PRESBYTERY OF GREAT RIVERS (PGR)

PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

HANDBOOK

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SECTION ONE: An Overview of the Preparation Process for the ministry of Word and Sacrament

I. KEY CONCEPTS

The preparation for ministry process is grounded in an understanding of Christian vocation as a response to God's preeminent grace which calls all Christians to ministry, whatever their occupations. Some among them are called by the Holy Spirit, through the church, to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Covenant relationships acknowledge that the Christian community's primary commitment is to God. In the context of this commitment to and covenant relationship with God, the Inquirer or Candidate and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry negotiate between themselves additional covenant agreements. These agreements affirm their mutual responsibility and provide the means for planning and evaluating the Inquirer's or Candidate's progress in preparing for the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The resulting **ongoing relationships** take seriously the unique background, experience and personal attributes that each person brings to the process. They enable the sharing of deep convictions, an enhanced understanding of the demands of ministry, and the self-evaluation that are essential to the process. Professional and spiritual guidance and personal support develop naturally within the context of such relationships.

Consultations with the Inquirer or Candidate are based on specific goals in five areas of growth development and on specific "expected outcomes" for both the **i**nquiry and **c**andidacy **p**hases. The purpose of consultations is to help the Committee on Preparation for Ministry work with the individual at their current level of achievement and, through guided conversations and the mutual negotiation of new learning contracts, to stimulate further growth in specific areas.

The process of examination and ordination is shared by both the Candidate's presbytery and the presbytery of call. Having guided and evaluated the Candidate's progress through the cumulative series of consultations, the Candidate's presbytery meets with the Candidate in a final consultation to assess their readiness to receive a call. When a call is extended by a church in another presbytery, the presbytery of call ordinarily has the responsibility to examine, ordain and install Candidates. (G-2.0702). A **C**andidate may request to be ordained in their presbytery of care,

Shared mutual accountability characterizes the preparation for ministry process. The Inquirer or Candidate shares responsibility for their movement through the process and for planning and evaluating their growth.

The pastor and session are responsible for helping members of the congregation understand what Christian vocation means. This is the critical foundational step in the preparation for ministry process. The pastor and session are expected to provide the context within which individuals can discern the call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and understand the nature of this ministry. They help Inquirers evaluate the suitability of their gifts and provide pastoral care and support during the preparation for ministry process. Acting as advocate for the Inquirer or Candidate, the session, through its moderator and presbytery commissioner(s), can call the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to accountability in fulfilling its responsibilities.

The **presbytery**, through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), provides pastoral care, guidance, support and evaluation of Inquirers and Candidates.

The **theological institution** provides academic, field education and professional resources in the guidance and evaluation of Inquirers or Candidates.

The preparation for ministry process is one of **continuing development**. By providing a supportive community in which the Inquirer or Candidate assumes increasing responsibility for decisions made throughout the process, it introduces him or her to skills for self-development, goal-setting and self-evaluation. The individual is encouraged to develop these skills into conscious, disciplined planning for personal and professional growth which should continue throughout their ministry.

II. PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS G-2.06

The Preparation for Ministry process involves two phases: Inquiry and Candidacy.

Both the **i**nquiry **p**hase and the **c**andidacy **p**hase of the process nurture and test the individual's development in five key areas:

- **Education for Ministry**, which includes evaluation of the individual's academic potential and progress and reflection on the purpose of educational experiences and on their relation to preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament;
- **Spiritual Development**, which provides a framework in which individuals can reflect on their personal faith journeys and their spiritual practices to discern the will of God in their lives;
- **Interpersonal Relations** which provide opportunities to reflect on how an individual relates to others, one's own leadership style, and what this means in terms of the ministry of Word and Sacrament;
- **Personal Growth**, through which persons reflect on who they are, what areas they need to develop, how to understand their call, and how to develop personal stewardship;
- **Professional Development**, to help persons develop specific skills that will enhance their effectiveness as ministers of Word and Sacrament and as presbyters. To understand one's ministry context, the congregation, is important. Also needed is the ability to deal with conflict that may emerge in the congregation one serves.

During both the inquiry phase and the **c**andidacy phase, the individual's progress is measured by specific expected outcomes formulated in light of these five growth areas. It is important that the expected outcomes be understood as essential goals rather than simply as minimum requirements to be met or papers to be written. These expected outcomes serve as the focus of ongoing consultations between the Inquirer or Candidate and the session and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

The process of **i**nquiry and **c**andidacy is most effective when it reflects the biblical theme of the covenant relationship. That is, when it is both a response to God's faithfulness and an expression of the concern people have for one another. The process further affirms that all aspects of the church's life are based upon God's gracious promises and on the belief that God's self-giving love undergirds all that the church is and does. Throughout the entire process, all who are involved in the covenant relationship need to approach their tasks with seriousness and diligence, communicating openly and intentionally with each other.

A. Phase 1: Inquiry G-2.0603

The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as teaching elders to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the Inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.

1. Admission to Inquiry

A member of a congregation is considered for enrollment as an Inquirer when they approach the session about the possibility of becoming a Minister of Word and Sacrament and formally agrees with the session and with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to explore the implications of this quest. Enrollment is intended to be a thoughtful and deliberate step; people are encouraged to take this formal action soon after they have made their personal decision to explore this ministry so that the presbytery's Committee can provide them with support and counsel as early as possible. The process and requirement of the inquiry phase can be as follows:

a. A person desiring to become an Inquirer shall indicate to the session of the particular church a desire to explore the personal implications of becoming a Minister of Word and Sacrament.
b. The person shall have been an active member of that particular church for at least six months.
c. The session shall contact the Committee on Preparation for Ministry for orientation to the process used in this presbytery.
d. The session shall consult with the person and, if the individual requests to be enrolled as an Inquirer, shall make a recommendation to presbytery through the Stated Clerk with respect to the request. The Stated Clerk shall communicate this request to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator.
e. Upon receipt of the recommendation of the session, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall recommend to the presbytery whether to enroll the person as an Inquirer. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall interview the person before making its recommendation. The date of the presbytery's action to enroll shall be the beginning of the covenant relationship. This covenant relationship shall be at least two years, at least one year of which shall be as a Candidate. (G-2.0602)
f. The phase of inquiry shall be of sufficient length for the Inquirer, the session, and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to decide whether the Inquirer should apply to become a Candidate. During this time, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall make use of resources such as information provided by the Inquirer, personal references, and reports from counseling services, the session, and the Inquirer's institution of learning, if the Inquirer is a student.

2. During Inquiry

Before deciding whether to apply for candidacy and in order to remain in good standing, the Inquirer must consult at least once a year with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. During each consultation, the committee and the Inquirer assess their progress toward previously established goals and together negotiate appropriate new goals. The committee votes at each consultation whether the Inquirer will continue in the process.

3. Completion of Inquiry

The inquiry phase concludes when the Committee on Preparation for Ministry knows the Inquirer well enough to determine whether or not to recommend that the presbytery receive them as a Candidate.

4. Expected Outcomes of Inquiry

By the end of the inquiry phase, each Inquirer will demonstrate adequate promise for ministry by presenting to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry in writing:

a. a statement of their understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to their sense of call;
b. a statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition;
c. an analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationships;
d. a statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
e. a statement of self-understanding which reflects the Inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
f. statement of their understanding of the tasks a Minister of Word and Sacrament performs, including an awareness of their specific gifts for ministry as a Minister of Word and Sacrament and of areas in which growth is needed.
g. A report of vocational assessment counseling from a provider determined by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Ordinarily, the cost of this assessment is shared in equal parts by the Inquirer, their congregation and the Presbytery of Great Rivers. The inquirer must sign a release for the report to go to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

B. Phase 2: Candidacy G-2.0604

The purpose of this phase is to provide opportunities for the church to support persons received as Candidates in their preparation for being ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to create an environment in which the uniqueness of each individual Candidate is taken seriously. As partners in a covenant relationship, both the Committee and the Candidate are encouraged to work together as they plan for and evaluate the Candidate's growth and development.

1. Admission to Candidacy

An Inquirer becomes a Candidate by action of presbytery. At that time the Candidate formally agrees to accept the presbytery's supervision in their preparation for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.

The process of the candidacy phase can be as follows:

a. An Inquirer shall apply to the presbytery through the session of their church and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to become a Candidate for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.
b. The session shall confer with the Inquirer, review the evidence of the inquiry phase, and make recommendations to the presbytery through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator with respect to the Inquirer's application.

Completed and signed forms may be sent via email to: PreparationforMinistry-CPM@greatriverspby.org.

c. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall confer with the Inquirer and review the evidence which indicates whether the Inquirer is ready to proceed to candidacy
d. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall make a definite recommendation to the presbytery with respect to whether the Inquirer should be received as a Candidate. Presbytery shall act on every committee recommendation regarding application for candidacy.
e. The presbytery shall receive the report and recommendation of its committee and shall examine the Inquirer in person with respect to their Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry.
f. If the examination is approved, the presbytery shall receive the Inquirer as a Candidate after the following manner. The moderator shall propose the following questions to the inquirer:
   (1) Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament?
   (2) Do you promise, in reliance upon the grace of God, to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
   (3) Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
   (4) Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a Candidate for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA)?
g. If these questions are answered in the affirmative, a brief charge shall be given, the Candidate's name shall be recorded on the presbytery's roll of Candidates, and the proceedings shall close with prayer.

2. During Candidacy

The covenant relationship between the Candidate and the presbytery is expressed through the negotiation and review of a series of learning contracts based on the expected outcomes for this phase. To remain in good standing, there must be consultations at least once a year, in which both the committee and the Candidate assess their progress toward completion of previously established goals and negotiate appropriate new goals. It is essential that during each consultation the decision be made as to whether candidacy should be continued, especially if it becomes clear that adequate growth is not taking place. The committee votes at each consultation whether the Candidate will continue in the process.

3. Completion of Candidacy

Candidacy continues until the presbytery acts in one of three ways to remove the Candidate's name from the Roll of Candidates:

a. Completion of the preparation for ministry process with a call to the ministry of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. In this case, the following steps are involved:
   (1) the Committee on Preparation for Ministry determines that the Candidate is ready to be examined for ordination;
   (2) the Candidate receives a call; and

(3) the Candidate is ordinarily examined and approved for ordination by the presbytery of call (G-2.0702). A candidate may request to be ordained in their presbytery of care,
(4) the Candidate shall not be ordained before the full two-year period of covenant relationship required, at least one year of which shall be as a Candidate. (G-2.0602)

b. Withdrawal by the Candidate; (G-2.0609)
c. Removal by the presbytery; (G-2.0609)

4. Expected Outcomes of Candidacy/ Requirements to be certified ready to receive a call.
By the end of the candidacy phase, each Candidate to be ordained shall demonstrate readiness to begin the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament by meeting all of the requirements of G-2.0607.

III. Some Constitutional Provisions

A. Accommodations to Particular Circumstances for Inquirers and Candidates (G-2.0610)

- Some accommodations and waivers are possible. See G-2.0610.

B. Service in Covenant Relationship (G-2.0606)

- Some requirements are made about service to a congregation by a Candidate/Inquirer.

C. Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service (G-2.0607)

A Candidate having completed or nearly completed the minimum two-year covenant relationship (G-2.0602) "may not enter into negotiation for their service as a teaching elder without approval of the presbytery of care. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a Candidate ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder shall include:

a) a Candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;
b) a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;
c) a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and
d) examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.

D. Transfer of Relationship (G-2.0608)

At the request of the Inquirer or Candidate and with the approval of the sessions and presbyteries involved, a presbytery may transfer the covenant relationship of an Inquirer or Candidate.

E. Removal from Relationship (G-2.0609)

An Inquirer or Candidate may, after consultation with the session and the presbytery, withdraw from covenant relationship. A presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an

individual's name from the roll of Inquirers and Candidates, reporting this action and the reasons to the session, to the individual, and, if appropriate, to the educational institution in which the individual is enrolled. Prior to taking such action, the Presbytery or the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall make a reasonable attempt to give the Candidate or Inquirer an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal.

F. Location of Ordination (G-2.0702)

The presbytery placing the call to the Candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain, and install the Candidate.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

A. THE INQUIRER AND CANDIDATE

1. Role of Inquirers and Candidates

Responding to God's call to ministry is an exhilarating and demanding experience. The ministry of the Word and Sacrament is particularly challenging to prepare for and to fulfill. It stretches every human capacity and touches every dimension of life.

As a person discerns their call and begins the process of preparation for ministry, the counsel and guidance of the pastor and the session of the home church are available, along with that of the presbytery and the theological institution.

The denomination has designed the process of preparation for ministry to enable one to participate fully in discerning the type of ministry for which they are best suited and to plan and evaluate one's own preparation and development in consultation with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Although demanding, the process is not intended to be simply a series of imposed requirements; its focus is, rather, on the covenant relationships between persons who are deeply committed to the church and those who are preparing for ministry. As an individual enters into these relationships and assumes responsibility for moving through the process according to the guidelines provided, and maintains regular and open contact with the persons and committees involved, they can expect a rich and rewarding experience.

2. Responsibilities of Inquirers and Candidates

a. Before the Process Begins

- Participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.
- Initiate discussions of a sense of call with pastor, college chaplain or other spiritual advisor, or persons whose opinions one respects.
- Be an active member of a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation for at least six months.

b. Phase 1: Inquiry

To begin the process, indicate to the session the desire to explore the implications of becoming a Minister of Word and Sacrament. At least six months of active church membership is required before this step can be taken. The following forms are found at http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/application-forms/

Individual completes and submits to the moderator of session the following:
A. Form 1A "Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer"
B. Form 1B "Questions for Reflection"
C. Form 1C "Financial Planning for Theological Education"

- Session fills out and sends to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry: ***Form 1D "Session Evaluation and Recommendation"***
- Upon approval of the session, the individual then requests to be enrolled by the presbytery as an Inquirer.

Complete Form 2A, "Report of Consultation Regarding Application" and send a copy with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry enrollment report to session for recording of endorsement.

- Participate in one or more interviews with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

It is imperative that the roles, expectations, and responsibilities of Inquirer or Candidate and committee members be made clear from the beginning. Discuss these issues and negotiate a covenant relationship with the committee at the first interview or consultation.

Use Form 2B, "Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release" to formalize this relationship.

- Throughout the Inquiry phase, consult with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to plan for and evaluate growth and development.

Complete and return Form 3, "Pre-consultation report on development areas" to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at least 21 days before each Consultation.

Working jointly with representative(s) of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, complete Form 4, "Report on Consultation."

- As requested by the Committee, participate in vocational assessment counseling.
- Continue active membership and participation in a PCUSA congregation.
- With the approval and under the guidance of the Presbytery, engage in some form of service to the church or field education.
- To complete the Inquiry phase, meet with the session for a review of evidence indicating readiness to proceed to candidacy.

Adequate promise for ministry must be demonstrated according to the expected outcomes of Inquiry and any other requirements agreed to in previous consultations.

- Meet with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry for an evaluation of readiness to be recommended to presbytery for reception as a Candidate.
- Adequate promise must again be demonstrated. The Inquiry phase generally lasts a minimum of one year, but can continue for as long as is necessary to make the decision as to whether a person's God-given gifts will be best utilized through the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.

- In case of termination of the covenant relationship with a person who decides against or is denied admission to candidacy, other ways in which that person might express their vocation may be explored through a group discernment process with the aid of the session and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

c. Phase 2: Candidacy

- For admission to candidacy, apply to the presbytery through the session and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The following forms are found at http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/application-forms/

Complete and submit Form 5A, "Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate" to session for review and recommendation to presbytery. Session fills out Form 5B "Session recommendation for Enrollment as Candidate"

- Completed and signed forms may be sent to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry via email to: PreparationforMinistry-CPM@greatriverspby.org
- Once the CPM has officially endorsed the individual for candidacy, the person shall appear before the presbytery to be examined with respect to Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry of Word and Sacrament.
- During candidacy, maintain a relationship with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry through: consultations held at least annually, participation with the committee to negotiate and review learning contracts, participation in reviews of growth and progress, and preparation of reports.

Form 3, "Pre-consultation report on development areas" must be submitted before each consultation to fulfill presbytery requirements.

- Continue active church membership.
- With the approval and under the guidance of presbytery, engage in some form of service to the church or field education.
- Successfully complete course requirements at a regionally accredited college or university and at a theological institution acceptable to the presbytery and accredited by the Association of Theological Schools https://www.ats.edu/Member-School-list. (G-2.0607).
- Successfully complete examinations in the areas covered by Presbytery's Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates.
- Before seeking a call, and ordinarily in the final year of theological education, meet with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry for a final assessment of readiness to receive a call. This consultation focuses on the outcomes of candidacy.
- Complete Personal Discernment Profile (PDP) and receive approval from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to explore obtaining a call. Submit the completed PDP to the Church Leadership Connection Office for circulation and participation in the denomination's procedures for exploring a call to service.
- A one-page Personal Statement of Faith must be submitted to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to be shared during examination by the presbytery.
- Complete examination for ordination, administered on the floor of the presbytery of call.

If the presbytery finds the call in order and determines that it is for the good of the whole church, it shall inform the person being called of its decision and shall proceed to present the call through the presbytery having jurisdiction over the Candidate.

To be eligible for ordination, the Book of Order requires a relationship with the presbytery of at least two years, including at least one year as a Candidate. (G-2.0602)

Remember that the church's session continues to act as an advocate during both the inquiry and candidacy phases; through its moderator and presbytery commissioner(s) it can call the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to accountability in fulfilling its responsibilities.

Candidacy continues until ordination, withdrawal, or removal.

A. THE SESSION

1. Role of Session

The pastor and session are responsible for communicating to all church members what is meant by "the ministry of all believers" and for helping members discern and fulfill their Christian vocation.

a. Developing Vocational Awareness

To ensure that committed, knowledgeable persons continue to be involved in the life and mission of the church and the world, it is essential that the session take seriously its responsibility for developing vocational awareness among members of the congregation. A biblically-grounded, theologically sound understanding of Christian vocation integrated into the church's program will help members recognize opportunities to fulfill their Christian vocation within the context of their secular occupations.

b. Developing Awareness of the Call to Ministry through the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.

Members of congregations should also be aware of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament as an occupation through which many dimensions of Christian service can be realized. This opportunity can be emphasized in all church programs, from Christian education classes and youth and young adult groups, to men's and women's programs.

It is essential that pastors, sessions and local congregations:

- challenge all members to become aware of their Christian vocation;
- develop and implement thoughtful and creative means by which highly qualified persons may be challenged to consider a vocation in the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament;
- help potential Inquirers get in touch with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry as early as possible;
- give high priority to developing and maintaining vital, theologically sound youth programs which are in harmony with the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions; and
- assure that youth ministry leaders are carefully selected and trained, theologically competent and appropriate role models.

c. Exploring the Call to Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament

When a member of the congregation approaches the pastor and session to express the possibility that they have been called to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament, the local church is provided with a challenge and an opportunity. It is the session's responsibility to provide a supportive relationship through which it can explore with the individual the personal implications and suitability of a church occupation.

According to the Constitution, the relationship between the session and the individual Inquirer is part of the inquiry phase of the preparation for ministry process. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament to explore that call together in such a way that a decision regarding the Inquirer's suitability for ministry of Word and Sacrament will be based on knowledge and experience of one another.

Such knowledge and experience emerge through prayerful examination of the Inquirer's motivation, personal faith and experience in the congregation, through examination of their knowledge of the responsibilities of a Minister of Word and Sacrament, and through a serious assessment of the gifts needed by a Minister of Word and Sacrament. These are the first important steps in discerning that the individual has indeed been called by the Holy Spirit, through the church, to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. Studies indicate that the lives and work of dedicated pastors and effective congregations have a significant impact on the lives of Inquirers and Candidates.

d. Supporting Inquirers and Candidates

The pastor, session and congregation communicate with and support Inquirers and Candidates throughout the entire period of preparation. This can be a most meaningful experience for those involved.

Along with its specifically prescribed responsibilities, it is important that the session continue to express its concern and support by contacting the individual and their family at important times, such as annual consultations with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, appearances before presbytery, academic examination periods, Presbyteries' Cooperative Examination periods, when the presbytery through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry makes its final assessment of the Candidate, when a call is being negotiated, on holidays, anniversaries, etc.

1. Responsibilities of the Session

- To develop among church members an awareness of their Christian vocation and challenge them with responsible Christian stewardship of their talents.
- To encourage persons with appropriate motivation and abilities to consider preparation for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament or other church occupations.

a. Phase 1: Inquiry

Admission to inquiry begins when a person who has been a church member for at least six months indicates to that church's pastor and session their sense of call to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. This is the first step toward establishing an ongoing relationship with the session and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry for the purpose of exploring and testing their sense of call.

Some Issues for Attention and Evaluation by the Session When Examining the Gifts and Motivations of a Prospective Inquirer

- What personal qualities do they possess, that are evidence of a healthy and vital faith in God through Jesus Christ?
- How is that faith currently being expressed through the individual's participation in the worship, life and mission of this congregation?
- What various motivations impel their sense of call? (e.g., service to God and the world, compassion for God's children, guilt, the need for power and status)
- What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this individual? (e.g., the ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, leadership or administrative abilities)
- What is the level and adequacy of the individual's academic interest, ability and motivations?
- What is the evidence of their physical health and stamina?
- What is the evidence of their emotional well-being?
- What is the evidence of their self-discipline?
- How does the individual plan to finance their education?

Ask the applicant to complete Form 1A "Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer," Form 1B "Questions for Reflection," and Form 1C "Financial Planning for Theological Education"

- Contact the Committee on Preparation for Ministry requesting orientation to the preparation for ministry process used in that presbytery.
- Meet with representative(s) of the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to receive orientation in the preparation for ministry process. Ordinarily the orientation will take place prior to the presbytery enrolling the inquirer.

At this meeting distribute the applicant's completed Form 1 to session members for review prior to session's meeting with the applicant.

- Consult with the person requesting enrollment as an Inquirer and make a decision whether or not to endorse the applicant as an Inquirer.
- Appoint a Ruling Elder (or a group of persons including at least one elder) to act as liaison with the Inquirer and with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry and to participate with the Inquirer and the Committee as they explore and evaluate their progress.
- Make a recommendation to the presbytery, through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, regarding the applicant's request to be enrolled as an Inquirer.

Indicate session's endorsement or non-endorsement on Form 1D "Session Evaluation and Recommendation" and submit Forms 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D to the presbytery.

- If the session, the committee or presbytery decides not to accept the individual's name for enrollment as an Inquirer at this time, the session continues to provide support, counsel and guidance to the individual as they seek to discover an appropriate occupational expression of their Christian vocation.
- During the inquirer phase, the session participates with the inquirer and presbytery's committee in evaluating the Inquirer's growth and progress.

- For completion of the inquiry phase, the session meets with the Inquirer to review evidence indicating their readiness to proceed to candidacy. This evidence includes personal interviews with the Inquirer, all consultation reports, the Inquirer's demonstration of adequate promise for ministry according to the expected outcomes.
- The session makes a decision regarding whether to recommend to the presbytery that the Inquirer proceed to the candidacy phase.
- Ordinarily, the session pays for at least one third of the expenses associated with the required vocational assessment.

b. Transition from Inquiry to Candidacy

When the Inquirer is ready for admission to Candidacy the session **fills out *Form 5B "Session recommendation for Enrollment as Candidate"***

- ***Indicate the Session's endorsement or non-endorsement on the Inquirer's completed Form 5B"Session recommendation for Enrollment as Candidate" and submit to the presbytery.*** **Completed and signed forms may be sent to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry via email to: PreparationforMinistry-CPM@greatriverspby.org.**
- The Session provides support and may make a statement, when the Inquirer is examined by presbytery.
- If the Inquirer is not received by the presbytery as a Candidate at this time, the session continues to support, counsel and guide the individual as they seek to discover an appropriate occupational expression of their Christian vocation.

c. Phase 2: Candidacy

- During candidacy, the session provides support and pastoral care to the Candidate and their family, maintaining the liaison relationship with both the Candidate and the presbytery Committee.
- The session receives and reviews reports of each consultation.
- The session removes the Candidate's name from the church roll when notice is received of their ordination.

It is important to recall that the session acts as an advocate for both Inquirers and Candidates and through its moderator and presbytery commissioner(s), can call the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to accountability in fulfilling its responsibilities.

C. THE PRESBYTERY

1. Role of the Presbytery

The presbytery's ministry to the church is at the heart of the preparation for ministry process. The presbytery provides a committee to work with individual Inquirers and Candidates. The presbytery elects persons to serve as readers for ordination exams, and the presbytery guides Inquirers and Candidates and examines them for ordination.

The presbytery's ministry with individual Inquirers and Candidates takes place through the work of its Committee on Preparation for Ministry. As Ruling Elders and Ministers of Word and Sacrament take on the responsibilities of membership on this committee, they share in the rich tradition of helping individuals to discern their calls and grow toward readiness for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. Their time, energy and commitment offer a significant contribution to the church's future ministry.

2. Responsibilities of the Presbytery

a. Responsibilities of the Presbytery as a Whole

- To provide a Committee on Preparation for Ministry or other groups to work with its Inquirers and Candidates and ensure that this committee has adequate support and resources. Committee members should be carefully selected, with planned tenure to assure continuity. While new members should receive careful orientation, regular training events or retreats should be provided for all committee members. Such training will enable committees to develop their own procedures for relationships with Inquirers and Candidates and help them establish their own criteria by which to measure individuals' development.
- To receive the committee's reports and recommendations regarding each applicant for inquiry and candidacy; enroll Inquirers and examine and vote whether to approve the Inquirer's becoming a Candidate.
- To record the name of each Inquirer and Candidate on its rolls and report this to the General Assembly Office.
- To receive reports of consultations.
- To grant exceptions and waivers to Preparation for Ministry requirements.
- To transfer Inquirers and Candidates to the care of other presbyteries.
- To remove the names of Inquirers and Candidates from its rolls when appropriate.
- To transfer Candidates for ordination when requested.
- To examine and ordain Candidates who have received a call to ministry and to report these ordinations to the appropriate General Assembly offices.

b. Responsibilities of the Presbytery through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. Phase 1: Inquiry

- When the Committee on Preparation for Ministry receives information from a session that a member of their church has indicated a desire to explore the personal implications of becoming a Minister of Word and Sacrament, one or more committee members should meet with that session to explain the session's role and responsibilities during the preparation for ministry process. During this orientation, members of the session are encouraged to discern their own call and Christian vocation, and are informed about the particular evaluative criteria and procedures used in this presbytery and, with the committee representatives, discusses ways the session and the committee can work together most effectively.
- After the applicant has agreed to enter into a covenant relationship with the session and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry and has received the

- session's endorsement for enrollment as an Inquirer, they meet for an interview with the committee. The purpose of this initial interview is to allow the committee to make a preliminary assessment of the applicant's motives, seriousness of intent and general suitability for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament before deciding to recommend to presbytery that they be enrolled as an Inquirer.
- ***Forms 1A "Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer," 1B "Questions for Reflection," and 1C "Financial Planning for Theological Education" are distributed to all Committee members for review prior to the meeting to acquaint them with the applicant.***
- After completing its interview and evaluation and making a decision, the committee recommends to the presbytery whether to enroll the applicant as an Inquirer. When enrollment is recommended, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry should appoint from its membership a liaison to work closely with the Inquirer. The Inquirer and session shall be informed of this action.

Complete Form 2A "Report of Consultation Regarding Application to become an Inquirer"

- committee reports and recommendations to presbytery to enroll applicant as an Inquirer

Use Form 2B, "Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release" to formalize this relationship.

- It is imperative that the roles, expectations and responsibilities of the Inquirer and committee members be clarified and a covenant relationship be negotiated at the first interview or consultation.
- Throughout the inquiry phase, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry holds consultations with each Inquirer to explore the appropriateness of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament as an occupational choice and to guide their development for that ministry. Each consultation focuses on goals for growth and development in each of five key areas: Education for Ministry, Spiritual Development, Interpersonal Relationships, Personal Growth and Professional Development.
- During each consultation, the committee and the Inquirer assess what progress has been made toward fulfilling previously established goals in each of the five areas and together negotiate appropriate new goals. The committee votes at each consultation whether the Inquirer will continue in the process.

At least 21 days prior to each consultation, the Inquirer completes and returns to the committee ***Form 3,*** "***Pre-consultation report on development areas***," as a basis for discussion.

Use Form 4, "Report on Consultation" for reporting purposes.

- Specific considerations may guide the committee's assessment of an Inquirer's suitability to prepare for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. Careful

individual assessment may also help the committee to recommend experiences to enhance the Inquirer's growth and development.

- Following action by the session and receipt of Form 5A, "Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate," the Committee on Preparation for Ministry meets with the Inquirer to review evidence indicating whether or not they are ready to proceed to the candidacy phase and has fulfilled all the expected outcomes for Inquiry and any other requirements agreed to in previous consultations.
- After considering the preceding evidence the committee makes a recommendation to presbytery.
- Through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry the presbytery is responsible for continuing to guide and support both those whom it does and does not recommend to be enrolled as Candidates. Those who are denied candidacy at this time should be helped through a group discernment process or a vocational assessment to discover appropriate occupations through which they can fulfill their Christian vocation.

Consultations

The goals and expected outcomes of each of the five areas of growth provide the focus for each consultation. By using these goals the committee can discover the Inquirer's current level of experience and achievement and, through guided conversations and appropriate new learning contracts, stimulate further growth in appropriate areas. **The committee will decide for itself what signifies "growth" and how an Inquirer might show evidence of such growth**. Creativity should be used in thinking through these areas and goals with the individual Inquirer so that they do not see this experience simply as the writing of required papers in order to qualify for candidacy.

2. Some Considerations to Guide the Committee's Assessment of an Inquirer's Suitability to Continue Preparation for Ministry to the office of Minister of Word and Sacraments by proceeding to the candidacy phase.

Personal Issues:

- How would you describe the Inquirer's commitment to God and to the world?
- How deeply do they demonstrate self-awareness?
- How do they demonstrate a sense of responsibility and self-direction?
- How does the Inquirer relate to people?
- How effective are their leadership skills?
- How do they seem to tolerate stress?
- Does the Inquirer appear to be open to the influence of others?
- How do they seem to relate to authority figures?

Educational issues:

- Do they demonstrate adequate academic skills?
- Is there sufficient motivation for scholastic achievement?
- Are they meeting the constitutional requirements?

- Do they have adequate experience in a local church or other context for experiential learning?
- Have they made appropriate theological education plans?

Situational issues:

- Are there financial obstacles?
- Are there health limitations?
- Are there family or spouse considerations?
- Are the Inquirer's present goals feasible and realistic?

Occupational issues:

- Is the Inquirer's blend of temperament, abilities, coping style, values and motivation suitable for the ministry of Word and Sacrament?
- Should they consider a specialized ministry or alternate occupations?
- Does the Inquirer have a realistic understanding of the occupational demands and job opportunities in the ministry of Word and Sacrament?

3. Phase 2: Candidacy

Candidacy is a time of continuing pastoral guidance and support by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. This shall be accomplished through the guidance and evaluation of Candidates, using learning contracts within a context of supportive relationships."

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry receives your forms 5A and 5B, and if the committee decides to recommend your moving to the candidacy phase, the committee fills out Form 5C "Report of Consultation to become a Candidate" and Form 5D "Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release."

- After the Committee on Preparation for Ministry completes its evaluation of the Inquirer and presents to the presbytery its report and recommendation as to whether the Inquirer should or should not be received as a Candidate, if the recommendation is to move the Inquirer to Candidate status, the Inquirer appears before the presbytery to be examined with respect to their Christian faith, forms of Christian service and motives for seeking the ministry.
- If the presbytery votes to receive the Inquirer as a Candidate, they are asked to respond to the "Candidacy questions to be used before Presbytery" in Section 3-1. A charge is given, the Candidate's name is recorded on the roll of Candidates and prayer is offered.

As with Inquirers, the presbytery, through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and the session, are responsible for continuing to guide both those whom it recommends for candidacy and those whom it does not.

- The presbytery continues its regular consultations with the Candidate through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. As described in the inquiry phase, these consultations focus on goals in each of the five areas of growth and development.

As during inquiry, planning for and evaluating growth during candidacy and the negotiation of new learning contracts continue to involve the active participation of both the Candidate and the committee.

The Candidate completes ***Form 3, "Pre-consultation report on development areas,"*** and submits it at least 21 days prior to each consultation to provide the basis for discussion.

Form 4, "Report on Consultation" is completed and signed by both the Candidate and the appropriate committee person after each Consultation and becomes part of the Candidate's permanent file.

Final Assessment: Negotiating a Call may only be sought after the Committee on Preparation for Ministry meets with the Candidate for a final assessment of their readiness in all respects to receive a call.

- In conducting this assessment, the committee focuses on the expected outcomes of **i**nquiry, the expected outcomes of candidacy, on each of the requirements of certification and on any additional items negotiated between the presbytery and the Candidate.
- Evidence that the Candidate has achieved the expected outcomes is based on their academic performance and experience in supervised field education, the requirements of G2.0607 [see III. C.], and other activities discussed and agreed upon by the committee as relevant to preparation for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.
- The committee completes its evaluation and reports to the presbytery a summary of the final assessment along with the date the Committee certified the Candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. When requested, the presbytery transmits this report to the presbytery of call.

Use Form 6, "Summary Report of Final Assessment of Candidate's Readiness to be Examined for Ordination" to transmit this report.

Upon completion of the preparation process the Candidate's file is either kept by the committee (for a specified period of time) or given to the Candidate. In cases where the Candidate and committee have dealt with highly sensitive issues that are a matter of record, the committee may want to retain the Candidate's file.

D. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The Office of Vocation:

- Provides guidance, consultation, and resource materials to presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry to assist them with vocational discernment and ministry preparation of Inquirers and Candidates.
- Provides appropriate vehicles to enable presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry to exchange resources, policies, and models for their ministry.
- Participates in synod and presbytery training events for members of Committees on Preparation for Ministry.

- Provides guidance to presbyteries on particular sections of the Book of Order that deal with preparation for ministry.
- Works through seminaries and presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry to encourage collaboration as they work with Inquirers and Candidates.
- Works with seminary staff and Inquirers and Candidates providing guidance on preparation for ministry, ordination exams, and the call process.
- Maintains and makes available a list of seminary contact persons and moderators of Committees on Preparation for Ministry.
- With the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee, coordinates the development, administration, and grading of ordination examinations.
- Provides coaching to Candidates seeking their first call.

2. **The Office of Financial Aid for Studies** administers scholarships and loans for those preparing for ministry.

V. Examination of Ministers from other denominations seeking to become a PC(USA) Minister of Word and Sacrament

In cooperation with the presbytery's Committee on Ministry, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry has examined Ministers from other denominations seeking to become a PC(USA) Minister of Word and Sacrament. [see G-2.0505]. This examination has followed a similar path as the "Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service" found in G-2.0607 which states that: "Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a minister of the Word and Sacrament shall include:

a) a Candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;
b) a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;
c) a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and
d) examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries."

SECTION TWO: An Overview of the Preparation Process for the ministry of Ruling Elders seeking Commissioning to a Particular Church or Validated Ministry *[From the Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE) Handbook[1]]*

1. Overview of the Ministry Formation Program

1.1. Introduction:[1]

Great Rivers Presbytery is committed to providing the best possible leadership to all churches within its bounds. To provide that leadership training has been developed for the continued edification of our ruling elders. The Committee on Ministry (COM), and Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), and Commissioned Ruling Elder Coordinator partner to provide the various levels of training for ruling elders.

COM provides training for ruling elders who are seeking to be granted permission for a specific time frame to serve Communion in their home congregation in the absence of pastoral leadership. COM also works with ruling elders who seek to be approved for the presbytery's pulpit supply list. CPM provides training for ruling elders who seek to serve as pastor in a specific context. The CRE Coordinator works with both committees for the purpose of training and caring for ruling elders who complete the more in-depth training to be able to serve a commission. This handbook provides the information for those ruling elders seeking the in-depth training.

Our polity provides for two forms of pastoral leadership in congregations. The first as a Minister of Word and Sacrament, the other as a Commissioned Ruling Elder. It is the intention of this handbook to outline the process for authorizing ruling elders to be commissioned as Commissioned Ruling Elders as provided for in the *Book of Order* (G-2.10).

The purpose of the Ministry Formation Program is to prepare and commission Ruling Elders for preaching and administration of sacraments at places of need within the presbytery. The Handbook for Commissioned Ruling Elders provides guidelines to attract, discover, train, counsel, and support qualified Ruling Elders to provide leadership, nurturing and service to member congregations and other service opportunities within Great Rivers Presbytery.

The Committee for Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is responsible for the selection of applicants and the training and the examination of Candidates and evaluating the effectiveness of the training. The CPM is also responsible for approving the Candidate as ready to accept a position as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

The Commission on Ministry (COM) is responsible for authorizing the placement and commissioning of CREs.

1.2. Definition of a Commissioned Ruling Elder

A Commissioned Ruling Elder is a Ruling Elder who has been commissioned by Great Rivers Presbytery to limited pastoral service in a validated ministry of the presbytery.

They have been called by God and affirmed by their session and received appropriate training in accordance with the *Book of Order,* G-2.1002, under the supervision of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

The CRE is commissioned by the presbytery to serve a particular congregation or validated ministry in Great Rivers Presbytery after being deemed certified ready to be commissioned, invited by the session of a congregation or other entity, recommended by the Committee on Ministry (COM), and approved by the presbytery.

[1] This handbook has been adapted for the Presbytery of Great Rivers' use from the Commissioned Ruling Elder's manual of Blackhawk Presbytery with their permission.

The CRE may perform pastoral functions not requiring ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament, in agreement with the session, and approved by COM, such as teaching, visitation of members in home or hospital, visitation of prospective members, supervising Sunday school, leading music, prayer meetings, or study groups or conducting funerals. Other duties and privileges may be approved in certain circumstances (See section 2.4)

If commissioned to a congregation, the CRE will ordinarily be the primary leader of worship and preacher for the congregation. This person may serve as a CRE in full-time or part-time, salaried, or volunteer positions.

2. Policy and Procedures for Congregations.

2.1 Recruitment of CRE Candidates.

"We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us" (Romans 12: 6a).

Within every congregation God bestows many and diverse gifts upon the members of that church. It is important that churches actively encourage persons to honor, use, and build upon their gifts in the ministry of the church.

It is the duty of all Christians, whether in leadership roles or not, to seek and recognize those believers who have been gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, and to encourage them to explore their calling.

Great Rivers Presbytery is committed to working with local congregations to identify and encourage people gifted for ministry as Commissioned Ruling Elders.

It is the Presbytery of Great Rivers' practice not to assign CREs to their congregation of current membership and/or sponsoring congregation. Exceptions to this policy require a 75% vote of the presbytery.[2]

2.2 Determining Congregational Needs

Congregations considering whether a CRE or an MWS would best fulfill their need should spend some time in prayer and discernment.

CREs are trained, though not ordained as MWS are. Theirs is a separate calling. The primary differences between a Minister of Word and Sacrament and a Commissioned Ruling Elder can be found in Appendix A.

Often, a church who decides to go with a CRE has money as their leading reason, believing that a CRE will be cheaper, however there should be a missional and theological reason to choose a CRE, not simply a financial reason.

Often a CRE will have differing gifts than an MWS. A CRE may have better skills and experience connecting with laity. A CRE may have already served in a variety of councils of the church including at the presbytery or higher levels.

At all times it is advisable to consult with the COM during this discernment process.

2.3 Potential Additional Duties of a CRE.

Upon the written request of the session to the COM and with the recommendation of the mentor and supervisor, the CRE may also be commissioned by the Presbytery to carry out other functions allowed in the *Book of Order*, G-2.1001.

a. Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's supper
b. Administer the Sacrament of Baptism

[2] Verify with COM's policy.

c. Moderate the session of the congregation.
d. Moderate meetings of the congregation.
e. Have voice and a vote in meetings of the Presbytery.
f. Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee of the Presbytery, and in accordance with Illinois law.[3]

2.4 Minimum Compensation for Commissioned Ruling Elders

It is the determination of Great Rivers Presbytery that the minimum effective salary for Commissioned Ruling Elders is set at 80% of the current presbytery minimum for Ministers of Word and Sacrament.[3]

2.5 Search Process for CRE Candidates.

Any congregation interested in hiring a CRE should contact their COM Ministry Partner to find more information.

3 Policy and Procedures for Candidates

3.1 Policy

The Ministry Formation Program Great Rivers Presbytery shall be administered by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

The CPM will have the following responsibilities:

1. Recruitment, admission, or dismissal for cause of Candidates to the program.
2. Oversight of the training process.
3. Consultation with Commissioned Ruling Elders during training as they explore their sense of call.
4. Referral of the Candidate to Presbytery's Committee on Ministry for examination, approval of placement, and post-commissioning oversight (see G-2.1003 and G-2.1004) once a CRE Candidate is ready for a commission.

Application Process for Elders

1. An applicant to the program shall be an elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA).
2. Ordinarily, an applicant to the program will have been a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for at least two years and active in the life of a particular church within the bounds of the Great Rivers Presbytery for at least one year immediately prior to applying for the Commissioned Pastor program.
3. Application to be a Commissioned Pastor will be submitted to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and will include:
    a. a completed application form (CRE Form 1a, appendix D),
    b. the completed support form from the church session or its equivalent (CRE form 2, appendix F)
    c. and an interview with CPM (CRE Form 4, appendix I).
4. Upon receipt of the individual's application and support from their session, an interview with CPM will be scheduled and the Candidate will be contacted for any additional information needed to complete the required background check.
5. Applicants for whom English is not a primary language may apply to take courses in their primary languages, as available, with the prior approval of the CPM.

[3] Verify with COM's policy.

6. Applicants who have previous study in required areas may submit those to CPM for consideration as a substitute for equivalent courses. Applicants may also show the CPM documented experience from employment, church, or academic settings, to stand as equivalent to any of the areas of training and the CPM will advise the applicant as to the substitute credit that may be applied in their unique case.
7. Applicants to the program should be aware that acceptance to this program does not guarantee placement as a Commissioned Pastor within Great Rivers Presbytery
8. Application packets are available through the CRE Coordinator, CPM Moderator, or on the Great Rivers Presbytery website.[4]

3.2 Outline of the CRE Process

Those persons seeking to become a CRE will follow a different track or program than those seeking ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament. A CRE's ability to preach, teach, and lead worship may be seen as a gift of the Spirit developed through experience, practice, and formal training.

To further develop the gifts for service in a particular field of ministry, the Presbytery, through the CPM and COM, will guide the CRE Candidate through a program of training and preparation for pastoral service. For others who wish to attend training, but do not know how they are called to serve, the CPM and the CRE Candidate will work together to prayerfully discern God's call for the individual.

The program track for a CRE is:

1. **Seeking Phase:** The individual seeking to become a CRE receives endorsement from the session of their own church and is evaluated and received by the CPM.
2. **Learning Phase:** With the authorization, guidance and support of the CPM, the CRE Candidate will engage in study and preparation for service as a CRE.
3. **Commissioning Phase:** After completing the program of training, preparation, and discernment with the CPM, and after the CPM determines the CRE **C**andidate is ready to receive a commission to a field of service or congregation, they will be recommended to the COM. At the recommendation of the COM and with the approval of the Presbytery, the CRE may be commissioned to a particular congregation or validated ministry.

During the entirety of the CRE preparation process, the CRE in Training shall:

1. Meet at least annually with their sponsoring session.
2. Meet at least annually with the CPM, supplying a CRE Form 3 for every meeting.
3. Demonstrate work towards completing the class requirements.
4. Remain active in the life and work of their congregation.
5. Receive instruction and practice in all areas of church life.

In each step of the program, particular responsibilities are assigned to:

1. The CRE Candidate
2. The session of the sponsoring congregation.
3. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry
4. The Committee on Ministry

[4] This packet will need to be created from our current resources.

4. Seeking Phase

During this phase a Ruling Elder, believing they have been called by God to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE), seeks validation of the call by their session and then by the presbytery through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

Core Responsibilities during the Seeking Phase:

The CRE Candidate Applicant

1. Has been a member of a PC(USA) congregation within the Great Rivers Presbytery for at least one year prior to submitting the application to the session.
2. Has been ordained a Ruling Elder within the PC(USA) for at least six months. They need not be actively serving on session to qualify.
3. They shall be regular in attendance and active in the life of their congregation. They shall have demonstrated leadership ability, pastoral concern and pastoral ability.
4. The applicant should have an extended conversation with their pastor about their sense of call and the gifts and tasks of ministry before approaching CPM.
5. The applicant will contact the presbytery's Commissioned Ruling Elder Coordinator to begin the process of application.
6. The applicant is examined by the session of their member church and seeks their endorsement.
7. Applicant shall fill out and submit CRE Form 1A (appendix D) to the CRE Coordinator or in the absence of a CRE Coordinator, the CPM Moderator (preparationforministry-CPM@greatriverspby.org) supplying three references as outlined in the application. The three references will each fill out a CRE Form 1B (appendix E) to be submitted to CPM. The CRE Coordinator or CPM moderator shall provide the forms upon request, or they can be found on the Great Rivers Presbytery website under "Forms."[5]
8. Meets with the CPM for a review of their application, and approval to enter the process.

The Session of the Sponsoring Congregation[5]

1. The session shall contact the CRE Coordinator or in the absence of a CRE coordinator, the CPM Moderator for orientation to the process.
2. Applicants shall meet with their session to be interviewed to receive the session's endorsement for application to the CRE program. If approved, the session shall fill out CRE Form 2 and submit it to the CRE Coordinator or in the absence of a CRE coordinator, the CPM Moderator.
3. The proposed CRE Candidate, the session, and Commissioned Ruling Elder Coordinator together will initiate contact with the CPM.
4. The session will appoint one or more of its members as liaison for the duration of the CRE process.
5. Encourages, supports, and prays for the CRE candidate throughout their time of preparation for service.
6. May offer to provide financial assistance to the CRE candidate for class work or study
7. May offer opportunities for service and preparation for ministry through working in the congregation under the supervision of the pastor(s), in either paid or volunteer positions.
8. The session shall renew their endorsement of the candidate on an annual and ongoing basis.

[5] Verify these are on the website.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. After receiving the Application Form and Session Endorsement Form, the CPM shall meet with the applicant. The interview shall include discussion of the individual's:
    a. personal faith
    b. sense of call
    c. motives in seeking enrollment in the program
    d. competency in Book of Order requirements
    e. communication skills
    f. willingness to engage in study/mentoring program
    g. review of information contained in application
2. Confidentially interviews the references included in the application concerning the applicant's qualifications, character, and aptitude for pastoral service. The CPM may also initiate inquiries to others who may be familiar with the applicant.
3. The CPM will ask the applicant to address inadequacies in any area before recommending further preparation as a CRE.
4. Once the committee approves the applicant to enter the process, they shall vote to receive the applicant as a CRE Candidate. The CRE Candidate shall then begin their training in the CRE process.
5. The Commissioned Ruling Elder Coordinator will act as a liaison between the CPM and Candidate to guide the Candidate through the process. In the absence of a Commissioned Pastor Coordinator a member of CPM will act as the liaison.
6. Designing the learning plan for the CRE Candidate. Validating directed studies done in concurrence with the agencies (presbyteries, colleges, seminaries, workshops, etc.).
7. CRE Candidates shall meet annually with the CPM to be examined as to personal faith, motives for seeking commission, and the areas of instruction they may have already received. The Candidate will fill out form CRE 3 for each annual consultation.

5. Learning Phase

During this phase, the CRE Candidate will acquire competency and skills required for the role of Commissioned Ruling Elder under the supervision and direction of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) (*Book of Order,* G-2.1002).

Upon entry into the CRE training phase, the CRE Candidate and the CPM liaison will adopt a Learning Covenant (CRE Form 3, appendix G) that will be written and signed as a covenant between the Candidate, their CPM liaison and the CPM.

The Learning Covenant will be tailored for each individual including plans for completion of all training requirements and realistic timelines for the completion of each requirement. Training will not require the same levels of knowledge required of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

Core Responsibilities during the Learning Phase:

The CRE Candidate

1. The CRE Candidate needs to take the initiative through this phase of the process.
2. They will explore available training options with the approval of the CPM.
3. They will enroll and begin their program of study.
4. They may, with their CPM liaison, find an appropriate internship program.
5. The Candidate will sign and submit to COM a statement declaring the absence of any convictions of sexual or financial misconduct.

The Session of the Sponsoring Congregation

1. Meets with the CRE Candidate annually through their course of study to review progress and to encourage, support, and pray for the CRE.
2. May offer to provide financial assistance to the CRE Candidate for class work or study.
3. May offer opportunities for service and preparation for ministry through working in the congregation under the supervision of the pastor(s).

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. Available CRE training programs from the Synod of Lincoln Trails, other governing bodies, seminaries, colleges, etc., are reviewed and an authorized list of available programs is created and provided to CRE Candidate.
2. Reviews and approves independent study arrangements and other Presbytery sponsored training programs as requested by a CRE Candidate.
3. Meets with the CRE Candidate at least annually through this phase to review their progress and determine other needs or future plans.
4. May assist in facilitating an internship or find appropriate internship for the CRE Candidate.
5. The CPM will request that a criminal background check be conducted via the process currently in use in the Presbytery.

The CRE Coordinator

1. Act as a liaison for the Candidate with the CPM.
2. Support the Candidate with their studies.
3. Meets with the Candidate monthly.

Course Requirements

The CRE Candidate, with the approval of the CPM, may take classes offered by the presbytery and designated for CRE Candidates; may enroll in a designated CRE training program offered by a college, seminary, the Synod of Lincoln Trails, or another governing body as approved and recommended by the CPM.

There are eight areas of competence that are required by Great Rivers Presbytery.

1. Introduction to Old Testament
2. Introduction to New Testament
3. Introduction to Preaching
4. Introduction of Christian Education
5. Introduction to Pastoral Care
6. Presbyterian Polity
7. Reformed Worship and Sacraments
8. Introduction to Reformed Theology

Additional work may be required depending on the particular Candidate's background and experience as well as the type of ministry a CRE Candidate is preparing to undertake.

Other Requirements

In addition to the training requirements above, CRE Candidates must:

1. Complete a vocational assessment counseling by a provider determined by CPM to evaluate the fit of the Candidate for the ministry, early in the CRE process. Ordinarily, the cost for this evaluation is shared in equal parts with the CRE Candidate, their congregation and the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

2. Attendance at an approved workshop on healthy boundaries is required prior to being approved for a commission.
3. The CPM may also require a supervised internship if it feels it is appropriate to prepare the Candidate for pastoral ministry. The CPM will, in consultation with the Candidate, determine the scope and length of the internship. If there is a need for an internship a teaching elder in PGR will be assigned to the Candidate as a mentor.
4. Special Circumstances—ordinarily Certified Christian Educators applying to be a Commissioned Pastor are deemed qualified to serve having completed requirements of the Book of Order G-2.1103

6. Certification and Commissioning Phase

At this phase, the CRE Candidate is formally commissioned by the Presbytery to a specific ministry. The presbytery's Committee on Ministry has oversight of the commissioning Phase.

Core Responsibilities during the Certification and Commissioning Phase:

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. CPM shall examine the CRE Candidate to determine their fitness for pastoral ministry. This assessment will include:
   a. a review of all Learning Covenant requirements,
   b. assessment and review of the CRE Candidate's Faith Statement,
   c. and a final sermon review including exegesis, preparation, and delivery; perhaps in a congregational or alternate setting.
2. After successful completion of the examination, CPM will present the Candidate to presbytery as certified and ready for a commission (CRE Form 5).

The CRE Candidate

1. Upon successful completion of all items listed in the learning covenant, the CRE Candidate will provide the following documents to the CPM.
   a. A personal statement of faith.
   b. A brief sermon (5-9 minutes).
   c. Before preaching the sermon, the committee shall be told the context and setting where this sermon would be presented.
   d. Plans for continuing education.
   e. A written self-evaluation (no more than three pages) about their experience during their training and their readiness to be Commissioned into Service.
2. Once receiving the certification from Great Rivers Presbytery, the CRE Candidate may begin the search for suitable employment. At this point, working with the COM, they may:
   a. Be added to Preaching Supply List and become available for potential match with congregation(s).
   b. Complete a CRE Information Form / Resume and may be considered for commissioning to a specific congregation or validated ministry as a Commissioned Pastor.
   c. The CRE will be prepared to interview and preach for sessions or PNCs of the congregations that are considering CREs.

This ends the CPM portion of the CRE Handbook. The CRE Handbook continues after this point with the Committee on Ministry's (COM) portion of the process.

Section Three: A Listing of Resources

I. RESOURCES FOR THOSE ENTERING THE PREPARATION PROCESS FOR THE MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

A. RECOMMENDED LISTS OF QUESTIONS AND CRITERIA

A List of Questions for Session Inquiry Endorsement Interviews

- What personal qualities are in evidence of a healthy and vital faith in God through Jesus Christ?
- How is that faith being expressed through the individual's participation in the worship, life and mission of this congregation?
- What various motivations impel the sense of call? (e.g., service to God and the world, compassion for God's children, guilt, the need for power and status)
- What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this individual? (e.g., the ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, leadership or administrative abilities)
- What is the level and adequacy of the individual's academic interest, ability and motivations?
- What is the evidence of their physical health and stamina?
- What is the evidence of their emotional well-being?
- What is the evidence of their self-discipline?
- How does the individual plan to finance their education?

A List of Outcomes for Inquiry

- A statement of their understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to their sense of call;
- A statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition;
- An analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity and their interrelationships;
- A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
- A statement of self-understanding which reflects the inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health; and
- A statement of their understanding of the tasks of Minister of Word and Sacrament perform, including an awareness of their specific gifts for office of Minister of Word and Sacrament and of areas in which growth is needed.

A list of Questions for Moving to Candidacy Examination

- Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the office of Minister of Word and Sacraments?
- Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
- Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?

- Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a Candidate for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

A List of Candidacy Interview Questions

Personal Issues:

- How would you describe the Inquirer's commitment to God and to the world?
- How deeply do they demonstrate self-awareness?
- How do they demonstrate a sense of responsibility and self-direction?
- How does the Inquirer relate to people?
- How effective are their leadership skills?
- How do they seem to tolerate stress?
- Does the Inquirer appear to be open to the influence of others?
- How do they seem to relate to authority figures?

Educational Issues:

- Do they demonstrate adequate academic skills?
- Is there sufficient motivation for scholastic achievement?
- Are they meeting the constitutional requirements?
- Do they have adequate experience in a local church or other context for experiential learning?
- Have they made appropriate theological education plans?

Situational Issues:

- Are there financial obstacles?
- Are there health limitations?
- Are there family or spouse considerations?
- Are the Inquirer's present goals feasible and realistic?

Occupational Issues:

- Is the Inquirer's blend of temperament, abilities, coping style, values and motivation suitable for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament?
- Should they consider a specialized ministry or alternate occupations?
- Does the Inquirer have a realistic understanding of the occupational demands and job opportunities in the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament?

A List of Candidacy Questions for Use Before Presbytery

- Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament?
- Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
- Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
- Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a candidate for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

A List of Outcomes for Candidacy

- Presenting evidence of competence in the fields such as theology, Bible, polity, and Worship and Sacraments, of ministerial skill attested in the supervised practice of ministry;
- Expressing theological views compatible with the confessional documents of the church;
- Expressing understanding of the meaning of the questions required for ordination (W4.4003) informed by knowledge of the church in diverse settings;
- Revealing commitment to the office of Minister of Word and Sacraments within the Presbyterian Church (USA) with personal maturity, spiritual depth, and a capacity to respond to the needs of others, including colleagues in ministry;
- Presenting a written sermon, together with a description of the contemporary need to which it was addressed, an exegetical interpretation of the biblical material out of which the sermon arose that you wish to submit, and a list of sources used. This sermon shall be preached before the calling presbytery or a committee thereof as a part of the appearance of the candidate.

B. DESCRIPTION OF FORMS USED IN THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS

All these forms are found online at http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process/

Form 1A *"Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer"*
To be completed initially by the applicant seeking to be enrolled. Both the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry and the presbytery's actions regarding the application are recorded on this form. It provides basic information regarding the applicant's background, identity, and interests. This form includes a list of personal references.

Form 1B "Questions for Reflection"
These questions are to be completed by the applicant as a basis for direct discussion first with the session of the applicant's home church and later with the presbytery's committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry.

Form 1C "Financial Planning for Theological Education"
Using basic information provided by the applicant, this spreadsheet automatically generates a projection of the applicant's financial resources and needs relative to the required seminary training.

Form 1D "Session Evaluation and Recommendation"
This form is completed by the applicant's session and forwarded along with the other application forms to the presbytery's committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry. The form includes questions that may guide the session's discussion with the applicant and provide support for its recommendation to the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry.

Form 2A "Report of Consultation regarding application"
In addition to formulating its recommendation to the presbytery to enroll the applicant as an inquirer, the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry should also establish goals for the first year the new inquirer will be under care. This form records the growth objectives agreed to by the

new Inquirer and the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry. The completed report is sent to the enrollee, the theological institution, and the sponsoring session.

Form 2B "Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release"
A signed acknowledgement of the new covenant relationship entered into by the Inquirer, the session and the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry. The Inquirer release sets in motion an understanding that permits the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry to secure information necessary to make responsible decisions and recommendations.

Form 3 "Pre-consultation report on development areas"
This report, completed by the Inquirer/Candidate before each consultation, evaluates progress in accomplishing previously agreed-upon goals and objectives. The form requests a listing of completed courses, and includes specific questions to be addressed in each of the five growth areas.

Form 4 "Report on Consultation"
A summary report of the consultation, completed by the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry and the Inquirer/Candidate, that indicates developmental progress in the five key areas along with growth objectives agreed to for the next year. The completed report is sent to the Inquirer/Candidate, theological institution, and sponsoring session.

Form 5A "Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate"
To be completed initially by the Inquirer seeking to be advanced to candidacy. The recommendations of the session and the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry along with the action taken by the presbytery are recorded on this form.

Form 5B "Session recommendation for Enrollment as Candidate"
This form is completed by the Inquirer's session and forwarded to the presbytery's committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry. Questions that may guide the session's discussion with the inquirer and provide support for its recommendation to the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry may be found in the "Advisory Handbook" on pages 39 – 41. Attach a letter explaining rationale for the session's action in light of Inquirer's suitability.

Form 5C "Report of Consultation to become a Candidate"
A signed acknowledgement of the new covenant relationship entered into by the Candidate and the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry. This form also establishes growth areas for Candidate. The completed report is sent to the Inquirer/Candidate, theological institution, and sponsoring session.

Form 5D "Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release"
A signed acknowledgement of the new covenant relationship entered into by the Candidate, the session and the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry. The Candidate release sets in motion an understanding that permits the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry to secure information necessary to make responsible decisions and recommendations.

Form 6 "Summary Report of Final Assessment"
This form, completed by the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry, acknowledges that the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry of the Candidate's presbytery has conducted a final assessment of the Candidate's preparation and readiness to begin ministry. It certifies that they have successfully completed all requirements of the denomination and the committee/commission overseeing preparation for ministry and so is ready to be examined for ordination. It should be accompanied by supporting documentation that is identified on the form. (Since this report may need to be shared with another calling presbytery, all presbyteries should use this form as issued.)

Online Reporting to Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly
Since January 2014 the Office of the General Assembly has exclusively used online management systems for presbyteries to report actions related to their Inquirers and Candidates. The system also provides direct access to Senior Ordination Exams and their evaluations as well as Bible Content Exam results, and is to be used by presbyteries to report their ordination exam readers to the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC). Both a "User's Guide" and a "Quick Reference Sheet" have been prepared to assist presbyteries in the use of the system.

http://www.pcusa.org/resource/exam-system-users-guide/

C. Presbytery of Great Rivers **CPM Flow Chart**

PERSON
interested in becoming inquirer (must be member of church for 6 months)

PASTOR
Provides **FORM 1A, 1B, 1C** to person who completes all pages

SESSION
Session makes decision after meeting with member. Session completes **FORM 1D.** Session sends **ALL**completed and signed forms to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry via this email: PreparationforMinistry-CPM@greatriverspby.org

PRESBYTERY/CPM
Receives forms. Contacts person with date to meet with CPM.

PERSON & CPM
Person must have **FORM 1A, 1B, 1C, & 1D** completed & signed prior to meeting with CPM. CPM meets with potential Inquirer. CPM votes to accept as new Inquirer and completes **FORM 2A & 2B**. New Inquirer is assigned Liaison.

ASSEMBLY
CPM requests Assembly to accept person as new Inquirer.

INQUIRER
Ordinarily 1year as Inquirer.

Vocational Assessment Counseling
Inquirer must attend career counseling. Ordinarily Church pays 1/3, Inquirer pays 1/3, CPM pays 1/3 (including travel and expenses up to $250.00). Inquirer releases report to CPM.

INQUIRER ANNUAL MEETING
Meet with CPM for annual consultation and must have **FORM 3** completed and e-mailed to CPM no later than 21 days prior to annual meeting. Liaison will meet with Inquirer to complete FORM 4.

When Inquirer wishes to become a Candidate, they must first meet with session. Session asks CPM to move them to status of Candidate. The Inquirer **must** also have **FORM 5A and 5B** completed AND signed by Session. Report must be sent to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator at: PreparationforMinistry-CPM@greatriverspby.org at least 21 days prior to meeting.

If CPM approves Inquirer's request to become Candidate, CPM will complete **FORM 5C** and **5D** at meeting. Candidate must be presented on the floor of Assembly for questioning regarding their call. **NO** theological questions are asked at this time. Assembly will vote to accept Inquirer as a new Candidate.

CANDIDATE
At least 1 year as Candidate Must take and pass ALL five Standard ordination exams.

CANDIDATE ANNUAL MEETING
Meet with CPM for annual consultation and must have **FORM 3** completed and E-mailed to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator at: PreparationforMinistry-CPM@greatriverspby.org no later than 21 days. prior to annual meeting. Liaison will meet with Inquirer to complete FORM 4.

CANDIDATE ANNUAL MEETING
Meet with CPM for review and to be Certified Ready to Receive a Call. Must send to CPM via email at least 21 days prior date of meeting, a Digital copy of sermon, Statement of Faith and PDP. CPM to complete **FORM 6**.

CPE is not a requirement, but it is highly recommended.

II. RESOURCES FOR THOSE ENTERING THE PREPARATION PROCESS FOR RULING ELDERS SEEKING COMMISSIONING TO A PARTICULAR CHURCH OR VALIDATED MINISTRY

APPENDIX A (Summary of Differences between MWS and CRE)

Committee on Ministry Comparison of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Ruling Elders

	Ministers of the Word and Sacrament – Called and Installed	**Ministers of the Word and Sacrament - Temporary Supply**	**Commissioned Ruling Elders**
Functions			
Preaching	Yes	Yes	Yes
Preside at The Lord's Supper	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Baptism	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Funerals	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weddings	Yes	Yes	Yes, per local law
Moderate session	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Moderate congregational mtg	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
May ordain elders / deacons	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Voice and vote at Presbytery (if PCUSA)	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Call / Hiring			
Utilizes Church Leadership Connection	Yes, generally	Sometimes	No
PNC coordinates search and hiring	Yes, generally	Sometimes	Sometimes
Hired by session or congregation	Congregation	Session	Session
Requires approval of COM	Yes	Yes	Yes
Installation commission	Yes	No	No
Term of Call	No term	1 year/ renewable	1-3 years/ renewable
Compensation			
Presbytery minimum terms of call	Apply	Apply	80% of MWS Minimum Salary[6]
BOP health plan	Pastor Participation plan required	May be in BOP Pastor Participation, Minister's Choice, or another plan	Optional
Pension	Required	Sometimes	Optional
Reimbursable Expenses	Required	Generally required	Optional

[6] Verify with COM's policy.

APPENDIX B (CRE Process Quick Reference)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Progress Checklist for Commissioned Ruling Elders

Seeking Phase

Date	Task
_____	Date Candidate joined as a member of the congregation: _____
_____	Date Candidate was ordained as a Ruling Elder: _____
_____	Form CRE1a (*Application for Certification Program for Commissioned Ruling Elder) Completed and Submitted to the CPM*
_____	Form CRE1b (*Reference for Commissioned Ruling Elder Applicant) [One form from each of three (3) references) Completed and submitted to the CPM.*
_____	Interview with the session of the Sponsoring Congregation
_____	Form CRE2 (*Session Evaluation and Recommendation) Completed and submitted to the CPM.*
_____	Interview with the CPM.
_____	Candidate received as a CRE In Training by the CPM
_____	Liaison assigned by the CPM: _____

Learning Phase

Date	Task
_____	Candidate along with their liaison develop an appropriate learning covenant.
_____	Learning Covenant is approved by CPM
_____	Candidate enrolls and begins their program of study.
_____	Training completed: Introduction to the Old Testament
_____	Training completed: Introduction to the New Testament
_____	Training completed: Pastoral Care
_____	Training completed: Presbyterian Polity
_____	Training completed: Reformed Worship and Sacraments
_____	Training completed: Introduction to Preaching
_____	Training completed: Foundations of Christian Education
_____	Training completed: Reformed Theology
_____	Training completed: Internship (if required)
_____	Training completed: Healthy Boundaries Workshop
_____	Vocational Assessment Counseling performed

Certification and Commissioning Phase

Date	Task
_____	Personal Statement of Faith completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Written Self-Evaluation completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Sermon and Context Statement prepared and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Sermon preached to the CPM.
_____	Continuing Education plans completed and submitted to the CPM.

_____ Affidavit declaring the absence of any convictions of sexual or financial misconduct completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____ CPM ensures that a criminal background check is conducted.
_____ Candidate examined by the CPM.
_____ Form CRE4 (*CPM Evaluation/Recommendation) completed by the CPM and submitted to the Presbytery.*
_____ Candidate is presented and approved by the presbytery assembly.
_____ Candidate is Certified by the presbytery as ready to receive a commission.
_____ Mentor/Supervisor assigned by the COM: _____
_____ Session in coordination with the COM develop an appropriate Covenant Agreement.
_____ Covenant Agreement is signed by all parties.
_____ The COM recommends to the presbytery that the CRE Candidate be commissioned based on the signed Covenant Agreement.
_____ Presbytery assembly commissions CRE at an appropriate Service of Commissioning.
_____ Session conducts a Service of Recognition welcoming the CRE to their congregation.

APPENDIX C (List of Training programs & required coursework)

Core Courses:

- Introduction to the Old Testament
- Introduction to the New Testament
- Introduction to Preaching
- Christian Education
- Pastoral Care
- Presbyterian Polity
- Reformed Theology
- Reformed Worship and Sacraments

If you are a ruling elder and are interested in receiving specific training that would allow you to be commissioned to serve in the role of pastor in one of our presbytery's congregations, here are three options:

- Option 1 – join the Wabash Valley Presbytery cohort. This partnership allows you to take online classes through Columbia Theological Seminary and have in-person training. This option keeps you with a cohort of ruling elders throughout the training to help you build a support system.

- Option 2 – take online classes through University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

- Option 3 - take online classes through Union Theological Seminary.

Scholarships are available through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). To be eligible for the scholarship you will need to be endorsed by the Session of your home congregation (congregation of membership) and meet with the CPM (we meet via Zoom) to be accepted into care.

All of that is done once you contact the Commissioned Ruling Elder Coordinator for the Presbytery of Great Rivers. Throughout the training you will have a partner from CPM and the CRE Coordinator to support your studies.

CRE Coordinator:
Rev. Dr. Cheyanna Losey
Email: cheyannalosey@gmail.com
Cell phone: 309-299-4790

APPENDIX D (CRE Form 1a)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Application for Certification Program for Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE)

Applicant's Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
(Street or PO Box)

_____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Phone (Home): _____ Phone (Cell): _____
Email Address: _____
Gender: Male Female Date of Birth:

_____
Occupation/Place of Employment: _____
Church of Membership: _____
(Name of Church) (City, State)

What church occupation (Pastor, Youth Leader, etc.) are you interested in at this time?

_____
_____

Academic Background
List the academic institutions you have attended, beginning with high school, and complete the information requested:

Institution	Dates Attended	Program/Major	Diploma/Degree

Describe any previous experience in lay preaching or lay pastor training:

Occupational History
List the three most recent full-time or part-time positions in which you have been employed and attach it to this application. Provide the following information: job title, dates of employment, aspect most enjoyed, aspect most disliked.

Church History
Date and place of baptism:
Date and place of profession of faith:
Church membership:
Date joined:

Date ordained a ruling elder:
Date ordained a deacon:

List other churches where you have been a member.

List areas of involvement in your local church, both as a participant and as a leader. Indicate areas of leadership.

List areas of involvement in Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly.

List voluntary services, civic or social organizations of which you are or have been a member. Indicate your extent of participation and your role.

List any factors that may place limits on your ability to receive training or to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE).

Questions for Reflection
Write a response to each of the following questions and attach to this application.

1. In one or two paragraphs, describe yourself as a person.
2. Describe briefly what it means to your to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder? What has motivated you to consider this program?
3. Write a brief statement of your personal faith (approximately 300-500 words). Your statement should describe (at minimum) what you believe about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and your relationship to them.
4. What does it mean to you to be a Presbyterian?
5. Describe your current spiritual journey, spiritual practices, prayer life, and disciplines.
6. Comment on your interests, hobbies, and stress-relieving activities.

References
Please list three people who will serve as references. One should be your pastor or a pastor within Great Rivers Presbytery.

Name:_____
Address:_____
Phone:_____Email:_____
Relationship:_____

Name:_____
Address:_____
Phone:_____Email:_____
Relationship:_____

Name:_____
Address:_____
Phone:_____Email:_____
Relationship:_____

Please ask your references to complete Form BHP-CRE 1B (Reference for Commissioned Ruling Elder Applicant), including the questions for reflection, and send their responses under separate cover directly to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at the following address: Great Rivers Presbytery, Attn: CPM, P.O. Box 476, Oregon, IL 61061.

I promise, in reliance upon the grace of God, to participate diligently and wholeheartedly with the session and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation on Ministry/Committee of Ministry in exploring my vocation.

Signature:_____Date:_____

After completing the application, make a copy for yourself and submit the original to the Clerk of Session or Moderator of the session of your home church.

APPENDIX E (CRE Form 1b)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Reference for Commissioned Ruling Elder Applicant

Background information for (applicant's name):_____

Reference Name:_____

Relationship to Applicant:_____

Length of time known person:_____

Date:_____

The person named above is seeking admission to the Commissioned Ruling Elder program. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry would appreciate your candid response to the following questions:

1. To what extent does the applicant adhere to Christ's teachings?
2. What is your experience of the applicant's commitment to the Presbyterian Church (USA)?
3. What special gifts, talents and skills does the applicant exhibit for service as a Commissioned Ruling Elder?
4. What is the most recent example of the applicant's service to the church?
5. If the applicant were your Commissioned Ruling Elder, what specific areas would you wish them to improve?
6. If you are a Minister of Word and Sacrament and a member of the Presbytery of Great Rivers, would you be willing to serve as the applicant's mentor if asked?

Please use a separate sheet(s) for your response, attach it to this form, and send your response directly to:

CRE Coordinator Rev. Dr. Cheyanna Losey
cheyannalosey@gmail.com
or
1299 Day Street, Galesburg, IL 61401

or

Committee on Preparation for Ministry
preparationforministry-CPM@greatriverspby.org

APPENDIX F (CRE Form 2)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Confidential Session Endorsement

On _____, 20_____, the Session met with the _____

(applicant) and examined him/her/them about becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder Candidate of the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

We, the session of the _____Presbyterian Church (USA) in_____

_____, Illinois, certify that _____ is an active member of our congregation.

The session does / does not (please circle) endorse this application for admission to the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program of the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

We are able / unable (please circle one) to provide financial support by paying 1/3 of the vocational assessment counseling fee.

Moderator/Clerk of Session_____ Date_____

Report on Session's Consultation with Applicant

1. Where have you seen this Candidate exhibit God's grace in life and in their ministry as an elder?

2. What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this individual (e.g., the ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, leadership or administrative abilities)?

Pease mail to: CRE Coordinator Rev. Dr. Cheyanna Losey, 1299 Day Street, Galesburg, IL 61401 or cheyannalosey@gmail.com.
Or Committee on Preparation for Ministry: preparationforministry-CPM@greatriverspby.org

APPENDIX G (CRE Form 3)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Learning Covenant for CRE applicant, CPM, and Liaison
To be reviewed annually with all parties.

Applicant's Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
(Street or PO Box)
_____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Phone (Home): _____ Phone (Cell): _____
Email Address: _____

CPM Liaison's Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
(Street or PO Box)
_____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Phone (Home): _____ Phone (Cell): _____
Email Address: _____

Required classes to complete:

Class/Training Required	Anticipated Date & Program	Date Completed

Completion of background check: _____ (date)

Completion of vocational assessment: _____ (date & agency)

The liaison and applicant will meet regularly for support. Record of meetings dates:

Other trainings completed or recommended:

Other items of note.

Year One: _____ (date)

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
CPM Moderator Applicant

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
CPM Liaison CRE Coordinator

Year Two: _____ (date)

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
CPM Moderator Applicant

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
CPM Liaison CRE Coordinator

Year Three: _____ (date)

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
CPM Moderator Applicant

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
CPM Liaison CRE Coordinator

APPENDIX H (CRE Form 3)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Questions for Annual Consultation

Name: _____

Please return form by: _____ to _____

For your annual consultation at _____ AM/PM on _____

At _____

I. Attachments
   a. Certification of Training completed, grades if applicable

II. Information Update
   a. When will you complete your training? _____

III. Reflect on and respond briefly in the following areas of your training?
   a. Old Testament
   b. New Testament
   c. Church History
   d. Practice of Ministry
   e. Other

IV. Briefly describe your spiritual disciplines, including your participation in the worship and mission of a Presbyterian congregation.

V. Describe your relationship with your peers, authority figures, family, and others who are significant to you. What are the implications of those relationships in your ministry?

VI. Describe recent experiences of emotional impact, if any, and how you dealt with them.

VII. Comment on areas in which you believe you are growing and identify areas in which you feel the need for progress.

VIII. List other areas which you wish to discuss with the committee including financial needs, family concerns, etc.

APPENDIX I (CRE Form 4)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

CPM Evaluation/Recommendation

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry of Great Rivers Presbytery met with _____
On _____and submits the following report:

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

_____ **Endorses** the applicant to be trained by the presbytery to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

_____ **Does not endorse** the applicant to be trained by the presbytery to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
Moderator, CPM Applicant

APPENDIX J (CRE Form 5)

Great Rivers Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Certification Notice for CRE Candidates

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry of Great Rivers Presbytery met with _____
On _____and submits the following report:

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

_____ **Certifies** that the Candidate has been properly trained and is ready to receive a commission to a validated ministry within the bounds of the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

_____ **Does not certify** the Candidate as ready to receive a commission. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry believes that the Candidate has the following deficiencies regarding their readiness to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder. The CPM would be willing to reconsider certification once these deficiencies have been corrected.

Deficiencies that need to be corrected:

_____
_____
_____

Signed:_____ Signed:_____
Moderator, CPM Applicant