

From the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Orderly exchange with Formula Partner Churches

Ministers of Formula of Agreement Denominations

(ELCA, PCUSA, RCA and UCC)

The Process of Orderly Exchange

Ministers of Formula of Agreement denominations (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ) under Orderly Exchange” may serve as an installed or temporary pastor of a PC(USA) congregation by invitation from a PC(USA) presbytery (regional mid council).

Highlights of the Formula of Agreement and the Orderly Exchange process are:

- The orderly exchange process begins with the identification of a ministry need by the appropriate regional body of the “inviting” congregation and the identification of an ordained minister from a Formula of Agreement partner church who may serve in that ministry setting.
- The judicatory of the “inviting” congregation initiates the process of the orderly exchange between the congregation to be served and the ordained minister. The ordained minister does not initiate the process of exchange.

- The “inviting” congregation should consult with the appropriate regional body of the ordained minister to determine the suitability of the potential service and to receive the concurrence of the “sending” body – presbytery, classis, conference and association or synod. The ordained minister remains accountable to the sending church for continuation of ministerial status.
- A ministry in a congregation of another church is not intended for a “first call” candidate. Experience in and knowledge of one’s own tradition is seen as necessary before serving in a different tradition.
- This agreement applies only to persons who are ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament and does not apply to persons who are locally trained and authorized ministers – commissioned pastors (RCA), commissioned ruling elders (PCUSA), licensed ministers (UCC), synodically authorized ministers (ELCA).
- Ministers serving in an orderly exchange should be temporary under this agreement. Should an ordained minister of one church intend to serve permanently in another church then the process of the transfer of ministerial status should be followed.
- Should a disciplinary process be necessary, the ordained minister remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as necessary.
- Pension and medical coverage is through the denominations of membership.

The complete policy and process document, “A Formula of Agreement – The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament,” is available on the Web at: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/ecumenical-formula-agreement/>.

Office of the General Assembly, Mid Council Ministries, Office of Ordered Ministry and Certification

Revised December 18, 2013, [Office of the General Assembly](#)