

**Comparison of Commissioned Pastors, Preaching Elders, and Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the RCA**

**Revised June, 2018**

	<b>Commissioned Pastor</b>	<b>Preaching Elder</b>	<b>Minister of Word &amp; Sacrament</b>
<b>Ordained Office</b>	Elder	Elder	Minister of Word & Sacrament
<b>Initiation for Ministry</b>	Commissioning	Commissioning	Ordination and/or Installation
<b>Scope of Ministry</b>	Specific local ministry	Specific local ministry	Whole Church
<b>Length of Commission/Ordination</b>	Reviewed annually during period of assigned service; commission expires automatically when service ends	May be commissioned for up to two years; may be renewed after evaluation by the local consistory and the classis	Ordination continues until minister demits or is deposed; may be declared inactive if not functioning in office
<b>Candidacy Begins</b>	With Consistory recommendation	With Consistory recommendation	With Consistory recommendation
<b>Training Plan/Education</b>	Approved and supervised by classis, meeting BCO competencies and GSC criteria	Approved and supervised by classis, meeting BCO competencies	Four routes to ordination; must meet the BCO requirements, and certificate from GS agent
<b>Call or Contract?</b>	Contract for specific service approved by the classis under auspices of local church	Contract for specific service approved by the classis under auspices of local church	Call or contract with church approved by the classis, or contract for specialized ministry
<b>Relation to Consistory</b>	May serve as a member and presiding officer of the consistory, with classis approval, and may be appointed as consistory supervisor by classis	If no installed minister, meet regularly with the consistory during commission	If serving under a call, one minister is elected as president of consistory, and presides at all of its meetings except where otherwise provided.
<b>Classis Mentor</b>	Assigned to all commissioned pastors during candidacy and for entire period of service	Regular and thorough supervision by the classis through mentor or other means	Appointed for newly ordained ministers and transfers from other denominations
<b>Classis Membership</b>	Member of classis during the period of commissioned service, may serve as an elder delegate to the synods if appointed by consistory and classis	May serve as a regular elder delegate if appointed by the consistory, or as nonvoting delegate to classis at the discretion of the classis	Full member of classis; may serve as classis delegate to greater assemblies; may not serve as an elder delegate
<b>Serve as a supervisor?</b>	Yes, may be appointed as a classis supervisor of the church of membership	No, may not serve as a classis supervisor	Yes, may be appointed as a classis supervisor of any RCA church, even another classis
<b>Evaluation</b>	Annually by the classis	Every two years by the consistory and the classis	Annually by the consistory
<b>Ending Service</b>	CP is given written statement of training received and ministry performed when the commission ends; classis membership ends when contracted service ends	Service ends after two years unless renewed by the classis; preaching elder status ends when commission ends	Retains classis membership until dismissal, demission, deposition, or death; if under call, pastoral relationship to church ends only with classis approval
<b>Discipline</b>	Amenable solely to the discipline of the classis while a member of the classis	Amenable to the classis through supervision process; mutual oversight with the local consistory	Amenable solely to the discipline of the classis while a member of the classis
<b>Status of Church</b>	If the church has no installed minister, a classis supervisor must be appointed	If the church has no installed minister, a classis supervisor must be appointed	If serving under a call, the minister is installed and no classis supervisor is appointed