

Descending Overtures
From the 28th General Assembly
Evangelical Presbyterian Church

DESCENDING OVERTURE 08-A

That *The Book of Government* §11-8.A be amended to allow Presbytery to renew the term of a minister appointed as Stated Supply.

Existing Wording G.11-8.A	Proposed Wording (additions in <i>italics</i>)
Stated Supply. Invited to serve for 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.	Stated Supply: Invited to serve for a definite period of <i>not</i> less than one month and <i>no</i> more than twelve <i>months</i> (<i>the “invited period of service”</i>). <i>Before the end of any invited period of service, the invitation may be extended for an additional period not to exceed twelve months by approval of the Church Session and the Presbytery on recommendation from the Ministerial Committee.</i> The Stated Supply may be appointed by the Presbytery to moderate the Church Session during the time of service.

Grounds: The proposed amendment is intended to clarify any ambiguity as to whether or not a minister’s term as stated supply may be renewed, making the possibility of renewal explicit and stipulating how such renewal is to be approved.

DESCENDING OVERTURE 08-B

That *The Book of Government* be amended at §2-3, §11-4, §11-10, §11-12, §15-10, and §16-14 to allow presbyteries to establish the status of “Associate Member.”

Existing Wording G.2-3	Proposed Wording (additions in <i>italics</i>)
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	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.

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.

A minister who is retired or serving in a capacity which may impede or prevent regular and/or required attendance at Presbytery meetings may, upon request, be granted the status of Associate Member, according to the process stipulated in G.16-14. Associate members are entitled to serve with voice and vote on all committees of Presbytery and General Assembly. Associate Members are entitled to serve with voice but not vote on Commissions to ordain and install pastors and to receive churches. Associate Members shall have voice but not vote at all Presbytery and General Assembly meetings. Associate Members are not eligible to serve as officers of any court but do retain all rights and privileges of ordination and are to be afforded the same pastoral care as Active Members. Any Associate Member called to serve as Stated Supply or Interim Supply shall automatically be returned to active membership status during such service.

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.

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These same churches shall be invited by the General Assembly to add one additional Ruling Elder until this disparity is corrected for meetings of the General Assembly.	These same churches shall be invited by the General Assembly to add one additional Ruling Elder until this disparity is corrected for meetings of the General Assembly.
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Existing Wording G.11-4	Proposed wording (additions in <i>italics</i>)
Calling must always be to a specific task. A particular church must call a Ruling Elder or Deacon to office within that congregation. A Minister must be called by some specific agency to a particular task deemed appropriate to the ordaining, installing or approving Presbytery.	Calling must always be to a specific task. A particular church must call a Ruling Elder or Deacon to office within that congregation. A Minister must be called by some specific agency to a particular task deemed appropriate to the ordaining, installing or approving Presbytery <i>except in the case of retired ministers being received from another denomination as Associate Members (G.2.3; 11-10; 16-14).</i>

Existing Wording G.11-10	Proposed Wording (additions in <i>italics</i>)
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.	In the event the Minister being called is from some other Presbytery or other church body, the receiving Presbytery shall not enroll that person <i>Minister</i> without a valid call <i>unless the Minister is retired and being enrolled as an Associate Member under the stipulations of G.2-3 and G.16-14.</i> The dismissing church body shall be informed by the calling receiving 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.

Existing Wording G.11-12	Proposed Wording (additions in <i>italics</i>)
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 call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the	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 call. If the Presbytery approves the nature of the

<p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>If the nature of this call impedes or prevents regular and/or required attendance at Presbytery meeting, the Minister may be granted the status of Associate Member (G.2-3; 11.10; 16-14).</i></p> <p>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</p>
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Existing Wording G.15-10	Proposed Wording (additions in <i>italics</i>)
<p>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 on 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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>A. 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 on 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</p>

	<p>Ministers on Active Status.</p> <p><i>B. A retired minister may be granted the status of Associate Member as defined in G.2-3, 11.10, and 16-14.</i></p>
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Existing Wording G.16-14	Proposed Wording (additions in italics)
<p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>The Presbytery may establish a roll of Associate Members as defined in G.2-3. Presbyteries may place an ordained Minister of Presbytery on the roll of Associate Members upon that Minister's request and upon recommendation of the Ministerial Committee and a 2/3 vote of Presbytery. Presbyteries may, by 2/3 vote, receive an ordained Minister from another Reformed body as an Associate Member, following the normal process of examination (G.13-5).</i></p> <p><i>An Associate Member may request to be placed on Active Status. The Presbytery may do so upon recommendation by the Ministerial Committee and provided the Minister has a call Presbytery approves, or provided the Minister is being transferred to another body in order to receive a call.</i></p> <p>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</p>

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.	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. <i>Associate Members are not counted as part of the ratio of ruling and teaching elders (G.2-3)</i>
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Grounds: These proposed amendments are intended to address an issue developing in presbyteries that have a significant number of ministers on the retired roll and/or in out of bounds callings that prevent regular attendance, making it impossible in some situations to fulfill the parity adjustment requirements currently stipulated in G.2-3. The amendment allows, but does not require, presbyteries to create a roll of Associate Members addressing parity adjustment by removing them from the 2:1 ratio while maintaining the possibility of the Associate Member contributing expertise in the work of Presbytery. As Associate Members, ministers would not lose the privilege offered by ordination to preach, conduct baptisms, administer the Lord's Supper, or conduct weddings.

Having the status of Associate Member available gives presbyteries an option other than inactive status for Retired Ministers who have faithfully served EPC for many years but now find themselves physically unable to attend. It also gives presbyteries the option of receiving a retired minister from another denomination as an Associate Member without a call in hand.

The proposed amendment does **not** give presbyteries authority to place a Minister on the Associate Member roll without that Minister's request.