

Missouri Union Presbytery Pulpit Supply Policy [Adopted 3-8-2023]

What Pulpit Supply is: A Pulpit Supply is literally one who “supplies” the gift of preaching to a vacant pulpit of an active congregation on a given Sunday.

What Pulpit Supply is not: The designated Pastoral Leader of a congregation – either official or unofficial.

Missouri Union Presbytery (MUP) maintains a Pulpit Supply List (PSL) as its approved resource for congregations in need of someone to preach the Word for their congregations: in the absence of their officially recognized pastor, such as during a vacation or during times of transition until a new pastor is called and installed (or until a Minister of the Word and Sacrament (MWS) or Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is contracted or commissioned to serve the congregation as its pastor). When any individual offers their services to a congregation as Pulpit Supply, that person is not serving that congregation as its pastor but simply providing worship leadership and preaching for a designated worship service.

1. Oversight of the PSL for MUP rests upon the Commission on Ministry (COM).
2. The COM will publish and periodically update the PSL for MUP with contact information for all persons approved to provide Pulpit Supply services. The list will indicate which participants are MWS's, CRE's, Ruling Elders without CRE training, pastors of other denominations and any other helpful distinctions. The COM will also publish such minimum honorarium requirements as may be adopted by the Presbytery. Churches needing pulpit supply are strongly encouraged to contact one or more persons on the PSL to help fill their pulpit during times of vacancy. The PSL is located on the MUP Website at www.mupresbytery.org
3. The purpose of a Pulpit Supply preacher is to provide preaching and related worship leadership for a congregation's worship services. Persons providing these services are not to provide additional pastoral services for a congregation and should not be asked to do so. Eligibility for inclusion on the PSL differs substantially from the training required for persons who might serve as full or part time pastors of a church. In no event shall a church or its session allow any individual, either on the PSL or by session invitation to preach, to represent themselves as the pastor for the particular congregation. Any session wanting to arrange for additional pastoral services (especially during a transitional period), or that desires to change a congregation's relationship with any person providing pulpit supply services, must contact the COM.
4. Any ruling elder, teaching elder, and member of a PC(USA) church desiring to preach and conduct worship in the capacity of a Pulpit Supply preacher may be eligible for inclusion on the PSL. Persons with similar experience in other denominations may also be eligible.
 - a. Who May Participate:
 - i. Ruling elders, deacons and other PC(USA) church members desiring to be considered for providing Pulpit Supply services to congregations other than their own must first request from the session of their home church its recommendation and approval with that

individual's request for consideration by the COM. The session moderator or clerk should forward the session's recommendation and approval to the COM.

ii. MWS's or CRE's may be put on the list by a simple request – either to the General Presbyter or the Chair(s) of the COM.

iii. Persons who have served as pastors or in roles of spiritual leadership in other denominations may submit their request directly to the Chair(s) of COM or the General Presbyter for COM's consideration.

b. Except for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and CREs, requests to the COM for inclusion on MUP's PSL, should include an explanation of the individual's background and experience in spiritual leadership, knowledge of the Bible, public speaking experience, and writing proficiency. A resume covering all work and other relevant experience should also be provided, along with a personal statement of faith (under 300 words). Requests may be submitted (with any Session's concurrence) to the moderator of the COM.

5. All persons seeking to be included on the PSL are required to satisfy the Boundary Training required of members of the COM, MWS's and CRE's, which is currently an interactive on-line program that must be taken every 36 months. Each applicant must also consent to a background check by the Presbytery and any future background checks as may be required. The COM may require the applicant to pay the nominal costs for these services.

6. Persons seeking to participate may be examined by the COM, whereupon inquiry may be made into the individual's understandings of the essential tenets of the reformed faith and Presbyterian polity and their aptitude and talents for preparing worship and preaching the word to congregations; they may also be required to attend training provided by or arranged by the COM or appropriate alternative training. (Such examinations are more likely to be conducted for church members, Ruling Elders and Pastors or preachers from denominations not recognized by or in communion with the PC(USA).

7. The COM will provide or help arrange for Pulpit Supply training for ruling elders, lay members of MUP congregations (and others) who wish to be included on MUP's PSL. This training may also be available to any members who might assist in leading worship in their own church – a role that does not typically require COM approval when not being done on a regular basis.

8. Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA), Commissioned Ruling Elders, or Pastors of a denomination with which the PC(USA) is in communion, and who are in good standing, may be sent a copy of these guidelines (via email) and invited to be included on the PSL. All other individuals wishing to be included on the PSL shall be required to sign a Pulpit Supply Agreement with the COM before being added to the PSL, and subsequently being available to churches for preaching. The Pulpit Supply Agreement shall reflect the date on which the individual was approved for pulpit supply services, incorporate the current presbytery-approved remuneration terms, and set forth the role of and

expectations of any person providing pulpit supply services. The agreement will also describe the limitations of their services and their limited role in any congregation for which they may be asked to provide pulpit supply services. *A copy of the Pulpit Supply Agreement is attached to this Policy.*

9. Limitations on Service by Pulpit Supply Participants.

- a. Ruling elders not trained for a Commission, non-ordained participants, and any persons who are not part of the PC(USA), whether on the approved PSL or not, are prohibited from providing preaching on a regular basis in a single church without prior COM approval. **Any church desiring more frequent or more long-term preaching services from such persons should consult with COM.**
 - i. Preaching on a regular basis means that the individual is preaching in a vacant pulpit weekly for more than 2 weeks in a row, monthly on an ongoing schedule (expected to exceed four months), in a rotation of pulpit supply used over a period of four or more months) or an arrangement of similar nature.
 - ii. If a church has a desire for an individual to preach more than 4 times within a 6-month timeframe at the same church, it is deemed to be preaching on a regular basis and contact should be made with COM for the person to continue preaching.
- b. MWS's and CRE's may agree to preach for a church more frequently or for a longer time period as Pulpit Supply, provided they report their arrangement to the COM on an annual basis and remain in good standing as a member of the Presbytery. The COM may recommend adjustments to any preaching schedule to the session of the church and/or the Pulpit Supply participant.

10. The process for arranging for Pulpit Supply Preachers is set out below:

- a. In churches with called and installed MWS's, or with approved Stated Supply MWS's who have a contract for part time services for a congregation, or with a Presbytery approved CRE, when the pastor will be away for vacation/study leave/sabbatical/personal leave, Pulpit Supply may be arranged/approved by the Pastor/Moderator *or* the Session. The Pastor/Session is encouraged to use the MUP PSL. The COM does *not* require a pulpit supply arrangement for another pastor who is also serving as the moderator for that church to cover for that church when that pastor is away from the pulpit. Nor does it require a pulpit supply arrangement for ruling elders or other church leaders who are members of that church to preach within the home church where they are under the oversight of that church's pastor, provided they are not preaching on a regular basis. The Session may require a pulpit supply agreement at their own discretion.
- b. In churches in which the pastor/preacher is *not* the moderator of the session or congregation, when the pastor will be away for vacation or study leave, pulpit supply will be arranged/approved by the Session. The Session is encouraged to use the MUP PSL. The Session may require a Pulpit Supply agreement at their own discretion. The COM must be consulted if any one individual may be scheduled to provide worship leadership more than 4 times within a six-month period as a pulpit supply agreement may be required.

- c. In churches without a pastor, the Session will be responsible for securing pulpit supply in consultation with the COM. The session is encouraged to use the PSL. The COM must be consulted if any one individual may be scheduled to provide worship leadership more than 4 times within a six-month period as a pulpit supply agreement shall ordinarily be required.

11. When a session arranges for a preacher other than their regular pastor, the session minutes should include the name and identifying information of any individual scheduled to provide the preaching services along with the date(s) of their service. This applies to services led by participants on the PSL as well as all others who may be invited to lead worship, including elders within the congregation. The minutes should also indicate whether the preaching will be in person, virtual or pre-recorded.

12. The COM recommends utilization of the PSL to all churches needing to fill their pulpits because each Pulpit Supply preacher listed has completed boundary training, had a background check and has been approved by the COM (and, for non-Ministers of Word & Sacrament, by the sessions of their own churches, too). However, there are additional resources for preaching that may be considered by sessions:

- a. Often churches will invite members of their own session and other members to preach, sometimes on rotation to fill several weeks when a pastor is unavailable or when the church is in transition between pastors. Where such arrangements are likely to exceed four weeks over a six month period, the COM requests to be notified of the arrangement and its intended length.
- b. Isolated churches without a pastor finding it difficult to procure the services of a PC(USA) MWS to officiate at the Lord's Table, are encouraged to have some of their ruling elders trained and authorized by the Presbytery to preside over communion for their congregation. To this end, the COM offers periodic training for elders for this particular service as allowed in the Book of Order.
- c. Sometimes pastors of other Reformed or Mainline denominations reside within or near the community and may be willing to assist with pulpit supply. The COM would recommend consideration of pastors of any of the following denominations: The United Church of Christ (UCC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA) who are officially "in communion" with the PCUSA. Individuals in good standing with the following denominations may also request to be on the PSL: the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church (UMC) and the Christian (Disciples of Christ (DOC)). Pastors of these denominations may contact the Chair(s) of the COM or the General Presbyter if they would like to be included in the PSL.
- d. The COM urges sessions to practice extreme caution when considering preachers from non-denominational churches and those churches whose theology does not align with the essential tenets of reformed faith and the PCUSA's position on open communion, the ordination of women, etc.
- e. While sessions have the authority as the council for their church's congregation to invite other persons to provide occasional pulpit supply services, persons who are not on the PSL have not been vetted by the COM and could pose a risk of liability to the church and Presbytery and theological confusion for the church.

**Missouri Union Presbytery
Pulpit Supply List Agreement
Adopted March 8, 2023**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email: _____

Home Church: _____

In accordance with the Commission on Ministry's Pulpit Supply List Policy, the following persons are required to submit a Pulpit Supply List Agreement to be considered for inclusion on the Pulpit Supply List for the Commission on Ministry of the Missouri Union Presbytery:

- A. Ruling elders, deacons and other PC(USA) church members who have obtained the recommendation and approval of their home church's session.
- B. Persons who are in good standing with and have served in roles of spiritual leadership (but not ordained ministers) within a denomination with which the PC(USA) is in Communion and submit the Pulpit Supply Agreement to the COM: The United Church of Christ (UCC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA).
- C. Persons who are in good standing with and have served as pastors in the following denominations: the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church and the Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church.

Please indicate which category applies to you: _____

Identify your home church (where you are regularly in attendance): _____

If you are a member of a PC(USA) congregation, please request the Clerk of your church's session to submit the Session's recommendation and approval for your providing Pulpit Supply Services within the bounds of Missouri Union Presbytery.

If you are not a member of the PC(USA), please indicate your denominational membership and submit certification that you are in good standing with that denomination: _____

Please provide as references two persons who have observed your exercise of public speaking and spiritual leadership with their telephone number(s) and email address and a brief description of the circumstances of their observations:

1. _____

2. _____

Qualifications:

1. Please provide a current resume or similarly-detailed description of your current and past employment and volunteer activities in both religious and non-religious organizations and institutions, your educational background and any material certifications, recognitions or awards you may have received.
2. Please attach a description of your experience in spiritual leadership, knowledge of the Bible, public speaking experience, and writing proficiency.
3. Please attach a description of any other experience in public speaking.
4. Please provide a brief (not exceeding 300 words) statement describing your faith.

Acknowledgments:

Please indicate by your signature below your agreement to adhere to each of the following requirements for service as a pulpit supply preacher in Missouri Union Presbytery.

1. Ruling elders not trained for a Commission, deacons, non-ordained participants, and any persons who are not part of the PC(USA), whether on the approved PSL or not, are prohibited from providing preaching on a regular basis in a single church without prior COM approval. Any church desiring more frequent or more long-term preaching services from such persons should consult with COM.
 - a. Preaching on a regular basis means that the individual is preaching in a vacant pulpit weekly for more than 2 weeks in a row, monthly on an ongoing schedule (expected to exceed four months), in a rotation of pulpit supply used over a period of four or more months) or an arrangement of similar nature.
 - b. Once that individual has preached 4 times within a 6-month timeframe at the same church, it is deemed to be preaching on a regular basis.

2. All persons seeking to be included on the PSL are required to satisfy the Boundary Training required of members of the COM, MWS's and CRE's, which is currently an interactive on-line program that must be taken every 36 months.
3. All persons must also consent to a background check by the Presbytery and any future background checks as may be required. The COM may require the applicant to pay the costs for these services.
4. Persons seeking to participate may be examined by the COM, whereupon inquiry may be made into the individual's understandings of the essential tenets of the reformed faith and Presbyterian polity and their aptitude and talents for preparing worship and preaching the word to congregations; they may also be required to attend training provided by or arranged by the COM or appropriate alternative training. (Such examinations are more likely to be conducted for church members, Ruling Elders and Pastors or preachers from denominations not recognized by or in communion with the PC(USA).
5. The purpose of a Pulpit Supply preacher is to provide preaching and related worship leadership for a congregation's worship services. Persons providing these services are not to provide additional pastoral services for a congregation and should not be asked to do so. A Pulpit Supply preacher is prohibited from representing themselves as the pastor for the particular congregation.
6. I have read the Commission on Ministry's Pulpit Supply List Policy and agree to adhere to all of its provisions.
7. All of the information provided in this Agreement and within the attached submissions is true to the best of my knowledge.

Name

Date

This Agreement and all other submitted materials should be sent to the Stated Clerk for Missouri Union Presbytery at:

Stated Clerk, Missouri Union Presbytery, 3236 Emerald Lane, Suite 500,
Jefferson City, MO 65109 or emailed to office@mupresbytery.org.

Questions should be directed to the Stated Clerk for Missouri Union Presbytery or the Moderator(s) of the Commission on Ministry.