

**YELLOWSTONE PRESBYTERY**  
**POLICY FOR VALIDATING A MINISTRY**  
(For Those Who Are Already Ordained)

In compliance with the Book of Order, (G-2.0503) a teaching elder...shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery.” and it shall:

- Demonstrate conformity with the mission of God’s people
- Serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others
- Give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God’s word
- Be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery
- Include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church

A new reality of church is both the aging of our members and the dissolving of our congregations. This reality calls us to a new sense of flexibility and creativity in new ways of defining pastoral service. Many who are qualified for parish ministry are unable to find such positions. In an attempt to consider these realities while being faithful to the Book of Order regarding validated ministries, the Presbytery of Yellowstone puts forth the following criteria for validating ministries for those who are ordained.

Guided by the General Assembly who categorizes various ministries, (see Book of Order G-2.0503a1-4) when the additional criteria are met, the Pastoral Ministry team will validate the ministries of to those who are called to:

1. Chaplaincy: in a variety of commonly recognized contexts such as military, hospital, correctional, healthcare, and educational institutions
2. Christian educators in an institution or a church
3. Campus Ministries
4. Overseas Mission
5. Seminary Professors
6. Presbyterian related agencies such as Presbyterian Homes and The Foundation
7. Counseling in a recognized Christian Pastoral Counseling Center or as a grief counselor
8. Serving another denomination in a pastoral context
9. Tentmaking if serving a PCUSA congregation within our bounds
10. Ecumenical organizations that have a specific relationship to the PCUSA and/or the Presbytery of Yellowstone.
11. Those engaged in home church ministries

This is not an exhaustive list. Those wishing to seek validation for a ministry not listed, may still submit an application to be reviewed by the Pastoral Ministry Team. In all cases, the Pastoral Ministry Team may require an interview before a decision is made.

Additional Criteria to be met regarding the above:

1. A hospital chaplaincy or residency program must be approved by the Pastoral Ministry Team

2. The supervisor for any validated ministry must state that ordination is recommended or required for the position. The applicant will also have the opportunity to discuss on the application why the ability to administer the sacraments enhances their ministry.
3. The person must be affiliated, or will affiliate if just relocated, with a local congregation, ordinarily as PCUSA church in Yellowstone Presbytery, or be involved with judicatory work on the Presbytery, Synod or GA level.
4. Each minister will ordinarily maintain his/her permanent and/or primary residence within the bounds of Yellowstone Presbytery.
5. The expectation is that every validated minister shall attend at least one Presbytery meeting a year.

### **Application Process**

An application is required to seek validation. The appropriate application for someone who is already ordained and seeking to have their ministry is available on the website or from the Stated Clerk.

If an application is not approved, the person (if already a member of the presbytery) will be placed on the minister-at-large of the presbytery. We do not have a time frame for ministers staying on the minister-at-large role as long as the minister continues to reside in our bounds, worships in one of our churches, and submits their annual reports.

### **Annual Reports**

As indicated by the Book of Order, every minister serving in a validated position is required to submit an annual report regarding his/her work. The annual report should be used by those who currently performing a ministry that was previously validated and are requesting re-validation of that same ministry. If an individual is seeking validation for a new role, he/she must fill out a new application form. Annual reports are ordinarily sent out in October/November and are due at the end of December.

A minister will be notified up to two times if an annual report has not been received. After the third notification, which will be by certified mail, if the report is not received by the date indicated, the minister shall be identified as a member-at-large.

The BOO does not offer a definitive timeline of how long someone may remain a member-at-large. However, in G-2.0508 says, "If after three years the minister of Word and Sacrament does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, the presbytery may delete that person's name from the roll of membership and, upon request of a session, dismiss that person to a congregation.