

**LEHIGH PRESBYTERY
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY POLICY
ON EXCEPTION G-2.0504C**

**Allowing the church to consider calling the current interim or
temporary supply as their next called pastor.**

The 2011-2013 edition of the *Book of Order* includes the following:

G-2.0504c:

c. Exceptions

A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a teaching elder currently called as an Associate Pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor, or a teaching elder employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting.

This presents three related changes from the prior edition of the *Book of Order*:

- Interim pastors now fall in the category of temporary pastoral relationships.
- There now is a provision for Presbytery granting an exception to a congregation to consider calling an associate pastor to become their pastor. In prior editions of the *Book of Order*, associate pastors could not become the next pastor/co-pastor.
- The exception for a congregation to consider calling its temporary supply pastor to become the next called and installed pastor still exists, but now requires a 3/4 vote of Presbytery instead of 2/3 vote.

Lehigh Presbytery approved the following Committee on Ministry policy dealing with any requests for this exception for a temporary pastoral relationship at their June 25, 2013 Stated Meeting at Camp Brainerd. (A recommendation for considering requests to consider an Associate Pastor will be brought to the Presbytery at a later time).

POLICY ON EXCEPTION G-2.0504c of the Book of Order

Ordinarily, if a member church of Lehigh Presbytery is interested in being able to consider their temporary supply or interim pastor to be the next called and installed pastor of that same church, they may request the exception described in the Book of Order, G-2.0504c following this process:

- At least two years of vital ministry has to have already taken place with the temporary supply pastor and congregation.
- The Session of the congregation requests the exception through the Committee on Ministry.
- The Committee on Ministry will enter into a discernment process with the Session that will include completing a mission study, reviewing the demographic trends of the community where the church is located as well as the church's financial health, and exploring our Reformed understanding of call.
- At the conclusion of the discernment process, the Committee on Ministry will recommend to Presbytery whether or not to grant the exception allowing the temporary supply pastor to be considered for the called and installed position.
- Lehigh Presbytery must approve such recommendations by a three-fourths vote of the members of Presbytery present and voting.
- If approved by the Presbytery, an open search then proceeds.

In the case of a request to be able to consider a temporary supply pastor as the next called and installed pastor, a Session can request to be exempt from the requirement for an open search through the Committee on Ministry provided:

- the vacant position is a solo pastor position
- the search process used in finding the temporary supply pastor was extensive enough to be considered an open search (including consideration of limitations due to geography, part-time status, etc.)

One other factor that could exempt a church from conducting an open search would be:

- the church's financial health is not sufficient enough to cover the expenses involved in an open search

The Committee on Ministry is authorized to waive the open search requirement on behalf of the Presbytery.

In the case of a request to be able to consider an interim pastor as the next called and installed pastor, an open search must take place.

*Approved by Lehigh Presbytery
at their Stated Meeting on June 25, 2013 at Camp Brainerd.*