

OLYMPIA PRESBYTERY CRITERIA FOR VALIDATING THE WORK OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT

The following criteria will be used by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) and by the Committee on Ministry (COM) to determine if a ministry is to be validated. CPM *or* COM will make a recommendation to the Olympia Presbytery, which retains the final authority to validate a ministry.

CPM is responsible for working with Candidates and those preparing to serve in ministry. When a candidate seeks to establish a relationship with one of Olympia Presbytery's congregations, Committee on Ministry will participate with CPM in the interview process.

If a pastor is currently a member of the Olympia Presbytery and is seeking to validate a new call, COM will be the responsible committee. If a Minister of the Word and Sacrament is seeking membership in the Presbytery for the purpose of accepting a call to a validated ministry COM will be the responsible committee.

The criteria are:

1. The ministry of continuing members shall be in demonstrable conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, The Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order of this church. (G-11.0403, a).

... in conformity with the mission of God's people in the world

Our Presbytery's mission statement will be used to determine if a particular ministry is in "conformity with the mission of God's people." The ministry needs to clearly help implement the Presbytery's mission.

2. The ministry shall be one that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministries of others. (G-11.0403, b).

...one that serves, aids, enables... others

This criterion implies that the primary thrust of the work being validated is toward serving people and enabling them to serve other people. Conversely, it implies that its primary thrust is not toward profit-making activities. The minister may be employed in a profit making enterprise, however, the primary function of one's work, whether full time or part time, should relate to the service of people rather than to the production of goods or profits.

The ministry shall give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word. This will normally require the Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent and the completion of the requirements for ordination set forth in (G-14.0402) (G-11.0403, c).

... theologically informed fidelity to God's Word.

CPM for candidates and COM for those already ordained would determine where theologically informed skills are needed to carry out the ministry. This implies that work to which a continuing member is called makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination. Normally this means that such work should provide opportunities to articulate the Christian faith and share in the sacramental Ministry of the Church. If a proposed call does not provide such opportunity, serious questions will be raised as to whether it can be a validated ministry.

3. The ministry shall be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the Presbytery and to organizations, agencies, and institutions.
(G-11.0403, d).

... accountability for its character and conduct

In order to be validated, a ministry will have clear, written and agreed-upon expected outcomes. COM will do a face-to-face review with the minister of the validated ministry. Thereafter, COM will review the validated ministry at least annually.

4. The ministry shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the Presbytery and in the worship and service of a congregation.
(G-11.0403, e).

A clear, written agreement will be made between the minister and CPM. He/she will be encouraged to become a parish associate in a congregation.

Once a person is a member of Olympia Presbytery, the Committee on Ministry will assume responsibility for the review and care of the relationship. COM will use the criteria previously stated to evaluate ongoing validated ministries.

If not validated ministry, what other options?

If one or more of the criteria cannot be met, the minister shall ask to be designated either a member-at-large or an inactive member of Presbytery. If Presbytery is unwilling to grant this, then the minister shall seek release from the exercise of ordained office (G-11.0414) until he or she receives a call to ministry that fulfills all four criteria.

Restoration to the exercise of the office is possible without re-ordination by (1) application to and approval of the Presbytery that granted release, (2) reaffirmation of ordination vows, and (3) resumption of a ministry that qualifies for continuing active membership in Presbytery. These steps provide for ease in movement and are in no way judgmental. They are permissive in that re-ordination is not necessary. People should be encouraged to use them.

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