



REMIT B, 2023

(Life and Mission Agency, Rec. No.15, p. 180, 24)

Re: Presbytery Constituent Roll

The Book of Forms codifies the obligation to respond to Remits as follows:

257. It is the right and duty of every presbytery to take its part in the legislation of the Church, by approving or disapproving of overtures transmitted by the General Assembly, in terms of the Barrier Act, 1876.

257.1 The answer of a presbytery to a remit under the Barrier Act must be in the form of an extract minute.

257.2 The answer must be simply “approve” or “disapprove”. A qualified approval or an approval accompanied by any proposed amendment, must be taken as equivalent to rejection.

Section 293 details the procedure of the Barrier Act. Please be sure to include in your response, the number of members on the constituent roll at the time of your decision.

CONSTITUENT ROLL OF PRESBYTERY: BOOK OF FORMS 176.1.7

The section of the Book of Forms on presbytery membership includes the following:

176. The presbytery consists of:

176.1 Ordained ministers within the bounds, whose ministry is carried out on a minimum of a half-time basis and:

176.1.6 who make request and are serving in agencies not directly responsible to The Presbyterian Church in Canada as Bible Society secretaries, teachers in Bible or theological colleges or university departments of religion; workers in inner-city, national or overseas missions (the last when residing within the bounds); (Declaratory Act: A&P 1989, p. 268, 65)

176.1.7 who are institutional chaplains, appointed for not less than one year with the approval of the responsible committee of the General Assembly; (Declaratory Acts: A&P 1988, p 283, 34; A&P 1992, p. 383, 63; and A&P 1995, p. 229, 38; A&P 2017, p. 279–80, 15)

In 2021, the Committee on Education and Reception received a request from a presbytery pursuant to Book of Forms 176.1.7 for approval to add to its constituent roll the name of a minister who had recently begun working as an institutional chaplain. This led to a discussion about whether the Committee on Education and Reception needed to be involved in this decision and why presbyteries could not treat ministers serving in institutional chaplaincy positions the same way they do for all other “agencies not directly responsible to The Presbyterian Church in Canada” as set out in 176.1.6. What is the rationale for 176.1.7? Why should presbyteries not have the authority to receive requests from ministers in institutional chaplaincy positions and add them to the constituent roll directly under 176.1.6, as they would for other cognate ministries?

Prior to restructuring of the boards and agencies in the 1990s, the General Assembly had an Institutional Chaplaincy Committee which reported through the Board of Ministry (A&P 1989, p. 413–15, 66) and whose permission was required for an institutional chaplain’s name to be placed on a presbytery’s constituent roll (A&P 1988, p. 394, 21). When the Board of Ministry’s responsibilities became those of the Life and Mission Agency, the Institutional

Chaplaincy Committee was discontinued and its specific responsibility under 176.1.7 passed on to the Committee on Education and Reception. The recommendation as approved by the 1997 General Assembly reads as follows:

That the Committee on Education and Reception be “the responsible committee of General Assembly” (Book of Forms 176.1.7) to approve institutional chaplains until such time as new legislation is adopted. (A&P 1997, p. 374, 32)

The change gave the Committee on Education and Reception the responsibility to grant permission to presbyteries to ordain ministry candidates to institutional chaplaincy positions (A&P 2008, p 362, 42). However, it said nothing about the committee’s responsibility under 176.1.7 to grant permission for presbyteries to place on their constituent roll the names of already ordained ministers in institutional chaplaincy positions.

Given this history, there is no reason to retain 176.1.7. Therefore, it is proposed that 176.1.7 be deleted and 176.1.6 revised to read:

176. The presbytery consists of:

176.1 Ordained ministers within the bounds, whose ministry is carried out on a minimum of a half-time basis and:

176.1.6 who make request and are serving in agencies not directly responsible to The Presbyterian Church in Canada as Bible Society secretaries, teachers in Bible or theological colleges or university departments of religion; workers in inner-city, national or overseas missions (the last when residing within the bounds); (Declaratory Act: A&P 1989, p. 268, 65); or institutional chaplains, appointed for not less than one year (Declaratory Acts: A&P 1992, p. 383, 63; A&P 1995, p. 229, 38; A&P 2017, p. 279–80, 15).

~~176.1.7 who are institutional chaplains, appointed for not less than one year with the approval of the responsible committee of the General Assembly; (Declaratory Acts: A&P 1988, p 283, 34; A&P 1992, p. 383, 63; and A&P 1995, p. 229, 38; A&P 2017, p. 279–80, 15)~~

The Declaratory Act references still required would be the 1992 General Assembly’s decision to include “accredited pastoral counsellors” under the definition of “institutional chaplains”; the 1995 General Assembly’s decision that the “responsible committee of the General Assembly” (now the Committee on Education and Reception) grant permission to presbyteries for ordinations to institutional chaplaincies; and the 2017 General Assembly’s decision that an institutional chaplain’s presbytery membership should be lodged within the bounds of the presbytery where they reside rather than where they work.

You are asked to approve or disapprove this change.