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I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Theology of Calling

1. The Call of a Christian

   All Christians are called by God to participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world and to exercise such gifts as God has given them in obedience to His purpose. The call of God to be Christian demands that the choice of work be a responsible decision of faith, based on the following factors:

   a. God’s Purposes:

      The work should be appropriate to serve God’s purposes. Therefore work should be judged first on the basis of its relationship to the biblically expressed mission of the Church, and second on the relative need in the world for that work. It is not enough to choose useful work that one likes and can do. The Christian’s work should be important to the Kingdom of God.

   b. Person’s Abilities

      The work should be consistent with a person’s abilities. God has created each person with an individual set of natural abilities and a unique emotional and mental pattern. All Christians should make use of testing, counseling, and every other means at their disposal to learn as much as they can about themselves and their God-given gifts so they may best serve God in the vocational area for which He has fitted them.

   c. Inner Conviction

      The work should be confirmed by an inner conviction that this is God’s will for their lives. By the grace of God, when Christians seek God’s will for their lives with good judgment, they begin to sense a strong conviction that one type of work is better for them than others. This is what might be spoken of as the “inner call.” It is very definitely a part of the occupational choice Christians make but never shall it be trusted alone, since this kind of inner experience can be misinterpreted. The Church is responsible for helping all its members choose work that is not merely satisfying or financially beneficial, but more importantly to choose work that honors God and reflects His will and kingdom ministry.

2. The Call to the Ordained Ministry

   The Reformers believed that God instituted the ordained ministry to proclaim His Word, to administer the sacraments, and to ensure the orderly government of the Church. They held that both preaching and teaching by a trained and duly authorized person are essential. The sacraments are functions of ordained ministry not because their validity is based on the minister’s ordination, but because they must never be separated from preaching His Word, the declaration of God’s will. These elements, the right preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the practice of scriptural discipline were and still are the marks of the true Church.

   The Church should encourage committed people to consider its ministry as a vocational choice. The Church, in fact, should urge those endowed with suitable physical, mental and spiritual gifts to consider the ministry because of its importance to God’s purpose.
3. The Call of the Church

How does one decide if God is calling him to vocational ministry? Should one completely trust one’s own judgment? Should one rely on the opinions of others? Should one look to the covenant community? The Reformers felt that the people of God could best make the ultimate judgment about demonstrated gifts for the ministry. They insisted that ministers be called by the Church.

By this call of the Church, the Reformers meant a process which included the search for and selection of candidates, candidate preparation and the election of a candidate to be pastor by the people of the congregation. The next step was examination before presbytery, culminating in the ordination and installation of the candidate as minister. These steps comprise the “outward call,” or the call of the Church. In Calvin’s mind, the Scriptures taught that the Church has the responsibility to be the agent through which God calls people into the ministry. Moreover, his experience forcefully indicated that this biblical understanding of the call served a dual purpose: it protected the Church from weak and misguided leadership and it provided the means of securing the gifted, disciplined, prepared clergy which would be necessary for the Reformed churches. Like Luther, Calvin and his successors placed the deciding consideration upon the call of the Church.

In theory and in practice the Reformers affirmed the right and the responsibility of the Church to choose or select candidates for the ministry. The “inner call” has frequently been given predominant consideration. The Reformers affirmed its importance, but they never acknowledged it as the sole deciding factor for admission to the ministry. Calvin defined the inner or secret call as the “good testimony of one’s heart” that allowed one to accept an office in the Church.

Some look upon the call to the ministry as an event which takes place at one time and may not be apparent to anyone other than to the one called. The Book of Government, §12-2A, explains, however, that this calling is not only an event but a process. For the individual, this process strengthens the impetus to the ministry; for the Church it confirms the validity of the call and the suitability of the person called.

G.12-2 Preparation for the Ministry: Since the Ministry is seen as the first office in the Church, special preparation is required.

A. A person desiring to become an ordained Minister shall first become a Candidate under the care of the Presbytery of which that person’s church is a member. That person begins the process by receiving the endorsement of the particular Church Session where the person’s membership has been held for at least six months. When the particular Church Session has approved the candidate, application shall be made to the appropriate committee of the Presbytery.

B. The Presbyteries

1. Government

The government of the Church shall be understood as defined by the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Book of Order.

G.2-1 The government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church shall be Presbyterian in form. This is

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1 For stylistic purposes, the generic masculine pronoun is used throughout. This is not intended to imply any particular perspective on gender and office.
2 The verb form “shall” is mandatory language, while the verb form “may” is volitional language and the verb form “should” is used for strong recommendations which are not constitutionally binding.
government by Elders, both Ruling and Teaching, meeting in courts in regular gradation. While this form of government is not essential to the existence of the true Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church believes the perfecting of the order of the visible Church is best established where the scriptural doctrine of government by Presbyters gathered in church courts is practiced.

G.2-3  The courts of the Church shall be: The Session, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly. The Session shall be composed of the Minister(s) called by the congregation, and active Ruling Elders of a particular church. The Presbytery shall be composed of all Ministers belonging to it, and two Ruling Elders from each particular church or two Ruling Elders for each Minister from each particular church within its bounds. The basis of representation to General Assembly shall be the same as representation to Presbytery. The Board of Deacons, while useful in service and ministry, is not a court of the church and is under the supervision and control of the Church Session.

G.16-5  Jurisdiction of the organizational units of the Church: Each organizational unit of the Church has a definite sphere of action. For the efficient dispatch of the work of the Church in a manner that is decent and in order, the following definitions of those spheres shall apply:

16.5B. The Presbytery has jurisdiction over all that belongs to the worship and ministry of a group of churches within designated bounds.

2. Membership

Membership in presbytery shall consist of all teaching elders on the Active Roll of presbytery including retired ministers and those ruling elders duly elected by their congregations to serve at the presbytery. It is the goal to have a ratio of two ruling elders for each teaching elder. Elders not currently serving on session may also be elected as commissioners to presbytery.

G.16-14  The Presbytery: The Presbytery has the oversight of the life of a number of churches within a designated area. It is composed of all the Ministers of the Presbytery and at least two Ruling Elders elected by the Church Session. The Church Session shall elect two additional Ruling Elders for each additional Pastor, whether Associate or Assistant. In any case, a particular church shall have no fewer than two Ruling Elders for each 500 members or major portion thereof.

When a disproportionate ratio of Ruling Elders to Teaching Elders occurs in a Presbytery, the Presbytery will move to correct the ratio by suggesting to member churches on a yearly alphabetical rotational basis that they have the right to appoint an additional Elder to the Presbytery. The Presbytery shall on this basis invite churches to add one additional Ruling Elder until this disparity is corrected.

3. Enrollment of All Teaching Elders

G.16-16  Duties: In maintaining the spiritual supervision of the churches within its bounds, the Presbytery has the following duties and powers:

16.16L To establish a Ministerial Obligation record to which all Ministers must subscribe before being received into membership. This obligation shall consist of the ordination vows for Ministers to which shall be added a subscription as follows:

"I do receive and adopt the above vows as a true statement of my faith, commitment, and obligation, and I do resolve and promise to exercise my calling to the Gospel Ministry in obedience to those vows."

Two copies of the Ministerial Obligation Form (see p. 112) should be signed: one for the minister’s personnel file in presbytery, and the second for the minister’s personnel file in the Assembly Office. The ministerial obligation should not only be signed by newly ordained ministers, but also by those ministers who transfer into a presbytery.
4. Inactive Minister

A minister may, for reasons deemed valid, request to be placed on inactive status, which is effective upon the presbytery’s concurrence. However, if a minister who is not retired has been without approved call for more than one year, the presbytery, after judicious consideration, may place the minister on inactive status involuntarily, provided the vote to do so is by a two-thirds majority. Ministers on the Inactive Status Roll have all rights and privileges of ordination temporarily set aside, including participation in presbytery meetings. After five years, the presbytery has the right to drop that person from the roll without censure. Retired inactive ministers may not be removed from the rolls of presbytery for reason of inactivity (G. 15-10).

G.15-8 Removal of a Minister to Inactive Status: A Minister, may for reasons deemed valid, request the Presbytery to be placed on Inactive Status. If the Presbytery concurs, the Minister shall be placed on such status. All rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside, including the right to vote and participate in the meetings of Presbytery. However, the name of the Minister shall be carried on the Inactive Status Roll of Presbytery. After at least one year, the Minister may request Presbytery to be restored to Active Status. The Presbytery, after careful deliberation, may do so provided the Minister has a valid call that Presbytery approves, or provided the Minister is being transferred to another Presbytery in order to receive a call.

When the Minister who is not retired has been without approved call for a period of one year, the Ministerial Committee will confer with the Minister as to his continued sense of call and his expectations for future ministry. The committee will then recommend to the Presbytery whether the Minister shall remain on Active Status in the Presbytery or be placed on inactive status. The Presbytery, at its discretion and after judicious consideration, may place the Minister on the Inactive Status Roll involuntarily provided the vote to do so is by a two-thirds majority.

A limit shall be placed on the time during which a Minister on Inactive Status who is not retired shall remain on the roll of Presbytery, the limit being five years. After five years, the Presbytery has the right to drop that person from the roll without censure.

C. The Relationship of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee to the Presbytery

1. General Overview

The Ministerial/Candidates Committee of presbytery is responsible for the enlistment, support, care and supervision of its candidates for the ministry. The responsibilities of this Committee should include:

a. Enlistment

Seeking out those who are likely to be ministers and presenting to them the opportunities, blessings and responsibilities of the ministry of the Word.

b. Reception

Guiding applicants for candidacy through all the steps necessary under the Book of Government to come under the supervision of the Committee and to become candidates under care of presbytery.

G.12-2A A person desiring to become an ordained Minister shall first become a Candidate under the care of the Presbytery of which that person’s church is a member. That person begins this process by receiving the endorsement of the particular Church Session where this person’s membership has been held for at least six months. When the particular Church Session has approved the Candidate, application shall be made to the appropriate committee of Presbytery.
The Presbytery Committee charged with the oversight of Candidates shall make whatever tests of gifts and abilities as well as of sincerity of purpose, it deems necessary. If the Candidate is approved, the Committee shall recommend to the Presbytery the approval of candidacy.

Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee (G.16-27A.5). Such assignment shall be noted in presbytery’s bylaws or standing rules.

c. **Oversight**

Supervising and caring for candidates until they have been ordained or otherwise cease to be candidates.

2. **Unique Relationship**

The Ministerial/Candidates Committee relates to the presbytery as its pastoral arm. First, it seeks to care for its member churches and ministers. Second, it seeks to give oversight to the preparation of candidates for the ministry. The Committee stands at the outer gate to the ordained ministry—responding to the applicants, screening them, and recommending whether or not they shall be admitted to processes which may eventually lead to ordination as Ministers of the Word.

3. **Required Resources**

a. **Personnel**

The significance of the task of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee calls for well-qualified people who can and will commit themselves to a faithful term of office. The Committee should be large enough to carry out its functions without undue hardship for any, but not so big as to be unwieldy. It would be helpful if the Committee were composed of persons of varying ages and life experiences. The Committee should communicate annually its perception of personnel needs to presbytery.

G.16-27A The Ministerial Committee: Each Presbytery shall have a Ministerial Committee. It shall have at least six members equally divided between Ministers and Ruling Elders. Its quorum for action shall be one-half (½) of membership, to include at least one Ruling Elder and one Teaching Elder. The Committee shall be established in equal classes for a term of three years. Eligibility to succeed will be determined by the appointing court.

b. **Funds**

The presbytery is encouraged to provide adequate funds to enable the Committee to discharge all its responsibilities. These funds should make provision for such items as:

1. Administration: expenses of the Committee;
2. Program (expenses related to workshops, retreats, etc.);
3. Scholarship or aid funds.

c. **Committee Structure**

The work of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee is of such importance that it requires a high level of commitment by its members.

Once the Ministerial/Candidates Committee has been established by the presbytery, it may structure itself in whatever way seems best suited and most efficient to fulfill its responsibilities. The following suggestions are offered:
1. The Committee should elect a chairman and a clerk. Selection of the Committee’s chairman should be made with careful consideration being given to qualifications and continuity. Presbytery should provide oversight for a smooth transition for the Committee.

2. The chairman should be careful to keep the Committee informed and involved. The chairman, moreover, should be diligent to oversee the implementation of the Committee’s work in accordance with stated policies. The chairman should endeavor to keep presbytery’s Moderator and Clerk informed as to the Committee’s work and potential problems.

3. The Committee should meet regularly to fulfill its responsibilities at least as often as presbytery meets.

D. The Work of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee

1. Responsibilities

G.16-27A The Ministerial Committee: Each Presbytery shall have a Ministerial Committee. It shall have at least six members equally divided between Ministers and Ruling Elders. Its quorum for action shall be one-half (½) of membership, to include at least one Ruling Elder and one Teaching Elder. The Committee shall be established in equal classes for a term of three years. Eligibility to succeed will be determined by the appointing court. Its duties are as follows:

1. It shall report annually on the work of the Ministers of the Word to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Ministers of the Word approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.

2. It shall work with particular churches in securing Pastor(s). Calls shall always be placed in the hands of this Committee, who shall then make its recommendation to the Presbytery.

3. It shall review each request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship and make a recommendation for Presbytery.

4. It shall counsel with congregations seeking a Pastor or other pastoral staff, shall recommend to the Presbytery a Minister to serve as Moderator of the Church Session, and shall work with a congregation in securing pulpit supply.

(Note: The minister assigned to moderate the session may appoint a moderator pro tem so that he need not attend every meeting, but will still maintain appropriate accountability with the church session.)

5. It shall have the oversight of Candidates for the Gospel Ministry of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee.

6. It shall confer with each Minister desiring to become a member of the Presbytery, or Candidate desiring ordination, and conduct any examination it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to Presbytery concerning the application. It shall also conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the Book of Government.

7. No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation which has not first consulted with the Committee.
(Note: After a congregation has voted to elect a minister, the call process is not complete until the presbytery has ratified the congregation’s invitation to serve that local church.)

8. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of remuneration of Ministers, shall consult with Church Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to Presbytery minimum terms for the call of a Minister. Requests to Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.

(Note: The Chairman of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee should be careful not to act unilaterally but to involve his Committee in the work that has been assigned to the Committee.)

9. The Committee, or a Presbytery-designated alternate committee, shall consult with particular churches receiving aid from Presbytery and shall make recommendations to the Presbytery concerning that aid.

10. The Committee may be appointed by Presbytery to serve as a Judicial or Administrative Commission.

11. Although no complaint may have been received, if in the judgment of the Committee a particular congregation may be having difficulties or appears to be failing in its mission, the Committee has the authority to investigate and make recommendations to Presbytery.

(Note: As a part of a connectional system, the Ministerial Committee is encouraged to be proactive when it hears of conflict in the local church that may endanger its mission. The Ministerial Committee has authority to investigate reports of conflicts within a congregation and to make recommendations to presbytery. The purpose for intervention by the Ministerial Committee is to help resolve the conflict so that the church can move forward in health to regain its momentum for ministry and growth and outreach.)

12. Presbytery may authorize this Committee to dissolve pastoral relationship and dismiss Ministers according to the Book of Order, when both the congregation and the Pastor concur in the dissolution.

13. Although no complaint may have been received, if it appears to the Committee that there is dissension between a church and a Minister, the Committee has the authority to investigate and make recommendations to Presbytery.

2. Opportunity List

The Office of the Stated Clerk maintains and publishes an Opportunity List at least bi-monthly. EPC congregations seeking ordained and other professional personnel should provide information to the Office of the Stated Clerk for the Opportunity List. Those churches without a pastor that do not provide information will be listed in a section titled “Vacant Pulpits.” At the discretion of
the Stated Clerk, non-EPC opportunities may be listed, provided that calling body would allow a minister to maintain EPC ordination and not restrict the minister in exercising his ordination vows. Such a listing does not imply formal endorsement of the calling body and does not infringe upon the right of presbyteries to approve or disapprove a call to serve out of bounds (G.10-3).

a. Print version

To receive the print version of the Opportunity List, an EPC minister or candidate under care may send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the General Assembly Office. Lists are sent automatically to those with envelopes on file, chairman of the Ministerial and Candidates Care Committees of the presbyteries, the Stated Clerks and Moderators of the presbyteries and members of the permanent Ministerial Vocation Committee of the General Assembly. Non-ordained individuals seeking professional positions may also receive an Opportunity List on request.

Non-EPC ministers may submit a Personal Information Form to the Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk may refer such individuals to churches seeking ministers. Such ministers may also contact the Ministerial/Candidates Committee chairman of the presbytery in which he or she resides to obtain information about openings existing in that presbytery only. Presbytery chairmen are asked not to circulate the print version of the Opportunity List to non-EPC persons but to limit their assistance to those vacancies existing in that particular presbytery only.

b. Electronic Version

The Office of the Stated Clerk maintains an electronic version of the Opportunity List on the denomination’s web site. Listings are posted only with specific permission of the church seeking personnel.

Anyone interested in inquiring about a position listed in the electronic version of the Opportunity List may do so.

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3 In 1993 the Ministerial Vocation Committee of the General Assembly determined that the Opportunity List would be sent only to EPC ministers and candidates in order to give them the highest priority and consideration.

4 In 2001 the Ministerial Vocation Committee of the General Assembly approved the publication of the Opportunity List on the denomination’s web site with the condition that churches give specific permission for their listing to appear.
II. PROCESS OF CANDIDACY AND ORDINATION

A. Office of Minister

There are many types of callings within the office of Minister of the Word. Most ministers will serve within a pastoral ministry. But some will serve in other capacities, such as a teacher, missionary, evangelist, church planter, administrator or chaplain.

1. Pastor

The pastor is called by the congregation. The call shall be approved by the presbytery who shall then appoint a Commission to proceed with ordination, if required, and installation (see “Terms of Call—Minister,” p 113)

2. Associate Pastor

The Associate is called by the congregation. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities of the office. The call shall be approved by the presbytery who shall then appoint a Commission to proceed with ordination, if required, and installation.

G.11-6 A congregation may call a Minister to serve as Associate Pastor and shall proceed in the same manner as indicated above [G.11-5] with the exception that the call of the congregation shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Associate. Ordinarily an Associate Pastor is not eligible to succeed the Pastor. However, should a Search Committee desire to consider an Associate Pastor as Pastor, approval by a three-fourths vote of Session and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee shall be required for the Search Committee to proceed.

3. Assistant Pastor

The Assistant Pastor shall be called by the session. This call shall be for a definite period of time and shall be renewable. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities of the office. The call shall be approved by the presbytery who shall then appoint a Commission to proceed with ordination, if required, and installation. An Assistant Pastor may not succeed the Pastor (see “Terms of Call – Minister,” p. 113). The Assistant Pastor is not called by the congregation and therefore is not a member of Session (G.16-8).

G.11-7 A Minister may be called as Assistant Pastor. However, the call is issued by the Session. The call shall follow the form indicated above (G 11-5) and shall be for a definite period of time and is renewable. The call shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Assistant. The call of an Assistant Pastor may be terminated by the Church Session prior to that time only with the consent and approval of the Presbytery. A person serving as Assistant Pastor on the same church staff at the time the Pastor position becomes vacant shall not be called to fill that position in the same church, by any means.
Churches may call an Assistant Pastor to serve as Associate Pastor. Such a transition is a change in call and requires a call from the congregation and approval of both call and terms of call by the presbytery. The Assembly issued the following advice to presbyteries on this matter:

02-04(6) Presbyteries are reminded that a change in call from Assistant to Associate Pastor is a significant change. It is the congregation that calls, not the session. An installation service is required and appropriate when such a change occurs.

The following Act of the Assembly provides further guidance regarding the office of Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastor.

85-05 The General Assembly sustains the Permanent Judicial Commission’s opinion regarding the office of co-pastor as being non-existent. Relationships between Teaching Elders and EPC congregations sanction by the Book of Government are those of Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastor (Minutes, 5-40).

4. Teacher

G.10-3.B Teacher: A Minister may be called to teach in a seminary, college, or some other school. As a Teacher, the Minister is no less responsible for being a Pastor to those whom he teaches. The Teacher is to use that calling for planting the Word and for searching for the fruit of it. Above all, the Teacher is to serve as one who cares for the spiritual well-being of others.

5. Evangelist

A minister may be called by a presbytery, another court or an organization to serve as an evangelist. An evangelist may serve in an itinerant ministry, as a missionary or as a church planter (see “Terms of Call-Evangelist,” p. 115; “Terms of Call-Missionary,” p. 118).

G.10-3.C Evangelist: A Minister may be called by a Presbytery, by some other court or by some organization to serve as an Evangelist. The Presbytery of which the Minister is a member may commission the Minister to share the Gospel and to administer the sacraments outside the geographical bounds of the Presbytery in other parts of the Church or the world. An Evangelist called as missionary shall always have as his primary duty the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. When a Presbytery calls an Evangelist as Church Planter, it may entrust to that person the responsibility to develop churches, to conduct preparational meetings of such churches, and to oversee the required preparation of Elders and Deacons. Those special powers given to the Evangelist shall be specified by the Presbytery in writing. That person may be given the power to receive and dismiss members.
The 19th General Assembly clarified the status of ministers who are serving as missionaries totally under the auspices of the EPC. Such are classified as ministers with call (missionaries), not ministers serving outside of boundaries (Minutes, 19-40).

6. Administrator

G.10-3.D A court of the Church or one of its agencies may call a Minister to serve in some administrative capacity. Some worthy organization deemed proper by the Presbytery may also issue a call to a Minister to be an administrator. In such cases, it is always the duty of the Minister to give a good account of the Gospel, always making the Word the focus and center of ministry.

The 19th General Assembly clarified the status of ministers who are serving in an administrative capacity in one of the courts of the church. Such are classified as ministers with call (administrators), not ministers serving outside of boundaries (Minutes, 19-40).

7. Chaplain

G.10-3.E A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Minister as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Minister shall always have as his primary duty the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.

a. Military

The Department of Defense (DOD) requires that all military chaplains hold an Ecclesiastical Endorsement from a recognized religious body or denomination. The EPC uses as an umbrella endorsing agency the National Association of Evangelicals’ Commission on Chaplains. The Ministerial Vocation Committee of the EPC may recommend an EPC minister or candidate in good standing through its Subcommittee on Chaplaincy for an Ecclesiastical Endorsement to serve as a chaplain candidate, chaplain in the Army, Navy, or Air Force on Extended Active Duty (EAD) or in the Reserve or National Guard. Additional DOD requirements include completing a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent, passing a military medical examination, passing a National Agency Check for a Security Clearance, and being commissioned before the 40th birthday. In some cases the military may require two years pastoral experience before being eligible for an endorsement for active duty. The final sign-off for an Ecclesiastical Endorsement rests with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. Pastors, churches, or presbyteries shall contact the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) as the denominational endorsing agent for advice and action on any matter pertaining to the military chaplaincy.

Such ministers will fall into one of the following four categories:
1. Duly ordained EPC ministers seeking Ecclesiastical Endorsement for Extended Active Duty (EAD) in any branch of military service.

2. Duly ordained EPC ministers seeking Ecclesiastical Endorsement for a Reserve or National Guard appointment in any branch of military service, including Veterans Administration (VA) and Civil Air Patrol (CAP).

3. Duly ordained ministers transferring into the EPC from another denomination holding a Reserve Commission as a chaplain not on Extended Active Duty (EAD) in any branch of military service, including Veterans Administration (VA) or Civil Air Patrol (CAP).

4. Chaplains currently on Extended Active Duty (EAD) in any branch of military service transferring into the EPC from another denomination.

Regarding categories 3 & 4 above, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) has established procedures for Change of Religious Affiliation (Denomination), so that an Active Duty or Reserve Chaplain is not without an Ecclesiastical Endorsement during the transfer. Contact the Office of the Stated Clerk for the current procedure.

In order to standardize and regulate the process of application for the military chaplaincy, the following guidelines have been established:

1. The applicant shall complete a Personal Information Form and Form C-1 Application for Military Chaplaincy” (see p. 124). These forms may be obtained from the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) and on completion, should be returned there.

2. The applicant should inform and seek the advice of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee of the local presbytery or of the presbytery into which he will seek admission. The Ministerial/Candidates Committee of the respective presbytery should provide a “memorandum to file” indicating the committee’s support of the applicant. The memorandum should be sent to the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) for the applicant’s file.

3. The Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) should submit the completed file with all forms as listed in #4 below to the Subcommittee on Chaplaincy for review and evaluation.

4. The Subcommittee should make evaluation of the applicant, based on a review of:
   a. PIF and Application form for Military Chaplaincy.
   b. Psychological testing approved by the Ministerial Vocation Committee:
      1) the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
2) Enrich (if married, both spouses will complete the test) or Prepare (if planning marriage)\(^5\)

c. Personal interview by a member of the Subcommittee or an EPC endorsed chaplain designated by the Subcommittee chairman.

d. Medical statement by applicant’s personal physician (not required for EAD chaplains).

e. The reports of contact with the six references listed in the candidates PIF; (see “Reference Check Form,” p. 135).

f. Supporting memorandum from the Ministerial/Candidates Committee of presbytery, per #2 above.

g. The report from the background check of the candidate (see page 26).

h. Interview by phone or in person by the Subcommittee as a whole.

4. The Subcommittee should notify the Ministerial Vocation Committee in writing of its recommendation. Since the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly serves as the denomination’s endorsing agent, he shall, on recommendation of the Committee, inform the National Association of Evangelicals Commission on Chaplains of the Committee’s positive action.

5. The Office of Stated Clerk (General Assembly) should notify the presbytery once endorsement has been obtained. When an opening develops, the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) is notified by the NAE Commission on Chaplains, and the Clerk, in turn, alerts the presbytery and the prospective chaplain.

6. The presbytery should approve the call if it deems it appropriate.

7. The presbytery shall contact the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) in writing of its approval of the call.

The following Act of the Assembly that gives further guidance for a chaplain’s membership in a presbytery.

88-07 Chaplains are encouraged to hold membership in the Presbytery allowing the greatest participation and most effective ministry (Minutes, 8-41). (This applies to military chaplains on Extended Active Duty [EAD]).

\(^5\) If testing indicates a need, the applicant should receive appropriate follow-up counseling
b. Chaplain Candidate Program

The applicant shall be recommended to the permanent Ministerial Vocation Committee for the Chaplains Candidate Program by his session with the Ministerial/Candidates Committee’s approval.

The applicant shall complete the Personal Information Form and Form C-1 “Application for Military Chaplaincy” (page 124).
1. The applicant shall submit completed forms to the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) to be reviewed and evaluated by the Subcommittee on Chaplains.
2. The applicant shall complete psychological testing as required by the MVC (MMPI and Enrich or Prepare).
3. The six references mentioned in the candidates Personal Information Form shall be contacted (see Reference Check Form, p.171)

The applicant’s request to attend the Chaplain Candidate Program should be acted on by the permanent Ministerial Vocation Committee upon recommendation of its Subcommittee on Chaplains. The Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) will notify the candidate and other appropriate persons of its ecclesiastical approval or disapproval.

c. Military Chaplains Leading Worship with Other Faith Groups

The 19th General Assembly adopted guidelines for EPC military chaplains regarding leading worship with other faith groups:

99-12 While our chaplains are encouraged to exercise their ministry in the Armed Forces with the maximum of collegiality in cooperation with persons of varying beliefs, the EPC does not approve joint leadership of a worship service with persons representing faith groups outside the historic Christian tradition, as defined by the Apostles’ Creed.

d. Non-military Chaplains (hospital, prison, etc.)

Since endorsing requirements differ for the various chaplain ministries, the prospective chaplain should contact the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) for assistance in fulfilling chaplain requirements of that particular ministry. The EPC is an endorsing body for the Association of Professional Chaplains.

B. Temporary Pastoral Offices
Temporary pastoral relationships. A Church Session may invite a Minister to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and perform needed pastoral duties. The invitation must be approved by the Presbytery on recommendation of the Ministerial Committee unless otherwise stipulated. No person serving in a temporary relationship is eligible to be called as Pastor of that church. The various relations are as follows:

A. Stated Supply. Invited to serve a definite period of time of no less than one month and no more than twelve. The Stated Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Church Session during the time of service.

B. Interim Supply. Invited to serve during the period of time a congregation is seeking a Pastor. The Interim Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Church Session during the time of service.

C. Occasional Supply. Invited to serve on specified days. Only the Ministerial Committee must approve.

1. Calling a Minister who has served in a temporary pastoral relationship

A minister should not be serving in a temporary pastoral relationship with the intent of becoming the pastor of the church. To do so diminishes the minister’s ability to accomplish the tasks necessary in the interim period as defined by the Assembly’s “Guidelines for Intentional Interim Pastoral Ministry” (p. 91). The Book of Order (G.11-8 above) prohibits any minister being called as pastor of the church while actively serving in a temporary relationship. If the church desires to consider calling the minister as pastor, the temporary relationship should be ended and an appropriate length of time be allowed for serious consideration of the call (normally a minimum of two months).

2. Sacraments administered by non-EPC ministers

The following Act of the Assembly provides guidance:

94-22 A lawfully ordained minister in good standing of a non-EPC church may be authorized to serve communion in an EPC church, with the concurrence of the Presbytery (Minutes, 14-36).

The administration of the sacraments is a function of the office of the Minister of the Word to which presbytery alone ordains. As distinguished in G.16-10.K, the session of a local church authorizes the celebration of the Sacraments for the persons under its jurisdiction, determining its time, place and frequency of the celebration, but does not authorize persons to administer the sacraments. To presbytery, therefore, remains the particular responsibility to approve who the administrators of the sacraments shall be. A lawfully ordained minister in good standing of a non-EPC church may be authorized to serve communion in an EPC church with the concurrence of the presbytery.
G.16-10 Duties: In maintaining the spiritual supervision of the particular church, the Church Session has the following duties and powers:

K. To oversee the worship of the congregation in accordance with the Book of Worship, including the time and place of worship, special services, the music program, and the celebration of the sacraments. This shall not infringe on the responsibility of the Pastor in the selection of hymns, Scriptures, sermon, administration of the sacraments, or other duties that are incumbent on the office of Pastor.

C. Disposition of the Call to the Ministry

1. Call

A call may be placed in the hands of a minister or a candidate only by the presbytery to which that person is being called.

G.11-9 A call may be placed in the hands of a Minister only by the Presbytery to which that person is being called. If the calling Presbytery determines that the person is suitable for the position, that the good of the whole Church shall be served, and that the Minister or Candidate being called accepts the call, it shall inform the Minister or Candidate of its approval and proceed to place the call in the hands of said Minister or Candidate. The calling Presbytery shall appoint a Commission to proceed with ordination, if required, and installation.

G.11-11 If some court or agency issues a call to a Minister in some capacity other than a pastorate, the calling agency shall issue a call in like form as a particular church and the Presbytery shall proceed in ordinary fashion for approving a call to a particular congregation, except the Commission to install shall be omitted.

G.11-12 If a Minister desires to accept a call outside the structures of the Church, he or she shall present a request to the Presbytery, indicating the nature of the work and the terms of the call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the work as appropriate to the Gospel ministry, it may approve it for a definite period of time. After the expiration of that time, the Minister must receive further approval to continue.

In the event that the outside of bounds ministry falls within the geographic boundaries of a Presbytery not currently his own, a Minister shall inform the appropriate committees of both Presbyteries, seeking the advice and approval of both Presbyteries regarding potential plans for ministry or work.

2. Call Disapproved By Presbytery

A call disapproved by presbytery results in moving a minister to inactive status.
In the event a Minister desires to accept a call disapproved by Presbytery, that person shall be placed on inactive status.

D. Preparation of Candidate for Office

1. Overview

The sequential steps in preparing a person for ordination involves many different parties. The individual applicant who senses God’s call to the ministry is central to the process, but the applicant’s church and presbytery are also involved. In the Reformed tradition, a call to ministry is understood as a three-fold call. First, there is the inward call to the individual where the person bears testimony of God’s call. Second, there is a confirming call of a particular church, church court or other appropriate agency to that person to fill the office, and third, the approval of that call by an appropriate court of the church (G.11-1). The following Acts of the Assembly and the 14 steps listed afterwards provide further guidance for the sequential steps that an applicant would follow from the individual’s sense of call to that person’s acceptance as a candidate by presbytery:

83-03 Presbyteries shall use the approved standardized “Application - Candidates for the Gospel Ministry” for persons seeking to come under care of Presbyteries.

83-04 Session shall use the approved “Session Approval Form” for commending Candidates to Presbyteries (See “Session Endorsement Form,” p. 128).

82-07 Uniform Procedures on Candidacy and Ordination:

1. Requirements for ordination shall be:
   a. Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university
   b. Seminary degree-M.Div. or equivalent degree including Koine Greek and Hebrew
   c. Care of Presbytery for a minimum of one year
   d. Examinations: four written and one oral examination must be sustained
   e. Valid call
   f. Other evidence - Assurance those spiritual gifts needed for effective ministry are present and being developed

2. All exceptions to fulfilling standards for ordination (extraordinary circumstances) will be referred to the permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation for a recommended course of action, including continuing education and reading requirements. The Presbytery of Jurisdiction shall, in conjunction with the Committee on Ministerial Vocation:
2-1 Mail necessary documentation (personal history, etc.) to the permanent committee for its review and counsel, and

2-2 Proceed with process of ordination only after receiving recommendations from the Ministerial Vocation Committee.

3. Persons seeking membership within a Presbytery may be received as enrolled members only upon evidence of a call endorsed by the Presbytery.

3-1. Terms of call: The amount of annual vacation time: one month

3-2. Terms of call: The amount of time to be given for study leave: two weeks, cumulative up to six weeks.

83-07 The denomination shall provide an approved “Candidates Educational Equivalency Program” (CEEP) for Presbyteries preparing Candidates for the ministry who have extraordinary circumstances. Program shall be under the general oversight of the Ministerial Vocation Committee (Minutes, 3-50).

Certain obligations are placed on the person pursuing ordination. This procedure is explained in detail in G.12-1 and G.12-2.

G.12-1 Calling to office in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church places certain obligations on an ordinand. Each person being ordained to office is required to make certain commitments in terms of faith and order as well as to give a good testimony of Jesus Christ. For that reason, certain preparations for office are required.

G.12-2A A person desiring to become an ordained Minister shall first become a Candidate under the care of the Presbytery of which that person’s church is a member. That person begins this process by receiving the endorsement of the particular Church Session where the person’s membership has been held for a least six months. When the particular Church Session has approved the Candidate, application shall be made to the appropriate committee of Presbytery.

G.12-2B The Presbytery Committee charged with the oversight of Candidates shall make whatever tests of gifts and abilities, as well as of sincerity of purpose, it deems necessary. If the Candidate is approved, the committee shall recommend to Presbytery the approval of candidacy.

G.12-2C The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Candidate as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination, and a statement regarding the person’s call to the Ministry. If approved, Presbytery shall proceed as follows:

The Candidate shall stand before the Presbytery and respond affirmatively to the following questions to be put by the Moderator of the Presbytery:

1. As you understand God’s working in your heart and life, do you continue to affirm that you feel called to the Gospel Ministry?

2. Do you now submit yourself to the care and supervision of this Presbytery as you prepare yourself for this task?
3. Do you renew your commitment as a Christian, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as becomes a follower of Jesus?

The Candidate shall kneel and the Moderator, or someone appointed by the Moderator, shall offer a special prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing to rest upon the Candidate.

A charge shall be given to the Candidate by someone appointed by the Moderator. The Moderator shall then declare the person received as a Candidate and the person’s name placed on the Candidate roll of the Presbytery. Afterwards, it is appropriate either for the Moderator on behalf of the Presbytery, or for the entire Presbytery, to extend to the Candidate the right hand of fellowship.

G.12-2D The Presbytery shall assign a Minister of the Word to serve as advisor to the Candidate, ordinarily not the Candidate’s Pastor. The advisor and the Candidate’s Pastor shall report regularly to the appropriate committee on the progress of the Candidate. It is also appropriate for the home church of the Candidate to have some special service of recognition.

G.12-2E The Presbytery shall have some Committee to which the oversight of Candidates is assigned. This Committee shall oversee the training program of the Candidate, giving encouragement and pastoral attention, and making an annual report to the Presbytery of the progress of the Candidate.

G.12-2F After being under the care of a Presbytery for a minimum of one year, the Candidate may request transfer to another Presbytery. Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination.

G.12-2G A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a degree from a four-year college and a degree from a seminary approved by the Presbytery, requiring at least three years of study. The Candidate shall have had appropriate courses in the original languages of the Scriptures and shall complete an exegesis in one such language on a passage assigned by the Presbytery.

G.12-2H In extraordinary circumstances, a Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.

(Note: The course of study is prescribed by the Ministerial Vocation Committee and implemented by the Presbytery (see p. 29))

2. Applicant

The following are the requirements in the acceptance process for the applicant:

a. Person who wishes to come under care of the Presbytery:
1) The applicant shall be a member of a church belonging to the presbytery to which the individual is applying.

2) The applicant shall be a member of that church for at least six months prior to making formal application.

3) The applicant should talk with the Pastor and session members who know the candidate well, then file a formal application with the chairman of presbytery’s Ministerial/Candidates Committee. A formal interview with the session will be necessary before the session can give its endorsement to the applicant.

4) The applicant should participate with a career counselor or counseling center approved by presbytery in an evaluation of emotional, intellectual, and vocational aptitudes for ministry.

5) The applicant shall submit a physician’s report on his physical examination to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

6) The applicant shall have transcripts sent to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee from all educational institutions beyond the secondary level that the applicant has attended.

7) The applicant should present a completed PIF with a written statement of personal Christian experience and events that have led to a sense of call to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

8) The applicant should have a personal interview with presbytery’s Ministerial/ Candidates Committee.

9) The applicant should make an appearance before presbytery when the Committee makes its report. If presbytery votes to receive him, the applicant should participate in a brief service of reception and recognition at that meeting of presbytery.

10) The applicant shall agree to a background check (see page 26).

b. Person transferring candidacy within the EPC

1) A candidate transferring from one EPC presbytery to another should advise the chairman of the Ministerial/Candidates Committees and Stated Clerks of both presbyteries of his desire to transfer. He may move his local church membership.

2) The candidate is responsible to see that all files and records have been forwarded from the original to the new Ministerial/Candidates Committee and that all necessary documents are transferred to the clerk of the Presbytery.

3) The candidate should seek to meet with the new Ministerial/Candidates Committee after the Committee has received the necessary papers.

4) The candidate should be present to answer any questions that may be asked whenever the Ministerial/Candidates Committee is prepared to make a recommendation that presbytery receive the candidate.

5) The candidate must agree to a background check if one was not conducted by the candidate’s previous presbytery. (See page 26)

c. Person who has been under care in another Reformed body

A person who has been a candidate in another Reformed body and is seeking to become a candidate in an EPC presbytery must fulfill the 6-month membership requirement in an EPC church before making application to the presbytery (G.12-2.A). The presbytery, having satisfied itself that the applicant’s candidacy in the other body is equivalent to that of the
EPC, may shorten the normal length of time that the candidate is under care. Grounds for shortening the normal period of time under care should be noted in presbytery minutes.

02-04(5) In exercising their discretionary authority (e.g., waiving the ordinary requirement of one year under care for a candidate), presbyteries should indicate the grounds for doing so in their minutes.

3. Session

The following are the requirements in the reception process.

a. Applicant from a church within the Presbytery:

The pastor, or any member of the session, upon learning that a person in the congregation has a sense of call to the ministry, should discuss with the person the particulars of his sense of call. If after prayer and discussion the applicant truly wants to pursue the candidacy process, the pastor or other session member should notify the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

1) A representative of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee should meet with the session before session formally interviews an applicant or endorses him for candidacy. This requirement allows for instruction on the qualities needed in ministers, and the obligation that falls upon any endorsing church. Session should be encouraged to seriously evaluate the applicant as to his sense of call and as to his qualifications to pursue ordination. Sometimes session routinely passes an applicant on to presbytery when it should have stopped the process at the level of the local church. Session should do all it can to encourage suitably gifted members to consider pursuing ministry in the EPC. Ministers should view it as a great privilege to encourage and mentor candidates for the ministry from their own congregations. In the evaluation of an applicant, session should assure itself that it can endorse the applicant in good conscience to pursue ordination to the Gospel ministry within the EPC.

2) The session should decide whether or not it is prepared to carry out the following obligations of an endorsing church:

[a] Providing possible financial support;
[b] Maintaining communication during the period of training;
[c] Continuing pastoral support, even though presbytery is responsible for supervision of training;
[d] Making annual reports to the Committee of the degree to which it has fulfilled the recommendations above in letters a - c.

3) The session should complete the Session Endorsement Form (see p. 128) if it desires to endorse the applicant.

4) The session should plan to recognize the applicant in a worship service.

5) The session should be well represented at the meeting of presbytery when one of its home church members is examined for candidacy.

6) The session should record in its minutes when it is notified that a church member is taken under care of presbytery (Act of the Assembly 98-15).

b. Candidate under care of another Presbytery
1) The individual shall be received into membership of the local church, as any other person who transfers by letter.
2) That session should immediately notify the Ministerial/Candidates of the reception of this individual.
3) That session should determine from the Ministerial/Candidates Committee whether the home church of the candidate is expected to continue its responsibilities as the endorsing church.
4) If presbytery receives the applicant as a candidate on its rolls, the session should note such in its minutes.

4. Endorsing Congregation

The session, on behalf of the endorsing congregation, should be concerned with the candidate’s needs and offer its support in any way which it feels will be helpful for the candidate’s development. The congregation should take great care to support the work of presbytery with the candidate.

The endorsing congregation should be guided by the following requirements and procedures:

1) It should make sure that candidates receive all local church mailings and denominational publications;
2) It should determine the dates when candidates return to their home communities so that they might participate in worship in the home church.
3) It should submit a report to the presbytery’s Ministerial/Candidates Committee each spring regarding the fulfillment of the responsibilities listed in 1) and 2) above.

5. Pre-screening by the Ministerial/Candidates Committee

The Ministerial/Candidates Committee carries out certain duties, some directly delegated to it, others logically assumed by it. The Committee is officially responsible for the initial screening interview with applicants for candidacy. Prior to this interview, the applicant should have discussed his sense of call with his pastor who will then contact the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

The Committee receives official word of an applicant’s interest when the “Application to Come Under Care of Presbytery” is submitted to the chairman. (see “Application to Come Under Care Of Presbytery,” p. 129)

The Committee should send a representative to meet with the session of the applicant’s church before that session takes any kind of endorsing action. The purposes of the meeting are as follows:

To discuss the qualities needed in ministers;
   a. To present the obligations which are assumed by a endorsing church:
(1) providing possible financial support;
(2) Keeping open communication between the church and the applicant through the years of training;
(3) Continuing pastoral support even if applicant is under care of presbytery in regard to training;
(4) Making an annual report to presbytery through the Presbytery Committee (See G.12-2E).

6. Interview by the Ministerial/Candidates Committee

Prior to arranging an interview with an applicant, the Committee members should clarify their own thinking through discussion of certain issues pertaining to calling and ministry. The members should also identify what they wish to accomplish in the forthcoming meeting. Once these determinations have been made, the Committee is ready for interview.

These issues, in conjunction with relevant questions and possible approaches for exploring them are as follows:

a. The Calling:

Questions to be resolved by the Committee before meeting:  Do we understand and agree on a theology of calling? What implications are there for us as a committee in the idea that calling is not only an event but a process? How does this theology of calling shape our intentions toward applicants? Can we ourselves explain this theology of calling to an applicant?

Approaches during meeting with the applicant: What influences you toward this ministry? How is God working things together to help you make the decision to pursue the ministry?

b. The Gifts and Talents:

Questions to be resolved by the Committee before meeting: What personal characteristics and gifts are most needed in the ministry? How do gifts and talents relate to effective ministry?

Approaches during meeting with the applicant: What is your assessment of your own gifts and talents? How would these gifts and talents relate to your ministry? In what ways might this process of candidacy serve as an opportunity to discover and develop your gifts and talents? What would be your goals in this process? How can the Committee help you achieve them?
c. The Vocational Options

Questions to be resolved before meeting: What are various avenues of service within the ordained ministry? What are the requirements for each avenue? How can the Committee help you achieve them?

Approaches during meeting with the applicant: What do you believe God wants of you? What do you want to do in the ordained ministry? How will ordination help you to minister? Could you serve just as effectively without ordination?

d. The Process:

Questions to be resolved before meeting: What are the options and requirements of candidacy? How can we reach agreement with this applicant about the nature and requirements of our mutual relationship?

Approaches during meeting with candidate: How do you wish to proceed from here? What are your plans? Do you wish to come under care of presbytery, and under the supervision of the Committee?

7. Acceptance Process of Applicant by the Ministerial/Candidates Committee

a. General Guidelines

The process should be handled carefully and involves a number of people and groups. In addition to the applicant, participants include the session of his church, the Ministerial/Candidates Committee of presbytery and the presbytery itself. It is vital that the Committee knows the formal requirements and takes care of the details of paperwork before meeting with applicants. Only then can it approach each person involved with the seriousness deserved for such a significant step. Each applicant should be given serious and sensitive attention.

b. Committee’s Preparation for Acceptance of Applicant

1) The Committee should come to an understanding of and attitude toward its responsibility for oversight of the applicant. Two questions need to be answered by the Committee. First, will the Committee seek to approve every applicant for candidacy or will it only endorse those applicants that genuinely appear to be called and gifted by God to serve within the EPC? Secondly, will the Committee take the time to examine the information about each candidate so it can make an informed decision to accept or to reject an application for candidacy?
2) The Committee needs to decide how many of the applicant forms provided by the Ministerial Vocation Committee it will use and have on hand an adequate supply. Alternative forms that the Committee may prefer should be prepared well in advance of the time when they will be used. The Ministerial Vocation Committee requests that each committee use three specific forms:

(a) Application to Come Under Care of the Presbytery (p. 129)
(b) Certificate of Reception as a Candidate for the Ministry (p. 136)
(c) Presbytery Transfer of a Candidate for the Ministry (p. 145)

Copies of these, sent to the General Assembly Office, make it possible to keep denominational records current.

3) The Committee should discuss the procedures it will use during the interview process. Input from those who have had training in the interview process can be helpful. Such information may be available from EPC church members who have had such training or who work in the personnel department of a company. Special care should be given to make certain that unintended pain is not inflicted on any applicants.

4) The Committee should establish goals in regard to the kinds of information it is seeking to learn about the applicant from both written documents and personal interviews. The Committee will also need to clarify the standards that will govern the acceptability and non-acceptability of an applicant (see “Checklist for of Candidate Coming Under Care of Presbytery,” p. 148). The Committee needs to understand that it acts as one of the important gate keepers for the process leading to ordination. It should, therefore take the responsibility for evaluating a prospective candidate very seriously. Too often the Committee accepts any applicant as a candidate without seriously evaluating the applicant’s potential to serve as a minister in the EPC. The Committee must invest adequate time in evaluating the written documents and the personal interviews and all of the data that have come to them about the applicant and prayerfully discern if this applicant, in their best judgment, should be accepted as a candidate under care of the presbytery on his way to serve as a minister in the EPC.

5) The Committee should explore and decide which career counseling centers and/or counselors it will use in its work with the applicant, and then have them approved by presbytery.

6) The Committee should determine the cost of an evaluation made by its approved centers or counselors and establish a policy on payment of fees, travel and other expenses. This should be explained carefully to the applicant at the start of the process. The Ministerial Vocation Committee recommends that expenses be shared equally by the session, presbytery and applicant.

7) The Committee should establish a policy regarding the required report on the applicant’s health and physical condition.
8) The Committee should decide what its policy is to be regarding any costs involved in physical examinations and should share this policy with the applicant. The Ministerial Vocation Committee suggests that expenses be shared equally by the session, presbytery and applicant.

9) The Committee should establish guidelines for the candidate’s advisor, who is normally not the candidate’s pastor.

8. Presentation of the Applicant to the Presbytery

The following are requirements in the acceptance process for presbytery’s Ministerial/ Candidates Committee.

a. Under Care of the Presbytery –(G.12-2B)

1) The Committee should notify the applicant of the time requirements before presbytery can act on the application. See G.12-2A.

2) The Committee should inform the applicant of the various required written documents that are needed
   (a) Session Endorsement From
   (b) Assessment evaluation
   (c) Physical examination
   (d) Transcripts from all schools above secondary level;
   (e) Statement in writing of applicant’s personal Christian experience and the events which had led to a sense of God’s call to the ministry.
   (f) The application to come under care
   (g) Personal Information Form

3) Preliminary Questionnaire – Candidate’s Statement of Faith (Part 1) - Candidate’s Statement of Faith (Part 2). The Committee may wish to ask the applicant to fill out the Preliminary Questionnaire (p. 133) as another way of gaining information from the candidate regarding his understanding of his call to ministry. As the candidate moves toward ordination, the Committee may wish to ask the candidate to complete the Candidate’s Statement of Faith (Part 1) (p. 138) and the Candidate’s Statement of Faith (Part 2) (p. 142).

4) Background Check: Note the following Act of the Assembly

98-15   *Presbyteries shall perform a background investigation on all individuals seeking candidacy or membership in their Presbytery. The investigation of public records shall include at least a verification of social security number, criminal history and motor vehicle driving history. Also, as part of the reception process, references must be checked.*  (Minutes 18-41)
Our first concern is to protect the well-being of the flock under our care, and better secure the integrity of the household of faith. We are also concerned to strengthen the integrity of all information that is presented in the process of a call. We further note that by judicial precedent, any employer which fails to exercise due diligence and reasonable care to hire safe and competent employees exposes itself to legal liability for damages caused by employees so hired. We would thus protect the stewardship of the gifts given by God’s people for the work of the Kingdom. The information requested in the background check is not confidential and is readily available on the public record, thus violating no one’s privacy.

5) Before meeting the applicant, the Committee should study all the above documents. The Committee should also carefully examine the report of the background check. The Committee should check the references listed in the Personal Information Form (see “Reference Check Form,” p. 171).

6) The Committee should have a personal interview with the applicant. The full Committee should meet with the applicant before voting on whether or not to recommend that presbytery take this person under care.

7) The Committee should notify those responsible to arrange for a place on the docket of a meeting of presbytery for examination. The chairman should also notify and alert the Moderator to be prepared to ask the necessary questions and participate in the service of recognition (see G.12-2C).

8) The Committee, after consulting with the applicant, should be prepared to present the following to presbytery:

   (a) Plans for recognition and reception at presbytery.
   (b) Name of a ministerial advisor to be appointed by presbytery (ordinarily not the candidate’s pastor).

b. By Transfer From Another Presbytery (G.12-2F)

1) The Committee shall communicate with the dismissing presbytery through their stated clerks to obtain the following documents:

   (a) The files on the candidate which would include the items listed above as well as the report on the background check and the report of the reference checks;
   (b) An official certificate or letter of dismissal or transfer (see “Presbytery Transfer of a Candidate for the Ministry,” p. 145).

2) The Committee, having notified the local church where the candidate is a member, shall request time on the docket of presbytery to move that the candidate be received.

3) The Committee should be prepared to propose to presbytery a ministerial advisor and an endorsing church for the candidate, unless the time until ordination is so short as to make this unnecessary.

9. Presbytery Action to Review an Applicant
The following are requirements in the reception process for presbytery:

a. First-time applicant

1) The presbytery, upon notice from the Ministerial/Candidates Committee, should docket time at its first appropriate meeting to hear the report of the Committee, to examine the applicant and to arrange for a service of recognition and reception.

2) The Moderator should be prepared to ask questions about the applicant’s experience of Christian grace and motives for seeking the ministry of the Word (G.12-2).

3) The presbytery, being satisfied that it has sufficient information, shall vote upon receiving the applicant under care.

4) The presbytery should arrange for a service of recognition and reception, in accord with G.12-2C.

5) The presbytery, in consultation with the Ministerial/Candidates Committee, shall appoint a ministerial advisor. The advisor is normally not the candidate’s pastor (G.12-2.D)

6) The Stated Clerk of Presbytery should notify the ministerial advisor, the endorsing church and the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly) of the candidate’s reception (see “Certificate of Reception for a candidate for the Ministry,” p. 136).

b. Transferring from another EPC Presbytery:

1) Through their stated clerks, the presbytery shall receive the official notice of dismissal or transfer from the original presbytery (see “Presbytery Transfer of a Candidate for the Ministry,” p. 145).

2) The presbytery shall place on the docket a time for the Ministerial/Candidates Committee to report and for presbytery to vote on whether to receive the candidate by transfer.

3) Through their stated clerks, the presbytery shall notify the dismissing presbytery of the date of reception.

4) The presbytery, upon recommendation of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee, shall assign to the candidate a ministerial advisor, unless ordination is imminent.

10. Ministerial Advisor

The major role of the ministerial advisor is to facilitate the process of candidacy. In effect he is a project manager, helping the candidate move toward ordination. The advisor expedites communication between the candidate and presbytery, and assists the candidate in any way possible in the process of candidacy (G.12-2D). The ministerial advisor will want to familiarize
himself with the following requirements and procedures:

1) The advisor shall be a Minister of the Word in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

2) The advisor should take the initiative for contacts with the candidate and be in direct communication with him by telephone or personal visit at least quarterly.

3) The advisor should submit a written report each spring to the presbytery’s Ministerial Committee concerning the progress of the candidate (see “Advisor’s Report,” p. 141). The report should include the following:

   (a) Time spent with the candidate;
   (b) Ways in which communications have been maintained;
   (c) Ways in which the candidate has been involved in the worship and work of a local church;
   (d) A narrative of the candidate’s personal, spiritual and academic progress; growth in professional skills; financial needs and ways in which the Ministerial/Candidates Committee can improve care of this candidate.

4) The advisor should consider himself to be a prompter and, if possible, an aid in the preparation of the Committee’s annual report on the candidate.

5) The advisor will find it helpful to be acquainted with seminary curricula. He should be familiar with the Reformed Reading List and encourage the candidate to study those resources in preparation for ordination. (See “Reformed Reading List,” p. 139)

11. Extraordinary Status: Candidate’s Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP)

a. Authorization

According to Book of Government 12.2-H, certain candidates for the ministry, in extraordinary cases, may have part of their formal education waived when there are other compensating educational experiences. In such cases, the candidate shall be assigned a course of study to overcome whatever educational deficiencies may exist.

b. Purpose
The purpose of the Candidate’s Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP) is not to offset or in any way weaken the traditional and long-accepted approach to the preparation for ministry. Study leading to degrees from a four-year college and seminary is a proven and preferred educational procedure.

Those, however, who have been unable to follow the traditional track, especially at the seminary level, may follow a non-traditional track which would eventually lead to the regular examination procedure for ordination. This non-traditional track should maintain an appropriate degree of educational rigor and should not be considered a short cut to ordination.

c. Program

CEEP provides a grid to help the Ministerial Vocation Committee work with a candidate who has been accepted under the extraordinary clause. The program is built around three educational modes:

1) a methodological mode which outlines the pedagogical procedures;
2) a cognitive mode which details the subject matter to be covered;
3) an evaluation mode to assess satisfactory accomplishment.

Within the cognitive mode there are four units: biblical, theological, ecclesiastical and pastoral. Each unit is broken into four specific learning modules (16 in all) which cover the traditional subject matter areas of seminary study. The requirements of each learning module are carefully outlined in a course syllabus. (see p. 131). The Ministerial Vocation Committee uses the cognitive modes as a grid to evaluate areas of deficiency in the candidate’s academic background. Course work is then prescribed from the excellent resources currently available in area seminaries.

12. Process for Candidates with Extraordinary Circumstances

Please refer to the procedures for regular candidates, as these should be followed except where they are specifically altered by the extraordinary circumstances (Refer to page 16 for Act of the Assembly 82-07.3)

a. The candidate consults at local level:
   1) with pastor
   2) with elders
   3) with friends;

b. The candidate comes under care of presbytery:
   1) is assigned an advisor;
   2) works under the supervision and advice of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

c. The presbytery receives the candidate and recommends extraordinary status. (Refer to G.12-2H)

d. The candidate’s application for extraordinary status shall be referred, with appropriate
materials, to the Ministerial Vocation Committee of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

e. The Ministerial Vocation Committee shall review the candidate’s file. It shall meet with the candidate at the General Assembly Office, normally during one of its stated meetings, to review and assess the candidate’s educational needs. It should take into account the following:

1) intent of candidate;
2) educational background of candidate;
3) experience of candidate.

f. The Ministerial Vocation Committee shall propose the proper course of study which shall be implemented under the oversight of the Ministerial/Candidates Care Committee of the candidate’s presbytery.

13. Candidate Application Materials

The following information should be received with the candidate’s application:

a. copy of the college and post-graduate transcripts of the candidate;

b. written descriptive overview of the candidate’s experience and ministry to date;

c. list of any published articles or materials;

d. Candidate’s Personal Information Form;

e. Candidate’s Application Form;

f. copy of physical examination from physician and psychological assessment results.

14. Termination of Candidacy

The Candidates Committee should conduct an annual review of the candidate roll. The normal process of candidacy is to shepherd the candidate through the appropriate steps that will lead him to ordination. Sometimes, however, a candidacy must be terminated.

a. Reasons for terminating candidacy

1) The candidate decides he no longer wishes to pursue ordination.
2) The candidate decides he no longer wishes to pursue ordination within the EPC.
3) The candidate engages in behavior or embraces beliefs which would not be acceptable to the EPC.
4) The candidate is making no progress over an extended period of time in pursuing ordination.
b. Steps in Termination

1) If it is the intent of the candidate to terminate his candidacy, he should be asked to put in writing to the Ministerial/Candidate Committee his desire to terminate candidacy;
2) If it is the intent of the Ministerial/Candidate Committee to terminate a candidate who has not requested termination, the Ministerial/Candidate Committee should put in writing its intent to the candidate with a listing of its reasons for seeking termination;
3) The Ministerial/Candidate Committee or one of its representatives should seek to meet with the candidate and discuss with him the intent to terminate candidacy;
4) The Ministerial/Candidate Committee should bring to presbytery a motion to terminate candidacy;
5) If the candidate was accepted under care with extraordinary status the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery should inform the MVC of the decision of presbytery to terminate candidacy (see p. 144, “Termination of Candidacy Form”).

15. Reinstatement of Candidacy

A person’s candidacy may be reinstated through the following procedure:

1) If the person seeking reinstatement is a member of an EPC church other than the original sponsoring church, the person should be a member for a time sufficient for the Session to give a credible endorsement. The person’s previous EPC membership may be considered adequate to fulfill the requirements of G.12-2A by the presbytery for purposes of reinstatement.
2) The Session of the church at which the former candidate is currently a member, having satisfied itself that the potential candidate shows evidence of a call to ministry and a commitment to pursue that call, endorses the member according to the procedures outlined above (p. 20)
3) The Ministerial/Candidates Committee proceeds according to the procedures outlined above, requiring updated forms as necessary, and may recommend the candidate’s reinstatement to the presbytery.
4) The potential candidate is examined by the presbytery according to the provisions of G.12-2.

16. Preparation for Ordination

a. Concluding Steps in Candidacy

1) Basic Philosophy: While the Book of Government has specified some guidelines and requirements which relate to the period of candidacy, the closing steps in this process call for all previous strands to be woven together. Understandably, numerous constitutional provisions relate to this final step of candidacy.
2) Two-fold Relationship: Ordination frequently involves two presbyteries and their relationship one to the other:
   (a) There is the Presbytery of Origin, which has nurtured the candidate through the period of preparation and cared for his personal development.
(b) There is the **Presbytery of Call**, which shall be responsible for examination and ordination of the candidate and shall assume responsibilities of continuing care for the newly ordained Minister of the Word and Sacraments.

3) Prerequisites to ordination:
(a) The ordinand must be a candidate under the care of his presbytery (*Book of Government*, Chapters 12-13).
(b) A valid call to an approved Ministry of the Word and Sacraments must be extended to the candidate (*Book of Government*, Chapter 11).

4) Concluding Responsibilities. The Presbytery of Origin should:
(a) Inform the candidate of the constitutional provisions relative to the calling/ordination process.
(b) Counsel the candidate on the ways of seeking a call and inform him of available services to assist in this process.
(c) Be an advocate for the candidate when a call is in process through appropriate communications with the prospective calling agency and the presbytery concerned.
(d) Transmit, immediately upon request of a calling presbytery, a candidate’s files so the process may proceed expeditiously.
(e) Authorize, through its Stated Clerks, the official dismissal or transfer of the candidate by means of communications signed by the Stated Clerk of presbytery.

b. Ordination Examinations

Presbyteries have the responsibility of authorizing persons to take (or retake) examinations for ordination. This process may be assigned to the Ministerial/ Candidates Committee or to another committee, which shall serve as the instrument of presbytery.

The *Book of Government* specifies that there are mandatory areas of examination: G.12-2G and G.13-1,2. They are as follows:

1. Original languages of Scripture
2. Exegetical skills
3. Christian experience
4. Knowledge of:
   a. Theology
   b. English Bible
   c. Sacraments
   d. *Book of Order*
   e. Reformed tradition
   f. Nature of the office of Minister of the Word
5. Ability to expound the Word of God effectively

G.12-2.G A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a degree from a four-year college and a degree from a seminary approved by Presbytery, requiring at least three years of study. The Candidate shall have had appropriate courses in the original languages of the Scriptures and shall complete an exegesis in one such language on a passage assigned by the Presbytery.

G.13-1 Prior to approving a Candidate for ordination to the Ministry or as a Ruling Elder or Deacon, it is important for the ordaining court to assure itself of the competency of the individual being ordained to serve. Therefore, certain examinations shall be made.

G.13-2 The examination of a Candidate for the Ministry: The Candidate shall be examined on competency in the original languages of Scripture. However, evidence of course work as previously indicated (G.12-2G) along with required exegesis may be accepted in lieu of examination. The Candidate shall be examined in Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth. The Candidate shall be examined in writing and orally in the following areas: Theology and Sacraments, English Bible, The Book of Order, the Reformed tradition and the nature of the office of Minister of the Word. The Candidate shall preach a sermon to the Presbytery on an assigned topic or Scripture to demonstrate ability to expound the Word of God effectively.

1) Written Examinations

(a) Administered By presbytery
   i. Original Languages of Scripture (or evidence of coursework as provided in G.12-2G; G.13-2
   ii. Exegesis on an assigned portion of Scripture (G. 12-2G; G.13-2)

(b) Administered by Ministerial Vocation Committee
   The candidate shall take written exams in the following areas (G.13-2):

   (1) Theology
   (2) English Bible
   (3) Sacraments
   (4) Book of Order
   (5) Reformed tradition
   (6) Nature of office of Minister of the Word

The permanent Ministerial Vocation Committee has authorized three examinations which cover the areas above: English Bible; Theology, Sacraments and Reformed tradition; Polity (Book of Order and nature of the office of Minister of the Word). There are several versions of each examination that are rotated annually.

When the candidate is ready to take the written examinations, the Ministerial/Candidates Committee Chairman should contact the Office of the
Stated Clerk using the Request for Ordination Examinations form (p. 143), apprising it of the candidate’s readiness. The Office of the General Assembly shall have a current PIF on file for the candidate and verify that all requirements have been met before releasing examinations. Proctors of ordination examinations must be approved by the presbytery, Ministerial or Candidates Committee or the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly). Examinations will be forwarded to the proctor no sooner than 20 days prior to the date of testing.

Candidates may not request tests for themselves. This is the responsibility of the chairman of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee. The candidate may not review or study the tests prior to time of testing. **Blank tests may not be duplicated by any means** outside the General Assembly Office so that the integrity of the testing process may be preserved. If the candidate decides not to take the tests at the appointed time, the proctor shall return the blank tests to the Office of the General Assembly immediately.

Completed examinations shall be sent by certified mail or other means requiring a signature to the Office of the General Assembly for grading. The chairman who requested the tests on behalf of the candidate will be notified by telephone and letter of exam results. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not apprize the candidate of the scores. This is the responsibility of the chairman of the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

A score of 75% is normally required to sustain written examinations. The Ministerial Vocation Committee shall resolve any questions arising from examination grading.

Written examinations are held on file in the Office of the Stated Clerk and are not released to the candidate or Ministerial/Candidates Committee.

The following Act of the Assembly provides further guidance:

91-03  *The Candidates Care Manual, “Ordination Exams,” shall be amended by requiring that in the event an exam is not sustained, it may be retaken no sooner than 30 days thereafter. If an examination is not sustained after three attempts, another examination may not be administered until at least six months have elapsed (Minutes, 11-33).*

2)  **Sermon**

The candidate shall preach a sermon before the presbytery on an assigned topic or Scripture, demonstrating ability to expound the Word of God effectively.

3)  **Oral Examinations**

The candidate shall be examined orally before the presbytery in the following areas:

(a)  **Theology**
(b) English Bible
(c) Sacraments
(d) Book of Order
(e) Reformed tradition
(f) Nature of the office of Minister of the Word
(g) Christian experience
(h) Sermon preached to the presbytery on an assigned topic or Scripture.

Oral examinations shall be conducted in a properly constituted meeting of the presbytery, not simply in committee.

4) Written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms

G. 13-6 The candidate or transferring Teaching Elder shall provide a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of this Church, and the Presbytery must act to allow or disallow the exceptions. The Presbytery shall not allow any exception to “Essentials of Our Faith.” If the Teaching Elder develops exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms after ordination, he or she must report those exceptions to the Presbytery and the Presbytery must act to allow or disallow these exceptions.

While the written statement of exceptions to the Westminster Standards shall be reviewed and allowed or disallowed by the presbytery, the statement itself should not appear in the Minutes of presbytery. However, minutes should reflect that the statement was received and allowed or disallowed. The statement of exceptions shall be retained in the minister’s personnel file.

5) Allowable Exceptions to Mandatory Requirements:

(a) Waiving of formal education requirements when the candidate is determined by presbytery (2/3 vote) to be of extra-ordinary circumstances (G.12-2H). In this case, the candidate shall follow the recommendations of the Ministerial Vocation Committee in preparation for ordination in terms of his further study. Unless otherwise specified when taken under care, the Book of Government (G.13-3) allows for the language requirement to be waived.

(b) Evidence of course work including appropriate courses in the original languages, and completing an exegesis paper in one such language on a passage assigned by the presbytery can be submitted in lieu of an examination in the original languages (G.13-2).

E. Military Chaplain Candidates

Those seeking to serve as Military Chaplains under the endorsement of the EPC should follow the normal steps of candidacy. The Department of Defense (DOD) requires that all Chaplain Candidates hold an Ecclesiastical Approval from a recognized religious body or denomination. The EPC uses as
an umbrella endorsing agency, the National Association of Evangelicals’ Commission on Chaplains. The Ministerial Vocation Committee of the EPC may recommend an EPC student who is under care of a Candidates Committee of presbytery for an Ecclesiastical Approval in the Army, Navy, or Air Force Chaplain Candidate Programs. Additional DOD requirements include the satisfactory completion of the first semester in a recognized seminary, passing a military medical examination and passing a check for a security clearance.

The final sign-off for an Ecclesiastical Approval rests with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. Seminary students will fall in one of the following two categories:

1. An EPC seminary student under the Ministerial/Candidates Committee of a presbytery.
2. A student coming into the EPC holding an Ecclesiastical Approval for the Army, Navy, or Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program from another denomination.

The latter should join an EPC congregation, come under care of its session and the local presbytery through the Ministerial/Candidates Committee of that presbytery.

**F. Examination of ministers transferring to the Presbytery**
(See **G.13-1 through G.13-8**).

1. Examination of an ordained Minister transferring from an EPC Presbytery

A minister seeking to transfer into presbytery shall be examined on views of the areas indicated in **G.13-2** (please refer to **G.13-4** below). Questions that will assure presbytery of the minister’s personal love for Christ and passion for ministry would be appropriate.

**G.13-4** The examination of an ordained Minister transferring to a Presbytery: A minister seeking to transfer into a Presbytery shall be examined on views of the areas indicated in §13-2 and shall relate that person's experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.

2. Examination of an ordained Minister coming from another denomination

**G.13-5** The examination of an ordained Minister coming from another denomination: A minister seeking to become a member of a Presbytery in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from another denomination from within the Reformed family shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination. Further, such person shall be examined on views and beliefs in the same fashion as one transferring from one Presbytery to another within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. A person coming from any other tradition shall be examined in the same manner as a Candidate for ordination. Each person seeking admission shall always be examined on personal Christian experience and progress in spiritual growth.

Presbytery shall not ordinarily receive a Minister seeking to transfer from another denomination while either discipline, inquiry, or charges are pending against the Minister. Presbytery may, however, by three-fourths vote and following careful review of the case, declare pending charges insufficient for refusal of membership.
a. From another denomination from within the Reformed family

1) The minister shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination;
2) The minister shall be examined on views and beliefs in the same fashion as one transferring from one presbytery to another within the EPC.

b. From another tradition

When a minister from outside the Reformed tradition seeks to become a member of an EPC presbytery, the presbytery shall satisfy itself that the minister has a valid ordination and education equivalent to EPC ordination requirements. Presbyteries may require additional coursework if deemed necessary. In the case of biblical languages, presbytery shall make a determination in accordance with the following Act of the Assembly:

02-07 A presbytery must evaluate the transferee’s educational credentials, including the requirements pertaining to biblical languages and either 1) require “appropriate courses in the original languages” and an exegesis paper assigned by the presbytery; or 2) exempt the transferee from such requirement by a two-thirds vote.

The minister shall be examined in the same manner as a candidate for ordination, i.e., both orally and in writing in the areas specified in G.13-2. This examination, however, does not make the minister a candidate, nor require that the minister become a candidate. The purpose of the examination is not to call into question the applicant’s ordination, but to assure a presbytery that the minister’s education is consistent with the high standards for ministry within the EPC.

c. The Importance of Christian Experience and Growth

Each person seeking membership in a presbytery shall always be examined on personal Christian experience and progress in spiritual growth. Presbytery should assure itself that the applicant has a personal love for Christ and a passion for ministry within the EPC.
III. SEARCH PROCESS

A. Introduction

The search process is an explanation of the logical steps in helping a local church to locate a minister of the Word. Following these steps will help the Search Committee to understand and expedite this undertaking. Sections 11-5,6 of the *Book of Government* establish the basic procedures for the search process.

G.11-5 The call of a Minister by a particular church: When a particular church desires to call a Minister as Pastor, the procedure shall be as follows:

A. The Church Session shall call a congregational meeting following the procedures for the purpose of electing a Search Committee. The Church Session may nominate a Search Committee to the congregation, although the floor must be opened for other nominations. The congregation shall proceed to determine how many persons are to serve and to select them.

B. The Search Committee shall carry on its work in regular consultation with the Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery.

C. Upon agreeing on a Minister they feel led of God to nominate, the Search Committee shall secure the consent of the Ministerial Committee. Should that Committee decline to consent, the Search Committee may persist with the nomination, recognizing the Presbytery has the right to reject the call. (See Section 11-3)

D. The Search Committee shall notify the Church Session in writing and the Church Session shall call a congregational meeting.

E. When the congregational meeting has been convened, the Search Committee shall make its report and recommendations to call a Pastor. This recommendation shall include the details for remuneration, including all benefits. The congregation shall conduct a counted vote in a fashion it deems appropriate. A majority favoring the recommendation is required to elect a Pastor. The exact vote must be recorded in the minutes and the person elected notified of the count. The congregation shall appoint representatives to advocate the call at a meeting of the Presbytery.

F. The call of the congregation shall be stated in the following or like terms:

   The _____________________ Evangelical Presbyterian Church of __________________, feeling led by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, have covenanted together to call you, _____________, as Pastor (or other office). In issuing this call to you to be our Pastor and spiritual leader, we commit ourselves to support you in every way. We commit ourselves to support you in prayer, in participation in the work of ministry, and in your material needs.

   In meeting your material needs, we initially commit ourselves as follows:

   1. Annual Salary_____________________ (and frequency of payment)

   2. Housing or housing allowance______________

   3. Utilities and maintenance _____________________
4. Car and expense allowance________________________
5. Full portion of the denominational retirement program
6. Medical insurance for you and your family_________
7. Annual vacation leave of __________
8. Others shall be stipulated, such as: study leave (required), book allowance, etc.

We commit ourselves to continue this remuneration as long as you continue as our Pastor [or other]. We commit ourselves to review this pledge annually and to adjust it appropriately, with the consent of Presbytery. In addition, we commit ourselves to paying the expense related to your move.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the congregation this _____ day of _____________________, A.D. ________.

__________________________ ________________________
Clerk of Meeting      Moderator of Meeting
_________________________
Chairman of Search Committee

G.11-6  A congregation may call a Minister to serve as Associate Pastor and shall proceed in the same fashion as indicated above, with the exception that the call of the congregation shall stipulate the primary responsibilities to be exercised by the Associate. Ordinarily, an Associate Pastor is not eligible to succeed the Pastor. However, should a Search Committee desire to consider an Associate Pastor as Pastor, approval by a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee shall be required for the Search Committee to proceed.

B. Overview

The steps outlined below are the result of practices which have been proven over the years:

1. The session calls a congregational meeting to elect a Search Committee.

2. Prior to that meeting, the session will ask discerning and spiritually mature members of the congregation, often representing such key areas as the session, the Christian Education Department, the Deacons, etc., to consider serving on the Search Committee and nominates them to the congregation (G.11-5.A). The number is usually between 7 and 10 members.

3. The congregation elects a Search Committee at this duly called meeting. This meeting should include an action providing for the Search Committee to serve until the duly called minister is
ordained/installated.

4. The Search Committee consults with the Ministerial Committee of the presbytery and requests that a member of the Ministerial Committee be appointed to act as a liaison.

5. The Search Committee is encouraged by the presbytery to give priority to all persons within the EPC seeking calls.

6. The Search Committee selects the best prospect for the position and discusses the suggested terms of the call with the minister, asking for a response. In its discussion with the minister, the Search Committee should explain that it cannot by itself extend a call to a minister but only proposes a recommendation to the congregation that the minister be called.

7. The Search Committee obtains the consent of the Ministerial Committee. (If the Ministerial Committee declines to consent, the Search Committee may persist with the nomination, recognizing that the presbytery will be informed of the Ministerial Committee’s response to the candidate and has the right to reject the call. (G.11-3).

   Please note that the Ministerial Committee cannot approve a minister without first asking for a background check, as well as conducting its own interview regarding the minister’s experience of salvation, spiritual growth, and views on Bible, theology, sacraments, Book of Order, the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office the Minister of the Word. (G.13-4,5)

8. The Search Committee notifies the Church Session which should call a congregational meeting.

9. The Search Committee gives its report at this congregational meeting and makes the recommendation to call a Pastor/Associate. A majority favoring the recommendation is required to elect a pastor. The exact vote shall be recorded in the minutes and the person elected shall be notified of the count.

10. The call of the congregation shall be stated in a form similar to the form in G.11-5F (see p. 113).

11. The call and terms of call are forwarded to the Ministerial Committee for processing.

12. The congregation should invite two or three members to speak on the candidate’s behalf when he is presented to presbytery.

13. At the service of ordination/installation, the Moderator of the service should note the work of the Search Committee and express appreciation to the Committee for its work.

C. Important Relationships

The Search Committee has important relationships with the Ministerial Committee, presbytery and congregation.

1. Ministerial Committee:
a. Each presbytery has a committee dealing with ministers and their working relationships (G.16-27A). Duties of this Committee relevant to the pastoral search process are as follows:

- **G.16-27A:2.** It shall work with particular churches in securing Pastor(s). Calls shall always be placed in the hands of this Committee who shall then make its recommendation to Presbytery.

- **4.** It shall counsel with congregations seeking a Pastor or other pastoral staff, shall recommend to the Presbytery a Minister to serve as Moderator of the Church Session, and shall work with a congregation in securing pulpit supply.

- **6.** It shall confer with each Minister desiring to become a member of the Presbytery or Candidate desiring ordination, and conduct any examination it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to Presbytery concerning the application. It shall also conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the *Book of Government*.

- **7.** No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation which has not first consulted with the Committee.

b. The Ministerial Committee is responsible for assisting a church that is seeking a pastor because its pulpit is vacant.

- **G.16-9** If there is no Pastor, the Church Session may elect one of its members to serve in that capacity [Moderator]. Also, Presbytery, at its discretion, may appoint a Minister of the Presbytery to serve as Moderator when a church has no Pastor.

The Presbytery may authorize its Ministerial Committee to appoint, at its discretion and with concurrence of the Church Session, a minister of Presbytery to serve as interim Moderator of the Church Session until such time as a Presbytery can act in the matter.

(1) The Session may elect one of its members as moderator. However, experience has taught the wisdom of selecting a minister to moderate the church session who is not on the staff or session of that church. When a staff member is asked to serve as the Moderator it may have potential implications for the pastoral search process. Owing to the particular needs of the church, dynamics of the staff or session of the church, a Moderator from the presbytery may be more helpful than a member of the session. Presbytery may appoint a Moderator. If authorized by the Presbytery and with the concurrence of the Session, the Ministerial Committee may appoint an interim Moderator until the presbytery can act.

(2) The Committee should work with the congregation in securing pulpit supply.
(3) Committee should appoint one of its members to be a liaison with the Search Committee.

(4) The representative of the Ministerial Committee should meet with the Search Committee promptly after the Search Committee has been elected. In the meeting, the following steps should be undertaken:

(a) The Ministerial Committee’s representative should discuss with the Search Committee the appropriate theological framework necessary for conducting their search. This discussion should include, but not be limited to, the following areas:
   i. the nature of the office of the minister in the Reformed tradition
   ii. the three-way call as understood by the Reformed tradition
   iii. the connectional system of church government within the EPC

(b) Discuss the nature of the ministerial interview with potential nominees and the need for a background check. (See page 26)

(c) The Call process should be explained.

(d) Potential problems should be explored, identified and discussed. Particular attention should be given to the steps of moving the minister onto the field of ministry, to any ordination exams that will need to be administered, and to the process that is be followed if the candidate is coming from another denomination.

(e) The need for the church to develop a clear and concise statement and explanation of its theological views, congregation and community identification, etc., should be explained. (See p. 173 “Church Information Form”)

(f) The Ministerial Committee representative should review the remuneration guidelines as indicated by the terms of call form (see p. 113 “Terms of Call) with the Search Committee in order to assure that the Committee has given appropriate reflection to the different categories of remuneration and compensation.

2. The Session:

In the absence of the pastor, the Session is responsible for the following:

a. Continuing regular worship services.

b. Engaging a Stated Supply, Interim Supply, or Occasional Supply as appropriate (See G.16-27A.4 above and pages 91ff (Guidelines for Interim Ministries)). It is preferable to engage a Stated or Interim Supply Minister so that the minister can exercise leadership in helping continue the activities of the church. Presbytery’s Ministerial Committee shall be consulted before engaging a Stated or Interim Supply. This is also true of Occasional Supply if for longer than one month.

c. Calling a congregational meeting to elect a Search Committee. The Search Committee should nominate one minister to the congregation for consideration for a call to fill the available position. Session shall give the congregation notice of the meeting at least two Sundays prior to the meeting and shall transact only business stated in the notice.
d. Concurring in the terms of call and on the financial terms which shall be stated in the
terms of call (see p.113 “Terms of Call”).

e. Calling a congregational meeting to approve a call.

3. The Congregation:

The Search Committee is a committee of the congregation. It is not a committee of session. The
congregation is responsible for the following:

a. Determining the number of members (typically seven to ten) and electing a Search
Committee that is representative of the congregation. It may elect alternates to fill potential
vacancies on the committee, or else fill vacancies as they occur at a subsequent
congregational meeting. Alternates shall not be used to expand the Committee.

b. Acting on the recommendation of the Search Committee, including terms of call,
and discharging the Committee when its work is finished.

D. General Guidance for Search Committees

The discernment of members of a Search Committee is extremely important as they proceed to select
a person to be nominated. The task requires guidance from God. Members of the Search Committee
should:

1. Join in a prayer covenant for God’s guidance and direction in the selection.

2. Open and close all meetings with prayer.

3. Schedule regular meetings.

4. Elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.

5. Establish a covenant of confidentiality with clear boundaries for the committee.

6. Decide early in the formation of the committee the method of voting, type of majority to select
person and how decisions are to be made.

7. Keep the session and the congregation informed of the Search Committee’s progress, but also
keep confidential, even from family members and church officers, the names of individuals being
considered.

8. Keep the Ministerial Committee fully informed of progress.

9. Keep clear and accurate files of ministers under consideration, including their Personal
Information Forms with the dates it was requested and received, correspondence with persons,
decisions made concerning each candidate.
10. Keep candidates still under consideration informed of committee’s progress.

11. Promptly inform candidates when they are no longer under consideration.

12. Although unanimity is not essential, strive to receive unanimous and enthusiastic support in the choice of the candidate.

13. Include the pastor, in the case of associate or assistant pastor searches, as an ex-officio member, to attend any and all meetings of the search committee.

14. Avoid speaking for the committee unless authorized to do so.

15. Avoid making a commitment to a person concerning a call during preliminary communications and interviews.

E. Church Information Form

One of the first tasks of a Search Committee in consultation with the session is to prepare an informational description of its church. Preparing this document may help identify the training, experience, and abilities that a minister should have in order to serve the particular congregation. It will also provide a description of the church and community for the perspective minister. In addition, this document can be used in evaluating the match between the candidate and the church (see the Church Information Form, p. 173)

F. Source of Names

Names of prospective ministers will come from various sources including:

1. Circulation of the EPC Opportunity List (see p. 7)

2. Members of the congregation;

3. Former members and interested friends;

4. Members of the Committee;

5. Representative of Ministerial Committee;

6. Referrals from the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly);

7. Self-referrals from persons who are aware of the position;

8. Seminaries and other ecclesiastical institutions;

9. Face-to-Face segment of General Assembly (Acts of the Assembly #83-02)

83-02 Opportunity shall be provided at each General Assembly for Pastors seeking a call to meet with churches and ministries seeking to issue a call (Minutes, 3-53)
The Search Committee may wish to invite the congregation to suggest names and should request Personal Information’ Forms (PIF) for those whose names are submitted. Anyone suggesting a candidate should furnish the Committee with the full name and current address of the person being proposed. Personal Information Forms may be requested from the Office of the Stated Clerk, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 17197 N. Laurel Park Dr., Suite 567, Livonia, Michigan 48152; tel. 734/742-2020; fax: 734/742-2033; e-mail: epchurch@epc.org (see also p. 157)

High priority should be given to candidates who are a part of the EPC.

G. Receiving and Reading Personal Information Forms

All interested persons should complete a Personal Information Form (see p. 157, “Personal Information Form”) and return it to the Search Committee. If a Search Committee decides to pursue a particular candidate, a copy of his PIF should be forwarded to the EPC office. In addition to an essay section, these forms contain objective information such as educational background, work experience, and major areas of interest. Evaluating the PIF provides a preliminary screening to help determine if the Committee wants to get more information on particular ministers. In evaluating the PIF, the following guidelines are suggested:

1. Establish a simple recording system to track when a form was received and its status during the Committee’s activities;

2. Establish selection criteria, keeping in mind experience, training, suitability, and availability.

3. Develop a procedure whereby members place candidates in one of at least three categories: appears to be very suitable; suitable; not suitable.

4. Contact first those who appear very suitable to see if available and, if so, determine if mutual interest exists.

H. Interviewing

While much can be learned from reading and evaluating the Personal Information Forms, the additional information gained from direct interviews and from hearing a person lead in worship and/or preach is invaluable. Thus when a Search Committee becomes seriously interested in a person, it would be beneficial to visit his church and observe him leading worship, and preaching a sermon. If that is not possible, it may be arranged for him to preach in another church for the convenience of the Search Committee. However, the Search Committee should not ask a potential nominee to visit its church for the purpose of preaching a trial sermon prior to being presented as the nominee, or prior to receiving a call. For mutual convenience, an interview usually can and should be arranged during the same trip when a Search Committee hears a potential nominee preach.

The following guidelines are suggested for the interview process:

1. Restudy your church information report so you are prepared to answer questions about it, your church, and community.
2. Review the Personal Information Form to identify points on which you would like further information, and formulate specific questions to generate the information.

3. Select a single Committee member to lead the interview, or designate certain members to lead specific parts of the interview.

4. Allow adequate opportunity for the minister to ask questions.

5. Take notes both during the interview and immediately following to capture impressions gained during the course of the interview.

6. Thank the minister and remind him that the interview is not a commitment on the part of either party.

7. Be sure to follow up by arranging a date and procedure to let each other know if further consideration is in order. Those who have been eliminated from consideration should be notified promptly and courteously of such action.

I. Hearing a Minister Preach

The following suggestions are offered for guidance:

1. Reread the person’s Personal Information Form.

2. Verify the time of the service.

3. Be on time for the service.

4. If you are visiting the minister’s church, enter the sanctuary either in singles or in pairs, but not as a large group which would be noticeable. Avoid being more conspicuous than necessary, lest you disturb both the person and the congregation.

5. Have a receptive and inquiring attitude:
   - Does the person read the Scripture well and carefully?
   - Is the pulpit manner compelling?
   - Are the prayers helpful?
   - Is the sermon easily followed, well organized, and applicable to life?
   - Is the congregation attentive?
   - Is the person’s custom at the close of the service acceptable?

6. Note the activities announced in the bulletin or from the pulpit.

7. Greet the person simply and cordially as you leave the service.

8. It would be inappropriate to ask a minister/candidate to preach at the seeking church until the Search Committee has agreed to present him to the church as their choice and session has been asked to call a congregational meeting to vote on the proposal.
J. Information about the Potential Nominee’s Life, Character and Work Habits

The following suggestions may be helpful in securing additional information about the potential nominee’s life, character and work habits:

1. The Ministerial Committee and the Search Committee may obtain information from various sources.

2. It may be obtained discreetly from friends of the members of the Committee living in the community where the person is located.

3. It may be obtained from credit bureaus.

4. It may include such matters as the record of the person in his previous pastorate, his ability to work easily among all ages and classes of people, his attitude toward the total program of the church, and his ability as a preacher, pastor, educator, and church administrator;

5. It should be received and held in confidence.

K. Search Committee’s Report to the Ministerial Committee

The Search Committee is responsible for selecting and nominating a minister. While the congregation may call a minister of its own choosing, the Search Committee cannot act unilaterally.

G.16-27A.7 No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation which has not first consulted with the Ministerial Committee.

G.11-5B The Search Committee shall carry on its work in regular consultation with the Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery.

G.11-5C Upon agreeing on a Minister they feel led of God to nominate, the Search Committee shall secure the consent of the Ministerial Committee. Should that Committee decline to consent, the Search Committee may persist with the nomination, recognizing the Presbytery has the right to reject the call (see G.11-3).

The following guidelines are suggested:

1. Determine if the Ministerial Committee will recommend presbytery’s approval of the call plus its terms, and seek the Committee’s concurrence on the call before a name is submitted to the congregation.

2. Seek to process the approval of presbytery and the reception of the minister before he is invited to begin his new ministry.

3. The name of the person to be nominated should be sent to the Ministerial Committee in writing and a written response requested from the Ministerial Committee as to whether his call and ordination/installation will be recommended to presbytery.
4. It is strongly suggested that person not be allowed to begin his ministry prior to the presbytery having completed all its work in approving and receiving him into the presbytery. Past experience proves the necessity of utmost caution in this matter.

L. Congregational Meeting to Elect Pastor/Associate Pastor

When the Search Committee is ready to nominate, it informs the session and calls a congregational meeting for that purpose (G.11-5D).

G.11-5D The Search Committee shall notify the Church Session in writing and the Church Session shall call a congregational meeting.

M. Terms of Call

The following Acts of the Assembly stipulate minimum requirements for the terms of call:

81-04 Terms of call for any Minister of member churches shall provide for participation in the denominational hospitalization and disabilities program. (Minutes, 1-32)

81-05 Terms of call for any Minister shall provide a minimum of 18% benefit to provide for group hospitalization, disability and pension. The pension factor shall not be less than 10%. This benefit shall be computed on the gross effective salary base, i.e., salary and housing/utilities allowance (Minutes, 1-32).

81-06 The denominational group insurance plan providing health, disability, and life coverage shall be mandatory for all Ministers within member churches (Minutes, 1-36).

82-07 4. Terms of call: The amount of annual vacation time shall be one month.

5. Terms of call: The amount of time to be given for study leave shall be two weeks, cumulative up to six weeks. (Minutes, 2-42)

82-10 The General Assembly approves the concept of self-funding insurance and instructs its Committee on Administration to execute a plan in trust as appropriate. Individual churches are urged to assume the deductible portion of the health insurance program and cost of co-insurance as part of a Minister's compensation. (Minutes, 2-56)

84-08 General Assembly adopts the self-funding group insurance plan offered by the Travelers Insurance Company and gives authority to the permanent Committee on Administration to approve and establish all details relative to the establishment of proposed plan. (Minutes, 4-37)

87-12 The Assembly approves the establishment of an employer sponsored tax-sheltered annuity program for the required minimum (10%) of gross effective salary for retirement for each Minister and Missionary and urges each congregation to participate in such program. (Minutes, 4-37)

88-08 Assembly amends participatory requirements for group health insurance plan by requiring participation of all Ministers on the rolls of Presbyteries with the exception of:

1. Missionaries laboring in cooperative agreements with mission agencies;

2. Ministers laboring in institutional agencies providing their own group insurance plans;
3. Ministers afforded group insurance coverage as part of retirement benefits from a previous employer;

4. Ministers without call and Ministers laboring less than 20 hours in a place of ministry. (Minutes, 8-24)

The Assembly has urged presbyteries and churches to be diligent to insure that housing allowance provisions conform to the accepted IRS standard cap of fair rental value (furnished) plus utilities (Acts of Assembly 02-04(3)).

The formal process of extending a call by a congregation involves documenting specific actions on the “Terms of Call” form. This form is conceptually described and its purpose explained in G.11-5F (see p. 113).

Consult with presbytery on any special requirements that should be included in the call.

The Search Committee should keep in mind the importance of providing continuing coverage of the minister’s insurance and pension programs when processing a new call.

N. Public Notices of Acceptance of Call

Public notices of acceptance of a call are made jointly by the session of the church issuing the call and the minister called. The Search Committee should coordinate this process and see that these notices are issued.

O. Associate Pastor

The same steps are followed in calling an Associate Pastor as in calling a Pastor. Note the following points:

1. The congregation is required to vote upon the terms of call;

2. The terms of call shall set forth the particular functions to be fulfilled (see p. 113, “Terms of Call: Pastor, Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor);

3. An Associate Pastor is ordinarily not eligible to succeed the Pastor. However, with a three-fourths vote of the church session, and a three-fourths vote of the Ministerial Committee, the Search Committee may consider the Associate as a nominee for pastor (G.11-6).

P. Dismissal of Search Committee

At the time the Search Committee is elected, provision should be made for it to serve until the duly called minister is ordained/installed. At the service of ordination/installation, the Moderator of the service should note the work of the Search Committee, express appreciation to the Committee for its work, and, on behalf of the congregation, dismiss the Committee from its charge.
Q. Concluding Thoughts

Experience shows that a little courtesy can go a long way in making the search process more pleasant for both Search Committee and minister. Give serious consideration to the minister’s family and personal feelings and the result will reflect sincere appreciation from all concerned.
IV. ORDITION AND INSTALLATION PROCESS

A. Presbytery Responsibilities

The presbytery is responsible to oversee the process of ordaining/installing a minister. The presbytery usually delegates this responsibility to an administrative commission, but the presbytery retains the ultimate responsibility of insuring the order and meaning of this significant event. The presbytery shall specify which of the Commissioners is to serve as chairman of the Commission. The Book of Government indicates that the Ordaining/Installing Commission shall consist of ministers and Elders in proportion as near to two ruling elders to one minister as possible. The minimum number and distribution is not fewer than five members representing not fewer than two member churches. The quorum for a commission shall be a minimum of one half of its membership. (G. 16-b-2-e)

02-04(1) Commissions are representative of the Presbytery and give an opportunity for particular churches to appreciate the fact that they are part of a larger church. Even though the constitutional minimum for commissions is five people from two churches, presbyteries should give due consideration in forming commissions to make them more broadly representative.

The Book of Government sets forth in Chapter 14 the specific steps which shall be followed in the ordination and installation of ministers. The purpose of this Manual is to assist in the implementation of the procedures outlined in the Book of Government.

G.14-1 A commission shall be appointed. At a date and time approved by the ordaining court, a worship service shall be conducted. A sermon suitable to the occasion shall be preached. The person presiding shall recount the conditions necessary for ordination and/or installation, the solemnity of the event, and its importance in the life of the Church.

B. Suggested Steps to be Taken by Presbytery Prior to the Ordination/Installation

The presbytery, through the Ministerial Committee, should consult with the minister-elect and the Search Committee prior to the meetings of presbytery. The Ministerial Committee should prepare recommendations for presbytery, taking into consideration the wishes of the minister-elect and the local church in which the minister is being called to serve concerning the following matters:

1. The time and place of the ordination and/or installation. This service will ordinarily be held in the church of which the minister is being called to serve as pastor. When a minister is called as pastor of two or more congregations, he shall be installed in each congregation. This installation service may be conducted jointly by the congregations or separate services may be held for each congregation.

2. The names of the ministers and ruling elders who will compose the commission to ordain/install: It is customary for the minister-elect to request ministers and Elders to serve on the commission. Presbytery may set the number of individuals it wishes to serve on the commission, conforming with the requirements of G.16-26,B-2. Members of this commission shall be members of the presbytery under whose jurisdiction the service takes place. Ministers from outside the presbytery (including ministers outside the EPC) may be enrolled as
corresponding members of the Commission. However, these ministers are in addition to the minimum requirements set out in the *Book of Government*. Presbytery shall identify a chairman for the commission.

3. The names of other Elders and ministers: The minister-elect, however, may submit to the ordaining/installing presbytery for approval names of Elders and/or ministers he may wish to participate in the service. The installing presbytery shall respond by either approving or disapproving the request.

4. The specific parts to be assigned to members of the commission and to other invited participants: At a minimum, the service should include the following parts: (see p. 146, Ordination/Installation Worship Service Form”)

   (a) presiding and asking the constitutional questions;
   (b) preaching of the ordination/installation sermon;
   (c) bringing a charge to the minister-elect;
   (d) bringing a charge to the congregation;
   (e) offering the prayer of ordination/installation;
   (f) declaration of ordination/installation.

Before submitting the names of these persons to presbytery, it is wise for a representative of the Committee assisting the minister-elect to ascertain that they have agreed to serve.

C. Suggested Steps to be Taken at the Service of Ordination/Installation

1. The commission shall meet privately prior to the service, and open its proceedings with prayer. A secretary shall be selected and instructed to take minutes, using the approved form for commission minutes (see p. 147, “Minutes of the Commission to Ordain and/or Install”).

2. At the appointed time, the commission should proceed with the service of worship.

   (a) The members of the commission, the minister-elect and the Elders and Deacons (if the church has a deacon board) of the church may enter the sanctuary in that order. The commission members may be seated facing the congregation. The minister-elect may be seated in the front row of pews nearest to the aisle, and the Elders (and Deacons) of the church may be seated in a body in the row immediately behind the minister-elect.

   (b) The chairman of the commission should preside throughout the entire service. The chairman should state to the congregation, the proceedings of the presbytery regarding the minister-elect up to this point, and introduce the members of the commission.

   (c) At the appropriate time, usually following the preaching of the Word, the chairman should direct the minister-elect to stand facing the commission and address to him the questions required by the *Book of Government* (**G.14-1A**).

   (d) While the minister-elect is still standing, the chairman should then direct the constitutional questions to the congregation (**G.14-1A.12 through G.14-1A.15**).

   (e) When the questions are answered in the affirmative, the commission chairman should direct
the minister-elect to kneel. Members of the commission should rise and place their right hands upon the minister-elect’s head and shoulders for the prayer of ordination/installation.

(f) The chairman will ask the minister-elect to rise and then give to him the right hand of fellowship and declare,

“By the authority of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of _______________, I declare that _______________ has been ordained/installed to the Gospel Ministry of this Church, and that he has been duly and properly installed as pastor of this congregation, agreeable to the Word of God and the laws of this Church. As such, he/she is entitled to be given support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(g) There should then follow the charge to the pastor which would normally take no more than 5 minutes.

Note: An installation/ordination service should not be composed of three sermons (i.e. the sermon and then a second sermon for the charge to the pastor and a third sermon for the charge to the congregation.)

(h) The charge to the congregation should then be delivered. This charge also would normally take no more than 5 minutes.

(i) The service is concluded with the benediction. By custom, the new ordained/installed minister is granted the opportunity to offer this benediction.

(See also the Service Forms section of the Book of Order.)

At the conclusion of the service, opportunity should be provided for the Elders and Deacons of the congregation and the members of the congregation to greet the newly ordained/installed minister. Many congregations have a reception for the minister and his family following the service.

The commission should retire to conclude its own meeting with the reading of the minutes of the proceedings and prayer. A complete and formal report must be made to the presbytery. Such report shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery within ten (10) days (see p. 147, “Minutes of the Commission to Ordain and/or Install”).
V. DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

A. When the Pastor Intends to Resign His Pastorate

1. The first public knowledge of a minister’s intention to “resign his pastorate” shall be given by him to the session of the church. He should advise the members of the session of his intention to leave his present church and ask the session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of deciding whether to concur in his request.

2. The session should proceed to arrange for such a congregational meeting immediately, care being taken to observe the required two Sundays notice (G.8-1B and §15-2).

3. Normally a reception would be planned for the minister and his family so that the congregation can express its appreciation publicly to them.

4. Usually a minister resigns his pastorate in order to respond to a call to serve in another pastorate or ministry. If the minister has expressed his intention of not serving within the church as a minister or in some other ministry approved by the EPC in the near future, Presbytery may consider placing him on inactive status. If the minister will be actively seeking another call to ministry, the presbytery may keep him on active roll as a minister without call.

5. The congregation has the right to refuse to concur with the minister’s request. In such case, it shall be prepared to appear by its commissioners and explain its action (G.15-2).

6. After hearing both minister and church, the presbytery will render its decision as to dissolution of the pastoral relationship. Only presbytery has the authority to dissolve a pastoral relationship (G.15-2)

G.8-1B Notice of meeting: At least two Sundays notice shall be given. The purpose of the meeting must be stated in the call.

G.15-2 The dissolution of a pastoral relationship: This relationship may be dissolved only by Presbytery. A Minister or Session shall consult with the Ministerial Committee before making a request to the congregation to dissolve the pastoral relationship. A congregational meeting shall be duly called and the congregation requested to concur with the Pastor in the request for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. If the congregation declines to concur, it shall appoint representatives to Presbytery to explain its action. The Presbytery shall then be the sole judge of whether or not to dissolve the relationship. In the event the congregation, in a duly called congregational meeting, votes to dissolve the relationship and the Pastor declines to concur, the congregation shall appoint representatives to Presbytery to explain its action. The Presbytery shall be the sole judge of whether or not to dissolve the relationship. The Presbytery may appoint an appropriate commission of Presbytery with authority to dissolve pastoral relationships.

B. When the Pastor Reaches the Age of 70.

G.15-3 Dissolution by reason of age: When a Minister serving in any capacity in the Church reaches the
age of 70, that relationship shall be terminated. The Minister is obligated to notify the Presbytery six months prior to the 70th birthday. The Minister is then eligible to be reelected in the same relationship yearly with the approval of the Church Session and the Presbytery. When such a renewal privilege is exercised by the calling body, no installation is necessary. No person having reached the age of 70 is eligible to accept a call as Pastor to any congregation other than the one being served upon reaching retirement age. Presbytery may set aside this limitation by a 2/3 vote. The Minister is then eligible to be reelected in this new relationship yearly with the approval of the Church Session and the Presbytery. Moreover, a Minister who has reached the age of 70 is eligible to serve as Stated Supply, Interim Supply or Occasional Supply for a period of up to one year as approved by Presbytery. The Presbytery may appoint an appropriate committee of that court to establish such relationships.

C. Report of Procedures to Presbytery

For the sake of good record keeping, it is advisable for the Clerk of Session to send a certified transcript of the congregational meeting to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. However, some form of report shall be made to the presbytery (normally through the Ministerial Committee to the meeting of Presbytery) that it concurred with the minister in his request for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship.
VI. TRANSFER AND DISMISSAL

A. Overview

G.11-9 A call may be placed in the hands of a Minister only by the Presbytery to which that person is being called...

G.11-10 In the event the Minister being called is from some other Presbytery or other church body, the receiving Presbytery shall not enroll that person without a valid call. The dismissing church body shall be informed by the calling Presbytery for the purpose of taking appropriate action. The Presbyteries shall deal directly with each other through their stated clerks in certifying both the call of the church and the credentials of the Minister or Candidate.

G.13-4 The examination of an ordained Minister transferring to a Presbytery: A Minister seeking to transfer into a Presbytery shall be examined on views of the areas indicated in Section 13-2 and shall relate that person’s experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.

Most transitions in the ministry of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church result from a minister’s acceptance of a call to a church. When the call comes from a church in another presbytery, the minister usually requests transfer to that presbytery at the same time his resignation of his present pastorate is made known to the session of his church. Since a call is a three-way contact between the minister, the church, and the presbytery, three distinct parties are definitely involved in the minister’s orderly departure from the presbytery of which he is now a member. Certain procedures are incumbent upon each of these parties.

B. Procedures To Be Followed By The Minister

1. The minister should advise the session of his church that he intends to ask presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship between the minister and the church, and shall request a congregational meeting called for the purpose of deciding if the church will concur in his request to the presbytery. Before such a congregational meeting is called, the minister shall consult with the Ministerial Committee of his current presbytery according to G.15-2.

2. The minister should also advise the Moderator and Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of this intended action, and ask for a meeting of the presbytery to be called to act on this request for dissolution of the pastoral relationship.

3. Some presbyteries operate under the provision of G.15-2 and G.16-27.A-12, permitting dismissal of a minister by the appropriate commission of presbytery. The Ministerial Committee may be empowered to act on behalf of presbytery when there is agreement with pastor and congregation. In such cases, the minister’s request would be transmitted to the presbytery’s appropriate commission, which should promptly act on his request.

4. Usually a presbytery dismisses a minister to another presbytery in order that he may accept the call of a particular church of that presbytery. The minister makes a two-fold request of the
presbytery: the dissolution of the present relationship and his transfer (or dismissal) to the other presbytery. It is important to see that the technicalities involved be carefully observed and the constitutional requirements faithfully met. The minister should present, therefore, both parts of the needed request to his presbytery.

5. If a minister is not a member of a presbytery, that presbytery may not place any call to ministry in his hands. A minister may be advised by a pulpit nominating committee that a congregational meting of their church has elected him as its pastor, and he may receive a copy of the ‘call’ of that church for his pastoral services, duly certified by the Moderator of the congregational meeting. But so long as he remains a member of any other presbytery, the call is not officially in his hands.

6. Following the meeting of the presbytery (or the meeting of the commission approved by presbytery, where applicable), the minister should determine if the Stated Clerk of his presbytery has or will transmit a certificate of dismissal to the stated clerk of the other presbytery promptly. (“Certificate of Dismissal of a Minister”)

C. Procedures To Be Followed By The Presbytery

1. When a minister desires to transfer his credentials from one presbytery to another, the receiving presbytery shall conduct a background check on the minister. (See page 26)

2. A certificate of dismissal is to be completed and forwarded to the presbytery to which the minister is being dismissed promptly after his presbytery has granted his request for dissolution of his present pastoral relationship and his dismissal to the receiving presbytery (Certificates may be ordered from the General Assembly Office).

3. At the same time, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery will complete and forward a “Record of Official Change for Minister’s Status and Ministry” to the minister and to the General Assembly Office (see p. 155 “Record of Official Change for Minister’s Status and Ministry).

4. See pages 148ff. for checklists and sample motions to be used in the transfer process.
VII. PASTORAL CARE (OVERSIGHT)

G.15-8 Removal of a Minister to Inactive Status: A Minister may, for reasons deemed valid, request the Presbytery to be placed on Inactive Status. If the Presbytery concurs, the Minister shall be placed on such status. All rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside, including the right to vote and participate in the meetings of Presbytery. However, the name of the Minister shall be carried on the Inactive Status Roll of Presbytery. After at least one year, the Minister may request Presbytery to be restored to Active Status. The Presbytery, after careful deliberation, may do so provided the Minister has a valid call that Presbytery approves, or provided the Minister is being transferred to another Presbytery in order to receive a call.

When the Minister who is not retired has been without approved call for a period of one year, the Ministerial Committee will confer with the Minister as to his continued sense of call and his expectations for future ministry. The committee will then recommend to the Presbytery whether the Minister should remain on Active Status in the Presbytery, or be placed on Inactive Status. The Presbytery, at its discretion and after judicious consideration, may place the Minister on the Inactive Status Roll involuntarily provided the vote to do so is by a two-thirds majority.

A limit shall be placed on the time during which a Minister on Inactive Status who is not retired shall remain on the roll of the Presbytery, the limit being five years. After five years, the Presbytery has the right to drop that person from the roll without censure.

G.15-9 The retirement of a Minister: A Minister may request Presbytery to be placed on the Retired Roll of Presbytery due to age, infirmity, or other debilitating condition. If the Presbytery concurs, a service of appreciation and thanksgiving shall be conducted, either at the meeting of Presbytery or at the place of service of the retiring Minister. Ordinarily, Presbytery shall appoint a special Commission to conduct this service and a record of it inserted in the minutes of the Presbytery. The Presbytery shall be responsible for making an annual review of its retired members to be sure of their welfare and to rectify any deficiencies. Such annual review shall be reported to the court and recorded in its minutes.

A. Pastoral Care of Ministers

The Ministerial Committee of the presbytery is responsible for providing oversight, support and counsel for ministers in the respective presbyteries (G.16-27.A).

1. Active Ministers

The Ministerial Committee shall maintain communication with all of the active ministers in the presbytery and shall make an annual report to presbytery regarding the work of each minister (G.16-27.A,1). This includes a report on those ministers approved for labor outside the bounds of presbytery. This annual report on the active ministers in the presbytery may include the following information: name, church, length of ministry, key responsibilities, accomplishments during the past year, new responsibilities, concerns, and problems in the ministry. (See p. 154, “Annual Report on Ministers of the Word”).
The Committee is also responsible for an annual review of remuneration of ministers, consulting with church sessions when necessary and may recommend to presbytery minimum terms for a call to a minister. All requests for changes in terms of call come to the presbytery through the Ministerial Committee (G.16-27.A,8).

The General Assembly has made provision to assist in medical care of ministers in special situations. The following Acts of the Assembly provide guidance:

89-15 The Assembly approved the establishment of a General Assembly benevolence fund for medical care costs, concentrating its benevolence health care efforts on Ministers without call, mission church pastors, and retired Ministers and their families. (Minutes, 9-33)

90-16 The Assembly conceptually endorsed the Medical Benevolence Trust with the understanding that the actual Trust Agreement would be presented to the 11th Assembly. Approval to begin promotion of the Trust was given. (Minutes, 10-39)

2. Inactive Ministers:

G.15-8 Removal of a Minister to Inactive Status: A minister may, for reasons deemed valid, request the Presbytery to be placed on Inactive Status. If the Presbytery concurs, the minister shall be placed on such status. All rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside, including the right to vote and participate in the meetings of Presbytery. However, the name of the Minister shall be carried on the Inactive Status Roll of Presbytery. After at least one year, the Minister may request Presbytery to be restored to Active Status. The Presbytery, after careful deliberation, may do so provided the Minister has a valid call that presbytery approves, or provided the Minister is being transferred to another Presbytery in order to receive a call.

When the minister who is not retired has been without approved call for a period of one year, the Ministerial Committee will confer with the Minister as to his continued sense of call and his expectations for future ministry. The committee will then recommend to the Presbytery whether the Minister should remain on Active Status in the Presbytery or be placed on Inactive Status. The Presbytery, at its discretion and after judicious consideration, may place the Minister on Inactive Status Roll involuntarily provided the vote to do so is by a 2/3 majority.

A limit shall be placed on the time during which a Minister on Inactive Status who is not retired shall remain on the roll of presbytery, the limit being five years. After five years, the Presbytery has the right to drop that person from the roll without censure.

G.11-13 In the event a Minister accepts a call disapproved by Presbytery, that person shall be placed on inactive status.
When a minister is on the Inactive Status Roll “all rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside.” (G.15-8) Therefore, during inactive status, the services performed by the minister cannot be regarded by the EPC as within the exercise of EPC ministry for tax purposes. Accordingly, the minister may not be eligible for any tax benefits or exemptions generally made available to ministers of the gospel under federal law by reason of affiliation with the EPC.

Because ‘all rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside’ for ministers on Inactive Status, services performed by the minister during his Inactive Status will not be subject to EPC supervision in any way. Further, the minister is not an agent of the EPC in an ecclesiastical or any other capacity during his inactive status. As a result, the EPC cannot be construed as legally liable for any action of ministers on inactive status. During the period of inactivity, the minister’s ecclesiastical and legal relationship with the EPC shall ordinarily be understood as non-existent.

3. Retired Ministers:

A minister who is retired remains a full member of presbytery. The Ministerial Committee is responsible for making an annual review of its retired members in order to evaluate their income and to seek to rectify any deficiencies. This review is to be included in the annual review of ministers

G. 15-9 A minister may request presbytery to be placed on the Retired Roll of Presbytery due to age, infirmity, or other debilitating condition. If the presbytery concurs, a service of appreciation and thanksgiving should be conducted either at the meeting of Presbytery or at the place of service of the retiring Minister. Ordinarily, a Presbytery shall appoint a special Commission to conduct this service and a record of it inserted in the minutes of Presbytery. The Presbytery shall be responsible for making an annual review of its retired members to be sure of their welfare and to rectify any deficiencies. such annual review shall be reported to the court and recorded in its minutes.

Retired ministers are expected to remain active in the life of their presbytery. While presbyteries are not required to do so, especially in the case of health and financial constraints, they may place retired pastors on inactive status due to lack of participation. For a retired pastor on Inactive Status, the rights and privileges granted by ordination are temporarily set aside, including the right to vote and participate in the meetings of Presbytery (G.15-8). However, a retired minister on inactive status may not be dropped from the rolls of presbytery for lack of participation, retains eligibility for housing allowance and the denomination’s benefit plans, and is to be afforded the same pastoral care as retired ministers on active status.

G.15-10 Retired Ministers: A Minister who is retired according to the provision of G.15-9 remains a full member of Presbytery. Membership may be transferred to another Presbytery. A Retired Minister who does not participate in the life of the Presbytery by attending at least one Stated Meeting during a calendar year, may be placed in Inactive Status at the discretion of the Presbytery. After at least one year, the Retired Minister may request Presbytery to be restored to Active Status. The Presbytery shall make the determination based on the Minister’s participation in the meetings of the Presbytery and need not require a specific call to be restored to Active Status. A Retired Minister on Inactive Status shall not be removed from the Presbytery rolls for that cause and is to
be afforded the same pastoral care as Retired Ministers on Active Status.

B. Pastoral Care of Congregations

The Ministerial Committee is to serve as counselor and advisor for the local congregation:

1. The Committee shall seek to work with particular churches in securing pastor(s). It shall seek to counsel with congregations seeking a pastor or other pastoral staff. It shall recommend to presbytery a minister to serve as Moderator of the church session if the church is without its (senior) pastor. It shall work with congregations in securing pulpit supply.

2. The Committee shall seek to work with the congregation as it moves to issue a call to a minister or other pastoral staff persons.

3. The Committee should be available to give counsel regarding change in the terms of call and shall communicate these changes to presbytery.

4. The Committee, or a presbytery-designated alternate committee, shall consult with particular churches receiving aid from presbytery and shall make recommendations to presbytery regarding that aid.

5. The Committee shall advise the Moderator of the Session in a church with a vacant pulpit that a pastoral report shall be made available at each stated meeting of the presbytery. The report shall cover the spiritual well-being of that congregation as long as the pulpit is vacant.

C. Crisis Intervention

Although no complaint may have been received, if in the judgment of the Committee a particular congregation may be having difficulties or appears to be failing in its mission, the Committee has the authority to investigate and to make recommendations to presbytery (G.16-27A.11&13).

D. Conflict Management

Every Ministerial Committee should strive to develop the ability to discern early warning signs of conflict within individuals as well as within groups inside the local church. Much of the church’s pain over conflict could be diminished or even avoided if committees were more sensitive to early warnings.
VIII. OUT OF BOUNDS

G.10-3  (final paragraph) Whenever a minister is called to one of the positions provided for under paragraphs A to E above [pastor, teacher, evangelist, administrator, chaplain] that is outside the authority of a court of the Church and after being fully satisfied that the ministry is consistent with the calling to the ministry of the Word, the Presbytery may grant permission for the Minister to labor outside of bounds. It shall be required of the Minister of the Word to make annual report of faithfulness to the Gospel, and have such permission of the Presbytery renewed annually at its discretion. In any event, that person shall be diligent to serve actively in the court of which he is a member.

G.11-11  If some court or agency issues a call to a Minister in some capacity other than a pastorate, the calling agency shall issue a call in like form as a particular church and the Presbytery shall proceed in ordinary fashion for approving a call to a particular congregation, except the Commission to install shall be omitted.

G.11-12  If a Minister desires to accept a call outside the structures of the Church, he or she shall present a request to the Presbytery, indicating the nature of the work and the terms of the call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the work as appropriate to the Gospel ministry, it may approve it for a definite period of time. After the expiration of that time, the Minister must receive further approval to continue.

In the event that the outside of bounds ministry falls within the geographic boundaries of a Presbytery not currently his own, a Minister shall inform the appropriate committees of both Presbyteries, seeking the advice and approval of both Presbyteries regarding potential plans for ministry or work.

G.11-13  In the event a Minister accepts a call disapproved by Presbytery, that person shall be placed on inactive status.

A. Considerations for outside of bounds calls

1. Within the office of minister, there are numerous callings. It may occur that a minister is called to labor in some capacity outside the authority of a court of the Church. After being fully satisfied that the ministry is consistent with the calling to the ministry of the Word, the presbytery may grant permission for the minister to labor outside of bounds.

2. For ministers laboring outside of bounds, the presbytery is responsible to complete the form, “Call to a Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery” (see pp. 121ff).

3. If in accepting a call to labor outside of bounds, the minister moves from his presbytery into the geographical boundaries of another presbytery, it would be appropriate to inform both presbyteries through their stated clerks of his move.

4. Presbyteries should give serious attention to G.10-3F, which cautions presbyteries to be fully
satisfied that each calling reflects the centrality of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and is consistent with the variety of callings within the office of minister (G.10-3 A-E);

5. Presbyteries shall make diligent annual use of the form ‘Call to a Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery.’ The call to a ministry outside the bounds of presbytery should not be renewed when it is determined that the member’s calling is not consistent with the ministry of the Word and Sacrament;

6. Presbytery members who desire to transfer within the bounds of presbytery to a calling not consistent with the ministry of Word and Sacrament should not be approved;

7. When an outside of bounds call is not approved, and the minister persists in that call, the procedures in G.15-8 and G.11-12 apply.

B. Limitations of Those Laboring Outside of Bounds

(See Acts of Assembly 99-11; Minutes, 19-40)

1. Ministers laboring out of bounds are by definition ‘serving outside the authority of a court of the church’ (G.10-3F) and ‘outside the structures of the Church’ (G.11-12). Therefore they serve under the ecclesiastical but not the legal authority of the EPC. They cannot, therefore, act as an agent of the EPC in the legal sense. They cannot exercise any authority to bind the EPC to any contracts or agreements, nor can they commit the EPC to fulfill any other legal obligations.

2. Because ministers laboring out of bounds will be ‘serving outside the authority of a court of the Church’ (G.10-3F) and ‘outside the structures of the Church’ (G.11-12) they will be employed by the calling agency, not by the EPC. They will not be subject to the supervision of the EPC with respect to time, place or manner of ministry. Any financial relationships or legal accountability regarding their ministry will be undertaken solely through the calling agency. Accountability to the EPC relates solely to spiritual and ecclesiastical matters.

3. The regulations of the IRS state that eligibility to claim any special tax benefits or privileges available to the minister of the gospel under federal law may be jeopardized if any of the following apply to your ministry:

   (a) The calling agency did not arrange with the EPC for the minister’s services;

   (b) The minister performs services for the calling agency that other employees of the calling agency who are not ministers are performing;

   (c) The minister performs the same services before and after obtaining permission from the EPC to labor out of bounds.

C. Missionaries and The Out Of Bounds Status

EPC members who serve as missionaries are in a unique position because of their geographical distance from EPC presbyteries. Some EPC missionaries are ordained and some are not. Some EPC missionaries serve under the direct oversight of the EPC World Outreach department, and some do
not. In practice it might appear that all missionaries ordained within the EPC are serving “out of bounds.” In reality, however, those EPC missionaries ordained and serving under the direct oversight of EPC’s World Outreach department are serving under both the legal and the ecclesiastical authority of the church and are within the boundaries of the EPC.

99-10 The Assembly sustains an opinion of the Permanent Judicial Commission regarding the status of ministers who are missionaries serving totally under the auspices of the EPC …Ministers serving in such capacities should be classified as ministers with calls, not as ministers serving out-of-bounds. (Minutes, 19-40)

Ordained EPC missionaries who serve under the direct oversight of some other missions agency are serving “out of bounds.” They serve under the ecclesiastical, but not under the legal, authority of the EPC. Their legal relationship lies with the agency under whose direct supervision they serve. This relationship with their primary mission agency is understood as the legal relationship which governs their ministry.
IX. ANNUAL REVIEWS AND REPORTS

G.16-27A.1, 7 & 8  The Ministerial Committee: Each Presbytery shall have a Ministerial Committee. It shall have at least six members equally divided between Ministers and Ruling Elders. Its quorum for action shall be one-half (½) of membership, to include at least one Ruling Elder and one Teaching Elder. The committee shall be established in equal classes for a term of three years. Eligibility to succeed will be determined by the appointing court. Its duties are as follows:

1. It shall report annually on the work of the Ministers of the Word to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Ministers of the Word approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.

7. No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation which has not first consulted with the Committee.

8. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of the remuneration of Ministers, shall consult with Church Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to Presbytery minimum terms for the call of a Minister. Requests to Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.

A. Review

The Ministerial Committee has responsibility for conducting annual reviews for all ministers in the presbytery, including pastors classified as active, inactive, retired, and serving out of bounds.

All annual reviews shall be conducted sensitively and with a sufficient amount of time being provided for the minister to share information reflecting areas of accomplishment, disappointment, expectation, and need.

1. Compensation:

   The minister’s salary and benefits are an area of concern for the Ministerial Committee. Annual review of the adequacy of compensation and the advocacy of an organized compensation plan to improve inadequate salaries should have a high priority in every presbytery.

   The following Act of the General Assembly provides further guidance:

   **83-01**  The Committee on Ministerial Vocation shall annually provide the Presbyteries a letter encouraging each Session to review annually pastoral and staff compensation, taking into account such factors as changes in cost of living, performance, capabilities of the congregation, and economic conditions of the community. Each Presbytery shall determine how best to use the letter. *(Minutes, 3-37)*

2. Annuities, Pensions, and Benefits
The Ministerial Committee should encourage each minister to have a working knowledge of annuities and pension. Knowing where to find answers to questions is important. Information may be secured from the Pension Board and, if desired, independent financial counsel.

In Act of the Assembly 84-08, the General Assembly has adopted a self-funding health insurance plan. The plan requires all EPC ministers to participate. Employees who meet minimum requirements may participate in the plan as well.

The following Act of the Assembly provides further guidance:

87-12 The Assembly approves the establishment of an employer sponsored tax-sheltered annuity program for the required minimum (10%) of gross effective salary for retirement for each Minister and Missionary and urges each congregation to participate in such program (Minutes, 7-47).

B. Terms of Call:

The Ministerial Committee is responsible for reviewing the terms of call of all pastors (Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastor). Requests to presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall also be reviewed by this Committee before it presents these changes to presbytery. The Ministerial Committee may recommend to presbytery minimum terms for the call of a minister. At the time that presbytery approves a call of a minister, the entire package is reviewed. Subsequent annual reports to presbytery need only report the change in terms of call.

C. Outside of Bounds

The Committee shall maintain contact with all ministers laboring outside the bounds of presbytery and assure that these individuals submit their annual reports to the presbytery. Outside of bounds calls are subject to annual review and approval. (G.10-3F, G.11-12, G.16-27A.1)

D. Ministers Without Call

The Committee shall maintain contact with ministers without call and confer with them regularly regarding that minister’s sense of call and expectations for future ministry. The Committee is responsible to recommend to the Presbytery whether that minister should remain on Active Status or be placed on the Inactive Status Roll.

G.15-8 (second paragraph) When the Minister who is not retired has been without approved call for a period of one year, the Ministerial Committee will confer with the Minister as to his continued sense of call and his expectations for future ministry. The committee will then recommend to the Presbytery whether the Minister should remain on Active Status in the Presbytery or be placed on Inactive Status. The Presbytery, at its discretion and after judicious consideration, may place the Minister on the Inactive Status Roll involuntarily provided the vote to do so is by a two-thirds majority.
E. Retired Ministers

The presbytery, through this Committee, is responsible for making an annual review of its retired members to be sure of their welfare and to rectify any deficiencies. Communication between presbytery Ministerial Committees will help insure care of retired ministers who change residence in retirement.

F. Ministers Over Age 70

A minister over the age of 70 serving in any capacity in the Church may continue to serve in his present capacity with the annual approval of the church session and the presbytery. (G.15-3)

Pastors over age 70 serving as Stated Supply, Interim Supply or Occasional Supply may be approved to serve for up to one year. (G.15-3)

G. Annual Reports

The Ministerial Committee shall submit year-end written reports to the presbytery covering actions in all its areas of responsibility and any evaluations made during the year according to the following categories:


2. Report on ministers laboring outside the boundaries of presbytery (G.16-27A.1).

3. Report on the progress of the candidates of the presbytery (G.12-2E) (see p. 141)

4. Report on ministers over age 70 serving in pastoral ministry (G.15-3).
X. RELOCATION

In working with ministers who want or need to relocate, the Ministerial Committee should take a highly supportive role that can include the following:

A. Exploring with the minister the type of call best suited to his gifts and needs at the time. Ministers often need guidance in order to be realistic about career goals and job prospects.

B. Advising on the preparation of the Personal Information Form or reviewing the form when completed. Personal Information Forms should be kept current. Personal Information Forms may be obtained from the Office the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or copied from the Forms section of this Manual.

C. Explaining how the call system works. Phoning or writing Ministerial/Candidates Committees in other presbyteries on behalf of the minister who wants to move.

D. Encouraging the minister to practice interviewing skills with a colleague.

E. Helping the minister think realistically about the appropriate remuneration that might be expected from churches in our denomination.

F. Keeping in touch with the minister throughout the process.
XI. ADVISORY PAPER ON THE STUDY LEAVE

A. Background

The study leave provision is part of the minister’s Terms of Call. It represents a commitment on the part of the church and on the part of the minister to continue his education. Sometimes this provision has been abused; and in other occasions it has been neglected. Some consider study leave simply an extended vacation time; others use it for inspiration but not for professional development. The Ministerial Vocation Committee suggests the following guidelines

1. The study leave should be used to assist the minister in doing a better job of his ministry. It is not an entitlement, but should produce results in skill/knowledge development useful in the church.

2. The minister should be asked to put in writing for session: where and what and why the study leave will be used; and afterwards, a written report of what was studied; and how it will benefit the church as well as pastor.

3. The concept of a study leave should be viewed as ‘Professional Development,’ since the basic question to be asked is how this proposed study helps the minister do his job in a more effective and productive way.

B. Definitions

The concept of a study leave represents a long history in the Reformed tradition. It walks hand in hand with the commitment of providing an educated clergy as leaders in the church (1 Tim. 3:15). Although historical experience has evidenced the peril of the pendulum, swinging between scholarship and piety, the Bible allows for no such divergence. We are commanded to grow both in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). Peter commands us to add to our faith, knowledge and to our knowledge godliness (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Both Calvin and Knox were known for their scholarship and their devotion to Jesus Christ.

A study leave is a leave of absence from the formal ministry for the purpose of study and renewal. It is a period of time set aside for personal and professional growth. One of the core values of the EPC is to continue a ‘biblically educated leadership.’ This value is incarnated in the provision for study and development through the Terms of Call document that requests time and resources for a study leave for each ordained minister.

The category of 'Professional Development' is very helpful in thinking through how to utilize the provisions of a study leave. A study leave should reflect the goals of professional development. It should contribute to effectiveness in ministry. Many courses, seminars, and classes have been developed that may help increase the competency of the pastor. Topics such as conflict management, administration, goal-setting and decision making, leadership development, crisis counseling and a host of others may be taken as a means of professional development. At the same time, we must not think that a study of the mechanics and machinery of church ministry is sufficient for the minister’s needs. Ministry is a ministry of the Word and a ministry in the Spirit. Times that enhance our biblical understanding, ministry skills and our walk of faith must continually be a part of a minister’s study leave plans.
C. Qualifications

In the EPC, the minister's terms of call include 2 weeks for study leave annually. The minister is encouraged to invest them each year for study. The Acts of the Assembly permit for study leave time to be accumulated for up for six weeks. Ordained missionaries serving overseas may accumulate up to 8 weeks of study leave and funds over 4 years to be used in their 5th year. Except for missionaries, study leave monies may not be accumulated.

Many denominations make no provision for the continued education of their clergy. We are fortunate to be a part of an historical tradition that places a priority on the cultivation, development and continuing education of its ministers. However, some have misunderstood the purpose of the study leave and not used it in the way it was designed. The study leave is not designed to be additional vacation time. It is not designed to be used as time to read a few good books or catch up on the magazines unread during the year. It is designed for focused study that will further the minister's spiritual formation, deepen biblical understanding and enhance ministry skills.

D. Financing The ‘Study Leave’

Money placed in the study leave account, regardless of the amount, it should be treated as a 'Reimbursable Expense Account.' Money used from this account is not taxable. IRS requirements include documenting expenses and any money not used by the end of the year is returned to the general fund of the church. This means that the minister would keep a record of expenses for each study leave event and submit them to his treasurer for reimbursement within a month after the event. This also means that any money left in the study leave account at the end of the year would revert back into the church’s general fund. Use of study leave money for purposes other than a study leave should be discouraged.

How much should be placed in the study leave account? The tuition for attending a week long class or seminar, including the cost of room and board is expensive. Even with cost-cutting measures, the expense will run $500 - $1000. The local church may not be able to cover the entire expense of such a study leave. But some minimum amount will pay high dividends to the minister who feels esteemed by his congregation and encouraged to continue his ministry with excellence. Perhaps an amount of $400 - $500 would be a suggested minimum.

E. Accountabilities

A study leave provision can be a great blessing to the church and to the minister. As with all blessings, some boundaries need to be established to ensure that this provision is being properly used. Every church should have a Personnel Committee (Personnel and Policy, or Pastor/Staff) that will work with the minister and staff in church-related matters. The minister should discuss with this committee the philosophy, practices and expectations regarding his study leave. Often the minister will need to take the high road in this matter for he may know more about the provisions for his study leave than does the committee or session members. He will want to work through the Personnel Committee to keep his session informed of his study leave plans.
F. Before the Study Leave

The minister should consult with the Personnel Committee in concert with his plans for a study leave. Some form of request that includes the date, purpose, nature of the study leave should be forwarded to the Committee and through the Committee brought to session. The following is suggested as a form to be used for this purpose.

**STUDY LEAVE REQUEST**

1. ____________ requests permission to be absent from his ministerial duties for a study leave during the time period: ________________.

2. The purpose of this study leave is to ____ further my spiritual formation, ____ enhance my ministry skills and/or ____ deepen my biblical understanding.’ In the space below, please summarize your expectations for this study leave:
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________

3. This study leave will involve (class, seminar, independent study)
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   (briefly explain the nature of the study leave, institution, etc; if an independent study is planned, please submit the plan of study)

4. Briefly explain what provisions have been made or will need to be made to cover ministerial duties while the minister is away.
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________

The Personnel Committee should bring the request for study leave to the session for information and/or approval. In the absence of such a committee, the above report should be presented directly to session.

G. After The Study Leave

A brief report should be presented to the Personnel Committee on the completion of the study leave. Such a report should include comments about the value of the study leave, insights, personal renewal,
and skills learned. A summary of this report could be presented to session by the Personnel Committee.

H. Considerations

Many ministers lose their cutting edge because they stop learning and growing. A properly administered study leave can help keep the minister from stagnating. Many ministers have invested their study leave into a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program. Many such programs are available. Most of them are modular in nature, usually requiring a reading assignment before class, a week of classes, and then a post-class project often worked out in the structure of the local church. Although the cost for the D.Min. program is greater than the annual study leave allowance, if the student is patient, he can spread his studies and its costs over a number of years.

For the secure pastor, it might be advisable to interact with his Personnel Committee, asking them for suggestions of the areas of study they might suggest to improve his ministry. The local presbytery might also be a good resource for ideas about study leave possibilities.
A. Introduction

A sabbatical is a concept that traces its roots deep into the soil of the Scriptures. God created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th. Old Testament regulations also informed farmers to give their land a year’s rest after 6 years of productivity. Although the practice has been followed more closely in the academic community, ministers from a wide diversity of denominational backgrounds are finding encouragement to consider a sabbatical. Typically a sabbatical is a paid leave of absence that facilitates further study, research, renewal prevention or recovery from burnout, writing, and/or the development of some appropriate project or undertaking that would be impossible under the current schedule. The 18th Assembly asked the Ministerial Vocation Committee to study the feasibility, effectiveness and benefits of a periodic sabbatical for teaching elders. A questionnaire was mailed to each EPC church to solicit information about sabbaticals as they were practiced on the level of the local church.

B. Definition

A sabbatical is a period of time during which the minister or staff person is relieved of his vocational responsibilities so he may experience new areas of ministry skills, education, exposure to the larger work of God in the Kingdom as well as find a measure of recovery from burnout and weariness in the ministry. It is neither vacation nor study leave. A vacation provides opportunities for the family for rest, enjoyment, and renewal. A study leave provides opportunity for professional development, spiritual formation and growth in biblical understanding. A sabbatical may include both rest and study, but its focus is on taking an extended period of time to recover from burnout, renew his walk with Christ, investigate a new area of ministry skills or study, or undertake some project that will be incorporated into the local church. Normally it is granted after 6-7 years of ministry in the same place; hence the title ‘sabbatical.’

A sabbatical is not entitlement for the minister that comes with ordination. Often the wise use of vacations and study leave, as well as the judicious following of appropriate time and work boundaries in the ministry will contribute to the continuing well being of the minister. But the presbytery and the session of the local church may recommend a sabbatical if they truly deem it important for the minister and for the church.

C. Sabbatical Concepts

David Carder, Assistant Pastor of Counseling Ministries at the First Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton CA, conducted a series of interviews with pastors who took a sabbatical. He distilled from these interviews the following concepts, which he presented at the Moody Pastor’s Conference a few years ago:

1. A sabbatical should take the minister away from his place of ministry so he is disengaged from personnel, worship, programs and people of his church.

2. A sabbatical should include a requirement that the minister will return and serve at his place of ministry for a set number of years (2-4) after the sabbatical is completed. It is agreed that neither
pastor nor church will seek to make a change of pastorate during this time.

3. The ideal length of a sabbatical appears to be between 10 and 15 weeks. Such a time period allows for disengagement from ministry and for focused study, spiritual formation, rest and renewal.

4. Additional funds may be needed to help with the costs of a sabbatical. During a sabbatical, the minister is paid his full salary. But additional compensation may help with the cost of study, travel, and other expenses associated with a sabbatical.

5. A sabbatical may lead to the participant returning with a desire to shift or change the emphasis of his job description. Church leadership should be aware and prepared to discuss such thoughts with the minister.

6. The highest levels of satisfaction appear to come from sabbaticals that took the participants outside the usual realm of their past or present experiences. To visit the same old places for longer period of time is not as invigorating as doing at least some things differently during the sabbatical period.

7. A sabbatical should be renewable. Sabbatical programs that may be repeated create less of a need to cram a ‘once in a lifetime experience’ into the first outing.

D. Guidelines

In order to be granted a sabbatical, the Minster should submit to session a detailed proposal of how the time will be used. Approval of the sabbatical rests with session or appropriate judicatory. The request should be submitted at least 6 months prior to the beginning of the sabbatical. The proposal should indicate:

1. The nature of the sabbatical experience.

2. The specific goals of the sabbatical.

3. The benefits of the sabbatical to the minister, his ministry and the local body of believers where he serves.

4. The time and duration of the sabbatical.

5. Suggestions for filling the ministerial responsibilities during the sabbatical.

E. Feasibility Of Sabbaticals

Survey responses from EPC churches indicate that very few offer sabbaticals to their staff. Some of them had never considered the possibility. Others indicated that the nature of their congregation would be such as to have great difficulty understanding why a minister would be granted such an extended leave of absence from his work with pay. Churches that have a high percentage of professionals in the congregation seem to have greater proclivity to understand and provide sabbatical opportunities.
Jay Beuoy, in the Summer 1999 edition of *Leadership*, mentioned the importance in addressing attitudes about sabbatical on three levels:

**With the Leadership Board:** He reported that most on the Leadership Board were neither for nor against a sabbatical; they were basically uninformed of its purpose and importance. He suggests giving a pamphlet to the leaders that will help them understand a sabbatical. Such a pamphlet would:

a. Outline the unique nature of the minister’s work load: 6 day workweeks, no free weekends, week nights away from family, few free holidays, with the results that ministry can be stressful, wearisome, and discouraging.

b. List the benefits of a sabbatical: a grateful minister with a renewed vision, a more grateful minister’s wife, happier children, enhanced training, a deepening awareness of the love of the congregation for the minister.

Jay noted two lessons he had learned from the educating his leadership board: first, to use the help of an outside source such a pamphlet from denominational headquarters; and secondly, to give enough lead time for the leadership to process the information and request. A pamphlet entitled ‘Sabbatical Policy for Pastors’ is available from the Evangelical Free Church at Great Lakes District, 1120 S. Calumet Rd., Unit 1. Chesterton, IN, 46304

1. **With the Congregation:** The congregation will know even less than the Board about sabbaticals. One of Jay’s members came to an elder and said: ‘I work two jobs to support my family and no one give me two months paid leave. I question Pastor Jay’s work ethic.’ Jay suggests distributing the same information to the congregation, directly, through the Newsletter, in discussions with members of the congregation.

2. **With the minister himself:** Some ministers feel that the church will falter if they leave for a sabbatical. Certainly the timing needs to be considered in light of the activities of the church. But with adequate planning, the church will continue its ministry during the absence of the minister.

Jay concludes his Leadership article: ‘A sabbatical may seem too good to be true. As pastors, we’re used to struggle and weariness. Yet, with a slight change of attitude on these three levels, you can get that needed rest. You, your family and your church will appreciate it.’

**F. Testimony**

Erik Ohman, pastor of Parker Presbyterian Church (Parker Colorado) had just returned from his sabbatical when H. B. London interviewed him on the ‘Pastor to Pastor’ program of Focus on the Family (tape # 33). Eric had gone on a sabbatical for three months during the summer. He spent some time in mountains above Parker, in Scotland, traveling, resting, reading, praying and journaling.
The following is a summary of the interview:

1. *What led up to the plans for a sabbatical?* His wife noted that he looked tired all of the time. Others began to notice some classic symptoms of burnout—anger, frustration, weariness, loss of joy. He began to pray about a sabbatical. The goals he clarified for a sabbatical were to rest and to go deeper in his walk with Jesus Christ. Erik mentioned the importance of the pastor sharing with his leadership and laity his need for such a rest/recovery/renewal time in his ministry.

2. *How would a sabbatical be worked out in other and perhaps smaller churches?* First talk with your spouse. Get her counsel regarding whether she thinks a sabbatical is necessary. Discuss the concept with the session and congregation. Build up to it. Talk about it down the road. Start planning for the contingencies during your absence. The people of God can do the work of God with appropriate training. In short, plan ahead; sell it to the leadership, make a case for its importance; trust leadership to carry on the ministry of the church.

3. *What changes have taken place as a result of the sabbatical?* Erik said that the first change was that he has fallen more deeply in love with Jesus Christ. It is his opinion that the very best pastor, the most holy pastor is someone who is in love with Jesus Christ. Secondly he indicated that the sabbatical has renewed his love for people. He finds himself more patient, more attentive, more focused in serving others for Christ’s sake.

**G. Summary**

A sabbatical is a period of time during which the minister or staff person is relieved of his vocational responsibilities so he may experience new areas of ministry skills, education, exposure to the larger work of God in the Kingdom as well as find a measure of recovery from burnout and weariness in the ministry. A sabbatical is not an entitlement for the minister that comes with ordination. Ordinarily the wise use of vacations and study leave, as well as the judicious following of appropriate time and work boundaries in the ministry will contribute to the continuing well being of the minister. But the presbytery and the session of the local church may recommend a sabbatical if they truly deem it important for the well-being of the minister and for the church. The experience of ministers from many denominational backgrounds testify to the value and feasibility of a sabbatical.
XIII. PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SALARY

A. History

The Standing Ministerial Committee of the 18th General Assembly discussed a number of issues related to the minister in the local church. One of these dealt with the issue of the ‘Performance Review’ of the minister and its relationship to salary recommendation for the coming year. GA asked the Ministerial Vocations Committee to investigate this area and come with some recommendations. The MVC mailed a questionnaire to each EPC church to solicit information about the annual performance review.

Although many of our larger EPC churches have a fairly sophisticated ‘Performance Review’ process in place, some of our churches grapple each year with the practice of evaluating the minister and staff as well with the issue of recommendations for annual increase (or decrease) in salaries. How and when should the minister be evaluated? Who should conduct such an evaluation? Since the minister is seeking to serve Christ, is a ‘Performance Review’ biblical? How should recommendations for salary increases be handled? Should equal increases be given to each staff of the same local church? Should increases be wedded to needs rather than performance? Should the annual cost of living increase be a factor of consideration? Should salary increases be wedded only to merit increases? Many questions and each one calls for serious and wise deliberation.

B. Definitions

The ‘Performance Review’ is a formal evaluation of the performance of the minister(s) and other staff members. It is an evaluation of the work that has been accomplished, typically since the last evaluation period. The ‘Performance Review’ is conducted on the backdrop of the position description that spells out the expectations of the church toward its minister(s) and other staff members. It is not a judgment regarding the ultimate spiritual life and God-directed service of the individual. As Paul so aptly said: 'Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.' (Rom. 14:4).

Furthermore Paul wrote to the Corinthians - 'I care very little if I am judged by you ... I do not even judge myself. It is the Lord who judges me.' (1 Cor. 4:3-4). Regardless of our career or vocation or employment, each of us will give an account to God of the way we have used our time, talents and treasure for His Kingdom.

The performance review, however, focuses on the work related to employment in the local church. It is a reality check. It is an opportunity to give and receive feedback about the major responsibilities, goals, projects, accomplishments and skills involved in related to the minister or staff member's work. It is a time to speak the truth in love about the work of the ministry over the past evaluation period. In the parables, Jesus often taught the importance of accountability. Paul (2 Thes. 3:6-10) was hardest on those who thought they could draw on the resources of the Christian community without working. Accountability is unpopular today. None of us really likes to have his work evaluated by someone else. We don't mind being commended, but we don't really want to hear anything negative about our performance. When we receive pay from a church, however, we understand that we are being paid for the work that we are asked to do. And implicit in such an arrangement is an understanding that our work will naturally be evaluated.
C. Value of a regular Performance Review

1. **It encourages a close examination of the original position description and an evaluation of the major responsibilities that came with the position.** The following questions are preparatory for such an performance review: Why was the staff member brought to this local church? What was he asked to do? How well is he doing in accomplishing the responsibilities of his position description? Has his role in the church changed? Does his position description need to be changed to reflect new or different responsibilities assigned to him?

2. **It permits discussion of expectations; the expectations of the church and the expectation of the staff member.** In this setting, an honest exchange of how well these expectations are being met can be processed. Sometimes the staff member thinks he is doing a great job but his supervision has a different perspective. Or the opposite might be true. The ‘Performance Review’ provides a forum for discussing expectations and clearing the 'pipe lines' for open communication.

3. **It fosters an evaluation of results within a limited time period.** Every position description contains implicit and explicit responsibilities that will be undertaken during the time of ministry at the local church. A ‘Performance Review’ is an opportunity to reflect on these results as they have been carried out during the past 6 months - 1 year, to discuss accomplishments and failures, successes and frustrations, and to set goals for the next work period. Ultimately we are called to faithfulness in our ministry to the Lord. But faithfulness is wedded to fruitfulness. The ‘Performance Review’ sets the stage for evaluating not only the time and plans invested in work, but also the fruit or lack of fruit in the assigned areas of ministry.

4. **It provides a protection for the staff person.** God looks with great disfavor on those who are lax in doing the Lord's work (Jer. 48:10). As iron sharpens iron, so one may sharpen another. A ‘Performance Review’ can be the occasion of sharpening the vision, skills, and commitment to diligently serving the Lord in the life of the minister and other staff members. It also provides a ‘paper trail’ of evaluation if a minister or staff person were to come under the criticism of members of the congregation as to the effectiveness of his work.

D. Process

The process of ‘Performance Review’ differs among our EPC churches. The review of the minister is handled by the session or a sub-set of session. In some cases, each session member is asked to complete an evaluation form about the minister, and the results are summarized and communicated to the minister by the Personnel Committee or an Executive Committee composed of the Clerk, the chair of Finance Committee and the chair of the Personnel Committee. In other churches, the ‘Performance Review’ of the minister is conducted by an Executive Committee composed of a smaller number of elders such as the sub-set mentioned above. It would be the advice of the MVC that the minister be evaluated by a sub-set of session, a few elders who would approach this task with great sensitivity and seriousness.

When there are other staff members, the minister or immediate supervisor conducts their evaluation. In some cases, the minister performs the review of all other pastors and program staff. Or there may be a division of labor within the staff for such reviews. A music director might evaluate the choir director and organist. An assistant minister might evaluate program staff under his oversight. It would be the advice of the MVC that each staff person be evaluated by his immediate supervisor. To
complete an adequate performance review, every church should be able to answer in the affirmative the following questions:

1. Does each staff person, including the Pastor have a position description?

2. Does each staff person have goals that have emerged from the position description, which both the staff person and his supervisor understand and to which both have agreed should be pursued within the time period to be evaluated.

The results of all evaluations are usually communicated to the Personnel Committee. That Committee can present this information to session when appropriate.

E. Forms

The forms used in EPC churches for the annual ‘Performance Review’ vary from simple to sophisticated. In general a performance form will provide space for comments on the following areas;

1. **Key result area**: major responsibilities as mentioned in the Position Description. Space may also be allotted beside each major responsibility for specific duties related to each responsibility and comments about the achievement of these duties.

2. **Key projects and initiatives** - new programs or events that were initiated in concert with goals and objectives. What are the new areas of ministry that are being undertaken? Was there a major event or program that was initiated this past year? How successful were they?

3. **General Factors and skills related to ministry.** This includes a listing of areas that impact the work of the ministry and may be focal points for evaluation and discussion. The following areas are typically included: quantity of work, quality of work, motivation level, vision, goal setting, spiritual life, staff relationships, congregational relationships, problem solving, communication skills, public preaching and teaching, initiative, creativity, work habits, leadership, administration, mentoring/leadership development, planning and decision making.

4. **Specific goals, ideas, emphases or changes for the next year.** One of the major results of the ‘Performance Review’ should be to establish goals and objectives for the next year. As the position description is reviewed, as the projects and activities of the past year are evaluated, and as the needs, opportunities and vision for the coming year are assessed, specific goals should emerge that can be put in writing. To a large degree, these goals become the checkpoints for discussion at the next performance review.

5. **Measurements of performance should be conducted on some type of scale.** Some may use a three-fold scale - below average, average and above average; others may use a five-fold scale; unacceptable; unsatisfactory, satisfactory; above average; excellent. Most of us like to be 'feel-good' people who only affirm and commend our staff members. But for the sake of improvement and in a commitment to the good stewardship of our resources, EPC churches through their session and minister are called to give honest feedback and evaluation to staff members. Some scale will need to be utilized that reflects a straight-forward evaluation. See the suggested form at the end of this article.
6. **Other considerations.** Often both the evaluator and the evaluatee use an evaluation form. Both are instructed to complete the form and then meet to discuss their observations. This process encourages the staff member to evaluate himself and it also provides a basis for the evaluator to record his evaluation and interact with the evaluatee. **The performance evaluation may also serve as an opportunity to discuss in more detail the personal development of the staff member.** Under this heading, the following questions may be explored:

a. What are your ministry aspirations for the next 3-5 years?
b. What goals would you articulate for your personal and professional development during the next year?
c. What plans might you formulate to accomplish goals mentioned above?
d. How would you like to spend your next study leave?

The Performance Review should also be curtailed to deal with the staff person under evaluation. Senior leadership would be evaluated on issues related to vision, staff development, and overall leadership of the church. Other program staff would be evaluated with a greater focus placed on the accomplishment of goals that were established at the beginning of the evaluation process. Support staff would be evaluated with a priority placed on their work skills.

**F. Timing**

The timing of a ‘Performance Review’ is important to the purposes of the review. Typically a church year follows the momentum of the school year. Plans for programs and ministries are designed to be implemented during unfolding of the year, often beginning in September as families return from their summer vacation and as school calls children back to their studies.

A major ‘Performance Review’ should therefore be scheduled sometime in the late spring. During this review, the work of the previous year can be evaluated and plans for the new year can be discussed. Some churches also conduct a mid-year review, during the early winter. A mid-year review gives a platform for feedback on the progress to date and for helpful discussion that might assist in the work that has been planned.

**G. Salary Considerations**

Most churches have developed some form of salary review for their minister and staff. The larger churches often have a written policy that informs such a process. But many churches wade through hours of discussion each year about the appropriate ways to handle salary increases(or decreases) for the minister(s) and staff. Some of our churches are struggling to survive financially and would love to pay their minister and staff a larger salary but cannot. Some churches are paying their minister and staff a very generous salary.

Salary considerations address two major issues. The first speaks to the adequacy of the base salary of the minister and other staff members. Geography, size of church, and years of ministry will all impact this figure.
The second salary consideration speaks to the annual adjustment in compensation. How does the session make these decisions? What is a reasonable process to follow in arriving at the recommendations for annual salary adjustments for the staff at a local church?

Each church will develop its own methods of processing these important decisions. One way would be to connect the annual ‘Performance Review’ with salary recommendations. For instance, if measurements on the ‘Performance Review’ were on a scale of 1-5, the Personnel Committee could then ask that it be provided with a number (1-5) representing the summary of the ‘Performance Review’ for each minister and staff person. In conjunction with the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee could decide what amount of money would be available for increase in staff compensation.

Some churches take into consideration the annual cost of living increase by making it equal to a satisfactory rating on the review. The staff person who received a rating higher than satisfactory would receive a merit increase above the annual cost of living increase. The staff person who received a rating lower than satisfactory would receive less than the annual cost of living increase.
# ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW FORM

**EPC CHURCH NAME**

**Staff member name** __________________________ **Supervisor** __________________________

**Position title** __________________________ **Period of Review** __________________________

**Date of last review** __________________________ **Date of current review** __________________________

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<th>KEY RESULT AREA</th>
<th>SPECIFIC DUTIES</th>
<th>RATING</th>
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<th>KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVE</th>
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<td>2. Quality and quantity of work</td>
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<td>3. Self-motivated</td>
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<td>4. Leadership development</td>
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<td>5. Setting goals and priorities</td>
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<td>6. Planning and organizing</td>
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<td>7. Problem solving</td>
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**SUMMARY**

**GOALS for Next Work Period**

1. 
2. 
3. 

**Action Plans**
COMMENTS

______________________________
By Evaluator

________
(signature)

date:_______

______________________________
By Evaluatee

________
(signature)

date:_______

_____ I agree

_____ I disagree

( if you choose not to sign, please submit a written explanation)
A. INTRODUCTION

The Book of Order of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church makes provision for its congregations to secure pastors for interim ministries.

“Temporary pastoral relationships. A Church Session may invite a Minister to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and perform needed pastoral duties. The invitation must be approved by the Presbytery on recommendation of the Ministerial Vocation Committee unless otherwise stipulated. No person serving in a temporary relationship is eligible to be called as Pastor of that church.” (G. 11-8)

“Interim supply. Invited to serve during the period a congregation is seeking a Pastor. The Interim Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Church Session during the time of service.” (G.11-8B)

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the General Assembly Office offer these guidelines to local churches considering an interim supply. Further development will occur as the church continues to address this need, in hopes that stronger and healthier congregations will result as permanent pastors are called and new long term ministries get underway.

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. L. Edward Davis, Stated Clerk Emeritus of the General Assembly, and Dr. Charles Wickman for their substantial work on this document.

B. AND IN THE IN-BETWEEN TIMES

Your pastor has resigned! Now what?

Most churches are ill-prepared for the interim period between permanent pastors. The congregation may be buoyed up by such ideas as the ministry of the laity as the way God intends for the church to operate, the multiple gifts of God’s people as resourcing the church for such a time and perhaps a history of handling crises well. Congregations, too, are generally energized by the new challenges presented to them, the opportunities the interim presents for new directions and the whole search process as a stimulation to congregational unity.

We may not, however, be aware of the feelings from which the congregation suffers: loss, shock, grief, anger, guilt, panic. We may not be prepared for the old issues that sometimes re-surface during this period, the unresolved conflicts that reoccur or what might be the limiting powers of how the congregation has defined itself up to this point by the pastor who has left. A congregation may not realize that some old but needed leadership retires with the pastor’s resignation leaving undesirable vacancies or how people in the background of church life, often untrained and inexperienced, begin to assert themselves. A congregation may not be prepared for the new future that a new pastor will bring. We may not be aware of the opportunities that the interim period presents to focus on certain developmental tasks appropriate to the “in-between” times. Nor is the congregation always aware of the resources available to the church for making the most of the interim period.

There are pastoral needs left unattended to, which some members of the congregation desire quite intensely, such as the elderly facing their own death and wanting the care of a pastor. The moderating of
Session and congregational meetings may need objective leadership. Pastoral representation at community functions may be neglected.

Healing may be needed especially if the previous pastor left under duress or has left behind a conflicted congregation. Process time is needed to handle change appropriately. Familiarities and established patterns are being challenged. Denial, anger and bargaining, all part of the normal grief process, need to lead healthily to acceptance. Any sense of crises must be dealt with well and utilized. Any sense of hurry needs to be moderated by careful planning and search, and can be handled in the awareness that the pastoral vacancy has been temporarily filled.

Philip Porcher fantasizes about a congregation in the interim as, in part, “a group of people… walking slowing ahead, often looking backward with longing and lost expressions on their faces. Gradually, they begin to look at each other, some in anger and frustration, others in supportive collaboration, and still others in small groups pulling off to the side…” If your pastor has resigned and if in any measure this is potentially your congregation, it is now time to consider an intentional interim pastor.

A congregation may feel that the interim can be handled by the associate staff. This assumes that the church will accept an associate as the head of staff as it accepted that person as an associate. Such is not always the case. It also assumes that the associate is prepared to be an interim, “thinks” interim, and can and does change priorities and style if necessary to do intentional interim work, rather than continuing in the associate’s role and adding the head of staff responsibilities to an already busy schedule. In addition, serving as interim makes it difficult for the associate to look for a new position himself in anticipation of the new pastor asking the associate(s) of his choice. Most churches believe that a new pastor must be given the choice of his own key staff people, if he is to do the work a congregation wants of him. He may choose the present staff, but a church ought not require him to do so. Furthermore, an associate acting as head of staff may find it difficult to return to an associate position once the new pastor has come, should he stay.

If a church does ask a present associate to serve as interim pastor however, (and this is not recommended) much of what is suggested here should be required, including the drawing of a covenant and intentional work on the specific issues of the interim period.

The search for a new permanent pastor demands a healthy congregation if the next installed pastor is to be what, under God, he is to be to that congregation. No church wants its next permanent pastor to be, in effect, an interim (as has happened again and again). For these reasons the General Assembly has developed in Intentional Interim Program for churches in the “in-between” times and who are seeking interim pastors and for ordained pastors available to do interim service. Our hope is that our congregations will enjoy a long term and stable ministry following the interim period, and we believe an interim pastor may be absolutely necessary to such future work. You are urged, therefore, to read this Manual carefully and consider making the “in-between” times a time of coming to terms with your church’s history and discovering a new identity for your future by inviting an intentional interim pastor to serve with you during this critical period in church life.

This Manual draws on the work of others, most of which is mentioned in the bibliography. God bless you as you carefully consider what He would have your congregation do in the “in-between” times.

C. SO WHAT IS AN INTERIM?

An interim time is an “in-between” time. For the church, it is the time between when one pastor leaves and a permanent pastor is installed. The ministry of the church goes on, sometimes in regular and familiar ways, but always with new and unfamiliar challenges. We continue in such a time to be the people of God
with the unique and distinct mission committed to us as a church. As to the congregation’s ministry, therefore, there really is no interim period.

An interim person is a trained and intentional interim pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, purposeful about serving God’s people during these “in-between” times, skilled in and willing to provide pastoral care and leadership during the months before a congregation’s next permanent pastor is installed.

Chosen by the Session, an interim pastor serves under a clearly defined, temporary and published covenant, doing what a pastor generally and routinely does and more, and within a limited framework of time and goals. His role is designed to serve a congregation during a dynamic but limited period in its life, particularly in ways appropriate to this time in a church’s history. He may serve full-time or part-time for a portion of the interim or for it all, be resident or not, but never a candidate for the longer term position which the church wishes to fill. Having served as a permanent pastor, he brings unique personality characteristics, skills and perspective to the task. He brings maturity, flexibility and adaptability to his role. His competence may be in handling grief, in an ability to use conflict positively, in an ability to quickly analyze situations, entering and leaving a congregation in a healthy way or in the skill to organize and direct group processes. He recognizes unfinished tasks and leads toward their completion before the permanent pastor arrives, for example, the examination of the membership roles of the church so as to reflect membership realities. The interim pastor moves quickly and purposefully to these tasks and leads in preparing the people of God for a healthy future together. He is intentionally an interim pastor. He is not a single-Sunday supply pastor, preaching only. He is not a temporary supply primarily preaching over a relatively short period of time.

It is conceivable that some ordained people, after a relatively few years of permanent pastoral work, will choose to serve only as interim pastors for the rest of their public ministry. Such people would be interim pastor Specialists, having been especially and intensely trained in the leadership skills needed to guide the people of God in the “in-between” times. No such specialists are trained at the present time to serve in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Some interim pastors are people without call at the present and wish to serve in this capacity for a time agreed upon by the church and the interim. Other interim pastors, however, are 60+ years of age, having served in several permanent pastoral positions, are honorably retired and receiving some pension and/or social security income. He is simply entering a new phase of his ministry for which he has prepared himself. An Interim Pastor is convinced that his work is a vital part of the church’s mission, not simply a fill-in until the “real” pastor arrives. His work is different in many ways but equally essential as the ministry a congregation’s permanent pastor will have.

D. THE TASKS OF AN INTERIM PASTOR

Research with many different congregations, done by Loren Mead and the Alban Institute, indicates that a congregation in transition has five basic areas of need. Mead calls these five “developmental tasks.” Virtually every denominational interim program acknowledges that these are the primary tasks of interim leadership. The possibility that healthy leadership will be found in the search for a permanent pastor and that he will be able to minister unimpeded is enhanced by working through these issues. An interim pastor addresses these needs in the sequence both the pastor and the church consider appropriate.

1. COMING TO TERMS WITH HISTORY.
   Feelings, termination emotions, need to be resolved: loss, grief, anger, despair, relief, guilt, panic. Old and debilitating ways of responding to crises need to be addressed. The ghosts of pastors past need to be put to rest. A dearly loved immediate past pastor needs to be released in the minds and hearts of the congregation. If the past pastor was pressured to leave by some in the congregation, healing between for and against groups needs to occur. Where the church has come from and how it got there needs to be understood, acknowledged, valued and worked through, whatever is
appropriate. Conflicts of long-standing need to be resolved. Until this happens, a congregation is less able to make good decisions about itself.

2. **DISCOVERING A NEW IDENTITY.**
   Churches in the interim are no longer defined by their pasts. The pastor who defined them in many ways is no longer present with them. They will not stay the same. A new identify must develop. While the next permanent pastor will bring vision to the church, the congregation must discover what, in general terms, it wishes to become in the future.

3. **FACILITATING SHIFTS OF POWER.**
   New leadership is necessary, since the “old” pastor was the key decision-maker and leader of the past life of the congregation. Some members fade from active service when the pastor departs. Others get involved. If the previous pastor was a great influence on the congregation, a bold or controversial leader, the more changes in leadership will occur. An interim pastor can help in leadership shifts making them positive and appropriate to the changing situation. The interim pastor may provide leadership training, giving the new pastor a cadre of people who know the when, how and where of church leadership.

4. **RETHINKING DENOMINATIONAL TIES.**
   Part of a church’s identity is its connection with the larger church. The staff, resources and organization of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church will become clearer to a church in transition as it connects more with the denomination in its search process. The Confession, the Essentials, the Catechisms and the *Book of Order*, all of which help define us, should become more familiar to the church as it lives through the interim period. Contacts with the presbytery and General Assembly office will be made frequently by the Pastoral Search Committee and an appreciation for its work will be developed. An interim pastor can help a congregation understand its EPC heritage and denominational structure.

5. **BUILDING COMMITMENT TO NEW LEADERSHIP AND A NEW FUTURE.**
   The church must move from its past orientation to a future vision. Pastoral styles differ and strengths vary and the congregation must be open to the individuality of its next pastor. A congregation must be spiritually prepared for its new pastor. A commitment to the new pastor must be encouraged, especially when that person is identified and called. Shared vision and working relationships can and must develop among the congregation. The church must become forward-looking, appreciating the past but rolling up its sleeves to a new and exciting ministry in the upcoming days. The interim pastor can engage the congregation in this process.

A congregation must experience the maximum benefit possible in the interim period. The more these tasks are completed, the stronger a people will be for its next pastor. If a congregation assumes that these issues will be successfully addressed without interim leadership, it may be disappointed.

**E. STEPS TO SECURING AN INTERIM PASTOR in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

**STEP 1** At a time following the presbytery’s approval of the present permanent pastor’s change in his ministry, Session determines to seek an interim pastor. A thorough study should be made of this Manual and the benefits of calling an interim, and the counsel of the presbytery ministerial committee sought. Then a decision should be thoughtfully made.
STEP 2  Session appoints an Interim Search Committee (ISC) as an ad hoc committee of the Session, appointing its chairman, if desired. This should be done before the congregation selects a Pastoral Search Committee.

STEP 3  The Interim Search Committee informs its presbytery stated clerk of the Session’s decision to search for an interim pastor.

STEP 4  The ISC studies the Interim Pastor Manual. It profiles the interim pastor it determines to be best suited for the church, considering the church’s special needs in the interim, how long it envisions the interim period to be, possible beginning dates, salary and benefits package and other such matters as it considers appropriate. It then develops the covenant to be presented to the interim pastoral candidate. (See appendix for a sample covenant.)

STEP 5  The ISC studies the interim pastor Profiles and Personal Information Forms (PIF) received from the General Assembly office and the presbytery stated clerk and prays about the choice(s) it will make for further investigation.

STEP 6  The ISC makes contact with the choice(s) it makes to discover availability and gather other information it may seek. Some interim pastors may be serving a church at the time another church calls, but may still be available within a month or two of that initial conversation. Contact may also be made with the candidate’s recommendations at this time.

STEP 7  The ISC interviews its available choice, further developing and then reviewing the covenant and other pertinent information with the candidate.

STEP 8  The ISC continues to process, if necessary, until an interim pastor is agreed upon by the ISC and the candidate.

STEP 9  The ISC recommends the interim pastor and the covenant to the Session. The Session issues the invitation (G. 11-8).

STEP 10  When an interim pastor is called, the Session receives the necessary approvals from the presbytery or ministerial committee, should this committee be empowered to make this decision (G.11-8).

STEP 11  The ISC plans for the installation of the interim pastor acts as his counsel, conducts periodic reviews of his covenant and ministry and plans any and all matters related to his termination.

STEP 12  If an interim resigns and Session determines that a second interim pastor is needed, the ISC repeats its work until the next interim is secured by the congregation.

STEP 13  Session dismisses the ISC with thanks when the church has secured a permanent pastor and its work is complete.

These steps may be modified, depending upon the needs of the particular church.

F. COVENANTING WITH THE INTERIM PASTOR

A church and its interim must have a clearly understood working relationship with each other. Unhappy relationships develop when expectations are not clear. A covenant should be drawn, therefore, which fits both the needs of the congregation and the interim. The expectations of both the church (the Interim Search Committee and the Session) and the pastor should be thoroughly discussed and expressed in a
covenant similar to the example found in this Manual. Items included should be the tasks involved, the compensation package (salary, housing, vacation time, insurance, and possibly pension allowance), travel reimbursement, disability and other such matters as express the desires and priorities of both parties. A congregation may wish to spell out the priorities for the first two or three months of interim ministry. No assumptions should be made.

The covenant should include a pledge of support and cooperation between the church and the interim pastor. The length of time before it is reviewed should be made clear. How the covenant is terminated by either party can be spelled out. What happens in the event of the church’s dissolution or the interim pastor’s death can be written into the covenant.

The covenant should be reviewed by the Interim Search Committee and the pastor after 3 months of interim service to see if it reflects the intentions of both the church and the pastor. Renegotiate, if necessary. If needed, changes should be suggested to the Session. At the same time, the ISC should evaluate the ministry of the interim. Thereafter, the covenant should be reviewed no less than every 6 months for the same purposes, should the ministry of the interim continue to be needed by the church.

The original covenant, with its terms of call included, should be presented to the presbytery and/or ministerial committee when the church seeks presbytery approval of the call it issues. Unless major changes are made as time goes on, it would not be necessary to resubmit the covenant to the presbytery. It should also be published for the congregation’s perusal. This covenant should be signed by the Interim Search Committee, the Session, the interim pastor and the presbytery. This covenant is not intended to restrict ministry but to release it by clarifying all issues from the start, allowing the church and pastor to do, unimpeded, the critical work the interim period requires.

G. COMPENSATION FOR INTERIM PASTORS

Each church and interim must work out a compensation package agreeable to both. The compensation for a full-time interim position differs from a part-time position, of course. As guidelines for the Session, consider these suggestions:

1. Salary should be negotiated based on the church’s current budget and the compensation package of the previous pastor. It must be remembered that an interim pastor is a “real” pastor and that compensation must be appropriate to his position. In either case (full- or part-time), the benefits package should include health insurance if the pastor is not covered in another way, as well as pension. Remember too that the terms of call must be included in the covenant drawn between the church and the interim and that the presbytery ministerial committee and the presbytery must approve what the church offers. For a retired pastor, there are no required terms of call.

2. One way used by some churches for determining compensation is the unit system. A unit is a block of time, usually 3-4 hours (a morning, an afternoon, an evening) compensated at a certain rate for each unit. A suggested rate is $60-$100 per unit. Using the Interim Pastor Worksheet in the appendix, the number of hours required for an interim’s ministry can be determined. So, for example, if a church determines that its interim will serve 10 units per week (30-40 hours) and the compensation is $75 per unit, the interim would receive a package that adds up to $750 per week.

3. Travel reimbursement should meet IRS guidelines. Mileage should include the interim’s commute from his home each week, if this is how he is to minister to your congregation.

4. Business expenses should be reimbursed by the church.

5. Vacation is to be negotiated on the basis of one paid week of vacation for each 3 months of
service. General Assembly and presbytery attendance is not considered vacation.

6. If a church owns a manse, its use should be a matter for the church to determine and, if it determines to make it part of the compensation offered, this should be negotiated with the interim.

These are suggestions. Each situation differs so a compensation package needs to be worked out that is satisfactory to both the church and the interim.

H. TERMINATING THE RELATIONSHIP: Giving the gift of a healthy farewell

An interim pastor should plan to leave no less than a week before the new pastor arrives. If a church has very much loved its interim, it is best to leave two to four weeks before, giving the church the opportunity to anticipate its new pastor without too much of an interim’s influence and a church’s affection still intact. What is important is that the interim pastor be intentional about the conclusion of his ministry.

On some occasions, it may seem appropriate to include the interim pastor in the welcoming of the new pastor, though this should be carefully considered before deciding to do so.

A healthy farewell would include the interim asking the Session and/or Interim Search Committee what is expected of him in the process of termination and the welcoming of the new pastor. Lyle Schaller, eminent church consultant, suggests that as the interim plans to leave, he begins to think of himself as the predecessor. He also suggests that the interim leave behind a packet of useful information for the next pastor. This could include church and city directories, maps, telephone numbers, etc.

As the exit approaches there should be expressions of joy and sadness, talk about the transition to the new pastor and how he will be received, encouraged by the interim, records put into good order, arrangements made regarding pending weddings, etc., conversations about exact dates for the interim’s break from the congregation, covenant termination, and the planning of an appropriate farewell event for the interim. He should recognize and affirm the staff and other significant people in the congregation. A sermon or sermon series reviewing the time together, affirming the congregation as it moves forward, the experience of change and such topics would be appropriate.

The interim pastor should encourage the preparation of the pastor’s study and the manse, should the congregation plan to provide such for its new pastor. He may need to prepare his own household goods, terminate community commitments, transfer personal records and the like.

An exit interview benefits both the church and the interim pastor. The interim period should be evaluated, the work of the interim discussed, how the congregation is perceived by the interim as he departs, what gains were made and what work needs to be done in the future. Each of the five developmental tasks should be discussed to discover where the congregation is as it enters into a new and exciting phase of life together.

The interim pastor should plan a transition conversation with the next pastor and the Session told that the interim plans such a talk.

As an interim approaches the end of the interim period, he should begin to plan for his next ministry, evaluating his experience and planning for its use in his next pastorate. He should give himself process time. He has been involved in a rather intense time in a congregation’s life and needs a break in order to be fresh for his next assignment. He may wish to contact the General Assembly office indicating when he will be available for another interim. Then celebrate with the church, say “good-bye” and LEAVE!
A congregation is wise when it insists on a healthy farewell from its interim pastor.

I. CONCLUSION

This Manual is intended to provide guidelines for our churches. It rises out of love for the church and an intense interest in maintaining effective ministry and bringing growth and renewal to a congregation in what may be an uphill part of its journey. Unique opportunities are provided to congregations by the interim period and no church should let this “in-between” time slip by without an intentional effort at taking advantage of those opportunities.

The General Assembly office is ready to assist your congregation further, if needed, in the interim process.
J. INTERIM MINISTRY COVENANT

BETWEEN
The ________________________________________________________ Church and the Reverend
____________________________________________________
to provide interim pastoral leadership, it is agreed that the Reverend ____________________________ will begin to serve as interim pastor of the _________________________________________ Church on _________________________. It is understood that this Covenant will be reviewed after three months of service to see if it reflects the expectations of Church and Pastor and thereafter at least every six months, until a permanent pastor is called and installed. During this interim, the congregation and interim pastor will work together, with the help of God to:

• Provide for worship and the practice of ministry with the congregation and community.
• Engage in the evaluation of the church, reviewing its past and planning for its future, strengthening the mission and unity of the church.
• Prepare for the coming of a permanent pastor called by the congregation.

It is agreed that under no circumstances shall the interim pastor be a candidate for permanent pastor and that at no time will he meet with the Pastoral Search Committee or assist in the search process unless specifically asked to do so by the Session of the church.

SHARED MINISTRY
• The interim pastor agrees to provide (full-time, part-time) pastoral leadership and shall be responsible for the following:
  • Preaching and leading the worship of the Church;
  • Officiating at baptisms, weddings and funerals as requested;
  • Visitation of the sick, shut-ins and counseling members as requested;
  • With presbytery approval, serve as Moderator of the Session and congregation;
  • Serve as head of staff;
  • Attend and resource committees as requested;
  • Provide leadership and training for members, including self-study, future planning, membership outreach and stewardship;
  • Give intentional leadership to the Five Developmental Tasks of the Interim Period;
  • Represent the church in the community and remain active in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, its General Assembly and presbytery;
  • Participate in an evaluation of the interim pastorate at the conclusion of this interim period;
  • Other duties:

The church will support and cooperate with the interim pastor assuming responsibility for:
• Attending worship services and other meetings;
• Continuing financial support of the church and its ministries;
• Sustaining lay leadership and shared ministry;
• Supporting the pastor in the church’s ministry to the community and the world;
• Working on the Five Developmental Tasks of the interim period;
• Participating in the presbytery and General Assembly;
• Informing the interim pastor of the timing of possible and definite leadership transitions, including Candidate Sundays.
• Keeping the interim pastor informed of covenant termination;
• Participating in the evaluation process at the end of the interim period;
COMPENSATION
The church agrees to provide the following compensation to the interim pastor:
- Base salary, per month
- Housing allowance
- Health insurance
- Pension
- Travel allowance ($ per mile or ________ allowance)
- Social Security offset
- Vacation (1 week for each 3 months of service)
- Other

DISABILITY
In case of disability because of accident or illness, the church shall be responsible for the interim pastor’s full salary and benefits at a rate of one week for each week served up to three months of disability.

DEATH
In case of the interim pastor’s death, the spouse and/or family shall receive full salary and housing for three months, plus any earned vacation pay.

It is agreed that this covenant shall be in effect for ________ months after which time it may be renewed. It is further agreed that thirty days notice shall be given by either the church or the interim pastor if either wishes not to renew this covenant. It is also agreed that, when a permanent pastor has been called, this covenant shall conclude as the Session deems best, but, at the most, one week before his installation.

Copies of this Covenant shall be provided to the local church, the interim pastor and the ministerial committee of the presbytery.

By signing this agreement, the church and interim pastor agree on the following statements made by the pastor. I hereby agree that while serving as interim pastor, I will not allow my name to be submitted as a candidate for the vacant pulpit of the church I am serving. I further agree that, upon my termination and departure as Pastor, I will sever my pastoral relations with this congregation, recognizing that all future pastoral functions should be fulfilled by my successor.

For the Interim Search Committee       Date

For the Session       Date

The interim pastor       Date

For the Presbytery       Date
INTERIM PASTOR WORKSHEET  
*To be used by the Interim Search Committee*

Before the Interim Search Committee interviews possible candidates, here is a checklist of activities in which you see your interim pastor involved while with your church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. WORSHIP</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday preparation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday service(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weddings, funerals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. PASTORAL CARE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospital visitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shut-in visitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home visitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. ADMINISTRATION/LEADERSHIP</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee involvement</td>
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<tr>
<th>D. TEACHING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<th>E. OUTREACH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>F. STAFF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of staff leadership</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff meetings</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G. DENOMINATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presbytery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assembly</td>
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| H. EVALUATION AND PLANNING |                |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Total hours per week required**  


COMPENSATION FOR RETIRED PASTORS

What can be earned

A retired pastor receiving social security, pension or annuity income may be able to exclude some or all of compensation for interim ministry from income taxes. Certain limits apply and it would be advisable for any retired pastor considering interim ministry to check with a tax-preparer to ensure falling within those limits. The purpose here is to indicate to churches considering an interim, what those limits are, in general, so as to be able to negotiate with a potential interim appropriately.

A portion of an interim’s compensation may be designated in advance as housing allowance and therefore the interim can exclude this allowance from income taxes. The EPC Pension Plan designates all such income as housing allowance and therefore not subject to income taxes (unless, of course, it exceeds what a pastor can prove to be his housing expenses). Retirement income is all exempt from self-employment tax. Each church and pastor must discuss these matters before entering an interim relationship but generally a church could designate about 50% of work income to housing allowance. If he receives a pension or annuity and it applies to housing (as it does in the EPC), the amount of other income he can exclude from income taxes as housing allowance must take into consideration what he receives as pension for this purpose. An example of the above, for a person 65 years of age, would be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work and Pension Income</th>
<th>Total income taxes</th>
<th>Subject to taxes</th>
<th>Subject to Self-Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim pastorate</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total work/pension income</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, of course, the interim pastor can receive Social Security income, most of which should be non-taxable. In any case, the total income received from all sources designated for housing will only be excludable from income taxes to the extent that the pastor is actually spending that amount on housing costs.

It is conceivable that a pastor desiring interim work at 62 years of age or beyond will delay receiving Social Security and/or pension income and therefore whatever that person’s compensation may be will be treated, tax and Social Security-wise, as his present income is treated.

Churches and pastors should work together to make the compensation given and received tax-friendly for the pastor. **Be sure to check with a tax-preparer or CPA.**

Information courtesy of Mr. Jesse Wasserman, CPA
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Should a congregation seek additional resources or consultation for the interim period, help may be obtained from:


The Alban Institute
7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1250 West
Bethesda, MD 20814-3211
www.alban.org
301/718-4407
800/486-1318

Interim Ministry Network
5740 Executive Drive, Suite 220
Baltimore, MD 21228
410/719-0777
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info@interimministry.org
XV. Guidelines for Intentional Interim Pastoral Ministry

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church

A SUPPLEMENT FOR PASTORS

SO YOU THINK YOU WANT TO BE AN INTERIM PASTOR
in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

An interim pastor is a pastor with a temporary contract, brought into a particular church when, for whatever reason, the permanent pastoral position is vacant. This role is designed for serving a people in preparation for its next pastor and within the context of the unique dynamics of a limited period in a church’s life. This person is intentionally an interim in expectations and approaches to ministry, serving the regular needs of a people but ministering specifically in terms of the needs of a congregation at this critical transition period in its life. Interim work is seen as the unique challenge that is not only to provide regular ongoing pastoral leadership and compassion care, but also to help in resolving issues of grief and conflict and to assist the congregation in preparing for a new ministry under a new pastor. The interim pastor uses the changes of the transition period for the growth of the church, interprets the interim process to the congregation and contributes to the renewal of the church during this prime time in a congregation’s life.

It is axiomatic that an interim is temporarily located and is never a candidate for the longer term position.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church wishes to develop a pool of available candidates to serve in this position. Some will be full time; others, part time. Some will be compensated fully and others in a limited way by the churches they serve. Some will commute to their interim work and others will move to where the church is located. Some will have taken basic training in interim ministry and others will have only done limited reading on the subject. Some will be awaiting a call to a permanent position and some will be committed to doing only interim work. The full profile form will be held in the General Assembly office and available to churches that ask for it. Churches will be encouraged to secure interim leadership while their pulpit is vacant. Interim service will then come as churches and pastors negotiate an agreement to work together during an interim period.

No attempt is made here to repeat what can be found in the *Intentional Interim Pastors Manual for EPC Churches*. It is expected that a pastor considering interim ministry will read that Manual carefully, especially the tasks of the interim pastor as well as the appendices and this entire supplement for pastors.

Furthermore, no attempt is made here to consider all that is involved in interim ministry. Availability is only half of the process. The rest is the development of the heart and skills needed by churches in the “in-between” times. The bibliography included will direct you to material helpful in considering how best to practice interim service.

No pastor should accept interim ministry without first preparing for this unique role. It should not be assumed that being a pastor for many years perhaps totally qualifies a pastor for interim service. Training in the theory, skills and tasks of interim work is necessary if a pastor is to be of the greatest possible benefit to churches in transition. Included in this supplement is a brief description of training and other services offered by the Interim Ministry Network, Inc., and if you really want to be an interim pastor you ought to consider taking the basic education courses this organization offers.

Also included in this supplement is Steps to Becoming an Interim Pastor and the form to be completed.
and sent to the General Assembly Office should you wish to be listed as interested in interim ministry. If you choose to be listed as a potential interim, you may wish at the same time to inform your presbytery stated clerk of your availability as well as work with your own net-work of contacts, informing others that you are prepared to accept such a temporary assignment.

The call to interim service is a 3-point call, as is true for all pastoral assignments in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church: the pastor, the Session and the presbytery. The Book of Order states that the invitation to serve as an interim “must be approved by the presbytery on recommendation of the ministerial committee unless otherwise stipulated.” (G.11-8) Once called and approved by the presbytery it is assumed that any change in contractual arrangements with a church will be minor and, given the fact that the assignment is generally a year or less, will not require future approval by the presbytery (with the exception of terms of call).

It is expected that several questions remain unanswered at this early stage of the church’s interim program. Your experience serving as an interim will be helpful, too, in the further development of this effort. We envision that at some future time, an annual caucus of those committed and trained for interim ministry will be held prior to or at General Assembly.

If, after thought and prayer, you wish to prepare for and be listed as a candidate for interim ministry, the General Assembly office will be happy to assist you further.

**STEPS TO BECOMING AN INTERIM PASTOR**

*For pastors in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church*

**STEP 1** Secure the interim pastor Manual from your presbytery stated clerk or the General Assembly Office. Read it carefully.

**STEP 2** Fill in the Interim Pastor Profile form found in the packet and send it to the Office of the Stated Clerk (General Assembly). You must be a current member of a presbytery to be included in the pool of interim pastor candidates.

**STEP 3** Be sure your Personal Information Form (PIF) is updated as necessary and on file in the General Assembly Office.

**STEP 4** Check the bibliography in the Manual and begin to read about the dynamics of interim ministry. If and when you are contacted by a congregation’s Interim Search Committee (ISC), respond as appropriate. If you are interested in serving this church, gather some sense of interim needs as the ISC envisions them, secure the interim pastor covenant (if it has already been prepared), and any other information desired. State in this initial contact your absolute decision, should you be called as interim, not to become its permanent pastor (G.11-8).

**STEP 5** If called by a church Session to serve as an interim, be sure to secure the approval of the ministerial committee and the presbytery.

**STEP 6** Serve as your covenant requires, providing one month or more notice should you decide to terminate the interim relationship before a permanent pastor is installed.

**STEP 7** As common courtesy demands, sever all relationships with the church you serve in the interim once your interim service is over.
IF YOU WANT TRAINING IN INTERIM MINISTRY

The Services and Programs of The Interim Ministry Network, Inc.

Consideration should be given by interim ministry candidates to taking advantage of the basic education and other services offered by the Interim Ministry Network, Inc. (IMN), an association of more than 700 interim ministry specialists, consultants and denominational leaders. While it is not intended that this be an unqualified endorsement of this organization, the IMN does offer significant help to those who wish to further investigate interim ministry, if not actually serve as intentional interims.

For people wanting an overview of interim ministry, a day-long orientation workshop is offered.

Basic education courses are offered for in-depth training as well as Advanced Basic Education and accreditation for members who wish to go further in their commitment to interim service. Special seminars are also offered.

An annual conference is held as a gathering of people engaged in interim ministry.

A journal and newsletter called “In Between Times,” is published bimonthly focusing on topics relevant to interim ministry and the interim period of congregational life.

The IMNet, an electronic network of interim pastors, is available for a monthly membership fee. Membership is available to those who want all the benefits offered by the IMN.

Further information can be secured by writing to “The Interim Ministry Network, Inc., 5740 Executive Drive, Suite 220, Baltimore, MD 21228; Phone: 410/719-0777. Website: www.interimministry.org. Email: info@interimministry.org
PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY
For the practice of Interim Ministry


INTERIM PASTOR PROFILE

Name ___________________________________________ Date ________________________

Current address ___________________________________ Phone (h) (          ) _____________

State/Zip_________________________________________Phone (w) (         )______________

Fax: (           )_____________________ E-mail:_______________________________________

Permanent address, if other _____________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Age  ______35-44 ______45-54 ______ 55-64 ______ 65-74 ______ 75 plus

Marital status  _____ Married      ______ Single ______ Widowed   _____ Divorced

If married, is your spouse supportive of interim ministry?  ___Yes  ___No  ___Somewhat

Presbytery of which you are a member________________

Years in ministry since ordination_____

Retired?  _____Yes  _____No  _____Will be soon

Churches served:  Last full time ________________________________________________

                                      Last interim________________________________________

                                      Other recent ministries________________________________

Types of interim positions you wish to serve (check all that apply)

_____ Commuter (Live away, but return home 2-3 days a week)

_____ Regional (Have a home base, but work within a region)

_____ Moving (Will pack up and move)

_____ Part-time (Part-time interim my only employment)

_____ Part-time Retired (Interim plus pension and/or social security)

_____ Tentmaker (Part-time interim plus other work)

Length of time you prefer an interim assignment to last (check all that apply)

_____ 0-5 months _____ 6-9 months _____ 10-13 months _____ 14-18 months

_____ 19-24 months _____ Longer than 24 months

Skills you bring to an interim ministry (rate 0-5, 5 being the highest rating):

_____ Organizational/Administrative  _____ Evangelism   _____ Other

_____ Counseling       _____ Small group process

_____ Self-study of church         _____ Conflict utilization

_____ Program development        _____ Change management

_____ Visitation/membership development _____ Stewardship
HELPFUL QUESTIONS

What training and/or experience has prepared you for interim ministry?

Write a brief statement of what you believe the interim pastorate to be.

Note any special working restrictions you require (Handicap-accessible, absence on special days, etc.).

Describe briefly your style of ministry and leadership.

List preferences regarding interim pastorates (geographic, size of congregation, etc.).

List limitations regarding interim pastorates you would accept (geographic, size, length of assignment, etc.)

Give two (2) telephone references from recent pastorates (permanent or interim):

I will inform the General Assembly office when I want my name removed from the interim pastors availability roster.

Signed_______________________________________________
XVI. Forms

The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly grants permission and encourages the photocopying of the following forms for use in presbyteries and local congregations.
MINISTERIAL OBLIGATION

As an ordained minister, it is my desire to become a minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. As evidence of my desire and commitment, I subscribe to the Ministerial Obligation below and thereafter inscribe my name.

I reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ as my own personal Lord and Savior.

I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

I sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.

I promise that, if at any time I find myself out of accord with the system of doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church I will, on my own initiative, make known to my Presbytery the change which has taken place in my views since the assumption of these vows.

I affirm and adopt the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception.

I subscribe to the government and discipline of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

I promise subjection to my fellow presbyters in the Lord.

I have been induced, as far as I know my own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love of God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son.

I promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto me on that account.

I will seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all my duties as a Christian and a Minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relative, private or public, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in my manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make me overseer.

I do receive and adopt these vows as a true statement of my faith, commitment, and obligation and I do resolve and promise to exercise my calling to the Gospel ministry in obedience to these vows.

Whereof I, an ordained minister, do hereby inscribe my name this _____ day of ____________________, 20________.

Name      Address      City/State/Zip

EPC Form March 2005
The __________________________________________ Evangelical Presbyterian Church of ____________________________, feeling led by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have covenanted together to call you, ___________________________________ as Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor. In issuing this call to you to be our ___________________________ and spiritual leader, we commit ourselves to support you in every way. We commit ourselves to support you in prayer, in participation in the work of ministry, and in your material needs.

In meeting your material needs, we initially commit ourselves as follows:

1. Annual Cash Salary $_____________________
2. Housing Allowance $_____________________ (or) 3. Manse & Utilities $_____________________
4. Car Allowance $_____________________
5. Amount (10% minimum) of gross salary for government approved pension plan $_____________________
6. EPC Group Insurance for you and your family
7. Annual vacation of four weeks or 1 month
8. Study leave (two week minimum, cumulative up to six weeks)
9. Study leave allowance ________________________ Other allowance(s) (book allowance, reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending presbytery and General Assembly meetings, etc.) _________________________

As Associate or Assistant Pastor your primary responsibilities will be:

As Assistant Pastor, this call is extended to you for ________ years, beginning ____________________ (date).

We commit ourselves to continue this remuneration as long as you continue as our Pastor/Associate Pastor/Assistant Pastor. We commit ourselves to review this pledge annually and adjust it appropriately (considering all applicable factors, including changes in the cost of living). In addition, we commit ourselves to paying the expense related to your move.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the congregation/session this _________________________ day of __________________________________________, 20 ________________.

________________________________________________   ______________________________________________________
Clerk of Meeting     Chairman of Search Committee

I, ________________________________, having moderated the congregational/session meeting which extended the call to ___________________________ for ministerial services, certify that the call was made in complete conformity with the Book of Government, and that the persons signing the call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation/session.

____________________________________________
EPC Form March 2005

1st copy – Recipient of Call   2nd copy – Ministerial Committee   3rd Copy – Presbytery File
ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE CALL -- Minister

Name of Minister: __________________________________________

A. By the Church’s Presbytery

   Action of the Ministerial Committee

   This call has been reviewed by the Ministerial Committee and found to be in order. The Committee recommends that Presbytery approve / not approve this call.

   Date of Action: _______________ Chairman: ________________________________

B. Acceptance of the Call

   This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

   Date of Acceptance: _______________ Signature: ________________________________

C. Beginning Date of Ministry

   Ministry to begin on: _____________________________

D. I hereby certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by:

   _________________________________ Presbytery, meeting on _________________________.
   (Date)

   Signed, __________________________________
   (Stated Clerk of Presbytery)
TERMS OF CALL
Evangelist

The Presbytery of ____________________________, feeling led by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, have covenanted together to call you, ____________________________ as an Evangelist. In issuing this call we commit ourselves to support you in every way. We commit ourselves especially to support you in prayer, in participation in the work of ministry, and to assist you in the development of your support income.

In meeting your material needs, we initially commit ourselves as follows:

1. Annual Cash Salary $____________________
2. Housing Allowance $____________________ (or) 3. Manse & Utilities $____________________
4. Car Allowance $____________________
5. Amount (10% minimum) of gross salary for government approved pension plan $____________________
6. EPC Group Insurance for you and your family
7. Annual vacation of four weeks or 1 month
8. Study leave (two week minimum, cumulative up to six weeks)
9. Study leave allowance ________________________ Other allowance(s) _________________________

We authorize this level of support as long as you remain as an Evangelist under the charge of the ______________________ Presbytery. We promise to review the terms of this authorization annually and to seek to adjust it appropriately (considering all applicable factors, including changes in cost of living). In addition, we commit ourselves to paying the expense related to your move to the field.

In order that you may fulfill the responsibilities assigned to you by virtue of this call, we also grant you the special powers as designated below. These powers are prescribed in the Book of Government (10-3C) of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. 10-3C.

☐ To share the Gospel
☐ To administer the sacraments
☐ To develop a church
☐ To conduct preparational meetings of such church
☐ To oversee the required preparation of Elders and Deacons
☐ To receive and dismiss members

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the Presbytery this ______ day of __________, 20 ____. We regard your call to this work as being in the exercise of your ministry for tax purposes and in furtherance of the purposes of your ordination.

____________________________________________   _________________________________________
Stated Clerk of Presbytery     Chairman, Ministerial Committee

EPC Form March 2005

1st copy – Recipient of Call        2nd copy – Ministerial Committee        3rd Copy – Presbytery File
ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE CALL -- Evangelist

Name of Minister: __________________________________________

A. By the Church’s Presbytery

Action of the Ministerial Committee

This call has been reviewed by the Ministerial Committee and found to be in order. The Committee recommends that Presbytery approve / not approve this call.

Date of Action: _______________ Chairman: ________________________________

B. Acceptance of the Call

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of Acceptance: _______________ Signature: ________________________________

C. Beginning Date of Ministry

Ministry to begin on: _____________________________

D. I hereby certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by:

______________________________________ Presbytery, meeting on _____________________.

(Date)

Signed, __________________________________

(Stated Clerk of Presbytery)
TERMS OF CALL
Missionary

The Committee on World Outreach, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, feeling led by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy
Spirit, have covenanted together to call you, ______________________ as Missionary. In issuing this call to
be our Missionary, we commit ourselves in cooperation with your presbytery and churches of this denomination to support you in
every way. We commit ourselves especially to uphold you in prayer, and to assist you in the development of your support
account.

In meeting your material needs, we initially commit ourselves as follows:

1. Annual cash salary $___________
2. Foreign cost of living adjustment $___________
3. Housing allowance $___________
4. Rent and utilities allowance $___________
5. Social Security allowance $___________
6. Amount (10% minimum) of gross salary for
government approved pension plan $___________
7. EPC group insurance for you and your family
   (Indicate amount for plan chosen)
      EPC Plan $___________
      Agency Plan $___________
8. Administrative cost factors $___________
9. Ministry related expenses $___________
10. Annual vacation leave of four weeks/or one month $___________
11. Study leave (two weeks, cumulative for four years for career
    missionaries serving abroad, cumulative for three years for
    career missionaries in domestic service) $___________
12. Study Leave Allowance ($800 for career missionaries) $___________
13. Other allowances $___________
14. Total annual support $_________________

We authorize this level of support as long as you remain as a Missionary under the charge of the Committee on World Outreach.
We promise to review the terms of this authorization annually and to adjust it appropriately (considering all applicable factors,
including changes in cost of living).

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the Committee on World Outreach this ____________ day
of __________________, 20 __________.

___________________________________________________  ________________________________________
World Outreach Director    Chairman, the Committee on World Outreach

EPC Form March 2005

1st Copy – Recipient of Call  2nd Copy – Committee on World Outreach  3rd Copy – Ministerial Committee  4th Copy – Presbytery File
ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE CALL -- Missionary

Name of Minister: __________________________________________

A. By the Minister’s Presbytery

Action of the Ministerial Committee

This call has been reviewed by the Ministerial Committee and found to be in order. The Committee recommends that Presbytery approve / not approve this call.

Date of Action: ___________________ Chairman: ________________________________

B. Acceptance of the Call

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of Acceptance: ________________ Signature: ________________________________

C. Beginning Date of Ministry

Ministry to begin on: _____________________________

D. We certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by the Committee on world Outreach at its ________________________ meeting.

(Date)

I hereby certify that the above call has been duly considered and approved by:

______________________________________ Presbytery, meeting on ________________________.

(Date)

Signed, __________________________________

(Stated Clerk of Presbytery)
Instructions for use of the Form
“Call to a Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery”
(See Book of Government 10-3F and 11-12)

Presbyteries are urged to take seriously the mutual accountability between the governing body and its members by discovering and implementing ways for serving as a formal third party in calls to ministers serving outside the bounds of presbytery. The “Call to a Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery” provides presbyteries with a means of becoming a third party to a call, either in a formal or an informal way. It enables presbyteries to evidence their concern for the ministry to be performed, to outline presbytery’s expectations of the minister, and, where appropriate, to consult with the calling agency as an advocate for the minister as to ecclesiastical matters.

Prior to accepting a call, the minister shall contact the presbytery in which membership is sought, providing the Ministerial Committee with a position description. The Ministerial Committee, guided by the four criteria outlined on the form, shall determine if the ministry ought to be validated. If the ministry is validated, a call shall be issued. This call shall be reviewed and renewed annually by presbytery.

Four copies of the “Call to a Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery” should be completed. The following special instructions refer to the numbers on the form:

1. Describe how the minister will fulfill his/her responsibility to presbytery and related units, and if not explicit in the job title, how the minister will fulfill his ministry as outlined in the five criteria outlined on the form.

2. A representative of the presbytery and the minister shall sign the form.

3. Form shall indicate year for which call was approved, and the date approved.

4. The calling agency shall be asked to sign the call.

One or more persons acting on behalf of the calling agency, or one or more members of the Ministerial Committee should be appointed to present and prosecute the call before the presbytery. When a call has been thus presented, if found in order, and the presbytery deems it for the good of the Church, it should be placed in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.

IF THE CALL IS ACCEPTED, the call form shall be distributed as follows:

1. Original to the person called
2. Copy to the presbytery’s Stated Clerk
3. Copy to the Ministerial Committee
4. Copy to the calling agency.

IF THE PERSON REJECTS THE CALL, the Stated Clerk of the presbytery shall promptly return all copies of the call to the presbytery’s Ministerial Committee.

EPC Form March 2005
CALL TO A VALIDATED MINISTRY
OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of _______________________________, being satisfied with your qualifications as a Minister of the Word, and trusting that your ministry will:

- Be in demonstrable conformity with the mission of God’s people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Book of Order of this Church;
- Be appropriate in nature to the Gospel ministry;
- Give evidence of fidelity to God’s Word and faithfulness to the Gospel;
- Be carried on in accountability for its spiritual character and ecclesiastical conduct to the Presbytery and other organizations and agencies of this Church;
- Include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the Presbytery, and in the worship and service of a congregation;

Solemnly acknowledges that you,

____________________________________________
(Name of Minister)

have been called to perform a special ministry as

____________________________________________
(Position title)

in the employ of

____________________________________________
(Name and address of calling agency)

We covenant with you our support and encouragement as together we seek to serve the Lord, who calls us to ministry in every aspect of life. We join you in the goals and working relationships agreed upon and in your commitment to fulfill your ministry as described below: (1)

In its concern for the welfare of its members, the presbytery promises to review this call annually.

Signed,

(2) Presbytery Representative: ________________________________ Date ___________

Minister accepting call: ________________________________ Date: ___________

(3) This call was approved and renewed for the year 20 _____ on (Date) ______________________

(4) Calling Agency Representative: ________________________________

EPC Form March 2005

Original to person called. Copies to: (1) Presbytery Stated Clerk, (2) Ministerial Committee, (3) Calling Agency
TERMS OF CALL

Minister

Serving Outside the Bounds of Presbytery

The Presbytery of ____________________________ of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, has agreed to approve the call by ____________________________ to have you, ____________________________, serve as ____________________________. In approving this call to you to serve in this capacity outside the bounds of presbytery, we commit ourselves to support you in prayer, in fellowship and in the spiritual work of ministry.

This document confirms that we have assigned and designated you to perform the ministerial services, in fulfillment of the ministry, and with the calling agency, all as described in the attached Call to a Validated Ministry Outside the Bounds of Presbytery. We recognize these services as furthering the purposes of your ordination in the exercise of your ministry.

Your ministry pursuant to this Call is to be performed under the ecclesiastical authority, and as a ministry agent, of this Church. However, you are not an agent of this Church in the legal sense. Thus, you may not exercise any authority to bind this Church to any contracts or agreements, nor can you commit this church to fulfill any other legal obligation.

As a minister serving outside the bounds of presbytery, you will be employed by the calling agency, not this Church. You will be subject to the supervision of your calling agency with respect to the time, place or manner of your ministry. Any financial relationships or legal accountability regarding your ministry will be undertaken solely through the calling agency. Your accountability to us is related solely to spiritual and ecclesiastical matters.

Your eligibility to claim any special tax benefits or privileges available to a minister of the gospel under federal law may be jeopardized if any of the following apply to your ministry as described above: 1) the calling agency did not arrange with the Church for your services; 2) you perform services for the calling agency that other employees of the calling agency who are not ministers are performing; or 3) you perform the same services before and after obtaining this document from us.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names on behalf of the Presbytery as of this date of ____________________________, 20 ______.

_______________________________________     _______________________________________
(Stated Clerk)         (Ministerial Committee Chairman)

I, ____________________________________, having moderated the meeting which extended the call to ____________________________ for ministerial services, certify that the call was made in complete conformity with the Book of Government, and that the persons signing the call were authorized to do so by vote of the Presbytery.

____________________________________________
(Moderator of the Meeting)

EPC Form March 2005

Original to person called   Copies to: (1) Presbytery Stated Clerk, (2) Ministerial Committee
APPLICATION FORM FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINCY
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(Form C-1)

BASIC INFORMATION

Date: _______________________

Full Name: ___________________________________________________________________
(Last)     (First)    (Middle)

Address: _______________________________________________________________________
(City)   (State)  (Zip)

Telephone: Home: (          )______________    Work: (        )_______________________
Fax: (          )______________ Ema il: ____________________________

Spouse’s Name: _______________________

Children’s Name and Ages:

Ordained? Yes ☐ No ☐ Ordained by _______________________________________________

Member of Presbytery (or church): ___________________________________________________

Candidate under care of __________________________ Presbytery

If currently endorsed, list endorsing body: _____________________________________________

Preferred Branch of Service: __________________________  ☐ Active Duty  ☐ Reserve / Guard

Date by which endorsement is needed: ___________________________

Recruiter (Name/Address/Phone: __________________________

If currently serving, list rank and present assignment:

Previous Military Service (use reverse side if necessary)

REASON FOR SEEKING CHAPLAINCY

Describe what type of institutional chaplaincy are you seeking and why. Use additional page if necessary.
QUALIFICATIONS

Briefly indicate what qualifications you have for institutional chaplaincy (past experience, employment, education, etc.). Use additional page if necessary.
APPLICATION FORM FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCY
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(Form C-2)

BASIC INFORMATION

Full Name: ___________________________________________________________________ (Last) (First) (Middle)

Address: ___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________ (City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone: Home: (_____) __________________ Work: (_____) __________________

Fax: (_____) ___________ Email: _____________________________

Spouse’s Name: ________________________________

Names and ages of children:

Ordained? Yes ☐ No ☐ Ordained by ____________________________________________

Member of Presbytery (or church): ____________________________________________

Candidate under care of _____________________________________________________ (Presbytery)

If currently endorsed, list endorsing body: ______________________________________
Name: _____________________________________

REASON FOR SEEKING CHAPLAINCY

Describe what type of institutional chaplaincy are you seeking and why. Are you applying to an organization that requires Ecclesiastical Endorsement (e.g., Association of Professional Chaplains)? Use additional page if necessary.

QUALIFICATIONS

Briefly indicate what qualifications you have for institutional chaplaincy (past experience, employment, education, etc.). Use additional page if necessary.
SESSION ENDORSEMENT FORM

The normal process in which an EPC member moves toward becoming a candidate for the Gospel ministry includes the following initial steps:

1. A member senses God’s leading to pursue the Gospel Ministry. This member talks to his/her pastor about his/her sense of call.
2. This member shares his/her convictions with his/her session.
3. The session encourages and interviews the member.
4. The member who is approved by session is recommended to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee to be taken under care of the presbytery. **This form should be used to communicate session’s endorsement of the applicant to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee.**

Name of Member: ___________________________________________

Address:  _______________ ___________________________________________

Telephone:  (       ) ___________________  E-mail:  __________________________

Name of Church:  _____________________________________  Length of membership: _____________

Name & phone of Elder completing this form: _______________________________________________

1. What evidence/testimony does this person give of his salvation through death in Christ?

2. What evidence does this person give/demonstrate of his call to the gospel ministry?

3. Please mention in specific detail your observations regarding this person’s potential fulfillment of the qualifications mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Mention specific strengths and weaknesses.

4. How do you evaluate this person’s potential giftedness for the Gospel Ministry? Does the session recommend this applicant for candidacy? Does this recommendation have any qualifications? If so, what?

5. Does the person seem to sincerely desire to pursue God’s will relative to the Gospel Ministry?

STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION: We, the Session of ___________________________________,
certify that the above applicant has been a member of this church since ________________ and we commend this member to the presbytery as an applicant for candidacy in the Gospel Ministry.

___________________________________  ____________________________________
Moderator of Session      Clerk of Session

EPC Form March 2005

Date: ______________________________
APPLICATION TO COME UNDER CARE OF PRESBYTERY’S MINISTERIAL/CANDIDATES COMMITTEE

Name of Applicant: _______________________________________________________________

Mailing Address: ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

Telephone: (        ) ____________________  Fax: (       ) ___________________

E-mail: __________________________  Date of Birth: ___________________

Name of Pastor: _________________________

Name of Ruling Elder who knows you well: _______________________________

Name of Presbytery to which you are applying: _______________________________

Name of School/College/Seminary: _____________________________________________________

Year of anticipated graduation: ________________  Anticipated Degree: ______________________

Please check: _______ Male  ________ Female

Session endorsement: _______________________ (date)

☐ Seeking to be received as a candidate with extraordinary circumstances (G.12-2H)

Applicant’s Signature: __________________________________________ Date: ________________

This is to certify that _______________________________________ has been taken under care of the

Ministerial/Candidates Committee of the Presbytery of _____________________________________

Signed: _______________________________________  Position: __________________________

Address: ______________________________________  Date: ____________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________


EPC Form March 2005
CANDIDATES EDUCATIONAL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAM (CEEP)

TRADITIONAL TRACK

CANDIDACY

COLLEGE

SEMINARY

ORDINATION

NON-TRADITIONAL TRACK (EXTRAORDINARY CASE)

METHODOLOGICAL MODE

INDEPENDENT STUDY

TUTORIALS & GUIDED RESEARCH

SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

COGNITIVE EXPERIENTIAL MODE

BIBLICAL UNIT (I)

THEOLOGICAL UNIT (II)

ECCLESIASTICAL UNIT (III)

PASTORAL UNIT (IV)

EVALUATION MODE

REPORTING WRITING EXAMINATION

REPORTING WRITING EXAMINATION

REPORTING WRITING EXAMINATION

REPORTING WRITING EXAMINATION
PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE
(To be completed by the Applicant and returned to the Ministerial/Candidate Committee along with the Application to Come Under Care)

(Please type out your answers)

NAME: ____________________________________________  DATE: _________________

1. Describe what factors have influenced you to consider vocational Christian service.

2. What kind of vocational ministry are you contemplating? How will ordination within the EPC assist you in accomplishing this ministry?

3. Describe how you are cultivating your relationship with God. What are you doing in the areas of prayer, Bible reading and study, reading of Christian literature?

4. Describe your current and past involvement in the local church and/or in other areas of service, teaching, witness, and ministry. Give approximate dates for each.

EPC Form March 2005
CHECKLIST FOR CANDIDATE EVALUATION  
(For use by Sessions and Candidate Committees in evaluating applicants for the Gospel Ministry)

1. Evidence of a call to the Gospel Ministry

2. Evidence of giftedness for the Gospel Ministry

3. Observations of the qualifications mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

4. Areas of service in the past that reveal God’s blessings upon his ministry

5. Effectiveness in communication:
   - Public speaking
   - Written communication
   - Listening skills

6. Indications of interpersonal skills
   - Able to connect with others
   - Eye contact, manner, demeanor
   - Motivational abilities, leadership skills

7. Administration
   - Goal setting and decision making abilities
   - Signs of success in planning, organizing, delegating, recruiting, training

8. Integrity
   - Indications that applicant is trustworthy, truthful, dependable, responsible
   - Any concerns about applicant’s handling of confidentiality, sexual purity, financial freedom

9. Sense of personal identity
   - Is the applicant aware of his/her strengths, weaknesses, spiritual gifts
   - Willing to take correction and criticism with discernment
   - Evidence of appropriate initiative, assertiveness, self-motivation, appropriate boldness, self-esteem, self-confidence, stability, stress management skills, sense of direction
   - Positive and faith-filled outlook

10. Personal discipline
    - Gives evidence of practicing spiritual disciplines
    - Use of time

11. Knowledge
    - Shows evidence of intellectual abilities for seminary and ministry
    - Able to handle the responsibilities of study, reflection, wise governance that fall on the minister

EPC Form March 2005
REFERENCE CHECK FORM
To be used in a telephone interview with those listed in Candidate’s PIF References

Name of Candidate: _________________________________

Name of Reference: _________________________________ Date of Contact: ___________

“The candidate has authorized us to contact you as a reference. He has signed a statement indicating that you are released from any claims or liabilities arising from your responses about him/her made in good faith and without malice.”

1. What is your relationship to the candidate?

2. How long have you known the candidate and how well do you know the candidate?

3. The candidate is requesting to be under our supervision leading to ordination as a minister of the Gospel (or ministry as a military/institutional chaplain). How well suited do you think the candidate is to pursue such a work?

4. How does the candidate relate to children, teens, peers, older adults?

5. What are your opinions about the candidate’s Christian life and how he relates his Christian faith to his work and to others?

6. What are your thoughts about the candidate’s moral and ethical behavior?

7. Is there anything I have not asked but that I should know about this person in making a decision about endorsing him for the ministry?
CERTIFICATE OF RECEPTION AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE MINISTRY
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

This is to certify that ________________________________________________________
(Name)
was received under the care of __________________________________________ Presbytery, in
(Name of Presbytery)
session at _______________________________________________________________ on __________________
(Place) (Date)
according to the provisions of Chapter 12 of the Book of Government.

A service of recognition will be (was) conducted by Presbytery at _______________________
(Place)
on _________________________________. Presbytery, after consultation with the candidate,
(Date and Time)
Minister and Session assigned __________________________________ to serve as Ministerial
(Name)
Advisor and ________________________________________ Church of
(Name of Congregation)
_________________________________________ to serve as sponsoring congregation.
(City/State)

Signed ____________________________________________, Stated Clerk ________________

Send a copy of this form to the Office of the Stated Clerk, Evangelical Presbyterian Church,
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Livonia MI 48152

EPC Form March 2005
ITEMS SENT AND RECEIVED
For use by Chairman of Ministerial/Candidates Committee with Candidates

Candidate’s Name: ________________________________

To be received and evaluated before recommending candidacy to the presbytery:

The Session Approval Form Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

The Candidacy Request Form Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

The PIF Form Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

The Preliminary Questionnaire Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Report of Physical Examination Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Report from Psychological/Career Evaluation

Evaluation: ________________ Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Evaluation: ________________ Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Evaluation: ________________ Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Reference Checks Date Assigned: ______ Received ______

Committee member assigned to check references: ________________________________

Transcripts: School: ________________________________ Received: ______

School: ________________________________ Received: ______

School: ________________________________ Received: ______

To be received and evaluated during candidate’s time under care:

Statement of Faith, part 1 Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Statement of Faith, part 2 Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Advisor’s Report Date Sent: ______ Received: ______

Recommended Reading Date Sent: ______

Exegesis Paper: Text Assigned: _____________ Date Assigned: ______ Received: ______

EPC Form March 2005
CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT OF FAITH (Part 1)

Please attach a typed statement of your own beliefs in your own words about the following:

1. The Bible (Bibliology)
2. God the Father (theology proper)
3. Jesus Christ (Christology)
4. The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)
5. Mankind (Anthropology)
6. Sin (Hamartiology)
7. Salvation (Soteriology)
8. Satan
9. Angels and Demons
10. The Church (Ecclesiology)
11. The Spiritual Life of the Believer
12. Future Things (Eschatology)
13. Evangelism
14. Spiritual Gifts

EPC Form March 2005
REFORMED READING LIST

THEOLOGY


BIBLICAL THEOLOGY


SACRAMENTS


Wallace, Ronald S. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments*. 
REFORMED TRADITION


OFFICE OF THE MINISTER


ADVISOR’S REPORT

This report is provided for a candidate’s advisor and should be used in the Advisor’s annual report about the candidate. It should be filled in and directed to the Ministerial/Candidates Committee for distribution at the last presbytery meeting of the year.

ADVISOR’S NAME: ______________________ PHONE: ______________ DATE: ________

CANDIDATE’S NAME: ______________________________

1. In what ways have you communicated with and spent time with this candidate during the past year?

2. In what specific ways has the candidate been involved in the worship and work of your congregation?

3. Please indicate areas of service and ministry outside of your congregation in which the candidate has participated this past year.

4. Please share an update regarding the candidate’s personal, intellectual, academic and vocational growth.

5. Are there any concerns and prayer requests that you or the candidate would like to communicate to the presbytery? Are there any areas in which presbytery can take a more active role in the life of this candidate?

EPC Form March 2005
CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT OF FAITH (Part 2)
Integration

CANDIDATE’S NAME: _________________________________   DATE: __________________
Please attach your answers to these questions and return it to the chairman of the Candidates Care or Ministerial Committee before you are scheduled to meet with that committee for your oral ordination examinations.

1. State in your own words your view of the Scriptures and the place the Scriptures will have in your ministry.

2. What distinctions of the Reformed faith appeal to you?

3. What/Who is the Holy Spirit and how important is his ministry?

4. What is your position on women in leadership roles in the church?

5. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Presbyterian form of government?

6. Explain in your own words your philosophy of ministry.

7. Describe your approach personally and as a pastor in a local church to evangelism.

8. As you reflect on your life, explain your sense of call to ministry.

9. Elaborate on your convictions about personal accountability in your life and in the lives of Christians to whom you might minister.

EPC Form March 2005
REQUEST FOR ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS

For Candidates Under Care or Ordained Ministers Transferring from non-Reformed Traditions

Please complete this request form and send with Personal Information Form to:
Rev. Dr. Ed McCallum, Assistant Stated Clerk
Office of the General Assembly
17197 N Laurel Park Dr. Suite 567
Livonia MI 48152-7912
Phone: 734-742-2020 Fax: 734-742-2033 E-mail: ed.mccallum@epc.org

Name of Candidate/Transferee: ____________________________  Presbytery: __________________________
If currently ordained: Ordained by ______________________  Ordination Date: ______________________
Candidate: Church membership: _________________________  Date received as church member: __________
            Date received as Candidate: ______________  Advisor: ________________________________
If candidate transferred: Former EPC Presbytery: __________________________
            Length of Candidacy: ______________  Date of Transfer: ______________________

Seminary: ____________________________  Graduation date/degree: ____________________________  [ ] CEEP Program

Proposed exam date(s): __________________________

NOTE: The three ordination examinations must be taken as a unit within a three week time period.

Being considered for a call as: (Position/Church) __________________________

To be eligible to sit for ordination exams, required documents must be in candidate’s file:
[ ] Copy of college and post-graduate transcripts
[ ] Personal Information Form
[ ] Medical statement from physician
[ ] Psychological evaluation results
[ ] Background check

Send exams to: ____________________________________________________________________________, Proctor
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

I certify that the above named candidate/transferee has completed the required course of study and is now fully prepared in the judgment of the candidate’s Advisor and the Candidates Care or Ministerial Committee to take the written examinations. I further certify that the information above is correct and that the candidate’s file is complete.

Signed, __________________________________________, Chairman, Candidates/Ministerial Committee

Presbytery: ____________________________  Date: ____________________________

If this request is for a retake of any examination not previously sustained, indicate which exam is needed and the date of prior testing. Second and third attempts may be taken no sooner than 30 days following the previous examination. Should a fourth attempt be necessary, six months must elapse to insure adequate preparation and study time.

1. English Bible  [ ] 2nd attempt  [ ] 3rd attempt  [ ] 4th attempt  Date of prior test: __________
2. Theology & Sacraments  [ ] 2nd attempt  [ ] 3rd attempt  [ ] 4th attempt  Date of prior test: __________
3. Polity  [ ] 2nd attempt  [ ] 3rd attempt  [ ] 4th attempt  Date of prior test: __________
TERMINATION OF CANDIDACY FORM

Name of Candidate: _____________________________________________________

Mailing Address: _____________________________________________________

Telephone: ______________________________

Name of Presbytery: __________________________________________________

Date of Commencement of Candidacy: __________________

Reasons for Termination of Candidacy:


Dates and results of communication of intent to terminate:

Written Communication

Committee Representative: _____________________________  Date: _____________

Results:

Personal Meeting:

Committee Representative: _____________________________  Date: _____________

Results:

This is to certify that the candidacy of ____________________________ has been
terminated by action of the ____________________________ Presbytery.

Signed: ____________________________  ____________________________

Candidates/Ministerial Chairman  Stated Clerk

Date: ____________________________

Send a copy of this form to the Office of the Stated Clerk, Evangelical Presbyterian Church,
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Livonia MI  48152

EPC Form March 2005
PRESBYTERY TRANSFER OF A CANDIDATE FOR THE MINISTRY
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

To be completed by the transferring presbytery:

This is to certify that ________________________________, since ________________,

Candidate’s name Date received

a candidate under the care of _____________________________ Presbytery was dismissed on

Presbytery

the ___________ day of ________________, 20 ________ by this presbytery to the care

of ____________________________ Presbytery.

Signed: ______________________________________   Date: __________________________

To be completed by the receiving presbytery:

This is to certify that _____________________________ was received by transfer as a

Candidate for the Gospel Ministry under care of the ______________________________

Presbytery, meeting on the ___________ day of ________________, 20 ____________.

Signed: _____________________________________   Date: _______________________

Stated Clerk

Send a copy of the completed form to the Office of the Stated Clerk, Evangelical Presbyterian Church,
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Livonia MI 48152.

EPC Form March 2005
SERVICE OF ORDINATION AND/OR INSTALLATION

This order of service is for advisement only; it shows where the different elements of ordination/installation may be placed in the flow of a worship service. Some may not wish to include as much singing or some of the other elements listed below.)

Call to Worship
Hymn of Praise
Invocation and Lord’s Prayer and Apostle’s Creed
Welcome, Explanation and Introduction of Commission
Scripture Reading
Anthem, Special Music or Hymn
Announcements, Offering and Offertory
Hymn
Sermon
Hymn
Constitutional Questions to the Candidate
Constitutional Questions to the Congregation
Prayer of Ordination/Installation
Declaration of Ordination/Installation
Charge to the Pastor
Charge to the Congregation
Hymn of Consecration or Victory
Appreciation and Dismissal of Search Committee
Benediction (usually by the one who was ordained/installed)

EPC Form March 2005
MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION TO ORDAIN AND/OR INSTALL

The Reverend ________________________________, as pastor of _________________________
____________________________________ Church.

The Commission, according to the appointment of _________________________________ Presbytery,
met at ______________________________ Church with ministers _______________________
________________________________________________________________ and ruling elders
______________________________________________________________________________

present, and was opened with prayer by Elder/Reverend _______________________. There was
a quorum present. Elder/Reverend ________________________ was elected Moderator and
Elder/Reverend ________________________ Clerk. Elder/Reverend ________________________
presided and led the congregation in a worship service. Reverend _________________________
preached from ______________________ after which Elder/Reverend ________________________
recited the proceedings of presbytery leading up to this service, and propounded the
constitutional questions to both the minister and the congregation. These being answered in the
affirmative, ____________________________ was (ordained with prayers and the laying on of
hands of the presbytery and) installed as pastor of ____________________________________
Church, agreeably to the Word of God and the form of government. The charge to the pastor
was delivered by Elder/Reverend ________________________.

The service was concluded with the benediction pronounced by the newly installed pastor, and
the leaders of the congregation came forward and gave him/her the right hand of fellowship in
token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

The Minutes were read and approved, and the Commission closed with prayer by
Elder/Reverend _________________________.

____________________ (Commission Moderator)           (Commission Clerk)

____________________ (Date)

EPC Form March 2005
Checklist for Candidates Coming Under Care of Presbytery (G.12)

☐ 1. Membership in EPC church for a minimum of six months (G.12-2,A)
☐ 2. Endorsement form received from church session (Attachment 7, Procedure Manual)
☐ 3. Examined and recommended by the Ministerial or Candidates Care Committee (G.12-2,B)
☐ 4. Examined satisfactorily in (G.12-2,C):
   ☐ Christian experience and growth
   ☐ Motives for seeking ordination
   ☐ Personal call to ministry
☐ 5. Candidate responded affirmatively to questions asked by Moderator (G.12-2,C)
☐ 6. Charge given to the candidate
☐ 7. Advisor assigned to candidate (G.12-2,D)

Sample wording for minutes:

___________ (name), having been a member of ________________________(church name) for at least six months, has been endorsed by that church session as a candidate to come under care of the presbytery. The _________ Committee has examined ___________________ (name) and recommends approval. In accordance with G.12-2,C, the presbytery examined ___________________ (name) in Christian experience and growth, motives for seeking ordination and personal call to ministry and approved him/her as a candidate under care of the ___________ Presbytery. The candidate responded affirmatively to the constitutional questions posed by the Moderator (G.12-2,C). Prayer for the candidate was offered by _____________________(name) and a charge to the candidate was given by ________________(name). ___________ (name) was appointed as the candidate’s advisor.
Checklist for Examination of Candidate for Ordination (G.13-2)

☐ 1. Candidate has completed a four-year college degree and a three-year degree from a seminary approved by presbytery including appropriate courses in Greek and Hebrew (G.12-2G)

☐ 2. Candidate was under care of presbytery for at least one year (G.12-2F).

☐ Ordinary minimum of one year waived. Reasons:

☐ 3. Completion of exegetical paper using one of the original languages on a passage assigned by presbytery.

☐ 4. Candidate successfully completed all written examinations.

☐ 5. Candidate successfully completed oral examination in:

☐ Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth

☐ Theology and Sacraments

☐ English Bible

☐ The Book of Order

☐ The Reformed Tradition

☐ Nature of the office of Minister of the Word

☐ 6. Candidate has preached a sermon to the presbytery on an assigned topic or Scripture

☐ 7. Candidate has provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.13-6)

☐ 8. Candidate’s exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms have been (G.13-6):

☐ Allowed

☐ Disallowed

Sample text for minutes:

Candidate ______ ______, having completed the candidacy requirements prescribed in G.12-2 and having sustained written examinations and then oral examination before the Ministerial Committee, was presented to the presbytery for examination for the office of minister. The candidate’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms were declared to the Presbytery as required by Book of Government 13-6.

The Presbytery then proceeded to examine the candidate in the areas required by Book of Government 13-2. Upon motion, the examination was arrested and the candidate was excused. [If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly]

Upon motion, the candidate’s examination was sustained in the areas prescribed by Book of Government 13-2. or

Upon motion, the candidate’s examination in the area of __________ was sustained.

Upon motion, the candidate’s sermon was sustaned as a portion of his/her examination as required by Book of Government ________.

Upon motion, the candidate’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed.

EPC Form March 2005
Checklist for Examination of an EPC Minister Transferring to a Presbytery (G.13-4)

1. Certificate of dismissal received from Clerk of dismissing presbytery (Procedure Manual, pp. 48, 93)

2. Minister was examined orally on views of (G.13-2, 13-4):
   - Theology and sacraments,
   - English Bible,
   - Book of Order,
   - Reformed tradition,
   - Nature of the office of the Minister of the Word

3. Minister related his/her experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth (G.13.2).

4. Minister has provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.13-6)

5. Minister’s exceptions have been (G.13-6):
   - Allowed
   - Disallowed

6. Presbytery moved to enroll minister pending approval of call.


9. “Record of Official Change for Minister’s Status and Ministry” sent to the minister and General Assembly (Procedure Manual, pp. 48, 92)

Sample text for Minutes:
________________ (name), an ordained minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, seeking to transfer from __________________ Presbytery to __________________ Presbytery, having sustained oral examination before the Ministerial Committee, was presented to the presbytery for examination. The minister’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms were declared to the Presbytery as required by Book of Government 13-6.

The Presbytery then proceeded to examine the minister on his views in the areas required by Book of Government 13-2. Upon motion, the examination was arrested and the minister was excused. [If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly]

Upon motion, the minister’s examination was sustained in the areas prescribed by Book of Government 13-2. or

Upon motion, the minister’s examination in the area of ___________ was sustained.

Upon motion, the minister’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed.

The presbytery sustained a motion to receive ___________ (name) as a member of the ______________ Presbytery pending an approved call. _____________ (name) signed the Ministerial Obligation Form which is on file in the Clerk’s office.

EPC Form March 2005
Checklist for Examination of an Ordained Minister from Another Denomination within the Reformed Tradition (G.13-5)

☐ 1. Minister’s credentials of education and ordination presented and approved
☐ 2. Minister was examined orally on views of (G.13-2, 13-4):
   ○ Theology and sacraments,
   ○ English Bible,
   ○ Book of Order,
   ○ Reformed tradition
   ○ Nature of the office of the Minister of the Word
☐ 3. Minister related his/her experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth (G. 13.2, 5).
☐ 4. No discipline, inquiry, or charges pending from other denomination
   ○ Pending charges: Presbytery reviewed case and declared by ¾ vote that pending charges are insufficient for refusal of membership (G.13-5)
   ○ Minister lacks current ordination credentials for reasons other than disciplinary action (G.13-7)
☐ 5. Minister has provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.13-6)
☐ 6. Minister’s exceptions have been (G.13-6):
   ○ Allowed
   ○ Disallowed
☐ 7. Presbytery moved to enroll minister pending approval of call.

Sample text for Minutes:
_________________ (name), an ordained minister of _____________________________ (denomination) from within the Reformed tradition has presented the credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC. Having sustained oral examination before the Ministerial Committee, _____________ was presented to the presbytery for examination. The minister’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms were declared to the Presbytery as required by Book of Government 13-6.

The Presbytery then proceeded to examine the minister on his/her views in the areas required by Book of Government 13-2. Upon motion, the examination was arrested and the minister was excused. [If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly]

Upon motion, the minister’s examination was sustained in the areas prescribed by Book of Government 13-2.

Upon motion, the minister’s examination in the area of ___________ was sustained.

Upon motion, the minister’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed.

The presbytery sustained a motion to receive _____________ (name) as a member of the ________________ Presbytery pending an approved call. ________________ (name) signed the Ministerial Obligation Form which is on file in the Clerk’s office.

EPC Form March 2005
Checklist for Examination of an Ordained Minister from a non-Reformed Tradition (G.13-5)

☐ 1. Minister’s credentials of education and ordination presented and approved (*Procedure Manual, II.F.2(b); Act of Assembly 02-07*)

☐ 2. Minister successfully completed all written examinations (G.13-2)

☐ 3. Minister successfully completed oral examination in (G.13-2):
   - Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.
   - Theology and Sacraments
   - English Bible
   - The *Book of Order*
   - The Reformed Tradition
   - Nature of the office of Minister of the Word

☐ 4. No discipline, inquiry, or charges pending from other denomination
   - Pending charges: Presbytery reviewed case and declared by ¾ vote that pending charges are insufficient for refusal of membership (G.13-5)
   - Minister lacks current ordination credentials for reasons other than disciplinary action (G.13-7)

☐ 5. Minister has provided a written statement of any exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (G.13-6)

☐ 6. Minister’s exceptions have been (G.13-6):
   - Allowed
   - Disallowed

☐ 7. Minister has preached a sermon to the presbytery on an assigned topic or Scripture.

☐ 6. Presbytery moved to enroll minister pending approval of call.


**Sample:**

_____________(name), an ordained minister of _________________ (denomination) having presented the credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC and having successfully completed the written and oral examinations and then oral examination before the Ministerial Committee, was presented to the presbytery for examination. The minister’s exception(s) to the Westminster confession of Faith and Catechisms were declared to the Presbytery as required by *Book of Government* 13-6.

The Presbytery then proceeded to examine the minister in the areas required by *Book of Government* 13-2. Upon motion, the examination was arrested and the minister was excused. *If a presbytery decides to arrest each area of examination separately, minutes should reflect that practice accordingly*

Upon motion, the minister’s examination was sustained in the areas prescribed by *Book of Government* 13-2.

*or*

Upon motion, the minister’s examination in the area of ___________ was sustained.

Upon motion, the minister’s sermon was sustained as a portion of his/her examination as required by Book of Government ________.

Upon motion, the candidate’s exception(s) to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism were allowed/disallowed.

*EPC Form March 2005*
Checklist for the Dissolution of a Pastoral Relationship (G.15-2)

1. Minister or session consulted with the Ministerial Committee before making request to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

2. If relationship of a pastor or associate pastor is being dissolved, a congregational meeting was duly called and the congregation concurred.
   - Congregation or pastor did not concur.
   - Commission appointed
   - Presbytery heard representatives explain action
   - Decision of congregation or commission:

3. Status of pastor following dissolution:

4. “Record of Official Change for Minister’s Status and Ministry” sent to the minister and General Assembly (Procedure Manual, pp. 48, 92)

Sample:
Pastor/Associate Pastor:
The congregation of _________________ Church in a duly called congregational meeting on _______________ (date) approved the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with TE _______________. The Presbytery of _________________ concurred and the relationship is dissolved. Rev. ______________ was/is (fill in new status: transferred, without call, out of bounds, etc.)

Assistant Pastor:
Based on the action of the Session of _________________ Church, the Presbytery of _________________ concurs with the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with TE _______________. Rev. ______________ was/is (fill in new status: transferred, without call, out of bounds, etc.)

EPC Form March 2005
ANNUAL REPORT ON MINISTERS OF THE WORD

This report should be submitted to the Ministerial Committee annually along with the change in terms of call form (G.16-27,A-1 & 8).

Presbytery: ______________________________  For year: ______________________

Name of Minister: __________________________  Church: _______________________

Length of Ministry at above Church:____________________________

Major Responsibilities: __________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

How have you seen the Spirit of God at work in your ministry this past year? ________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Change in responsibilities for the coming year: _______________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Session Performance Review of Pastor:   □ Yes   □ No

Problems or Concerns: ___________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Do you continue to find yourself in accord with the vows you assumed at ordination (G.14-1,A1-11)?

Signature: _________________________________  Date: ______________________

EPC Form March 2005
RECORD OF OFFICIAL CHANGE
FOR MINISTER'S STATUS AND MINISTRY

Name of Minister: ________________________________

Home address: ___________________________________

Home phone: (   ) _____________________________

Please complete sections pertinent to status changes on minister named above.

Dismissed to: ____________________ Presbytery, EPC  Date: ____________

Received from: ___________________ Presbytery, EPC  Date: ____________

Dismissed to: ___________________ Date: ____________

(other denomination)

Received from: __________________________ Date: ____________  □ Pending dismissal

(other denomination)

Former ministry: _______________________________________________________________

Position (pastor, chaplain, etc.)  Church/Institution  City  State

New position:

Pastor  Evangelist (church planter)  Teacher
Associate Pastor  Evangelist (missionary)  Stated Supply
Assistant Pastor  Chaplain (military)  Interim Supply
Evangelist  Chaplain (institutional)  Outside of Boundaries

Other ________________

New place of ministry:  Church/Employer: __________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________

City: _______________________ State: _____ Zip: ___________

Phone: (   ) _____________________________

Newly Ordained  Date: ____________  Date of Installation: ________________________

Retired  Date: ____________  Service of Recognition: __________________________

Deceased  Date: ____________

Moved to Inactive Status  □ At own request  Date: ____________

Divested  Specify censure: ______________________  Cite Reference: _________

Signed, ________________________________________  Date: _____________________

EPC Form March 2005
Personal Information Form

Introduction

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are responsible for denominational vocational services. As part of the process of “matching” ministers and congregations, the Office of the Stated Clerk provides resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the individual pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and for evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort, and commitment to open communication.

The Personal Information Form presents the unique skills, gifts and experiences of a pastor. Search committees are encouraged to approach this information respectfully and prayerfully. It is our hope that this will be of help in facilitating the search process. It is also important to keep in mind that these Information Forms are an initial introduction. The second phase of the process will be more in depth interviews with those who appear to be most compatible with the congregation’s vision.

Contents

Part I Statement of consent   Part IV Ministry Preferences and History
Part II Personal Information  Part V Appraisal
Part III Narrative          Part VI Background Disclosure

Please return the completed document to:

Office of the Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive
Livonia, MI  48152
Phone: (734) 742-2020   Fax: (734) 742-2033

EPC Form 2005.1
Part I: Statement of Consent*

We are called to honesty and a commitment to open communication as we seek to build the body of Christ. In that spirit, we ask that you confirm your agreement to the following statements by your signature below:

1. I attest that the information contained in my Personal Information Form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

2. I authorize the persons and entities, such as members of search committees of a prospective calling body or appropriate staff persons, to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my Personal Information Form. I also authorize all persons referred to in the Profile as references, members of congregations I have served, or personal/professional colleagues to supply verification of the information provided in the Personal Information Form. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding all matters addressed in the profile, including without limitation, my background and character. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from any claims or liabilities arising from their responses and comments if made in good faith and without malice.

3. I authorize staff of the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with my Personal Information Form to representatives of calling bodies. I hereby release the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, its agencies, and all contractors or employees of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church or its agencies from any claims or liabilities in connection with the Personal Information Form or its distribution.

4. I understand that I may receive copies of all written information, which is submitted to the Office of the Stated Clerk in connection with the Personal Information Form, if I make a request in writing. I may submit additions to my file to supplement or reply to any matters included in my file.

*A copy of this consent form will be available to reference sources.

Date signed: ___________   Signature: ___________________________________________

Printed or typed name: ______________________________________________________

I am in a position to consider a call at this time.

It is unlikely I will consider a call before ______________________________
Part II: Personal Information (Please print or type)

Name: _____________________________________________________________________________

(Last)     (First)     (Middle)

Preferred Address: __________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Alternate Address: __________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Preferred Telephone: (        ) ___________________  Alternate Telephone: (        ) ______________

Fax: (        ) _______________  E-mail: ____________________________  Date: ____________________

1. List factors that affect you or your family and will influence your relocation (e.g., dual career, or physical or mental disability that may require accommodation):

   ☐ Housing Allowance Preferred  ☐ Manse Preferred  ☐ No Preference

2. Work History:

   Present/Last Position (if you are currently not in a ministry position)  Dates of Service

   Previous Ministry Positions  Dates of Service

2a. Ordination Status

   Ordained by _________________________________  Date: ____________________

   If not ordained:
   Church Membership: _______________________________ (include city & State)

   Candidate under care of ________________________ (Presbytery) _____________________________

   _______________________________ (denomination) since _________________ (date received as Candidate)
3. Educational Background:

a. Name of Institution  Dates Attended  Degree Achieved

b. Continuing Education/Professional Development (please include dates):

c. Community and Civic Activities:

d. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:

e. Ecumenical Activity:

f. Special Interests, Hobbies:

g. Languages you can speak (and level of proficiency):

h. Types of supervision/accountability you have found helpful in your ministry:
Part III: Narrative

Name: _______________________

1. Life Story: In one page, describe your life’s journey. Include key incidents that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry. State your personal ideals and goals.
2. Please describe briefly (Confine your answers to two pages):

   a. My leadership style: (How you include others in decision-making, administrative style, ways you deal with conflict, etc.)

   b. My worship emphases: (preaching style, preferred worship emphases and style, etc.)

   c. My ministry gifts/skills/strengths:

   d. My vision for ministry:
3. Comment briefly on your views as relates to:
   a. Spiritual giftedness
   b. The charismatic movement
   c. Women in ordained office
   d. Presbyterian connectional system

4. Please respond to the following questions. If you answer “No” to any of these questions, briefly explain your position.
   a. Are you in agreement with the system of doctrine and government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church? Yes □ No □
   c. Do you subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith without reservation? Yes □ No □
   d. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents? Yes □ No □
**Part IV: Ministry Preferences and History (check as many as apply)**

Name: ____________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Church</th>
<th>Would Serve</th>
<th>Have Served</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 150 members</td>
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<td>150 to 300 members</td>
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<td>300 to 500 members</td>
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<td>500 – 1000 members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 1000 members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Position Type**

- Pastor (sole)  
- Pastor (Head of Staff)  
- Staff Ministry  
  - Associate  
  - Assistant  
  - Congregational Care  
  - Education  
  - Outreach  
  - Youth  
  - Other: ____________________  
- Chaplaincy  
- Church Planting  
- Tentmaking  
- Temporary  
  - Occasional Supply  
  - Stated Supply  
  - Interim Supply  
- World Missions  
- Home Missions  
- Other: ____________________  

**Community Type**

- Rural (Country/Farming)  
- Suburban  
- Town/Village  
- Urban (Metropolitan)  
- Urban (Inner City)  
- College/University  
- Multi-Cultural  
- Ethnic (Specify: ____________________)  

**Geographic Areas**

- US West  
- US Midwest  
- US South  
- US East  
- US Middle Atlantic  
- US Southeast  
- Other: ____________________  

---

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Part V:  Appraisal

A. Self Appraisal

The purpose of this form is to provide search committees with a view of how you see yourself. Your references will be receiving the same items to consider. Try to be as candid as possible and indicate as honestly as you can what you believe your capabilities are in ministry.

Identify a maximum of 12 ministry emphases that you believe best describe you and your current ministry. Obviously, you have more than these. Please try to identify those that are strongest as you are now carrying out your calling. Write the 12 numbers for the characteristics you believe are strongest in the blanks provided at the end of this list. An item not chosen should not be deemed an indication of weakness. **Do not rank** them.

**Write no more than 12 numbers in the blanks at the end of this list.**

I...

1. am an effective preacher/speaker.
2. continue to develop my theological and biblical skills.
3. help people develop their spiritual life.
4. help people work together in solving problems.
5. am effective in planning and leading worship.
6. have a sense of the direction of my ministry.
7. regularly encourage people to participate in denominational activities and programs.
8. help people understand and act upon issues of social justice.
9. am a helpful counselor.
10. minister effectively to people in crisis situations.
11. make pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes.
12. make pastoral calls on members not confined at home or in hospitals.
13. am a good leader.
14. am effective in working with children.
15. build a sense of fellowship among the people with whom I work.
16. help people develop their leadership abilities.
17. am an effective administrator.
18. am effective with committees and officers.
19. am an effective teacher.
20. have strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church.
21. am effective in working with adults.
22. inspire a sense of confidence.
23. work regularly at bringing new members into the church.
24. regularly encourage support of the EPC’s missions and outreach.
25. reach out to inactive members.
26. work regularly in the development of stewardship growth.
27. am active in ecumenical relationships and encourage the church to participate.
28. am a person who cultivates a close, devotional relationship with God.
29. write clearly and well.
30. work well on a team.
31. am effective in working with youth.
32. organize people for community action.
33. am skilled in planning and leading programs.
34. plan and lead well organized meetings.
35. encourage people to relate their faith to their daily lives.
36. am accepting of people with divergent backgrounds and traditions.
37. encourage others to assume and carry out leadership.
38. am mature and emotionally secure.
39. have strong commitment and loyalty to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
40. maintain confidentiality.
41. am a compassionate and caring person, sensitive to others’ needs.
42. deal effectively with conflict.

_____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____

Comments:
B. Written References

As part of the Appraisal, you are also asked to choose five (5) persons who will take the “Appraisal Form” and give their response. We request that at least one of these respondents represent your current/last congregation and one your current/last Session. Please send the form and an envelope to each reference person, asking that they return the completed form to the Office of the Stated Clerk.

1. Name: ______________________________________________________________
   Address: __________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

2. Name: ______________________________________________________________
   Address: __________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

3. Name: ______________________________________________________________
   Address: __________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

4. Name: ______________________________________________________________
   Address: __________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

5. Name: ______________________________________________________________
   Address: __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
Telephone References

Search Committees will contact the persons listed here for a personal interview. This will take place as part of the second stage of the process for calling a pastor, after the initial list has been narrowed. It is important to keep this list current – probably updating it every two years, or when you are actively interested in making a move.

In this list of references, please include a person who has been part of the Session of the current/last congregation during your tenure.

1. Name: _________________________________________________________________________
   Office Telephone: (_______)________________   Home Telephone: (_______)_______________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   How long and in what relationship have you known this person? __________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

2. Name: _________________________________________________________________________
   Office Telephone: (_______)________________   Home Telephone: (_______)_______________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   How long and in what relationship have you known this person? __________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

3. Name: _________________________________________________________________________
   Office Telephone: (_______)________________   Home Telephone: (_______)_______________
   Address: ________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   How long and in what relationship have you known this person? __________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

Updated _______________
Part VI: Background Disclosure

To the person completing these statements:

It was noted in the introduction to this Personal Information Form that the process of filling out this material “calls for honesty, effort, and commitment to open communication.” Congruent with the concern for ethical performance of ministry in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and openness about issues that are sensitive to functioning in the public role of a pastor in a congregation, you are asked to respond to the following statements. There is opportunity for explanation if you so desire.

To the Search Committee or Session of a calling church:

It was also noted that those receiving these Personal Information Forms for consideration “approach this information respectfully and prayerfully.” Any practice of routinely rejecting profiles on a perfunctory basis, without a complete and thoughtful review of the explanations offered by the candidate is strongly discouraged. The information presented here is meant to provide an occasion for open, honest dialogue.

This disclosure statement will only be shared with an interested congregation as part of the second phase of the search process.

1A. Have you ever been the subject of official discipline by a Session or Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church where you pastored?

- Suspended  □ Yes  □ No
- Deposed    □ Yes  □ No

1B. Is any official disciplinary action pending at the present time?

□ Yes  □ No

1C. Have you ever been the subject of official disciplinary proceedings by another denomination that resulted in disciplinary action?

□ Yes  □ No

1D. Are any official disciplinary proceedings by another denomination pending at the present time?

□ Yes  □ No

Explanation of 1A – 1D:

2A. Has a civil lawsuit, criminal charge, or official ecclesiastical complaint been sustained against you for sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct, physical abuse, child abuse or financial misconduct?

□ Yes  □ No
**Background Disclosure – continued**

2B. Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

_______ Yes  ________ No

Explanation of 2A – 2B:

3A. Has your employment ever been changed because you attempted or actually engaged in:

1. Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct  ________ Yes  ________ No
2. Physical abuse  ________ Yes  ________ No
3. Child abuse  ________ Yes  ________ No
4. Financial misconduct  ________ Yes  ________ No

3B. Has your employment ever been changed in order to avoid facing or to avoid being terminated because of charges of actual or attempted

1. Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct  ________ Yes  ________ No
2. Physical abuse  ________ Yes  ________ No
3. Child abuse  ________ Yes  ________ No
4. Financial misconduct  ________ Yes  ________ No

Explanation of 3A – 3B:

I recognize that presbyteries are required to perform a background investigation on all individuals seeking candidacy or membership. I further recognize my responsibility to update this background disclosure in a timely manner should there be a change of status in any of the issues named above.

Signature: _____________________________________________________  Date: _________________

Type or print your name: _______________________________________________________________
Reference Form

For Personal Information Form
Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Reference for _____________________________________________________________

You have received this reference form from a person who values your opinion. The material you provide will be placed with other materials to comprise the individual’s Personal Information Form for use in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Office of the Stated Clerk encourages persons regularly to update or prepare a new Personal Information Form. **Therefore, being asked to provide a reference does not necessarily imply that the person is interested in a change in position.** Committees may use the material you provide in the future if the person seeks a change.

You are being asked to provide as clear a picture of this person as possible through a forced-choice checklist and an opportunity to comment. Indicate the qualities evidenced in this person’s ministry at this time as you have encountered them. Bear in mind that other congregations and/or ministries rely on the completeness and accuracy of the information that you provide.

For your information, the pastor for whom you are completing this reference form has signed the following statement of consent, which is on file at the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly:

> I authorize the persons and entities, such as members of search committees of a prospective calling body or appropriate staff persons, to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my Personal Information Form. I also authorize all persons referred to in the Profile as references, members of congregations I have served, or personal/professional colleagues to supply verification of the information provided in the Personal Information Form. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding all matters addressed in the profile, including without limitation, my background and character. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from any claims or liabilities arising from their responses and comments if made in good faith and without malice.

When you have completed the information, please use the enclosed envelope to send it directly to:

Office of the Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia, MI 48152
Phone: (734) 742-2020  Fax: (734) 742-2033
Reference for: _________________________________________________   Date: _______________________

Name of person providing reference (Please print): _________________________________________________

Signature of person providing reference:  _________________________________________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

How long and in what relationship have you known the above-named person? ____________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

This part of the appraisal form is for you to identify the 12 strongest qualities in this person’s ministry as you have experienced it. There should be no assumptions that items not chosen are a sign of weakness in those areas. **Choose no more than 12.** Many more characteristics will be apparent to you. Please indicate the strongest qualities from those on this sheet by writing the numbers in the blanks provided at the end of this list. **Do not rank the 12.** Because of the variety of items, read through them before beginning to mark.

**Write no more than 12 numbers in the blanks at the end of the list**

This person…

1. is an effective preacher/speaker.
2. continues to develop his/her theological and biblical skills.
3. helps people develop their spiritual life.
4. helps people work together in solving problems.
5. is effective in planning and leading worship.
6. has a sense of the direction of his/her ministry.
7. regularly encourages people to participate in denominational activities and programs.
8. helps people understand and act upon issues of social justice.
9. is a helpful counselor.
10. ministers effectively to people in crisis situations.
11. makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes.
12. makes pastoral calls on members not confined to their homes or in hospitals.
13. is a good leader.
14. is effective in working with children.
15. builds a sense of fellowship among the people with whom he/she works.
16. helps people develop their leadership abilities.
17. is an effective administrator.
18. is effective with committees and officers.
19. is an effective teacher.
20. has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church.
21. is effective in working with adults.
22. inspires a sense of confidence.
23. works regularly at bringing new members into the church.
24. regularly encourages support of the EPC’s missions and outreach.
25. reaches out to inactive members.
26. works regularly in the development of stewardship growth.
27. is active in ecumenical relationships and encourages the church to participate.
28. is a person who cultivates a close, devotional relationship with God.
29. writes clearly and well.
30. works well on a team.
31. is effective in working with youth.
32. organizes people for community action.
33. is skilled in planning and leading programs.
34. plans and leads well-organized meetings.
35. encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives.
36. is accepting of people with divergent backgrounds and traditions.
37. encourages others to assume and carry out leadership.
38. is mature and emotionally secure.
39. has strong commitment and loyalty to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
40. maintains confidentiality.
41. is a compassionate and caring person, sensitive to others’ needs.
42. deals effectively with conflict.

_____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____,  _____

Comments:
Introduction

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are responsible for denominational vocational services. As part of the process of “matching” ministers and congregations, the Office of the Stated Clerk provides resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the individual pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and for evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort, and commitment to open communication.

The Church Information Form presents the local congregation’s history, challenges, and goals. It is our hope that this will be of help in facilitating the search process, assisting the church in focusing on future directions, and pastors in gaining some sense of the nature and uniqueness of this congregation.

Contents

Part I  Church Information     Part IV  Leadership Expectations
Part II  Building/Financial Information  Part V  Church History
Part III  Church Characteristics     Part VI  Other Information

Please return the completed document to:

Office of the Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia, MI  48152
Phone: (734) 742-2020  Fax: (734) 742-2033

EPC Form 2005.1
Part I: Church Information

1. Name: _______________________________________________________________________
   Address: _____________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   Telephone: (_______) _________________     Fax: (_______) ___________________________
   E-mail: _____________________________     Web site: ________________________________

2.   Presbytery: ____________________________________
     Presbytery Ministerial Committee Liaison: ________________________________

3. Search Committee Chairman: ____________________________________________________
   Address: _____________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   Telephone: (_______) ________________     E-mail: ____________________________________

4. List all paid staff positions

   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   □ Full time   □ Part time
   Position Available: _______________________________  Date of Vacancy: _________________
   Position Available: _______________________________  Date of Vacancy: _________________

5. Membership (please state approximate numbers and percentages)

   a. Number of church members
      Five years ago: ___________  Currently: ___________
   b. Number of family units
      ______________
   c. Worship attendance
      ______________
   d. Profile of church members
      (1) Age:
      _____% 0-11  _____% 12-18  _____% 19-24  _____% 25-34  _____% 35-49
      _____% 50-64  _____% 65+
Church Information – continued

(2) Occupation:

___% Business  ___% Professional  ___% Trades  ___% Stay-at-home parent
___% Agriculture  ___% Retired  ___% Other (Specify: ___________________)

(3) Educational level of adults

___% some high school  ___% high school  ___% college  ___% graduate school

(4) Percentage of members belonging to the congregation:

Less than one year  ___%
5 years or less  ___%
6-10 years  ___%
10 years or more  ___%

(5) Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation

___% Asian  ___% Hispanic  ___% African American  ___% Caucasian
___% Other (Specify: ___________________)

6. Worship

a. Time Average Attendance


b. Frequency of communion celebration: _____________ per year.

c. How are members involved in planning and participation in the liturgy/worship?

c. Style of liturgy used in your worship (e.g., traditional, contemporary, variety):

e. Type of music used in worship (e.g., traditional, contemporary, variety)
Church Information – continued

7. Church/Sunday School
   a. Average attendance in Church School (under 18 years) ____________________
   b. Average attendance in Adult Education (Sunday) _________________________

8. Community Setting (check as many as apply):
   - Location
     - Rural
     - Industrial
     - Growing
     - Small town
     - College/University
     - Static
     - Metropolitan
     - Agricultural
     - Declining
     - Suburban
     - Recreational
     - Inner City
     - Military

   Approximate population of community _________________

   Racial/Ethnic composition of community:
   - % Asian   % Hispanic   % African American   % Caucasian
   - % Other (Specify: ___________________________________________

9. Program Information: List major boards, committees and organizations that are part of your church and frequency of meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Purpose of Group</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>Frequency of meetings</th>
<th>*Leadership role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicate leadership role expected by using the number below:
   1. Pastor takes primary initiative and responsibility.
   2. Pastor and laity share responsibility.
   3. Laity take primary initiative and responsibility.
Part II: Building/Financial Information

1. Current annual budget: $___________________ Last year’s annual budget: $___________________
   (Please attach a copy of current budget)

2. Percentage of income received toward budget: ______% 

3. Amount contributed for (last complete reporting year: ______________):
   a. EPC per member contribution: $__________________
   b. EPC World Outreach Missionaries: $__________________
   c. EPC Benevolence Askings $__________________
   d. Presbytery giving $__________________
   e. Other Missions/Missionaries $__________________

4. Property owned by church:
   a. Describe buildings and property (other than manse)

   b. Are your buildings adequate for your present program?
      ☐ Yes  ☐ No
      If no, please explain:

   c. Is a building program projected?
      ☐ Yes  ☐ No
      If yes, describe what and when and projected cost:

   d. Does the church own a manse?
      ☐ Yes  ☐ No
      Condition: ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor Number of bedrooms: ______
      Office/study: ☐ In Church ☐ In Manse ☐ Not provided ☐ Other: ______________
Building/Financial Information – continued

6. Compensation:
   a. The salary range we are prepared to offer:
      
      Position: ___________________________  $___________________________________
      Position: ___________________________  $___________________________________

   b. The average annual increase over the past three years is:
      
      Position: ___________________________  $___________________ or ________%
      Position: ___________________________  $___________________ or ________%

   c. Housing
      □ Housing allowance
      □ Manse only
      □ Either of the above

   d. Benefits and expenses:
      
      ________________  Pension (minimum 10% gross effective salary)
      ________________  Medical insurance
      ________________  Life insurance
      ________________  Social Security
      ________________  Travel/mileage
      ________________  Book allowance
      ________________  Study leave allowance
      ________________  Annual vacation
      ________________  Number of worship services (in addition to vacation and study leave)
          for which pastor is provided relief (per year)
      ________________  Other (Specify: __________________________________________)
Part III: Church Characteristics

Circle the number that most closely describes the current congregation characteristics and future goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our congregation…</th>
<th>Currently</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. supports the pastor.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. readily shares their gifts with the rest of the congregation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. places a high priority on sound biblical preaching.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. gladly welcomes visitors and new members.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. is involved in local evangelistic ministries.</td>
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<td>6. is often found living their faith in their communities.</td>
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<td>7. has a spirit of unity.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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<td>8. cares about each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. looks to its Session for leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. ministers well to members who are hurting.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. uses members’ gifts in its worship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. contains people willing and able to lead the congregation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. is capable of change when and where appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. is spiritually alive.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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Church Characteristics – continued

15. In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

16. Describe the strengths of your congregation:

17. List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

18. List major goals that this congregation has set for itself:
Church Characteristics - continued

19. Has there ever been disciplinary action taken against a pastor of your congregation?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

20. Has there ever been any disciplinary action against an elder or deacon of your congregation?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

If you answered “Yes” to either 19 or 20, please explain:

21. Have you completed a mission statement, vision statement and/or a strategic plan for your congregation?

☐ Yes  Date: ____________________  ☐ No

If yes, please attach copies.
Part IV: Leadership Expectations:

Below are listed 42 items which represent a range of qualities in the ministry of the church. Choose the 12 items which your church feels are the most important aspects of ministry for your church at this time. Then place the numbers in the blanks following the list. All the qualities are important and there are other qualities that are not listed. Please choose those 12 which you feel are highest priority at this time. Do not rank the items. Write no more than 12 numbers in the blanks at the end of this list.

Our church needs a person who…

1. is an effective preacher/speaker.
2. continues to develop his/her theological and biblical skills.
3. helps people develop their spiritual life.
4. helps people work together in solving problems.
5. is effective in planning and leading worship.
6. has a sense of the direction of his/her ministry.
7. regularly encourages people to participate in denominational activities and programs.
8. helps people understand and act upon issues of social justice.
9. is a helpful counselor.
10. ministers effectively to people in crisis situations.
11. makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes.
12. makes pastoral calls on members not confined to their homes or in hospitals.
13. is a good leader.
14. is effective in working with children.
15. builds a sense of fellowship among the people with whom he/she works.
16. helps people develop their leadership abilities.
17. is an effective administrator.
18. is effective with committees and officers.
19. is an effective teacher.
20. has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church.
21. is effective in working with adults.
22. inspires a sense of confidence.
23. works regularly at bringing new members into the church.
24. regularly encourages support of the EPC’s missions and outreach.
25. reaches out to inactive members.
26. works regularly in the development of stewardship growth.
27. is active in ecumenical relationships and encourages the church to participate.
28. is a person who cultivates a close, devotional relationship with God.
29. writes clearly and well.
30. works well on a team.
31. is effective in working with youth.
32. organized people for community action.
33. is skilled in planning and leading programs.
34. plans and leads well-organized meetings.
35. encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives.
36. is accepting of people with divergent backgrounds and traditions.
37. encourages others to assume and carry out leadership.
38. is mature and emotionally secure.
39. has strong commitment and loyalty to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
40. maintains confidentiality.
41. is a compassionate and caring person, sensitive to others’ needs.
42. deals effectively with conflict.

_____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____  _____
Part V: Church History (please limit to one page)

A. What have been the three most important events in the history of your church?

B. What has been the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?
Part VI: Other Information

1. List the last three persons in this position: Position: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates of Service</th>
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2. Please list names of any persons whose profiles you wish us to mail you:

   1)  
   2)  
   3)  
   4)  
   5)  
   6)  

3. Do you want the Office of the Stated Clerk to suggest some names of pastors whom you might consider for a call? If so, completed Personal Information Forms will be sent.

   ☐ Yes    ☐ No

4. Please indicate if there are any special preferences based on gender, age, race or national origin in consideration of persons’ profiles that may be sent:

   ☐ No basis for preference
   ☐ Please consider the following factors that we believe require consideration:

__________________________  __________________________
Clerk of Session            Chairman, Search Committee