

---

## Powers and Authority of the Commission on Ministry

### *G-3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Pastors and Congregations*

Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its pastors, both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (also called commissioned pastors [also known as commissioned ruling elders]), as well as the certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, pastors and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture and oversee the process of preparing to become a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of inquirers and candidates, **reception and oversight of minister of the Word and Sacrament members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament**, it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. Such entities shall be composed of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting

Original Jurisdiction – [*COM does not have the following power, but almost always is involved when this happens...*] . . . “The presbytery has authority to . . . assume original jurisdiction in any situation in which it determines that a session cannot exercise its authority. After a thorough investigation, and after full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the session, the presbytery may conclude that the session of a congregation is unable or unwilling to manage wisely its affairs, and may appoint an administrative commission with the full power of session. This commission shall assume original jurisdiction of the existing session, if any, which shall cease to act until such time as the presbytery shall otherwise direct.” G-3.0303. *Administrative Commissions are designated by and report to the presbytery, not COM, but work in consultation with COM in same way as any session.*

### **Delegated to COM by the Presbytery, via its Bylaws . . .**

#### **9.200 Commission on Ministry**

- a. The commission shall be composed of equal numbers of ruling elders and teaching elders, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403.
- b. The Commission on Ministry is **delegated the authority of the presbytery to be “pastor, counselor and advisor to teaching elders and congregations”** as delineated in G-3.0307, except for the “oversight of inquirers and candidates.” All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting. The following specific tasks are delegated to this commission:

## Delegated Powers

Commission on Ministry; Approved 12/21/2015



- i. Find in order calls issued by churches.
- ii. Approve and present calls for services of teaching elders,
- iii. Dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur,
- iv. grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the presbytery,
- v. Dismiss teaching elders to other presbyteries,
- vi. Approve the examinations of and receive teaching elders transferring from other presbyteries and present them at the next stated meeting of the presbytery.
- vii. Appoint a moderator of session where a pulpit is vacant or is filled by a temporary pastoral relationship.
- viii. Appoint a commission for the purpose of installing a teaching elder.
- ix. Provide consent on behalf of the presbytery to a change in a call to a pastor or associate pastor made at the request of the pastor or associate pastor or at the request of the church by action of the congregation
- x. Grant permission for a teaching elder to engage in a validated ministry "in service beyond the jurisdiction of the church (G-2.0503),
- xi. Designate a teaching elder as honorably retired (G-2.0503c).
- xii. Release a teaching elder from the exercise of ordained ministry upon application by the teaching elder (G-2.0507).
- xiii. Approve the restoration of a teaching elder previously released under G-2.0407.
- xiv. Train, authorize and commission specific ruling elders to administer or preside at the Lord's Super when the presbytery deems it necessary to meet the needs for the administration of the Sacrament.
- xv. When the presbytery's strategy for mission requires it, authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service in a validated ministry of the presbytery, according to all provisions of G-2.10, including training, examination, supervision, and withdrawing "commissions for reasons it deems good and sufficient."

### **Administrative Tasks Delegated to the Moderator(s) and Staff<sup>1</sup>**

- Designating installation commission (Moderators, Clerk, EP)
- Approving terms of an interim contract; establishing a pastoral relationship, including temporary, needs a COM vote (Moderators, Clerk, EP).
- HR status when uncontested after a call has been dissolved (Clerk).
- Approval of alternative courses for sexual misconduct prevention training (Moderators, Clerk, EP).
- Appointing moderators of a session, when needed (Moderators, Clerk, EP).
- Approval of a CIF in some cases – sometimes churches want feedback from everybody, which could happen, but not hold up approval and listing with CLC (Moderators, EP).
- Approving persons who are not PCUSA teaching elders to preach and preside at communion (Moderators, Clerk, EP).
- Concur with a congregation to dissolve a call when COM is aware of the situation and timeliness is important. (Moderators, Clerk, EP).
- Transfer a minister to another presbytery (Clerk).
- Scholarship requests within established guidelines. (Moderators, EP).

---

<sup>1</sup> See *COM Minutes, 12/3/2015*.