acceptable to the EPC.

4. The Candidate is making no progress over an extended period of time in pursuing ordination.

**Steps in Termination**

To terminate candidacy, the steps below should be followed:

1. Either the Candidate or the MCC puts the reasons for termination (see above) in writing to the other party.

2. The MCC or one of its representatives makes reasonable attempts to meet with the candidate to discuss the reasons for termination.

3. The MCC brings to Presbytery a motion to terminate candidacy.
4. When a candidacy is terminated, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery notifies the Candidate’s sponsoring church and Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly), using the Termination of Candidacy Form (p. 144)

Reinstatement of Candidacy

A person's candidacy may be reinstated through the following procedure:\(^\text{17}\)

1. If the person seeking reinstatement is a member of an EPC church other than the original sponsoring church, the person should be a member for a time sufficient for the Session to give a credible endorsement. The person’s previous EPC membership may be considered adequate to fulfill the requirements of G.11-2A by the Presbytery for purposes of reinstatement.

2. The Session of the church at which the former candidate is currently a member, having satisfied itself that the potential Candidate shows evidence of a call to ministry and a commitment to pursue that call, endorses the member according to the procedures outlined above.

3. The MCC proceeds according to the procedures outlined above, requiring updated forms as necessary, and may recommend the Candidate's reinstatement to the Presbytery.

4. The potential Candidate is examined by the Presbytery according to the provisions of G.11-2C.

Examination of ministers transferring to the Presbytery

In addition to examining Candidates for ordination, presbyteries also have the responsibility to examine ordained ministers who are seeking to transfer their ordination and receive a call, whether from another EPC presbytery or from outside the EPC.

Examination of a Teaching Elder Changing Presbyteries

Ordination in one presbytery does not mean that an EPC minister may freely take a call in any EPC congregation. When receiving a call in another presbytery, the receiving presbytery examines the minister orally on views of the areas indicated in G.12-3A (Theology and Sacraments, English Bible, the Book of Order, the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder). This examination on views is the Presbytery's opportunity to ascertain the convictions of the Minister who is seeking membership in the Presbytery. Ministerial Committees should instruct presbyters on the type of questions that are appropriate in this context. For example, “Outline the Book of Romans” asks for Bible content, whereas “What are your convictions on the issue of biblical inerrancy?” asks for the Minister's views.

Before the transfer of a minister is complete, the receiving presbytery must conduct and approve the examination, approve the call and terms of call, and the dismissing presbytery must act to dismiss the minister. The Stated Clerks of each presbytery are responsible for promptly communicating the actions of their respective bodies (G.10.8C.2). Depending on which body acts first, a minister may be dismissed pending reception or a minister may be received pending dismissal.

\(^\text{17}\) Adopted by the 23rd General Assembly (2003) (03-08).
Examination of an ordained minister coming from outside the EPC

A church may desire to call an ordained minister from outside the EPC. During the search process, the Search Committee must consult with the Ministerial Committee, as different provisions will apply depending upon the ecclesiastical body from which the Minister is coming (G.12-3). These provisions should be communicated to the Search Committee and the potential minister early in the search process.

The Ministerial Committee should verify that the Minister's ordination is from an ecclesiastical body, is valid, and is current. This is normally accomplished through official communication with the ordaining body. The EPC normally recognizes ordination from Christian churches or denominations. Because educational requirements for ordination differ from one tradition to another, the Presbytery is responsible to evaluate the Minister's educational credentials, may waive language requirements by a two-thirds vote, and may require additional study (02-07).

From another denomination within the Reformed family

“Another denomination from within the Reformed family” is defined in Act of Assembly 05-10. Such denominations include, but are not limited to, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church of America, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, the Christian Reformed Church, the United Church of Christ, National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, and the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference. Churches that do not identify themselves as “denominations,” coming from a different historic stream than the British Reformed tradition (Presbyterian and Puritan Congregationalist), such as the Reformed Baptist Church, are not, by definition, a “denomination from within the Reformed family.” Independent churches that are Reformed in doctrine are not “denominations within the Reformed tradition” by virtue of their independence.

When seeking membership in an EPC presbytery, a minister from a denomination within the Reformed family shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination (82-07.1). The Minister shall be examined on views and beliefs in the same fashion as one transferring from one presbytery to another within the EPC, and may be examined on knowledge (G.12-3B).

From outside the Reformed tradition

When a minister from outside the Reformed tradition seeks to become a member of an EPC presbytery, the Presbytery shall satisfy itself that the Minister has a valid ordination and education equivalent to EPC ordination requirements. Presbyteries may require additional coursework or readings. In the case of biblical languages, presbytery shall make a determination in accordance with Act of the Assembly 02-07.

A Minister coming from outside the Reformed tradition shall be examined in the same manner as a Candidate for ordination, i.e., both orally and in writing in the areas specified in G.12-2C. This examination, however, does not make the Minister a Candidate, nor require that the Minister become a Candidate. The purpose of the examination is not to call into question the applicant’s ordination, but to assure a presbytery that the Minister's education is consistent with the standards for ministry within the EPC.
Chapter 4: Process of Candidacy and Examination

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES

*Process of Candidacy and Examination*

G.2-4A **Review and Control**

For orderly process of Review and Control, each organizational unit shall submit its minutes to the Church Court above. The Board of Deacons shall submit its minutes at least semi-annually to the Session; the Session shall submit its minutes to the Presbytery annually; the Presbytery shall submit its minutes to the General Assembly annually.

G.10-8C **Transfer**

2. Official communication regarding transfer. The dismissing church body shall be informed by the receiving Presbytery for the purpose of taking appropriate action. The Presbyteries shall deal directly with each other through their Stated Clerks in certifying both the call of the church and the credentials of the Minister, Teaching Elder or Candidate.

G.11-2 **Preparation for ordained ministry as a Teaching Elder**

Since the office of Teaching Elder is seen as the first office in the Church both for dignity and usefulness, special preparation is required.

A. A person desiring to become a Teaching Elder shall first become a Candidate under the care of the Presbytery of which that person’s church is a member. That person begins this process by seeking the endorsement of the Session of the local church where the person’s membership has been held for at least six months. When the Session has approved the Candidate, application shall be made to the appropriate Committee of Presbytery.

B. The Presbytery Committee charged with the oversight of Candidates shall make whatever tests of gifts and abilities, as well as of sincerity of purpose, it deems necessary. If the Candidate is approved, the Committee shall recommend to Presbytery the approval of candidacy.

C. The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Candidate as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination, and a statement regarding the person’s call to the Ministry. If approved, the Presbytery shall proceed as follows.

The Candidate shall respond affirmatively to the following questions to be put by the Moderator of the Presbytery:

1. As you understand God’s working in your heart and life, do you continue to believe yourself called to the office of Teaching Elder?

2. Do you now submit yourself to the care and supervision of this Presbytery as you prepare yourself for this office?

3. Do you renew your commitment as a Christian, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as becomes a follower of Jesus?

The Moderator, or someone appointed by the Moderator, shall offer a prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing for the Candidate.
A charge shall be given to the Candidate by someone appointed by the Moderator.

The Moderator shall then declare the person received as a Candidate, the person’s name shall be placed on the Candidate roll of the Presbytery, and welcomed in an appropriate manner.

D. The Candidate continues to be a member of the local church and subject to the Session. But with regard to the Candidate’s training for the ministry, the Candidate is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It is appropriate for the home church of the Candidate to have a service of recognition.

E. The Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder in the Presbytery, ordinarily not the Candidate’s Pastor, to serve as advisor to the Candidate. The advisor and the Candidate’s Pastor shall submit regular reports to the appropriate committee on the progress of the Candidate.

F. The Presbytery shall have some Committee to which the oversight of Candidates is assigned. This Committee shall oversee the training of the Candidate, giving encouragement and pastoral attention, and making an annual report to the Presbytery of the progress of the Candidate.

G. A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a degree from a four-year college and a degree from a seminary approved by the Presbytery, requiring at least three years of study including courses in biblical Hebrew and Greek.

H. Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate’s membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.

I. A Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate under extraordinary circumstances for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by the Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.

J. A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.

G.12-2 The examination of a Candidate for ordination as a Teaching Elder

A. The Candidate shall present evidence of competency in the original languages of Scripture, including transcripts of coursework taken, along with the required exegesis.

B. The Candidate shall be examined in Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.

C. The Candidate shall be examined in writing and orally in the following areas: Theology and Sacraments, English Bible, the Book of Order, the history of the Church and the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder.
D. The Candidate shall preach a sermon to the Presbytery to demonstrate the ability to expound the Word of God effectively.

E. If the Presbytery has previously received a Candidate and has not required the stipulated work of college and/or seminary, the requirements for language shall be omitted. However, every other part of the examination shall be given. The examination must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Presbytery.

G.12-3 Examination of Transferees

A. Examination of an EPC Teaching Elder seeking to transfer into a Presbytery EPC Teaching Elders shall be examined on views of the areas indicated in G.12-2 and they shall relate their experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.

B. Examination of non-EPC ordained Ministers

1. A Minister seeking to become a Teaching Elder in a Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from another denomination from within the Reformed family shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC. The Minister shall be examined on views and beliefs and may be examined on knowledge.

2. Examination of Ministers from non-Reformed Traditions: A minister presenting current and valid ordination credentials from any other ecclesiastical tradition shall be examined in the same manner as a candidate for ordination.

C. Presbytery shall not ordinarily receive a Minister seeking to transfer while discipline, inquiry, or charges are pending. Presbytery may, after careful review of the case, by three-fourths vote, declare pending charges insufficient for refusal of membership.

G.12-4 Exceptions to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms

The Candidate or transferring Teaching Elder shall provide a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of this Church, and the Presbytery shall act to allow or disallow the exceptions. The Presbytery shall not allow any exception to the "Essentials of Our Faith." Following ordination, should the Teaching Elder develop exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, he or she shall report those exceptions to the Ministerial Committee and the Presbytery shall act to allow or disallow these exceptions.

G.19-4 Authority and Responsibilities of the Presbytery

B. With respect to Teaching Elders

2. To examine Ministers and Candidates, to receive and dismiss Ministers and Candidates.

3. To ordain and install, to dissolve pastoral relationships, to approve calls and to grant permission to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.
Chapter 4: Process of Candidacy and Examination

1. With regard to Teaching Elders and Candidates
   a. It shall have the oversight of Candidates for the gospel ministry of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee.
   b. It shall confer with each Teaching Elder desiring to become a member of the Presbytery, or Candidate desiring ordination.
   c. It shall conduct any examination and assessment it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to Presbytery concerning the application.
   d. It shall conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the Book of Government.
   e. It shall report annually on the work of the Teaching Elders to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Teaching Elders approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.
   f. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of remuneration of Teaching Elders, shall consult with Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to Presbytery minimum terms for the call of Teaching Elders. Requests to Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.
   g. It shall review each request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship, and make a recommendation to Presbytery.

ACTS OF ASSEMBLY REFERENCES

82-07.1 Uniform Procedures on Candidacy and Ordination
   1. Requirements for ordination shall be:
      a. Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university;
      b. Seminary degree – M.Div. or equivalent including Koine Greek and Hebrew;
      c. Care of the presbytery in accord with G.11-2F;
      d. Examinations – four written and one oral examination must be sustained;
      e. Valid call;
      f. Other evidence – assurance those spiritual gifts needed for effective ministry are present and being developed.

82-07.2 All exceptions to fulfilling standards for ordination (extraordinary circumstances) will be referred to the permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation for a recommended course of action, including continuing education and reading requirements. The presbytery of jurisdiction shall, in conjunction with the Committee on Ministerial Vocation:
   2.1. Mail necessary documentation (personal history, etc.) to the permanent committee for its review and counsel, and
2-2. Proceed with process of ordination only after receiving recommendations from the permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation.

83-03 Presbyteries shall use the approved standardized “Application - Candidates for the Gospel Ministry” for persons seeking to come under care of presbyteries. (Minutes, 3-48)

83-04 Session shall use the approved “Session Approval Form” for commending Candidates to presbyteries. (Minutes, 3-48)

98-15 Presbyteries shall perform a background investigation on all individuals seeking candidacy or membership in their Presbytery. The investigation of public records shall include at least a verification of social security number, criminal history and motor vehicle driving history. Also, as part of the reception process, references must be checked. (Minutes 18-41)

02-04.5 In exercising their discretionary authority (e.g., waiving the ordinary requirement of one year under care for a candidate), presbyteries should indicate the grounds for doing so in their minutes.

02-07 The Assembly adopts a Permanent Judicial Commission ruling that a presbytery must evaluate the transferee’s educational credentials, including the requirements pertaining to biblical languages and either 1) require “appropriate courses in the original languages” and an exegesis paper assigned by the presbytery; or 2) exempt the transferee from such requirement by a two-thirds vote. (Minutes, 22-24)

03-09 While the written statement of exceptions to the Westminster Standards shall be reviewed and allowed or disallowed by the presbytery, the statement itself should not appear in the minutes of presbytery. However, minutes should reflect that the statement was received and allowed or disallowed. The statement of exceptions shall be retained in the minister’s personnel file.

05-10 The Assembly sustains a provisional opinion of the Stated Clerk clarifying what constitutes a “denomination from within the Reformed family” (G.12-3B). Such denominations 1) legally and/or ecclesiastically share a common government, 2) are theologically, historically and/or fraternally identified with the Continental or British Reformed traditions, 3) profess one of the historic Reformed confessions and/or other standards whose doctrine is consistent with these in content as well as scope, and 4) could be part of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (REC) or the World Reformed Fellowship. (WRF). (Minutes, 25-53) [Note: Subsequently, WARC and REC merged to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches]

15-01 The Assembly adopts requirements for the “Candidates Educational Equivalency Program,” supplementing Act of Assembly 83-07 and giving specification to G.11-21 (assigning courses of study to candidates with extraordinary circumstances), namely: 1) Old Testament Survey, 2) New Testament Survey, 3) Old Testament Exegesis, 4) New Testament Exegesis, 5) Church History (with an emphasis on the Reformation), 6) Apologetics, 7) Leadership, 8) Preaching, 9) Evangelism, 10) Missiology, 11) Discipleship/Disciple-making, 12) Pastoral Care and Counseling and 13) Ethics, 14) three courses in systematic theology (equivalent nine semester-hours), 15) competency in Reformed theology as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms demonstrated through a standardized ordination exam governed by the Ministerial Vocation Committee, 16) ability to exegate competently the Scriptures in the original languages (demonstrated by a standardized open-book exam (governed by the Ministerial Vocation Committee) in either Greek or Hebrew, including a sermon
manuscript based upon that exegesis, to be submitted within a one-week period), and 17) an EPC Polity course. (Minutes, 35-30)

15-02 The Assembly adopts “Ethical Affirmations for EPC Leaders” for use with Candidates Under Care, and strongly encourages its use in EPC presbyteries and churches. (Minutes, 35-30; See Documents section of the Minutes of the 35th General Assembly)
A local church in the EPC has the irrevocable right to call its own pastor, with the concurrence of the Presbytery (G.6-6).¹⁸ The time of transition between pastors and the selection of a new pastor are critical in the life of the local church. During these times, churches are often served by pastors in temporary positions (interim supply, stated supply, occasional supply, G.10-7) and churches always utilize a Search Committee (G.10-4). This chapter describes first the typical process that takes place when a church is without a pastor (a "vacant pulpit") and searching for its next pastor. It will then describe a scenario for "pastoral succession" and the search process for associate and assistant pastors.

**Presbytery and Session responsibilities when there is no Pastor**

**Appointing a Moderator**

The Pastor is the Moderator of the Session (G.18-2A.1). When a church is without a pastor, it is often wise for Presbytery to appoint a Teaching Elder from the Presbytery to serve as Moderator (G.18-2A.4; G.21-2D.2(b)), especially in a solo pastor situation. Such an appointment may strengthen the ties of the church to the Presbytery during this transitional time. If authorized by the Presbytery and with the concurrence of the Session, the Ministerial Committee may appoint an interim Moderator until the Presbytery can take action (G.18-2A.4; G.21-2D.2(b)). Since distance between churches makes it difficult for a Moderator to attend all meetings, it may be helpful for the Session to appoint one of their members to serve as a Moderator pro-tem when the appointed Moderator is unable to attend. The Moderator pro-tem can also serve as a helpful point of communication between the appointed Moderator and the Session. It is also possible, if permitted by the Presbytery, for the Session to elect one of its members as Moderator when there is no pastor (G.18-2A.3).

**Temporary Pastoral Positions**

In the absence of the Pastor, the Session is responsible to, 1) Continue regular worship services, in accordance with the Session’s authority and responsibilities (G.18-3A, M), and 2) engage a Stated Supply, Interim Supply, or Occasional Supply as appropriate and in consultation with the Ministerial Committee (G.10-7C). I. The Ministerial Committee is responsible for working with the Session in this process.

**Ministerial Committee Liaison**

The Ministerial Committee should send this chapter of the Manual (or a publication of its own based on this chapter) to the Session as soon as it is aware of a pastoral vacancy. It is wise for the Ministerial Committee to appoint a liaison with the Church as soon as there is a pastoral vacancy. This individual should be familiar with the concepts of interim ministries (chapter 11 in this Manual) and the pastoral search process in this chapter. The Ministerial Committee liaison should meet with the Session as soon as possible after there is a pastoral vacancy to 1) explain the merits of securing a qualified individual in one of those temporary pastoral positions, 2) help the Session locate an appropriate interim, stated, or occasional supply minister, and 3) explain the pastoral search process in this chapter. Once a Search Committee is formed, the liaison can guide the Committee through their responsibilities.

¹⁸ All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

Pastoral Search Process

The Congregation has the irrevocable right to call its own pastor provided that the presbytery concurs (G.6-6). It does so through an elected Search Committee (G.10-4A).

Stage 1 – Preparatory work by the Session

One of the distinct advantages in having an interim or stated supply pastor is the assistance that person can give in this preparatory work. Additionally, the presence of the interim or stated supply pastor removes the need for the Session to manage day to day functions of the church so it can focus on these critical tasks, giving the Search Committee a solid foundation on which it can work. The Ministerial Committee may also be aware of resources within the Presbytery or General Assembly to assist with these tasks.

1. Review and modify (or develop if none exists) the vision and mission of the church.

2. The Session or the Search Committee (in consultation with and approval of the Session) completes the Church Information Form (CIF; p. 173).

3. The Session or the Search Committee (in consultation with and approval of the Session) completes a Pastor’s Position Description. Those responsible for developing the Position Description should carefully consider how much detail should go into the document. If it is overly detailed, it may be too limiting. If there is not enough detail, important expectations may not be well communicated and be the source of problems in the future. The Position Description should be flexible enough to provide adaptability to changing congregational circumstances and needs, and prevent a candidate from simply giving lip-service to a static document.

4. The Session determines a range of compensation it believes the congregation will support as terms of call for the new Pastor (G.18.3H). The Session should factor in required EPC items such as medical insurance and pension, and normal reimbursements for expenses (see Terms of Call – Minister, p. 117). In establishing those parameters, the Session should be sensitive to offering a level of compensation influenced by the previous Pastor’s package as well as a particular candidate’s education, training, experience and other accomplishments. Ministerial Committees should have access to annual publications such as The Compensation Handbook for Church Staff, Richard R. Hammar (published annually by Christianity Today International) as a resource for their work with Sessions and Search Committees.

Terms of call should include salary, housing (02-4.3) (or a statement like, “housing allowance included in salary and will be specified when housing has been secured”), EPC Medical Insurance, Retirement 10% (minimum), two weeks’ study leave, and four weeks’ vacation (81-04; 81-05; 81-06; 82-07.34, 5.4). Terms of call should also include appropriate accountable plans (e.g., mileage, books/study. Accountable reimbursement plans are recommended instead of “allowances,” that which are paid regularly without requiring documentation. A “reimbursement” paid in accordance with a properly formed policy, is not taxable to the minister whereas some a portion of the “allowance” could be.

Stage 2 – Formation of the Search Committee

On the basis of experience, this Manual recommends extensive involvement of the Session in forming and preparing materials for the Search Committee and strong representation on the
Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

Search Committee. At the same time, the irrevocable right of the congregation to elect its pastor must be preserved (G.6-6). Ultimately, the Search Committee is formed by and responsible to the congregation, not the Session.

1. The Session, as the elected leadership of the church, should take the responsibility allowed in G.10-4A and nominate members for the Search Committee. The congregation has the right to determine the size of the Search Committee (G.10-4A). In making its recommendation, the Session should consider that experience has shown that seven members is optimal. A good composition for the Search Committee is:

   a. Two or three Ruling Elders serving on Session. The new Pastor will work directly with the Session as its Moderator (G.18-2A), so the Session should be adequately represented. The Search Committee will be dissolved, but the new Pastor’s relationship with the Session will be critical to a fruitful, long-term ministry.

   b. One from the Board of Deacons, if the church has this Board (G.6-4). Often the Pastor is the Moderator of the Board of Deacons (G.17-4A) and, if not, the Pastor is an advisory member (G.17-7). Therefore, the Deacons should be represented in the pastoral search.

   c. Three or four spiritually mature, discerning members of the congregation, who are not new to the church. These qualities are more important than electing people to represent various constituencies or interest groups in the congregation. Search Committee members are to represent the mind of Christ on the Search Committee.

It is common to think that staff members should be on the Search Committee. Having staff members on the Search Committee is not recommended due to the inherent conflict of interest in hiring the person to whom one will report in an employment setting. The Search Committee should consult with staff in the process for an understanding of the needs of the church’s ministry, and the prospective Pastor should meet with staff, but it is unwise for staff members to serve on the Search Committee.

2. The Session calls a congregational meeting to elect a Search Committee (G.10-4A; G.7-1, 2, 3) and presents its recommendation for the size of the Committee and its nominees for the Committee. The congregation has the right to amend the size of the Committee and the floor must be opened for additional nominees (G.10-4A).

Stage 3 – Orienting the Search Committee

It is common for this to be the first involvement in a pastoral search by most members of a Search Committee. Some members may have Human Resources experience in their professions. There is common wisdom from that profession that transfers to the pastoral search process, but there is a unique additional dimension that must be considered. The Search Committee, on behalf of the congregation, is seeking to understand the mind of Christ about whom He has called to be the pastoral leader of this congregation. Additionally, most Search Committee members have had little or no exposure to the EPC form of government and Book of Order. Many may carry assumptions from other churches with a different form of government where they have been active. For these reasons, it is imperative that the Ministerial Committee (probably through its appointed liaison) meet with the Search Committee shortly after it is elected to orient them to the process.

1. Preliminary Responsibilities of the Session
Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

Communicate the items developed in Stage 1 to the Search Committee and the Ministerial Committee:

2. Joint meeting of Session, Search Committee, and Ministerial Committee representative
   a. The Session, Search Committee and Ministerial Committee representative should review/discuss the CIF and make any necessary adjustments, corrections.
   b. The Search Committee should be in complete support of the church’s vision and mission, and agree to accurately represent it to candidates.
   c. The Ministerial Committee representative should outline the constitutional requirements for the pastoral search and requirements that pastors must meet to become a member of the Presbytery, as well as any Presbytery-specific requirements for the Search Committee process. There should be clear agreement as to the expectations each party has of the others and establish communication channels and timetables between the Search Committee and Ministerial Committee.
   d. The Ministerial Committee representative should communicate the Presbytery's policy on background checks for ministers (98-15).
   e. The Search Committee and Session should agree on a suitable timetable of reporting to both the Session and congregation, and announce the schedule to both bodies.
   f. In its initial meetings on its own, the Search Committee should:
      1. Agree on praying regularly for God’s guidance and direction in the selection.
      2. Schedule regular meetings.
      3. Elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.
      4. Establish a covenant of confidentiality with clear boundaries for the Committee. It is highly recommended that names of individuals be kept confidential, even from family members and church officers until the final stages of the search process.
      5. Decide the method of voting, type of majority needed to select a pastor-nominee, and how decisions are to be made. Although unanimity is not essential, the Committee should strive to receive unanimous and enthusiastic support in the choice of the nominee.
      6. Decide on who will speak for the Committee.
      7. Set up systems whereby it will:
         i. Keep the Session and the congregation informed of the Search Committee’s progress,
         ii. Keep the Ministerial Committee fully informed of progress.
         iii. Keep clear and accurate files of ministers under consideration, including their Personal Information Forms with the dates it was requested and received, correspondence with persons, decisions made concerning each Candidate.
iv. Keep Candidates still under consideration informed of the Committee’s progress.

v. Promptly inform Candidates when they are no longer under consideration.

**Stage 4 – Conducting the Search**

1. **Announce pastor vacancy**

   The Search Committee, in consultation with the Session, will announce the open position. Typical channels are the EPC General Assembly Office (epchurch@epc.org), through the Ministry Staff Opportunities published on www.epc.org, Presbytery meetings, and General Assembly meetings. The Ministerial Committee should be actively involved in referring ministers to churches with vacancies. Search Committees have also posted positions through placement offices at seminaries and through online services like ChurchStaffing.com. It is common for Search Committees to ask congregation members to submit names. If so, the congregation should also be informed of EPC qualifications for ordination. There is a growing trend to use search organizations like Vanderbloemen Search Group (www.vanderbloemen.com) or McGowan Search International (www.mcgowansearch.com).

2. **Communication**

   Periodic updates (monthly recommended), from the Search Committee are critical, even if there is no progress (e.g., "The Search Committee continues to meet, pray, read Personal Information Forms, and listen to CDs/DVDs of candidates’ sermons. Please keep us in your prayers as we proceed.").

3. **Preliminary Screening/Interviewing**

   a. **Communication with Candidates**

      (1) Acknowledge receipt of candidate’s Personal Information Form shortly after it is received.

      (2) Advise the candidate of his/her current status shortly after decisions are made to continue or end consideration.

   b. **Considering Associate Pastors and Interim Pastors as Candidates**

      Sometimes it is appropriate to consider an Associate Pastor as a candidate. The Committee should be mindful that their familiarity with the Associate Pastor or Interim Pastor is both positive and a negative. For some, serving as an Associate Pastor is excellent preparation for serving as Pastor. However, for many the specific calling of an Associate Pastor is the position for which the Teaching Elder is best suited. Unfortunately, it is also an opportunity for “politicking” by the Associate or Interim Pastor in order to gain a position to which the Lord may not be calling. For these reasons, there are special stipulations for considering Associate and Interim Pastors as Candidates. In both cases, the Search Committee must obtain a three-fourths vote of the Session and the Ministerial Committee in order to proceed (G.10-19).

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19 At the time of publication, the Ministerial Vocation Committee is in active conversation with these two agencies with possible recommendations forthcoming.
As Assistant Pastor, serving on the staff when the pastor position becomes vacant, is not eligible under any circumstances to be a Candidate (G10-4E).

c. Reviewing Personal Information Forms (PIFs)

The Search Committee should receive many of these, both from within and outside the EPC. Review, study, and most importantly pray over the PIFs in light of the agreed upon vision and mission, the position description, and the requirements for ordination in the EPC. At some point, at least three or four candidates should constitute the Committee’s “short list.” The Search Committee should then very prayerfully agree to list these as “First preference,” “Second preference,” and so on.

Remember to communicate decisions with all candidates (see section 3 above).

d. Check references

It is unlikely anyone would list someone who would give a bad reference. The Search Committee should seek out references in addition to the ones listed in the PIF, such as the Stated Clerk and/or Ministerial Committee Chairman of the Minister’s Presbytery, General Assembly Stated Clerk or executive staff, or friends from the candidate’s church and/or place of residence. If a candidate is currently serving a church, be quite cautious in contacting people in that church, as the candidate’s interest in another position may be confidential, and this kind of “leak” could prove detrimental to the minister and church.

The Chairman should communicate the “short list” to the Ministerial Committee liaison, giving an opportunity for the liaison to note any concerns that should be taken into account. A common concern is “ordainability.” If a Search Committee is considering a person from outside the EPC, there could be extra requirements to be met before the person is eligible for examination and ordination by the Presbytery. For example, a person who is a candidate for ordination in another denomination may have to first be a member for six months in an EPC local church before being eligible to be endorsed by the Session and received as a Candidate Under Care of the Presbytery (G.11-2A; G.11-2j).

Some candidates may be eliminated during this phase. Remember to communicate these decisions to the candidates (see section 3 above).

e. Sample Sermons

Those remaining on the “short list” should provide the Search Committee with recorded sample sermon(s). It may be appropriate for the Search Committee to attend a service where the minister is preaching. If so, the visit should be discreet (e.g. don’t enter and sit together as a large group).

The following suggestions are offered for guidance when listening to a sermon:

(1) Reread the person’s PIF

(2) Have the following questions in mind

i. Does the person read the Scripture well and carefully?
ii. Is the sermon faithful to the scriptures?

iii. Is the pulpit manner compelling?

iv. Are the prayers helpful?

v. Is the sermon easily followed, well organized, and applicable to life?

vi. Is the congregation attentive?

vii. Is the person’s custom at the close of the service acceptable?

Once all members of the Search Committee have heard/seen the candidate’s sermon, the Search Committee should also decide whether to pursue one candidate at a time from this point forward, or to conduct preliminary interviews with all those on the “short list” first, and then review/re-arrange that list before the next step.

f. Initial interview

Teleconferencing or videoconferencing are encouraged at this stage of the process. Otherwise, the Search Committee Chairman and the candidate(s) must arrange a suitable time and place to meet face to face. It is best to select one member of the Search Committee to lead the interview. The leader should announce at the beginning that time will be provided for questions from the PSC members and from the candidate. A preliminary interview usually consists of the following (but is not limited to):

(1) The candidate’s testimony, call to ministry, brief description about the candidate and candidate’s family.

(2) What led the candidate to be interested in your church?

(3) The candidate’s initial vision/impression of ministry for your church based on the CIF.

(4) Ask about his particular ministry strengths, weaknesses. In other words, what part of the ministry does he have a passion for and feels he is best suited for (and vice versa for weaknesses).

(5) Probe to discover if the candidate seems prone to enlist help from others in his admitted weak areas and how he would go about that.

(6) Make sure you understand what the candidate is saying. If a statement is unclear, vague, be sure to ask for clarification (e.g., “What did you mean when you said . . .?”).

(7) Preliminary interviews should not last beyond two (2) hours (you may return to a particular candidate in a future interview).

Many Search Committee members are inexperienced at interviewing. An audio training resource “Biblical Interviewing Skills” is available at www.epc.org/ministries/minvo/interviewskills.
4. In-depth interviews and calling
   a. Reconsider the “short list”

   Once the first round of interviews is concluded, the Search Committee should review its “short list” for modification or change(s). After prayer individually and together, one candidate may emerge as the first preference and the first candidate to pursue for calling as Pastor.

   b. In-depth face-to-face interview with the first preference Candidate

   The Search Committee should strongly consider arranging time for the Candidate to meet with the Session so that the two parties can discern whether or not there is a “fit.” From this point on, it is recommended that this candidate is the only candidate considered, taking the attitude by faith, “This appears to be God’s choice as our Pastor” until it is obviously evident otherwise.

   c. Vote on the first preference candidate

   After completing the in-depth interview phase and following adequate time for prayer, the Chairman calls for a vote of Search Committee members.

   If the vote is favorable for the candidate, the Search Committee, having information from the Session in hand, agrees to the terms of call to be offered to the prospective new Pastor and informs the candidate of their intent to recommend him/her as the new Pastor with the terms of call stipulated. There may be some questions, discussion of the terms of call offered (which is appropriate), as the candidate may have special needs, concerns, circumstances the Search Committee may not be aware of. It is most desirable for the Search Committee and candidate to agree on terms of call prior to informing the Session. If the Search Committee feels the candidate's requests are unreasonable or unworkable the candidate should be made aware of the Search Committee's concerns, and that the congregation and/or Session may or may not agree to them. The Search Committee should not inform the Session of its candidate choice if terms of call become a serious point of contention, as this revelation may be grounds for the Search Committee’s reconsideration of a candidate.

Stage 5 - Concluding the Search Process

1. Informing the Ministerial Committee

   The Search Committee must seek the consent of the Ministerial Committee before the next step. Normally, the Chairman contacts the Ministerial Committee liaison. The liaison informs the Ministerial Committee Chairman who polls Committee members on their advice and/or consent regarding the Pastor-nominee. If the Ministerial Committee does not give its consent, the Search Committee may still continue with the Pastor-nominee, but should be aware that there could be difficulties with Presbytery approval as the process moves forward (G.10-4C).

2. Informing the Session

   After receiving input from the Ministerial Committee, the Search Committee Chairman contacts the Clerk of Session (if verbal, it must be followed up in writing) the Session of
their decision. It is wise for the Session to meet with the Search Committee (or its Chairman) in executive Session. If the interview process has not included a time for the Pastor-nominee and Session to meet, it should be arranged before a congregational meeting is called. The Session does not have veto-power over the Search Committee’s recommendation. However, a good working relationship between the prospective Pastor and Session is extremely important for a long, fruitful tenure, both the Pastor-nominee and the Search Committee should carefully weigh the input from this time with the Session.

3. Informing the Congregation

When the Pastor-nominee and the Search Committee are in agreement to move forward, the Session must call a congregational meeting for the Search Committee to present their recommendation for the person to be called and the terms of that call (G.10-4G, H). A common practice historically has been for the congregation to vote before it formally meets the pastor or hears the Pastor-nominee preach. In recent years, the practice of “candidating” has become more popular, in which the Pastor-nominee preaches and meets members of the congregation in a variety of settings before the congregational vote. There are merits for both procedures, and the process the church will follow should be determined beforehand and a congregational meeting timed appropriately.

4. Congregational Meeting

Some Search Committees have demonstrated creative ways to introduce the Pastor-nominee, his family, biographical, and professional information through video clips, power point presentation, colorful printed brochures, leaflets and other media. It is appropriate for the Search Chairman, on behalf of the Committee to move approval of the call and terms of call (see Terms of Call Form, p. 117) to the Pastor-nominee. There is no need for a second because the recommendation comes from a committee. Voting is done by either tallying a standing vote, a show of hands, or written ballot. The vote count must be reported to the Pastor-nominee (G.10-4G) and it is advisable to report it to the Ministerial Committee. Assuming the motion is approved and the Pastor-nominee has accepted, the Chairman of the Search Committee should offer a motion to dissolve the Search Committee upon approval of the Pastor-elect by the Presbytery (unless this has been done when the Search Committee was formed). The Clerk of the meeting shall send minutes of the meeting, including the exact vote, to the MC Chairman and also to Presbytery’s Stated Clerk.

5. Presbytery examination and approval

The local church has the irrevocable right to call its own pastor(s). While the right is irrevocable, it is not unconditional (G.6-6). The Presbytery must examine, approve the call, approve the terms of the call, and receive the Pastor-elect into its membership. This is a primary way in which the EPC expresses its theology of church government as Teaching and Ruling Elders meeting together in representative assemblies of ascending order (G.2-1). The examination process is described in chapter 4 of this Manual. The Search Committee should have a spokesperson at the Presbytery meeting at which the Pastor-elect is being examined in order to advocate for the call.

It is strongly recommended that a Minister not be allowed to begin service at the calling church prior to the Presbytery having completed all its work. Doing so places the minister and church in an extremely awkward position if the Presbytery does not
approve the Pastor-elect’s examination.

6. Ordination and installation

When a Teaching Elder has been approved by the Presbytery, an Administrative Commission is appointed on to act on behalf of the Presbytery to ordain (if necessary) and install the new Pastor. The process is described in chapter 6 of this Manual.

Planned Pastoral Transitions

The process of dissolving the pastoral relationship, securing an interim supply, forming a Search Committee, and calling a new pastor has a long history and is still common, but it is not the only way a pastoral transition may take place in the EPC, especially in larger churches. This paragraph is titled deliberately to avoid the notion of “pastoral succession.” Given the irrevocable right of the congregation to call its own pastor, the Pastors of local churches do not have the right to “name their successor.” However, there are situations in which it is wise and beneficial for the pastor to be involved in a planned transition.20 These situations generally occur when a long-term Pastor knows that the time is coming to end the pastoral relationship, often (but not always) due to pending retirement.

Although transition planning should begin earlier, an announcement of the Pastor’s retirement (or intention to leave), with the Presbytery’s consent and affirmed by the congregation and pegged to a date or event is equivalent to the announcement of a vacant pulpit, making it possible for the congregation to elect a Search Committee before the effective date of the Pastor’s departure.21 In some situations, an Associate Pastor has been called with an expectation that this individual could be the next Pastor. If so, special provisions described above must be followed.

Associate Pastor Search Process

1. Called by a Search Committee

An Associate Pastor is called by the congregation. When that Associate Pastor will be coming from outside the church staff, the congregation follows the same process as calling a Pastor. As the Session is making preparations, the position description must include the main areas of responsibility in which the Associate Pastor will be serving (G.10-5). Although the Pastor is not a member of the Search Committee, the Committee should regularly seek out the pastor’s input and advice. Because of the close working relationship, the Pastor should openly and enthusiastically support the candidate selected.

2. Calling an Assistant Pastor as an Associate Pastor

The Session, by a three-fourths vote and with the approval of Presbytery’s Ministerial Committee, may recommend to the congregation that an Assistant Pastor currently on

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20 There is an increasing amount of helpful literature available on planned leadership transitions in organizations such as The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the unspoken about pastoral transitions (Weese and Crabtree, Leadership Network, 2004) and Next: Pastoral succession that works (Vanderbloemen and Bird, Baker Books, 2014).

21 In the absence of a specific provision or prohibition in the Book of Order, this has been the consistent advice of the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.
staff be called as an Associate Pastor without needing to elect a Search Committee. Presbytery must approve the call and the terms of call. Since it is a new call, Presbytery also conducts a service of installation (G.10-6B).

**Assistant Pastor Search Process**

An Assistant Pastor is called by the Session for particular responsibilities for a limited period of time (which may be extended). The Session may conduct a search for an Assistant Pastor in a manner it deems appropriate (G.10-6A). The provisions for forming a congregational Search Committee do not apply, however it is wise to involve members of the congregation in the search process, especially those in the areas of ministry to which the Assistant Pastor will be called. The Assistant Pastor must be examined and approved by the Presbytery in the same way as a Pastor or Associate Pastor. In many cases, an individual is called as an Assistant Pastor with the understanding that he/she will be considered as an Associate Pastor in the future (see section immediately above).
Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES

Process of Pastoral Search and Call

G.2-1 The government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church shall be Presbyterian in form. This is government by Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders meeting in representative assemblies called Church Courts.

A. These Church Courts, in their ascending order, are the Session, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly.

B. Churches may also elect Deacons, but the Board of Deacons is not a Church Court.

G.6-4 The local church has the right to determine whether or not it shall have a Board of Deacons.

G.6-6 The local church has the right to call its own pastor(s), provided the Presbytery concurs by receiving such pastor(s) into its membership.

G.7-1 Calling a meeting

The Session may call a congregational meeting when deemed necessary. Also, when at least one fifth of the active membership shall request a meeting in writing, the Session shall do so without delay. Further, the Session shall call a meeting when instructed to do so by the Presbytery.

G.7-2 Notice of meeting

At least two Sundays notice shall be given. The meeting may be conducted on the same day the second notice is given. The purpose of the meeting must be stated in the call.

G.7-3 Agenda of meeting

Only those matters stated in the call may be presented and handled.

G.10-2 The right of calling may never be taken away or conditioned for non-Scriptural reasons. This right is inalienable and may not be changed. At the same time, a Church Court also has the inalienable right not to approve an individual for reasons the Court determines to be proper and in keeping with Scripture.

G.10-4 The call of a Pastor by a local church

When a local church desires to call a Pastor, the procedure shall be as follows

A. The Session shall call a congregational meeting. The Session may nominate a Search Committee to the congregation, although the floor must also be opened for other nominations. The congregation shall proceed to determine how many persons are to serve and to select them.

B. The Search Committee shall carry on its work in regular consultation with the Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery.

C. Upon agreeing on a person they feel led of God to nominate, the Search Committee shall secure the consent of the Ministerial Committee. Should that Committee
decline to consent, the Search Committee may persist with the nomination, recognizing the Presbytery has the right to reject the call.

D. Ordinarily, an Associate Pastor is not eligible to succeed the Pastor. However, should a Search Committee desire to consider an Associate Pastor as Pastor, approval by a three-fourths vote of Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee shall be required for the Search Committee to proceed.

E. A person serving as Assistant Pastor on the same church staff at the time the pastor position becomes vacant shall not be called to fill that position in the same church, by any means.

F. After consulting with the Ministerial Committee, the Search Committee shall notify the Session in writing of its nominee and the Session shall call a congregational meeting.

G. When the congregational meeting has been convened, the Search Committee shall make its report and recommendations to call a Pastor. This recommendation shall include the details for remuneration, including all benefits. The congregation shall conduct a counted vote in a fashion it deems appropriate. A majority favoring the recommendation is required to elect a Pastor. The exact vote must be recorded in the minutes and the person being elected notified of the count. The congregation shall appoint representatives to advocate the call at a meeting of the Presbytery.

H. The call of the congregation shall always conform with the Acts of the General Assembly and follow the form approved by an appropriate committee of the General Assembly.

G. 10-5 The call of an Associate Pastor by a local church

A congregation may call an Associate Pastor by means of a Search Committee in the same fashion as indicated above, with the exception that the call of the congregation shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Associate.

G.10-6 The call of an Assistant Pastor by a Session

A. A Session, in consultation with the Ministerial Committee of Presbytery, may call an Assistant Pastor. The call of the Session shall be for a definite period of time and is renewable. The call of an Assistant Pastor may be terminated by the Session prior to that time only with the consent and approval of the Presbytery. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Assistant. The call of the Session shall always conform with the Acts of the General Assembly and follow the form approved by an appropriate committee of the General Assembly.

B. A Session, by a three-fourths vote and with the approval of Presbytery’s Ministerial Committee, may recommend to the congregation that an Assistant Pastor of the local church be called as an Associate Pastor without a Search Committee being elected. The call as Associate Pastor must be approved by Presbytery and an installation service shall be conducted by the Presbytery or by its appointed Commission.

G.10-7 Temporary Pastoral Relationships
Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

A. When there is no Pastor, a Session may invite a lawfully ordained Minister in good standing or a Commissioned Pastor to enter a temporary pastoral relationship. Although this invitation is not a call as defined in G.9-5, the invitation and authority to preach the Word, to administer sacraments, and to moderate Session must be approved by the Presbytery or by the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission.

B. Ordinarily, a person currently serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is not eligible to be called as Pastor of that church. Should a Search Committee desire to consider any person who has served in a temporary capacity since the pulpit most recently became vacant, it must secure approval by a three-fourths vote of the Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee in order to proceed.

C. Types of temporary pastoral relationships
   1. Stated Supply
      A Stated Supply Pastor is invited to serve for a definite period of time of not less than one month and no more than twelve months. The Stated Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to Moderate the Church Session during the time of service. Before the end of any invited period of service, the Session may extend the invitation for an additional period not to exceed twelve months with the approval of the Presbytery or of the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission.
   2. Interim Supply
      An Interim Supply Pastor is invited to serve during the period a congregation is seeking a Pastor. The Interim Supply Pastor may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Session during the time of service.
   3. Occasional Supply
      An Occasional Supply Pastor is invited to serve regularly on specified days. Only the Ministerial Committee must approve.

G.11-2 Preparation for ordained ministry as a Teaching Elder

Since the office of Teaching Elder is seen as the first office in the Church both for dignity and usefulness, special preparation is required.

A. A person desiring to become a Teaching Elder shall first become a Candidate under the care of the Presbytery of which that person’s church is a member. That person begins this process by seeking the endorsement of the Session of the local church where the person’s membership has been held for at least six months. When the Session has approved the Candidate, application shall be made to the appropriate Committee of Presbytery.

J. A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.
Prior to approving a Candidate for ordination as a Teaching Elder or as a Ruling Elder or Deacon, it is important for the ordaining court to assure itself of the competency of the individual being ordained to serve. Therefore, certain examinations should be made.

**The examination of a Candidate for ordination as a Teaching Elder**

A. The Candidate shall present evidence of competency in the original languages of Scripture, including transcripts of coursework taken, along with the required exegesis.

B. The Candidate shall be examined in Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.

C. The Candidate shall be examined in writing and orally in the following areas: Theology and Sacraments, English Bible, the **Book of Order**, the history of the Church and the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder.

D. The Candidate shall preach a sermon to the Presbytery to demonstrate the ability to expound the Word of God effectively.

E. If the Presbytery has previously received a Candidate and has not required the stipulated work of college and/or seminary, the requirements for language shall be omitted. However, every other part of the examination shall be given. The examination must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Presbytery.

**Officers of the Board of Deacons**

A. Moderator

The Board may elect a Moderator for a term of one year, or the Session may appoint a Pastor of the congregation to serve as Moderator.

**The Board and the Pastor(s)**

Though not a voting member of the Board, the Pastor(s) is officially designated an advisory member. As such, the Pastor(s) is entitled to participate in deliberations, giving advice and wisdom.

**Officers of the Session**

A. Moderator

1. The Pastor shall be the Moderator and is a voting member of the Session. If the Moderator wishes to make motions or otherwise participate in debate, some other member of the Session should serve as Temporary Moderator.

2. An Associate Pastor, at the request of the Pastor and with the consent of the Session, may serve as Moderator for the Pastor.

3. If there is no Pastor or Associate Pastor or if there is no Associate Pastor and the Pastor is absent for more than one month, the Session may elect one of its members to serve as Moderator.

4. Presbytery, at its discretion, may appoint a Teaching Elder of the Presbytery to serve as Moderator when a church has no Pastor. The Presbytery may
authorize its Ministerial Committee to appoint, at its discretion with concurrence of the Church Session, a Minister of Presbytery to serve as Interim Moderator of the Church Session until such time as the Presbytery can act in the matter.

G.18-3 Authority and Responsibilities of the Session

A. To oversee the worship of the congregation in accordance with the Book of Worship, including the time and place of worship, special services, the music program, and the celebration of the sacraments. This shall not infringe on the responsibility of the Pastor in the selection of hymns, Scriptures, sermon, administration of the sacraments, or other duties that are incumbent on the office of Pastor.

H. To determine the budget of the church and the benevolence objectives of the congregation.

G. 21-2D [Ministerial Committee] Authority and Responsibilities

2. With regard to local churches
   a. It shall counsel with local churches in securing Pastor(s). Calls shall always be placed in the hands of this Committee who shall then make its recommendation to the Presbytery. No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation that has not first consulted with the Committee.
   b. It shall recommend to the Presbytery a Teaching Elder to serve as Moderator of the Session, and shall work with a congregation in securing pulpit supply. The Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to appoint, with concurrence of the Session, an Interim Moderator of the Session.

ACTS OF ASSEMBLY REFERENCES

81-04 Terms of call for any minister of member churches shall provide for participation in the denominational hospitalization and disabilities program. (Minutes, 1-32)

81-05 Terms of call for any minister shall provide a minimum of 18% benefit to provide for group hospitalization, disability and pension. The pension factor shall not be less than 10%. This benefit shall be computed on the gross effective salary base, i.e., salary and housing/utilities allowance (Minutes, 1-32).

81-06 The denominational group insurance plan providing health, disability, and life coverage shall be mandatory for all ministers within member churches (Minutes, 1-36).

82-07 4. Terms of call: The amount of annual vacation time: one month.
   5. Terms of call: The amount of time to be given for study leave: two weeks, cumulative up to six weeks.

82-10 The General Assembly approves the concept of self-funding insurance and instructs its Committee on Administration to execute a plan in trust as appropriate. Individual churches are urged to assume the deductible portion of the health insurance program and cost of co-insurance as part of a minister's compensation. (Minutes, 2-52, Appendix I)
Chapter 5: Process of Pastoral Search and Call

83-02 Opportunity shall be provided at each General Assembly for pastors seeking a call to meet with churches and ministries seeking to issue a call. (Minutes, 3-37)

84-08 General Assembly adopts the self-funding group insurance plan offered by The Travelers and gives authority to the permanent Committee on Administration to approve and establish all details relative to the establishment of proposed plan. General Assembly requires pastors and employees of all member congregations, all presbyteries, and the Assembly who meet minimum requirements to enroll in the program. This major medical program shall be reviewed annually and a full report made to the General Assembly (Minutes, 4-37).

87-12 The Assembly approves the establishment of an employer sponsored tax-sheltered annuity program for the required minimum (10%) of gross effective salary for retirement for each minister and missionary, and urges each congregation to participate in such program. (Minutes, 7-53)

88-08 Assembly amends participatory requirements for group health insurance plan by requiring participation of all ministers on the rolls of Presbyteries with the exception of:

1. Missionaries laboring in cooperative agreements with mission agencies;
2. Ministers laboring in institutional agencies providing their own group insurance plan;
3. Ministers afforded group insurance coverage as part of retirement benefits from a previous employer;
4. Ministers without call and Ministers laboring less than 20 hours in a place of ministry. (Minutes, 8-24)

98-15 Presbyteries shall perform a background investigation on all individuals seeking candidacy or membership in their Presbytery. This investigation of public records shall include at least a verification of social security number, criminal history and motor vehicle driving history. Also, as part of the reception process, references must be checked. (Minutes, 18-41)

02-04.3 In a number of cases, housing allowances approved in terms of call seem to be far above the accepted IRS standard cap of fair rental value (furnished) plus utilities. Pastors, sessions and presbyteries are urged to be diligent in conforming to established regulations.

12-11.1 The initial terms of call shall be approved in public by both congregations and presbyteries, using the forms found in the Book of Order and Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees.

2. Changes in terms of call must be noted and voted upon by presbyteries on recommendation from the Ministerial Committee. The changes may be noted as either a dollar amount, or percentage amount, with only the change, not the new total, noted.

3. Background or supporting material regarding terms of call shall be made available to the Presbytery Review Committee through the Stated Clerk upon the Committee’s request.
CHAPTER 6: PROCESS OF ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION

Ordination and installation are important milestones for pastors and congregations. However, they are acts of the Presbytery, not the local church. Even so, Sessions and congregations have responsibilities in this process as well.

**Presbytery Responsibilities**

The Presbytery is responsible to oversee the process of ordaining/installing a minister. The Presbytery ordinarily delegates this responsibility to an Administrative Commission (G.21-1C; 02-04.1)\(^22\), but the Presbytery retains the ultimate responsibility for insuring the order and meaning of this significant event. The Ordaining/Installing Commission shall consist of at least five Ruling and Teaching Elders in proportion as near to 2:1 as possible with Ruling Elders from at least two churches (G.21-1C.2). The quorum for a commission shall be a minimum of one half of its membership (G.21-C3). The Presbytery may specify which of the Commissioners is to serve as chairman of the Commission.

**Church Session Responsibilities**

Usually some Ruling Elders of the calling church are selected to be members of the Commission. Commission members participate with the Presbytery in setting the time and place of the ordination and/or installation.

**Local Church Responsibility**

The members of the Local Church shall participate in greeting the newly ordained/installed Pastor-elect and consider having a reception for the Pastor-elect and family following the service.

**Ordination and Installation Planning**

The Book of Government describes the specific steps which shall be followed in the ordination and installation of ministers (G.13-1A). This portion of the Manual is an aid in implementing the procedures outlined in the Book of Government.

**Suggested Steps to be taken by Presbytery Prior to the Ordination/Installation**

Prior to the appointment of an Administrative Commission, the Presbytery, through the Ministerial Committee, should consult with the Pastor-elect and the Search Committee prior to the Presbytery meeting. The Ministerial Committee should prepare recommendations for the Presbytery, taking into consideration the wishes of the Pastor-elect and the Local Church to which the Pastor is being called concerning the following matters:

1. **The time and place of the ordination and/or installation.** Ordinarily this service will be held in the Local Church to which the Teaching Elder is being called. When called by two or more congregations, the Teaching Elder may be installed in each church or a joint service may be held (G.13-5).

\(^{22}\) All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
2. **The names of the Teaching and Ruling Elders composing the commission to ordain/install.** It is customary for the Pastor-elect to request specific Teaching and Ruling Elders to serve on the Commission. Presbytery may set the number of individuals it wishes to serve on the Commission, conforming to the requirements of (G.21-1C.2). Members of this Commission shall be members of the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction the service takes place. Teaching Elders from other EPC Presbyteries and other lawfully ordained ministers or Elders outside the EPC may be enrolled as corresponding members of the Commission. However, these individuals are not part of the minimum requirements for composition of the Commission set out in the *Book of Government*. Before submitting the names of Commission members to the Presbytery, the Pastor-elect and/or a member of the Presbytery assisting the Pastor-elect, should secure agreement of the nominees to serve if appointed. The Presbytery shall identify a chairman for the Commission.

3. **The specific parts of the service to be assigned to members of the commission and to other invited participants.** At a minimum, the service should include the following parts (see p. 145, “Ordination/Installation Worship Service Form”)
   a. Presiding and asking the constitutional questions;
   b. Preaching of the ordination/installation sermon;
   c. Bringing a charge to the Pastor-elect;
   d. Bringing a charge to the congregation;
   e. Offering the prayer of ordination/installation;
   f. Declaration of ordination/installation.

4. Prior to the service, The Commission shall meet privately prior to the service, and open its proceedings with prayer. A secretary shall be selected to take minutes, using the approved form for commission minutes (p. 149, “Minutes of the Commission to Ordain and/or Install”).

5. Following the service, the Commission should convene to conclude its own meeting with the reading of the minutes of the proceedings and with prayer. Minutes shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery within ten (10) days (see p. 149, “Minutes of the Commission to Ordain and/or Install”).
Chapter 6: Process of Ordination and Installation

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES

Process of Ordination and Installation

G.13-1A Teaching Elders

1. Ordinarily, the ordaining/installing Presbytery will appoint an administrative commission to conduct a worship service at a date and time approved by the Court. A sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached. The person presiding shall recount the conditions necessary for ordination and/or installation, the solemnity of the event, and its importance in the life of the Church.

2. Presbyteries may also directly ordain a Teaching Elder.

G. 13-2A Ordination vows

The person presiding shall administer the following ordination vows for those being ordained and for those coming into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from some other denomination:

1. Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior?

2. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

3. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

4. Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with the system of doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

5. Do you affirm and adopt the "Essentials of Our Faith" without exception?

6. Do you subscribe to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?

7. Do you promise subjection to your fellow Presbyters in the Lord?23

8. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy Ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the gospel of His Son?

9. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

G. 13-2C Questions to the congregation

23 For Deacons, the vow is “Do you promise subjection to your fellow Church Officers in the Lord?” (G.13-7B)
When the person being ordained has responded affirmatively to these vows, the person presiding shall address the following questions to the congregation:

1. Are you, the members of this congregation ready to receive __________ as your (name of office to which the person is being ordained/installed)?

2. Do you promise to submit to __________ in matters of spiritual discipline, and to receive with humility and love the word of truth?

3. Do you promise to support ________ (name) with your prayers, to give encouragement and assistance in every way as ________ (name) seeks to instruct you in the things of the Lord and to lead you in the building of the Kingdom of God in this place?

4. Do you commit yourselves to fulfill the terms of the call you have extended and to make provision for ________ (name) needs that the name of Christ might be glorified?

G.13-5 **Ordination and/or installation of a Pastor in more than one congregation**

When a Pastor is called to a multiple field, it is appropriate that the procedures for ordination and/or installation be conducted in each congregation, or a joint service may be held.

G.21-1C **Administrative Commissions**

1. Authority and Responsibilities

   Administrative Commissions are appointed to perform special functions. The functions entrusted to such commissions include, but are not limited to the following:

   a. To ordain Teaching Elders and to install them where appropriate.

   b. To organize, dissolve, dismiss, or receive local churches, or to constitute a mission church.

   c. To serve as a temporary Session of a mission church.

   d. To visit local churches having difficulties or appearing to be failing in their mission, to inquire into and resolve the difficulties therein. If it is necessary that a Session be dissolved, the authority of an Administrative Commission may be limited by actions of the General Assembly.

2. Membership

   Administrative Commissions of Presbytery and General Assembly shall be composed of Teaching and Ruling Elders in proportion as near to two Ruling Elders to one Teaching Elder as possible. The minimum numbers and distribution of members shall be:

   a. For the General Assembly, not fewer than three Presbyteries.

   b. For the Presbytery, not fewer than five members, with Ruling Elders representing not fewer than two member churches.

G.21-C3 **Quorum**

A commission shall have as its quorum, a minimum of one half of its membership.
02-04.1 Commissions are representative of the Presbytery and give an opportunity for particular churches to appreciate the fact that they are part of a larger church. Even though the constitutional minimum for commissions is five people from two churches, presbyteries should give due consideration in forming commissions to make them more broadly representative.
CHAPTER 7: CHAPLAIN ENDORSEMENT

“Chaplain” is one of the five varieties of callings within the office of Teaching Elder (G.9-5E). For those Chaplains needing denominational endorsement, the Presbytery MCC, the General Assembly’s Chaplains Work and Care Committee, and the EPC Chaplain Endorser work together. Authority to ordain belongs to the Presbytery. Authority to endorse for chaplaincy belongs to the General Assembly. For additional information on the theology of chaplaincy ministry and procedures, see the Chaplains Work and Care Procedure Manual (download from www.epc.org) (12-13; 12-14).24

The General Assembly as Endorsing Agency

Military chaplains serve as officers in the Armed Forces (non-combatants) and also represent their faith groups. The Department of Defense (DoD) requires that military chaplains have an endorsement from a recognized religious body or denomination. For chaplains coming from denominations, the DoD recognizes the national level of the church as the endorsing body. The EPC is a DoD-recognized denomination25 and the General Assembly authorized the Ministerial Vocation Committee (MVC) to design a process for the “proper maintenance of the military chaplaincy program” (83-15). Until 2011, the MVC designated a subcommittee to handle the endorsement process with an MVC member serving as chairman and the Stated Clerk as the designated Endorser. In 2011, the 31st General Assembly created the Chaplains Work and Care Committee (CWCC) to oversee the endorsement process, develop policies related to chaplain ministries, and oversee pastoral care of Chaplains (11-13). The Moderator of the General Assembly nominates a denominational Endorser (normally a retired Chaplain) who is affirmed by the General Assembly and authorized to represent the denomination to the DoD.26

The Veterans Administration also requires chaplains to be endorsed. Increasingly, hospitals and other institutions (e.g., federal and some state prison systems) require endorsements. Many hospitals require their chaplains to be “board certified” by agencies such as The Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). One of the requirements for board certification is endorsement from a recognized religious body or denomination.

Relationship of General Assembly and Presbyteries in the Endorsement Process

The chaplain endorsement process of the General Assembly runs alongside the ordination and approval of call process in the Presbytery. Good communication between the prospective Chaplain, the Presbytery, the Endorser, and the Office of the General Assembly is essential. The Presbytery, as the ordaining body, speaks to the prospective Chaplain’s suitability to be a Teaching Elder in the EPC. The General Assembly, through its Chaplains Work and Care Committee, speaks to the person’s qualifications to serve in the specialized calling of Chaplain. Reception as a Candidate under Care is a prerequisite for CWCC approval of that person for the military’s Chaplain Candidate Program. Ordination as an EPC Teaching Elder (or, in certain

24 All Acts of Assembly references cited are found at the end of this chapter
25 The EPC is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals Chaplains Commission, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC), and the Chaplains Alliance for Religious Liberty (12-04).
26 Rules for Assembly 10-1L3: “The Moderator shall nominate to the General Assembly a Teaching Elder to serve as the denomination’s Chaplain Endorser for a three-year term, which is renewable. The Endorser will be operationally accountable to the Office of the Stated Clerk.”
military's Chaplain Candidate Program. Ordination as an EPC Teaching Elder (or, in certain circumstances, approval for ordination) is a prerequisite for the CWCC's endorsement as a military or institutional chaplain. Commissioned Pastors may be endorsed as institutional chaplains, but not as military chaplains (G.9-11)

Sometimes, timing of the approval process in the military or the Veteran’s Administration requires that the CWCC’s endorsement be done prior to the Presbytery’s action. In such cases, the CWCC’s endorsement is revoked if the Presbytery does not ordain or approve the call to chaplaincy. If a minister is transferring from another denomination with a call as a military chaplain, the Presbytery must receive a report from the CWCC prior to receiving the Minister and approving the call (89-23).

**Military Chaplain Candidates**

Those not yet ordained and seeking to serve as military chaplains under the endorsement of the EPC should follow the normal steps of candidacy with their presbytery described in chapter 4. The Department of Defense (DoD) requires that all Chaplain Candidates hold an Ecclesiastical Approval from a recognized religious body or denomination. Additional DoD requirements include the satisfactory completion of the first semester in a recognized seminary, passing a military medical examination, and passing a check for a security clearance. The CWCC may approve a Candidate under Care of a Presbytery for the Chaplain Candidate Program in the Armed Forces. This will be done in communication with the Candidate’s presbytery. The approval process requires:

1. Application for Military Chaplaincy Form (p. 126).
2. Personal Information Form (PIF) (p. 157).
3. Phone reference checks.
4. Face-to-face interview with a CWCC member or a designee.
5. Phone interview with the CWCC.
6. Approval by the CWCC.

**Military Chaplains**

Ordination as an EPC Teaching Elder is a prerequisite for the CWCC’s endorsement as a military chaplain. Although there are many variations, a common process is for a Candidate under Care to first receive approval from the CWCC for the Chaplain Candidate Program and be part of that program while completing ordination requirements (see Military Chaplain Candidates above). Upon ordination, the Chaplain Candidate becomes eligible for endorsement as a chaplain, typically in the National Guard or Reserves. The military typically requires two years of pastoral experience prior to becoming an active duty chaplain. The endorsement process may run simultaneously with the Presbytery’s ordination process and is done in communication with the Presbytery. The endorsement process requires:

1. Updated Application for Military Chaplaincy Form (p. 126).

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27 All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter
Chapter 6: Process of Ordination and Installation

2. Updated Personal Information Form (PIF).

3. Written reference checks and phone reference checks by the CWCC.

4. An MMPI-2 psychological evaluation. If the MMPI-2 is required by the Presbytery, the prospective chaplain should arrange for the evaluation letter to be released to the General Assembly's Office of the Stated Clerk.

5. PREPARE/ENRICH marriage evaluation if married or engaged. This is required due to the unique stresses that deployments place on marriages.

6. Face-to-face interview with a CWCC Member or a designee.

7. Phone interview with the CWCC.

8. Approval by the CWCC.

By definition, a call to serve as a military chaplain is an out of bounds call (G.10-8B.2(a)). These chaplains often qualify for Associate Membership status (G.10-8B.2(b)). Chaplains are encouraged to hold membership in the Presbytery in which they may most easily participate (88-07). However, because the nature of military chaplaincy requires frequent moves, common practice has developed to not require those Chaplains to join a new presbytery and be examined each time they move.

Acts of Assembly 88-07, 99-12 and 11-12 speak to other aspects of military chaplaincy

**Institutional Chaplains**

For institutional chaplaincies that require denominational endorsement, the process is similar:

1. Application for Institutional Chaplaincy Form (p. 128).

2. Current Personal Information Form (PIF).

3. Written reference checks and phone reference checks by the CWCC.

4. Face-to-face interview with a CWCC member or a designee.

5. Phone interview with the CWCC.

6. Approval by the CWCC.

Some Commissioned Pastors may qualify for approval to serve as institutional chaplains. Presbytery approval of the Commissioned Pastor and the call is a prerequisite for the CWCC’s endorsement.
Chapter 6: Process of Ordination and Installation

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES
Chaplain Endorsement

G.9-5 The office of Teaching Elder
Within the office of Teaching Elder there are a variety of callings that require ordination. God distributes to each gifts according to the common needs of the Church. These include:

A. Pastor...
B. Teacher...
C. Evangelist...
D. Administrator...
E. Chaplain

A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. The Presbytery may authorize the Chaplain to administer the sacraments in that role.

G.9-11 A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals and provide pastoral care. Presbyteries may also approve and give appropriate powers to a Ruling Elder to serve as a Commissioned Pastor in mission churches, church planting and church revitalization works, or in chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons or other institutions.

G.10-8B.2 [Calls] From a church or agency outside the bounds of Presbytery
a. If a Teaching Elder desires to accept a call outside the jurisdictional or geographic bounds of the approving Presbytery, the Teaching Elder shall present a call from that body to the Presbytery, indicating the nature of the work and the terms of the call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the work as appropriate to the gospel ministry and requiring ordination, it may approve the call for a definite period of time. After the expiration of that time, the Minister must receive further approval to continue.

b. If the nature of this call impedes or prevents regular and/or required attendance at Presbytery meetings, the Teaching Elder may be granted the status of Associate Member.

ACTS OF ASSEMBLY REFERENCES

83-15 The General Assembly instructs the Ministerial Vocation Committee to proceed to design a process for the proper maintenance of the military chaplaincy program.
(Minutes, 3-37)
Chapter 6: Process of Ordination and Installation

88-07 Chaplains are encouraged to hold membership in the presbytery allowing the greatest participation and most effective ministry. (Minutes, 8-41)

89-23 Extended active duty military chaplains seeking to transfer from other denominations may be received by presbytery only after a review and report regarding that person's chaplaincy by the Ministerial Vocation Committee. (Minutes, 9-36) {The 31st General Assembly moved this responsibility to the Chaplains Work and Care Committee. (Act 11-13)}

99-12 The Assembly adopts guidelines for EPC military chaplains leading worship with other faith groups:

"While our chaplains are encouraged to exercise their ministry in the Armed Forces with the maximum of collegiality in cooperation with persons of varying beliefs, the EPC does not approve joint leadership of a worship service with persons representing faith groups outside the historic Christian tradition, as defined by the Apostles' Creed. (Minutes, 19-45)

11-12 The Assembly approves a policy statement "Ministry Policy for EPC Chaplains for Dealing with Persons Who Practice Homosexual Behavior and Claim Homosexual Identity." (Minutes 31-53; see Documents section of 31st General Assembly Minutes.)

11-13 The Assembly creates a Permanent Committee on Chaplains Work and Care whose chairman serves as denominational endorser (Minutes, 31-53)

12-04 The Assembly approves joining the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty as an Associate Member, and approves the EPC's Endorser for Chaplains maintaining a membership as an Individual Member (Minutes, 32-41).

12-13 The Assembly approves the Chaplains Work and Care Committee Handbook as the Committee's procedure manual. (Minutes, 32-56 and "Documents" section)

12-14 The Assembly approves the response of the Chaplains Work and Care Committee to the referral from the 30th General Assembly regarding the nature of chaplaincy and authorizes its inclusion in the CWCC Handbook. (Minutes, 32-56 and "Documents" section)
CHAPTER 8: COMMISSIONED PASTORS

Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor

Presbyteries may utilize Commissioned Pastors to provide leadership to mission churches, church planting, and church revitalization works. They may also be approved to serve in some institutional (non-military) chaplaincies. Depending on the qualifications of the person and the nature of the ministry, Presbytery may authorize a Commissioned Pastor to preach, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer sacraments, perform marriages, preside at funerals, and/or provide pastoral care. Commissioned Pastors may serve for a term of up to three years, which is renewable (G.9-11; G.9-11A). Although commissioned by the Presbytery, a Commissioned Pastor is not a Teaching Elder and therefore is not an ongoing member of the Presbytery.

The Training, Evaluating and Examining a Commissioned Pastor

Although not required by the Book of Government, the responsibility for training, evaluating and examining potential Commissioned Pastors typically falls to the Ministerial Committee. A Ruling Elder considered for becoming a Commissioned Pastor should have sufficient knowledge and skills to perform as the only pastor of the church or ministry in need. Minimally, the Ruling Elder should have studied and be well versed with the material in the EPC Leadership Training Guide.

Examining a Commissioned Pastor may include interviews and testing from the questions at the end of each section of the Leadership Training Guide. The Presbytery should focus on past experience and specific skills demonstrated relative to how he/she fits with the assignment to be made. Presbyteries are free to develop their own Commissioned Pastor training programs.

Other denominations have similar provisions for “lay ministers.” Such individuals must first become Ruling Elders in the EPC. At that point they are eligible to be examined by the Presbytery for service as a Commissioned Pastor (G.9-11C).

Commissioning of a Commissioned Pastor

Upon the authorization of a Commissioned Pastor, the Presbytery has the responsibility to conduct an appropriate commissioning service, either directly or through an Administrative Commission (G.9-11F). The Presbytery assigns a Teaching Elder to each Commissioned Pastor to serve as a supervisor and mentor and to assist in writing an annual report to the Presbytery (G.9-11D).

28 All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
Chapter 8: Commissioned Pastors

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES

Commissioned Pastors

G. 9-11 The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor

A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals and provide pastoral care. Presbyteries may also approve and give appropriate powers to a Ruling Elder to serve as a Commissioned Pastor in mission churches, church planting and church revitalization works, or in chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons or other institutions.

A. Authorization shall be for a term up to three years and may be renewed. Such authorization shall specify those powers granted and shall stipulate in which church(es) or ministry contexts those powers are authorized. Such powers shall be exercised only in those contexts.

B. Potential Commissioned Pastors shall be examined by Presbytery and found to have sufficient knowledge in the areas in which they will be serving.

C. A Ruling Elder previously commissioned as a lay pastor by another Reformed body may become a Commissioned Pastor as deemed appropriate by the Presbytery and subject to the same requirements of the EPC Commissioned Pastor.

D. Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder to each Commissioned Pastor as supervisor to act as mentor and to assist the Commissioned Pastor in writing an annual report to Presbytery.

E. Presbytery may terminate the authorization to serve as a Commissioned Pastor at any time prior to the expiration of the commission.

F. Upon authorization of a Commissioned Pastor, Presbytery shall administer the vows of commissioning below either immediately or through an administrative commission at a designated time.

1. Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination as a Ruling Elder and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations as a Commissioned Pastor?

2. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account?

3. Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as Commissioned Pastor whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before this congregation of which God will make you an officer?

4. Are you now willing to take responsibility in the life of this congregation/in this ministry as a Commissioned Pastor, and will you seek to discharge your duties relying upon the grace of God, in such a way that the entire Church of Jesus Christ will be blessed?
CHAPTER 9: PRESBYTERY CARE AND OVERSIGHT OF MINISTERS

The Ministerial Committee of the presbytery is responsible for providing oversight, support and counsel for ministers in the respective presbyteries (G.21-2D)29. The Committee is also responsible to give oversight, guidance, and advice to Sessions in matters related to the work of the Minister.

Active Teaching Elders

The Ministerial Committee shall maintain communication with all of the active Teaching Elders in the Presbytery and shall make an annual report to presbytery regarding the work of each Teaching Elder (G.21-2D.1(e). This includes a report on those Teaching Elders approved for labor outside the bounds of the Presbytery. This annual report on the active Teaching Elders may include the following information: name, church, length of ministry, key responsibilities, accomplishments during the past year, new responsibilities, concerns, and problems in the ministry (see “Annual Report on Ministers of the Word,” p. 156)

The Committee is also responsible for an annual review of remuneration of ministers, consulting with Sessions when necessary and may recommend to the Presbytery minimum terms for a call. All requests for changes in terms of call come to the Presbytery through the Ministerial Committee (G.21-2D.1(f).

The General Assembly has made provisions to assist in medical care of ministers in special situations. Acts of the Assembly 89-15 and 90-1630 provide guidance.

Inactive Teaching Elders

When a minister is on Inactive Status, “all rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside” (G.14-3). Therefore, during inactive status, the services performed by the Minister cannot be regarded by the EPC as within the exercise of EPC ministry for tax purposes. Accordingly, the Minister may not be eligible for any tax benefits or exemptions generally made available to ministers of the gospel under federal law by reason of affiliation with the EPC.

Because ‘all rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside’ for ministers on Inactive Status, services performed by the Minister during his Inactive Status will not be subject to EPC supervision in any way. Further, the Minister is not an agent of the EPC in an ecclesiastical or any other capacity during his inactive status. As a result, the EPC cannot be construed as legally liable for any action of ministers on inactive status. During the period of inactivity, the Minister’s ecclesiastical and legal relationship with the EPC shall ordinarily be understood as non-existent.

Retired Teaching Elders

A Teaching Elder who is retired remains a full member of presbytery unless action is taken to put the minister on Inactive Status or on the roll of Associate Members. The Ministerial Committee is responsible for making an annual review of its retired members in order to evaluate their income and to seek to rectify any deficiencies. This review is to be included in the

29 All Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
30 All Acts of Assembly references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
Chapter 9: Presbytery Care and Oversight of Ministers

annual review of ministers (G.15-1).

At the request of the retired Teaching Elder (within two years of being placed on the retired roll), the Presbytery may place that Teaching Elder on the roll of Associate Members (G.15-2C). After two years, the retired Teaching Elder is automatically placed on the Associate Member roll unless the Presbytery acts to make an exception, which it may do annually (G.19-2B.1(a)). An Associate member has voice but not vote in meetings of the Presbytery and General Assembly, is eligible to serve on committees, but is not eligible to serve as an officer and is not counted for purposes of parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders. An Associate Member retains all the rights and privileges of ordination (G.19-2B).31

**Teaching Elders with Calls Outside the Bounds of Presbytery**

A Teaching Elder may be called as Pastor, Teacher, Evangelist, Administrator, or Chaplain (G.9-5) to a ministry outside the direct authority of a court of the Church. After being fully satisfied that the ministry is consistent with one of the callings within the office of Teaching Elder, the Presbytery may grant permission for the Minister to labor outside of bounds (G.10-8B.2).

The “Call to a Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery” (p. 124) provides presbyteries with a means of becoming a formal third party to a call. Presbyteries are urged to take this role seriously in the mutual accountability between the governing body and its members. The Form is the tool by which presbyteries evidence their concern for the ministry to be performed, to outline presbytery’s expectations of the minister, and, where appropriate, to consult with the calling agency as an advocate for the minister as to ecclesiastical matters.

Prior to accepting a call, the minister shall contact the presbytery in which membership is sought, providing the Ministerial Committee with a position description. The Ministerial Committee, guided by the four criteria outlined on the form, shall determine if the ministry ought to be validated. If the ministry is validated (G.9-6A), a call shall be issued. This call shall be reviewed and renewed annually by presbytery.

**General Considerations**

If the outside of bounds call comes from a church or agency located within a different Presbytery than the one in which the Teaching Elder is a member, normally the Teaching Elder transfers to that Presbytery. In some cases it may be advisable for the Teaching Elder to retain membership in his/her Presbytery while laboring outside of boundaries in another. This is a common situation for military chaplains, who move frequently due to the nature of their calling. If that is the case, the Teaching Elder must receive the consent of both presbyteries (G.9-6B). Teaching Elders serving out of bounds whose callings prevent them from active participation in their Presbyteries may be placed on the Associate Member roll (G.19-2B.1(a) at the request of the Teaching Elder, approval of the Ministerial Committee, and by a 2/3 majority vote of the Presbytery. After two years, the Teaching Elder serving out of bounds “serving in a capacity which prevents regular and/or required attendance” is automatically moved to the inactive roll unless the Presbytery acts to make an exception, which it may do annually (G.19-2B.1(a)).

The calling agency and the Presbytery are responsible to complete the form, “Call to a...

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31 See the section "Presbytery Membership" in chapter 3 for more information on the Retired Roll and Associate Members.
Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery” (p. 124). The call to a ministry outside the bounds of presbytery is reviewed and renewed annually. It should not be renewed when it is determined that the member’s calling is not consistent with the office of Teaching Elder. When an outside of bounds call is not approved, and the Teaching Elder persists in that call, the procedures in G.10-8B.2 and G.14-3 apply and the Teaching Elder is placed on the inactive roll.

**Limitations**

Teaching Elders laboring out of bounds are by definition “serving outside the authority of a court of the Church” (G.9-6A) and “outside the structures of the Church” (G.10-8A.3). Therefore, they serve under the ecclesiastical but not the legal authority of the EPC. They cannot, therefore, act as an agent of the EPC in the legal sense. They cannot exercise any authority to bind the EPC to any contracts or agreements, nor can they commit the EPC to fulfill any other legal obligations.

Teaching Elders Serving outside of bounds are employed by the calling agency, not by the EPC. They will not be subject to the supervision of the EPC with respect to time, place, or manner of ministry. Any financial relationships or legal accountability regarding their ministry will be undertaken solely through the calling agency. Accountability to the EPC relates solely to spiritual and ecclesiastical matters. The Presbytery is the court of original jurisdiction (D.3-2B) for any matters requiring action under the Book of Discipline.

Internal Revenue System regulations state that eligibility to claim any special tax benefits or privileges available to the minister of the gospel under federal law may be jeopardized if any of the following apply to a ministry:

1. The calling agency did not arrange with the EPC for the Minister’s services.
2. The Minister performs services for the calling agency that other employees of the calling agency who are not ministers are performing.
3. The Minister performs the same services before and after obtaining permission from the EPC to labor out of bounds.

**Missionaries and the Out of Bounds Status**

EPC ministers who serve as missionaries overseas are in a unique position because of their geographical distance from EPC presbyteries. Some Teaching Elders are EPC World Outreach missionaries serving under the direct oversight of EPC World Outreach and some serve in cooperative agreements with other agencies. Those EPC Teaching Elders serving under the direct oversight of EPC World Outreach are under both the legal and the ecclesiastical authority of the denomination. Although they may not be serving in the geographic boundaries of an EPC Presbytery, they are within the jurisdictional bounds of the denomination and are not considered laboring outside of bounds (99-10).

Ordained EPC missionaries who serve under the direct oversight of some other mission agency are serving “out of bounds” (G.10-8B.2; G.10-9). They serve under the ecclesiastical, but not under the legal authority of the EPC. Their legal relationship lies with the agency under whose direct supervision they serve. This relationship with their primary mission agency is understood as the legal relationship which governs their ministry.
Annual Reviews and Reports

The Ministerial Committee has responsibility for conducting annual reviews for all ministers in the presbytery, including pastors classified as active, inactive, retired, and serving out of bounds. All annual reviews shall be conducted sensitively and with a sufficient amount of time being provided for the minister to share information reflecting areas of accomplishment, disappointment, expectation, and need.

The Ministerial Committee shall submit year-end written reports to the Presbytery covering actions in all its areas of responsibility and any evaluations made during the year according to the following categories:

2. Annual review of the remuneration of Teaching Elders. (G.21-2D.1(f)
2. Report on ministers laboring outside the boundaries of presbytery. (G. 21-2D.1(e)
3. Report on the progress of the candidates of the presbytery. (G.21-2D.1(ab) (See p. 138)
4. Report on ministers over age 70 serving in pastoral ministry. (G.14-1D)

A model reporting form has been included in the "Forms" section of the Manual as an aid to Ministerial Committees in their reporting responsibilities (p. 156)

Compensation

The Minister's salary and benefits are an area of concern for the Ministerial Committee. Annual review of the adequacy of compensation and the advocacy of an organized compensation plan to improve inadequate salaries should have a high priority in every presbytery (83-01).

Retirement and Benefits

The Ministerial Committee should encourage each minister to have a working knowledge of retirement plans. In particular, Teaching Elders should be aware that contributions to the EPC Retirement Plan may be designated for housing allowance following retirement. Detailed information may be secured from the Board of Benefits and, if desired, independent financial counsel.

The EPC has adopted a self-funding health insurance plan (84-08). The plan requires all EPC ministers serving EPC churches to participate. Employees who meet minimum requirements may participate in the plan as well (87-12).

Terms of Call

The Ministerial Committee is responsible for reviewing the terms of call of all pastors (Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastor) (G.21-2D.1(f)). The Ministerial Committee may recommend to presbytery minimum terms for the call of a minister ((G.21-2D.1(f)). Requests to presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall also be reviewed by the Ministerial Committee before it recommends these changes to presbytery (G.21-2D.1(f)). At the time that presbytery approves a call of a Teaching Elder, the entire package is reviewed. Subsequent annual reports
to presbytery need only report the change in terms of call (11-08; 12-11). A Presbytery may commit the authority to approve terms of call to an Administrative Commission, provided that it meets the stipulations of G.21-1.

**Outside of Bounds**

The Committee shall maintain contact with all Teaching Elders laboring outside the bounds of presbytery and assure that these individuals submit their annual reports to the presbytery. Outside of bounds calls are subject to annual review and approval (G.9-6A; G.10-8AB).

**Teaching Elders Without Call**

The Committee shall maintain contact with Teaching Elders without call and confer with them regularly regarding their sense of call and expectations for future ministry. The Committee is responsible to recommend to the Presbytery whether that minister should remain on Active Status or be placed on the Inactive Status Roll. After two years without call, Teaching Elders are automatically placed on the Associate Member roll unless the presbytery acts to make an exception, which it may do annually (G.14-3B.2; G.19-2B.1(a)).

**Retired Ministers**

The Presbytery, through this Committee, is responsible for making an annual review of its retired members to be sure of their welfare and to rectify any deficiencies. Communication between presbytery Ministerial Committees will help insure care of retired ministers who change residence in retirement (G.15-1C).

**Ministers over Age 70**

Ministers over the age of 70 serving in any capacity in the Church may continue to serve in their present capacity with the annual approval of the church session and the Presbytery. (G.14-1D)

Ministers over age 70 serving as Stated Supply, Interim Supply, or Occasional Supply may be approved to serve for up to one year (G.14-1D).

**Dissolution of Pastoral Relationships**

Only the Presbytery has authority to dissolve pastoral relationships. This authority may be given to the Ministerial Committee when both the congregation and Pastor are in agreement (G.14-1A). Normally, the initiative to dissolve a pastoral relationship comes from the Pastor or Associate Pastor when receiving another call. However, the Session may also initiate the request for dissolution (G.14-1B). If the congregation and Pastor or Associate Pastor do not concur in the request for dissolution, then the Presbytery makes the final decision (G.14-1C). Normally, such a recommendation comes to the Presbytery by way of the Ministerial Committee, or the Presbytery establishes an Administrative Commission to make the decision (G.21-1). There have been rare occasions, usually when there is irremediable conflict, when presbyteries have utilized their authority to dissolve pastoral relationships and active relationships of Ruling Elders on their own initiative (typically through an Administrative Commission) (G.21-1).
When the Pastor Initiates Dissolution

Before informing the Session or congregation of an intention to request dissolution of the pastoral relationship, the Pastor must first consult with the Ministerial Committee (G.14-1B). The Pastor should then inform the Session and the Session will call a congregational meeting as soon as possible, observing the required two Sundays notice (G.7-2; G.14-1) for the purpose of deciding whether to concur in the Pastor’s request for dissolution. One of the Sundays in the “two Sundays notice” may be the Sunday of the meeting itself. The same provision applies to Associate Pastors. Since an Assistant Pastor is called by the Session, the resignation of an Assistant Pastor before the term of service expires does not require a congregational meeting.

Usually a minister initiates dissolution of the pastoral relationship in order to respond to a call to serve in another pastorate or ministry. If the Minister will not be serving within the church as a minister or in some other ministry approved by the EPC in the near future, the Minister may request to be placed on inactive status by the Presbytery. After one year on active status without call, the Presbytery may consider placing the minister on Inactive Status. If the minister is actively seeking another call to ministry, the Presbytery may keep the Minister on the Active Roll (G.14-3).

The congregation has the right to refuse to concur with the Minister’s request. If it does not concur, it shall appoint representatives to explain its reasons to the Presbytery (G.14-1C), which has the sole authority to make the decision (G.14-1A). The Presbytery may determine if it wishes to hear the matter as a whole court, or commit the matter to the Ministerial Committee for a recommendation, or appoint a Commission to make the decision. Whatever the means, both congregation and Pastor/Associate Pastor should be heard.

When the Session Initiates Dissolution

A Session on its own initiative may call a congregational meeting to present a recommendation to dissolve a pastoral relationship. These situations are rare, and normally the result of conflict between the Pastor/Associate Pastor, Session, and/or congregation. A Session should not reach this point lightly, and only after many attempts to resolve the situation (see sections on crisis intervention and conflict management below.

Severance Pay

When the Pastor/Associate Pastor does not initiate the dissolution, severance pay often becomes part of the discussion. There is no mandate to provide severance pay, but is often appropriate because the Pastor/Associate Pastor has not been preparing for a change of call. There have been a few situations in which severance pay is agreed to as part of the initial terms of call. In a few other situations, Sessions have included severance pay policies in their personnel manuals. If severance pay is not part of terms of call, it is considered to be a contractual arrangement between the Session and the Teaching Elder. While Presbytery may advise, it does not need to approve.

Dissolving Assistant Pastor Relationships

In the case of an Assistant Pastor, the Session is the calling body and its call comes with specified responsibilities and a term of service (G.10-6A). The call to the Assistant Pastor expires at the end of the specified term. The Session has a moral responsibility to give the Assistant Pastor sufficient notice (at least six months) of its intention to let the term expire, renew the term (with or without a change in responsibilities), or seek the congregation’s approval in
calling the Assistant Pastor as Associate Pastor. Renewing the term is a change of terms of call, requiring Presbytery approval (G.21-2D.1(f)). Calling an Assistant Pastor as an Associate Pastor is a change of call, requiring Presbytery approval and a service of installation (G.10-6B). If Session decides to dissolve the call of an Assistant Pastor before the term is complete, it may only do so with the concurrence of the Presbytery (G.10-6A).

**Teaching Elders Reaching Age 70**

When a Teaching Elder Reaches the age of 70 the relationship in which that Teaching Elder is serving is automatically dissolved (G.14-1D). The Minister may continue in the same relationship if elected by the congregation and approved by the Session and Presbytery on an annual basis (G.14-1D.1). If the Teaching Elder wishes to take another call after age 70, the Presbytery may approve, but with a 2/3 majority required (G.14-1D.2).

**Report of Procedures to Presbytery**

When a pastoral relationship is dissolved, the Clerk of Session should send a certified transcript of the minutes of the congregational meeting to the Ministerial Committee Chair and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The Ministerial Committee, if previously authorized, may make final disposition of the matter if parties are in concurrence or make a recommendation to the Presbytery.

**Transfer and Dismissal**

Most transitions in the ministry of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church result from a Teaching Elder’s acceptance of a call to a church. When the call comes from a church in another presbytery, the Teaching Elder normally requests dismissal to and reception by the new presbytery at the same time. The receiving presbytery must conduct a background check (see p. 25). Transferring presbytery membership is only complete when dismissal from one presbytery and reception by the new presbytery have been approved.

A call from a congregation is not effective until the minister has been examined and the call and terms of call from the congregation have been approved. The call may only be officially placed in the minister’s hands by the presbytery of which that minister is a member (G.10-8B.1(b)). The Clerks of each presbytery should communicate the actions of their presbyteries (G.10-8C.2). The Clerk of the dismissing presbytery should transmit a “Certificate of Dismissal of a Minister” (forms are available from the General Assembly Office). After each Presbytery, the Stated Clerk of the receiving Presbytery should notify the General Assembly of Teaching Elders received.

A certificate of dismissal is to be completed and forwarded to the presbytery to which the Minister is being dismissed promptly after his presbytery has granted his request for dissolution of his present pastoral relationship and his dismissal to the receiving presbytery (certificates may be ordered from the General Assembly Office). At the same time, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery will complete and forward a “Record of Official Change for Minister’s Status and Ministry” to the Minister and to the General Assembly Office. (p. 157).

Pages 150 - 155 of this Manual have checklists and sample motions that may be used to be sure all mandated procedures are followed and recorded properly.
Pastoral Care of Congregations

In its relationship to the local churches, the Ministerial Committee:

1. Shall counsel with churches in securing pastor(s) (G.21-2D.2(a))
2. Shall recommend to the Presbytery a minister to serve as Moderator of the church Session if the church is without a Pastor and work with congregations in securing pulpit supply (G.21-2D.2(b))
3. Shall consult with particular churches receiving aid from presbytery, and shall make recommendations to presbytery regarding that aid, unless these responsibilities have been committed to another Committee (G.21-2D.2(c))
4. If authorized by the Presbytery, may serve as a Judicial or

Crisis Intervention

Although no complaint may have been received, if in the judgment of the Ministerial Committee a particular congregation may be having difficulties or appears to be failing in its mission, the Committee has the authority to investigate and to make recommendations to presbytery (G.21-2D.2(d)).

Conflict Management

Every Ministerial Committee should strive to develop the ability to discern early warning signs of conflict within individuals as well as within groups inside the local church. Much of the church’s pain over conflict could be diminished or even avoided if committees were more sensitive to early warnings.

Relocation

In working with Teaching Elders who want or need to relocate, the Ministerial Committee should take a highly supportive role that can include the following:

A. Exploring with the Minister the type of call best suited to his gifts and needs at the time. Ministers often need guidance in order to be realistic about career goals and job prospects.

B. Advising on the preparation of the Personal Information Form or reviewing the form when completed. Personal Information Forms should be kept current. Personal Information Forms may be obtained from www.epc.org or copied from the Forms section of this manual.

C. Explaining how the call system works.

D. Phoning or writing Ministerial Committees in other presbyteries on behalf of the minister who wants to move.

E. Encouraging the Minister to practice interviewing skills with a colleague.

F. Keeping in touch with the Minister throughout the process.
Chapter 9: Presbytery Care and Oversight of Ministers

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES
Presbytery Care and Oversight of Ministers

G.7-2 Notice of meeting
At least two Sundays notice shall be given. The meeting may be conducted on the same day the second notice is given. The purpose of the meeting must be stated in the call.

G.9-6 Teaching Elders serving outside of presbytery bounds
A. Whenever a Teaching Elder is called to one of the positions provided for under G.9-5 by an agency that is outside the jurisdiction of a court of the Church and after being fully satisfied that the ministry is consistent with the calling to the ministry of the Word, the Presbytery may grant permission for the Minister to labor outside of its jurisdictional bounds. Such permission is renewable annually. The Teaching Elder shall make an annual report to the Presbytery of faithfulness to the gospel. The Teaching Elder serving out of bounds shall be diligent to serve actively in the Court. If the particular call prohibits such service, the Teaching Elder should seek Associate Member status.

B. In the event that the outside of bounds ministry falls within the geographic boundaries of a Presbytery in which the Teaching Elder is not a member, the Teaching Elder shall seek the advice and obtain the approval of both Presbyteries.

G.10-2 The right of calling may never be taken away or conditioned for non-Scriptural reasons. This right is inalienable and may not be changed. At the same time, a Church Court also has the inalienable right not to approve an individual for reasons the Court determines to be proper and in keeping with Scripture.

G.10-6 The call of an Assistant Pastor by a Session
A. A Session, in consultation with the Ministerial Committee of Presbytery, may call an Assistant Pastor. The call of the Session shall be for a definite period of time and is renewable. The call of an Assistant Pastor may be terminated by the Session prior to that time only with the consent and approval of the Presbytery. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Assistant. The call of the Session shall always conform with the Acts of the General Assembly and follow the form approved by an appropriate committee of the General Assembly.

B. A Session, by a three-fourths vote and with the approval of Presbytery's Ministerial Committee, may recommend to the congregation that an Assistant Pastor of the local church be called as an Associate Pastor without a Search Committee being elected. The call as Associate Pastor must be approved by Presbytery and an installation service shall be conducted by the Presbytery or by its appointed Commission.

G.10-8 Calls approved by the Presbytery
A. Source of calls
Chapter 9: Presbytery Care and Oversight of Ministers

1. From a local church within the geographic bounds of the Presbytery, as modified by the inclusion or exclusion of churches according to the provision of G.5-7 and G.5-8.

2. From a denominational court or agency.
   If some court or agency of the denomination issues a call to a Teaching Elder, the calling body shall issue a call that conforms with the Acts of the General Assembly and follows the form approved by an appropriate committee of the General Assembly. The approving Presbytery shall proceed in a similar fashion for approving a call to a local church, except the Commission to install may be omitted.

3. From outside the geographic and/or jurisdictional bounds of the Presbytery.
   A Teaching Elder called by a church or agency outside the bounds of the Presbytery remains under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery.

B. Process for approving calls

1. From within the geographic and jurisdictional bounds of the Presbytery
   a. Having determined that the person is suitable for the call, that the good of the whole Church shall be served, and that the person being called accepts the call, it shall inform the Minister/Teaching Elder/Candidate of its approval and proceed to place the call in the hands of said person.
   b. A call may be placed in the hands of a Teaching Elder or Candidate only by the Presbytery in which that person is being called.
   c. The Presbytery shall appoint a Commission according to the stipulations of G.21-1B.2 to proceed with ordination and/or installation.
   d. The Teaching Elder is enrolled in the Presbytery upon Presbytery’s approval of the examinations and call and upon signing the ministerial obligation (G.19-4B.4).

2. From a church or agency outside the bounds of Presbytery.
   a. If a Teaching Elder desires to accept a call outside the jurisdictional or geographic bounds of the approving Presbytery, the Teaching Elder shall present a call from that body to the Presbytery, indicating the nature of the work and the terms of the call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the work as appropriate to the gospel ministry and requiring ordination, it may approve the call for a definite period of time. After the expiration of that time, the Minister must receive further approval to continue.
   b. If the nature of this call impedes or prevents regular and/or required attendance at Presbytery meetings, the Teaching Elder may be granted the status of Associate Member.
   c. In the event that the call outside of bounds falls within the geographic boundaries of a Presbytery of which the Teaching Elder is not a member, the Teaching Elder shall obtain the approval of both Presbyteries.

C. Transfer

1. Teaching Elder transferring from another EPC Presbytery or other church body. The receiving Presbytery shall not enroll that Teaching Elder without
Chapter 9: Presbytery Care and Oversight of Ministers

an approved call unless the Minister is retired and being enrolled as an Associate Member.

2. Official communication regarding transfer. The dismissing church body shall be informed by the receiving Presbytery for the purpose of taking appropriate action. The Presbyteries shall deal directly with each other through their Stated Clerks in certifying both the call of the church and the credentials of the Minister, Teaching Elder or Candidate.

G. 10-9 Call Disapproved by Presbytery

In the event a Teaching Elder accepts a call disapproved by Presbytery, that Teaching Elder shall be placed on inactive status.

G.12-3B Examination of non-EPC ordained Ministers

1. Examination of an ordained Minister from another Reformed denomination: A Minister seeking to become a Teaching Elder in a Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from another denomination from within the Reformed family shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC. The Minister shall be examined on views and beliefs in the same fashion as one transferring from one Presbytery to another within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

2. Examination of Ministers from non-Reformed Traditions: A minister presenting current and valid ordination credentials from any other ecclesiastical tradition shall be examined in the same manner as a candidate for ordination.

G. 14-1 The dissolution of a pastoral relationship

A. Authority to dissolve a pastoral relationship

Presbytery has the sole authority to dissolve a pastoral relationship. The Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss Ministers when both the congregation and the Pastor/Associate Pastor concur in the dissolution.

B. Initiative to dissolve a pastoral relationship

Either the Teaching Elder or a Session may initiate a request for dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Either party shall first consult with the Ministerial Committee before making a request to the congregation. A congregational meeting shall be duly called and the congregation requested to concur with the Pastor/Associate Pastor or the Session in the request for dissolution of the pastoral relationship.

C. When a party declines to concur in dissolving a pastoral relationship

When any party declines to concur in the dissolution of a pastoral relation, the congregation shall appoint representatives to Presbytery to explain its action. The Presbytery, or an Administrative Commission appointed for this purpose, having consulted with the Pastor and duly appointed representatives, shall then be the sole judge of whether or not to dissolve the relationship.
D. Dissolution by reason of age

When a Teaching Elder serving in any capacity in the Church reaches the age of 70, that relationship shall be terminated. The Teaching Elder is obligated to notify the Presbytery six months prior to the 70th birthday.

1. Annual renewal of the pastoral relationship or call after age 70.

The Teaching Elder who is age 70 or older is eligible, at his or her initiative, to be reelected annually in the same relationship with the approval of the calling body, the Session, and the Presbytery. When such a call is renewed, no installation is necessary.

2. Receiving a new call past age 70.

Presbytery, on recommendation of the Ministerial Committee, by a 2/3 vote, may approve a new call for the Teaching Elder who is age 70 or older. That Teaching Elder is eligible to be re-elected in this new relationship yearly with the approval of the calling body and Presbytery.

3. Serving in temporary pastoral relationships after age 70.

A Teaching Elder who is past age 70 is eligible to serve in a temporary pastoral relationship for a period of up to one year as approved by the Presbytery. The Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to serve as an Administrative Commission to establish such relationships.

G. 14-3 Removal of an officer to inactive membership status

A. Inactive Membership Status

When an officer is placed on inactive membership status, all rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside, including the right to vote and participate in the meetings of the Church Courts.

B. Special provisions for removing Teaching Elders to Inactive Membership Status

1. Removal at the Teaching Elder’s initiative

   a. When a Teaching Elder accepts a call disapproved by Presbytery, Presbytery shall place the Teaching Elder on inactive status.

   b. A Teaching Elder may, for reasons deemed valid by the Presbytery, request be placed on Inactive Membership Status. If the Presbytery concurs, the Teaching Elder shall be placed on such status. After at least one year, the Teaching Elder may request Presbytery to be restored to Active Membership Status. The Presbytery, after careful deliberation, may do so provided the Teaching Elder has a valid call that Presbytery approves, or provided the Teaching Elder is being transferred to another Presbytery in order to receive a call.

2. Removal at the Presbytery’s initiative

When the Teaching Elder who is not retired has been without approved call for a period of one year, the Ministerial Committee shall confer with the Teaching Elder as to the Teaching Elder’s continued sense of call and expectations for future ministry. The Committee will then recommend to the Presbytery whether the Teaching Elder should remain on Active Membership
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Status in the Presbytery or be placed on Inactive Membership Status. The Presbytery, at its discretion and after judicious consideration, may place the Minister on the Inactive Status Roll involuntarily provided the vote to do so is by a two-thirds majority.

3. Limit for Inactive Status

A limit of 5 years shall be placed on the time during which a Teaching Elder on Inactive Status who is not retired shall remain on the roll of Presbytery. After five years, the Presbytery has the right to remove that minister from office without sanction.

G.15-1 The retirement of a Teaching Elder

A. Eligibility for retirement

A Teaching Elder may request to be placed on the Retired Roll of Presbytery due to age, infirmity, or other debilitating condition.

B. Recognition of retirement

If the Presbytery concurs, a service of appreciation and thanksgiving should be conducted, either at the meeting of Presbytery or at the place of service of the retiring Teaching Elder. Ordinarily, a Presbytery shall appoint a special commission to conduct this service and a record of it inserted in the minutes of the Presbytery.

C. Pastoral care of retired Teaching Elders

The Presbytery shall be responsible for making an annual review of its retired members to be sure of their welfare and to rectify any deficiencies. Such annual review shall be reported to the court and recorded in its minutes.

D. Upon reaching age 70

When a Teaching Elder reaches age 70, special conditions apply as prescribed in G.14-1D.

G.15-2C Associate Member Status

A retired Teaching Elder may be granted the status of Associate Member as defined in G.19-2B.1. A retired Minister may be received from another Presbytery or another Reformed denomination as an Associate Member.

G.19-2B Non-voting Members of Presbytery

1. Associate Member Teaching Elders

a. Qualifications

The Presbytery shall establish a roll of Associate Members. A Teaching Elder who is retired or serving in a capacity outside of bounds which may impede or prevent regular and/or required attendance at Presbytery meetings may, upon request, within two years of this change in call be granted the status of Associate Member. Those who are retired, serving in a capacity which prevents regular and/or required attendance, or those without a Presbytery approved call for two years will automatically be placed on the Associate
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Membership roll. Presbytery, by 2/3 vote, may exempt a Minister from becoming an Associate Member for one year. This exemption may be granted to the minister on an annual basis. Presbyteries may, by 2/3 vote, receive a retired Minister from another Reformed body as an Associate Member, following the normal process of examination.

b. Rights and Restrictions

Associate Members are entitled to serve with voice and vote on all committees of Presbytery and General Assembly. Associate Members are entitled to serve with voice but not vote on Commissions to ordain and install pastors and to receive churches. Associate Members shall have voice but not vote at all Presbytery and General Assembly meetings. Associate Members are not eligible to serve as officers of any court but do retain all rights and privileges of ordination and are to be afforded the same pastoral care as Active Members.

c. Temporary pastoral relationships

Any Associate Member called to serve as Stated Supply or Interim Supply shall automatically be returned to active membership status during such service.

d. Return to Active Status

An Associate Member may request to be placed on Active Status. The Presbytery may do so upon recommendation by the Ministerial Committee and provided the Minister has a call Presbytery approves, or provided the Minister is being transferred to another body in order to receive a call.

e. Transfer of Associate Members

Associate Members, against whom no charges are pending, may transfer with the same status to another Presbytery, following the normal examination process.

2. Inactive Teaching Elders

3. Retired (Inactive) Teaching Elders

4. Teaching Elders under the sanction of suspension from office

21-1 Committees and Commissions

A. Definitions

1. A committee is appointed by a court to study a matter and make recommendations back to the appointing body, or to carry out decisions already made. It shall then make written reports to the court that created it.

2. A commission is appointed to act for the appointing court. The appointing court shall state specifically the powers and duration given to a commission. The only permanent commission is the Permanent Judicial Commission. A commission shall make a written report of its actions which shall then be inserted in the minutes of the appointing court and be regarded as the actions of the court itself.

C. Administrative Commissions
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1. Authority and Responsibilities

   Administrative Commissions are appointed to perform special functions. The functions entrusted to such commissions include, but are not limited to the following:

   a. To ordain Teaching Elders and to install them where appropriate.

   b. To organize, dissolve, dismiss, or receive local churches, or to constitute a mission church.

   c. To serve as a temporary Session of a mission church.

   d. To visit local churches having difficulties or appearing to be failing in their mission, to inquire into and resolve the difficulties therein. If it is necessary that a Session be dissolved, the authority of an Administrative Commission may be limited by actions of the General Assembly.

2. Membership

   Administrative Commissions of Presbytery and General Assembly shall be composed of Teaching and Ruling Elders in proportion as near to two Ruling Elders to one Teaching Elder as possible. The minimum numbers and distribution of members shall be:

   a. For the Presbytery, not fewer than five members, with Ruling Elders representing not fewer than two member churches.

G.21-2D [Ministerial Committee] Authority and Responsibilities

1. With regard to Teaching Elders and Candidates

   a. It shall have the oversight of Candidates for the gospel ministry of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee.

   b. It shall confer with each Teaching Elder desiring to become a member of the Presbytery, or Candidate desiring ordination.

   c. It shall conduct any examination and assessment it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to Presbytery concerning the application.

   d. It shall conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the Book of Government.

   e. It shall report annually on the work of the Teaching Elders to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Teaching Elders approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.

   f. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of remuneration of Teaching Elders, shall consult with Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to Presbytery minimum terms for the call of Teaching Elders. Requests to Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.

   g. It shall review each request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship, and make a recommendation to Presbytery.
2. With regard to local churches
   a. It shall counsel with local churches in securing Pastor(s). Calls shall always be placed in the hands of this Committee who shall then make its recommendation to the Presbytery. No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation that has not first consulted with the Committee.
   b. It shall recommend to the Presbytery a Teaching Elder to serve as Moderator of the Session, and shall work with a congregation in securing pulpit supply. The Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to appoint, with concurrence of the Session, an Interim Moderator of the Session.
   c. The Committee, or a Presbytery-designated alternate committee, shall consult with local churches receiving aid from Presbytery and shall make recommendations to the Presbytery concerning that aid.
   d. Although no complaint may have been received, if in the judgment of the Committee a local church may be having difficulties or appears to be failing in its mission, the Committee has the authority to investigate and to make recommendations to Presbytery.
   e. Presbytery may authorize this Committee to dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss Teaching Elders according to the Book of Order when both the congregation and the Pastor concur in the dissolution.
   f. The Committee may be appointed by Presbytery to serve as a Judicial or Administrative Commission. The Committee may be appointed as an ongoing Administrative Commission to approve temporary relationships.

D.3-2 Original Jurisdiction

In cases of original jurisdiction, the following rules apply:

B. The Presbytery: The Presbytery has original jurisdiction in every disciplinary case involving Ministers of the Presbytery.

ACTS OF ASSEMBLY REFERENCES

83-01 The Committee on Ministerial Vocation shall annually provide the presbyteries a letter encouraging each session to review annually pastoral and staff compensation, taking into account such factors as changes in cost of living, performance, capabilities of the congregation, and economic conditions of the community. Each presbytery shall determine how best to use the letter. (Minutes, 3-37)

84-08 General Assembly adopts the self-funding group insurance plan offered by The Travelers and gives authority to the permanent Committee on Administration to approve and establish all details relative to the establishment of proposed plan. General Assembly requires pastors and employees of all member congregations, all presbyteries, and the Assembly who meet minimum requirements to enroll in the program.

This major medical program shall be reviewed annually and a full report made to the General Assembly (Minutes, 4-37).
Chapter 9: Presbytery Care and Oversight of Ministers

87-12 The Assembly approves the establishment of an employer sponsored tax-sheltered annuity program for the required minimum (10%) of gross effective salary for retirement for each minister and missionary and urges each congregation to participate in such program (Minutes, 7-53).

89-15 The Assembly approved the establishment of a General Assembly benevolence fund for medical care costs, concentrating its benevolence health care efforts on ministers without call, mission church pastors, and retired ministers and their families. (Minutes, 9-33)

90-16 The Assembly conceptually endorsed the Medical Benevolence Trust with the understanding that the actual Trust Agreement would be presented to the 11th Assembly. Approval to begin promotion of the Trust was given. (Minutes, 10-41)

99-10 The Assembly sustains an opinion of the Permanent Judicial Commission regarding the status of ministers who are missionaries serving totally under the auspices of the EPC and ministers serving in an administrative capacity in one of the courts of the church (G.9-5D). Ministers serving in such capacities should be classified as ministers with calls, not as ministers serving out-of-bounds. (Minutes, 19-40)

11-08 The Assembly affirms the guidance of the Office of the Stated Clerk as the authoritative interpretation of the General Assembly to be practiced by the presbyteries regarding approving and recording ministers’ terms of call (Minutes, 31-39) The 32nd General Assembly modified the way terms of call may be recorded in the minutes. Cf. Act 12-11.

1. That the terms of call shall be approved in public by both congregations and presbyteries, using the forms found in the Book of Order and Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees, and entered into the journal of each presbytery’s minutes.

2. That changes in terms of call must be publicly noted and voted upon by presbyteries, and entered into the journal of each presbytery’s minutes. The changes may be noted as either a dollar amount, or percentage amount, with only the change, not the new total, noted.

3. If a congregation or presbytery wishes to alter this requirement, the only legal process would be a constitutional amendment.

12-11 The Assembly adopts a policy regarding approval and recording of ministers’ terms of call, superseding the actions of the 18th and 31st General Assemblies (Acts 98-04 and 11-08). (Minutes, 32-56)

1. The initial terms of call shall be approved in public by both congregations and presbyteries, using the forms found in the Book of Order and Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees.

2. Changes in terms of call must be noted and voted upon by presbyteries on recommendation from the Ministerial Committee. The changes may be noted as either a dollar amount, or percentage amount, with only the change, not the new total, noted.

3. Background or supporting material regarding terms of call shall be made available to the Presbytery Review Committee through the Stated Clerk upon the Committee’s request.
CHAPTER 10: THE MINISTER, SESSION, AND PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Performance Review and Salary

History

The Standing Committee on Ministerial Vocation of the 18th General Assembly (1998) discussed a number of issues related to the Teaching Elder in the local church. One of these dealt with performance reviews of ministers and its relationship to salary recommendations for the coming year. The Ministerial Vocation Committee (MVC) followed up by mailing a questionnaire to each EPC church to solicit information about the annual performance review.

Although many of our larger churches have a sophisticated performance review process in place, many Sessions grapple each year with the practice of evaluating the Pastor and staff as well with the questions of compensation changes, how and when to do evaluations, who should conduct the evaluation, is it biblical to conduct of performance review of someone seeking to serve Christ. There are many questions, and each one calls for serious and wise deliberation.

Definitions

A performance review is a formal evaluation of the performance of the Pastor(s) and other staff members. It is an evaluation of the work that has been accomplished, typically since the last evaluation period. The Performance Review is conducted against the backdrop of a position description that spells out the expectations the church has if its Pastor(s) and other staff members. It is not a judgment regarding the ultimate spiritual life and God-directed service of the individual. As Paul so aptly said: "Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Rom. 14:4) Furthermore, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "I care very little if I am judged by you ... I do not even judge myself. It is the Lord who judges me." (1 Cor. 4:3-4). Regardless of our career or vocation or employment, each of us will give an account to God of the way we have used our time, talents, and treasure for His Kingdom.

The Performance Review, however, focuses on the work related to employment in the local church. It is a reality check. It is an opportunity to give and receive feedback about the major responsibilities, goals, projects, accomplishments, and skills involved in related to the minister or staff member's work. It is a time to speak the truth in love about the work of the ministry over the past evaluation period. In the parables, Jesus often taught the importance of accountability. Paul (2 Thes. 3:6-10) was hardest on those who thought they could draw on the resources of the Christian community without working. When we receive pay from a church, however, we understand that we are being paid for the work that we are asked to do. Implicit in such an arrangement is an understanding that our work will be evaluated.

Value of a Regular Performance Review

A regular performance review encourages a close examination of the original position description and an evaluation of the major responsibilities that came with the position. The following questions are preparatory for those conducting the review: a) Why was the staff member brought to this local church? b) What was the staff member asked to do? c) How well is the staff member accomplishing the responsibilities of the position description? d) Has the staff member's role in the church changed? e) Does the staff member's position description need to
be changed to reflect new or different responsibilities assigned?

A regular performance review permits an open discussion of expectations of the church and the staff member.

A regular performance review fosters an evaluation of results within a limited time period. Every position description contains implicit and explicit responsibilities that will be undertaken during the time of ministry at the local church. A performance review is an opportunity to reflect on these results as they have been carried out during a specified period of time, to discuss accomplishments and failures, successes and frustrations, and to set goals for the next work period. Ultimately, we are called to faithfulness in our ministry to the Lord. But faithfulness is wedded to fruitfulness. The performance review sets the stage for evaluating not only the time and plans invested in work, but also the fruit or lack of fruit in the assigned areas of ministry.

A regular performance review provides a protection for the staff person. God looks with great disfavor on those who are lax in doing the Lord’s work (Jer. 48:10). As iron sharpens iron, so one may sharpen another. A performance review can be the occasion of sharpening the vision, skills, and commitment to diligently serving the Lord in the life of the Teaching Elder and other staff members. It also provides a “paper trail” of evaluation if a Teaching Elder or staff person were to come under the criticism of members of the congregation as to the effectiveness of his work.

**Process**

The process of performance review differs among local churches. The review of the Teaching Elder(s) is handled by the Session or a sub-set of Session. In some cases, each Session member is asked to complete an evaluation form about the Teaching Elder, and the results are summarized and communicated by the Personnel Committee or an Executive Committee. In other churches, the performance review of the Teaching Elder(s) is conducted by a subcommittee composed of a smaller number of elders such as the sub-set mentioned above. The MVC recommends that the evaluation be done by a sub-set of Session, a few elders who would approach this task with great sensitivity and seriousness.

When there are other staff members, the Pastor or immediate supervisor generally conducts the evaluation. In some cases, the Pastor performs the review of all other pastors and program staff. There may be a division of labor within the staff for such reviews. A music director might evaluate the choir director and organist. An Assistant Pastor might evaluate program staff. The MVC recommends that each staff person be evaluated by his/her immediate supervisor. To complete an adequate performance review, every church should be able to answer in the affirmative the following questions:

1. Does each staff person, including the Pastor, have a position description?
2. Does each staff person have goals that have emerged from the position description, which both the staff person and his supervisor understand and to which both have agreed should be pursued within the time period to be evaluated?

The results of all evaluations are usually communicated to the Personnel Committee, which can present this information to Session when appropriate.
Chapter 10: The Minister, Session, and Performance Reviews

Forms

The forms used in EPC churches for the annual performance review vary from simple to sophisticated. In general, a performance review form will provide space for comments on the following areas:

1. **Key result area**: major responsibilities as mentioned in the position description. Space may also be allotted beside each major responsibility for specific duties related to each responsibility and comments about the achievement of these duties.

2. **Key projects and initiatives**: new programs or events that were initiated in concert with goals and objectives. What are the new areas of ministry that are being undertaken? Was there a major event or program that was initiated this past year? How successful were they?

3. **General factors and skills related to ministry**: includes a listing of areas that impact the work of the ministry and may be focal points for evaluation and discussion. The following areas are typically included: quantity of work, quality of work, motivation level, vision, goal setting, spiritual life, staff relationships, congregational relationships, problem solving, communication skills, public preaching and teaching, initiative, creativity, work habits, leadership, administration, mentoring/leadership development, planning and decision making.

4. **Specific goals, ideas, emphases or changes for the next year**: one of the major results of the Performance Review should be to establish goals and objectives for the next year. As the position description is reviewed, as the projects and activities of the past year are evaluated, and as the needs, opportunities, and vision for the coming year are assessed, specific goals should emerge that can be put in writing. To a large degree, these goals become the checkpoints for discussion at the next performance review.

5. **Measurements of performance should be conducted on some type of scale**: some may use a three-fold scale (below average, average and above average); others may use a five-fold scale (unacceptable; unsatisfactory, satisfactory; above average; excellent). For the sake of improvement and in a commitment to the good stewardship of our resources, EPC churches through their Session and minister are called to give honest feedback and evaluation to staff members. Some scale will need to be utilized that reflects a straightforward evaluation. See the suggested form at the end of this article.

6. **Other considerations**: often, both the supervisor and the staff member use an evaluation form. Both are instructed to complete the form and then meet to discuss their observations. The performance evaluation may also serve as an opportunity to discuss in more detail the personal development of the staff member. Under this heading, the following questions may be explored:

   a. What are your ministry aspirations for the next three to five years?

   b. What goals would you articulate for your personal and professional development during the next year?

   c. What plans might you formulate to accomplish goals mentioned above?

   d. How would you like to spend your next study leave?
Chapter 10: The Minister, Session, and Performance Reviews

The performance review should also be tailored to deal with the staff person under evaluation. Senior leadership would be evaluated on issues related to vision, staff development, and overall leadership of the church. Other program staff would be evaluated with a greater focus placed on the accomplishment of goals that were established at the beginning of the evaluation process. Support staff would be evaluated with a priority placed on their work skills.

Timing

The timing of a performance review is important to the purposes of the review. Typically, a church year follows the momentum of the school year. Plans for programs and ministries are designed to be implemented during unfolding of the year, often beginning in September as families return from their summer vacation and as school calls children back to their studies.

A major performance review should therefore be scheduled sometime in the late spring. During this review, the work of the previous year can be evaluated, and plans for the new year can be discussed. Some churches also conduct a mid-year review, during the early winter. A mid-year review gives a platform for feedback on the progress to date and for helpful discussion that might assist in the work that has been planned.

Salary Considerations

Salary considerations address two major issues. The first speaks to the adequacy of the base salary of the minister and other staff members. Geography, size of church, and years of ministry will all impact this figure.

The second salary consideration speaks to the annual adjustment in compensation. How does the Session make these decisions? What is a reasonable process to follow in arriving at the recommendations for annual salary adjustments for the staff at a local church?

Each church will develop its own methods of processing these important decisions. One way would be to connect the annual performance review with salary recommendations. For instance, if measurements on the performance review were on a scale of one to five, the Personnel Committee could then ask that it be provided with a number (one to five) representing the summary of the performance review for each minister and staff person. In conjunction with the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee could decide what amount of money would be available for increase in staff compensation.

Some churches take into consideration the annual cost of living increase by making it equal to a satisfactory rating on the review. The staff person who received a rating higher than satisfactory would receive a merit increase above the annual cost of living increase. The staff person who received a rating lower than satisfactory would receive less than the annual cost of living increase.
Chapter 10: The Minister, Session, and Performance Reviews

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff member name</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position title</th>
<th>Period of Review</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of last review</th>
<th>Date of current review</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
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</tbody>
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**KEY RESULT AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC DUTIES</th>
<th>RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(from position description)</td>
<td>(unacceptable-unsatisfactory-satisfactory-above average-excellent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

2. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

**KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

**SKILLS /WORK ISSUES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Administration 1.

2. Quality and quantity of work 2.


5. Setting goals and priorities 5.


**SUMMARY**
**GOALS for Next Work Period**

1. 

2. 

3. 

**COMMENTS**

______________________________   (Evaluator)   date:____________________

______________________________   Evaluatee   date:____________________

___ I agree

___ I disagree

( if you choose not to sign, please submit a written explanation)
Most churches are ill-prepared for the interim period between permanent pastors. The congregation may be buoyed up by such ideas as the ministry of the laity as the way God intends for the church to operate, the multiple gifts of God’s people as resourcing the church for such a time and perhaps a history of handling crises well. Congregations, too, are generally energized by the new challenges presented to them, the opportunities the interim presents for new directions and the whole search process as a stimulation to congregational unity.

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the previous pastor’s leaving, the congregation may be experiencing loss, shock, grief, anger, guilt, or panic. Old issues and unresolved conflict may re-surface during this period. A congregation may not realize that some old but needed leadership retires with the pastor’s resignation. People that have been in the background of church life may begin to assert themselves. A congregation may not be prepared for the new future that a new pastor will bring. These all present opportunities to focus on certain developmental tasks appropriate to the “in-between” times.

When a pastor leaves, there are needs left unattended, which some members of the congregation desire quite intensely, such as the elderly facing their own death and wanting the care of a pastor. Moderating the Session and congregational meetings may need objective leadership. Pastoral representation at community functions may be neglected.

Healing may be needed, especially if the previous pastor left under duress or has left behind a conflicted congregation. Process time is needed to handle change appropriately. Familiarities and established patterns are being challenged. Denial, anger, and bargaining—all part of the normal grief process—need to lead healthily to acceptance. Crises must be dealt with well and utilized. Any sense of hurry needs to be moderated by careful planning and search, and can be handled in the awareness that the pastoral vacancy has been temporarily filled.

A congregation may feel that interim responsibilities can be handled by the associate staff or by lay leadership. In a multiple staff setting, this assumes that the church will accept an Associate as the head of staff as it accepted that person as an Associate. Such is not always the case. It also assumes that the Associate is prepared to be an Interim, “thinks” Interim, and can and does change priorities and style if necessary to do intentional Interim work, rather than continuing in the Associate’s role and adding the head of staff responsibilities to an already busy schedule. In addition, serving as Interim makes it difficult for the Associate to look for a new position in anticipation of the new pastor asking the Associate(s) of his choice. Furthermore, an associate acting as head of staff may find it difficult to return to an associate position once the new pastor has come, should he stay.

If a church does ask a present Associate to serve as Interim Pastor, however (and this is not recommended), much of what is suggested here should be required, including the drawing of a covenant and intentional work on the specific issues of the interim period.

The search for a new Pastor demands a healthy congregation. No church wants its next permanent pastor to be, in effect, an interim, which happens with frequency. An Interim Pastor, equipped for this specialized kind of leadership in a transitional time, can help the church come to that point of health.
Chapter 11: Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry

What is an Interim Pastor?32

An interim time is an “in-between” time. For the church, it is the time between when one pastor leaves and a permanent pastor is installed. The ministry of the church goes on, sometimes in regular and familiar ways, but always with new and unfamiliar challenges. We continue in such a time to be the people of God with the unique and distinct mission committed to us as a church. As to the congregation’s ministry, therefore, there really is no interim period.

Many Interim Pastors have served as a long-term pastors, bringing unique personality, skills, maturity and perspective to the task. The Interim Pastor may also have special skills in handling grief, using conflict positively, and should be one who quickly analyze situations, and enters and leaves a congregation in a healthy way. Interim Pastors should have the ability to recognize unfinished tasks and lead toward their completion before the permanent pastor arrives. The Interim Pastor approached the tasks of the “in-between time” with intentionality, not simply filling the pulpit. The end result should be a congregation in a place of health, ready to receive a new long-term Pastor. An Interim Minister is convinced that this specialized work is a vital part of the church’s mission, not simply a fill-in until the “real” pastor arrives.

Chosen by the Session and approved by the Presbytery, an Interim Pastor should serve under a clearly defined, temporary, and published covenant, doing what a pastor generally and routinely does and more, and within a limited framework of time and goals. The Interim Pastor may serve full-time or part-time for a portion of the interim or for it all, be resident or not, but should not enter the relationship with the intention of becoming a Candidate for the longer term position.

Tasks of an Interim Pastor

Research done by Loren Mead and the Alban Institute, indicates that a congregation in transition generally has five basic areas of need. Mead calls these five areas “developmental tasks.” The order and manner in which they are addressed depend on the specific situation.

Coming to Terms with History

Natural reactions of grief, anger, despair, relief, guilt, panic related to the loss of a pastor need to be resolved. Old and debilitating ways of responding to crises need to be addressed. The “ghosts of pastors past” need to be put to rest. A dearly loved immediate past pastor needs to be released in the minds and hearts of the congregation. If the past pastor was pressured to leave by some in the congregation, healing between “for” and “against” groups needs to occur. Where the church has come from and how it got there needs to be understood, acknowledged, valued, and worked through, whatever is appropriate. Conflicts of long standing need to be resolved. Until this happens, a congregation is less able to face outward and cultivate its missional thinking and practice.

Discovering a New Identity

Churches in transition are no longer defined by their pasts. The Pastor who defined them in many ways is no longer present, and the church will not stay the same. A new identification must

32 “Interim Minister” in this chapter means the same as “interim supply” in G.10-7C.2; all Book of Order references cited are found at the end of this chapter.
develop. While the next Pastor will bring vision to the church, the congregation must discover what, in general terms, it wishes to become in the future.

**Facilitating Shifts of Power**

New leadership is necessary, since the former Pastor was a key in setting tone and direction for the congregation. Some members fade from active service when the Pastor departs. Others get more involved than they have been. If the previous Pastor was a great influence on the congregation, a bold or controversial leader, the more changes in leadership will occur. An Interim Minister can help in leadership shifts, making them positive and appropriate to the changing situation. The Interim Pastor may provide leadership training, giving the new Pastor a cadre of people who know the when, how, and where of church leadership.

**Renewing Denominational Ties**

Part of a church’s identity is its connection with the larger Church. The staff, resources and organization of the EPC will become clearer to a church in transition as it connects more with the denomination in its search process. The Confession, the Catechisms, the Essentials, and the Book of Order, all of which help define us, should become more familiar to the church as it lives through the interim period. Contacts with the Presbytery and General Assembly leaders will be made frequently by the Pastoral Search Committee, with an increased appreciation for their work. An Interim Minister can help a congregation understand its EPC heritage and denominational structure.

**Building Commitment to a New Leadership and a New Future**

The church must move from its past orientation to a future vision. Pastoral styles differ and strengths vary, and the congregation must be open to the individuality of its next pastor. A congregation must be spiritually prepared for its new pastor. A commitment to the new Pastor must be encouraged, especially when that person is identified and called. Shared vision and working relationships can and must develop among the congregation. The church must become forward-looking, appreciating the past but rolling up its sleeves to a new and exciting ministry in the upcoming days. The Interim Minister can engage the congregation in this process.

A congregation must experience the maximum benefit possible in the interim period. The more these tasks are completed, the stronger a people will be for its next pastor. If a congregation assumes that these issues will be successfully addressed without interim leadership, it may be disappointed.

**Steps to Securing an Interim Minister**

1. When the previous Pastor leaves, the Session consults with the Ministerial Committee and determines to seek an Interim Pastor.

2. Session appoints an Interim Search Committee (ISC) as an ad hoc committee of the Session, appointing its chairman, if desired. This should be done before the congregation selects a Pastoral Search Committee.

3. The ISC profiles the Interim Minister it determines to be best suited for the church, considering the church’s special needs in the interim, how long it envisions the interim period to be, possible beginning dates, salary and benefits package and other such
matters as it considers appropriate. It then develops the covenant to be presented to the interim pastoral candidate. (See appendix for a sample covenant.)

4. The ISC may post the opening in the EPC Ministry Staff Opportunity List. The Ministerial Committee may be able to make recommendations of potential Interim Pastors.

5. The ISC studies the potential Interim Pastor’s Personal Information Form (PIF) and prays about the choice(s) it will make for further investigation.

6. The ISC makes contact with the choice(s) it makes to discover availability and gather other information it may seek. Some Interim Ministers may be serving a church at the time another church calls, but may still be available within a month or two of that initial conversation. Contact may also be made with references at this time.

7. The ISC interviews its available choice, further developing and then reviewing the covenant and other pertinent information with the potential Interim Pastor.

9. The ISC recommends the Interim Pastor and the covenant to the Session. The Session issues the invitation (G.10-7).

10. When an Interim Minister is invited, the Session receives the necessary approvals from the Presbytery or ministerial committee, should this committee be empowered to make this decision (G.10-7).

11. Although an installation of an Interim Pastor is not required, it may be a beneficial marker for both the congregation and the Interim Minister. If so, the ISC plans for the installation service in consultation with the Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery. An “installation” of an Interim Pastor, if done, does not require an Administrative Commission of the Presbytery.

12. The Session may ask the ISC to continue during the interim period to act as the Interim Pastor’s advisors, conducting periodic reviews of his covenant and ministry, and planning any and all matters related to his departure.

13. If an Interim Pastor resigns and Session determines that a second Interim Pastor is needed, the ISC repeats its work until the next Interim is secured by the Session.

14. Session dismisses the ISC with thanks when the church has secured a permanent Minister and its work is complete. Recognizing that there may be a gap before the next term of service for the Interim Minister, a reasonable period of transitional compensation should be offered.

Covenanting with the Interim Minister

A church and its Interim Pastor must have a clearly understood working relationship with each other. Unhappy relationships develop when expectations are not clear. A covenant should be drawn, therefore, which fits both the needs of the congregation and the Interim Minister. The expectations of both the church (the Interim Search Committee and the Session) and the Pastor should be thoroughly discussed and expressed in a covenant similar to the example found in this manual. Items included should be the tasks involved, the compensation package (salary, housing, vacation time, insurance, and possibly pension allowance), travel reimbursement, disability, and other such matters as express the desires and priorities of both parties. A congregation may wish to spell out the priorities for the first two or three months of interim ministry. No
assumptions should be made.

The covenant should include a pledge of support and cooperation between the church and the Interim Minister. The length of time before it is reviewed should be made clear. How the covenant is terminated by either party can be spelled out. What happens in the event of the church’s dissolution or the Interim Minister’s death can be written into the covenant. While this is not “Terms of Call” in a technical sense and does not need Presbytery approval, the Ministerial Committee should be consulted and informed.

The covenant should be reviewed by the Interim Search Committee and the Interim Pastor after three months of interim service to see if it reflects the intentions of both the church and the Pastor. Renegotiate, if necessary. If needed, changes should be suggested to the Session. At the same time, the ISC should evaluate the ministry of the Interim. Thereafter, the covenant should be reviewed no less than every six months for the same purposes, should the ministry of the Interim continue to be needed by the church.

This covenant is not intended to restrict ministry, but to release it by clarifying all issues from the start, allowing the church and pastor to do, unimpeded, the critical work the interim period requires.

**Compensation for Interim Ministers**

Each church and Interim must work out a compensation package agreeable to both. The compensation for a full-time interim position differs from a part-time position, of course. As guidelines for the Session, consider these suggestions:

1. Salary should be negotiated based on the church’s current budget and the compensation package of the previous Pastor. It must be remembered that an Interim Pastor is a “real” pastor, often with experience and sometimes with specialized training, and that compensation must be appropriate to the position and experience. In either case (full- or part-time), the benefits package should include health insurance if the Pastor is not covered in another way, as well as pension. Because the Session “invites” rather than “calls” an Interim Minister (G.10-7), the invitation is approved by the Presbytery, but not the compensation package.

2. One option for determining compensation is the unit system. A unit is a block of time, usually three to four hours (a morning, an afternoon, or an evening) compensated at a certain rate for each unit. Using the Interim Pastor Worksheet in the Appendix, the number of hours required for an Interim’s ministry can be determined. Another option is that the Interim is paid a percentage of the former pastor’s compensation (suggested 80%).

3. Travel reimbursement should meet IRS guidelines. If commuting from a distance, reimbursement for that mileage should be included.

4. Business expenses should be reimbursed by the church.

5. Vacation should be determined on the basis of one paid week of vacation for each three months of service (four weeks per year, which is the standard for EPC Teaching Elders). General Assembly and presbytery attendance is not considered vacation.

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33 A rate of $100 per unit would equate to an annual salary of approximately $50,000.
6. If a church owns a manse, its use should be a matter for the church to determine and, if it determines to make it part of the compensation offered, this should be negotiated with the Interim Minister.

**Terminating the Interim Relationship: Giving the Gift of a Healthy Farewell**

An Interim Pastor should plan to leave one to four weeks before the new Pastor arrives, giving the church the opportunity to anticipate its new pastor without too much of an Interim’s influence and a church’s affection for the Interim Minister still intact. What is important is that the Interim Pastor be intentional about the way the interim ministry is concluded. In some situations, it may be appropriate to include the Interim Pastor in the welcoming of the new pastor, though this should be carefully considered before deciding to do so. The late Lyle Schaller, eminent church consultant, suggested that as the conclusion of the interim time nears, the Interim Pastor should think like a predecessor and leave behind a packet of useful information for the next Pastor. This could include church and city directories, maps, telephone numbers, etc.

As the exit approaches there should be expressions of joy and sadness, talk about how the new Pastor and will be received, records put into good order, arrangements made regarding pending weddings, etc., conversations about exact dates for the Interim's break from the congregation, covenant termination, and the planning of an appropriate farewell event for the Interim. A sermon or sermon series reviewing the time together, affirming the congregation as it moves forward, the experience of change and such topics would be appropriate.

An exit interview benefits both the church and the Interim Pastor. The interim period should be evaluated, the work of the Interim discussed, how the congregation is perceived by the Interim, what gains were made and what work needs to be done in the future. Each of the five developmental tasks should be discussed to discover where the congregation is as it enters into a new and exciting phase of life together.

The Interim Pastor should plan a transition conversation with the next Pastor and the Session told that the Interim plans such a talk.

As an Interim approaches the end of the interim period, planning should begin for the next ministry, including an evaluation of the interim time and learnings for the next one. The Interim Minister has been involved in a significant and intense time in a congregation’s life and likely needs a break in order to be fresh for the next assignment. Above all, the Interim Pastor should celebrate with the church, say “good-bye,” and LEAVE!
SAMPLE INTERIM PASTOR COVENANT

BETWEEN _____________________________ Church and the Reverend _____________________________ to provide interim pastoral leadership, it is agreed that the Reverend _____________________________ will begin to serve as Interim Pastor of the _____________________________ Church on ______________. It is understood that this Covenant will be reviewed after three months of service to see if it reflects the expectations of Church and Pastor and thereafter at least every six months, until a permanent pastor is called and installed. During this interim, the congregation and Interim Pastor will work together, with the help of God to:

- Provide for worship and the practice of ministry with the congregation and community.
- Engage in the evaluation of the church, reviewing its past and planning for its future, strengthening the mission and unity of the church.
- Prepare for the coming of a permanent pastor called by the congregation.

By signature on this covenant, the Interim Pastor acknowledges that there is no intent to be considered as the permanent pastor and that at no time will he meet with the Pastoral Search Committee or assist in the search process unless specifically asked to do so by the Session of the church.

SHARED MINISTRY

- The Interim Pastor agrees to provide (full-time / part-time) pastoral leadership and shall be responsible for the following:
  - Preaching and leading the worship of the Church
  - Officiating at baptisms, weddings and funerals as requested
  - Visitation of the sick, shut-ins and counseling members as requested
  - With presbytery approval, serve as Moderator of the Session and congregation
  - Serve as head of staff
  - Attend and resource committees as requested
  - Provide leadership and training for members, including self-study, future planning, membership outreach and stewardship
  - Give intentional leadership to the Five Developmental Tasks of the interim period
  - Represent the church in the community and remain active in the Presbytery and General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church
  - Participate in an evaluation of the interim pastorate at the conclusion of this interim period
  - Other duties:

The church will support and cooperate with the Interim Pastor assuming responsibility for:

- Attending worship services and other meetings
- Continuing financial support of the church and its ministries
- Sustaining lay leadership and shared ministry
- Supporting the pastor in the church’s ministry to the community and the world
- Working on the Five Developmental Tasks of the interim period
- Participating in the Presbytery and General Assembly
- Informing the Interim Pastor of the timing of possible and definite leadership transitions, including Candidate Sundays
- Keeping the Interim Pastor informed of covenant termination
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- Participating in the evaluation process at the end of the interim period

Other:

COMPENSATION
The church agrees to provide the following compensation to the Interim Pastor:

- Base salary, per month
- Housing allowance
- Health insurance
- Pension
- Travel allowance ($____ per mile or ______ allowance)
- Social Security offset
- Vacation (one week for each three months of service)
- Other ______________________________

DISABILITY
In case of disability due to accident or illness, the church shall be responsible for the Interim Pastor’s full salary and benefits at a rate of one week for each week served up to three months of disability.

DEATH
In case of the Interim Pastor’s death, the spouse and/or family shall receive full salary and housing for three months, plus any earned vacation pay.

It is agreed that this covenant shall be in effect for ______ months after which time it may be renewed. It is further agreed that thirty days’ notice shall be given by either the church or the Interim Pastor if either wishes not to renew this covenant. It is also agreed that, when a permanent pastor has been called, this covenant shall conclude as the Session deems best, but, at the most, one week before his installation.

Copies of this Covenant shall be provided to the local church, the Interim Pastor and the ministerial committee of the presbytery.

For the Interim Search Committee ________________________________ Date

For the Session ________________________________ Date

The Interim Pastor ________________________________ Date

For the Presbytery ________________________________ Date
Before the Interim Search Committee interviews possible candidates, here is a checklist of activities in which you see your Interim Pastor involved while with your church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. WORSHIP</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday preparation</td>
<td>_________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday service(s)</td>
<td>_________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special services</td>
<td>_________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings, funerals</td>
<td>_________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>_________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| B. PASTORAL CARE |
|------------------|----------------|
| Hospital visitation | _________ |
| Shut-in visitation | _________ |
| Home visitation | _________ |
| Counseling | _________ |

| C. ADMINISTRATION/LEADERSHIP |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Session | _________ |
| Office work | _________ |
| Committee involvement | _________ |

| D. TEACHING |
|-------------|----------------|
| Adults | _________ |
| Children | _________ |
| Confirmation | _________ |
| Other | _________ |

| E. OUTREACH |
|-------------|----------------|
| Missions | _________ |
| Community | _________ |

| F. STAFF |
|----------|----------------|
| Head of staff leadership | _________ |
| Staff meetings | _________ |

| G. DENOMINATION |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Presbytery | _________ |
| General Assembly | _________ |

| H. EVALUATION AND PLANNING | _________ |

| I. OTHER |
|----------|----------------|
|          | _________ |

Total hours per week required _________
INTERIM PASTOR PROFILE

Name ___________________________ Date __________________

Current address ___________________________ Phone (h) (  ) _____________

State/Zip______________________________ Phone (w) (  ) _____________

Fax: (  )__________________ E-mail:______________________________

Permanent address, if other ________________________________

Presbytery of which you are a member______________

Years in ministry since ordination_____  Retired?  _____Yes  _____No  _____Will be soon

Churches served:  Last full time _______________________________ _________________

Last interim ________________________________

Other recent ministries______________________________

Types of interim positions you wish to serve (check all that apply)

_____ Commuter (Live away, but return home 2-3 days a week)

_____ Regional (Have a home base, but work within a region)

_____ Moving (Will pack up and move)

_____ Part-time (Part-time interim my only employment)

_____ Part-time Retired (Interim plus pension and/or social security)

_____ Tentmaker (Part-time interim plus other work)

Length of time you prefer an interim assignment to last (check all that apply)

_____ 0-5 months_____ 6-9 months_____ 10-13 months _____ 14-18 months

_____ 19-24 months _____ Longer than 24 months

Skills you bring to an interim ministry (rate 0-5, with 5 being the highest rating):

_____ Organizational/Administrative  _____ Evangelism  _____ Other

_____ Counseling  _____ Small group process

_____ Self-study of church  _____ Conflict utilization

_____ Program development  _____ Change management

_____ Visitation/membership development  _____ Stewardship
Helpful Questions for Potential Interim Pastors

What training and/or experience has prepared you for interim ministry?

Write a brief statement of what you believe the interim pastorate to be.

Note any special working restrictions you require (handicap-accessible, absence on special days, etc.).

Describe briefly your style of ministry and leadership.

List preferences regarding interim pastorates (geographic, size of congregation, etc.).

List limitations regarding interim pastorates you would accept (geographic, size, length of assignment, etc.)

Give two (2) telephone references from recent pastorates (permanent or interim):

I will inform the General Assembly Office when I want my name removed from the Interim Pastor availability roster.

Signed_____________________________________________
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BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES
Guidelines for Interim Pastoral Ministry

G.10-7 Temporary Pastoral Relationships

A. When there is no Pastor, a Session may invite a lawfully ordained Minister in good standing or a Commissioned Pastor to enter a temporary pastoral relationship. Although this invitation is not a call as defined in G.9-5, the invitation and authority to preach the Word, to administer sacraments, and to moderate Session must be approved by the Presbytery or by the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission.

B. Ordinarily, a person currently serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is not eligible to be called as Pastor of that church. Should a Search Committee desire to consider any person who has served in a temporary capacity since the pulpit most recently became vacant, it must secure approval by a three-fourths vote of the Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee in order to proceed.

C. Types of temporary pastoral relationships

1. Stated Supply
   A Stated Supply Pastor is invited to serve for a definite period of time of not less than one month and no more than twelve months. The Stated Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to Moderate the Church Session during the time of service. Before the end of any invited period of service, the Session may extend the invitation for an additional period not to exceed twelve months with the approval of the Presbytery or of the Ministerial Committee acting as a Commission.

2. Interim Supply
   An Interim Supply Pastor is invited to serve during the period a congregation is seeking a Pastor. The Interim Supply Pastor may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Session during the time of service.

3. Occasional Supply
   An Occasional Supply Pastor is invited to serve regularly on specified days. Only the Ministerial Committee must approve.
FORMS

The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly grants permission and encourages the photocopying of the following forms for use in presbyteries and local congregations. Many of these forms are available in electronic form at https://www.epc.org/resources/forms.
As EPC leaders called by God to the gospel ministry, we must recognize the eternal significance and responsibility of that call and understand that we are being watched, our actions are being evaluated, our words are being critiqued, and our attitudes are being assessed by others in the church and in the world.

Because our highest call is to do all for the glory of God we must hold ourselves to a high standard of behavior. Therefore, we should:

- **Exalt God as Sovereign Lord of the universe.**

  We should always endeavor to honor, glorify, and worship God, representing Him well in every relationship and in every endeavor.

  *Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.* (Psalm 29:1-2)

- **Emphasize integrity.**

  We are called to walk in humility, but with confidence because God is with us. There is no justification for selfishness, self-centeredness, or ego-driven goals.

  We will hold ourselves to the same level of accountability that we ask of those whom we are leading.

  We desire to be wise stewards of money whether personal funds or ministry funds. Theft, fraud, or the misappropriations of ministry funds or property are inexcusable. We should give an honest accounting of ministry expenses. Gifts of money or other gifts of value should not influence our decisions.

  We should not speak critically of other churches, nor should we purposefully recruit believers from other churches to join our fellowship.

  *Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.* (1 Timothy 4:12)
• **Expect excellence.**

We are called to be faithful to the Bible, applying it to our own lives first as we seek God’s guidance. We should share the truth of the Scriptures with wisdom, grace, and conviction, speaking the truth in love.

We should model integrity when preaching and teaching, acknowledging outside sources when their words or ideas are used.

We should study diligently to understand and promote doctrinal and theological orthodoxy.

We should lead with holiness, humility, and boldness, looking to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4)

We should strive to be trustworthy, to work well with others, and to work wisely. We should strive to be promise-keepers, not compromising spiritual or personal values.

We should welcome opportunities (workshops, seminars, classes) that will challenge our hearts and minds, stimulating spiritual growth.

We should lead with the authority that Jesus gives, coupled with the sacrificial life and attitude that He lived.

We should read the Scriptures regularly, meditate upon them, listen for the leading of the Holy Spirit, and pray for a moldable heart and a spiritually receptive mind.

We should strive to conform to God’s will rather than surrender to human desires and agendas.

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:17)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. (Romans 12:1-3)

• **Embrace compassion.**

We are called to care for those in our charge with love, grace, and forgiveness. We should listen to understand, speak to heal, lovingly confront, and make decisions that promote reconciliation, peace and unity.

We should remember that those we are speaking with are created in the image of God. We should be kind and accepting towards all, although not accepting of unbiblical behavior or values.

We should ensure confidence in private conversations, acknowledging that it may
occasionally be necessary to disclose confidential information, e.g. if that information concerns the immediate danger of bodily harm/loss of life, or when applicable laws mandate reporting.

We should always speak truth in love, recognizing that uncontrolled anger is unacceptable, and that neither gossip nor slander will be tolerated. We should avoid establishing unrealistic expectations for others or ourselves.

_De do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassion-ate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you._ (Ephesians 4:29-32)

We should care for ourselves, as well as others: spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and relationally.

_Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body._ (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

• **Excel in holy behavior.**

_But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do._ (1 Peter 1:15)

_Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul._ (1 Peter 2:11)

_Do not love the world or anything in the world._ (1 John 2:15)

We are called to holy living so we should not place ourselves in compromising situations, either personally or professionally. We should resist the devil and flee from temptation. We should try to identify our vulnerabilities and make specific provisions to safeguard our hearts and minds from these temptations.

We affirm sexuality as a gift from God and seek to honor this gift by conforming to biblical standards.

We should be intentional about regular self-examination.

We should strive towards a life of surrender and a repentant spirit.

• **Engage heart-to-heart.**

_As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another._ (Proverbs 27:17)

It is vital to deliberately place ourselves in relationships where mutual accountability occurs, constructive criticism can be shared without being concerned about responding defensively, where encouragement is the heart beat of these gatherings, and where focus and direction can be shaped in the presence of people who share a similar journey of personal and spiritual growth.
We should welcome accountability from spiritual partners and peers in ministry. We should willingly submit to spiritual discipline should we violate our ordination vows as leaders in the Church.

*And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three [strands] is not quickly torn apart.* (Ecclesiastes 4:12)

- **Empower God’s people.**

  We should motivate, prepare, and mobilize the people of God to impact the world for Christ. This includes inspiring co-workers and other believers to be missional and to intimately connect with the passions of God’s heart.

  We should esteem our co-workers as fellow laborers in the gospel ministry. We should not consider our co-workers as better than other believers, nor should we take for granted our co-worker’s gifts and abilities, time and treasure.

  *Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.* (Ephesians 4:12)

As a leader in Christ’s Church, and as one who represents the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, I commit to these Ethical Affirmations for EPC Leaders.

*Signature ____________________________  Date ____________________________

*Printed Name ___________________________

---The 35th General Assembly (June 2015) adopted the “Ethical Affirmations for EPC Leaders” for use with Candidates Under Care, and strongly encouraged its use in EPC presbyteries and churches."
MINISTERIAL OBLIGATION

It is my desire to be an ordained Teaching Elder of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. As evidence of my desire and commitment, I subscribe to the Ministerial Obligation below and thereafter inscribe my name.

I reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ as my own personal Lord and Savior.

I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

I sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.

I promise that, if at any time I find myself out of accord with the system of doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church I will, on my own initiative, make known to my Presbytery the change which has taken place in my views since the assumption of these vows.

I affirm and adopt the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception.

I subscribe to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

I promise subjection to my fellow presbyters in the Lord.

I have been induced, as far as I know my own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love of God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son.

I promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto me on that account.

I will seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all my duties as a Christian and a Minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relative, private or public, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in my manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make me overseer.

I do receive and adopt these vows as a true statement of my faith, commitment, and obligation and I do resolve and promise to exercise my calling to the Gospel ministry in obedience to these vows.

Whereof I, an ordained minister, do hereby inscribe my name

this _____ day of ________________, 20_____.

Signature: ____________________________  Printed Name: ____________________________

Date: ________________________________
TERMS OF CALL – MINISTER

The __________________________________________ Evangelical Presbyterian Church of
___________________________________, feeling led by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have covenanted together
to call you, ________________________________________ as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor. In issuing this
call to you to be our ___________________________ and spiritual leader, we commit ourselves to support you
in every way. We commit ourselves to support you in prayer, in participation in the work of ministry, and
in your material needs. We initially commit ourselves as follows:

1. Annual Cash Salary $________
2. Housing Allowance $_________ (or) 3. Manse & Utilities $______________
4. Car Allowance $_____________ or Mileage reimbursement of: ________________
5. Amount (10% minimum) of gross salary (salary plus housing) for government approved
   pension plan $______________
6. EPC Group Insurance for you and your family
7. Annual vacation of four weeks
8. Study leave (two week minimum, cumulative up to six weeks)
9. Other reimbursable accounts: (study/book account, travel for denominational meetings, etc.)

As Associate or Assistant Pastor your primary responsibilities will be:

As Assistant Pastor, this call is extended to you for ________ years, beginning ____________________ (date).

We commit ourselves to continue this remuneration as long as you continue as our Pastor/Associate
Pastor/Assistant Pastor. We commit ourselves to review this pledge annually and adjust it appropriately
(considering all applicable factors, including changes in the cost of living). In addition, we commit
ourselves to paying the expense related to your move up to:

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the congregation/session this
______________ day of ____________________________, 20 ____________

___________________________________________   ______ _______________________________________
Clerk of Meeting                         Chairman of Search Committee

I, ________________________, having moderated the congregational/session meeting which extended the call to
______________ for ministerial services, certify that the call was made in complete conformity with the Book of
Government, and that the persons signing the call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation/session.

____________________________________________
Moderator of the Meeting
Terms of Call - ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE CALL -- Minister

Name of Minister: __________________________

A. By the Church’s Presbytery

       Action of the Ministerial Committee

       This call has been reviewed by the Ministerial Committee and found to be in order. The Committee recommends that Presbytery approve / not approve this call.

       Date of Action: _______________   Chairman: ________________________________

B. Acceptance of the Call

       This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

       Date of Acceptance: ___________   Signature: ________________________________

C. Beginning Date of Ministry

       Ministry to begin on: ________________

D. I hereby certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by:

       _____________________________ Presbytery, meeting on _________________.

       (Date)

       Signed, _____________________________________________________
       (Stated Clerk of Presbytery)
Terms of Call Attachment

Church/ location of ordination and/or installation:

__________________________________________________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________________________________________

Time: _____________________________________________________________________________

Commission members (minimum of 5.) The Ruling Elders must be represent at least 2 churches:

1. TE _______________________________ Church ________________________________
2. TE _______________________________ Church ________________________________
3. RE _______________________________ Church ________________________________
4. RE _______________________________ Church ________________________________
5. RE _______________________________ Church ________________________________
6. _______________________________ Church ________________________________
7. _______________________________ Church ________________________________
8. _______________________________ Church ________________________________
9. _______________________________ Church ________________________________
10. _______________________________ Church ________________________________

(Use back of page for additional names)

When completed return this document by mail or email attachment to:

___________________________________________________, Ministerial Committee Chairman

Address/email: _________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________, Stated Clerk

Address/email: _________________________________________________________________
TERMS OF CALL - EVANGELIST

The Presbytery of ____________________________, feeling led by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, have covenanted together to call you, __________________________ as an Evangelist. In issuing this call we commit ourselves to support you in prayer, in participation in the work of ministry, and to assist you in the development of your support income.

1. Annual Cash Salary $_____________________
2. Housing Allowance $____________________
4. Car Allowance $__________________ or mileage reimbursement of ____________
5. Amount (10% minimum) of gross salary (salary plus housing) for government approved pension plan $______________
6. EPC Group Insurance for you and your family
7. Annual vacation of four weeks
8. Study leave (two week minimum, cumulative up to six weeks)
9. Other reimbursable accounts: (study/book account, travel for denominational meetings, moving, etc.)

We authorize this level of support as long as you remain as an Evangelist under the charge of this Presbytery. We promise to review the terms of this authorization annually and to seek to adjust it appropriately (considering all applicable factors, including changes in cost of living). In addition, we commit ourselves to paying the expense related to your move to the field.

In order that you may fulfill the responsibilities assigned to you by virtue of this call, we also grant you the special powers as designated below. These powers are prescribed in the Book of Government (9-5C) of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

☐ To share the Gospel
☐ To administer the sacraments
☐ To develop a church
☐ To conduct preparational meetings of such church
☐ To oversee the required preparation of Elders and Deacons
☐ To receive and dismiss members

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the Presbytery this ______ day of ___________ 20 ______. We regard your call to this work as being in the exercise of your ministry for tax purposes and in furtherance of the purposes of your ordination.

_________________________________________   _________________________________________
Stated Clerk of Presbytery               Chairman, Ministerial Committee
Terms of Call - ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE CALL -- Evangelist

Name of Minister: ________________________________

A. By the Church’s Presbytery

  Action of the Ministerial Committee

  This call has been reviewed by the Ministerial Committee and found to be in order. The Committee recommends that Presbytery approve / not approve this call.

  Date of Action: ________________ Chairman: ________________________________

B. Acceptance of the Call

  This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

  Date of Acceptance: ________________ Signature: ________________________________

C. Beginning Date of Ministry

  Ministry to begin on: _____________________________

D. I hereby certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by:

  ________________________________ Presbytery, meeting on __________________________. (Date)

  Signed, ________________________________
  (Stated Clerk of Presbytery)
The Committee on World Outreach, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, feeling led by the Holy Spirit, has covenanted together to call you, __________________________ as Missionary. In issuing this call to be our Missionary, we commit ourselves in cooperation with your presbytery and churches of this denomination to support you in every way. We commit ourselves especially to uphold you in prayer, and to assist you in the development of your support account.

1. Annual cash salary $___________
2. Foreign cost of living adjustment $___________
3. Housing allowance $___________
4. Rent and utilities allowance $___________
5. Social Security allowance $___________
6. Amount (10% minimum) of gross salary for government approved pension plan $___________
7. EPC group insurance for you and your family (Indicate amount for plan chosen)
   - EPC Plan $___________
   - Agency Plan $___________
8. Administrative cost factors $___________
9. Ministry related expenses $___________
10. Annual vacation leave of four weeks/or one month
11. Study leave (two weeks, cumulative for four years for career missionaries serving abroad, cumulative for three years for career missionaries in domestic service)
12. Study Leave Allowance ($800 for career missionaries) $___________
13. Other allowances $___________
14. Total annual support $___________

We authorize this level of support as long as you remain as a Missionary under the charge of the Committee on World Outreach. We promise to review the terms of this authorization annually and to adjust it appropriately (considering all applicable factors, including changes in cost of living).

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the Committee on World Outreach this __________ day of ______________, 20 __________.

_________________________________  _____________________________________
World Outreach Director  Chairman, World Outreach Committee

EPC Form 2015
1st Copy – Recipient Call  2nd Copy – World Outreach Committee  3rd Copy – Ministerial Committee  4th Copy – Presbytery File
ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE CALL -- Missionary

Name of Minister: _____________________________________________________________

A. By the Minister's Presbytery

Action of the Ministerial Committee

This call has been reviewed by the Ministerial Committee and found to be in order. The Committee recommends that Presbytery approve / not approve this call.

Date of Action: ________________ Chairman: ________________________________

B. Acceptance of the Call

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of Acceptance: ________________ Signature: ______________________________

C. Beginning Date of Ministry

Ministry to begin on: ________________

D. We certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by the Committee on world Outreach at its ____________________________ meeting.

(Date)

I hereby certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by:

________________________ Presbytery, meeting on ____________________.

(Date)

Signed, __________________________

(Stated Clerk of Presbytery)
CALL TO A VALIDATED MINISTRY
OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of _______________________________, being satisfied with your qualifications as a Minister of the Word, and trusting that your ministry will:

• Be in demonstrable conformity with the mission of God’s people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Book of Order of this Church;
• Be appropriate in nature to the Gospel ministry;
• Give evidence of fidelity to God’s Word and faithfulness to the Gospel;
• Be carried on in accountability for its spiritual character and ecclesiastical conduct to the Presbytery and other organizations and agencies of this Church;

Solemnly acknowledges that you, ____________________________________________
(Name of Teaching Elder)

have been called to perform a special ministry as
________________________________________________________
(Pastor/Teacher/Evangelist/Administrator/Chaplain -- Position title)
in the employ of
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
(Name and address of calling agency)

We covenant with you our support and encouragement as together we seek to serve the Lord, who calls us to ministry in every aspect of life. We join you in the goals and working relationships agreed upon and in your commitment to fulfill your ministry as described below:

In its concern for the welfare of its members, the presbytery promises to review this call annually.
Signed,
Presbytery Representative: _______________________________ Date _____________

Teaching Elder accepting call: _______________________________ Date: __________

This call was approved and renewed for the year 20 _____________ on (Date) _____________

Calling Agency Representative: _______________________________

EPC Form 2015
Original to person called. Copies to: (1) Presbytery Stated Clerk, (2) Ministerial Committee, (3) Calling Agency
ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE CALL TO SERVE OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of ____________________________ of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, has agreed to approve the call by ____________________________ to have you, ____________________________, serve as ____________________________. In approving this call to you to serve in this capacity outside the bounds of presbytery, we commit ourselves to support you in prayer, in fellowship and in the spiritual work of ministry.

This document confirms that we have assigned and designated you to perform the ministerial services, in fulfillment of the ministry, and with the calling agency, all as described in the attached Call to a Validated Ministry outside the Bounds of Presbytery. We recognize these services as furthering the purposes of your ordination in the exercise of your ministry.

Your ministry pursuant to this Call is to be performed under the ecclesiastical authority, and as a ministry agent, of this Church. However, you are not an agent of this Church in the legal sense. Thus, you may not exercise any authority to bind this Church to any contracts or agreements, nor can you commit this church to fulfill any other legal obligation.

As a minister serving outside the bounds of presbytery, you will be employed by the calling agency, not this Church. You will be subject to the supervision of your calling agency with respect to the time, place or manner of your ministry. Any financial relationships or legal accountability regarding your ministry will be undertaken solely through the calling agency. Your accountability to us is related solely to spiritual and ecclesiastical matters.

Your eligibility to claim any special tax benefits or privileges available to a minister of the gospel under federal law may be jeopardized if any of the following apply to your ministry as described above: 1) the calling agency did not arrange with the Church for your services; 2) you perform services for the calling agency that other employees of the calling agency who are not ministers are performing; or 3) you perform the same services before and after obtaining this document from us.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the Presbytery as of this date of ____________________________, 20____.

_____________________________________     _______________________________________
(Stated Clerk)      (Ministerial Committee Chairman)

I, ____________________________________, having moderated the meeting which extended the call to ____________________________ for ministerial services, certify that the call was made in complete conformity with the Book of Government, and that the persons signing the call were authorized to do so by vote of the Presbytery.

_____________________________________
(Moderator of the Meeting)
APPLICATION FORM FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINCY
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(Form C-1)

Date: ____________________

BASIC INFORMATION

Full Name: _________________________________________________ Date of Birth: ________________
(Last)  (First)  (Middle)

Address: _______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
(City)  (State)  (Zip)

Preferred Phone: (        ) ____________________________  □ Home  □ Work  □ Cell

Alternate Phone: (        ) ____________________________  □ Home  □ Work  □ Cell

Preferred Email: ____________________________________________________  □ Personal  □ Business

Alternate Email: ____________________________________________________  □ Personal  □ Business

Ordained? □ Yes  □ No  Ordained by: ________________________________

Member of Presbytery (or church): ________________________________________________

Candidate under care of __________________________ Presbytery

If currently endorsed, list endorsing body: _____________________________________________

Preferred Branch of Service: __________  □ Active Duty  □ Reserve/Guard  □ Candidate

Recuriter (Name/Address/Phone/Email):

If currently serving, list rank and present assignment:
Name: __________________________________________

Previous Military Service (use additional page if necessary)

REASON FOR SEEKING CHAPLAINCY
Describe the essential reasons why you wish to serve in the military chaplaincy. Use additional page if necessary.

QUALIFICATIONS
Briefly indicate what qualifications you have for service in the military chaplaincy. Use additional page if necessary.

Return completed forms to:

Chaplains Work and Care Committee ◊ Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Dr., Suite 567 ◊ Livonia, MI 48152-7912
734-742-2020 ◊ Fax: 734-742-2033 ◊ epchurch@epc.org ◊ www.epc.org
APPLICATION FORM FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCY
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
(Form C-2)

Date: ____________________________

BASIC INFORMATION

Full Name: _____________________________________________________
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address: _______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
(City) (State) (Zip)

Preferred Phone: (        ) ____________________________
Home Work Cell

Alternate Phone: (        ) ____________________________
Home Work Cell

Preferred Email: _______________________________________________________
Personal Business

Alternate Email: _______________________________________________________
Personal Business

Ordained? ☐ Yes ☐ No  Ordained by: ____________________________________________

Member of Presbytery (or church): _____________________________________________

Candidate under care of ________________________ Presbytery

Agency giving accreditation: _________________________________________________

If currently endorsed, list endorsing body: ________________________________
Name: ________________________________________________

REASON FOR SEEKING CHAPLAINCY
Describe what type of institutional chaplaincy are you seeking and why. Use additional page if necessary.

QUALIFICATIONS
Briefly indicate what qualifications you have for institutional chaplaincy (past experience, employment, education, etc.). Use additional page if necessary.

Return completed forms to:
Chaplains Work and Care Committee ◊ Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Dr., Suite 567 ◊ Livonia, MI 48152-7912
734-742-2020 ◊ Fax: 734-742-2033 ◊ epchurch@epc.org ◊ www.epc.org

EPC Form 2015
SESSION ENDORSEMENT FORM

This form should be used to communicate session's endorsement of the applicant to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

Name of Member: ___________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________

Preferred Phone: (       ) ___________________ E-mail: _____________________________
Name of Church: ___________________________ Length of membership: _____________
Name & phone of Elder completing this form: ____________________________________________

1. What evidence/testimony does this person give of his salvation through death in Christ?

2. What evidence does this person give/demonstrate of his call to the gospel ministry?

3. Please mention in specific detail your observations regarding this person’s potential fulfillment of the qualifications mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Mention specific strengths and weaknesses.

4. How do you evaluate this person’s potential giftedness for the Gospel Ministry? Does the session recommend this applicant for candidacy? Does this recommendation have any qualifications? If so, what?

5. Does the person seem to sincerely desire to pursue God’s will relative to the Gospel Ministry?

STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION: We, the Session of ____________________________, certify that the above applicant has been a member of this church since ________________ and we commend this member to the presbytery as an applicant for candidacy in the Gospel Ministry.

___________________________________  _________________________________
Moderator of Session    Clerk of Session

Date: ______________________________

EPC Form 2015
APPLICATION TO COME UNDER CARE OF PRESBYTERY

Name of Applicant: _______________________________________________________________

Mailing Address: __________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

Preferred Phone: (    ) ________________

E-mail: ____________________________ Date of Birth: ______________

Name of Pastor: ____________________________

Name of Ruling Elder who knows you well: _______________________________

Name of Presbytery to which you are applying: _______________________________

Name of School/College/Seminary: _______________________________________________

Year of anticipated graduation: ____________ Anticipated Degree: ____________

Please check: _____ Male  _____ Female

Session endorsement: ________________ (date)

☐ Seeking to be received as a candidate with extraordinary circumstances (G.11-21)

Applicant’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ______________

This is to certify that ____________________________ has been taken under care of the

Ministerial/Candidates Committee of the Presbytery of ____________________________

Signed: ____________________________, Stated Clerk

EPC Form 2015
PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE
(To be completed by the Applicant and returned to the Ministerial/Candidate Committee along with the Application to Come Under Care)

NAME: ____________________________________________ DATE: ________________

1. Describe what factors have influenced you to consider vocational Christian service.

2. What kind of vocational ministry are you contemplating? How will ordination within the EPC assist you in accomplishing this ministry?

3. Describe how you are cultivating your relationship with God. What are you doing in the areas of prayer, Bible reading and study, reading of Christian literature?

4. Describe your current and past involvement in the local church and/or in other areas of service, teaching, witness, and ministry. Give approximate dates for each.
CRITERIA FOR CANDIDATE EVALUATION
(For use by Sessions and Candidate Committees in evaluating applicants for the Gospel Ministry)

1. Evidence of a call to the Gospel Ministry

2. Evidence of giftedness for the Gospel Ministry

3. Observations of the qualifications mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

4. Areas of service in the past that reveal God’s blessings upon his ministry

5. Effectiveness in communication:
   • Public speaking
   • Written communication
   • Listening skills

6. Indications of interpersonal skills
   • Able to connect with others
   • Eye contact, manner, demeanor
   • Motivational abilities, leadership skills

7. Administration
   • Goal setting and decision making abilities
   • Signs of success in planning, organizing, delegating, recruiting, training

8. Integrity
   • Indications that applicant is trustworthy, truthful, dependable, responsible
   • Any concerns about applicant’s handling of confidentiality, sexual purity, financial freedom

9. Sense of personal identity
   • Is the applicant aware of his/her strengths, weaknesses, spiritual gifts
   • Willing to take correction and criticism with discernment
   • Evidence of appropriate initiative, assertiveness, self-motivation, appropriate boldness, self-esteem, self-confidence, stability, stress management skills, sense of direction
   • Positive and faith-filled outlook

10. Personal discipline
    • Gives evidence of practicing spiritual disciplines
    • Use of time

11. Knowledge
    • Shows evidence of intellectual abilities for seminary and ministry
    • Able to handle the responsibilities of study, reflection, wise governance that fall on the minister

EPC Form 2015
CERTIFICATE OF RECEPTION AS A CANDIDATE UNDER CARE
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

This is to certify that ____________________________________________

(Name)

was received under the care of __________________________ Presbytery, in

(Name of Presbytery)

session at __________________________ on ________________

(Place) (Date)

according to the provisions of Chapter 11 of the Book of Government.

A service of recognition will be (was) conducted by Presbytery at ______________

(Place)

on _________________. Presbytery, after consultation with the candidate,

(Date and Time)

Minister and Session assigned ___________________________ to serve as Ministerial

(Name)

Advisor and ______________________________ Church of

(Name of Congregation)

_________________________________________ to serve as sponsoring congregation.

(City/State)

Signed ____________________________, Stated Clerk

Date: ________________

Send a copy of this form to the Office of the Stated Clerk, Evangelical Presbyterian Church,
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Livonia MI 48152

EPC Form 2015
REFERENCE CHECK FORM

To be used in a telephone interview with those listed in Candidate’s PIF References

Name of Candidate: ________________________________

Name of Reference: _______________________________ Date of Contact: ___________

“The candidate has authorized us to contact you as a reference. He has signed a statement indicating that you are released from any claims or liabilities arising from your responses about him/her made in good faith and without malice.”

1. What is your relationship to the candidate?

2. How long have you known the candidate and how well do you know the candidate?

3. The candidate is requesting to be under our supervision leading to ordination as a minister of the Gospel (or ministry as a military/institutional chaplain). How well suited do you think the candidate is to pursue such a work?

4. How does the candidate relate to children, teens, peers, older adults?

5. What are your opinions about the candidate’s Christian life and how he relates his Christian faith to his work and to others?

6. What are your thoughts about the candidate’s moral and ethical behavior?

7. Is there anything I have not asked but that I should know about this person in making a decision about endorsing him for the ministry?

EPC Form 2015
**ITEMS SENT AND RECEIVED**

*For use by Chairman of Ministerial/Candidates Committee with Candidates*

Candidate’s Name: ________________________________

**To be received and evaluated before recommending candidacy to the presbytery:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date Sent</th>
<th>Received</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Session Approval Form</td>
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<td>The Candidacy Request Form</td>
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<td>The PIF Form</td>
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<td>The Preliminary Questionnaire</td>
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<td>Report of Physical Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report from Psychological/Career Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference Checks</td>
<td>Date Assigned</td>
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Committee member assigned to check references: ________________________________

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**To be received and evaluated during candidate’s time under care:**

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date Sent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Statement of Faith, part 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement of Faith, part 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisor’s Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommended Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exegesis Paper: Text Assigned: ______</td>
<td>Date Assigned</td>
<td>Received</td>
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</table>

EPC Form 2015
CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT OF FAITH (PART 1)

CANDIDATE’S NAME: ___________________________   DATE: _______________

Please attach a brief, statement of your own beliefs in your own words about the following:

1. The Bible (Bibliology)

2. God the Father (theology proper)

3. Jesus Christ (Christology)

4. The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

5. Mankind (Anthropology)

6. Sin (Hamartiology)

7. Salvation (Soteriology)

8. Satan

9. Angels and Demons

10. The Church (Ecclesiology)

11. The Spiritual Life of the Believer

12. Future Things (Eschatology)

13. Evangelism

14. Spiritual Gifts

EPC Form March 2015
REFORMED READING LIST

THEOLOGY


Clowney, Edmund P. *The Church,* InterVarsity, 1005.


BIBLICAL THEOLOGY


Williams, Michael D. *Far as the Church is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption.* P&R, 2005
SACRAMENTS


Glodo, Michael J. “*Covenant Sign and Seal*” Available widely on various internet sites including www.thirdmill.org.


Wallace, Ronald S. *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments*.

REFORMED TRADITION


**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**


ADVISOR’S REPORT

This report is provided for a candidate’s advisor and should be used in the Advisor’s annual report about the candidate. It should be filled in and directed to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee for distribution at the last presbytery meeting of the year.

ADVISOR’S NAME: ________________________________
PHONE: ___________ DATE: _______ EMAIL: __________________________

CANDIDATE’S NAME: ________________________________

1. In what ways have you communicated with and spent time with this candidate during the past year?

2. Please share an update regarding the candidate’s personal, intellectual, academic and vocational growth.

3. Are there any concerns and prayer requests that you or the candidate would like to communicate to the presbytery? Are there any areas in which presbytery can take a more active role in the life of this candidate?
CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT OF FAITH (PART 2)
Integration

CANDIDATE’S NAME: _______________________________   DATE: _______________

Please attach your answers to these questions and return it to the Chair of the Candidates Care or Ministerial Committee before you are scheduled to meet with that committee for your oral ordination examinations.

1. State in your own words your view of the Scriptures and the place the Scriptures will have in your ministry.

2. What distinctions of the Reformed faith appeal to you?

3. What/Who is the Holy Spirit and how important is his ministry?

4. What is your position on women in leadership roles in the church?

5. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Presbyterian form of government?

6. Explain in your own words your philosophy of ministry.

7. Describe your approach personally and as a pastor in a local church to evangelism.

8. As you reflect on your life, explain your sense of call to ministry.

9. Elaborate on your convictions about personal accountability in your life and in the lives of Christians to whom you might minister.

EPC Form 2015
REQUEST FOR ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS

For Candidates Under Care or Ordained Ministers Transferring from non-Reformed Traditions

Please complete this request form and send with Personal Information Form to:

Rev. Dr. Ed McCallum, Assistant Stated Clerk
Office of the General Assembly
17197 N Laurel Park Dr. Suite 567
Livonia MI 48152-7912
Phone: 734-742-2020 Fax: 734-742-2033 E-mail: ed.mccallum@epc.org

Name of Candidate/Transferee: ________________________________ Presbytery: ________________
If currently ordained: Ordained by __________________________ Ordination Date: __________
Candidate: Church membership: _______________________ Date received as church member: ______

Date received as Candidate: _______ Advisor: __________________________
If candidate transferred: Former EPC Presbytery: __________________________
Length of Candidacy: __________ Date of Transfer: __________

Seminary: _______________________ Graduation date/degree: __________ ☐ CEEP Program
Proposed exam date(s): __________ Being considered for a call as: __________________________

NOTE: The three ordination examinations must be taken as a unit within a three week time period.

To be eligible to sit for ordination exams, required documents must be in candidate’s file:

☐ Copy of college and post-graduate transcripts ☐ Personal Information Form
☐ Medical statement from physician ☐ Psychological evaluation results
☐ Background check ☐ Ethical Affirmations document signed

Send exams to: __________________________, Proctor
Proctor’s relationship to candidate: __________________________
Address: __________________________________________
_________________________________________ Email: ____________________________________

I certify that the above named candidate/transferee has completed the required course of study and is now fully prepared in the judgment of the candidate’s Advisor and the Candidates Care or Ministerial Committee to take the written examinations. I further certify that the information above is correct and that the candidate’s file is complete.

Signed, __________________________________________, Chairman, Candidates/Ministerial Committee
Presbytery: __________________________ Date: __________

If this request is for a retake of any examination not previously sustained, indicate which exam is needed and the date of prior testing. Second and third attempts may be taken no sooner than 30 days following the previous examination. Should a fourth attempt be necessary, six months must elapse to insure adequate preparation and study time.

1. English Bible ☐ 2nd attempt ☐ 3rd attempt ☐ 4th attempt Date of prior test: __________
2. Theology & Sacraments ☐ 2nd attempt ☐ 3rd attempt ☐ 4th attempt Date of prior test: __________
3. Polity ☐ 2nd attempt ☐ 3rd attempt ☐ 4th attempt Date of prior test: __________

EPC Form 2015
TERMINATION OF CANDIDACY FORM

Name of Candidate: ________________________________

Mailing Address: __________________________________

Telephone: _______________ Email: __________________

Name of Presbytery: ________________________________

Date of Commencement of Candidacy: ________________

Reasons for Termination of Candidacy:

Dates and results of communication of intent to terminate:

Written Communication
   Committee Representative: _______________ Date: __________
   Results:

   Personal Meeting:
   Committee Representative: _______________ Date: __________
   Results:

This is to certify that the candidacy of ___________________________ has been
terminated by action of the ____________________________ Presbytery.

Signed: ________________________________________________
       Candidates/Ministerial Chairman                        Stated Clerk

       Date: ______________________________

Send a copy of this form to the Office of the Stated Clerk, Evangelical Presbyterian Church,
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Livonia MI  48152

EPC Form 2015
Ordinarily, the ordaining/installing Presbytery will appoint an administrative commission to conduct a worship service at a date and time approved by the Presbytery. A sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached. The person presiding shall recount the conditions necessary for ordination and/or installation, the solemnity of the event and its importance in the life of the Church.\(^{34}\)

SUGGESTED ORDER OF WORSHIP

*It is appropriate for various members of the Administrative Commission to lead assigned parts of the service.*

**Call to Worship**

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100:1-5 (NIV))

**Hymn of Praise**

**Invocation**

God of grace, You have given us minds to know you, hearts to love you, and voices to sing your praise. Fill us with your Spirit, that we may celebrate your glory and worship you in spirit and in truth through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*[The Lord’s Prayer and/or Apostle’s Creed may be added here]*

**Welcome and Introduction of Commission**

**Scripture Reading**

**Anthem, Special Music or Hymn**

**Announcements, Offering and Offertory**

**Sermon**

\(^{34}\) G.13-1A
**Hymn**

**Explanation of the Office of Teaching Elder**
The one presiding for the Commission may give appropriate introductory remarks recounting the conditions necessary for ordination and/or installation, the solemnity of the event and its importance in the life of the Church, and then proceed with an explanation of the office of Teaching Elder.

According to Scripture, those who hold the office of Teaching Elder should be sound in faith and have an aptitude for teaching. Their lives should reflect holiness and discipline that brings honor to Christ. Pastors are to preach and expound the Word, be God’s prophet to the people, and the people’s priest before God. Pastors lead the church in worship, celebrate the sacraments, and oversee the education, nurture, and mission of the church. As the law of love places certain responsibilities upon each Christian, the Pastor is especially bound to fulfill those responsibilities and to be an example to all.35

The members of this congregation/Session36 have elected you to serve as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor, and you are now required to answer the prescribed questions.

**Administration of the Ordination Vows**
*For a candidate being ordained and installed and for one coming into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from some other tradition, the person presiding shall propose the following vows:*37

1. Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior?

2. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

3. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

4. Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with the system of doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

5. Do you affirm and adopt the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception?

6. Do you subscribe to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?

---

35 Based on G.9-5A.2
36 If ordaining/installing an Assistant Pastor, use “Session” (G.10-6A)
37 G.13-2A, B
7. Do you promise subjection to your fellow Presbyters in the Lord?

8. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy Ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the gospel of His Son?

9. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

For a candidate previously ordained in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the person presiding shall propose the following vows:

Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations?

The person presiding shall administer the following installation vows for those being installed to office in an EPC congregation:

1. Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a Teaching Elder, whether personal, or interpersonal, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the congregation of which God is making you overseer?

2. Are you now willing to accept the call of this church as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor, and, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties required of that office?

Questions to the congregation

When the candidate has responded affirmatively to the questions, the person officiating shall address the following questions to the congregation:

1. Are you, the members of this congregation, ready to receive ________________ as your Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor?

2. Do you promise to submit to ________________ in matters of spiritual discipline, and to receive with humility and love the word of truth?

3. Do you promise to support your Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor with your prayers, to give encouragement in __________ work, and to assist __________ in every way as __________ seeks to instruct you in the things of the Lord and to lead you in the building of the Kingdom of God in this place?

4. Do you recommit yourselves to fulfill the terms of the call you have extended and to make provision for your Pastor's needs that the name of Christ might be glorified?

---

38 G.13-2C
The Act of Ordination/Installation
[When the congregation has responded affirmatively, the one being ordained/installed shall kneel and the members of the ordaining Court or Commission shall lay hands on Ordinand(s).\textsuperscript{39} In the case of a Teaching Elder previously ordained in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the laying on of hands may be omitted.]

God, our Father, we give you thanks for calling _____________ to the office of Teaching Elder in this church. In obedience to your calling, we lay hands on _______ and ordain/install _______ to this office. We pray that You will fill ____________ freshly with your Holy Spirit and enable _______ to faithfully serve You and the people to whom you have given him/her charge, through the name of The Good Shepherd, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Declaration of Ordination/Installation
Following prayer, the one being ordained/installed stands and the one presiding makes the following declaration:

By the authority of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of _____________, I declare that ________________ has been ordained to the Gospel ministry of this Church, and that ________________ has been duly and properly installed as Pastor of this congregation, agreeable to the Word of God and the laws of this Church. As such ____________ is entitled to be given support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

All members of the Commission (and any other ruling and teaching elders present) may give the new Pastor an appropriate greeting.

Charge to the Pastor

Charge to the Congregation

Hymn

Appreciation and Dismissal of Search Committee

Benediction (usually by the one who was ordained/installated)
MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION TO ORDAIN AND/OR INSTALL

The Reverend ________________________, as pastor of ________________________________ Church.

The Commission, according to the appointment of ________________________________ Presbytery, met at ______________________________ Church with Teaching Elders ________________________________ and Ruling Elders ________________________________ present, and was opened with prayer by TE / RE ______________________. ___________________________________________ was/were present as corresponding members. There was a quorum present. TE / RE ________________________ was elected Moderator and TE / RE ________________________ Clerk. TE / RE ________________________ presided and led the congregation in a worship service. TE / RE ________________________ preached from ____________________ after which TE / RE ________________________ recited the proceedings of presbytery leading up to this service, and propounded the constitutional questions to both the minister and the congregation. These being answered in the affirmative, ________________________ was [ordained with prayers and the laying on of hands of the presbytery and] installed as pastor of ________________________________ Church, agreeably to the Word of God and the form of government. The charge to the pastor was delivered by TE / RE ________________________.

The charge to the congregation was delivered by TE / TE ________________________________.

The service was concluded with the benediction pronounced by the newly installed Pastor.

The Minutes were read and approved, and the Commission closed with prayer by TE / RE ________________________.

__________________________________________ (Commission Chair)  __________________________ (Commission Clerk)

__________________________________________ (Date)

EPC Form 2015
CHECKLIST FOR CANDIDATES COMING UNDER CARE OF PRESBYTERY

☐ 1. Membership in EPC church for a minimum of six months (G.11-2A)
☐ 2. Endorsement form received from church session (page 128, Procedure Manual)
☐ 3. Examined and recommended by the Ministerial or Candidates Care Committee (G.11-2B)
☐ 4. Examined satisfactorily in (G.11-2C):
   ☐ Christian experience and growth
   ☐ Motives for seeking ordination
   ☐ Personal call to ministry
☐ 5. Candidate responded affirmatively to questions asked by Moderator (G.11-2C)
☐ 6. Charge given to the candidate (G.11-2C)
☐ 7. Advisor assigned to candidate (G.11-2E)

Sample wording for minutes:
_______ (name), having been a member of _________________(church name) for at least six months, and having been endorsed by that church's Session as a candidate to come under care of the Presbytery, was examined by the ______ Committee and recommended for approval as a Candidate Under Care. In accordance with G.11-2C, the Presbytery examined _____________(name) in Christian experience and growth, motives for seeking ordination and personal call to ministry and approved him/her as a Candidate Under Care of the ______________ Presbytery.  [On motion, the Presbytery, by the required 2/3 majority (G.11-2I) approved __________ as having extraordinary circumstances, waiving the educational requirement for ______________ (e.g., Hebrew, an M.Div. degree, a Bachelor's degree, etc.)]. The Candidate responded affirmatively to the constitutional questions posed by the Moderator (G.11-2C). Prayer for the Candidate was offered by ______________(name) and a charge to the Candidate was given by __________(name). __________ (name) was appointed as the Candidate’s advisor.
CHECKLIST FOR EXAMINATION OF A CANDIDATE FOR ORDINATION

1. Candidate has completed a four-year college degree and a three-year (M.Div.) degree from a seminary approved by presbytery including appropriate courses in Greek and Hebrew (G.11-2G; Act of Assembly 82-07))

2. Candidate was under care of presbytery for at least one year (G.11-2H).
   □ Ordinary minimum of one year waived. Reasons: _________________________________

3. Showed evidence of competency in the original languages of Scripture.
   □ Requirements for original languages waived (G.11-2I; G.12-2E).

4. Candidate successfully completed all written examinations.

5. Candidate successfully completed oral examination in:
   □ Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth
   □ Theology and Sacraments
   □ English Bible
   □ The Book of Order
   □ The Reformed Tradition
   □ Nature of the office of the Teaching Elder

6. Candidate has successfully preached a sermon to the Presbytery on an assigned topic or Scripture

7. Candidate has provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.12-4)

8. Candidate’s written exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms have been (G.12-4):
   □ Allowed □ Disallowed
   Explanatory notes if disallowed:

Sample text for minutes:

Candidate _____ _____, having completed the candidacy requirements prescribed in G.11-2 and having sustained written examinations and then oral examination before the ________ Committee, was presented to the Presbytery for examination for the office of Teaching Elder.

The Presbytery then proceeded to examine ________ in the areas required by Book of Government 12-2. On motion, the examination was arrested and the Candidate was excused. [If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly.] On motion, the candidate’s examination was sustained/not sustained [Add explanatory notes if not sustained.]

On motion, the Presbytery approved / did not approve ________________’s sermon as demonstrating ability to expound the Word of God effectively (G.12-2D).

On motion, the candidate’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed. [Add explanatory notes as needed if disallowed]

EPC Form 2015
CHECKLIST FOR EXAMINATION OF AN EPC TEACHING ELDER
TRANSFERRING TO A PRESBYTERY

☐ 1. Certificate or letter of dismissal received from Clerk of dismissing presbytery (G.10-8C.2)
☐ 2. Teaching Elder was examined orally on views of (G.12-3A; 12-2C)
   - Theology and sacraments
   - English Bible
   - Book of Order
   - Reformed tradition
   - Nature of the office of Teaching Elder
☐ 3. Teaching Elder related his/her experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth (G.12-2B).
☐ 4. Teaching Elder has provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.12-4)
☐ 5. Teaching Elder’s exceptions have been (G.12-4):
   - Allowed
   - Disallowed
   Explanatory notes if disallowed:
☐ 6. Presbytery moved to enroll Teaching Elder pending approval of call (G.10-8C.1)
☐ 9. “Record of Official Change for Teaching Elder’s Status and Ministry” sent to the minister and General Assembly (page 157, Procedure Manual)

Sample text for Minutes:
__________ (name), an ordained Teaching Elder of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, seeking to transfer from ____________ Presbytery, having sustained oral examination before the Ministerial Committee, was presented to the Presbytery for examination.

The Presbytery then proceeded to examine __________ on his/her views in the areas required by Book of Government 12-2. On motion, the examination was arrested and the _________ was excused. [If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly.]

On motion, _________’s examination was sustained/not sustained [add explanatory notes if not sustained].

On motion, the minister’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed. [Add explanatory notes as needed if disallowed.]

The presbytery sustained a motion to receive __________ as a member of the __________ Presbytery pending an approved call. ____________ signed the Ministerial Obligation Form, which is on file in the Clerk’s office.

EPC Form 2015
CHECKLIST FOR EXAMINATION OF AN ORDAINED MINISTER FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION WITHIN THE REFORMED TRADITION

☐ 1. Minister’s credentials of education and ordination presented and approved (G.12.3D)

☐ 2. Minister was examined orally on views [and knowledge] (G.12-3B.1; G.12-2C):
   ☐ Theology and sacraments,
   ☐ English Bible,
   ☐ Book of Order,
   ☐ Reformed tradition
   ☐ Nature of the office of the Teaching Elder

☐ 3. Minister related his/her experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth (G. 12-2B).

☐ 4. No discipline, inquiry, or charges pending from other denomination
   ☐ Pending charges: Presbytery reviewed case and declared by ¾ vote that pending charges are insufficient for refusal of membership (G.12-3C)
   ☐ Minister lacks current ordination credentials for reasons other than disciplinary action (G.12-5)

☐ 5. Minister has provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.12-4)

☐ 6. Minister’s exceptions have been (G.12-4):
   ☐ Allowed ☐ Disallowed
   Explanatory notes if disallowed:

☐ 7. Presbytery moved to enroll Teaching Elder pending approval of call (G.10-8C.1).


Sample text for Minutes:
__________ (name), an ordained minister of __________________________ (denomination) from within the Reformed tradition presented the credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC (G.12-3B.1). Having sustained oral examination before the Ministerial Committee, _____________ was presented to the Presbytery for examination. The Presbytery examined ____________ on his/her views [and knowledge] in the areas required by Book of Government 12-2. On motion, the examination was arrested and _______ was excused. [If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly.]

On motion, _____________’s examination was sustained/not sustained [add explanatory notes if not sustained].

On motion, _____________’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed. [Add explanatory notes as needed if disallowed]

The presbytery sustained a motion to receive ____________ (name) as a member of the ______ Presbytery pending an approved call. ____________ (name) signed the Ministerial Obligation Form which is on file in the Clerk’s office.

EPC Form March 2015
CHECKLIST FOR EXAMINATION OF AN ORDAINED MINISTER FROM A NON-REFORMED TRADITION

☐ 1. Minister’s ordination recognized and credentials of education evaluated and ordination presented and approved (Act of Assembly 02-07).

☐ 2. Minister successfully completed all written examinations (G.12-2C)

☐ 3. Minister successfully completed oral examination in (G.12-2C):
   - Theology and Sacraments
   - English Bible
   - The Book of Order
   - The Reformed Tradition
   - Nature of the office of the Teaching Elder

☐ 3. Minister related his/her experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth (G. 12-2B).

☐ 4. No discipline, inquiry, or charges pending from other denomination
   - Pending charges: Presbytery reviewed case and declared by ¾ vote that pending charges are insufficient for refusal of membership (G.12-3C)
   - Minister lacks current ordination credentials for reasons other than disciplinary action (G.12-5)

☐ 5. Minister provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.12-4)

☐ 6. Minister’s exceptions have been (G.12-4):
   - Allowed
   - Disallowed

   Explanatory notes if disallowed:

☐ 7. Presbytery moved to enroll minister pending approval of call (G.10-8C.1).


Sample text for minutes:

__________ (name), an ordained minister of ________ (denomination) presented the credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC (G.12-3B.1). Having sustained oral examination before the Ministerial Committee, ____________ was presented to the Presbytery for examination.

The Presbytery examined ____________ in the areas required by Book of Government 12-2. On motion, the examination was arrested and the _______ was excused. [If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly.]

On motion, ____________’s examination was sustained/not sustained [add explanatory notes if not sustained].

On motion, ____________’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed. [Add explanatory notes as needed if disallowed]

The presbytery sustained a motion to receive ____________ (name) as a member of the ____________ Presbytery pending an approved call. ____________ (name) signed the Ministerial Obligation Form which is on file in the Clerk’s office.

EPC Form 2015
CHECKLIST FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF A PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

☐ 1. Minister or session consulted with the Ministerial Committee before making request to dissolve the pastoral relationship (G.14-1B).

☐ 2. If relationship of a pastor or associate pastor is being dissolved, a congregational meeting was duly called and the congregation concurred (G.14-1B).

☐ Congregation or pastor did not concur
☐ Presbytery heard representatives from congregation explain their action (could be handled by an Administrative Commission) (G.14-1C)
☐ Decision of presbytery regarding the dissolution: ______________________________

☐ 3. Status of pastor following dissolution: ______________________________

☐ 4. “Record of Official Change for Minister’s Status and Ministry” sent to the minister and General Assembly (Procedure Manual page 157)

Sample text for minutes:

**Pastor/Associate Pastor:**
The congregation of _____________ Church in a duly called congregational meeting on _____________ (date) approved the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with TE ______________. On motion, the Presbytery of _____________ concurred [or The Ministerial Committee concurred (G.21-2D.2(e))] and the relationship is dissolved.

On motion, TE __________ was transferred to ________________ [or the call to TE __________ from ________________ as ________________ was approved].

**Assistant Pastor:**
The Session of _____________ Church, approved the dissolution of relationship of __________ as Assistant Pastor prior to the expiration of his/her term. On motion, The Presbytery of _____________ concurred with the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with TE ______________. Rev. __________ was/is (fill in new status: transferred, without call, out of bounds, etc.) On motion, the Presbytery of _____________ concurred [ or The Ministerial Committee concurred (G.21-2D.2(e))] and the relationship is dissolved.

On motion, TE __________ was transferred to ________________ [or the call to TE __________ from ________________ as ________________ was approved].
ANNUAL REPORT ON TEACHING ELDERS

This report should be submitted to the Ministerial Committee annually along with the change in terms of call form (G.21D.1(f)).

Presbytery: ______________________________ For year: _________________

Name of Minister: _________________________ Church: _______________________

Length of Ministry at above Church: _________________

Major Responsibilities: ______________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

How have you seen the Spirit of God at work in your ministry this past year? _____________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Change in responsibilities for the coming year: _____________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Session Performance Review of Pastor:   □ Yes   □ No

Problems or Concerns: ______________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Do you continue to find yourself in accord with the vows you assumed at ordination (G.13-2)?

Signature: _____________________________ Date: _________________
RECORD OF OFFICIAL CHANGE FOR
TEACHING ELDER’S STATUS AND MINISTRY
Presbytery: ______________________

Name of Minister: ____________________________________________________________

First   Middle   Last

Home address: ________________________________________________________________

Street or Box No.  City  State  Zip

Preferred phone: (__) ____________  □ Cell  □ Work  □ Home

Email: ________________________________

Please complete sections pertinent to status changes on minister named above.

Dismissed to: ___________________________ Presbytery, EPC  Date: ____________

Received from: __________________________ Presbytery, EPC  Date: ____________

Dismissed to: ________________________________________________  Date: ____________
(Other denomination)

Received from: ___________________________________   Date: ____________
(Other denomination)

Former ministry: __________________________________________________________________

Position (pastor, chaplain, etc.)  Church/Institution  City  State

New position:

□ Pastor  □ Evangelist (church planter)  □ Teacher
□ Associate Pastor  □ Evangelist (missionary)  □ Stated Supply
□ Assistant Pastor  □ Chaplain (military)  □ Interim Supply
□ Evangelist  □ Chaplain (institutional)  □ Outside of Boundaries
□ Without Call  □ Other _____________

New place of ministry:

Church/Employer: ____________________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________ State: ____ Zip: ________________
Phone: (__) ________________

Change in status:

□ Newly Ordained  Date: ____________  Date of Installation: _____________
□ Retired  Date: ____________  Service of Recognition: ___________
□ Deceased  Date: ____________
□ Associate Member
□ Moved to Inactive Status  □ At own request  Date: ____________
□ Censured (Book of Discipline)  Specify: ____________________________  Date________
□ Removed from office without sanction (G.14-4)  Cite reason:

Signed, ________________________________________  Date: ________________

EPC Form 2015
The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church provide resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and as a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the individual pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and for evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort and commitment to open communication.

Ministers and Candidates are welcome to send completed Personal Information Forms to Search Committees for positions in which they have interest. No prior denominational approval is necessary. Completed Forms should also be sent to the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. Candidates Under Care of Presbyteries are required to submit a completed Personal Information Form before written ordination examinations are issued.

For those seeking to transfer ordination credentials to the EPC, please see the information on https://www.epc.org/transferringtotheepc before filling out this form.

Contents

Part 1 Statement of Consent
Part 2 Personal Information
Part 3 Narrative
Part 4 Ministry Preferences and History
Part 5 Appraisal
Part 6 Background Disclosure

Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Dr., Suite 567
Livonia. MI 48152-7912

Phone: 734-742-2020
Fax: 734-742-2033
E-mail: epchurch@epc.org
**Part 1: Statement of Consent***

We are called to honesty and a commitment to open communication as we seek to build the body of Christ. In that spirit, we ask that you confirm your agreement to the following statements by your signature below:

I attest that the information contained in my Personal Information Form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I authorize the persons and entities, such as members of search committees of a prospective calling body or appropriate staff persons, to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my Personal Information Form. I also authorize all persons referred to as references, members of congregations I have served or personal/professional colleagues, to supply verification of the information provided in the Personal Information Form. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding all matters addressed in the profile including, without limitation, my background and character. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from any claims or liabilities arising from their responses and comments if made in good faith and without malice.

I authorize staff of the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to circulate, distribute and otherwise share information gathered in connection with my Personal Information Form to representatives of calling bodies. I hereby release the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, its agencies and all contractors or employees of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church or its agencies from any claims or liabilities in connection with the Personal Information Form or its distribution.

I understand that I may receive copies of all written information which is submitted to the Office of the Stated Clerk in connection with the Personal Information Form, if I make a request in writing. I may submit additions to my file to supplement or reply to any matters included in my file.

*A copy of this consent form will be available to reference sources.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date signed: ___________________ Signature: ________________________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printed or typed name: _________________________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I am in a position to consider a call at this time.

☐ Yes        ☐ No        ☐ Possibly

It is unlikely I will consider a call before ____________________________
**Part 2: Personal Information** (please print or type)

| Name: _______________________________________________________________________________________________ |
| (Last)    | (First)    | (Middle) |

Preferred Address:

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Alternate Address:

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Preferred Phone: (        ) _____________________  □ Home  □ Work  □ Cell

Alternate Phone: (        ) _____________________  □ Home  □ Work  □ Cell

E-mail: _______________________________________________________________________________________________

1. Work History:

   Previous Ministry Positions                                    Dates

   Present/Last Position (if you are currently not in a ministry position)          Dates
Name:____________________________________________

3. Ordination Status

   Ordained by: _________________________________ Date: ________________

   If not ordained:
   Church Membership: ___________________________ (include city & state)

   Candidate under care of ___________________________ (Presbytery)

   ___________________________ (denomination) since ________________ (date)

4. Educational Background:

   a. Name of Institution Dates Attended Degree Achieved

   b. Continuing Education/Professional Development (please include dates):

   c. Community and Civic Activities:

   d. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:
Name: ______________________________________________

e. Ecumenical Activity:

f. Special Interests, Hobbies:

g. Languages you can speak (and level of proficiency):

h. Types of supervision/accountability you have found helpful in your ministry:
Part 3: Narrative

Name: ________________________________

1. **Life Story**: In one page, describe your life's journey. Include key incidents that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry. State your personal ideals and goals.
Name: ________________________________

2. Please describe briefly (confine your answers to two pages):

   a. My leadership style: *(How you include others in decision-making, administrative style, ways you deal with conflict, etc.?)*

   b. My worship emphases: *(preaching style, preferred worship emphases and style, etc.)*

   c. My call to ministry: *(What type of ministry role are you called to? What would effectiveness look like in that role?)*
Name: _____________________________________________

3. Comment briefly on your views as relates to:
   a. Spiritual giftedness

   b. Charismatic expression in worship (*manifestation of spiritual gifts*)

   c. Women in ordained office

   d. Presbyterian connectional system

4. Are you in agreement with the system of government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church? If no, please explain briefly:  Yes  No

5. Do you sincerely receive and adopt to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures? If no, please explain as part of your answer to #6 below.  Yes  No

6. Do you take any exceptions to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*? If yes, please identify the topic with the specific chapter and paragraph or the question number to which you take your exception.  Yes  No
   *(Note: you will need to submit a written statement of these exceptions to the Ministerial Committee and Presbytery during the examination process)*

   d. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents?  Yes  No
   If no, please explain briefly:
**Part 4: Ministry Preferences and History**

(chech as many as apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Size of Church</strong></th>
<th><strong>Would Serve</strong></th>
<th><strong>Have Served</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 150 members</td>
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<td>150 to 300 members</td>
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<td>300 to 500 members</td>
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<td>500 – 1000 members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 1000 members</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Position Type</strong></th>
<th><strong>Would Serve</strong></th>
<th><strong>Have Served</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastor (sole)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor (Head of Staff)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Ministry</td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaplaincy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church Planting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tentmaking</td>
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<td>Temporary</td>
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<td>Occasional Supply</td>
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<td>Stated Supply</td>
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<td>World Missions</td>
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<td>Home Missions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Community Type</strong></th>
<th><strong>Would Serve</strong></th>
<th><strong>Have Served</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural (Country/Farming)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town/Village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban (Metropolitan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban (Inner City)</td>
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<tr>
<td>College/University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-Cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic (Specify: ___________)</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Geographic Areas</strong></th>
<th><strong>Would Serve</strong></th>
<th><strong>Have Served</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US West</td>
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<td>US Midwest</td>
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<td>US South</td>
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<td>US East</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Middle Atlantic</td>
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<td>US Southeast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part 5: Appraisal

A. Self-Appraisal: What five key characteristics/gifts/skills would you bring to a ministry position?

B. References: Choose five persons to fill out the written reference form at the end of this document and who are willing to be contacted by phone by a Search Committee and a Presbytery Ministerial Committee. If possible, one of these references should represent your current/last congregation Session. When providing the form to your reference, include a stamped envelope addressed to the General Assembly Office (address provided on first page).

1. Name: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   E-mail: ____________________________ Preferred phone: ____________________________
   Person's relationship to you: ______________________________________________________________

2. Name: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   E-mail: ____________________________ Preferred phone: ____________________________
   Person's relationship to you: ______________________________________________________________

3. Name: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   E-mail: ____________________________ Preferred phone: ____________________________
   Person's relationship to you: ______________________________________________________________

4. Name: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   E-mail: ____________________________ Preferred phone: ____________________________
   Person’s relationship to you: ______________________________________________________________

5. Name: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
   E-mail: ____________________________ Preferred phone: ____________________________
   Person’s relationship to you: ______________________________________________________________
Part 6: Background Disclosure

Name: _____________________________________________

To the person completing these statements:

Congruent with the concern for ethical performance of ministry in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and openness about issues that are sensitive to functioning in the public role of a pastor in a congregation, you are asked to respond to the following statements. There is opportunity for explanation if you so desire.

To the Search Committee or Session of a calling church:

Any practice of routinely rejecting profiles on a perfunctory basis, without a complete and thoughtful review of the explanations offered by the candidate is strongly discouraged. The information presented here is meant to provide an occasion for open, honest dialogue.

This disclosure statement will only be shared with an interested congregation as part of the second phase of the search process.

1A. Have you ever been the subject of official discipline by a Session or Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?

Suspended ☐ Yes ☐ No
Deposed ☐ Yes ☐ No

1B. Is any official disciplinary action pending at the present time?

☐ Yes ☐ No

1C. Have you ever been the subject of official disciplinary proceedings by another denomination that resulted in disciplinary action?

☐ Yes ☐ No

1D. Are any official disciplinary proceedings by another denomination pending at the present time?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Explanation of 1A – 1D:
Name: _____________________________________________

2A: Has a civil lawsuit, criminal charge, or official ecclesiastical complaint been sustained against you for sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct, physical abuse, child abuse or financial misconduct?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

2B. Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

Explanation of 2A – 2B:

3A. Has your employment ever been changed because you attempted or actually engaged in:

1. Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

2. Physical abuse
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

3. Child abuse
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

4. Financial misconduct
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

3B. Has your employment ever been changed in order to avoid facing or to avoid being terminated because of charges of actual or attempted

1. Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

2. Physical abuse
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

3. Child abuse
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

4. Financial misconduct
   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

Explanation of 3A – 3B:

I recognize that presbyteries are required to perform a background investigation on all individuals seeking candidacy or membership. I further recognize my responsibility to update this background disclosure in a timely manner should there be a change of status in any of the issues named above.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: _______________

Type or print your name: _____________________________________________
Reference Form

Reference for _______________________________________________________

You have received this reference form from a person who values your opinion. The material you provide will be placed with other materials to comprise the individual’s Personal Information Form for use in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Office of the Stated Clerk encourages persons to update regularly or prepare a new Personal Information Form. **Therefore, being asked to provide a reference does not necessarily imply that the person is interested in a change in position.** Committees may use the material you provide in the future if the person seeks a change.

You are being asked to provide as clear a picture of this person as possible through the attached reference form which includes an opportunity to comment. Indicate the qualities evidenced in this person’s ministry at this time as you have encountered them. Bear in mind that other congregations and/or ministries rely on the completeness and accuracy of the information that you provide.

For your information, the person for whom you are completing this reference form has signed the following statement of consent, which is on file at the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly:

> I authorize the persons and entities, such as members of search committees of a prospective calling body or appropriate staff persons, to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my Personal Information Form. I also authorize all persons referred to in the Profile as references, members of congregations I have served, or personal/professional colleagues to supply verification of the information provided in the Personal Information Form. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding all matters addressed in the profile including, without limitation, my background and character. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from any claims or liabilities arising from their responses and comments if made in good faith and without malice.

When you have completed the information, please send the reference form directly to:

Office of the Stated Clerk  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
17197 North Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567  
Livonia, MI 48152-7912  
Phone: (734) 742-2020  Fax: (734) 742-2033  
E-mail: epchurch@epc.org

The person asking for this reference should have supplied an envelope with that address for your use.
Reference Form

________________________ is completing a Personal Information Form for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and has provided your name as a reference. Please answer as many of the following questions as you are able. If you have no knowledge or opinion on any of the questions, please check “unknown.”

1. In what capacity and how long have you known the candidate?

2. In comparison with other ministers you have known, indicate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Serious deficiency (1)</th>
<th>Below Average (2)</th>
<th>Average (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above Average (4)</td>
<td>Exceptional (5)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preaching ability</td>
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<td>Worship leadership</td>
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<td>Earns loyalty of</td>
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<td>colleagues and others</td>
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<td>Capacity to objectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional health</td>
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</table>

4. Is this individual able to work successfully with others?
Reference for: _______________________________________________________

5. Does the individual show evidence of alcohol or other substance abuse? If so, please explain.

6. How does the individual handle anger or frustration?

7. Does the individual have any personal qualities that might hamper ministry effectiveness?

8. Would you recommend this individual as a minister?

9. Please state any reservations you have, if unable to recommend this individual as a minister.

10. Additional comments:

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ______________

Print Name: __________________________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________

E-mail: ________________________________________________________________________________

Preferred Phone: _________________________________________________________________________
Introduction

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are responsible for denominational vocational services. As part of the process of “matching” ministers and congregations, the Office of the Stated Clerk provides resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the individual pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and for evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort, and commitment to open communication.

The Church Information Form presents the local congregation’s history, challenges, and goals. It is our hope that this will be of help in facilitating the search process, assisting the church in focusing on future directions and pastors in gaining some sense of the nature and uniqueness of this congregation.

Contents

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<th>Part 4</th>
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<td>Part 2</td>
<td>Building/Financial Information</td>
<td>Part 5</td>
<td>Church History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>Church Characteristics</td>
<td>Part 6</td>
<td>Other Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return the completed document to:

Office of the Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia, MI 48152-7912
Phone: (734) 742-2020 Fax: (734) 742-2033
E-mail: epchurch@epc.org
Part 1: Church Information

1. Name: _________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Address: _________________________________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Telephone: (_______) ___________________________     Fax: (_______) ________________________________
   E-mail: __________________________________     Web site: ________________________________________________
   2. Presbytery: ___________________________________________________________________________________________
   Presbytery Ministerial Committee Liaison: __________________________________________________________
   3. Search Committee Chairman: _______________________________________________________________________
   Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________________________________
   Telephone: (_______) _____________________________     E-mail: _________________________________________
   4. List all paid staff positions
      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
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      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
      _________________________________________________________     Full time     Part time
      Position Available: _______________________________  Date of Vacancy: _________________
      Position Available: _______________________________  Date of Vacancy: _________________
   5. Membership (please state approximate numbers and percentages)
      Five years ago      Currently
      A. Number of church members      _________      _________
      B. Number of family units      _________      _________
      C. Worship attendance      _________      _________
      D. Profile of church members
         (1) Age:
         ___% 0-11    ___% 12-18    ___% 19-24    ___% 25-34    ___% 35-49
         ___% 50-64    ___% 65+
(2) Occupation:

___% Business  ___% Professional  ___% Trades  ___% Stay-at-home parent

___% Agriculture  ___% Retired  ___% Other (Specify: ___________________)

(3) Educational level of adults

___% some high school  ___% high school  ___% college  ___% graduate school

(4) Percentage of members belonging to the congregation:

Less than one year ________%

5 years or less ________%

6-10 years ________%

10 years or more ________%

(5) Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation

___% Asian  ___% Hispanic  ___% African American  ___% Caucasian

___% Other (Specify: _________________________________)

6. Worship

A. Time  Average Attendance

________  ________

________  ________

________  ________

________  ________

________  ________

________  ________

B. Frequency of communion celebration: ___________ per year

C. How are members involved in planning and participation in the liturgy/worship?

D. Style of liturgy used in your worship (e.g., traditional, contemporary, variety):

E. Type of music used in worship (e.g., traditional, contemporary, variety):
7. Church/Sunday School

A. Average attendance in Church School (under 18 years) ________________

B. Average attendance in Adult Education (Sunday) ________________

8. Community Setting (check as many as apply):

Location          Function          Growth
□ Rural            □ Industrial       □ Growing
□ Small town       □ College/University □ Static
□ Metropolitan     □ Agricultural    □ Declining
□ Suburban         □ Recreational
□ Inner City       □ Military

Approximate population of community ________________

Racial/Ethnic composition of community:

___% Asian        ___% Hispanic       ___% African American       ___% Caucasian
___% Other (Specify: ____________________________________________________________)

9. Program Information: List major boards, committees and organizations that are part of your church and frequency of meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Purpose of Group</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>Frequency of meetings</th>
<th>*Leadership role</th>
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*Indicate leadership role expected by using the number below:

1. Pastor takes primary initiative and responsibility.
2. Pastor and laity share responsibility.
3. Laity takes primary initiative and responsibility.
Part 2: Building/Financial Information

1. Current annual budget: $______________  Last year’s annual budget: $______________
   (Please attach a copy of current budget)

2. Percentage of income received toward budget: ______% 

3. Amount contributed for (last complete reporting year: ________________):
   A. EPC per member contribution  $______________
   B. EPC World Outreach Missionaries  $______________
   C. EPC Benevolence Askings  $______________
   D. Presbytery giving  $______________
   E. Other Missions/Missionaries  $______________

4. Property owned by church
   A. Describe buildings and property (other than manse).

B. Are your buildings adequate for your present program?
   □ Yes   □ No   If no, please explain:

C. Is a building program projected?
   □ Yes   □ No   If yes, describe what and when and projected cost:

D. Does the church own a manse?
   □ Yes   □ No
   Condition: □ Good   □ Fair   □ Poor   Number of bedrooms: ________
   Office/study: □ In Church   □ In Manse   □ Not provided   □ Other: ________

6. Compensation:
A. The salary range we are prepared to offer:

Position: ___________________________  $________________________

Position: ___________________________  $________________________

B. The average annual increase over the past three years is:

Position: ___________________________  $___________________ or _____%

Position: ___________________________  $___________________ or _____%

C. Housing

☐ Housing allowance
☐ Manse only
☐ Either of the above

D. Benefits and expenses:

______________________  Pension (minimum 10% gross effective salary)

______________________  Medical insurance

______________________  Life insurance

______________________  Social Security

______________________  Travel/mileage

______________________  Book allowance

______________________  Study leave allowance

______________________  Annual vacation

______________________  Number of worship services (in addition to vacation and study leave) for which pastor is provided relief (per year)

______________________  Other (Specify: _______________________________ )
**Part III: Church Characteristics**

*Circle the number that most closely describes the current congregation characteristics and future goals:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our congregation…</th>
<th>Currently</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Supports the pastor.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2. Readily shares their gifts with the rest of the congregation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3. Places a high priority on sound biblical preaching.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4. Gladly welcomes visitors and new members.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5. Is involved in local evangelistic ministries.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>6. Is often found living their faith in their communities.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>7. Has a spirit of unity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>8. Cares about each other.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>9. Looks to its Session for leadership.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Ministers well to members who are hurting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Uses members’ gifts in its worship.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Contains people willing and able to lead the congregation.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>13. Is capable of change when and where appropriate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Is spiritually alive.</td>
<td>1</td>
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15. In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

16. Describe the strengths of your congregation:

17. List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

18. List major goals that this congregation has set for itself:
19. Has there ever been disciplinary action taken against a pastor of your congregation?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

20. Has there ever been any disciplinary action against an elder or deacon of your congregation?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

If you answered “Yes” to either 19 or 20, please explain:

21. Have you completed a mission statement, vision statement and/or a strategic plan for your congregation?

☐ Yes  Date: _______________  ☐ No

If yes, please attach copies.
Part 4: Leadership Expectations

22. What five key characteristics/gifts/skills should a person bring to the position?
Part 5: Church History

1. What do you consider to be the three most important events in the history of your church?

2. What do you consider to be the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?
Part 6: Other Information

1. List the last three persons in this position:

   Position: _____________________________

   **Name** | **Dates of Service**
   --- | ---
   | |
   | |
   | |

2. Other significant factors about our church not covered in previous questions:

   ___________________________________
   ___________________________________

   Clerk of Session          Chair, Search Committee

We encourage churches to list their openings on the EPC Ministry Staff Opportunities List (www.epc.org/mso). For more information or to send your posting, email epchurch@epc.org.