

Policy on Temporary Membership in the Presbytery of West Virginia

Ordinarily, churches in the Presbytery of West Virginia will be served by a Presbyterian Minister of the Word and Sacrament or by a Commissioned Pastor. In cases where it is not practical to do so, congregations may engage the services of a minister of another Christian denomination, who may be received as a Temporary Member of the presbytery.

In order for a minister of another denomination to become a temporary member of the presbytery

- a) The General Presbyter shall do a reference check with their current denomination to determine if they are in good standing, if they have been disciplined, if they have had charges filed against them, or if there are any allegations of misconduct.
- b) They shall undergo a criminal background check.
- c) To be authorized to moderate the session, the person shall satisfactorily complete a course on Presbyterian Polity that has been approved by the Committee on Ministry.
- d) To be authorized to celebrate the sacraments, a guided conversation based on the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and the Directory for Worship shall be conducted by at least two members of the Committee on Ministry and the General Presbyter or the Stated Clerk to determine the person's understanding of and willingness to uphold the Presbyterian practice of the sacraments. The outline of the guided conversation shall be based on a standardized plan approved by the Committee on Ministry.

After having received reports on the results of these steps, the Committee on Ministry shall examine this person for Temporary Membership in the presbytery.

The Committee on Ministry may authorize a Temporary Member of the Presbytery to serve a particular congregation as well as to moderate the session and/or administer the sacraments. The Committee on Ministry shall also appoint a Minister of the Word and Sacrament to moderate the session meetings with the Temporary Member present as an observer for at least the first six months; the temporary member will then moderate the session meeting with the appointed moderator present for at least an additional six months. After that time, the appointed moderator shall consult with the Temporary Member prior to each session meeting and may give them permission to moderate that meeting. A Minister of the Word and Sacrament shall provide annual officer training.

Temporary Members are subject to the Rules of Discipline of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and shall be granted voice at Presbytery meetings. A Temporary Member of the Presbytery shall attend at least two presbytery meetings each year. They are also encouraged to attend a peer group with other Presbyterian pastors and shall meet face-to-face

with a mentor at least quarterly. Temporary membership status shall be reviewed annually and reported to the Temporary Member's denominational authority.

In order to receive approval for the continued service of a Temporary Member of the Presbytery, the congregation shall submit their session records for approval annually. Failure to do so shall result in the termination of the authorization for the Temporary Member to moderate session meetings.