Commissioned Ruling Elder Program

**PRESBYTERY OF SHEPPARDS AND LAPSLEY**

***What is a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) and what can they do?***

**G-2.1001** “When the presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery MAY authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated **may** be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, **may** authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and too officiate at marriages **where permitted by state law.** This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.”

**G-2.1002** “A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by the presbytery. A ruling elder who **has been** commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.”

**G-2.1003** “When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of a ruling elder to serve a congregation providing the services described above, it shall commission the ruling elder to pastoral service as designated by the presbytery, employing the questions contained in

W-4.0404.

**G-2.1004** “The ruling elder commissioned under the terms of G-2.1001 shall work under the supervision of the presbytery. The presbytery may at any time withdraw the commission for reasons it deems good and sufficient. A Minister of Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.”

**SR-6.0402k** of the Standing Rules of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley provides that one of the functions of the Commission on Ministry (COM) is to “Provide care and oversight to the presbytery’s commissioned ruling elder program, including recommendation for commissioning.”

Approval has been given by the Presbytery to the Executive Presbytery or the Moderator of COM to give a ruling elder who has completed all the requirements for commissioning permission to officiate at the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper if requested by the session of a particular Church. Permission has not been given by Presbytery to officiate at the Sacrament of Baptism.

**I\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_agree to function within the requirements so stated above and further understand and agree to:**

1. There is no guarantee that I will be commissioned to a particular church or other mission once all training and other requirements have been met.

2. I am expected to participate in the 10- hour annual continuing education required and sponsored by the Presbytery and that I must pay a minimum tuition for this training. If I cannot attend the Presbytery sponsored training, I am responsible for securing other training which must be approved by the Dean of Training or the Moderator of COM. I further understand that I must pay my own tuition and if I fail to meet this requirement, the COM may remove me from the Presbytery Supply list and I am no longer available for commissioning.

3. I am expected to provide a written annual report to the COM in December of each year detailing my preaching activity and other missional service and my annual continuing education.

4. If I am commissioned, I will attend presbytery or otherwise seek an excuse from the Stated Clerk. I understand that **only if I am commissioned** to a particular church or other validated ministry that I am given presbytery vote in accordance with SR-3.0103d3. However, I will have vote if I am my home church’s commissioner for that particular presbytery meeting.

5. I understand that if I am commissioned to a particular church or ministry, I can perform the functions listed in G-2.1001 for **only** that particular congregation or ministry in accordance with G-2.1002. I agree not to overstep the authority granted to me by my commissioning.

6. I understand that I have no standing beyond the boundaries of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.

A Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is an elder who is trained and commissioned by the presbytery to provide pastoral services to a particular church or churches (G-2.1001). A ruling elder may be granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service for a designated congregation and will be allowed to perform the following functions (moderate the session, administer the Sacraments and officiate at marriages where permitted by state law) for that particular congregation, renewable at the request of the session and upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministry on an annual basis. Remember that upon completion of the CRE program, candidates are not automatically authorized to perform the above pastoral duties. Each presbytery authorizes specific duties for the CRE in each specific commission.

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