

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY (COM)

Excerpt from Book of Order 2019-2021 G3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Members of the Word and Sacrament and Congregations

To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception and oversight of minister of the Word and Sacrament members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. Such entities shall be composed of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting.

From the Blackhawk Ecclesiastical Administrative Manual

Authority: To exercise any of the powers given, if the Commission determines that the welfare of the church requires action before the next meeting of the Presbytery Assembly, provided that the Commission shall report any such action to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery Assembly.

If something is not approved unanimously by an Area, then the matter goes to the Area Chairs, COM Moderator, and Vice Moderator for a final vote.

Accountability: Presbytery Assembly

BLACKHAWK COMMISSION ON MINISTRY AUTHORITIES BASED ON BOOK OF ORDER G-3.0109

- Approve formation of Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)
- Approve Ministry Information Form (MIF)
- Take cognizance of issues in congregations and respond

When action needs to happen between Presbytery Meetings

- Approve Terms of Call (TOC), and Commissioned Pastoral (CP) Covenants, when terms are clear and meet or exceed Presbytery minimum
- Approve pastoral dissolutions when all parties agree and there are no known issues that could delay action
- Appoint Session moderators when congregation is without pastor, or the pastor is unavailable
- Areas report all action(s) to COM Moderator and Vice Moderator to be included in COM report to Presbytery
- Approve Installation Commissions
- Unless there's a true emergency, COM will not act on business two weeks before a Presbytery Assembly

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Recommend to Presbytery

- Installation Commissions, if not previously approved by COM
- Transfer of Minister of Word and Sacrament (MWS/Teaching Elder) to Blackhawk Presbytery and from Blackhawk to other Presbyteries
- Recommend Honorably Retired (HR) status of ministers when appropriate
- Recommend Commissioning of Commissioned Pastors (CP)
- Recommend Minimum Terms of Call (TOC) for MSW and CPs
- Recommend Administrative Commission (AC) to deal with presbytery business such as, dissolution or merger of congregations, or establishment of new worshiping communities.

Commission on Ministry (COM) Responsibilities by Role

Area Liaisons

- To facilitate good relations between the congregation and the Presbytery through:
 - Regular communication with pastoral leadership
 - Arranging for and conducting Triennial visits (visits should not be done alone – at least one MWS and one Ruling Elder. Refer to COM Manual, section F for more details)
 - If able, attend a session meeting in person or by virtual means, as a means of introduction and establishment of relationship
- To act as pastor, counselor and advisor to all pastors under your care and communicate any significant personal matters, **with permission of the pastor**, to the Transformational General Presbyter (TGP)
- To guide the process of dissolution of a pastoral relationship
- To be the initial point of contact regarding difficulties in a congregation that may require COM intervention
- To resource and advise a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) in its process, from formation to Mission Study, writing a Ministry Information Form (MIF), searching for a candidate, interviewing, finalizing the call process and installation
- To communicate with the Area Chairperson business that requires area COM action and/or Presbytery action
- To participate in Area Meetings
- To immediately report any issues or concerns regarding misconduct to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery

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- Ensure CP covenant renewals are processed with sufficient time before the current Covenant's expiration date
- To offer guidance to churches and pastors on where to find documents and reference material

Area Chairpersons

- Coordinate the work of COM in their Area including:
 - Appoint liaisons to each church in the Area
 - Administrate Area business (e.g., Triennial visits, CP Covenant renewals)
 - Ensure a meeting with Pastoral Candidates occur before the neutral pulpit stage of their call by a church is approved
- Call Area Meetings (in person, Zoom, email, phone conference, etc.), as needed, to discuss Area business and items of interest or/and action to report to the scheduled Area Chairs and COM Moderators meetings. Examples of action items are:
 - Approving dissolution of calls and CP commissions
 - Approving formation of PNCs
 - Guide Area churches to Ministry Information Forms (MIF) approval
 - Appointing moderators of Sessions
 - Discussing difficulties and possible courses of action in a church
 - Scheduling and leading exit and entrance interviews of transitioning MWS & CPs in their Area
 - Approving TOC, contracts, commissions, and covenants in their Area
 - Filtering requests from churches/church leaders for information or/and action
- Participate in all Area Chair Meetings with the COM Moderators
- Bringing action items to Area Chair meetings, and/or COM meetings, and/or COM Moderator and Vice Moderator for Presbytery action.
- Backup for church liaisons
- Assist in interventions, as needed
- Keep the COM Moderator, Vice Moderator and Stated Clerk aware of matters the Area is addressing
- Forward all forms including MIFs, Covenants, and TOCs for review, prior to finalization, to the COM Moderator and Vice Moderator
- Forward all forms requiring "COM signature" to the COM Moderator and Vice Moderator as the Moderators are the authorized signatories for these documents and are also the final quality check for those documents

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