

**PRESBYTERY OF GENESEE VALLEY
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Policy on Temporary Pastoral Relationships

This Presbytery of Genesee Valley policy addresses the varied types of approved temporary pastoral relationships, affirming the importance of securing Presbyterian leadership whenever possible.

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides the foundation for the Presbytery of Genesee Valley's Policy on Temporary Pastoral Relationships.

G-2.0405 b. *Temporary Pastoral Relationships*

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

Furthermore, the presbytery and the session have the power and the mutual responsibility "to provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard". This includes keeping before them the principles by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history. While presbytery has the responsibility of overseeing congregations without pastors, sessions are responsible for providing for regular preaching of the Word by a minister of the Word and Sacrament or other person prepared and approved for the work. **(References: F-1.0303, G-3.0301.a, G-3.0201a)**

The Presbytery of Genesee Valley as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to assuring that congregations within its jurisdiction have competent and vital leadership. The Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) is an active partner with a congregation as it seeks pastoral leadership whether temporary or installed. The Presbytery is obliged to make every effort to ensure that congregations are served by pastors that adhere to Presbyterian and Reformed theology and tradition.

The COM will be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in particular situations and may make appropriate adaptations in order to provide pastoral services for a congregation.

Process

Sessions are reminded that they may not enter into any contractual relationship for temporary pastoral leadership without the approval of COM.

Depending on the size and needs of a congregation and the transition work that a session wants to accomplish, a session may select from the following temporary pastoral relationships: Interim/Transitional Pastor, Stated Supply Pastor, Temporary Supply Pastor, or Commissioned Pastor.

Sessions are encouraged to be in contact with their COM liaison, who has access to the resources of the COM, as soon as possible. The COM is ready to help a session to select the best option for leadership of the church and to offer guidance in finding an appropriate leader to be considered.

Once session has selected an option, the session should present a written rationale to COM through the liaison. If approved, the session may proceed to seek temporary leadership with the assistance of the liaison. When an approved leader has been identified, the session has the authority to contractually enter into a Covenant Agreement with a temporary pastor without congregational approval. Such covenants are not to exceed twelve months in length, and may be renewable, by submitting a written rationale and new Covenant Agreement to the COM for approval.

It is the general policy of this Presbytery that temporary pastoral leaders are not eligible to serve the congregation as permanent installed pastors. The title “temporary” implies just that. The Presbytery may occasionally determine that its mission strategy with a particular congregation would be enhanced by allowing a temporary pastoral leader to serve as an installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate. In order to establish such a relationship, a three-quarter vote of the Presbytery is required.

When securing individuals to fill a temporary pastoral relationship, sessions should keep in mind the Presbytery of Genesee Valley’s following order of preference.

Those eligible for all positions:

- **Ordained PC(U.S.A.) minister members of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley.**
- **Ordained PC(U.S.A.) minister members of other presbyteries.**
- **Ordained Formula of Agreement Ministers** (Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

Those eligible for Temporary Supply positions only:

- Ordinarily, **Commissioned Pastor** of the Presbytery whose credentials are current.
- **Seminary Graduates who are Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Candidates for Ministry** with the approval of their Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the COM.
- **Other ordained ministers of other denominations** who have been evaluated and approved by COM.

The COM will offer guidance and assistance to sessions in taking prudent measures to publicize the availability of COM approved temporary pastoral positions. Only COM approved positions may be publicized through written, verbal, and media platforms including the Presbytery of Genesee Valley website.

POSITIONS

Interim/Transitional Pastor

In addition to the customary roles of pastoral leadership, an Interim/Transitional Pastor leads a congregation during the transition time after a previously installed pastor has departed, helping the congregation prepare to welcome the leadership of a new installed pastor. Interim/Transitional Pastors have specialized training that equips them to understand the dynamics of a congregation in transition, including feelings of grief, loss, and, sometimes, relief or anger. These pastors help the session provide for continuity of essential programs, and may assist the session in assessing needs for changes in programs and ministries of the congregation.

Most Interim/Transitional Pastors have completed at least the first level of Interim/Transitional Training. However, the Committee on Ministry may determine that an applicant’s qualifications, training, and experience are satisfactory to serve in this capacity.

This policy permits an Interim/Transitional Pastor to serve a congregation for up to two years while the congregation seeks to call an installed pastor. A written rationale and Covenant Agreement will be reviewed and renewed annually. The Presbytery through its Committee on Ministry may grant an extension when

circumstances warrant. Ordinarily, the Interim/Transitional Pastor will not be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor or associate pastor.

The Presbytery of Genesee Valley may determine that its mission strategy would be enhanced by allowing the Interim/Transitional pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate of a particular congregation. In order to establish such a relationship, a three-quarter vote of the Presbytery is required.

Temporary Supply

A temporary supply pastor ordinarily serves for a short term of a year or less. This option is available when a session or a congregation wants to ensure some continuity of worship leadership and pastoral care, such as is when still deciding about future leadership. PCUSA Seminary Graduates may only serve in temporary supply positions. Ordinarily Commissioned Pastors may only serve in temporary supply positions. A written rationale and proposed Covenant Agreement for the term of service must be submitted to COM for approval.

Stated Supply

When a congregation has a pastoral vacancy and is not in a position to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee to search for an installed pastor, a session may decide to enter into a Covenant Agreement with a teaching elder. A written rationale and Covenant Agreement may be renewed annually, with the concurrence of COM, for as long as the relationship is viable. The Presbytery of Genesee Valley may allow an eligible pastor serving in a stated supply position for six years to be installed as pastor upon congregational approval and by a three-quarters vote of the Presbytery.

OTHER FORMS OF PASTORAL SERVICE

Pulpit Supply

When there is no pastoral leadership for the congregation, the session may engage the services of individuals who have been approved by COM to offer worship leadership and preaching in congregations that need temporary service. The Pulpit Supply list of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley is comprised of individuals who have been examined by the COM with regards to their credentials and to their understanding of Reformed faith and tradition. The policy and process for pulpit supply is available on the [Presbytery website](#) or by contacting the COM liaison. Sessions are encouraged to consult with the COM liaison for guidance regarding pulpit supply.

Commissioned Pastor

Commissioned Pastors are Ruling Elder members of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley who have been specially trained for preaching and pastoral commissions at places of need within the Presbytery. Such elders are eligible to serve only in temporary supply positions. A written rationale and proposed Covenant Agreement are required for COM approval. Commissioned Pastors are subject to the oversight of the Committee on Ministry.

Designated Pastor

***G-2.0504a* Installed Pastoral Relationships**

The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A minister of the Word and Sacrament may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. allows for a designated pastoral relationship which is unique in nature. The Presbytery of Genesee Valley has its own policy and process for this position which is available on the [Presbytery website](#) or by contacting the COM liaison. Questions regarding this option for leadership should be directed to the COM liaison.