

**Advisory Handbook  
of the  
Commission on Preparation For Ministry**

of the Presbytery Of Sheppards And Lapsley  
Synod Of Living Waters  
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Designed to Assist  
Pre-Inquirers, Inquirers, Candidates and  
those who assist them in preparation for the  
Ministry of Word and Sacrament

Updated August 2023

Greetings to all in the community of faith through which God calls, prepares and empowers people for ministry!

If you have received this document, you are probably considering ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or know someone who is. We hope these pages will be helpful to potential pastors, their liaisons and sessions as well as members of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry ("CPM") in understanding and navigating the many important steps in exploring one's call to ministry and preparing for ordination, particularly as we go about those steps in the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. This document is intended to describe the CPM's normal operations. It is intended to be a living document that is amended from time to time to reflect the actual workings of the CPM. The most current version should be found on the Presbytery's web site (<http://www.pslpcusa.org/>).

Ministry, of course, embraces all those tasks and responsibilities to which all Christians are called. Ministry is first and foremost the work of the whole church. But some people are identified and prepared for unique leadership, and the church has outlined procedures and responsibilities for two important dimensions of that preparation: the nurture and preparation of those who have experienced God's call to ministry, and our care for the church, assuring presbyteries and congregations of the fitness and competence of those who wish to lead.

This is a rigorous and demanding process for Inquirers and Candidates as well as for members of the CPM. It is at the same time a deeply gratifying and important work. We pray that as you consider the possibilities of ordination, or work with those who do, you may experience the grace of God, the presence of Christ and the discernment of the Holy Spirit.

This document will be in effect for all those entering the process beginning August, 2023.

Peace,

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry

## **Preface**

As Reformed Christians, Presbyterians affirm the church to be a community called into being by Jesus Christ. Christ gives the church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances. Christ is its head in all things. *Book of Order* F-1.0202.

Presbyterians believe in the priesthood of all believers and that all church members, regardless of their occupational choice, are engaged in ministry. It is their Christian vocation. Some among them may be called out by the Holy Spirit, through the church, to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Thus, the Ministry of Word and Sacrament is one among many occupations through which people express their God-given interests and abilities in life and daily work.

Response to this calling into the ministry is approached through a careful process of exploring gifts and motivations within the community of faith. During this exploration period, Candidates are also evaluated in light of the needs of the church and of the world.

The essential role of Ministry of Word and Sacrament is set forth both in the Bible and in the church's constitutional documents. Key concepts have historically included:

Ordained ministry is a gift of God to the church;

Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament equip church members for their ministry by proclaiming the Good News in word and sacrament, teaching faith stories and practices, caring for people and, along with ruling elders, ensuring that the church's life is governed in an orderly way;

A person experiences God's call to ministry privately as an inner urgency; however, the church experiences that call publicly as it affirms an individual's gifts for ministry and confirms God's call through the acts of ordination and installation;

The church actively seeks and ordains persons whose gifts and abilities equip them for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. If a person ordained to this ministry is later called by God to other work, the church can release them from ordained ministry.

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## Purpose of The Preparation for Ministry Process

The purpose of the Preparation for Ministry process of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is to help church members discern and fulfill their Christian vocation and to provide the best possible leadership for the church by assuring that persons who feel called to be Ministers of Word and Sacrament receive the fullest personal and professional preparation for this office. To this end, presbyteries enter into covenants with all those who are preparing to be Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

## Defining The Preparation Process

The relationship between the presbytery and a person preparing for Ministry of Word and Sacrament has three phases: **Pre-Inquiry**, **Inquiry** and **Candidacy**. The process of preparation for ministry is most effective when it reflects the Biblical theme of covenant relationship. The covenants that are made in this process are made in light of God's faithfulness and love for all people. All who are involved in the tasks and relationships of preparation for ministry should approach these tasks with diligence, openness, intentionality and faith.

The purpose of the **Pre-Inquiry** phase is for informal conversation to ensure that the CPM process is clear before any steps are taken (e.g., enrolling in a seminary).

The purpose of the **Inquiry** phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament to explore that call together in such a way that a decision regarding the Inquirer's suitability will be based on full knowledge and experience of one another. *Book of Order* 2.0603.

Inquiry is appropriate for all who show possibility for ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The phase of Inquiry lasts until the Inquirer, the session and Presbytery are able to determine whether the Inquirer has sufficient promise for ministry and whether it is highly probable that they will continue to develop the skills and gifts for Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The purpose of the **Candidacy** phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church in all the capacities of the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. It is a time of development, guidance and evaluation, and lasts until Presbytery determines that the Candidate is fully prepared to be ordained.

This process begins on the date Presbytery enrolls the applicant as an Inquirer. At least one year of the process must be spent in the Candidacy phase. Presbytery is represented in this process by a CPM, made up of ministers and ruling elders, some of whom serve as liaisons for one or more Inquirers or Candidates.

Annual reviews are required by the presbytery. Included as part of the annual review will be a decision as to whether to continue or terminate the period of Inquiry or Candidacy. The final assessment includes preaching a sermon. A vote of preparedness will be taken, and if affirmative, the Candidate will be declared ready to circulate a Personal Information Form (PIF), and the action will be reported to Presbytery at its next meeting.

Inquirers and Candidates may request to meet with the CPM at any time they feel the need for clarification or consultation at times other than scheduled annual reviews.

The entire process should nurture and test the individual's development in the following areas: education for ministry including choice of seminary, evaluation of academic potential and progress, reflection on the purpose of the educational experience, and specific preparation for the Ministry of Word Sacrament; spiritual development that provides a framework within which reflection on one's personal faith journey takes place; interpersonal relations that provide opportunities for reflection on how one relates to others and what this means to ministry; personal growth that provides opportunities for reflection on individual identity, areas that need

growth and development, understanding a call, and development of personal stewardship; and professional development that offers opportunities to develop specific skills that will enhance effectiveness as Ministers of Word and Sacraments and as presbyters.

During both the Inquiry and Candidacy phases, progress is measured by specific expected outcomes formulated for each of the five growth areas. These will become essential goals, not simply minimum requirements or assignments. The expected outcomes serve as the foci of ongoing, regular consultations between the Inquirer or Candidate and the CPM.

Every individual who seeks to prepare for ministry comes to the process with unique skills, personality traits, history, faith and needs, and the individuality of every Inquirer or Candidate should be honored. The church also comes to the process with particular expectations and needs. To this end, criteria for evaluation have been developed for each point of transition in the process: the Inquiry phase, the transition from Inquiry to Candidacy and evaluation of preparedness for ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. At each transition point, a decision will be jointly made as to whether it is appropriate to continue in the preparation process and when to move to the next stage.

Only in cases in which it is unlikely or highly ill advised should a person be turned away from Inquiry. An Inquirer is ready for Candidacy if they have met the expectations of the CPM in developing the skills and gifts for ministry. A Candidate will be declared ready for ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament when they are fully prepared and have sufficiently developed their gifts and skills.

Session and CPM liaisons should be in frequent contact with their Inquirer/Candidates as this relationship is the basic link in the preparation process. Annual meetings with the CPM are required of each Inquirer and Candidate; however, additional meetings may also be needed. Between the transition points, it is critically important that careful work is done on the particular areas of growth that are identified at each meeting with the CPM. Session and CPM liaisons should keep careful records of all conversations with the Inquirer/Candidate as well as noting progress toward fulfillment of all requirements.

## Authority of The Book of Order

The current *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the authority under which the CPM functions. All requirements and procedures of the current *Book of Order* must be followed in the Inquiry and Candidacy process (G-2.06). These are incorporated into this manual, along with additional requirements of the Presbytery.

## Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley Requirements

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley has determined that some additional steps will enrich and enhance the preparation process, and therefore requires some experiences such as **Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)**, **Vocational Assessment**, **Background Checks** and **congregational internship**. Graduates of, or students attending, non-Presbyterian seminaries will usually be required to take some courses in a Presbyterian seminary. See Appendix 7.

## An Overview of the Preparation for Ministry Process

**Pre-Inquiry Phase:** A person who is interested in becoming an Inquirer should first have a conversation with their pastor about the call to ministry. This should be done prior to seminary enrollment. The applicant shall be a member of a local congregation and shall have been active in its work for at least six months before beginning the preparation process. The CPM may then designate one of its members to meet with the session to explain the Inquiry/Candidate process. [Having first submitted Form 1A and the presbytery's required financial form [<http://pslpcusa.org/resources/>] to the session, the applicant will meet with the home church session to seek endorsement to enter into a covenant relationship for preparation for Ministry of Word and Sacrament. If endorsement is granted, a meeting with the CPM will be scheduled to review the application and supporting documents (including form 1D). The CPM then advises the Presbytery that the individual has been enrolled as an Inquirer.

**Inquiry Phase:** This begins with the date of Presbytery enrollment and shall be of sufficient length, to determine whether the Inquirer should apply to become a Candidate. *Book of Order* G-2.0602. It is a time for exploring issues of ministry, questioning, testing and growth and during which a number of the requirements for preparation are to be completed. These are as follows:

- Complete the Vocational Assessment; Background Check and Boundary Training
- Begin or continue coursework toward a Master of Divinity degree at an accredited seminary; grades are to be reported to the CPM each term, with an official transcript provided annually;
- Begin or continue additional coursework that may be recommended by the CPM
- Plan for the completion of an approved field education experience and an approved accredited unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.
- Prepare for and take the Bible Content Examination (ordination requirement);
- Annual reviews with CPM
- Always stay in touch with Session and CPM liaisons for advice and counsel

To move into the Candidacy Phase:

- Complete the six "Inquirers' Statements" that are part of the Candidacy application;
- Meet with session to review the six statements and request endorsement of application for Candidacy (Forms 5A and B);
- Meet with the CPM for review of status and to seek endorsement for advancement to Candidacy;
- Prepare for appearing before Presbytery with Statement of Faith and Faith Journey statement to be examined and approved as a Candidate by responding to the constitutional questions;

**Candidacy Phase:** This begins with the date of Presbytery enrollment and requires at least one year as a Candidate to complete. *Book of Order* G-2.0602. Candidacy is the time for completing the preparation requirements along with the finishing touches of readiness for ministry. Specific requirements are as follows:

- Annual reviews with CPM
- Completion of field education and submission of supervisor's evaluation, if required
- Complete M. Div. Degree and have final transcript sent to the CPM
- Pass Ordination and Bible Content examinations
- Finalize Statement of Faith, exegesis and sermon text
- Meet with CPM for a final assessment, to preach sermon, review exegesis and statement of faith

Permission will be granted to circulate the Personal Information Form following a successful Final Assessment, and the action will be reported to Presbytery at its next meeting.

## Detailed Information About The Process

### Application to Become an Inquirer

A completed application includes Forms 1A and 1D and the presbytery's required financial form with appropriate signatures, a final transcript that shows the undergraduate degree, and a transcript of any graduate and/or seminary study and degrees. The first visit with the CPM will be accomplished as soon as possible after the application and supporting documents are received by the CPM from the session.

The applicant and their pastor and session liaison will meet with the CPM to review the applicant's vision for ministry, process of discernment, etc. The CPM will then vote as to whether Presbytery should enroll the applicant as an Inquirer. If the decision is affirmative, growth goals will be planned and discussed. A member of the CPM will be assigned to serve as CPM liaison to the Inquirer. If the decision is not affirmative, discussion will center on additional steps the applicant might take to prepare for Inquiry or other options for ministry. The meeting will close with prayer by the liaison.

The decision to enroll the applicant as an Inquirer will be effective at the next Presbytery meeting.

### General Expectations During the Inquiry Period

The Inquiry phase is meant to be a time of exploration, questioning, testing and growth in the discernment process toward ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. There are a number of requirements to be met during this phase:

#### *Vocational Assessment*

Inquirers will coordinate with CPM to arrange for a Vocational Assessment with an appropriate professional approved by the CPM. The cost of the Vocational Assessment is allocated among the Inquirer, the Inquirer's church and Presbytery, as determined by the CPM. The Inquirer should arrange for the CPM to receive a copy of the Vocational Assessment. Upon receipt of the Vocational Assessment, the CPM may schedule another meeting with the Inquirer to review the assessment. This should take place before the Inquirer's advancement to Candidacy.

#### *Background Checks*

Inquirers will coordinate with CPM to arrange for a Background Check. The cost of the Background Check will be paid for by the CPM. The Inquirer should arrange for the CPM to receive a copy of the Vocational Assessment. Upon receipt of the Vocational Assessment, the CPM may schedule another meeting with the Inquirer to review the assessment. This should take place before the Inquirer's advancement to Candidacy.

#### *Boundary Training*

Inquirers will coordinate with CPM to arrange for Boundary Training as required by the Book of Order G-2.0603. This training includes both Sexual Misconduct and Child Sex Abuse training. Many seminaries already offer such a course. Inquirers will be required to submit proof of completion of both aspects of Boundary Training to the CPM and should take place before advancing to Candidacy,

#### *Field Education and Clinical Pastoral Education*

While the CPM requires both field education and CPE for all Candidates prior to final assessment, it may require that field education, CPE or both be completed before advancement to Candidacy. The CPM reserves



the right to approve the location of CPE. Supervisor evaluations must be submitted to the CPM as part of the evaluative material collected during the preparation process.

Field education is completed during the course of seminary study and should be in a Presbyterian congregation. The CPM expects to approve the site prior to the beginning of work. The term may be at least nine months of part-time (15-20 hours/week) or full-time for three months. The placement may not be in the home church of the Inquirer/Candidate, but ideally in a context that offers a balance and contrast to the home church environment. The supervisor's mid-term and final evaluations must be submitted to CPM for review.

### *Annual Reviews*

The CPM shall hold an annual review with all Inquirers/Candidates during the time they are under care of the Presbytery. Form 3 is used to compile information for this review. Scheduling the review is the joint responsibility of the CPM and the Inquirer/Candidate. The Inquirer/Candidate is responsible for submitting Form 3 to the CPM Moderator at least two weeks prior to the annual review. Failure to meet the deadline may result in the annual review being delayed or rescheduled.

### *Seminary Education*

Persons in the preparation process must attend a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). CPM recommends enrollment at a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (USA). CPM approval is required for attendance at a non-PC(USA) seminary.

The seminary course of study must meet all requirements of the *Book of Order* (G-2.0607c), and additional requirements established by the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. Non-Presbyterian seminary graduates and students will be required to take specified courses at a Presbyterian seminary (see Appendix 7).

### *Bible Content Examination*

The Bible Content Examination is one of the five examinations required for ordination in the PC(USA). Inquirers are encouraged to take it during the Inquiry phase.

### *Inquirer's Pre-Candidacy Statements*

Inquirers are required to complete six statements on specified topics that are a major part of the application for Candidacy. These statements will be submitted along with the session for its review and consideration. The Statement of Faith will be considered as the first draft of the final statement. (See Appendix 10).

## **Requests for Exceptions**

If for some reason an Inquirer cannot meet all requirements, a request for an exception may be considered by the CPM. Such a request must be made in writing to the CPM at least two weeks prior to the next meeting. All requests for exceptions must meet the requirements of the *Book of Order* G-2.0610 and some may require approval by the Presbytery.

## **Transition to the Candidacy Phase**

Acceptance into the Candidacy phase indicates a high probability of ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. During Candidacy, full and final preparations of an individual for ministry will be completed and

the Candidate will be declared ready to receive a call.

### **Application for Candidacy**

The Inquirer will determine the appropriate time to apply for Candidacy. Along with assessment of the Inquirer's gifts and skills for ministry, there are specific requirements to be met:

- At least one annual review
- Field education and CPE with evaluations on file
- Passing of the Bible Content Examination (expected but not required)
- Vocational Assessment, Background Check, and Boundary Training completed and report submitted to CPM
- Official transcripts on file
- Six Inquirer's statements Appendix 10

### **Procedure for Application**

The Inquirer should complete Forms 5A and B. The six statements are to be included as part of the application. The Inquirer will arrange to meet with the pastor and session as they consider the application and make a recommendation for endorsement. If approved, the moderator of the session will sign the appropriate forms and submit them to the CPM.

The Inquirer is responsible for ensuring that the CPM Moderator receives the fully completed Forms 5A and B at least two weeks prior to the meeting of the CPM at which the application will be considered.

### **Meeting with the CPM**

The Inquirer should be accompanied by their pastor and session liaison. The Inquirer's Candidacy application and statements will be distributed to the CPM prior to the meeting. All Inquiry phase requirements should have been met. The six statements will form the basis of the discussion and review, along with any other concerns or issues that may arise. The Inquirer will be given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and observations about the preparation process thus far. The Inquirer's pastor and session liaison should feel free to comment and ask questions. At the close of the discussion, the Inquirer will be asked to leave the room while the CPM decides whether to recommend to Presbytery at its next meeting that the Inquirer be enrolled as a Candidate. The CPM will in any event, formulate growth goals for the Inquirer and present them to the Inquirer. The review will close with prayer.

### **Appearance before Presbytery**

Advancement to Candidacy is a step that must be approved by Presbytery after recommendations by the session and CPM. It is the time when the Presbytery affirms the gifts and skills of a person under care and pledges its support in the final stages of preparation. Prior to the Presbytery meeting, the Inquirer will prepare a brief Faith Journey statement and a Statement of Faith. These two documents are to be submitted to the CPM Moderator well in advance of the Presbytery meeting so as to be included in the packet of materials mailed to the Presbyters prior to the meeting.

The Inquirer will be presented to Presbytery and may be given an opportunity to make a brief introductory statement before being examined about their Christian Faith, forms of Christian Service undertaken and motives for seeking the Ministry. Following the examination, a motion "to sustain the examination" will be made. If the vote is affirmative, the Presbytery Moderator will invite family, pastor and liaisons to be present with the Inquirer when the questions of commitment are asked (Appendix 13). There will be a laying on of hands while

the Moderator or someone else chosen by the Inquirer offers a prayer and presents a charge to the Candidate.

If the vote is negative, Presbytery will return the applicant to CPM to continue as an Inquirer. A prayer will be offered. A list of specific recommendations/concerns from Presbytery will be reviewed with the applicant.

The Stated Clerk of Presbytery will sign the appropriate forms that will be distributed to the Candidate, session and the General Assembly Office.

## **The Candidacy Phase**

The purpose of the Candidacy phase is to provide a time for further development toward full readiness for Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and to provide an opportunity for both CPM and the Candidate to address issues of experience, integration, competency and theological maturity. At least one year is required in the Candidacy phase (*Book of Order* G-2.0602).

There will be continuous assessment of the final materials, seminary course work, CPE and field education (if not completed during Inquiry), and any other issues or concerns. Candidates should be engaged in theological discussions related to the call to ministry and their preparation process with peers, mentors, family, and the CPM.

It is expected that an annual review will be held each year after which the CPM determines whether to continue the Candidacy process. The CPM liaison and Candidate should remain in close contact during this period to assure that all requirements are being met.

In addition to preparing and presenting various written reports, evaluations and assessments, the Candidate should take the required ordination examinations at the appropriate time, in consultation with the CPM. Permission to write the examinations must be granted by the CPM Moderator.

## **Completion of The Candidacy Phase and Circulation of The PIF**

It is a time of great rejoicing when all preparations and requirements have been met and the time for final assessment of readiness for ministry has arrived.

The Candidate's file should contain:

- Forms 1A, B and D, 2A and B, all copies of form 3, 4, 5A, B, C and D
- Vocational Assessment, Background Check and Boundary Training Reports
- CPE supervisor's evaluation
- Field education supervisor's evaluation
- Six Inquirer's statements
- Current official transcripts and evidence of anticipated or past seminary graduation with completion of all CPM's required courses
- All five ordination examinations successfully completed and submitted to the CPM Moderator by the Candidate
- Statement of Faith and Faith Journey
- Exegesis and sermon

The final assessment consists of: a review of all relevant materials, preaching of the sermon by the Candidate, discussion of the sermon and the exegesis and the statement of faith, following which the Candidate will be excused while the CPM discusses the review and votes whether to certify the Candidate ready to circulate their PIF and receive a Call. The Candidate will be notified of the CPM's action and the meeting will be closed with prayer by the CPM liaison. There often follows a time of informal visiting and well wishing after the closing

prayer.

Approval by the CPM will be reported to Presbytery at its next meeting. If the vote is negative, the CPM will decide whether to recommend that the Candidate continue and determine what further work is needed before another review is scheduled. The meeting will be closed with prayer and care and support will be offered to the Candidate.

The PIF form is accessed on the website of the PC(USA).

## **Leaving The Preparation for Ministry Process**

At any time during the process it may be determined that an Inquirer or Candidate will not continue.

If the Inquirer/Candidate decides to leave the process, the pastor and session should be informed of the decision. A request to be removed from the Presbytery roll of Inquirers and Candidates should be presented in writing to the CPM Moderator. The Inquirer/Candidate's name will be removed and Form 7 will be signed by the Stated Clerk and sent to the Denomination's Office of Resourcing CPMs. *Book of Order G-2.0609*

The CPM may decide that it is not in the best interest of all that an Inquirer or Candidate continue in the process. This would ordinarily take place within the context of an annual review and would be recorded on Form 4. The CPM moderator will inform the pastor and session liaison of the recommendation. The Inquirer/Candidate's name will be removed and Form 7 will be signed by the Stated Clerk and sent to the denomination.

*Book of Order - G-2.0609*

A session may also determine that the preparation process of an Inquirer or Candidate is not proceeding appropriately and may discontinue the covenant relationship and remove the person from the care of the session. The recommendation of the session must be sent to Presbytery through the Stated Clerk. An opportunity for the Inquirer/Candidate or the members of the session to meet with the CPM may be granted.

## **Expectations: Criteria for Evaluation**

The following criteria are intended as general evaluative guidelines and should not be used legalistically:

Acceptance into Inquiry indicates a POSSIBILITY for ministry. (*Book of Order G-2.0603*)

The goals of the application period are to:

- Determine whether the person has at least basic potential for Ministry of Word and Sacrament;
- Begin to question the nature of call;
- Begin to discern the nature of the applicant's vocation, whether to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament or to another calling;
- Prepare the applicant for the highly evaluative period of Inquiry and Candidacy; and offer suggestions for further exploration of vocation and development in the event the applicant is not accepted.

Expectations during the time of application include:

Evidence of spiritual development through:

- Vital, searching faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ;
- Commitment to biblical faith;
- Exploration of personal spirituality and disciplines; and

- Active participation in a congregation of the PC(USA).

Readiness for education toward ministry with:

- Intellectual ability for ministry;
- Academic interest, motivation and proficiency;
- Capacity to deal with abstract ideas and symbols; and
- Understanding of the dynamics of a worshipping community, particularly in the context of a PC(USA) congregation

Healthy interpersonal relations exhibited by:

- Positive qualities of compassion, listening skills and caring
- Realistic sense of self
- Sensitivity to one's environment (roles and culture)
- Ability to communicate with and listen to others
- Ability to maintain relationships

Personal readiness as shown through:

- A reasonable level of emotional health and self-awareness
- Commitment to personal growth, including knowledge and use of tools for self-assessment
- Accord between understanding of self and others' perceptions of self
- Appropriate openness to counsel
- Strong sense of personal integrity
- Flexibility
- Awareness of personal limits
- Ability to finance theological education without inordinate debt

Professional readiness through:

- A sense of call to serve God as a Minister of Word and Sacrament
- Awareness of the larger church (presbytery, synod, general assembly) and its mission
- Commitment to participation in the PC(USA)
- Awareness of the covenantal relationship and mutual accountability that Presbyterians have to one another
- A sense of vocation of all Christians
- A sense of the importance of "equipping the saints" and ability to motivate others
- A beginning awareness of the tasks of, and one's suitability for, Ministry of Word and Sacrament
- Awareness of one's own gifts, skills and areas where growth is needed

Means of assessment may include:

- Written information provided by the applicant and church (Forms 1 and 2)
- Conversations with the pastor/clerk of the home church
- Endorsement by the session of the home congregation
- Interviews with CPM
- Interviews with personal references
- Academic transcripts

Goals of the Inquiry period are to:

- Determine whether the Inquirer is highly likely to finish developing the skills and gifts for Ministry of Word and Sacrament
- Assess the Inquirer's skills, gifts and development (strengths and weaknesses)

- Determine whether those gifts, skills and abilities best suit the Ministry of Word and Sacrament or another calling
- Decide whether to proceed to Candidacy, continue in the Inquiry phase, or leave the process and explore a more suitable calling

Acceptance into Candidacy indicates HIGH PROBABILITY for ministry

Expectations:

Education for ministry will be demonstrated through:

- Evidence of intellectual ability and capacity to integrate academic learning and practical experience in ministry
- Academic interest, motivation and proficiency demonstrated by moderate to high performance in seminary
- Ability to deal with abstract and concrete issues appropriately
- Ability to articulate one's faith vis-à-vis the Reformed tradition
- Seminary training including an appropriate balance of courses, both academic and practical (*Book of Order* and/or Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley requirements for ordination):
  - **Greek and Hebrew [language and exegesis], Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Reformed theology, church history, Reformed worship and sacraments, Presbyterian polity, preaching)**
  - Courses in pastoral care and counseling, Christian education and ethics are highly recommended
  - Church administration/financial management, if available

Spiritual development will be shown by:

- The ability to articulate one's faith, personal experience, essential elements of the Reformed tradition, and their interrelation
- Evidence of strong personal faith in God, revealed in Jesus Christ, and experienced through the Holy Spirit
- Response to faith through service to the church and the world
- Continuing exploration of and participation in a lively spiritual life, which includes prayer
- Participation in a worshipping community and experience in a PC(USA) congregation
- Understanding of the relationship between faith and the issues faced by people in the contemporary world

Interpersonal relationships demonstrating

- Have evidence of qualities of compassion, caring and empathy
  - Clarity about one's own values, gifts and priorities matched with an appreciation of those gifts in others
  - Sensitivity to one's setting and the ability to perform successfully in a variety of environments (school, church, other field education, home etc.)
  - Understanding of and effective response to issues of authority, roles and expectations
  - Effective communication skills in one-to-one and small and large group settings
  - Ability to deal productively with conflict, failure and pain (one's own and others')
- Ability to maintain appropriate relationships, acknowledge limits and set boundaries

Personal growth will be evidenced by

- Good mental health, including emotional stability, authenticity, a sense of humor, energy, motivation, comfort with self and others, appropriateness, and an adequately low level of anxiety
- Openness to learning, self-exploration, and counsel

- A fairly high degree of coincidence between one's self-image and others' perceptions
- Commitment to continued personal growth, knowledge of and appropriate use of tools for growth (e.g. Counseling, reading, mentors, spiritual advisors, prayer etc.)
- Ability to set priorities (pursue challenging goals, acknowledge realistic limits, and manage time effectively)

Professional development is evidenced by:

- An understanding of the larger church (presbytery, synod, general assembly) and its mission, polity and theology, and a commitment to participate in the PC(USA)
- Commitment to the covenantal relationship and mutual accountability in the PC(USA)
- Demonstrated leadership (initiative, self-confidence, organizational and communication skills) and ability to motivate others and cultivate leadership
- A clear sense of call and appropriateness of vocational choice, which includes compatibility of interests and gifts with those, required for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament
- An ability to think about the existence of the church in creative and expansive ways
- Experience in and understanding of the practice of worship in the Reformed tradition

The Means of Assessing Readiness for Candidacy will be:

- Academic transcripts
- Six Inquirer's statements prepared as part of the Candidacy application Appendix 10
- Seminary field education supervisor's evaluation and CPE supervisor's
- Evaluation
- Interviews by CPM
- Endorsement by the session (Forms 5A and B)
- Conversations with or recommendations of the seminary
- Conversations with the pastor/clerk of the home church
- Interviews with personal references (persons in a variety of appropriate contexts such as college/seminary, field education supervisors, family, friends, employers, and/or home church)
- Written information provided by the applicant and home church (including annual growth goals, Forms 3 and 4)
- Interview with the CPM
- Progress toward completion of the Bible Content Examination (required for Readiness for Ministry)
- Examination of the Inquirer with respect to their Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken and motives for seeking the ministry.
- Affirmative answers to the questions of commitment (Appendix 13) asked at the time of presentation to Presbytery

Goals of the Candidacy Period are to:

- Determine whether the Candidate is ready to receive a call and be ordained to Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and if not, how the person can further prepare for ordination or identify another vocation
- Identify areas of strength, weakness, continued growth and development
- Identify plans for transition into ministry

Approval for readiness for ministry certifies FULL PREPARATION for starting the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Expectations for certification of readiness are:

- Evidence of full education for ministry with sufficient fluency in the Christian and Reformed traditions, including Scripture, history, theology and church history
- Awareness of the scope and tasks of Ministry of Word and Sacrament
- Completion of seminary training, required course work and receipt of an mdiv degree (or its equivalent as approved by the CPM and Presbytery) before the final examination for ordination by a presbytery takes place

#### Spiritual development will be evidenced by:

- An articulate expression of personal faith compatible with the Reformed tradition, especially as seen in the confessional documents of the church
- A responsible, continuing struggle with difficult areas of faith such as sin, evil, the sovereignty of God, individual freedom, corporate responsibility, the atonement, etc.
- Continuing growth in personal spiritual disciplines and mission
- Authentic faith (beliefs and commitments practiced, coherence between theology and life, and ability to interpret life through the lens of theology)

#### Interpersonal relations

- Must show evidence of increasing depth of sensitivity, compassion and empathy
- Ability to evaluate and articulate one's own values, gifts and priorities and to identify and appreciate those of others
- Healthy interdependence with maturing balance between self, family, friends and community, especially in the areas of authority, responsibility and needs
- Ability to analyze one's setting including history, location/culture, personalities, dynamics/conflicts, spiritual and emotional health
- Well-developed communication skills, oral and written, for a variety of settings (counseling, preaching, teaching, writing and administration)
- Ability to deal productively with conflict, failure and pain (one's own and others')
- Ability to maintain appropriate relationships, acknowledge limits and set boundaries

#### Personal growth

- Will be shown by maturity and integrity demonstrated by trustworthiness, openness, flexibility, healthy level of self-esteem, sufficiently low levels of defensiveness and anxiety and an appreciation of one's role, expectations and context
- Commitment to the life-long pursuit of growth and self-discipline
- Balance in life with a commitment to work and play, and activities beyond the work place
- Self-motivation and ability to set priorities to pursue challenging goals, acknowledge realistic limits, and manage one's time effectively
- Ability to assume responsibility for physical, emotional, spiritual and financial health

#### Professional development

- Commitment to the church, its people, mission, theology and polity, and to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament
- Commitment to being an active presbyter, with some ideas about how to be involved in the life of the presbytery
- Ability and commitment to communicate the mission of the church and inspire faithful discipleship in others
- Ability to articulate and share the faith in the practice of Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the ability to discern and discuss theological issues in the life of the church and the world
- Effective skills for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament which include preaching, worship planning and leadership, teaching, counseling, administration, polity, etc. Ability and commitment to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.



The means of assessing readiness for ministry will include:

- Successful completion of the five standard ordination examinations (Bible Content, Polity, Theology, Worship and Sacraments, and Biblical Exegesis and Sermon) *Book of Order* G-2.0607.d
- A review of the Statement of Faith (one page)
- A review of the exegesis, bibliography and sermon text
- Receipts transcripts from seminary showing satisfactory grades and successful completion of a divinity degree from a Presbyterian seminary or an accredited theological institution approved by the CPM
- Receipt of the Vocational Assessment, Background Check and Boundary Training reports
- Evaluations from field education and CPE supervisors
- Interviews and conversations with the CPM liaison
- Conversations with the home pastor
- Interviews with personal references, as needed
- Written information provided by the Candidate including annual review consultation goals (Forms 3 and 4)
- The review by the CPM, which will certify readiness to receive a call and to be ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament

## *APPENDIX 1 --- Steps in The Preparation for Ministry Process*

The First Seven Steps Should Normally Occur Prior to Seminary Enrollment:

1. Minimum of 6 months' active membership in a PC(USA) congregation
2. Applicant contacts Session
3. Session notifies CPM of applicant
4. CPM consults with Session
5. Session interviews applicant, recommends to CPM
6. CPM interviews, enrolls applicant as Inquirer
7. CPM reports enrollment to Presbytery

The Continuing Process:

8. Inquirer participates in Vocational Assessment, completes a Background Check and completes Boundary Training to include both sexual misconduct and child sex abuse training
9. CPM reviews Vocational Assessment and Background Check reports with Inquirer and verifies both aspects of Boundary Training were completed
10. CPM conducts annual review and guides progress\*
11. After one year, Inquirer may apply through Session for Candidacy
12. Session interviews Inquirer, recommends to CPM
13. CPM interviews, recommends Candidacy status to Presbytery
14. Presbytery examines Inquirer, enrolls as Candidate
15. CPM conducts annual review and guides progress\*
16. Candidate takes Ordination Examinations
  - Bible Content
  - Biblical Exegesis
  - Theological Competence
  - Worship and Sacraments
  - Church Polity
17. CPM conducts final assessment of readiness for call
18. CPM authorizes circulation of PIF
19. CPM certifies readiness, reports to Presbytery
20. Candidate negotiates for call and service
21. Examination of Candidate by calling Presbytery for ordination

\* There may be more than one annual review during either Inquirer or Candidacy status depending upon the pace of the applicant through the process toward ordination.

## *APPENDIX 2 --- The Role of an Inquirer/Candidate: A Covenant*

The preparation for ministry process is a covenant relationship between an individual and the presbytery for the mutual task of nurturing the gifts of a particular person into their most appropriate expression, and enhancing the welfare of both the Church and the individual.

Each Inquirer/Candidate has two liaisons: One with the session and one appointed by the CPM. The goal is that the relationship with the Inquirer/Candidate, liaisons, session, and CPM will be supportive, helpful, productive and smooth. Every covenant entered into requires faith in God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a commitment by both the liaison and the Inquirer/Candidate to work with one another openly and with constant concern for one another.

Suggestions to the Inquirer/Candidate:

Always show a human face to your liaison. They are genuinely interested in you. Inform your liaison promptly of major events in your life, such as marriage, divorce, deaths, change of schools, etc. If you feel there is a communication problem, say so. If you are struggling with something, it is hoped that you will be able to discuss whatever it is with your liaison.

Make sure your Session Liaison is informed of your planned meetings with the CPM and Presbytery so that they may attend with you.

Ask questions! Ask them early! Ask them frequently!

Send originals of transcripts, ordination examinations, all reports, and other materials relating to preparation for ministry to the CPM Moderator.

Stay in touch with your liaison. Always make sure your liaison has your current address, phone number and email address if you have one.

Initiate communication with your liaison at least twice each year; monthly contact is not too frequent. Meet face-to-face whenever possible.

Be considerate of your CPM's limitations and deadlines by: submitting all required forms and reports in a timely manner; and communicating your questions and concerns to your CPM Liaison (not the CPM Moderator).

Give advance notice to your Session Liaison and your Pastor of the time and place of each of your meetings with the CPM. They should attend meetings of the CPM along with you, whenever possible.

### *APPENDIX 3 --- The Role of A CPM Liaison: A Covenant*

The CPM liaison is the key to the effective work of the CPM and is the continuing liaison with individual Inquirers and Candidates. The primary tasks of the liaison are to: act as a contact person, serve as an advocate for the Inquirer/Candidate and explain the process. The liaison will also communicate the CPM's concerns to the Inquirer/Candidate, and when appropriate, to the home church pastor and the session liaison. The CPM liaison will lead the discussion when their Inquirer/Candidate meets with the CPM.

Suggestions:

Explain the process and functioning of the CPM to your Inquirer/Candidate. Include what is expected of them and what they can expect of the CPM.

Put a human face on the process. The liaison is the primary person to communicate the care and concern of Presbytery.

Help Inquirer/Candidate get in touch with their strengths and weaknesses. Be honest and kind.

Initiate communication with Inquirer/Candidate at least twice a year and meet face-to-face whenever possible. Always respond to communications from an Inquirer/Candidate.

Initiate communication between the CPM and the Inquirer/Candidate.

Have conversations with the Inquirer/Candidate prior to each of their meetings with the CPM in order to be able to inform the CPM of the Inquirer/Candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and inform the Inquirer/Candidate of possible concerns of the CPM. Make sure the Inquirer/Candidate knows the time and place of their next meeting with the CPM, what documents are required for the meeting and when these documents are to be submitted to the CPM.

Be the Inquirer/Candidate's advocate at points of tension with the CPM. Interpret whenever necessary.

Remind the Inquirer/Candidate periodically of growth goals, requirements for ordination, including required course work, field education, CPE, Bible Content and other Standard Ordination Examinations, as well as papers that are due.

Work with Inquirer/Candidate in preparing all documents and forms required for each meeting with the CPM or the Presbytery.

Discuss the Inquirer/Candidate's developing faith and sources of spiritual growth.

Follow-up each meeting with a conversation. At times, there may be personal matters that the liaison may choose not to share; however, matters relevant to the Inquirer/Candidate's future ministry must be shared.

Pray for your Inquirer/Candidate.

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

### **Exploring the Call to Ministry of Word and Sacrament**

The local church is provided with a challenge and an opportunity when a member of the congregation approaches the pastor and session to express the possibility that they have been called to ministry. It is the session's responsibility to provide a supportive relationship through which to explore with the member the personal implications and suitability of a full-time church vocation.

Such awareness and experience emerges through prayerful examination of the member's personal faith, through their motivation and experience within the congregation, and through a shared assessment of all the responsibilities and gifts needed for ministry. These are important first steps in discerning whether the member is called by the Holy Spirit to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

### **Offering Support to Inquirers and Candidates**

The pastor, session and congregation communicate with and support the member throughout the entire period of preparation. This can be a deeply meaningful experience for all involved. In all matters relating to preparation, the member will be under the oversight (care) of Presbytery. To facilitate this relationship, this document provides for appointment of one elder from the church to act as liaison with the individual and with the CPM throughout the process.

It is important that the session contact the member at significant times during the preparation process, such as annual and special consultations with CPM, appearances before Presbytery, academic examination periods, ordination examination periods, when a call is being negotiated, and when ordination takes place.

Providing financial assistance is another very tangible expression of support. The session should consider budgeting to assist with the member's seminary tuition, room and board and books and supplies. The session is also asked to pay part of the fee for the required Vocational Assessment and part of the member's travel expenses incurred in meeting with the CPM. See Appendix 14.

The pastor and session may provide valuable support and learning by offering the Inquirer or Candidate opportunities to preach and lead worship.

### **Initiating the Preparation Process and the Inquiry Phase**

The session or pastor should contact the CPM Moderator when a church member indicates a desire to pursue their sense of call to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. A session meeting for orientation to the preparation process will be scheduled and a representative from the CPM will participate. The session will interview the applicant and hear their request to become enrolled as an Inquirer and will make a recommendation to the CPM regarding this request (Forms 1A, B and D). If the recommendation is positive, the session should then consider what assistance it will provide to the member during the Inquirer and Candidacy phases. As part of the covenant between the member and the session, the session and the member should have clear understandings of the financial, spiritual and other support the session will provide to the member as part of its covenant to be a faithful partner to the member and to care for and nurture the member with love as the member pursues the call to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. The CPM recommends that these understandings be communicated to the CPM during the member's first meeting with the CPM.

If the session or CPM decides not to accept the member for enrollment as an Inquirer, the session will continue to provide support, counsel and guidance to the individual as they seek to discover an appropriate occupational expression of Christian vocation. During the Inquiry phase, the session will participate with the Inquirer and the CPM in an evaluation of the Inquirer's growth and progress. When an Inquirer desires to become a Candidate, the session will participate with the Inquirer in a review of evidence indicating readiness to proceed to Candidacy. This evidence may include personal interviews with the Inquirer, CPM consultation reports, and the Inquirer's clear demonstration of adequate promise for ministry along with the Inquirer's application for Candidacy, and the six statements. The session will make a decision as to whether to recommend to CPM and Presbytery that the Inquirer proceed to Candidacy (Forms 5A and B).

## **The Candidacy Phase**

When the Inquirer is ready for admission to Candidacy, the session will provide a report and the pastor will make a statement, if requested, when the Inquirer is examined by the CPM. After the Inquirer is received by Presbytery as a Candidate, the session will continue to provide support to the Candidate and maintain the liaison relationship with both the Candidate and the CPM.

The session will continue to receive and review reports of each annual consultation with the Candidate and the CPM, and act as an advocate for as long as needed.

As an advocate, the session may call the CPM to accountability in fulfilling any of its responsibilities.

When notice is received of the Candidate's ordination, it is the session's responsibility to remove the Candidate's name from the church roll.

Possible Issues for Attention and Evaluation by the Session:

What personal qualities show clear evidence of a healthy and vital faith in God through Jesus Christ?

How are faith and spirituality currently being expressed through participation in the life, mission and worship of the congregation?

What motivations impel the sense of call? Are they healthy and positive?

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

What is the level of their academic interest, ability and motivation?

What is the level of their physical health and stamina?

What is the evidence of their emotional stability and well being?

What is the evidence of their self-discipline?

For constitutional guidelines relating to ordination requirements, Inquiry, Candidacy, and presenting and receiving a call, see Book of Order G-2.06 through G-2.08. This document serves to provide details approved by this presbytery and CPM that were formerly specified in the Book of Order.

The CPM, replacing the former requirements of the Book of Order, requires the appointment of an elder (or a group of persons including at least one elder) to act as liaison with the Inquirer/Candidate and with the CPM. This elder will represent the session and participate with the Inquirer/Candidate and the CPM as they explore and evaluate their progress in the preparation for ministry. Outlined below are some of the ways in which such liaisons may be helpful.

- Remember your Inquirer/Candidate in prayer.
- Learn the background of the Inquirer/Candidate: parents, spouse, children, siblings, college, interests and abilities, birthday, work experience, seminary, progress toward ordination, financial needs, etc.
- Become acquainted in ways that seem natural to you and to the Inquirer/Candidate. If the Inquirer/Candidate is attending seminary away, arrange a visit when they are home. At other times, find ways to stay in touch.
- Take an interest in their particular activities related to preparation for ministry such as field education, course work, CPE, annual consultations and the Ordination Examinations.
- Share with the CPM, especially at the time of an annual consultation, any areas
- Of particular need of the Inquirer/Candidate — whether financial or personal.
- Maintain contact with your Inquirer or Candidate through calls, cards, email, bulletins, newsletters, gifts, and particularly on special occasions (Christmas, birthdays or anniversaries).
- Keep the congregation aware of its Inquirers/Candidates through such means as:
  - Inviting the Inquirer/Candidate to preach or otherwise lead worship when appropriate
  - Remembering the Inquirer/Candidate in prayer at worship on a regular basis
  - Inviting letters from the Inquirer/Candidate for inclusion in the church newsletter
  - Placing a picture of the Inquirer/Candidate on the church bulletin board or other prominent place
  - Celebrating when your Inquirer is received by Presbytery as a Candidate
  - Identifying ways to keep the congregation aware of the names and needs of all of its Inquirers and Candidates who have entered into a covenant relationship with the session and Presbytery in preparation for ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
  - Discussing with the session its responsibility to provide tangible support to the Inquirer or Candidate, including financial assistance.
  - Assisting your Inquirer or Candidate in obtaining reimbursement for the Session's share of their expenses incurred in meeting with the CPM and obtaining Vocational Assessment.
  - Facilitating the session's approval and payment of its share of your Inquirer or Candidate's Vocational Assessment expense.
  - Become familiar with this document in order to be able to assist with requirements and procedures and to provide support at times such as appearances before Presbytery, annual consultations, ordination examinations, etc.
  - Be present at all meetings of the CPM or Presbytery at which the Inquirer/Candidate will appear, including the service of ordination and/or installation when a call is received. Make sure the pastor is informed of the time, place and subject of each such meeting.
  - In a word, be a friend who offers a sense of personal, moral and spiritual interest in and support of the Inquirer/Candidate in all aspects of training for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In so doing, you will also grow in faith and grace.

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley requires all Inquirers to participate in a comprehensive Vocational Assessment to help the participant understand how their values, interests, personality, potential and learned capabilities all fit into an occupational choice of ministry and give the Inquirer opportunity to gain deeper appreciation of their own strengths, commitment and growing edges. The cost of the Vocational Assessment is shared by the Inquirer, the Inquirer's church and the CPM.

Vocational Assessment utilizes various interest inventories, psychological tests, a meeting with a psychologist and reflection to help both Inquirers and the CPM assess suitability for ministry. The Inquirer and counselor discuss the results of the inventories and tests, and a written report is sent to the Inquirer with a release form for a copy to be sent to the CPM. Such reports include biographical information, interpretation of the results of the various inventories, assessment of the Inquirer's promise for ministry and any recommendations for growth or future directions. These reports are considered highly confidential and are released only with the Inquirer's written permission. They are to be seen only by CPM members.

Vocational Assessment should be completed in consultation with the CPM and must be completed before Candidacy is approved.

Occasionally the CPM asks an Inquirer to return for a follow-up visit or a visit to another practitioner in response to changes in a person's situation, a Candidacy of extended duration, or to explore a particular issue. Also, occasionally the counselor recommends a follow-up visit.

Some criteria to be explored include:

- Openness to learning, self-exploration and ability to do reality testing
- Emotional stability
- An effective style of interpersonal relating
- Adequate motivation as it pertains to a sense of call and value system
- Level of maturity and ability to adapt commensurate with age
- Level of autonomy and authenticity
- Leadership potential (initiative, self-confidence, enthusiasm etc.)
- Compatibility of interests with elements involved in the exercise of ministry
- Chance for the Inquirer's needs as a person to find reasonable fulfillment in ministry
- Innate abilities commensurate with the demands of ministry and the capacity to develop new skills
- Academic ability to complete the rigorous demands of seminary education

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley required all Inquirers to submit to a Background Check. The CPM will pay for the cost and can help coordinate the process.

Background Training became a Book of Order requirement in July, 2023 and includes both sexual misconduct and child sex abuse training. If the Inquirer's seminary does not offer such a course, the CPM can help find a suitable alternative.



Ordinarily no Candidate shall be received under care of this Presbytery unless enrolled, or planning to enroll, in one of the seminaries of this denomination. The purpose of this requirement is that those preparing for ministry will have the deepest possible acquaintance with the life, mission, and ethos of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

A request for a waiver of this requirement must be submitted in writing to the CPM. It should include the reasons for making the request and a plan for making up any deficiencies. The Presbytery understands that personal circumstances may make enrollment in a denominational seminary inconvenient. Nevertheless, because of the importance of the preparation, the CPM may require that a person transfer to a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminary, or may require additional course work at a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminary. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminary education will usually include courses on or including:

- Presbyterian Polity
- Sacraments
- Reformed Worship
- Preaching
- Reformed theology/history
- Hebrew Bible & New Testament exegesis
- Greek and Hebrew language and exegesis

Factors to be considered in granting exceptions may include:

- The student's prior theological training and denominational background
- The seminary's theological perspective and denominational affiliation.

Late entry into the Candidacy process shall not diminish the CPM's responsibility to prepare persons for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbytery understands that the above requirements may indeed lengthen the training process for certain Candidates.

## *APPENDIX 8 --- Field Education*

The Book of Order no longer addresses this area specifically. In the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, field education is a required part of the care process, generally fulfilled in seminary.

Requirements for a Field Education Site are as follows:

- A qualified on-site supervisor who is willing to be the student's guide and mentor
- A PC(USA) congregational setting (not home church) in which the student will be exposed to and have experience in a wide range of ministry needs
- A learning covenant which describes the expectations and goals of the field education experience and is signed by both the Candidate and the supervisor
- Written evaluations, based upon the learning covenant, of the student's practice of ministry and a final evaluation which will be added to the CPM file
- Time commitment of a minimum of nine months part-time (15-20 hours per week) or three months full-time (40 hours per week)

### **Recommendations:**

Ordinarily, field education will be completed under the supervision of the student's seminary.

Experience should be sought which will expand the student's knowledge and experience of the life of the church. The ideal situation is one that is significantly different from the student's previous church experience — in size, type of ministry, culture, etc.

Opportunity to engage in ministry beyond minimum requirements is strongly encouraged. Inquirers/Candidates should consider extended internships, additional ministry in agencies, additional congregational placements and international opportunities.

## *APPENDIX 9 --- Clinical Pastoral Education*

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a program of learning pastoral skills integrated with life experience in a clinical setting under extensive supervision. It is theological and professional education that allows qualified students to minister to people in crisis situations while integrating their pastoral experience with personal history, behavioral theory and method and spiritual development. CPE students are challenged to improve the quality of all their pastoral relationships through an intense involvement with supervisors, fellow students, people in crisis and other professionals,

Learning is through clinical practice, theological reflection, written case studies and verbatims, individual supervision, seminar participation and relevant reading. Through viewing complicated life situations from different viewpoints, students are able to gain new insights and understanding about the human situation. Essential elements include an accredited CPE center such as a hospital, certified CPE supervisor(s) to provide pastoral supervision, a small group of peers engaged in a common learning experience, a specific time period and an individual learning contract. A basic “unit” of CPE is typically three months of full-time work, with frequent all night “on call” requirements. At least one unit is required of all Candidates in the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.

## *APPENDIX 10 --- Guidelines for Inquirers' Pre---Candidacy Statements*

To fulfill the CPM's requirements that were formerly found in the Book of Order, Inquirers are to submit the following six one-page statements to the CPM for its review and approval as part of the process of advancing from Inquiry to Candidacy. This is to help clarify the Inquirer's understanding of call and suitability for Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The requirement will be met when the CPM is satisfied with the form and content of the statements.

### *Statement of Call*

A statement of the Inquirer's understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to their sense of call. This statement will be the basis of Presbytery's examination at the time the Inquirer is presented to Presbytery for Candidacy.

### *Statement of Faith*

A statement of personal faith that incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition. This should be considered the initial draft of the Statement of Faith that will be presented to Presbytery at the time of presentation for ordination examination.

### *Concept Paper*

An analysis of at least one theological concept from the Statement of Faith regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationship.

### *Statement on Being Presbyterian*

A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular congregation.

### *Statement of Self-Understanding*

A statement of self-understanding that reflects the ways the Inquirer has been shaped by their personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical and mental health.

### *Statement of the Tasks of Ministers of Word and Sacrament*

A statement of the Inquirer's understanding of the tasks performed by Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Also included should be their specific gifts for this ministry and awareness of the areas in which growth is needed.

## *APPENDIX 11 --- Guidelines for Writing the Statement of Faith*

The purpose of the Statement of Faith is for the Inquirer/Candidate to reflect theologically on specific areas and to state in a concise form their faith related to those specific areas. A statement of faith should incorporate an understanding of the Reformed tradition.

Writing a Statement of Faith should begin early in the preparation process. The Inquirer/Candidate is urged to discuss it with the CPM liaison, a professor, pastor, or other significant persons in their life.

A Statement of Faith might include, but is not limited to:

- The Nature of God
- The Experience of God
- Sin and Evil
- Life and Work of Jesus
- Jesus' Humanity and Divinity
- Christology and Atonement
- The Holy Spirit
- The Church and Its Ministry
- The Sacraments
- The Bible
- The Ministry and Mission of the Church in the World

The Statement of Faith will be the basis by which CPM and Presbytery conduct their oral examinations of the Candidate. Clichés that might distract a reader should be avoided, and language should be chosen for clear understanding, since both lay people and ministers will read the statement. The Candidate will have the opportunity to discuss it, defend it, explain it, and (sometimes) change it.

The statement will be emailed out in advance of these discussions and examinations. Please type the statement single-spaced on one page, number the lines or paragraphs, and maintain adequate margins. The statement will be reproduced as submitted, so typing, spelling and grammar are important.

It is important, even with all of these guidelines, that preparation of the statement encourages you to think and struggle with what you believe. We hope you enjoy the process!

## APPENDIX 12 --- Guidelines for Exegesis and Sermon

The exegesis and written sermon are major parts of the final assessment. This brief guide lists the requirements and recommendations for these important documents. The Candidate may choose the passage selected in their ordination examination, for which some of the required and recommended work below may already have been prepared.

### Requirements for the exegesis:

- Typed, double-spaced; include name and date on cover, initials on all other pages; all pages must be numbered
- Include the Scriptural Text and indicate the Bible version or your own translation
- Include an outline or description of the exegetical method used
- Include use of the original language (Hebrew or Greek)
- Sources must be referenced using footnotes, end notes, or notes within the body of the paper
- Include a bibliography of all sources used (the majority of sources should be current)

### Recommendations for the exegesis:

Good exegesis means knowing what questions to ask of a particular text. Thus, it is impossible to list all the ingredients necessary in every exegesis. You are encouraged to be creative in the development of your exegetical method. However, it is recommended that the following categories of questions be represented in any exegesis for preaching:

*Textual* - Are there particular difficulties in translation? Are there concerns about the Hebrew or Greek text? Are there key words that need to be studied to understand this text? Include the Biblical text in English and identify the version used or whether it is your own translation

*Literary* - What are the boundaries of this passage? What is the relation of the passage to its larger literary context? What is its literary genre, and what is the significance of this genre?

*Historical* - Author? Date? Original audience? What are the historical, sociological and theological circumstances that formed the original context of this text? What is the significance of this genre?

*Theological* - What did this text mean in its original context? How has the community of faith interpreted this passage? What does it mean for us today?

Sources in the bibliography should include standard reference works, recent commentaries, and other recently published books and pertinent articles.

### Requirements for the written sermon

- Typed, double-spaced; name and date on the cover, initials on all other pages; pages must be numbered.
- Include a description of the context in which the sermon was, or possibly will be, preached and the particular needs to which the sermon speaks
- Must be based on the written exegesis
- CPM expects use of gender inclusive language with regard to people and expansive language with regard to God

### Recommendations for the sermon (remember the Gospel is Good News)

- Approximately fifteen-minutes long
- Demonstrates awareness of and sensitivity to the particular context.
- Maintain integrity with the particular biblical text as well as with the whole Bible

**Advancing to Candidacy:**

If the examination is approved, Presbytery shall receive the Inquirer as a Candidate after the following manner. The Moderator shall propose the following questions to the Inquirer:

- Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the Ministry 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 Ministry of the Word and Sacrament?  
Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

**Ordination:**

These questions (Book of Order W-4.0404) are asked at ordination. We commend them to Inquirers/Candidates for consideration and study. The CPM may ask for reflections upon some of these questions throughout the process.

- A. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- B. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?
- C. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?
- D. Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?
- E. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?
- F. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?
- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- h. Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- I. (3) Will you be a faithful minister of the Word and Sacrament, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith and caring for people? Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the councils of the church; and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

#### *APPENDIX 14 --- Sharing Travel Expenses*

Inquirers and Candidates may incur travel expenses in connection with their meetings with the CPM and their Vocational Assessment. As part of the covenant relationship, these expenses should be shared among the Inquirer or Candidate, their home church and the CPM. Inquirers and Candidates traveling in their privately owned vehicles may submit a travel voucher to the CPM.

The CPM will consider reimbursement of Inquirers and Candidates traveling by other means on a case-by-case basis.

The CPM recommends that the session adopt a policy setting out its commitment to sharing its members' travel expenses incurred in meeting with the CPM.



(All forms are available at <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process/>. They can also be obtained from the CPM Moderator or any CPM Member. Please consult the appropriate sections of this Advisory Handbook for the times and situations applicable to the particular forms.)

Form 1A: Application to Be Enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer

Form 1B: Questions for Reflection

PSL Estimated Financial Resources Worksheet (<http://pslpcusa.org/resources/>)

Form 1D: Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as an Inquirer

Form 2A: Report of Consultation Regarding Application to Become an Inquirer

Form 2B: Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release

Form 3: Pre-consultation Report on Development Areas

Form 4: Report on Consultation

Form 5A: Application to Be Enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate

Form 5B: Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as a Candidate

Form 5C: Report of Consultation Regarding Application to Become a Candidate

Form 5D: Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release

Form 6: Summary Report of Final Assessment of Candidate's Readiness to be Examined for Ordination

It is the Policy of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley that:

- Every Inquirer and Candidate annually completes the Estimated Financial Resources form (available on the PSL website).
- Every Inquirer and Candidate creates and follows a plan for financing the cost of seminary.
- Every Inquirer and Candidate participates in the Board of Pensions “Fiscal Fitness” workshop offered at Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) seminaries.
- The presbytery will share, with the Inquirer or Candidate and their church of care, the cost of attending a CPM-approved Career and Counseling Center for career guidance in pursuit of ordination in the PCUSA.
- The CPM will counsel with every Inquirer and Candidate regarding her or his level of indebtedness in relationship to the salary that can be expected based on the current median income for the denomination reported by the Board of Pensions and based on the minimum effective salaries established by the presbyteries.
- The CPM will encourage each Candidate and Inquirer to pursue financing options including grants, interest-free loans, and funding that may be available through the Financial Aid for Studies Office of the PCUSA and PCUSA seminaries.
- The CPM will advocate with the congregation of care, and with other congregations of the presbytery as appropriate in order to generate financial support for each Candidate and Inquirer in the form of grants. See resources available at:  
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/financialaid/>