

Office of  
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*Preparation for Ministry  
in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

**Advisory Handbook**



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Presbyterian Distribution Service at 1-800-524-2612 and asking for  
OGA 07095. The cost is \$10 per copy.

This Advisory Handbook is to be used alongside the Book of Order where essential and foundational materials are provided. National standards and requirements are found there.

The current Book of Order and this Advisory Handbook are intended to encourage the church's movement toward a more flexible, less regulatory polity. Such a polity recognizes that there may be many different and equally acceptable ways to uphold the national standards for preparation, ordination, installation, and the practice of ministry.

This Advisory Handbook provides process and requirements for the inquiry and candidacy phases as mandated by the Book of Order. It is advice for the church – the gathered wisdom from the experiences of persons across the church and those of us who serve you in the national offices. It is not mandatory or required. It includes best practices, recommended processes, and discussion of specific areas about which we frequently receive questions. It is intended to assist presbyteries as they develop policies and processes so that they can make public and consistent the ways in which the presbyteries fulfill the denomination's standards and requirements.

To presbyteries, we recognize the diversity in the PCUSA and the wide variety of mission needs. It is expected that you, the presbyteries, and others will use this material as you see fit for your ministry context – adopting or adapting what is offered here, and creating your own policies and processes. As you do so, we invite you to share them with us that we may share them with others.

## OFFICE OF VOCATION

Preparation for Ministry Office  
Examination Services Office

# **Preparation for Ministry Advisory Handbook**

**Part I - Preparation for Ministry Manual**

**Part II - Handbook for Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderators**

**A. Preparation for Ministry Process**

**B. Ordination examinations**

# **Preparation for Ministry Advisory Handbook**

## **Part I**

### Preparation for Ministry Manual

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| Section One   | An Overview of the Process                 |
| Section Two   | Roles and Responsibilities of Participants |
| Section Three | Related Issues                             |
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## ***Section One - An Overview of the Process***

### ***I. Introduction***

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

Your participation

- as Inquirers and Candidates;
- as ministers, members of sessions and congregations;
- as college chaplains, campus ministers, career/vocational counselors, theological institution staffs and faculties;
- as members of presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry;
- as presbytery, synod and General Assembly staffs

involves awesome, demanding and rewarding opportunities.

The preparation for ministry process was designed through careful planning, discussion and field-testing. Two successive proposals were written and rewritten in consultation with candidates, with representatives of local churches, presbyteries, synods and seminaries, with agency board members and denominational staffs, and with two successive General Assembly committees.

This Advisory Handbook provides participants with an overview of the process and helpful resources. The first section, the Overview, is meant to be read by all participants to help them gain a basic understanding of the process, its intentions and goals. The second section, Roles and Responsibilities of Participants, is organized in six parts; each part outlines the responsibilities and tasks of one of the specific participants in the process. The third and fourth sections deal with Related Issues and Resources of interest to all participants. Issues that need particular interpretation and attention are highlighted. We encourage all who use this Handbook to adapt its suggestions within the limits prescribed in the Form of Government and to use supplemental resources and/or guidelines to meet the needs of individual participants and presbyteries. It is important to note that the preparation for ministry process is outlined in the Book of Order, and that this Advisory Handbook should not be used without reference to that document. Be sure that the Book of Order that you use is the most current one available from the Office of the General Assembly.

### ***II. Purposes of the Process***

The purposes of the preparation for ministry process of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are as follows:

- to help all church members, whatever their occupations, discern and fulfill their Christian vocation; and

- to provide the best possible leadership for the church by assuring that persons who feel called to ministry of the Word and Sacrament receive the fullest personal and professional preparation for this office (G-14.0401).

### ***III. Theological Background***

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is firmly grounded in the Reformed tradition in its relationships with men and women who feel themselves called by God to be ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Both in exploring with these persons their sense of vocation and in all subsequent procedures leading to ordination, the Reformed understanding of the church underlies what the Book of Order calls “full preparation” for ministry (G-14.0401).

As Reformed Christians, Presbyterians understand the church as a community called into being by Jesus Christ. It is Christ who gives the church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its offices and ordinances, and Christ who is its head in all things (G-1.0100).

Presbyterians believe in the priesthood of all believers---that is, that all church members, regardless of their occupational choice, are engaged in ministry. That is their Christian vocation (G-5.0102). Some among them may be called by the Holy Spirit, through the church, to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Thus the ministry of the Word and Sacrament is one among many occupations through which men and women express their God-given interests and abilities in life and daily work. Response to this calling, as to every other, is approached through a careful process of exploration and testing carried on within the community of faith during which gifts and motivations are evaluated in light of the needs of the church and the world.

The essential role of ministers of the Word and Sacrament is set forth in both the Bible and in the church’s constitutional documents. Among its key concepts which have been proven valid by the church’s experience through the years are the following:

- Ordained ministry is a gift of God to the church;
- Ordained ministers equip church members for their ministry by proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, caring for people and, along with elders, by ensuring that the church’s life is governed in an orderly way;
- The church actively seeks and ordains persons whose gifts and abilities equip them for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament; if a person ordained to this ministry is later called by God to other work, the church can release him or her from ordained office;
- A man or woman experiences God’s call to ministry privately as an inner urgency. The church, however, experiences that call publicly as it affirms that individual’s gifts for ministry and confirms God’s call through the acts of ordination and installation.

The relationship between the church and those who feel called to be ministers of the Word and Sacrament carries important responsibilities for all involved.

- **For congregations**, it means educating all members in the biblical and Reformed understanding of Christian vocation and helping believers understand that the call of discipleship includes making responsible occupational choices. It also means nurturing and encouraging persons seeking to discern their call to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- **For Inquirers and Candidates** who enter into the process, it involves a sense of solemn obligation to God and to the church. In some cases this means that it is the individual's responsibility to recognize and accept the fact that she or he is called to a ministry other than the ministry of the Word or Sacrament.
- **For presbyteries**, it means developing effective means of testing and validating the calls of those seeking to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament, providing them with guidance and oversight, and bringing to active candidacy those with appropriate abilities and motivation. To ensure that this important work is effectively carried out, those chosen to serve on presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry need particular gifts, skills and commitment.
- **For theological institutions**, it means upholding the Reformed standards of an educated ministry by providing Scriptural, historical, doctrinal and ecclesiastical disciplines, as well as opportunities for students to develop personal and professional skills.
- **For all participants involved in preparation for ministry**, it means relating to one another in continuing openness to God's grace, with mutual trust and respect based upon the assurance that God has given everyone gifts to use in the church's ministry. Integrity demands that each partner in the preparation process speak the truth with love to other partners at all times. It is important for partners to function in a way that reflects mutual accountability and honesty in all dealings with one another.

#### ***IV. 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 the 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 the 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 (see page 6) and on specific “expected outcomes” for both the Inquiry and Candidacy Phases (see page 8 and 10). The purpose of consultations is to help a Committee on Preparation for Ministry work with the individual at her or his 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 her or his readiness to receive a call. When a call is extended by a church in another presbytery, the presbytery of call ordinarily has the responsibility of examining Candidates for ordination and the presbytery of care “ordinarily” ordains the Candidate.

**Shared mutual accountability** characterizes the preparation for ministry process. The Inquirer or Candidate shares responsibility for her or his movement through the process and for planning for evaluating her or his 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 the 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, 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 his or her ministry.

## V. *Preparation for Ministry Process*

The preparation for ministry process involves two phases: Inquiry and Candidacy. These two phases are designed to explore the call, evaluate the gifts, and support the preparation of men and women who feel themselves called to be ministers of the Word and Sacrament (G-14.0401). To do this effectively, each presbytery charges a Committee on Preparation for Ministry to work closely with those persons within its congregations who wish to prepare themselves for this ordained office. Since the model for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament is the ministry of Jesus Christ, it is the Committee's particular responsibility to help these individuals grow toward maturity in Christ.

Both the Inquiry Phase and the Candidacy Phase 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 the 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 the 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 Candidacy 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 Inquiry and Candidacy 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***

The purpose of Inquiry is to provide opportunities for the church and for those who believe they may be called to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament to explore and test that call together. To make this exploration as effective as possible, a network of caring, supportive relationships is initiated—first, between the Inquirer and the church session, then with the presbytery through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and with the theological institution. In regular consultation with the Committee, the Inquirer evaluates the personal implications and the suitability of a church occupation, is guided in prayerful examination of his or her motivation, personal faith and experience in the congregation, and makes a serious assessment of the gifts needed by ministers of the Word and Sacrament comparing them with his or her own gifts. This phase also provides the church with opportunities to respond directly to the Inquirer's questions and concerns.

#### ***1. Admission to Inquiry***

A member of a congregation is considered for enrollment as an Inquirer when he or she approaches the session about the possibility of becoming a minister of the 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 the 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 that 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.
- 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 period shall be at least two years, at least one year of which shall be as a Candidate, required in G-14.0403 (See G-14.0473 for exception). A presbytery may assign to its Committee on Preparation for

- Ministry the power to enroll Inquirers, with the provision that the action be reported to the next stated meeting of the presbytery. (G-9.0403)
- 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, the Inquirer consults at least once a year with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. During each consultation, the Committee and the Inquirer assess her or his progress toward previously established goals in each of the five growth areas and together negotiate appropriate new goals.

*The presbytery shall require the inquirer or candidate to submit an annual written report on progress in studies and service to the church. The seminary or institution of theological education shall make an annual report on the progress of the inquirer or candidate toward preparation for ministry. The presbytery shall conduct an annual consultation for the evaluation and nurture of the inquirer or candidates. In no case shall an inquirer or candidate be excused from these annual consultations. (G-14.0421)*

## ***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 him or her as a candidate.

## ***4. Expected Outcomes of Inquiry***

By the end of the inquiry phase, each Inquirer can demonstrate adequate promise for ministry by presenting

- (1) a statement of his or her understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to his or her sense of call;
- (2) a statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition;
- (3) an analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationships;
- (4) a statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
- (5) 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;

- (6) statement of his or her understanding of the task ministers of the Word and Sacrament perform, including an awareness of his or her specific gifts for ministry of the Word and Sacrament and of areas in which growth is needed.

### ***B. Phase 2: Candidacy***

The purpose of this phase is to provide opportunities for the church to support persons received as Candidates in their preparation for the ministry of the 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 her or his preparation for the ministry of the 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 his or her church and the stated clerk to become a Candidate for the office of Minister of the 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 stated clerk with respect to the Inquirer's application.
- 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 his or her 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 ministry of the 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 ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?
- 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.
  - h. A presbytery may provide, at the request of the Candidate and his or her session, for the service of reception to be conducted by a commission of presbytery in the presence of the Candidate's congregation.

## **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. In consultations that occur at least once a year, both the Committee and the Candidate assess her or his 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 presbytery shall require the inquirer or candidate to submit an annual written report on progress in studies and service to the church. The seminary or institution of theological education shall make an annual report on the progress of the inquirer or candidate toward preparation for ministry. The presbytery shall conduct an annual consultation for the evaluation and nurture of the inquirer or candidates. In no case shall an inquirer or candidate be excused from these annual consultations. (G-14.0421)*

## **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 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 and is ordinarily ordained by the presbytery of care.
- b. Withdrawal by the Candidate;
- c. Removal by the presbytery;

#### ***4. Expected Outcomes of Candidacy***

By the end of the candidacy phase, each candidate to be ordained shall demonstrate readiness to begin ministry of the Word and Sacrament by

- a. presenting evidence of competence in the fields of theology, Bible, polity, and worship and Sacraments, ordinarily attested by completion of the requirements of G-14.0450; and evidence of ministerial skill attested in the supervised practice of ministry;
- b. presenting evidence of readiness to participate in a calling presbytery's plan for transition and of plans for continuing study and growth (G-11.0103n)
- c. expressing theological views compatible with the confessional documents of the church;
- d. expressing understanding of the meaning of the questions required for ordination (W-4.4003) informed by knowledge of the church in diverse settings;
- e. revealing commitment to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with personal maturity, spiritual depth, and a capacity to respond to the needs of others, including colleagues in ministry;
- f. presenting a written sermon, together with a description of the contemporary need to which it was addressed and an exegetical interpretation of the biblical material out of which the sermon arose. This sermon shall be preached before the calling presbytery or a committee thereof as a part of the appearance of the candidate.

#### ***C. Requirements to be Certified Ready for Examination, Pending a Call (G-14.0450)***

To be certified by the presbytery responsible for the Candidate's preparation, each Candidate is required to fulfill the following:

1. demonstration of readiness to begin ministry of the Word and Sacrament as required in the Expected Outcomes above.
2. presentation of a diploma and a transcript showing satisfactory grades at a regionally accredited college or university.
3. in lieu of an anticipated diploma, presentation of a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery. This transcript shall show satisfactory grades and presentation of a plan to complete the theological degree including Hebrew and Greek and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts;
4. presentation of satisfactory grades with the examination papers in the five areas covered by the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates.

Ordinarily, it takes at least two years to proceed from admission to the Inquiry Phase to ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament. During this time, the Inquirer (or Candidate) and members of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry strive to discover and be faithful to God's purpose. The Committee's recommendations to begin and to continue the Candidacy Phase are based on prayerful reflection, on common negotiations with the Candidate, and on

their mutual discernment that God has called that person and that he or she has adequately developed in response to that call.

When conducting final assessment and certifying candidates ready to seek a call, it is important for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to give attention to, and prepare the candidates for, some of the first-call issues which include:

- self-understanding in their role as pastor
- help for understanding the congregation they will serve in terms of history, ethos, programs, and status in the community, and in relation to the denomination
- assistance in establishing an appropriate pastoral relationship style for their situation
- support in dealing with conflict that may emerge in the congregation

The candidates are to be reminded of the resources and programs available to them as newly ordained pastors: New Pastors Seminars, Seminary Debt Program, presbytery mentor programs and pastor support groups.

## ***VI. Some Constitutional Provisions***

### ***A. Time Requirements (G-14.0403)***

*“An inquirer shall have been a member of the sponsoring congregation for at least six months prior to the inquirer phase. The inquirer and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.”*

### ***B. Exceptions and Waivers for Extraordinary Inquirers and Candidates (G-14.0470)***

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommended the following interpretation regarding the word “extraordinary” to the 203rd General Assembly(1991). This recommendation was adopted in 1992 (Minutes, 1992, Part I, pages 320-321) and has constitutional authority.

“For purposes of G-14.0470 (formerly G-14.0313), a candidate is deemed ‘extraordinary’ if he or she is unusually or exceedingly qualified to receive a call but, because of some exceptional and unusual reasons (determined by presbytery to be good and sufficient), he or she cannot or should not meet the ordinary requirements.

“A candidate who is not in fact exceptionally well-qualified is not deemed ‘extraordinary’ merely because he or she cannot meet the ordinary requirements for whatever reasons.

“In the context of G-14.0470, the word ‘extraordinary’ means rare; exceptional; and exceeding the common degree, limit or measure (Minutes, 1991, Part 1, page 394).

- a. An exception to the educational requirements listed in G-14.0471 indicating a specified alternative course of study, can be granted only by a three-fourths vote of the members of the presbytery present.
- b. Waiver of the examination requirements listed in G-14.0472 cannot be granted until an Inquirer or Candidate has twice failed to receive a satisfactory grade. Action by presbytery and the successful completion of an alternate pattern are required (see exception for candidate with disability, G-14.0472).
- c. Waiver of the time requirements listed in G-14.0473 is granted to an extraordinary Inquirer or Candidate only by three-fourths vote of the members of the presbytery present. *Under no circumstances is the time requirement to be less than one year as a candidate.* (G-14.0403)
- d. *“The foregoing exceptions shall hold if the presbytery has received the inquirer or candidate from another presbytery that approved the exemption of any of these requirements, the reception of the candidate having confirmed the action of the dismissing presbytery.”* (G-14.0474).

**C. Annual Consultation (G-14.0421)**

*“The presbytery shall conduct an annual consultation for the evaluation and nurture of the inquirer or candidate. In no case shall an inquirer or candidate be excused from these annual consultations.”* (G-14.0421)

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry is given several options for conducting an annual consultation. The provisions are intended to underscore the importance of these mandatory consultations:

According to the old Book of Order, presbytery, together with the session and the Inquirer or Candidate, shall bear necessary expenses of the annual consultation, which shall be concerned with the spiritual growth and needs of the individual, the financial planning for his or her educational program, and with his or her relation to the church and progress in the program of study leading to ordination for ministry. The annual consultation may be held by the entire committee or may be carried out by persons appointed by the committee either from its own membership or with similar responsibilities in a presbytery within which the inquirer or candidate is pursuing a course of study or engage in other approved service, except in the case of the final assessment, which should be conducted by the committee on preparation for ministry of the candidate’s presbytery.

Each consultation shall include a decision, made by the whole committee, whether to continue or terminate the period of inquiry or candidacy. This decision shall be reported to the presbytery.

**D. Service in Covenant Relationship (G-14.0420)**

*“The committee on preparation for ministry shall monitor the covenant among presbytery and inquirers and candidates and the session. Inquirers and candidates shall be encouraged to engage in some form of supervised service to the church. The advisory handbook for committees on preparation for ministry shall provide guidance for supervision, evaluation, and reports on the service and preparation*

*for ministry of inquirers and candidates. No inquirer or candidate who has not been previously ordained as an elder may serve as moderator of a session, administer the Sacraments, or perform a marriage service. An inquirer or candidate previously ordained as an elder may be authorized to administer the Lord's Supper. (See G-6.0304, G-7-0306, G-10.0103, G-11.0103z, and G-14.0562.)”*

Field education assignments that are under the supervision of a theological institution do not require presbytery approval; however, field education assignments that place an Inquirer or Candidate as the student intern having sole pastoral responsibility for the life of a church require the counsel and oversight of the committee on ministry having jurisdiction over the church. An Inquirer or Candidate shall not undertake to serve a church, even as a temporary supply, without the approval of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the church as well as the approval of the Inquirer's or Candidate's presbytery.

A previously commissioned lay pastor who becomes an Inquirer or Candidate may continue to be authorized to administer sacraments in accordance with the presbytery's previous grant of authority under G-14.0562.

***E. Negotiation for Service (G-14.0440)***

*“A candidate who has completed two full years of theological education or its equivalent, who has had an annual consultation within the previous year, and who has successfully completed all ordination examinations or has received presbytery's certification of readiness according to G-14.0472 may, with approval of the committee on preparation for ministry (CPM) and the appropriate committee on ministry, enter into negotiation for his or her ministerial service. For candidates who have not yet completed the two years of theological education or successfully completed all ordination examinations, the presbytery of care may, by three-fourths vote, permit a candidate to proceed to negotiate for service prior to certification of readiness to received a call.”*

***F. When Ordination Exams May Be Taken (G-14.0431)***

*“Inquirers or candidates are encouraged to take the Bible Content Examination in their first year of seminary. The other four examinations may be taken by inquirers or candidates after completion of two full years of theological education. These four examinations shall only be taken upon approval by the committee on preparation for ministry of the inquirer's or candidate's presbytery.”*

***G. Transfer of Covenant Relationship (G-14.0461)***

*“A presbytery may transfer the covenant relationship of an inquirer or candidate to another presbytery, but only with the approval of the receiving presbytery and the inquirer or candidate. An inquirer or candidate shall not transfer her or his membership to a particular church under the jurisdiction of another presbytery without the approval of the presbytery responsible for the person's preparation for ministry. Whenever a presbytery approves such a transfer, it shall send to the other presbytery a certificate of its approval, its records concerning the individual, and the reasons for the request for transfer. Failure of an inquirer or candidate to follow this procedure shall result in the forfeiture of standing as an inquirer or candidate. No presbytery may restore the candidate's status except by beginning again at the inquiry phase.”*

***H. Removal from Covenant Relationship (G-14.0463)***

*“An inquirer or candidate may, after consultation with the session and the committee on preparation for ministry, withdraw from covenant relationship. A presbytery may also, for sufficient reason, remove an individual’s name from the roll of inquirers or 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. In both instances, prior to final action, the committee on preparation for ministry shall make a reasonable attempt to give the inquirer or candidate and other parties of interest an opportunity to be heard by that committee.”*

The presbytery may arrange for the continued guidance and support of those who withdraw or are removed from the roll of Inquirers or Candidates.

**I. Final Assessment (G-14.0450)**

*“In the final year of theological education or when a candidate has satisfied all of the requirements of this section, and before the candidate has received a call, the committee on preparation for ministry of the candidate’s presbytery shall conduct a final assessment of the candidate’s readiness to begin ordained ministry. A summary of this assessment shall be reported to the presbytery and shall be transmitted to a calling presbytery when requested. The committee of preparation for ministry shall report to the presbytery when it has certified a candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. This consultation shall focus on the outcomes of inquiry and candidacy and shall include all the requirements of certification:*

*“a. demonstration of readiness to begin ministry of the Word and Sacraments as required to fulfill the candidacy phase of preparation;*

*“b. presentation of a transcript showing satisfactory grades at a regionally accredited college or university, together with a diploma;*

*“c. presentation of a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, the transcript showing satisfactory grades, and presentation of a plan to complete the theological degree including Hebrew and Greek and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts;*

*“d. presentation of satisfactory grades together with the examination papers in the five areas covered by the Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates.”*

**J. Location of Ordination (G-14.0481) and (G-14.0484)**

*“The presbytery placing the call to a candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine and, contingent upon the candidate’s successful completion of that examination and all requirements in G-14.0450, the presbytery responsible for the candidate’s preparation for ministry shall ordinarily ordain the candidate.”*

*“The presbyteries and the candidate may agree that the ordination take place in the calling presbytery, in which case the presbytery may ordain and install the candidate at the same time at a service of worship in the presence of the calling congregation.*

**K. Examination and Ordination (G-14.0480, G-14.0482)**

*“Ordination for the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament is an act of the whole church carried out by the presbytery, setting apart a person to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.”*

*“The candidate shall appear before the presbytery and shall make a brief statement of personal faith and of commitment to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The presbytery shall receive the report of its appropriate committee that the candidate has completed all requirements, and has been certified ready for ordination pending approval of the call. The report shall include a summary of waivers and exceptions of requirements granted. The presbytery may conduct further examination of the candidate’s Christian faith and views in theology, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the government of the church as it deems necessary. If the presbytery is fully satisfied of the candidate’s qualification, it shall approve the call and vote to proceed to his or her ordination and installation.”*

***L. Integration***

Every call to a candidate shall be accompanied by a description of the presbytery’s plan for the integration of new ministers into the life and work of presbytery (G-11.0103n)

## *Section Two*

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## ***Section Two - Roles and Responsibilities of Participants***

### ***I. The Inquirer and Candidate***

#### ***A. 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 his or her call and begins the process of preparation for ministry, the counsel and guidance of the pastor and session of the home church are available, along with that of 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 she or he is 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, he or she can expect a rich and rewarding experience.

This manual and the printed resources described in the Resources section are available through the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The first section of the manual (pages 2-16) includes the theological background and overview of the preparation for ministry process. This section will help one clarify his or her responsibilities throughout the process. It should be read with reference to the first section and to Chapter 14 of the Book of Order.

#### ***B. Responsibilities of Inquirers and Candidates***

##### ***1. 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 (U.S.A.) congregation for at least six months.

##### ***2. Phase 1: Inquiry (G-14.0404)***

To begin the process, indicate to the session the desire to explore the implications of becoming a minister of the Word and Sacrament (page 7, 1a). At least six months of active church membership is required before this step can be taken (G-14.0403).

**Complete and submit to the moderator of session Form 1, “Application for Inquiry.”**

- Upon approval of the session, request to be enrolled by presbytery as an Inquirer (page 7,1d)

**Complete Form 2A, “Application To Be Enrolled by Presbytery As An Inquirer,” and send a copy with CPM’s enrollment report to session for recording of endorsement.**

- Participate in one or more interviews with the presbytery’s Committee on Preparation for Ministry (page 7, 1e).

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, “Inquirer Covenant Agreement and Release” which is available from the presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry, to formalize this relationship.**

- Throughout the Inquiry Phase, consult at least once annually with presbytery’s Committee on Preparation for Ministry to plan for and evaluate growth and development (G-14.0421).

**Complete and return Form 3, “Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report” to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at least 14 days before each Consultation.**

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

See G-14.0421 for content and expectations of successive consultations.

- As requested by the Committee, participate in career counseling or psychological evaluation.
- Continue active membership and participation in a Presbyterian congregation.
- With the approval and under the guidance of the presbytery, engage in some form of service to the church or field education (G-14.0420).
- 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 (page 8) and any other requirements agreed to in previous consultations.

- Meet with 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 (see page 8). 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 the 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 his or her vocation may be explored through a group discernment process with the aid of the session and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (G-14.0463).

### 3. *Phase 2: Candidacy (G-14.0405)*

- For admission to Candidacy, apply to presbytery through the session and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry (page 9).

**Complete and submit Form 5A, "Application To Be Received As A Candidate" to session for review and recommendation to presbytery; Forms are available from the presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry.**

- Appear before the presbytery to be examined with respect to Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry (page 9, 1e).
- If the examination is approved by presbytery, answer questions listed in page 9, 1f.

The Candidate and her or his session may request that a commission of presbytery conduct a service of reception in the presence of the Candidate's congregation (page 10, h).

- During Candidacy, maintain a relationship with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry through: consultations held at least annually, participation with committee to negotiate and review learning contracts, participation in reviews of growth and progress, and preparation of reports.

**Form 3, "Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report" must be submitted before each annual consultation to fulfill presbytery requirements.**

See G-14.0421 for content and expectations of successive consultations.

- Continue active church membership (G-14.0411).
- With the approval and under the guidance of presbytery, engage in some form of service to the church or field education (G-14.0420).
- 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. Requirements include

Hebrew and Greek exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts (G-14.0450b-c).

- Successfully complete examinations in the five areas covered by Presbytery's Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (G14-0431).
- In the final year of theological education and before accepting a call, 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 Inquiry (page 8) and Candidacy (page 11, a-f) and includes each of the requirements as set forth in G-14.0450 (include exegesis and a sermon).
- Complete Personal Information Form (PIF) and receive approval from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to explore obtaining a call. Submit the completed PIF to the Church Leadership Connection Office for circulation and participation in the denomination's procedures for exploring a call to service. Most theological institutions provide guidance for this process (pages 36-37).
- Complete examination for ordination, administered on the floor of the presbytery of call (See G-14.0482 and G-14.0481).

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 to 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-14.0403).

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 (see page 10, 3 a,b,c and G-14.0463).

## ***II. The Session***

### ***A. 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.

#### ***1. 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. Sessions should consider using *This Call's For You*, a workbook that has programs and workshops on Christian vocation for members of all ages, and includes six "conversations" for persons who want to test their call to ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

## **2. *Developing Awareness of the Call to Ministry of the Word and Sacrament***

Members of congregations should also be aware of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament as an occupation through which many dimensions of Christian service can be realized. This opportunity should 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 therefore 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 ordained ministry 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.

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

When a member of the congregation approaches the pastor and session to express the possibility that she or he has been called to the ministry of the 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. As defined in the Book of Order (G-14.0404), its purpose is "to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to ministry of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together in such a way that a decision regarding the Inquirer's suitability for ministry of the 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 his or her knowledge of the responsibilities of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, and through a serious assessment of the gifts needed by ministers of the 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 ministry of the 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.

#### **4. *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. To facilitate this continuing relationship, the Book of Order (G-14.0413) provides for the appointment of an elder from the church to act as a liaison with the Inquirer or Candidate and with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The Session Liaison is encouraged to accompany the Inquirer or Candidate to each annual consultation, participating as an observer.

Along with its specifically prescribed responsibilities, it is important that the session continue to express its concern and support by contacting the individual and his or her 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 presbytery makes its final assessment of the Candidate, when a call is being negotiated, on holidays, anniversaries, etc. Providing financial support, as suggested in the Book of Order (14.0413), is another very tangible expression of support.

It should be noted that although the Book of Order encourages a supportive relationship between the individual and the session, it clearly states that, "In matters relating to preparation for ministry, the individual is under the oversight of the presbytery ..." (G-14.0411).

#### **B. *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 (G-10.0102d and G-10.0102g).
- To encourage persons with appropriate motivation and abilities to consider preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament or other church occupations.

#### **1. *Phase 1: Inquiry***

Admission to Inquiry (page 7,1a-e) begins when a person who has been a church member for at least six months indicates to that church's pastor and session his or her sense of call to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. This is the first step toward establishing an ongoing

relationship with the session and presbytery's Committee for the purpose of exploring and testing the sense of call.

**Ask the applicant to complete Form 1, "Application for Inquiry."**

- Contact the appropriate presbytery committee (usually the Committee on Preparation for Ministry) requesting orientation to the preparation for ministry process used in that presbytery.
- Meet with representatives of the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to receive orientation in the preparation for ministry process.

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.

See "Some Issues for Attention and Evaluation by the Session When Examining the Gifts and Motivations of a Prospective Inquirer" on page 26.

- Appoint an 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 his or her progress (G-14.0413).
- Make a recommendation to 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 2A, "Application to be Enrolled by presbytery as an Inquirer" and submit Forms 1 and 2 A 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 she or he seeks to discover an appropriate occupational expression of his or her Christian vocation.
- During the Inquirer Phase (G-14.0411), 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 his or her 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 on page 8, 4(1) – (6).

- The session makes a decision regarding whether to recommend to presbytery that the Inquirer proceed to Candidacy Phase.

**Indicate Session's endorsement or non-endorsement on the Inquirer's completed Form5A, "Application To Be Received as a Candidate" and submit to presbytery.**

## 2. *Phase 2: Candidacy*

- When the Inquirer is ready for admission to Candidacy the session provides support and makes a statement, if requested, when she or he is examined by presbytery.
- If the Inquirer is not received by presbytery as a Candidate at this time, the session continues to support, counsel and guide the individual as she or he seeks to discover an appropriate occupational expression of her or his Christian vocation.
- When an Inquirer has been approved for Candidacy and has been examined (G-14.0305e) and approved by presbytery, he or she shall answer the questions listed on page 9, f (1) – (4).

The Candidate and her or his session may request that a commission of presbytery conduct a service of reception in the presence of the Candidate's congregation (see page 10, h).

- During Candidacy the session provides support and pastoral care to the Candidate and her or his family, maintaining the liaison relationship with both the Candidate and the presbytery Committee.
- The session receives and reviews reports of each annual consultation (G-14.0421).
- The session removes the Candidate's name from the church roll when notice is received of her or his 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.

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

- What personal qualities 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 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 his or her physical health and stamina?
- What is the evidence of his or her emotional well-being?
- What is the evidence of his or her self-discipline?
- How does the individual plan to finance his or her education?

NOTE: For the following Constitutional provisions, see Section One VI on pages 12-15

- Time Requirements
- Exceptions and Waivers
- Annual Consultation
- Service in Covenant Relationship
- Negotiation for Service
- When Exams May Be Taken
- Transfer of Covenant Relationship
- Removal from Covenant Relationship
- Final Assessment
- Location of Ordination
- Examination and Ordination

### ***III. The Presbytery***

#### ***A. Role of the Presbytery***

The presbytery's ministry to the church is at the heart of the preparation for ministry process. The presbytery participates in providing support for the denomination's colleges and seminaries and provides a committee to work with individual Inquirers and Candidates. The presbytery elects persons to serve on the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations, and the presbytery guides Inquirers and Candidates and examines them for ordination..

The presbytery's ministry with individual Inquirers and Candidates ordinarily takes place through the work of its Committee on Preparation for Ministry. As laypersons and ministers take on the demanding responsibilities of membership on this Committee, they share the rich satisfaction of helping men and women discern their calls and grow toward readiness for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Their time, energy and commitment offer a significant contribution to the church's future ministry.

In planning its Preparation for Ministry strategy the presbytery may consult the printed material described in the "Resources" section of this manual and contact appropriate General Assembly offices for additional support and counsel. This manual, however, provides most of the basic information the presbytery will need. Section I provides an overview of the entire Preparation for Ministry process. Section II clarifies the role and responsibilities of both the presbytery as a whole and its Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and should be read with reference to Section I of this Manual and Chapter 14 of the Book of Order.

## **B. Responsibilities of the Presbytery**

The Book of Order summarizes the presbytery's responsibilities as follows:

*“It is important that those who are to be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the committee on preparation for ministry. For this purpose, presbyteries shall enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”* (G-14.0 401)

*“The presbytery, through a committee on preparation for ministry, shall seek to instruct sessions on their role in the inquiry and candidacy process. Particular direction shall be given a session that has endorsed an inquirer or candidate.”* (G-14.410)

*“The presbytery shall exercise responsibility for the spiritual growth of inquirers and candidates, to support them with an understanding and sympathetic interest, and to give guidance in regard to courses of study, familiarity with the Bible and with the confessions, practical training and plans for education including the choice of institutions, field education, and the inquirer's or candidate's financial need. The presbytery shall also seek to give guidance and instruction to the inquirer or candidate in the faith and polity of the church (G-6.0108f).”* (G-14.0412)

### **1. Responsibilities of the Presbytery as a Whole**

- To provide a Committee on Preparation for Ministry 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 annual 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.

## **2. *Responsibilities of the Presbytery Through Its Committee on Preparation for Ministry***

In providing pastoral care, guidance and support to Inquirers and Candidates it is imperative that the Committee on Preparation for Ministry show sensitivity to each individual's unique background, experience, level of maturity and personal attributes. If growth is to be effectively nurtured, members of the committee must understand and accept the individual where he or she is at each stage of the process. With the committee's help and encouragement the Inquirer or Candidate will take increasing responsibility for moving through the process and in planning for and evaluating his or her own development.

The preparation for ministry process demands that the roles, expectations and responsibilities of Inquirers or Candidates and Committee members be made clear from the beginning. The negotiation of a covenant relationship (page 4) is an important step toward mutual understanding.

Committees should also identify particular services, resources and experiences which can enhance the growth and development of Inquirers and Candidates under their guidance. These include vocational development counseling, psychological evaluations, Clinical Pastoral Education opportunities, internships in churches, cross cultural experiences, specialized ministries and other opportunities for personal and spiritual growth. Such services and experiences may be recommended as individuals' needs are identified during the evaluation process.

### **a. *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 the Word and Sacrament, one or more Committee members are required to meet with that session to explain the session's role and responsibilities during the preparation for ministry process. Some Committees use the video "Preparation for Ministry" with session during the orientation meeting or ask that it be viewed in preparation for the meeting. 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 that presbytery and, with the Committee representatives, discusses ways the session and the Committee can work together most effectively (G-14.0404).

- 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, he or she meets 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 ministry of the Word and Sacrament before deciding to recommend to presbytery that he or she be enrolled as an Inquirer.

**Form 1, "Application for Inquiry" is distributed to all Committee members for review prior to the meeting to acquaint them with the applicant.**

Resources available to the Committee for background preparation: Considering Your Call and Vocation (SEIC Resource #101), Discerning Your Call and Your Gifts for Ministry, Primary Qualities for Professional Ministry (SEIC Resource #102), and An Annotated Reading List (SEIC Resource #103) on page 52.

- 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 an advisor to work closely with the Inquirer. The Inquirer and session shall be informed of this action.
- In one presbytery, an advisor is appointed as soon as completed application form is received so that the advisor and the inquiry applicant may have opportunity to get acquainted prior to the first appearance before the CPM. The purpose is to alleviate the possible nervousness that an inquiry applicant might feel when coming to the committee the first time.

**Complete "Report of Enrollment as an Inquirer by Presbytery" from Form 2A and return it to the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street, Room 4429, Louisville KY 40202-1396.**

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.

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

- Throughout the Inquiry Phase, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry holds annual consultations with each Inquirer to explore the appropriateness of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament as an occupational choice and to guide his or her development for that ministry (G-14.0403). 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. (See Overview, page 5 for a fuller description of these areas and their goals.)

- 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.

*At least 14 days prior to each consultation, the Inquirer completes and returns to the Committee Form 3, “Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report,” as a basis for discussion. This form, with attachments, can provide for meeting the requirements of G-14.0421.*

- “The Presbytery shall be notified of receipt of these reports and the reports themselves shall be submitted to the individual, the sponsoring session, and the theological institution” (G-14.0421).

**Use Form 4, “Report of Annual Consultation” for reporting purposes.**

- Specific considerations may guide the Committee’s assessment of an Inquirer’s suitability to prepare for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Careful individual assessment may also help the Committee to recommend experiences to enhance the Inquirer’s growth and development.

*See “Some Considerations to Guide the Committee’s Assessment of an Inquirer’s Suitability for the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament,” and “Resources for Evaluation and Guidance,” on the next two pages.*

For “Observations and Suggestions for the Interview Process, see Section Four - A Listing of Resources on page 44..

- Subsequent consultations follow the same pattern, with particular attention to issues identified in the Book of Order (G-14.0421).
- The Inquiry Phase concludes when the Committee on Preparation for Ministry knows the Inquirer well enough to determine whether or not to recommend him or her to the presbytery for enrollment as a Candidate.
- Following action by the session and receipt of Form 5A, “Application to be Received as a Candidate,” the Committee on Preparation for Ministry meets with the Inquirer to review evidence indicating whether or not he or she is ready to proceed to the Candidacy Phase.

*In preparing its recommendation, the Committee should consider the Inquirer’s application materials, all personal interviews with the Inquirer, all consultation records and whether the Inquirer as a person appears to be suited for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The Committee also reviews the Inquirer’s demonstration of adequate promise for ministry according to the expected outcomes of inquiry set forth on page 8, 4(1)-(6)..*

- 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 Ministry Development Center program to discover appropriate occupations through which they can fulfil their Christian vocation.

### *Consultations*

The goals and expected outcomes of each of the five areas of growth (see page 6) 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, of course, must decide for itself what "growth" in each of these five areas might mean 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 she or he does not see this experience simply as the writing of required papers in order to qualify for Candidacy.

#### *b. Some Considerations to Guide the Committee's Assessment of an Inquirer's Suitability to Continue Preparation for Ministry of the Word and Sacrament by proceeding to the Candidacy Phase.*

##### Personal Issues:

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

##### Educational issues:

- Does he or she demonstrate adequate academic skills?
- Is there sufficient motivation for scholastic achievement?
- Is she or he meeting the constitutional requirements?
- Does she or he have adequate experience in a local church or other context for experiential learning?
- Has she or he 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 the Word and Sacrament?
- Should she or he 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 the Word and Sacrament?

**c. *Resources for Evaluation and Guidance***

(1) *Career counseling*

Comprehensive, in-depth career counseling is offered by the centers affiliated with the Ministry Development Council and other service providers. This process can help the participant understand how her or his values, interests, and potential and acquired capabilities, as well as her or his own personality and sense of call, fit into an occupational choice. By previous agreement with the participant and the center, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry should request access to written reports of this experience. Career counseling is most valuable if the Inquirer has volunteered to participate and when the nature and purpose of the process are carefully interpreted to the Inquirer in advance. (A descriptive brochure is available from the Preparation for Ministry Office. See "A Listing of Resources" beginning on page 44.)

(2) *Psychological evaluation*

This process involves consultation(s) with a clinical or counseling psychologist. The primary purpose of such an evaluation is to determine the Inquirer/Candidate's psychological health and fitness for ministry and to screen for pathology. Greatest value is achieved if the Inquirer participates voluntarily and receives careful prior orientation as to the consultation's nature and purpose. The Committee should establish a working relationship with the psychologist so that her or his reports can be accurately interpreted to the Committee. The psychologist's familiarity with religious values and with the requirements of professional ministry will greatly enhance the results of such an evaluation. Psychological evaluation is usually combined with career counseling when the service is provided by a Ministry Development Council accredited counseling center.

*Note: The above resources should be regarded as background for the Committee's continuing counseling relationship with the Inquirer.*

(3) *Reports from the educational institution*

If the Inquirer is enrolled in a college or university, reports will center on academic progress. If the Inquirer is presently enrolled in a theological institution, reports will center on academic progress, field education and Clinical Pastoral Education experiences, and the theological institution's assessment of her or his gifts for ministry and progress in preparing for ministry.

- (4) *Reports and reflections on the Inquirer's participation in a Presbyterian congregation.*
- (5) *Letters of reference* from persons representing different areas of the Inquirer's life. These letters may be supplied by the Inquirer or the Committee may request that references be persons representing specific categories (e.g. pastor, elder, professor, employer, peer, adult acquaintance, etc.). **Note that such letters may have limited value due to their relative lack of objectivity and to the Committee's lack of knowledge of the author's frame of reference and degree of perception.**
- (6) *Persons experienced in interviewing techniques* who may be helpful as Committee members or resource persons, e.g., psychologists, social workers, Clinical Pastoral Education supervisors, pastoral counselors, career counselors. Also see "Resources," page 49, for "Observations and Suggestions for the Interview Process."

**d. Phase 2: Candidacy**

Candidacy is a time of continuing pastoral guidance and support by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. As indicated in the Book of Order, "... This shall be accomplished through the guidance and evaluation of candidates, using learning contracts within a context of supportive relationships." (G-14.0405)

- 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, the Inquirer appears before the presbytery to be examined with respect to his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service and motives for seeking the ministry. If the presbytery votes to receive the Inquirer as a Candidate, he or she is asked to respond to the questions on page 9. A charge is given, the Candidate's name is recorded on the roll of Candidates and prayer is offered. Upon request, the presbytery may arrange for a service of reception to be conducted before the Candidate's congregation .

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.

**Complete and Return "Report of Enrollment as a Candidate by Presbytery" from Form 5A to the Office of the General Assembly.**

- The presbytery continues its regular consultations with the Candidate through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. As described in the Inquiry Phase (page 32), these consultations focus on goals in each of the five areas of growth and development (page 5) and are based on the expected outcomes for the Candidacy Phase as set forth on page 11, 4a-f.

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-Interview Annual Consultation Report,” and submits it at least fourteen days prior to each consultation to provide the basis for discussion.

**Form 4, “Report of Annual 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.**

Specific additional issues are identified in the Book of Order (G-14.0421) for the Committee to consider in successive consultations with the Candidate prior to his or her entering the theological institution and during the first two years of theological education.

- Consultations continue to be held at least once annually without exception (G-14.0421). At each consultation the decision is made as to whether or not Candidacy should be continued, especially if it becomes clear that adequate growth is not taking place. The decision should be reported as a recommendation to presbytery.
- Presbytery action is required for transfers of covenant relationship and for the granting of exceptions and waivers. There are also constitutional restrictions regarding initiation of negotiation for service.
- Candidacy continues until the enrollee’s name is removed from the roll of Candidates by action of the presbytery in one of three ways: withdrawal by the Candidate; removal by presbytery (G-14.0463); or completion of the preparation for ministry process with a call to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament and ordination.

**Use Form 7B, “Report of Ordination of a Candidate or Withdrawal or Removal of an Inquirer or Candidate” to report such actions to the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street, Room 4429, Louisville KY 40202-1396.**

- In the final year of theological education and before a Candidate may accept a call, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry meets with the Candidate for a final assessment of his or her readiness in all respects to receive a call (G-14.0450).

In conducting this assessment, the Committee focuses on the expected outcomes of Inquiry (page 8, 4(1)-(6)), the expected outcomes of Candidacy (page 11, 4a-f), on each of the requirements of certification set forth in G-14.0450 and on any additional items negotiated between the presbytery and the Candidate.

Evidence that the Candidate has achieved the expected outcomes is based on her or his academic performance and experience in supervised field education or other activities discussed

and agreed upon by the Committee as relevant to preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

- The Committee completes its evaluation and reports to presbytery a summary of the final assessment along with the date the Committee certified the Candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call (G-14.0450). 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.**

- Presbytery procedures for presenting and receiving a call are set forth on page 15 K.
- For interpretations of presbytery procedures relating to Examination and Ordination (G-14.0480, G-14.0482).

When plans for ordination have been approved by the appropriate presbytery, the presbytery notifies the Preparation for Ministry Office by using Form 7B, “Report of Ordination of Candidate....”

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, as suggested above.

#### ***IV. The Theological Institutions***

Well-educated clergy are an integral part of the Presbyterian tradition. The increasing complexities of life and society demand that this tradition continue. This is why the preparation for ministry process places significant emphasis on the role of the theological institution, recognizing its indispensable contribution to the growth and development of Inquirers and Candidates.

The theological institution’s primary responsibility, of course, is to provide an academic curriculum, resources and motivation that will ensure students adequate intellectual and professional preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Together with the session, the presbytery and other participants in the process, the theological institution provides counsel and guidance. It also supervises field education, internships and other experiences that are crucial to the student’s spiritual, personal and professional development. In its day-to-day relationship with students the theological institution provides a unique context in which students can explore the meaning of Christian vocation and their sense of call to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

The theological institution may also provide objective information about a student's gifts, abilities and suitability for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament when such information is requested by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. In accord with provisions in the Book of Order, the theological institution reports annually to the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry regarding the student's progress and receives from the Committee reports of annual consultations with Inquirers and Candidates (G-14.0421).

Ordinarily, the theological institution helps administer Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations, helps students prepare Personal Information Forms and assists in providing information about possible calls.

## ***V. The Synod***

Taking the important role of resourcing participants in the preparation for ministry process, synods:

- Participate in making available Ministry Development Council and other such resource services.
- Provide training for members of presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry.
- Develop among their presbyteries consistent Candidacy requirements, policies and procedures.
- Encourage presbyteries to develop and implement confidentiality criteria in working with Inquirers and Candidates, and ensure that procedures of the denomination's Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Plan are implemented with regard to theological students, Inquirers and Candidates.

## ***VI. The General Assembly***

### ***A. 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.
- Serves as liaison with the Ministry Development Council and its centers in support of preparation for ministry.
- 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.

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

## ***Section Three - Related Issues***

### ***I. Internship***

While not required by the Constitution for ordination, an internship can be a highly valuable experience. It gives the individual firsthand experience of ministry, helps focus the final year of theological education and eases the transition from student and Candidate status to that of minister of the Word and Sacrament. Just as a variety of internships is available through different theological institutions, individuals vary as to the type of experience appropriate for them. Given a person's previous experience and background, an internship may not always be the best strategy. With appropriate persons, an internship can be a valuable part of the preparation for ministry process.

It is important that there be close communication between the individual, the theological institution and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry in determining the purpose of the internship, the type of experience desired and the way feedback will be used. Such sharing will enable all participants to fulfill their responsibilities and enhance the value of the internship experience.

### ***II. Career Development Programs***

Participation in a career development program enables an Inquirer or Candidate to gain a clearer understanding not only of her or his personal attributes, interests, capabilities and developmental needs, but also of appropriate occupational directions. The experience can also provide important background for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry as it guides the individual through the preparation for ministry process.

### ***III. Developing Human Relations Skill***

Skills in interpersonal relationships and small group situations are essential to most ministries. Some people have a natural ability to use their personalities effectively; others can profit from such experiences as Clinical Pastoral Education, human relations training, conflict utilization laboratories and individual or group therapy.

### ***IV. Inquirers/Candidates Retreats***

Retreats for Inquirers and Candidates are settings for providing low-stress, peer interactive opportunities for dialogue and learning among Inquirers and Candidates as well as others considering ministry as a vocation. Peer dialogue and feedback are crucial elements for any successful search for truth and need to be included by those who work with persons considering the ministry of Word and Sacrament. For additional research information on this concern, please read recommendations made by the SEIC Project (Study to Enrich Inquirers and Candidates) Final Program Report (October 1992).

### ***V. Certification of Christian Educators***

Certification for Christian Educators is administered by the Educator Certification Council. The individual educator works with the Educator Certification Advisor in the presbytery. At the conclusion of the process a certificate is sent to the presbytery for presentation to the educator. For further information contact the Associate for Certification and Christian Vocation, 100 Witherspoon Street, Room 4615, Louisville, KY 40202-1396, (502) 569-5751.

## **VI. *Financial Aid***

Theological students seeking need-based financial aid through their seminary must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) available at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

FAFSA assists seminary institutions in determining whether a student is eligible for need-based financial aid awards. This is a very valuable resource for students as they seek ways to fund their education while finishing seminary studies with as small amount of debt as possible. Once the FAFSA is complete, the institution's financial aid office can help students establish a realistic budget and suggest ways to find grants, scholarships and loans. For many students, their institution is a major source of financial aid, often in the form of scholarships or grants that are combined with a loan or work-study program. PCUSA seminaries are generous to Inquirers and Candidates who attend their institutions. This should be discussed extensively with students as they meet with their presbytery and choose the seminary where the Master of Divinity Degree will be obtained.

Applying for aid from as many sources as possible is a sound financial strategy. Relieving financial stress for a student provides time for spiritual growth. When applying for aid, meeting deadlines is critical. Students should not seek extensions to financial aid program deadlines. All necessary applications and supporting documentation should be completed well before deadline dates to be considered for scholarships.

When possible, presbyteries are encouraged to provide financial assistance and guidance to students. For presbyteries to understand a student's financial situation, the student must be open in providing financial information, positioning the presbytery to offer counsel on financial aid packages for Inquirers and Candidates. An annual review of the financial resources available to the student will help the presbytery develop ways to make the student's education affordable. Many churches have endowments, memorial funds or other resources that may help seminary students pay for their education. The Preparation for Ministry Committees may be of assistance to students in locating these sources.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry should counsel Inquirers and Candidates on managing debt while in seminary, encouraging them to attend the Fiscal Fitness Seminar offered by the Board of Pensions. Students should be given information regarding the realities of their first call including possible salary and size of congregation. Working together on financial issues as well as spiritual development will help the committee and student address financial and emotional impediments in seeking their first call.

Sources of financial aid:

Office of Financial Aid for Studies, Louisville, KY.  
www.pcusa.org/financialaid.

The Fund for Theological Education, Atlanta, Ga.  
www.thefund.org

The Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation, Omaha, Neb.  
www.omaha-sem-found.org

## **VII. Theological Institution Contact Persons**

- Provide information regarding PC(USA) preparation for ministry procedures and ordination requirements (including examination procedures);
- Provide information and guidance regarding preparation of PC(USA) Personal Information Forms and the denomination's call referral process;
- Encourage theological students considering PC(USA) ordination to contact their presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry as early as possible;
- Encourage PC(USA) students to establish and maintain a responsible covenant relationship with their presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry and to take initiative in their own development;
- Provide opportunities for theological students to relate to colleagues and to experience the inclusiveness of the church's ministry.

A "Directory of Theological Institutional Contact Persons" is available from the Preparation for Ministry Office in Louisville (page 50).

## **VIII. *Transition to Ministry of the Word and Sacrament***

Transition into ministry begins with the preparation for ministry process and continues through the experiences of the first call. A goal of the preparation process is to help individuals establish lifelong patterns of growth in ministry. The first call is a time of both challenge and stress for new ministers, a time when one's need for further development in ministry becomes evident and when one can benefit greatly from the continuing, planned support of one's congregation and presbytery.

Because of the issues and problems faced by many newly ordained persons, it is important for support and caring to extend beyond the preparation stage. For instance, prior to her or his ordination, the Candidate's session, theological institution and the presbytery responsible for her or his preparation (through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry and its Committee on Ministry) can actively help the Candidate become aware of what may be involved in her or his adjustment to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

These issues include:

- The individual's changing identity and role;
- The importance of on-going personal, spiritual and professional development, and self care;
- The nature of the specific call and the leadership style required;
- How she or he can negotiate clear and mutually satisfying expectations with the calling church or organization;
- How to deal with conflict that may emerge in the congregation one serves;
- The presbytery's structure and work and the responsibilities of presbyters.

In the first few years after ordination, presbyteries should provide new ministers with continuing support as part of their career-long support of ministerial development. In fact, it is primarily through relationships established in the collegial context of presbytery that ministers meet some of the goals of transition, such as:

- Feeling a sense of belonging within a new community;
- Learning the practice of ministry under the guidance of experienced ministers;
- Learning to benefit from experiences of accountability, feedback and evaluation;
- Participating in new pastors seminars and pastors support groups to build a support base;
- Establishing effective working styles as a result of studying and understanding the congregation's history, ethos, programs, and status in the community;
- Integrating their self-understanding with the everyday role of the minister.

Making a successful transition from Candidacy to ministry is primarily the individual's responsibility. However, the new minister often has to juggle several concerns and agendas simultaneously: there are the expectations and demands set by the calling congregation; there are personal and family goals and issues to pursue; then there are concerns that are mentioned randomly by individual members of the congregation that beckon the pastor's attention. Thus it is clear that if the new pastor's potential for full, effective service is to be realized, the whole church must be sensitive to the onslaught of needs and concerns that face a pastor who is starting out, and the congregation must take seriously its responsibility to provide sufficient support during this crucial formative time period. The presbytery committee on ministry's regular

check-in with pastor and session is necessary to help build healthy relationships between pastor and session and members of the congregation.

## *Section Four - A Listing of Resources*

### *I. 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 his or her physical health and stamina?
- What is the evidence of his or her emotional well-being?
- What is the evidence of his or her self-discipline?
- How does the individual plan to finance his or her education?

#### *A List of Outcomes for Inquiry*

- A statement of her or his understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to her or his 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 her or his understanding of the task ministers of the Word and Sacrament perform, including an awareness of her or his specific gifts for ministry of the Word and Sacrament and of areas in which growth is needed.

#### *A list of Questions for Candidacy*

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

*A List of Candidacy Interview Questions*

*Personal Issues:*

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

*Educational Issues*

- Does he or she demonstrate adequate academic skills?
- Is there sufficient motivation for scholastic achievement?
- Is she or he meeting the constitutional requirements?
- Does she or he have adequate experience in a local church or other context for experiential learning?
- Has she or he 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 the Word and Sacrament?
- Should he or she 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 the Word and Sacrament?

*A List of Additional Resources for Evaluating an Inquirer's Readiness for Candidacy*

- *Career counseling*  
Comprehensive, in-depth career counseling is offered by the centers affiliated with the Ministry Development Council and other service providers. This process can help the

participant understand how her or his values, interests and potential and acquired capabilities, as well as her or his own personality and sense of call, fit into an occupational choice. By previous agreement with the participant and the center, the presbytery or its delegated entity can request access to written reports of this experience. Career counseling is most valuable if the inquirer has volunteered to participate and when the nature and purpose of the process are carefully interpreted to the inquirer in advance.

- *Psychological evaluation*

This process involves consultation(s) with a clinical or counseling psychologist. The primary purpose of such an evaluation is to determine the inquirer/candidate's psychological health and fitness for ministry and to screen for pathology. Greatest value is achieved if the inquirer participates voluntarily and received careful prior orientation as to the consultation's nature and purpose. The presbytery should establish a working relationship with the psychologist so that her or his reports can be accurately interpreted to the presbytery or its delegated entity. The psychologist's familiarity with religious values and with the requirements of professional ministry will greatly enhance the results of such an evaluation. Psychological evaluation is usually combined with career counseling when the service is provided by a Ministry Development Council accredited counseling center.

- *Reports from the educational institution*

If the inquirer is presently enrolled in a college or university, reports regarding academic progress may be instructive. If the inquirer is presently enrolled in a theological institution, seminary or theological institution shall send annual report regarding academic progress, field education and Clinical Pastoral Education experiences, and the theological institution's assessment of her or his gifts for ministry and progress in preparing for ministry.

- *Reports and reflections on the Inquirer's participation in a Presbyterian congregation.*

- *Letters of reference*

The presbytery may request, or the inquirer wish to provide letters of reference from persons representing different areas of the inquirer's life. These letters may be supplied by persons representing specific categories (e.g.pastor, elder, professor, employer, peer, adult acquaintance, etc.). Note that such letters may have limited value due to their relative lack of objectivity and to the presbytery's lack of knowledge of the author's frame of reference and degree of perception.

#### *A List of Candidacy Questions for Use Before Presbytery*

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

*A List of Outcomes for Candidacy*

- Presenting evidence of competence in the fields of theology, Bible, polity, and worship and Sacraments, ordinarily attested by completion of the requirements of G-14.0450; and evidence of ministerial skill attested in the supervised practice of ministry;
- Presenting evidence of readiness to participate in a calling presbytery's plan for transition and of plans for continuing study and growth (G-11.0103n);
- Expressing theological views compatible with the confessional documents of the church;
- Expressing understanding of the meaning of the questions required for ordination (W-4.4003) informed by knowledge of the church in diverse settings;
- Revealing commitment to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 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 and an exegetical interpretation of the biblical material out of which the sermon arose. This sermon shall be preached before the calling presbytery or a committee thereof as a part of the appearance of the candidate.

## **II. Bibliography**

Most of the following resources are on our web site [www.pcusa.org/prep4min](http://www.pcusa.org/prep4min). They are also available in very limited quantities from the Preparation for Ministry Office, 1-888-718-7228, X-5708. Those resources that can be ordered through the Presbyterian Distribution Service (1-800-524-2612) are listed with their PDS # and cost, if applicable. Additional copies of this Advisory Handbook (PDS # 5070809-07-001) can be ordered through PDS at the cost of \$6.00 per copy.

### **A Day in the Life Of....A Kaleidoscope of Specialized Ministries**

By the Office of Christian Vocation and Enlistment and the Office of Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry. The typical day in the work of various areas of specialized ministries such as Parish Nurse, Prison Chaplain, Tentmaker, Pastoral Counselor, written by 30 persons active in these fields. DMS # 72-511-94-004. Cost is \$5.00 per copy.

### **A Session Guide for the Ministry of All Believers**

Suggested approaches and educational resources to enrich understanding of the vocation of the Christian. Includes suggestions and resources for acquainting persons with the ministry of the Laity, ministry of the Word and Sacrament, and other church occupations. For use by sessions, Christian Education committees, Inquirers, Candidates and pastors. Prepared and field tested by the Task Force for a Joint Candidacy Process.

### **A Theology of Vocations**

By Jack Stotts. Who is called? Who mediates the call? What characterizes the leader?  
DMS # 232-91-016.

### **Dare to be One**

A collection of twelve testimonies demonstrating the unique and common aspects of the call to ministry. This resource aims to inspire and challenge especially young racial ethnic leaders to consider the call to ministry.

### **Developing Competency Criteria: A Design for Committees on Preparation for Ministry**

A process designed to help committees develop competency criteria for evaluating Inquirers and Candidates. Prepared and field-tested by the Task Force for a Joint Candidacy Process.

### **Directory of Theological Institution Contact Persons**

A list of theological institution staff contact persons and Presbyterian resource persons on all accredited campuses where there are significant numbers of Presbyterian Inquirers and Candidates. For use in facilitating communication between committees and seminaries.

### **Discerning Your Call and Gifts for Ministry**

A resource addressed specifically to seminarians, Inquirers and Candidates to help them discern their gifts and their call. Also useful to sessions and Committees on Preparation for Ministry. Written by the late Roy M. Fairchild, former Professor of Education and Social Psychology at San Francisco Theological Seminary, it focuses on questions to be asked as professional church leadership is contemplated. DMS # 232-93-048. Cost \$1.50 per copy.

**Educator Certification Handbook**

A resource that explains the process of certification, including requirements, along with a step-by-step explanation of how to proceed.

**Financial Aid Programs, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

A description of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Student Loan Funds, Undergraduate and Graduate Grant Programs, eligibility criteria and application procedures. For students, local churches and presbytery committees.

**Frequently Asked Questions by Presbytery Committees on Preparation for Ministry**

This resource provides answers to questions frequently asked by CPMs.

**Gifted by the Flame**

A brochure for individuals who are called to work within the professional church arena, but are not called to be ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Includes brief descriptions for church educator, work in national and international mission, and in governing bodies and other agencies. PS #72218-99-003

**Group Discernment Model**

A model for CPMs to use with inquirers and candidates as they seek to discern God's call to them.

**Growing in the Life of the Christian Faith**

This resource was developed by the former Theology and Worship Ministry Unit. Cost is \$1.50 each and is available through Distribution Management Services (DMS # 275-89-001).

**Guidelines for Session Interview with Applicant**

By Bill King. For sessions.

**Ministry Development Council**

A brochure describing career counseling services for professional church workers, Inquirers and Candidates, including a listing of accredited centers, addresses, and directors. For use by Inquirers, Candidates and Committees on Preparation for Ministry.

**Observations and Suggestions for the Interview Process**

For use by sessions and Committees on Preparation for Ministry as they prepare to interview Candidates.

**Ordination**

By Joseph D. Small, Office of Theology and Worship, July, 2007.

### **Preparation For Ministry**

A VHS training video and resource for assisting a presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry to instruct a session in understanding its responsibilities in the preparation process. To purchase, contact the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

### **Recommended Duties of Session Liaison Person**

By John G. Gammie. For use by sessions.

### **Resources for Information Regarding Some Specialized Ministries**

A listing for persons interested in institutional ministries, ministry with older adults, social work and employment opportunities in these areas.

### **Roster of Moderators of Committees on Preparation for Ministry**

A list of the Committee moderator for each presbytery.

### **Self-Inventory Questions for Clarification**

A grouping of questions for vocational reflection for inquirers and candidates. It can be used as a self-inventory with session liaison or Committee on Preparation for Ministry liaison.

### **Some Major Events in the Preparation for Ministry Process**

An outline of important events in the preparation for ministry process.

### **Spiritual Development of Inquirers and Candidates**

An outline of spiritual development areas for CPMs to work with inquirers and candidates.

### **The Call to the Ministry**

By H. Richard Niebuhr. A brief article that explains the four elements of a call and how each element of a call has equal, but distinctive, importance to the individual and to the church.

### **The Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel**

Information regarding required qualifications and endorsement procedures. For persons interested in military chaplaincy service.

### **This Call's For You**

A workbook on Christian Vocation for congregations by the Office of Enlistment and Christian Vocation, PC(USA). Contains study sessions on Christian vocation for all age groups; how to form a committee on Christian Vocation; how to identify, nurture, and support people who should explore professional church occupations. DMS # 232-93-001. Cost \$29.95 plus shipping.

### **Touched by the Flame**

A Brochure that can be used as a study and reflective instrument for people considering their vocation in the light of ministry of the Word and Sacrament, a typical church, and the marks of success contribute to make this a resource that will challenge and validate those individuals who are, or should be, considering this profession. PDS#72218--002

**Vocational Journal**

This Journal is an appropriate tool for Inquirers to use to explore their thoughts and feelings as they examine and test their call to ministry. It is divided into eight sections: Your Relationship with God; Your Relationship with Others; Your Motivations; Your Interests; Your Abilities; Your Work Habits and Work Style; Your Goals and Values; Your Reactions and Feelings. After working through all the sections, the journalist is to re-read the entries and write a self-portrait. DMS # 232-93-005. Cost \$3.00 per copy.

***III. Resources Produced Through the SEIC Project  
and available through  
the Preparation for Ministry Office***

<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION TO MINISTRY AS A VOCATION</b>	
Considering Your Call and Vocation .	101
Primary Qualities for Professional Ministry	102
An Annotated Reading List	103
A Cloud of Witnesses	104
Using A Vocational Journal	105
Reflections of a Seminary Student	106
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Special Offering for Inquirers & Candidates ...	Sheppards & Lapsley	i
Theological Education Sunday (A Bulletin Insert)	Sheppards & Lapsley	v
Preparation Process (in pictorial form)	Greater Atlanta	vii
Building a Presbytery Manual (A Table of Contents)	Chicago/Greater Atlanta	ix
Applicants to the Inquiry Phase	Chicago	x
Developmental Chart of Inquirers & Candidates	Greater Atlanta	xi
Session Responsibilities	Mid Kentucky	xii
Session Interviews with Applicants	Pittsburgh	xiv
Duties of the Session Liaison	Pittsburgh	xv
Welcome and Instruction for New CPM Members	Mid Kentucky	xvii
Inquirer/Candidate's Checklist	Muskingum Valley	xix
Outline of the Preparation Process	Mid Kentucky	xx
Annual Consultation	New Brunswick	xxii
Moving from Inquirer to Candidate	Charlotte	xxiii
Financial Information Form	Charlotte	xxiv
Session Orientation Sheet: Supporting the Inquirer	Grace	xxv
Computer-Based Data Card	Grace	xxv
Interview for Inquirer Enrollment	San Francisco	xxvi
Inquirer Evaluation Prior to Candidacy	San Francisco	xxvii
Guidelines for Inquirers, Candidates and Liaisons	Pueblo	xxviii
Choosing a Spiritual Growth Mentor	Pittsburgh	xxx

## **THE SEIC PROJECT FINAL REPORT**

#### **IV. Description of Forms Used in the Preparation for Ministry Process**

(Sets of forms with the file folder (Form 8) can be ordered from PDS by calling 1-800-524-2612 and asking for item # 72-234-05-001; cost is \$1.75 per set. Extra file folders can be ordered from PDS, item # 72-234-05-00 2; cost is \$0.25 each)

**Form 1: Application for Enrollment as an Inquirer: Background Information for Session and CPM**

The potential Inquirer's first written communication to the session and the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry, along with session's evaluation and recommendation. This form provides basic information regarding the applicant's background, identity, and interests. Included in the form are questions for reflection by both applicant and session.

**Form 2A: Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer**

To be completed by the applicant seeking to be enrolled. The CPM action regarding the application as well as that of the presbytery are recorded on this form. Upon completion, Stated Clerk of presbytery sends the form to the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street - Room 4429, Louisville, Kentucky 40202.

**Form 2B: Covenant Agreement Between Inquirer, Session, and CPM; and Inquirer Release**

A signed acknowledgement of the new covenant relationship entered into by the Inquirer, the session and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The Inquirer Release sets in motion an understanding that permits the CPM to secure information necessary to make responsible decisions and recommendations.

**Form 3: Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report**

This report, completed by the Inquirer/Candidate before each Annual Consultation, evaluates progress in accomplishing previously agreed-upon goals and objectives. This form requests a listing of completed courses, and includes specific questions to be addressed in each of the five growth areas.

**Form 4: Report of Annual Consultation**

A summary report of the Annual Consultation, completed by the CPM and the Inquirer/Candidate, that indicates developmental progress in the five key areas along with growth objectives agreed to for the next year. Designed for use by enrollees before, during and after theological education. Completed report is sent to enrollee, theological institution, and sponsoring session.

**Form 5 A: Application to be Received by Presbytery as a Candidate**

Upon completion, this form is sent by Stated Clerk of presbytery to the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street - Room 4429, Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396.

- Form 5 B: Covenant Agreement Between Candidate, Session, and CPM; and Candidate Release**  
A signed acknowledgement of the new covenant relationship entered into by the Candidate, the session and the presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
- Form 6: Summary Report of Final Assessment of Candidate's Readiness to be Examined for Ordination**  
This form, completed by the CPM, acknowledges that the CPM of the Candidate's presbytery has conducted a final assessment of the Candidate's preparation and readiness to begin ministry; and that he/she has successfully completed all of the denomination's and the Committee's requirements and is ready to be examined for ordination. Also included on the form is a description of the information to be sent to a calling presbytery, when requested.
- Form 7A: Certificate of Approval of Transfer**  
Form used in the transfer of an enrollee's covenant relationship from one presbytery to another; completed and signed by Stated Clerk of transferring presbytery and Stated Clerk of receiving presbytery, who copies and mails to Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street - Room 4429, Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396.
- Form 7B: Report of Withdrawal or Removal of Inquirer or Candidate, or Ordination of a Candidate**  
Form used to report to the Office of the General Assembly particular action of the presbytery Committee relative to the withdrawal, removal, or ordination of enrolled persons.
- Form 8: File Folder (DMS #72-511-94-007)**

Appendix V – Flow Chart

The Preparation for Ministry Process-Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Steps In The Process	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT FOR INQUIRY			INQUIRY			APPLICATION ENROLLMENT FOR CANDIDACY			CANDIDACY			REVIEW CERTIFICATION FOR READINESS FOR MINISTRY					
Applicant Inquirer Candidate Session	I	I	I	M	M	P	P	I	M	M	M	I	I	M	M	I	I	M
Session Liaison																		
CPM Liaison																		
Presbytery																		
Theological Institution																		
General Assembly																		
Book of Order References G-14	0403, 0411	0404, 0405	0402, 0410	0410, 0413	0404	0421	0402, 0403	0405	0403	0405	0420, 0421	0450a, 0482	0450	00483	0450	0440	0481, 0480, 0482	1,0402
Advisory Hand Book References (Page #s)	12	19	19, 25	19-21	20-21	30	13,30-31	21, 26	21, 26-27	21, 26-27	30-34	35	36	36	36	11-12		35
Forms to use in reporting																		

Note: Form 8 (File Folder) is used throughout the process. (G-14,0460-0461, form 7A) and withdrawals (G-14,0463, Form 7B) can occur at any time during the process.

(\*\*)-CPM Approval to Circulate PIF Form (see Step 16)

I-Initiates; M-Mutual Involvement; P-Participant

# Preparation for Ministry Advisory Handbook

## Part II

### Handbook for Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderators

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**Chapter 3 “Senior” Written Examinations..... 67**

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## **A. Preparation for Ministry Process**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

**I**n 1992, a Handbook for CPM Moderators was published by the Office of Preparation for Ministry of the Church Vocation Ministry Unit. Since then, this Handbook has been revised in 1998 and then in 2003 with the assistance of the following task force members:

Elder Diana Barber, Associate Executive, Synod of Lakes and Prairies;

Rev. Lesley Davies, Associate, Examination Office, Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly;

Rev. Garnett Foster, Director of Vocational Formation, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary;

Elder Evelyn Hwang, Associate for Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry, National Ministries Division;

Rev. Daniel B. Merry, Associate Executive, Pittsburgh Presbytery;

Rev. David Peters, CPM Moderator, Riverside Presbytery;

Rev. Steven P. Ranney, CPM Moderator, Denver Presbytery

Elder Barbara Ranta, Associate Stated Clerk, Seattle Presbytery

Because significant changes in the Chapter 14 of the Book of Order have been adopted by presbyteries in June, 2007, this Handbook has been updated to be a part of the constitutionally required Advisory Handbook for Preparation for Ministry (G-14.0402).

In this Handbook, the role of the CPM Moderator and the descriptions of his/her responsibilities for each step of the inquiry/candidacy process are provided. In addition, suggestions for relationships that must be established with other committees and officers of presbytery are also available.

## *The Role of the Moderator* **1**

**C**ongratulations! As the moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) you have answered a call to ministry by your presbytery and will work with others who are also called. You are probably wondering:

What am I getting into?    Where do I start?  
Who and where is my support?    What do I need to know?

This Handbook is designed to help you get started and guide you along the way of your service as moderator of your presbytery's CPM. Other resources are available. Some are listed in the appendix of this Handbook; others will be given to you by the previous moderator, the presbytery office, the Committee on Ministry, and the Preparation for Ministry Office. Among the resources you will need are:

1. *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part I - The Book of Confessions, and Part II- The Book of Order;*
2. A copy of your presbytery's operating procedures;
3. Minutes of previous meetings of the CPM;
4. A roster of CPM committee members;
5. A roster and files for the presbytery's inquirers and candidates;
6. Copies of denominational forms used by the CPM;
7. Material sent by the denominational offices, newsletters, forms, reports, pastoral letters, etc.;
8. The budget for your committee and information about how it is developed: contents (committee travel expense, meeting expenses, scholarships available from presbytery and congregations, costs of annual consultations, costs for Standard Ordination Exams, etc.), and how disbursements are made;
9. Presbytery actions and policies related to the CPM;
10. The Preparation for Ministry video and copies of the Part I - *Preparation for Ministry Manual* (see Appendix VI - Resources);
11. Roberts' Rules of Order;
12. Catalogues of theological institutions;
13. Directory of Theological Institution Contact Persons;
14. Financial Aid Program brochures;
15. SEIC (Study to Enrich Inquirers and Candidates) materials (see Appendix VI).

<p>When your term of office as the CPM moderator is over, the above materials, along with this Handbook, should be given to the person who succeeds you.</p>
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As the moderator of your presbytery's CPM, you will discover that the effectiveness of the

committee will depend a great deal on your own effectiveness. Making the best use of the gifts, strengths, interests, knowledge, and varied theological positions held by you and the committee members depends on how you relate to them and they relate to each other. Take time to reflect with the committee on how issues are to be handled and decisions made. Invite feedback and creative alternatives to issues and procedures of the past and allow the committee to “live into” this new relationship and challenge.

Sudden and drastic changes in procedures, no matter how worthy or needed, may be resisted unless committee members have had a part in their development. The committee must, therefore, take the time and make the effort to care for itself amid the crush of many meetings, timelines, forms to complete, and others to care for. You will need to make room in the committee’s schedule for spiritual renewal, member re-creation, and committee development. Challenge the committee to seek their own care and growth.

You will find that careful preparation of meetings and agendas avoids the danger of clustering “heavy” issues in one place and thus overloading the committee. A good agenda creates a balance among the issues and concerns to be addressed that speaks positively to your leadership style. Among the items that will be regularly on the agenda of the moderator are:

- Training and nurturing the committee in the areas of discernment and spiritual formation;
  - Integrating new committee members;
  - Dealing with issues of trust and confidentiality;
  - Learning to say “no” to an inquirer or candidate;
  - Forming committee protocol for strategic times in the process;
  - Educating the presbytery and the churches on issues/process for preparation for ministry;
  - Demonstrating pastoral sensitivity toward committee members, inquirers and candidates, pastors and sessions;
  - Developing and utilizing the criteria needed to determine the successful completion of each step in the process;
  - Dealing with the demands for time, paperwork, and meetings;
  - Examining critically the structure and organization of the committee for effectiveness.
- Good subcommittees contribute to a lighter load and fewer headaches for the moderator.

This Handbook, with the Advisory Handbook Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual and the *Book of Order*, provides specific help as you lead the committee through the process for each applicant who comes before you. **Your presbytery or synod may provide training for new moderators. If not, please urge your presbytery (Executive or General Council) to do so or to provide alternatives for training.**

Now let us move on to the process itself. The following chapters provide guidance as you move through the various steps. Each chapter begins with steps, taken from the Preparation for Ministry Manual Flow Chart (see Appendix VII), to be addressed in that chapter. You will also find special *Alerts* to call attention to important messages or concerns that must not be missed. A *What do you do?* section is included as well to highlight specific actions to be accomplished or assigned to complete implementation of each step.

## *Beginning the Process: 2*

### *Application and Enrollment for Inquiry*

#### **Steps 1-6**

- Step 1 - Applicant is an active member of sponsoring congregation for at least six months.
- Step 2 - Session notifies CPM of applicant.
- Step 3 - CPM representative meets with session for session orientation.
- Step 4 - Session interviews applicant, makes recommendations to CPM/presbytery, chooses session liaison.
- Step 5 - CPM interviews applicant, makes recommendation on enrollment as an inquirer, appoints CPM liaison.
- Step 6 - Presbytery enrolls inquirer.

#### **STEP 1**

**Applicant is an active member of sponsoring congregation for at least six months.**

Before you, as moderator of the CPM, take any actions regarding an applicant, become familiar with the five key areas that will be used to nurture and test the applicant's development through the entire process. These key areas are (1) Education for Ministry; (2) Spiritual Development; (3) Interpersonal Relations; (4) Personal Growth; and (5) Professional Development (see Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, page 5, for a more detailed description of areas).

A member of a Presbyterian congregation applies to the session to become an inquirer. The applicant must have been a member of the congregation for at least six months. It is the responsibility of the pastor, session, and congregation to communicate with and support those who wish to formally pursue their call to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

#### **When session contacts the CPM regarding an applicant for the inquiry phase...**

##### *What do you do?*

#### **STEP 2**

**Session notifies CPM of applicant.**

- A. This is the point at which the CPM becomes active. Receive from the pastor, clerk of session, the presbytery executive, or the applicant information, concerning the applicant's desire to explore the implications of preparing for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- B. Arrange a meeting with the session for orientation. Decide who from the CPM will meet with them. Some committees have members

trained for this task. Prior to the meeting, negotiate with the session moderator and/or the clerk of session for adequate meeting time on the session agenda (30-45 minutes minimum).

- C. Preview the Preparation for Ministry video (see Appendix VI - Resources) and arrange for the session to view appropriate sections.
- D. Prior to meeting with the session, send **Form 1 (Application for Inquiry: Background Information for Session)** to the applicant to be completed and forwarded to the moderator or clerk of session before the CPM meets with them. (Forms are available from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) web site, the presbytery office or the Presbyterian Distribution Service.)

### **A time is set to meet with the session for orientation...**

#### *What do you do?*

#### **STEP 3**

**CPM  
representative  
meets with  
session for  
session  
orientation.**

- A. The CPM should discuss with the session the meaning of call and ministry as viewed by churches holding to the Reformed tradition (see *Book of Order*, G-6.0100, and Part I - Preparation for Ministry Manual, pages 3-4).
- B. It is the responsibility of the CPM to encourage the session to test the validity of the applicant's call.
- C. The CPM should interpret to the session the preparation process in its entirety, including: the requirement of at least two years as an inquirer/candidate, the presbytery's and the Committee's calendars for consultations and actions, financial considerations, and denomination expectations and presbytery policies and procedures (G-14.0403, G-14.0412).
- D. Leave copies of Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, forms, and information about the CPM video with the session moderator or clerk.
- E. **Form 1** should have been completed by the applicant and in the hands of session before the meeting. Remind all participants to use appropriate standards of confidentiality since **Form 1** contains personal information.
- F. Suggest that the session use page 26 of the Part I - Preparation for Ministry Manual, "Some Issues for Attention and Evaluation by the Session When Examining the Gifts and Motivations of a Prospective Inquirer," and page 22 of the Manual, "Roles of Session."

## Alert

The session has the option to receive or not to receive the applicant; to make or not make a decision regarding applicant on the day of the interview; to conduct one or more interviews before making a decision. Be sensitive to special concerns the session may have about the applicant's gifts, intentions and sense of call. Discuss with the session the necessity for objectivity in their interview with the applicant, and encourage them to meet without the applicant present when voting on the application.

### **If the session approves the application...**

#### **STEP 4**

**Session interviews applicant, makes recommendations to CPM/ Presbytery, chooses session liaison.**

#### *What do you do?*

- A. Be sure the session is aware that, following the interview, they must take the initiative to complete and send all papers to you, including the name and address of the session liaison.
- B. **Form 2A (Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer)** should be completed and sent by the session to you with the name and address of the session liaison.
- C. Be sure that the session is aware that following the process used in the presbytery, the CPM will make an endorsement to either enroll or not to enroll the applicant.

### **The CPM arranges to interview the applicant...**

#### *What do you do?*

#### **STEP 5**

**CPM interviews applicant, makes recommendation on enrollment as an inquirer, appoints CPM liaison.**

- A. Arrange for the applicant to meet with the CPM and distribute copies of the completed **Form 1** to all members of the CPM.
- B. Remind the committee of the goals of the interview:
  - 1. To discuss the nature and theology of call;
  - 2. To begin to discern the nature of the applicant's sense of vocation;
  - 3. To determine whether the applicant has the potential and the qualities necessary for ministry of the Word and Sacrament;
  - 4. To prepare the applicant for the highly evaluative period of inquiry (or offer suggestions for other vocations);
  - 5. To make certain that the applicant understands that the preparation process is the beginning of a relationship spanning two years or more that will determine one's fitness for ministry, that will assess one's growth in five areas of ministry, and a time of exploration of the validity of the call, and a further time, if the way be clear, for actual preparation for a call.

- C. Review and recommend the use of the SEIC (Study to Enrich Inquirers and Candidates. See Preparation for Ministry Manual, P. 52). materials as resources when appropriate, such as:
  - #101 Considering Your Call and Vocation;
  - #102 Primary Qualities for Professional Ministry;
  - #103 Vocation as a Journey for Life;
  - #104 Preparation for Ministry: The Process;
  - #105 Dialogue with CPM Members.
- D. Appoint a person or team from the committee to be liaison between the inquirer and the committee.
- E. Consult with the presbytery stated clerk as you prepare the recommendation concerning the action of the CPM for presentation to presbytery.
- F. Ensure that **Form 2A and Form 2B** are completed and sent to the stated clerk.

**Alert**

If the CPM decides not to recommend the applicant to the presbytery for enrollment as an inquirer, the committee should prepare for counseling as soon as possible with the applicant, the pastor, and the session regarding its action.

**The CPM decides to recommend to presbytery that the applicant be enrolled as an inquirer...**

*What do you do?*

**STEP 6**

**Presbytery enrolls inquirer.**

- A. Be sure all paper work is completed on **Forms 1, 2A, and 2B**.
- B. Check to see whether your presbytery has taken action to permit the CPM to act on the presbytery's behalf.
- C. Arrange with the stated clerk of presbytery for time on the docket of a convenient stated meeting for presenting the committee's recommendation concerning the applicant.
- D. Attend or designate a CPM member to attend the presbytery meeting and report the action of the CPM.
- E. Decide whether to invite the applicant to be present at presbytery meeting (although he or she is not officially presented to presbytery).
- F. Upon presbytery action the applicant is officially enrolled as an inquirer
- G. Begin an official file on this person.

The applicant is now an inquirer, and your task is to continue to work with the person through the next stages of the process. The following chapter in this Handbook deals with your responsibilities regarding the inquiry phase of the process.

**Step 7**

Step 7- Review of preparation process and progress. Develop covenant agreement for guidance, goals, consultations, and reports.

“The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to ministry of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together in such a way that a decision regarding the inquirer’s suitability for ministry of the Word and Sacrament will be based on knowledge and experience of one another.” (*Book of Order*, G-14.0404).

The covenant relationship established in this phase requires that you develop with the inquirer a mutual trust and that you be honest with each other, especially during this phase, be it a year or more, for it is a crucial time in the inquirer’s preparation for ministry. One presbytery developed a practice to interview prospective inquirers in retreat setting where questions for reflection about one’s faith journey were addressed by both the applicants and the CPM members. The quality and the depth of this sharing of personal faith help to build trust among applicants and CPM members.

**Your CPM has a new inquirer on its roll...**

**STEP 7**  
**Review of preparation process and progress. Develop Covenant Agreement for guidance, goals, consultations, and reports.**

***What do you do?***

The moderator is responsible for seeing that the following is accomplished:

- A. Appoint a committee liaison; develop Covenant Agreement; and determine timelines for future meetings.
- B. Encourage the inquirer to explore his or her call to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament from as many perspectives as possible.

**Alert**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is firmly grounded in the Reformed tradition in its relationships with men and women who feel themselves called by God to be ministers of the Word and Sacrament. As you explore with them their sense of vocation and the procedures leading to ordination, be sure that this tradition is clearly understood and that they are willing to abide by it as it is expressed in the *Book of Order* requirements for the ordination process outlined in section G-14.0480 (also see Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, pages 3-4).

- C. Encourage the inquirer to engage in as many challenging activities as feasible during this phase, including:
  - 1. Field work (if attending seminary), preferably not in the home congregation (see G-14.0420).
  - 2. Church-related employment in the summer;
  - 3. Involvement in the life of a Presbyterian congregation;
  - 4. Volunteer work in a local church, hospital, or other agency;
  - 5. Shadowing: The inquirer may be encouraged to accompany a pastor to meetings, on hospital calls, to community events, and so forth, for several weeks for observation and future discussion and debriefing;
  - 6. Attendance at governing body meetings or special events.
- D. Help the inquirer understand the realities of the current job market and the decreasing size of congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): the majority now average under 200 members.
- E. Remind the inquirer to supply full written reports from all those involved in supervising any of the activities listed above. Included in the reports should be: a statement of the expectations of the supervisor; how well these were fulfilled by the inquirer; and an evaluation of the inquirer's gifts for ministry.

### **Alert**

Keep in mind that all of the above is intended as an opportunity for inquirers to experience a variety of both the satisfactions and the frustrations that are regularly faced by pastors. In addition, these experiences provide both the CPM and the Inquirer with helpful evaluations of the inquirer's skills, strengths and weaknesses, and areas of needed growth.

## **Questions may be raised in your committee about the validity of the call and/or the suitability of an inquirer for the ordained ministry...**

### ***What do you do?***

- A. Review the responsibilities of gatekeeping and nurture with the members of your CPM. Gatekeeping is a major function of the CPM. The committee has this task, for it holds the authority to decide who is and who is not to be recommended to the presbytery for ordination. Do not let the pastoral concerns for an inquirer deter you from your responsibilities, for the inquiry phase is a time for complete honesty among the members of the CPM and the Inquirer. This function is truly critical because, even in this time of diminished influence of the church upon society, the power of the ordained clergyperson to impact, for good or for ill, the lives of church people, individually and as congregations, is too often unrecognized.

- B. Face issues and concerns related to inclusiveness in a direct manner balancing the committee’s gatekeeping function and nurturing practices. Inquirers and candidates have become increasingly more diverse in age, gender, race, previous experience, and increasingly open in regard to sexual orientation. Uncritical support of enrolled persons may backfire when circumstances dictate that a different, more critical judgment must be brought to bear by the CPM.

After encouraging the inquirer through a time of exploration in which growth and change are apparent to the CPM, and knowing that a three-year \$20,000 debt load has accumulated, the committee may find it difficult to agree that the red flags outnumber the green lights enough to warrant withholding a recommendation for candidacy.

***When there are early and undeniable indicators suggesting that a person should not be recommended to continue in the process or to advance to the next phase, it is kinder that the person know this as soon as possible rather than later.***

If your CPM recommends the inquirer for advancement, the “gate” has been opened, and, under ordinary circumstances, it will not be closed at a later date. Gatekeeping decisions should ordinarily be made before the candidacy phase.

- C. Factors to discuss:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has traditionally required its ministers of the Word and Sacrament to be not only well educated and equipped to preach and teach the scriptures effectively, but also to be well-rounded persons of faith and commitment. The difficulties of the gatekeeping task include:

1. The affirming response of most sessions to those who indicate a call to the ministry is often so uncritical that the home congregation of an inquirer will not understand a rejection by the CPM;
2. In early consultations, the CPM sees the inquirer’s potential and wishes to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in the hope that any problems can be resolved during the candidacy phase; however, by acting neither early nor decisively to address identified problems, the CPM is merely postponing the day of reckoning that must come for the committee and the person enrolled.
3. If a person asks the CPM to enter the inquiry phase late, perhaps even after graduation from seminary, the CPM may be unwilling to turn down the person in consideration of the time, energy, and money already expended;
4. As indicated above, applicants will come to your committee from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of needs. Recognize that there may be persons who have difficulty finding positions in the PC(USA) for reasons of race, language, sexual orientation, finances, physical condition, and so on. Examine this reality with applicants as you explore with them their call.

## **Your CPM decides to recommend removing the inquirer from the covenant relationship (G-14-0463)...**

### *What do you do?*

A. Review with your committee the policies, procedures, and style for this action to recommend terminating the covenant relationship. Be supportive and caring to the inquirer during this difficult time.

B. Explain as clearly as possible why the decision has been made, emphasizing the person's strengths well as indicating the weaknesses and shortcomings that led to the decision.

C. Offer suggestions through a group discernment process for alternative occupations that the person may wish to consider, including persons to contact, resources, and so forth.

D. Contact the pastor of the person's home church and the session liaison as soon as possible to explain the action to be recommended to the presbytery, since it may be unexpected. Tell them the reasons for the committee's action, give them the alternatives that were suggested, and offer any other suggestions you may have about how they can be most supportive of the rejected inquirer.

E. Recommend to presbytery the CPM's action regarding removal of the inquirer from the covenant relationship. Following presbytery's action, be sure that the stated clerk completes **Form 7 (Report of Transfer, Withdrawal, or Removal of Inquirer or Candidate)** and mail it to the Preparation for Ministry in Louisville.

## **Your CPM is to meet with someone who has been an inquirer for three years, and has not requested to move to candidacy...**

### *What do you do?*

A. Keep in mind that the provision of "sufficient time" for inquiry is at the heart of the current process. This is another occasion for serious consideration of the validity of the person's call to ministry.

B. Consider developing a policy, if there is not one already, concerning the length of time persons may continue under care in your presbytery, and how the time in the two phases should be divided. (One presbytery allows a maximum of five years, with not more than three years in either phase. Another presbytery allows six years total.)

## **Your CPM is to discuss the motivations and/or mental stability and psychological fitness of an inquirer...**

### *What do you do?*

Recommend to the CPM that all available evaluative tools be used.  
These include:

- A. Assessments by Ministry Development Council (MDC) Centers which are professional career counseling centers that work almost exclusively with church professionals. Some synods share the cost of these assessments with the presbytery, the inquirer, and his/her congregation providing the remainder;
- B. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) or a similar approved program that may be helpful to the inquirer. These programs vary in length and format. For information about those in your area, write The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, 1549 Clairmont Road, Suite 103, Decatur, GA 30033-4611, (404) 320-1472, (404) 320-0849, email address: [acpe@acpe.edu](mailto:acpe@acpe.edu) web address: [www.acpe.edu](http://www.acpe.edu)
- C. Evaluation by a professional psychiatrist, educational psychologist, or other certified person in whom the CPM has confidence.

In some presbyteries, the use of these evaluative tools is required; some CPMs simply encourage their inquirers to make use of them. In recent years, the concern about mental health of those preparing for ministry of the Word and Sacrament has been raised by our Board of Pensions. **It is unwise for presbyteries not to use these evaluation tools.**

### *Alert*

Reports from both counseling center staff and CPE supervisors as well as transcripts from educational institutions, need to be treated with **the utmost confidentiality**. These documents should be shared only with the permission of the inquirer. For legal and security reasons, after the committee has considered the material, some CPMs destroy any copies except the originals, which are kept in the inquirer's confidential file for transmittal at a later time (with the candidate's permission) to a calling presbytery. Since these evaluations can provide the CPM and the inquirer with data that go beyond superficial impressions, it is most important that they be done during the inquiry phase, rather than during the candidacy phase, in case there are truly significant and potentially serious problems that need consideration.

## **It is time for the inquirer to meet with the CPM for the annual consultation...**

### *What do you do?*

- A. Send a copy of **Form 3 (Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report)** to the inquirer at least a month in advance, with a notification of the time and place of the annual consultation.
- B. Schedule a face-to-face meeting if at all possible, either with the entire CPM or at least two or three members, including, where possible, the moderator and the CPM liaison. (NOTE: If meeting with the inquirer in person is not feasible, a CPM member traveling in the area may arrange to meet with the inquirer. The CPM moderator or someone on the presbytery staff in the inquirer's location might be asked to conduct the consultation for the committee. Another alternative, though not preferable, is a conference telephone call with several members of the committee and the inquirer.) Some presbyteries conduct annual consultation with all inquirers and candidates in a two-day retreat.
- C. Arrange to pay the expenses of the inquirer to the consultation, including child care, if needed. If the inquirer is attending school at some distance from your presbytery, try to arrange a consultation for a time when she/he will be in your area or buy her/him a plane ticket.
- D. Schedule at least one hour for the consultation with additional time for the CPM to discuss in advance the papers presented by the inquirer. Identify any special concerns that may need prior discussion by the CPM.
- E. Decide who is to conduct the consultation and prepare the report (**Form 4 – Report of Annual Consultation**). Allow time for prayer with and for the inquirers and their families at some time during the consultation.
- F. Become familiar with Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, Expected Outcome on page 8 so that you may be clear about the expectations of the committee and presbytery that must be met by the end of the inquiry phase.
- G. Be prepared in advance to help the inquirer plan to move from his or her present place in the process to the next steps. Make arrangements for this information to be shared in writing following the consultation. It may be included in the report of the consultation prepared by the CPM liaison.
- H. Discuss the financial status of the inquirer, encouraging openness about

current needs, projected debt load, plans for repayment, scholarship possibilities, and so forth. (NOTE: This is a critical part of the consultation since so many seminary students will graduate with considerable debt and with the prospect of existing on a low salary for several years.)

- I. In order to avoid any surprises in the future, when a CPM liaison has been recently appointed, determine with the inquirer what arrangements, promises, or advice was given by the previous liaison.
  
- J. Be sure that the inquirer signs a copy of the Report of the Annual Consultation form that will be sent to the session liaison to the theological institution's contact person (see the "Directory of Theological Institution Contact Persons" sent twice a year from the Preparation for Ministry Office in Louisville).

### **Checklist of Essential Papers for Inquirer's File**

Be sure that the following papers are in the inquirer's file:

- Covenant Agreement (**Form 2B**)
- Copies of the six written statements described in Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, page 8.  
(NOTE: Copies of these statements are to be sent to the session liaison with the request that they be considered by the session before it acts to endorse the inquirer to move to candidacy.);
- Reports of all annual consultations, including transcripts and field work evaluations;
- Scores on Ordination Examinations;
- Copies of requests for scholarships or financial aid;
- Application papers originally sent to the session and the CPM;
- Special papers concerning exemptions, etc.;
- All forms required by the preparation for ministry process to this point;
- Any additional materials required by your presbytery.

## *Application and Enrollment for Candidacy* **4**

### **Steps 8-11**

- Step 8 Inquirer applies to become a candidate through session.
- Step 9 Session confers with inquirer. Reviews evidence of inquiry phase and makes recommendation to CPM/presbytery.
- Step 10 CPM confers with inquirer, reviews evidence of inquiry phase, and makes recommendation regarding candidacy.
- Step 11 Presbytery receives CPM recommendation and examines inquirer.  
Presbytery receives and enrolls as candidate.

Steps 8-11 are a transitional phase between inquiry and acceptance into candidacy. Many presbyteries view this step as the most important move in the process. It is here where it needs to be determined if the inquirer has the gifts and abilities to serve the church well. If the conclusion is that they do not, this is the place where the “gatekeeping” role is more easily exercised.

### **When the inquirer applies for candidacy...**

#### *What do you do?*

#### **STEP 8**

**Inquirer applies to become a candidate through session.**

- A. Be sure that the inquirer has completed **Form 5A (Application to be Received as a Candidate)** and has submitted it to the session of his or her church. This should include the six statements in the Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, page 8. A copy should be placed in the person’s file.
- B. The session should be encourage to examine the inquirer using the six statements as a starting point.
- C. Wait for the session action to be communicated to you.

### **The session has made a recommendation to the CPM regarding the inquirer’s application to become a candidate...**

#### *What do you do?*

- A. Through the session liaison, provide the session with information

## STEP 9

Session confers with inquirer. Reviews evidence of growth within the five areas of competence and makes recommendation to CPM/Presbytery.

requested that will enable the members to assess the applicant's progress during the inquiry phase, remembering to use appropriate standard of confidentiality.

- B. The inquirer may ask the session:
  - (1) to advance to candidacy,
  - (2) to remain an inquirer for another year, or
  - (3) to withdraw from the process.
- C. Receive **Form 5A** from the session with its recommendation concerning the inquirer.

**The session has recommended that the inquirer be advanced to candidacy...**

## STEP 10

CPM confers with inquirer, reviews evidence of inquiry phase, and makes recommendation regarding candidacy.

### *What do you do?*

- A. Receive **Form 5A** from the session and schedule a meeting with the inquirer, the session liaison, and the CPM.
- B. Review with the inquirer and the CPM
  - 1. The annual consultation and the six statements required in the Book of Order.
  - 2. The covenant relationship and, in the case of a request to move to candidacy, begin to establish a new Covenant Agreement.
- C. The CPM has the responsibility to recommend one of the following actions to presbytery:
  - 1. To continue the individual as an inquirer;
  - 2. To withdraw or remove the individual from the process;
  - 3. To recommend that the individual be enrolled as a candidate (only the presbytery can enroll).

### *Alert*

In some cases, the CPM may, after prayerful deliberation, decide that an inquirer or candidate should not be continued in the process. This decision can be traumatic for many of the people involved. Thus, it is important to handle this situation in a forthright yet compassionate manner. The CPM needs to be clear and honest with the inquirer/candidate about the reasons why the decision was made, allowing the inquirer/candidate a chance to respond. After the meeting, these reasons should be put in writing and sent to the inquirer/candidate. As soon as is feasible a call should be made to the pastor of the inquirer/candidate's home church to explain the CPM's action and offer to have further conversation about the decision. An offer should also be made to send a representative from the CPM to the session to answer questions. All of this should be done with the utmost pastoral sensitivity, all the while observing appropriate standards of confidentiality. The proper handling of a dismissal can go a long way toward defusing a potentially volatile situation.

An individual may be dropped from the process because the period of “sufficient time” has elapsed. A presbytery, or the CPM with presbytery agreement, may define “sufficient time” as it decides in its policies. Some presbyteries set three years as sufficient time for the inquiry phase.

## **The CPM has voted to recommend the inquirer to the presbytery for examination and enrollment as a candidate...**

### *What do you do?*

#### **STEP 11**

**Presbytery receives CPM recommendation and examines inquirer. Presbytery receives and enrolls as candidate.**

- A. Consult with the stated clerk of presbytery for time on the docket of a meeting convenient to the CPM, the presbytery, and the inquirer.
- B. Inform the inquirer of what may be expected of him or her at the meeting of presbytery. There should be no surprises.
- C. As moderator of CPM you will ordinarily present the inquirer to the presbytery for enrollment. Before you introduce the inquirer, it is important that you set the boundaries of the examination by identifying the three areas to which the questions are limited: personal faith in Christ, their understanding of their sense of call, and any work experience in the church that has confirmed their understanding of call.
- D. Make a check list of:
  - Papers that will be needed;
  - Persons who will be involved (some may need to be invited or reminded to attend);
  - Dates, times, place, and so forth;
  - What will the presbytery be told about the inquirer—personal history, academic history, church membership, future plans?  
Have the statement of faith and description of the call been prepared by the inquirer? What questions from presbyters may be expected?
- E. Some presbyteries give a symbolic gift to the new candidate: a current *Book of Order*, a Bible, a *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study*, the Presbyterian symbol. Whatever the practice in your presbytery, you will wish this to be a positive and celebratory experience for the candidate, the presbytery, and your committee.

### **Alert**

You should ascertain at the beginning of your term of office the dates and locations of all stated meetings of the presbytery and the time on the docket allotted to your committee. Inquirers who hope to become candidates should also have this information.

**Step 12**

Step 12 - Review of preparation process and progress. Develop covenant agreement for guidance, goals, consultations, and reports.

**After presbytery votes to approve a person to become a candidate...**

*What do you do?*

**STEP 12**

**Review of preparation process and progress. Develop Covenant Agreement for guidance, goals, consultations, and reports.**

- A. At the appropriate time, schedule annual consultations to review the candidate's progress. **Form 3 (Pre-Interview Consultation Report)** should be provided the candidate and should be submitted to the CPM before the annual consultations.
- B. **Form 4 (Report of Annual Consultation)** should be prepared following the meeting and kept in the candidate's file. It contains goals in each of the five areas of competence for the following year. Some CPMs send **Form 4** to the candidate so that the candidate may suggest goals for the next year.
- C. Discuss and give approval to plans for some form of field education for the candidate.
- D. Discuss with the candidate progress in meeting course requirements in an accredited theological institution, including requirements for competency in Hebrew and Greek (G- 14.0450c).

**A new Covenant Agreement is to be established with the candidate...**

*What do you do?*

- A. Establish a new Covenant Agreement, as the agent of the presbytery, with the candidate. In this covenant, the presbytery agrees to provide care and supervision to the candidate, including:
  - 1. Oversight and guidance in course selection in seminary;
  - 2. Fieldwork assignments, including CPE, psychological and/or vocational testing;
  - 3. Spiritual development;
  - 4. Financial counseling and assistance (G-14.0412). The candidate's session should be reminded that they may be called upon to provide some financial assistance , and/or to help the candidate plan his or her financial matters.

- B. Include specific agreements in the covenant regarding the five key areas of development (see Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, page 5).
- K. Report major themes of the covenant to the presbytery as a party in the agreement. The session and session liaison should also be made aware of the essential themes in the agreement
- L. Remind the candidate periodically (at annual consultations, for example) of the expected outcomes of candidacy (see Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, page 10) and the requirements for certification for a call (see Part I – Preparation for Ministry Manual, pages 11).

**Steps 13-16**

- Step 13- Presbyteries' Cooperative Examinations.
- Step 14 - CPM conducts a final assessment of candidate's readiness to receive a call.
- Step 15- CPM recommends candidate to presbytery to be certified ready to receive a call.
- Step 16 - CPM approves circulation of Personal Information Form to explore obtaining a call.

The Standard Ordination Examinations are an integral part of the Preparation for Ministry process, and serve as one of the tools used in assessing readiness for ministry on the part of an inquirer or candidate. The examinations provide an opportunity for the larger church to assist the CPM and the presbytery in evaluating a student's integration of theological education and gifts for practical for ministry. It is important for the CPM to work carefully with students in planning for these examinations. In particular, it is the responsibility of the CPM to determine when inquirers or candidates are ready to take the four "Senior" examinations.

**You have a candidate ready to take the Standard Ordination Examinations...**

*What do you do?*

**STEP 13**

**Presbyteries'  
Cooperative  
Exams.**

- A. Develop a calendar to guide the candidate through the final year of seminary and on to a call and ordination (see Appendix II). With the exception of the Bible Content examination, usually taken in the first year of seminary, the remaining four ordination examinations are ordinarily taken at the beginning of the senior year of seminary.
- B. The Bible Content Examination is offered once a year on the first Friday in February. Copies of the registration forms for this exam are sent to CPM moderators each spring. Copies of the registration forms may also be downloaded from the examinations' website at [www.pcusa.org/exams](http://www.pcusa.org/exams) Inquirers and candidates do not need written permission from the CPM to sit for this exam.
- C. The four written "Senior" examinations are offered twice a year, currently at the end of August (the weekend before Labor Day weekend) and over the fourth weekend in January. These exams are for inquirers and candidates who have completed at least two years of theological education and have had the opportunity to serve as a student in a congregation or some other form of supervised ministry. The CPM must grant permission for inquirers and candidates to take these exams. Often this is done during the Annual Consultation. The CPM moderator or his or her designee must sign the

- authorization form to verify committee approval.
- D. Registration materials for all exams must be completely filled out and mailed along with exam fees. Incomplete forms, or forms sent without payment, will be returned to the inquirer or candidate, and delays may make it necessary for the students to wait until the next exam sitting.
  - E. Fees for examinations may pose a financial hardship for some inquirers and candidates. CPMs and Sessions are encouraged to offer financial support as they are able.
  - F. Inquirers and candidates are expected to forward their exam materials to their CPMs after they have received grades and comments from readers. Members of CPMs are encouraged to read the exams and comments and to review them with exam takers whenever possible. Exams are to be kept in a student's file until s/he has completed the preparation process. Inquirers and candidates should not be authorized to take further exams or to re-take exams until the CPM has reviewed exams already taken.
  - F. All presbyteries participate in the process of grading written exams by electing readers. Guidelines for the election of readers are provided to CPM moderators, Stated Clerks and Presbytery Executives each spring. Often the CPM will be asked to choose, or to recommend to the Nominating Committee, individuals who meet the criteria for serving as readers. It is important to make sure that the names and contact information for elected readers is forwarded to the Office of Examination Services in a timely manner.

## **You have a candidate who is having difficulty passing one or more of the examinations...**

### *What do you do?*

- A. If an inquirer or a candidate fails the Bible Content Exam, review with the student the areas where s/he had the most difficulty. The exam is divided into sections; such as the Pentateuch, Wisdom Literature, Prophets, Gospels, and Epistles, etc. Encourage the student to review those sections of the *Bible*, and not just to look at questions from old exams.
- B. If an inquirer or a candidate fails one or more written exams, have someone from the CPM and/or an experienced exam reader meet the student and review the exam and the readers' comments. It is important to determine the reason why the exam(s) was not successful. In many cases, a student simply misreads a question or does not follow the directions for the response to the questions. However, the problem could also be that the student has poor writing skills, or is not able to integrate academic work well with practical situation involving people. If a student has a learning disability, s/he will often not be able to perform well on a standard written exam. You may consult with the Office of Examination Services for special assistance for the student.
- C. You may also consider suggesting additional study with a tutor before the

examinations are taken again. This action helps to fulfill your covenant responsibility. If the candidate fails one or more of the examinations a second time, you may wish to be more directive by suggesting additional course work, reading, and tutoring. A second failure is serious and may disrupt the process.

- D. Review the appeal and exemption process described in the *Book of Order* (G-14.0472), and use only after appropriate counsel with the candidate about the situation and reasons for failure.

### **Alert**

Not every graduate of a theological institution will pass the Standard Ordination Examinations. In such cases, you and the CPM will need, prayerfully, to discuss whether the person in question is an appropriate candidate for ordination. Such discussion should include these questions: Can you advocate to the presbytery for a candidate on the basis of your knowledge of his or her abilities? Will you ask the candidate to continue the process for another year of study, internship, or secular work all undertaken under the supervision of the CPM and, after a year, to appear for another review and evaluation? Will you recommend that presbytery end the candidacy? These are difficult questions; you may want to consider using the group discernment model to help the candidate and the CPM discern the will of God at this time. Your addressing these difficult questions in your role as a caring gatekeeper contributes significantly to the future of the church.

### **The candidate has successfully passed the Standard Ordination Examinations...**

#### ***What do you do?***

- A. File copies of the examinations, grades, and comments of readers in the candidate's file.
- B. Confer with the candidate on the next steps of the process: final assessment, preparing and circulating the Personal Information Form, examination and ordination, the first call. Note these on the calendar and set dates for each of them as far ahead as possible (see Appendix II- Planning Calendar).
- C. Contact the appropriate person in the candidate's theological institution to be sure all final grades, transcripts, and so forth are forwarded to you as soon as possible after graduation. This also applies to fieldwork supervisors and others who may be involved in the preparation.

### **Alert**

Completing seminary requirements and the graduation ceremony may not coincide for candidates who do not complete their work during the spring semester. The CPM should plan in advance to deal with these circumstances. It is important to hold firm on presbytery time requirements for each part of the process.

**You have a candidate who has completed all of the requirements and is ready for final assessment...**

*What do you do?*

**STEP 14**

**CPM conducts a final assessment of candidate's readiness to receive a call**

- A. Prepare the CPM to conduct the final assessment. The date and place should have been on the planning calendar so that the committee and the candidate are present and sufficient time is available.
- B. Review with the candidate how all requirements of the *Book of Order* and the presbytery have been met. The candidate's file contains reports from the theological institution, the liaisons, fieldwork supervisors, psychological and vocational assessments, annual consultations, and so forth. It is helpful for the candidate's session liaison to be present to give support.

**Alert**

If the committee should determine that the final assessment is not adequate, the candidate is not certified and may not proceed to accept a call. This decision of the committee can be traumatic again for the candidate. It is important to address this situation in a forthright and yet compassionate manner. The CPM needs to be clear and honest with the candidate about the reasons why the decision was made, allowing the candidate a chance to respond. It is also helpful for the session liaison to hear the committee's reasons and prepare the home church to offer support. Recommendations for completing the process should be made and agreed to by the committee and candidate, and the agreement signed by both parties. Others for whom the revised time line may be a matter of concern should be notified as early as possible to avoid any embarrassing situations.

- C. When the final assessment has been completed to the committee's satisfaction, a summary of the assessment shall be reported to the presbytery (0-14.0450).

**When a candidate is ready for certification...**

*What do you do?*

**STEP 15**

**CPM certifies candidate ready to receive a call and reports to presbytery**

- A. When the final assessment has been completed and all committee requirements have been satisfied, the candidate is certified by the CPM as ready to receive a call. The candidate's certification is reported to presbytery (G-14.0450).
- B. **Form 6 (Summary Report of Candidate's Final Assessment of Readiness to be Examined for Ordination)** should be completed (indicating that the final assessment has been completed and the candidate certified ready to be examined for ordination) and placed in the candidate's file. Upon request of a calling presbytery, the candidate's file that includes **Form 6** is transmitted.

**When a candidate is ready to circulate a Personal Information Form...**

*What do you do?*

**STEP 16**

**CPM approves circulation of PIF to explore obtaining a call**

Writing and circulating a candidate's Personal Information Form (PIF) is a step in obtaining a call that involves the CPM. Most theological institutions provide some assistance to their students as the initial draft is prepared. This draft is to be shared with the CPM, for it is the task of the CPM, and not the institution, to approve the PIF. Blank Personal Information Forms may be obtained from Church Leadership Connection (CLC) of the Office of Vocation by calling (502) 569-5225, or printed from PC(USA) web site under the heading of Church Leadership Connection (CLC)

**The CLC will not accept a PIF from anyone without an attestation form from the CPM moderator. As a CPM moderator, you will be provided a pass word to access CLC and give authorization for a candidate to circulate a PIF on line.**

**When a student requests your assistance in completing the PIF...**

*What do you do?*

- A. Tread a fine line between assisting a candidate to present his or her best side and rewriting the PIF for the candidate.
- B. Help the candidate present his or her skills, gifts, and personality. Here the moderator or CPM liaison must use diplomacy, direction, and encouragement.

## Alert

Many CPM moderators may find themselves listed as references on candidates' PIFs. Because of possible litigation and ethical restraints, responses you give as a reference should be limited to those things about which you have firsthand knowledge.

## Alert

**It is the policy of the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) to not circulate PIFs of those candidates who have not been certified ready to seek a call by their CPMs.** A critical question is your presbytery's policy authorizing candidates to prepare and circulate PIFs. One extreme is to place no requirements and to allow any senior under care to circulate a PIF. At the other extreme, presbytery may forbid the submission of PIFs to CLC until all examinations are passed, all requirements are met, and no barriers remain that would block ordination. Such requirements avoid the problem of candidates entering into negotiation with churches when they cannot reasonably accept an offered call. It is important for you, as moderator of the CPM, to make sure that graduating seniors know the presbytery's policy regarding the circulation of PIFs at the beginning of their senior year. You may wish to send the policy to candidates in writing so that there are no surprises for them or your committee.

**Steps 17-18**

- Step 17 - Negotiation for service/call.
- Step 18 - Examination and ordination.

**You have a candidate who has passed the Standard Ordination Examinations, graduated from an appropriate theological institution (or is close to graduation), participated in a thorough final assessment, and been certified ready to seek a call...**

*What do you do?*

<p><b>STEP 17</b></p> <p><b>Negotiations for service/call</b></p>
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- A. Continue to monitor candidate’s progress in securing a call.
- B. Give leads on where a call may be obtained including the names of personal contact persons and/or executive leadership and how to access the Church Leadership Connection online.
- C. Advise the candidate on how to prepare a Personal Information Form (PIF), secure your attestation as CPM moderator, and submit it online with Church Leadership Connection of the Call Referral Service of the National Ministry Division.

**RETRACING OUR STEPS**

Having a degree does not constitute readiness for ordination. It is but one requirement for ordination. A candidate may have graduated at the top of his or her class and still not be ready to receive a call. The CPM must look for things that may delay being ready to negotiate a call, such as:

**Time requirements:** A person must have been under care for a minimum of two years, that time beginning on the date when she or he was enrolled by the presbytery as an inquirer. The person must have been a candidate for at least one year, that time beginning on the date when he or she was enrolled by the presbytery as a candidate.

**Process requirements:** The person must have progressed properly from church member to inquirer to candidate. The candidate must have had a final assessment by the CPM and that assessment certified by the

presbytery.

**Other requirements:** (1) Language requirements, fieldwork, etc., must be successfully completed. Denominational requirements are found in the *Book of Order* (G-14.0450). (2) Other requirements of presbytery or your committee that may have applied to the candidate specifically, such as CPE, intern years, etc.

**Exemptions:** There may be exceptions to some requirements that may be granted by your CPM and reported to the presbytery (G-14.0470). Any such exemptions must be documented and noted in the committee minutes and in the candidate's file.

**Ordination examinations:** As noted in Chapter 6 of this Handbook, the five Standard Ordination Examinations must have been successfully completed.

**Final assessment:** As discussed earlier in Chapter 6 of this Handbook, the CPM must have completed the final assessment and have certified the candidate as ready to be examined for ordination.

When these requirements have been satisfied, the candidate may proceed to negotiate for a call.

## **Alert**

When a married couple is seeking to be ordained and both are at the point of first call in the process, there is an additional reason for celebration and an additional concern. Remember that you are dealing with two individuals and each must be examined, approved, and accepted on his or her own merits. Beware of “joint appearances” before CPM and the presbytery—you are considering two individuals, each of whom must be able to stand alone.

**The *Book of Order* (G-14.0481) now states that the presbytery placing the call to a candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine the candidate for ordination (sometimes referred to as “trials for ordination”). When a candidate is extended a call...**

### **STEP 18**

#### **Examination and ordination**

#### ***What do you do?***

- A. Meet with the candidate to discuss the purpose and process for conducting the presbytery's examination for ordination.
- B. Assist the candidate to prepare for the examination by posing sample

- questions to see how he/she handles them and by providing feedback on the content and style of the responses.
- C. Consider rehearsing the examination process with the candidate in a sanctuary setting to enable him/her to get a better feel for the reality about to be experienced.
  - D. Provide the candidate with constructive feedback on the style, content, theology, and response to the mock examination experience.

### **Alert**

It is the task of the candidate's presbytery to fully prepare her/him for the examination for ordination on the floor of the presbytery. You need to be sure that candidates from your presbytery are prepared to answer a wide range of questions in a variety of situations. If necessary, coach candidates on ways to handle (and not to handle) questions related to controversial issues/subjects that may be raised during the floor examination.

### **The *Book of Order* (G-14.0484) provides room for latitude in the matter of place of ordination...**

- A. Ordinarily it is the presbytery of care that ordains a candidate.
- B. However, the candidate may request his/her presbytery of care to permit the ordination service to take place within the presbytery of call, and that presbytery may grant such permission when requested by the presbytery of care.
- C. A candidate who wishes to be examined and ordained in the presbytery of call may do so upon approval by both presbyteries (care and call).

### **Alert**

In these matters, coordination between presbyteries needs to include not only the moderators of the CPMs but also the stated clerks and often the Committee on Ministry moderators.

### **Some Important Related Issues for the CPM**

**You are asked to examine for ordination a candidate under care of another presbytery and who has accepted a call to a congregation in your presbytery...**

### ***What do you do?***

- A. Read carefully the file received from the presbytery of care before interviewing the candidate.
- B. Examine the policies of your presbytery to see whether the candidate meets all of your requirements.
- C. Establish early open communication with the Committee on Ministry (COM) about the candidate.
- D. Be clear about who will bring the candidate to the floor of presbytery—CPM or COM? The CPM will determine the candidate’s readiness to be examined for ordination unless this responsibility is designated to another appropriate committee. The COM determines suitability for a particular call.

### **Alert**

Negotiating skills and people skills will be required of the COM and the CPM in this process. It is important to follow the “spirit” as well as the “letter” of the law. The two committees must work together when candidates from other presbyteries are being interviewed for positions within your presbytery. One difficulty that may arise is when a Pastor Nominating Committee decides to call a candidate before the CPM has examined the candidate and certified him or her ready for ordination.

**A congregation in your presbytery is exerting pressure to proceed with the call and ordination of a candidate they wish to employ. There are questions about requirements of the candidate’s presbytery that differ from those of your presbytery...**

### ***What do you do?***

To avoid being “boxed in” or pressured to make affirmative decisions when there may be questions about a candidate’s readiness for ordination, consider the following:

- A. Establish in advance policies that deal with a candidate from another presbytery, the COM, and congregations;
- B. Review relationships and key time schedules;
- C. Meet with the candidate concerning his or her readiness for ordination *before* a visit to a congregation is made. Because the COM will also be interviewing the candidate, arrange for representatives of both committees to participate in the meetings. Any questions concerning readiness can be dealt with before prior commitments are made or expectations unduly influencing the process

are raised. **Caution:** Policies should be established jointly between CPM and COM and communicated to congregations in order to prevent congregations and candidates from developing unworkable expectations.

## **A candidate from another presbytery submits a PIF to a congregation in your presbytery...**

### ***What do you do?***

- A. Review the PIF route in your presbytery. Many presbyteries have policies as part of the candidacy process such as:
  - 1. Attendance at a Presbyterian seminary;
  - 2. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE);
  - 3. Internships;
  - 4. Special academic requirements.These policies should be communicated to candidates, the COM, congregations, Pastor Nominating Committees (PNCs), and theological institution contact persons.
  
- B. The following should be worked out with the COM before a candidate appears before the CPM with a call in hand:
  - 1. How will you deal with a candidate from another presbytery who does not meet the requirements of your presbytery?
  - 2. Will the candidate be required to fulfill your presbytery requirements?
  - 3. How will Pastor Nominating Committees be informed of problems before they consider a candidate?
  - 4. How soon will the PNC be notified and by whom?
  - 5. Will the PIF go directly to the PNC or is there another route for PIFs in your presbytery?

## **Work with the Committee on Ministry**

### **Alert**

When a candidate gets to the point of accepting a call, your committee will need to work closely with the COM. The Committee on Ministry will make recommendations to presbytery about the suitability of a candidate for a particular call. It may be tempting to try to do the job of the COM here, but beware.

**Several matters concerning procedure should be negotiated with the COM before a candidate's future hangs in the balance:**

**A. If a candidate from your presbytery is seeking a call in your presbytery, what are the steps to be followed?**

- Complete a successful final assessment;
- Give permission to circulate the PIF;
- Initiate conversation with the COM moderator;
- Make contact with the Pastor Nominating Committee through the COM;
- Review with the candidate the process leading to a call;
- Prepare the candidate for examination by presbytery;
- The presbytery examines for ordination;
- Select and present names for the ordination commission of presbytery.

**Other questions include:**

- When will the COM accept responsibility for the candidate?
- Who will present the candidate for the trials of ordination?
- Who will present the slate for the commission to ordain/install should the examination be sustained?

**Alert**

If the CPM is presenting a candidate for examination for ordination, and the COM is going to present the same person as a candidate for a position within your presbytery, be sure that the clerk puts the CPM on the docket before the COM. Otherwise the CPM presentation seems a moot point, the decision to ordain and install already having been made.

**B. If a candidate under the care of another presbytery is seeking a call in your presbytery, what are the steps to take?**

- Conduct an interview with the candidate;
- Determine whether the candidate is ready to be examined for ordination on the floor of the presbytery;
- Make an appropriate recommendation to the COM on whether or not to proceed with examination;
- Also, discuss with COM appropriate issues listed, on page 30, under “Other requirements.”

**Alert**

The possible complications here are many, and include scheduling interviews and getting approvals in order. Avoid the pitfall of having the COM approve a candidate that the CPM still has not seen. It makes saying “yes” meaningless and saying “no” nearly impossible

**C. If a candidate from your presbytery is seeking a call in another presbytery, what must you do?**

- Send the candidate's file when requested;
- Be aware that if the candidacy process is not successful the file and the responsibility for the candidate return to your CPM. Such a situation calls for **extraordinary pastoral care**.

**The service of ordination is being planned...**

***What do you do?***

- A. Assist the candidate to prepare for the service of ordination. (*Use the Checklist for Ordinations found at the end of this section.*) This is an important task for your committee. Presumably each candidate will only prepare for one such service and has no idea of the problems and/or policies related to it.
- B. Help the candidate understand the policies of the committee and presbytery about:
  1. What time of day may ordinations take place? Some presbyteries avoid the Sunday morning worship time.
  2. What policies determine the constitution of the commission of presbytery? Who may preach? Who may charge the candidate and the congregation? The stated clerk may give help here. As CPM moderator you will need to:
    - Understand the policies;
    - Inform the candidate of the policies;
    - Assist the candidate to prepare the slate for the commission, and ensure that the slate is ready for presentation following the successful completion of the examination for ordination.
- C. Help the candidate be sensitive to inclusiveness issues and persons (home pastor, session liaison, committee liaison) who might feel slighted if not involved. Is there a presbytery policy?
- D. Help the candidate consider the costs that will be incurred if someone from a distance is asked to participate. Such costs include at least travel, lodging, and honorarium.
- E. Is an offering allowed or required? Is there a policy on this? Does the candidate know to what cause the offering will go? How do the funds get from the worship service to the place they need to go? Should an explanation of the offering be printed in the bulletin?
- F. Invitations are often printed and sent. Does your presbytery have them printed, or is this expense borne by the local congregation? What is the tradition in your presbytery?

- G. Who will arrange for and pay for the bulletins—local church, presbytery, or candidate?
- H. A commission is ordinarily appointed to ordain the candidate for the presbytery. It is appropriate to discuss the date and time of the service of ordination with the moderator of the presbytery. Whether he or she is available will affect the makeup of the commission. Encourage the candidate to contact the clerk of the presbytery about the presbytery's calendar.

Once the day, time, and place have been determined, and the members of the commission are in place, the candidate should contact the members of the commission to request them to take particular parts of the service, to inform them when and where the commission will meet, who the other members of the commission are, appropriate dress, and so forth. When the day arrives, the moderator of the commission is the person in charge. As CPM moderator, you may wish to prepare a checklist for the moderator of the commission in cooperation with the COM moderator and the stated clerk.

### **The candidate has been ordained by the appropriate presbytery...**

#### *What do you do?*

- a. Be sure that your stated clerk completes **Form 7 (Report of Ordination of Candidate)** and mails it to the Office of General Assembly in Louisville.
- b. Help your CPM to celebrate in appropriate ways its role in guiding a person to fulfill the call to serve God as a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

## Checklist for Ordinations

A. The presbytery policy is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. The service of ordination is scheduled for:  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_  
Session approval was granted on \_\_\_\_\_

C. The following commission was elected and approved by the presbytery:  
On (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator \_\_\_\_\_  
Clergy members \_\_\_\_\_  
Elders \_\_\_\_\_  
Other invited participants \_\_\_\_\_

D. The Order of Worship will be prepared by \_\_\_\_\_  
By this date \_\_\_\_\_

E. Bulletins will be prepared by \_\_\_\_\_  
By this date \_\_\_\_\_

F. The following persons will need to be invited \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **CPM RELATIONSHIP TO THE SESSION**

Because the preparation for ministry process begins with the session, it is important that the moderator of the CPM affirm the importance and significance of this governing body in every way possible. Seeds of the relationship are planted in the initial contact between the CPM and the session--when an applicant indicates his or her interest in the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

Sessions need to be aware of the preparation process in its entirety and the presbytery requirements for it before they have a potential applicant for inquiry. Periodic announcements at presbytery meetings or a printed brochure are means to this end. Sessions and congregations need to be aware of the duties and responsibilities of the CPM and the appropriate persons to contact when an applicant appears.

As moderator of the CPM you need to know how your committee conducts session orientations as called for in the *Book of Order* (G-14.0410). This initial meeting is very important. For some sessions of new congregations and racial ethnic congregations, this may be a teaching moment about the connectional nature of our church and our Reformed tradition in terms of one's call to ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

Orientations may take place at regular meetings of session or at a called meeting. Sufficient time for orientation should be negotiated with the moderator or clerk of session well in advance of the meeting. If this is a first orientation for the session, more time will be needed. Some CPMs train a special subcommittee to do orientations, selecting committee members with communication skills, knowledge of the preparation process, and experience working with people of different cultures. Others share the responsibility among the members. Regardless of the option you choose, plan carefully for this orientation of the session to the preparation process used in your presbytery. Challenge the session members to consider their own call and be sure that they are clear about what is expected of them and time requirements that must be met.

**THE SESSION LIAISON** is expected to represent the session with the CPM especially at such times as the annual consultation, and will receive transcripts and reports on the inquirer's/candidate's progress and copies of the required forms for the stages of the process. The session liaison will be present

when the inquirer is received and enrolled by presbytery, when the inquirer is enrolled as a candidate, when the candidate is examined for ordination, when a candidate is presented a call, and when the candidate is ordained. These and other duties determined by the CPM or the presbytery should be clearly communicated to the session liaison when the liaison is appointed and the name given to the CPM (see Chapter 2, Step 4).

## **RECOMMENDED DUTIES OF THE SESSION LIAISON**

Background: The *Book of Order* provides for 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 presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and to participate with the inquirer/candidate and presbytery's committee as it explores and evaluates his or her progress in the preparation for ministry (see G-14.0413). Outlined below are some of the ways in which the session liaison can be of assistance:

- A. Learn the background of your inquirer or candidate if you do not already know it. This includes parents, siblings, school, college, avocational interests and abilities, birthday, name of spouse (if married), name(s) of child(ren) (if any), (proposed) seminary, progress toward ordination, financial needs, and so forth.
- B. Visit, write, or phone to introduce yourself.
- C. Become acquainted in ways that seem natural to you and the inquirer or candidate.
- D. Take an interest in his/her academic studies, field education, annual consultation, and other activities related to preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- E. Make regular reports to session, monthly if possible, on the progress of the inquirer/candidate.
- F. Share with the committee, especially at the time of annual consultation, any areas of particular need of the inquirer/candidate--whether financial or personal.
- G. Become aware of when the inquirer or candidate will be home and try to make some contact, even if it is only a phone call.
- H. Identify ways to keep the congregation aware of the names of its inquirers/candidates (away at seminary or at home) who have entered a covenant relationship with the presbytery and are preparing for ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- I. Initiate conversation with your session on the possibility of providing financial assistance or other tangible support to your inquirers and candidates.
- J. At the presbytery meeting at which the inquirer or candidate is to be received or examined, speak a word in his/her behalf.

- K. Consider with your session the possibility of assisting in the payment of necessary expenses incurred in relation to annual consultations.
- L. At the presbytery meeting at which the candidate is examined for ordination, make sure someone has been appointed (check with your pastor or the Committee on Preparation for Ministry) to leave the meeting with the candidate and his/her family when presbytery is making its decision.
- M. Be present if at all possible at the ordination and installation.
- N. Remember your inquirer and candidate in prayer.
- O. Write your inquirer or candidate on special occasions (for example, birthdays or anniversaries).
- P. Become acquainted with Part I and II of the Advisory Handbook so that you are aware of requirements and procedures and can provide timely support (for example, appearances before presbytery, Annual Consultation, Presbyteries' Cooperative Examinations, Final Assessment, and so forth).
- Q. Discuss with your session progress the inquirer/candidate is making, as reflected in the Summary Report of Annual Consultation which is prepared by the presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry and sent to the sponsoring session.
- R. The role of the spouse of the inquirer or candidate is particularly important. Try to be supportive, sensitive, and understanding of the whole family. Let the committee know if there are ways the committee may better assist the wives/husbands of inquirers and candidates in preparing for their new roles.
- S. In a word, be a friend and lend to your inquirer and candidate a sense of your personal, moral, and spiritual interest in, and support of, him/her in training for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- T. As you perform your tasks, you will also grow in grace and faith.

**The committee's work with the session is to assist this governing body to be a true covenanting partner in the preparation process.** The CPM moderator plays an important role in determining whether the session is a full partner.

## **CPM RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

As the time for a candidate's ordination nears, the need for clear communication between the CPM and the COM becomes obvious. If this does not happen, the candidate may miss an important step in the process, or feel free to design his or her own procedure. Neither committee should give any advice or take any steps without first communicating with the other. Unilateral actions and/or advice may cause the process to come apart.

Because the Presbyterian system relies to a great extent on volunteers, clearly defined policies, procedures, and relationships should be available in writing for all committee members. The following suggest the necessity for joint annual planning and training for CPM and COM:

## **A PNC IS READY TO INTERVIEW A CANDIDATE AND HEAR THE CANDIDATE PREACH IN A NEUTRAL PULPIT**

### **A. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. How does the CPM find out about pastoral candidates who are also candidates for ordination? If the candidate is enrolled in another presbytery, does the CPM become involved in the process before an invitation to visit is offered? The earlier the CPM obtains information about these candidates for ordination, the smoother the process will be. In any event, the CPM must review the candidate's PIF and check with his or her CPM to determine if the candidate meets your presbytery's requirements.
2. Presbytery should determine a process to coordinate a meeting of the CPM, COM, and the PNC. It is important that the three committees agree on who has responsibility for which issues and how communications can be kept open.
3. CPM and COM must coordinate candidates' appearances at meetings of presbytery. Examination for ordination occurs before examination for membership in presbytery.
4. How is the examination for ordination or membership to be done? Some presbyteries assign the examination to the CPM while others make it a joint responsibility of CPM and COM.
5. After the candidate successfully completes the examination, who presents the ordination/installation plans and the terms of the call? Some presbyteries make these a separate item for the COM report, and some do the examination and ordination plans as a single report.

### **B. SHARED CONCERNS - Schedule an Annual Meeting of CPM/COM**

1. This affords both committees an opportunity to see the total picture of the call and ordination process.
2. Issues of litigation, confidentiality, liability, and propriety are major concerns in the religious community. It is wise to plan time with presbytery legal counsel to examine these issues and develop procedures and policies.
3. Since the denomination defines the meaning of ordination, specialized ministries, and validated ministries, the CPM and COM must know what changes occur and what each other is doing, and must develop joint policies on these matters.

4. Staff relationships and responsibilities can be clarified. A major issue is the degree to which staff is called on to implement policies as well as provide communication and interpretation to and between candidate, CPM, COM, and PNC.

### **C. UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS**

Misunderstandings, communications breakdowns, incorrect assumptions, maverick committee members and/or candidates, overanxious PNCs, as well as other matters, can and will cause crises at some point in your committee's work.

### **When a crisis occurs...**

#### ***What do you do?***

- A. Remember that all parties are persons of goodwill and are seeking Christ's will through the process.
- B. Know policies and procedures. (Presbyterians prefer to put matters in writing as much as possible--this is a time to be glad of that.) Seek solutions in the *Book of Order*.
- C. Communicate problems to staff and related committees to keep them aware of the procedures you are using.
- D. When the crisis is over, evaluate policies and procedures to determine if they work and what changes need to be made.
- E. Additional considerations:
  1. Make sure each member of the CPM knows the procedures for interfacing with COM and PNC.
  2. Share forms, manuals, policies, and procedures with COM and PNC.
  3. Visit with the COM moderator periodically to review and evaluate CPM/COM issues in the presbytery.

## **CPM RELATIONSHIP TO PRESBYTERY STAFF**

In addition to a presbytery executive, some presbyteries call a staff person whose responsibilities include providing staff services to the Committee on Ministry, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and other groups related to vocations. In many cases, however, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry will not have a staff person assigned to it. Because the presbytery executives are generally expected to provide staff services to all of the committees of presbytery, their heavy schedule may mean that they may not be able to attend regularly meetings of the CPM.

Increasingly, presbytery executives called upon to provide references for

candidates seeking their first calls, as well as to provide references and other information regarding any person seeking a new call. It is essential, therefore, that presbytery executives have knowledge of and information about each candidate. As moderator of the CPM you play an important role in initiating and providing necessary information.

Following your election as moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, it is appropriate for you to meet with the presbytery executive and/or other staff assigned to the CPM, about the work of the committee, your own role, your expectations, the expectations of the staff person, the process for preparation for ministry and the policies related to it in your presbytery, and the manner in which you and the staff will communicate. Generally, the staff person will contact you early in your tenure about your responsibilities, opportunities for training, the CPM process, and the relationship you and the executive or other staff may expect to have.

If for any reason you are not contacted by a staff person or the executive within the first month of your service as moderator of the CPM, it is appropriate for you to contact that staff person related to your committee. Matters that will be particularly helpful to you, the staff person, the committee and to both inquirers and candidates are:

- A. Invite the presbytery executive or other staff assigned to the CPM to attend committee meetings as often as possible. Early in your tenure, arrange for a specific meeting when the staff person can discuss his or her role in providing references for candidates; the relation of the staff person to the moderator of the CPM and to the committee itself; and the policies and procedures of the CPM and their rationale.
- B. See that presbytery executive or other staff person receives a copy of your committee policies and procedures.
- C. Make sure that the staff person is on the mailing list of your committee and that she or he receives all minutes and other significant papers.

In those presbyteries where the presbytery executive is unable to be involved closely with the work of the committee, she or he may be able to provide only minimal information about candidates to an executive, a CPM, or a Pastoral Nominating Committee from another presbytery. In such cases, the executive may request that the person making the inquiry contact the moderator of the CPM or the candidate's CPM liaison for the information. You, as CPM moderator, and the executive in your presbytery may wish to discuss the development of a process for meeting this need.

## CPM RELATIONSHIP TO THE STATED CLERK

The stated clerk of your presbytery is someone with whom you should establish a good working relationship. A Committee on Preparation for Ministry is required by the *Book of Order*, and much of what is done by the committee involves presbytery time and resources. You must work with the stated clerk to coordinate your committee's needs with the work of the whole presbytery. Items for consideration include:

- A. Presbytery Rolls. Since the clerk is responsible for the rolls of presbytery, all actions regarding the status of inquirers and candidates should be reported in writing to the clerk.
- B. Docket. Since the clerk is usually involved in preparing the docket for meetings of the presbytery, all requests for time on the docket should be discussed with the clerk as far in advance as possible. Time conflicts are often most difficult in the spring or early summer when graduates of theological institutions are anticipating calls. Time-of-day requirements may also be important. If you have a candidate who can only attend a portion of a meeting, work with the clerk to schedule your report when the candidate can be present. Usually clerks are very understanding about these needs.
- C. Communication. The clerk is the officer of presbytery through whom official communication takes place. All requests for official actions should be addressed to and carried out by the clerk.
- D. Parliamentary Procedure. The clerk usually acts as parliamentarian for the presbytery. Questions about interpretation of parts of the *Book of Order* or how to apply them to the inquirer/candidacy process may be addressed to the clerk.
- E. Meetings. Since your CPM will have many occasions to work with the clerk, it may be wise to invite him or her to your training sessions or to regular meetings to facilitate understanding the process and to help the committee understand the interface with the clerk's office.

### **Alert**

The many steps in the inquirer/candidacy process requires presbytery policies that provide guidance and facilitate the process. If your presbytery does not have such policies in place, work with the officers and staff to establish them. Training sessions provide a good opportunity to work with the clerk to develop policies as needed.

## **CPM RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATIONAL OFFICES OF PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY AND EXAMINATION SERVICES**

As moderator of the CPM, the national offices with which you will work most closely is the Preparation for Ministry Office and the Examination Services Office. These offices are the national “nerve center” for work related to presbytery CPMs. They see to it that a database is maintained related to information about inquirers and candidates under care of presbyteries and their data on ordination examinations. Staff services of these office will be valuable assistance to you and the work of your committee by providing:

- A. Resources on the preparation process to inquirer/candidates, committees, and other partners in the process;
- B. Consultative assistance in planning and implementing CPM training events;
- C. Counsel regarding specific problems encountered by the CPM as it implements the process;
- D. Counsel regarding ordination exams;
- E. A variety of statistical data related to inquirers/candidates and CPMs;
- F. The intent and purpose of *Book of Order* references (G- 14.0400-.0485) that relate to the preparation for ministry process;
- G. Research and data to determine needs/results of the preparation process of participants.

These offices exist to support and assist presbyteries, synods, and theological institutions in their work with inquirers/candidates. Please call the office when you need help. The toll free number is: 1-888-728-7228, X-5771 and X-5746.

## **CPM RELATIONSHIP TO THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS**

All major theological institutions have a contact person listed in “The Directory of Theological Institution Contact Persons.” This directory is in the Orientation Packet sent to each moderator of CPM by the Office of Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry. If there is no contact person listed for a particular institution, contact the academic dean.

- A. What you may expect from the theological institution:
  - 1. Annual reports of grades, field education experience, and other evaluative reports. Normally, these reports will be released (in writing) by the student to be sent on request to the CPM.
  - 2. An “open telephone” policy to enable you to discuss any concern you may have about your inquirers/candidates or the education program of the school.

3. An “open door” policy to enable you to visit the school, and to meet with officials and teachers, the contact person, and your inquirers/candidates. The courtesy of a notification of your visit will be appreciated.
4. An office or persons to assist the student with field education requirements, Standard Ordination Examinations, and placement issues such as preparing the PIF and training for interviews.
5. A response to the CPM’s inquiry by the institution regarding any problem(s) faced by students under your care: financial, cultural, ethical, academic, physical, legal, and so forth.

B. What the institution expects of the CPM:

1. Regular and consistent contact with your inquirers/candidates.
2. Copies of reports of the annual consultations.
3. When possible, tangible concern for the inquirer’s/candidate’s financial needs (G-14.0412). Travel costs for annual consultations is generally arranged through the CPM.
4. Copies of your presbytery’s policies related to additional field work, CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education), or other requirements for completing the process and seeking a call.
5. Opportunities for representatives of theological institutions to participate at their expense with you in CPM training events.
6. Registration of inquirers/candidates for the Standard Ordination Examinations.

## **CPM RELATIONSHIP TO THE PRESBYTERY NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Nominating committees of presbyteries may or may not welcome communications from other committees as these may be seen as attempts to influence their work. For this reason it is important for the moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to visit informally with the moderator of the Nominating Committee. It may also be effective to request a brief meeting with the Nominating Committee to explain the unique work done by the CPM and to describe the kinds of skills, experience, and capabilities required of CPM members in order for them to be most helpful to candidates and inquirers related to the presbytery.

- A. Encourage the Nominating Committee to consider the following in making nominations to the CPM:
1. Persons who represent
    - a. Clergy/elders (bylaws may determine this);
    - b. Women/men;
    - c. Theological diversity within the Reformed tradition;
    - d. Parish/specialized ministries;

- e. Various ages and racial/ethnic groups.
  - 2. Persons who have time to do CPM work beyond that required for regular meetings of the committee;
  - 3. Persons who have been recently ordained;
  - 4. Persons who have expertise in personnel work, pastoral counseling, and so forth;
  - 5. Former members of CPM and former session liaison;
  - 6. Parents of candidates who have recently completed the process;
  - 7. Members (or recent members) of the Committee on Ministry.
- B. Persons to be considered as CPM members need to exhibit these qualities:
- 1. Ability and willingness to listen;
  - 2. Understanding of and willingness to work within the limits of confidentiality;
  - 3. Perception and “openness”;
  - 4. Knowledge of the Presbyterian system and a positive outlook on it;
  - 5. Process skills but without a need to dominate a group;
  - 6. Initiative, dependability, and potential for leadership;
  - 7. Patience, as it takes a year to come up to speed and feel comfortable.

*NOTE: If permitted in your presbytery, there may be a need to co-opt persons to secure the requisite skills and experience needed to balance the committee. Such persons may only have a voice on the committee, or they may have a vote, depending on your presbytery policy.*

- C. Develop a written statement for the Nominating Committee as a reference for their work. Include the following:
- 1. When and how often the CPM meets;
  - 2. The amount of time required each year for committee work in addition to stated meetings (estimated on the basis of recent experience);
  - 3. An outline of the preparation for ministry process with brief descriptions of what is involved at the various steps;
  - 4. A statement of the importance of continuity in membership;
  - 5. Persons to be recommended to nominations as ordination exam readers.

Explain that because each member of the committee is assigned one or more inquirers/candidates to work with as a CPM advisor, and because continuity of these relationships is essential, it is rarely helpful to have interim pastors on the CPM. Inquirers/candidates find that just the normal changes that occur in rotation of members are difficult enough.

- D. When the time comes to nominate a new moderator of the CPM, get in

touch with the Nominating Committee or its moderator. Share with them your experience and impress upon them the need for careful consideration of your successor and members of the CPM.

**Alert**

Be sure that the Nominating Committee understands fully the significance of the work of the CPM in the present and future lives of inquirers/candidates related to the presbytery.

## *Appendix I*

### **Maintaining Files**

The CPM moderator is responsible for inquirer/candidate files. Such files are to be treated as confidential information by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Documents to be included in such files include: official forms, academic transcripts, correspondence, reports from psychologists or counseling services, field work evaluations, ordination examinations, reports of annual consultations, etc. **The contents of the files are the property of the CPM and exist for the sole purpose of evaluating the suitability, preparation, and readiness of a person for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).**

It is important for the CPM moderator to follow established policies and procedures regarding the use of the files. Such policies should be known to the presbytery executive and/or staff person who works with the committee. Should no such policies or procedures exist, it is important that they be established. Questions to be considered by the committee in setting policies include: Who, specifically, has access to the files? Who has control of the files? Where are files kept? How long are files maintained?

Files should be stored in a secure place that is available only to those who have access to them. Attention should be given to questions such as: Is the storage fireproof? If there are keys to the room, storage cabinet, or drawers, who is authorized to use them and where are they kept? Are there backup files? Where?

When an inquirer or candidate is transferred to another presbytery, his or her file is forwarded to the CPM of that presbytery. Files should be sent by certified mail or by a delivery service that tracks its deliveries (such as United Parcel Service). No other referral of the files or their contents should be made except with the written permission of the inquirer/candidate.

There should be a policy regarding the disposal of files on inquirers/candidates at the conclusion of the process. Options for disposal include: retaining files, perhaps on microfilm; giving the file to the candidate at the conclusion of the process; destroying the file. CPM moderators are urged to consult with legal counsel, usually the person used by the presbytery, to develop a policy regarding the disposition of files.

*Appendix II*

**CPM Planning Calendar for the Year 20 -- , 20 -- , 20 -- , 20--**

**Meeting Dates of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry**

(Including dates for Committee Retreat/Training and /or other special CPM events/meetings)

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**Special Meetings for Annual Consultation and Final Assessments**

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**Presbytery Meeting Dates/Places**

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**Dates for Standard Ordination Examinations**

The Bible Content Examination, which is usually taken during the first year of seminary, is currently offered once a year on the morning of the first Friday in February.

The four written “Senior” examinations are offered twice a year, currently at the end of August and the end of January. These exams are for inquirers/candidates who have completed at least two full years of theological education and have had the opportunity to serve as a student in a congregation or some other form of supervised ministry.

Deadline for applications:

Bible Content Exam – December 7 (discount if mailed on or before November 15)

August Exams – July 15 (discount if mailed on or before June 15)

January exams – December 7 (discount if mailed on or before November 15)

**Projected Dates for Synod or Inter-Presbytery CPM Training Events**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Dates of Ordination and Installation Services**

_____	_____	_____
Name of Individual	Date of Service	Location of Service
_____	_____	_____
Name of Individual	Date of Service	Location of Service
_____	_____	_____
Name of Individual	Date of Service	Location of Service
_____	_____	_____
Name of Individual	Date of Service	Location of Service

**Other Important Annual Meetings/Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_ Meeting with Committee on Ministry

\_\_\_\_\_ Meeting with Presbytery Executive

\_\_\_\_\_ Meeting with Stated Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ Meeting with Theological Institution Representatives

\_\_\_\_\_ Meeting with Staff from Counseling Services

\_\_\_\_\_ Meeting with Presbytery/Synod Legal Counsel

\_\_\_\_\_ Other meetings

\_\_\_\_\_ Other meetings

*Appendix III*

**Healthcare Coverage for Inquirers and Candidates**

A full-time seminary student who is an inquirer or candidate under care of a presbytery may enroll for healthcare coverage under the Medical Plan of The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A *Seminary Student Benefits Plan Membership Application* (ENR-003) must be completed and sent to the Board of Pensions. A program brochure, *Seminary Student Medical Coverage*, and the application may be obtained by calling the Board at 1-800-773-7752 or by downloading them from the Board’s website, [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org).

1. The moderator of the committee on preparation for ministry should inform full-time students of their eligibility to participate in the Medical Plan. Students may enroll during the annual open enrollment period, which is August 1 through September 30. Transfer students or persons newly enrolled in seminary for the spring semester may enroll within 30 days of the start of the new semester.
2. Dues, deductibles, and out-of-pocket maximums are based on the minimum medical participation basis, which equals 65% of the churchwide median salary for pastors.

The 2007 dues for healthcare coverage are as follows:

Coverage Level	%	Monthly	Annual
Member Only	11.1%	\$288.00	\$3,456.00
Member and spouse	17.0%	\$441.08	\$5,292.96
Member and child(ren) only	17.0%	\$441.08	\$5,292.96
Member and family	19.5%	\$505.94	\$6,071.28

The 2007 deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums are as follows:

	In Network	Out of Network
Member annual medical deductible	\$310.00	\$465.00
Family medical deductible	\$310.00	\$465.00
Family medical out-of-pocket maximum	\$1,245.00	\$2,490.00

3. Enrollment procedure:
  - Student obtains an application form
  - Student obtains written verification of his/her presbytery status
  - Student obtains written verification of full-time student status from his/her seminary
  - Student completes the application form
  - Student mails completed application form and verification letters to the Board of Pensions

## Regional Representatives of the Board of Pensions

### **Synods of the Trinity, the Covenant, and Boriquen**

The Rev. Ernesto Badillo  
2000 Market Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
800-773-7752 ext. 7346  
Email: ebadillo@pensions.org

### **Synods of the Mid-Atlantic and part of Living Waters (KY, TN)**

The Rev. Helen Locklear  
2028 S. Highway 53, Ste. 3 #321  
LaGrange, KY 40031  
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800-773-7752 ext. 7047  
Email: hlocklear@pensions.org

### **Synods of Alaska-Northwest and the Pacific**

The Rev. Mark T. Frey  
18645 SW Farmington Rd., PMB 288  
Aloha, OR 97007  
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Email: mfrey@pensions.org

### **Synods of the Southwest and Southern California and Hawaii**

The Rev. Art Mills  
4910 Kensington Dr.  
San Diego, CA 92116  
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### **Synod of the Northeast**

The Rev. Philip R. Gehman  
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Philadelphia, PA 19103  
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Email: pgehman@pensions.org

### **Synods of South Atlantic and part of Living Waters (AL, MS)**

T. Clark Simmons  
1026 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE  
Atlanta, GA 30306  
800-966-1575 or  
800-773-7752 ext. 7046  
Email: csimmons@pensions.org

### **Synods of Mid-America, Lakes and Prairies, and Lincoln Trails**

The Rev. Douglas Kelly  
5559 NW Barry Rd., Ste. 363  
Kansas City, MO 64154  
800-511-0132 or  
800-773-7752 ext. 7045  
Email: dkelly@pensions.org

### **Synods of the Sun and the Rocky Mountains**

The Rev. Rick Young  
118 Monticello Dr.  
Mansfield, TX 76063  
800-815-9401 or  
800-773-7752 ext. 7044  
Email: ryoung@pensions.org

## Appendix IV

### Financial Counseling

Many inquirers and candidates face critical financial issues and needs during their enrollment in the preparation for ministry process. Some are able to talk openly about their financial situation with their Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), but others are not. Inquirer and candidate willingness to talk about financial needs and concerns often depends if the CPM has established between them an open and resourceful dialog. The relationship of finances to one's preparation for ministry simply cannot be ignored either by the inquirer/candidate or by the CPM. While open lines of communication between the student and the committee is critical, it should be understood by both that all information will be treated in a confidential manner.

The following resource is intended to assist CPMs in their work with applicants, inquirers and candidates. It is designed to provide a model budget format for obtaining basic financial information from inquirers and candidates for use by the CPM. If more substantial financial information is needed, the inquirer/candidate can obtain a financial aid transcript from their attending institution for the CPM.

It is important for the CPM to discuss internally their approach regarding issues of financial counseling with persons under its care. For example, the CPM may wish to establish a policy creating maximum amount students may owe. If a student owes more than this maximum, the CPM may choose to advise the student to relieve some of the debt before entering or continuing the preparation process. An annual review of the student's financial situation will allow the CPM to best advise the student on how to proceed with their education.

While not every inquirer or candidate will need financial counseling, those needing assistance may benefit by having a resource person identified by the committee. This resource person should have expertise in financial planning.

Finally, CPMs should never hesitate in calling the Office of Financial Aid for Studies, the Board of Pensions regional representatives, or the specific theological institution for assistance.

Financial Aid for Studies  
 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
 100 Witherspoon Street  
 Louisville, KY 40202-1396  
 888-728-7228 ext. 5776

Estimated Financial Resources

1. Income: Provide an estimate of your financial resources during your time of enrollment in seminary. If you and/or your spouse keep the same job while you are enrolled in seminary, please list your current salary. If you are ending employment to begin seminary, estimate what you may earn during the academic year.

**Income**

	<b>Total for academic year</b>
Student earnings	\$
Spouse earnings	\$
Social Security, Disability, VA, etc.	\$
Child support	\$
Other (please specify)	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

2. Other resources for education

Yes	No		<b>Total for academic year</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Institutions Grant	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Pell Grant	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	State Grants/Scholarships	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Grants/Scholarships	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCUSA Grants	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Savings	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Home Church/Congregational support	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presbytery support	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family/Friends support	\$

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Foundation or Corporations	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal loans	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCUSA loans	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other outside loans	\$
		<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

### 3. Assets

	<b>Current Total</b>
Cash and savings	\$
Investments (CDs, stocks, bonds, etc.)	\$
Retirement savings (IRAs, 401Ks, 403Bs, etc.)	\$
Real Estate equity	\$
Business Net Value	\$
Automobiles	\$
Other (please specify)	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

## Expenses for Academic Year

### 1. Educational expense

	<b>Academic year 20____ to 20 ____</b>
Annual tuition (_____ courses x tuition rate)	\$
Special academic programs of study (please explain)	\$
Fees	\$
Books	\$
Travel	\$
Other expenses (please specify)	\$

<b>TOTAL</b>	\$
--------------	----

2. Monthly living expenses

	<b>Monthly total</b>
Rent/mortgage	\$
Utilities	\$
Food and household supplies	\$
Clothing/laundry/dry cleaning	\$
Health/dental expenses	\$
Transportation	\$
Child care for working parents	\$
Health/dental premium	\$
Insurance (car/home/life)	\$
Charitable donations	\$
Contributions to savings	\$
Auto maintenance	\$
Entertainment	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

**Other Information**

1. Student (and spouse's) educational indebtedness

Student	Spouse	Loan Program	Amount Borrowed	Amount Remaining	Interest Rate
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Subsidized Stafford (Undergraduate)	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Unsubsidized Stafford (Undergraduate)	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Subsidized Stafford (Graduate)	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Unsubsidized Stafford (Graduate)	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Perkins	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCUSA	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loans from parents/family	\$	\$	%

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other outstanding loans	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Estimated total seminary debt upon graduation	\$	\$	%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		\$	\$	%
		<b>TOTAL</b>	\$	\$	

2. Student's (and spouse's) non-educational indebtedness (Mortgage, revolving credit, etc.)

Student	Spouse	Credit lender	Balance owed	Monthly payment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Please comment on how you intend to meet your financial responsibilities while attending seminary.

I certify that all of the above information is an accurate statement of my financial circumstances.

---

Signature

---

Date



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# 1. INTRODUCTION TO ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS

## Why Do We Have Ordination Examinations?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) administers standard Ordination Examinations as a tool to help determine when inquirers/candidates are ready to begin ministry. Throughout most of the process of preparation for ministry, the Session, CPM and presbytery of care carry the primary responsibility for nurturing and evaluating inquirers and candidates. The standard ordination examinations offer an opportunity for the larger church to participate in the assessment of potential leaders for the denomination.

***The standard ordination examinations are but one tool used to assess Inquirers and Candidates in the larger process of preparation for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.*** Other assessment tools include psychological/vocational evaluations, transcripts from seminary coursework, reports from supervisors in field education and Clinical Pastoral Education placements, progress reports made to the CPM, Annual Consultations, etc..

## Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates

Ordination Examinations are a function of the whole Presbyterian Church (USA). The examinations are designed and administered through the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates. The PCCEC has 24 members, twelve of whom are elected through presbyteries. The other twelve members of the committee are elected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee based on recommendations of presbyteries and synods.

## Areas of Examination

The "Standard" Ordination Examinations consist of five exams in areas identified in the *Book of Order* (G-14-0430 and G-14.0431a-e):

- Bible Content
- Open Book Bible Exegesis (including use of original biblical languages)
- Theological Competence
- Worship and Sacraments
- Church Polity.

All five exams must be completed successfully in order to satisfy the requirements for preparation for ministry as set forth in the *Book of Order*.

## Bible Content Examination

The **Bible Content Examination** is a **multiple-choice exam** and is ordinarily taken during the first year of seminary to determine one's basic knowledge of the Bible.

## Written "Senior" Examinations

The **other four examinations**, also known as the **"Senior" ordination exams**, are written in essay style. Inquirers/candidates may sit for these exams during their final year of seminary or after they have completed the equivalent of two full-time years of theological education (See G-14.0430 – 14.0431).

The purpose of the written ordination examinations is to assess one's entry-level readiness for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Examinations present pastoral challenges whereby inquirers/candidates can demonstrate how they integrate faith and theological education in practical areas of ministry. These exams are to be taken only after a student has had the opportunity to engage in practical ministry situations such as field education or supervised practical ministry.

**The four written exams are professional examinations, not academic tests.** They differ from seminary examinations, which measure academic knowledge. They also differ from presbytery examinations, which assess the acceptability of one's theological convictions.

## Languages

All examinations are offered in English, Spanish and Korean.

## 2. The Bible Content Examination

### Purpose and Timing of the Bible Content Examination

The Presbyterian Church considers basic knowledge of the content of the Bible to be an essential prerequisite for ministry. The purpose of the Bible Content Examination is to determine whether or not a candidate has such basic knowledge. Again, this exam is ordinarily taken in the first year of seminary, or as soon as possible after a student has completed basic survey courses in Old Testament and New Testament.

### Format of the Exam

The two-hour examination contains 100 multiple-choice questions about the Bible, using the New Revised Standard Version for all quotations (English exams). The questions vary in difficulty, and cover the entire Bible as required by the General Assembly.

### Grading the Exam

A grade of 70 correct answers or better is required to pass this exam. Answer sheets are machine-graded. Scores for the exam, along with the original answer sheets, are returned to the candidate through the proctor. Scores are also sent to Moderators of CPMs and presbyteries.

### Who May Take the Exam

Any student (PCUSA and students from other denominations) may take this exam at the appropriate time. A student does not have to be officially enrolled as an inquirer/candidate in order to take the Bible Content Examination, nor does s/he need permission from the CPM in order to register for this exam unless the presbytery has such a requirement.

## 3. "Senior" Written Examinations

The purpose of written ordination examinations is to assess readiness for entry-level ministry. A student needs to have both academic background and practical experience in order for the written examinations to be an effective tool for evaluation of readiness for ministry. . **It is vital that students have experience in practical ministry situations prior to taking the four written exams.** Such practical experience might come in the form of field education or supervised ministry programs, an internship as a student pastor or church staff member, Clinical Pastoral Education, or extensive service as an active member or officer in a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation before or after seminary training.

Questions on the exams intentionally focus on the integration of theological education and practical experience in ministry. It is neither helpful to inquirers/candidates, nor is it beneficial for the preparation process, to have students take written exams before they have had the opportunity to integrate learning with experience. Please do not encourage students to take an exam just because they have recently taken a class in the subject area if they have not yet the opportunity to use that learning in a practical setting. Also, please do not encourage students to take examinations "just to see if

they can get them out of the way” without taking the requisite course work. In ministry, as in any vocation, knowledge and practical experience must go hand in hand in order for a person to be as effective as possible in the work that s/he has been called to do.

The CPM has the responsibility to determine whether or not the student is deemed ready to take these exams. It is recommended that the CPM discuss with students a proposed schedule for taking exams during their Annual Consultations.

In order to take the written “Senior” examinations, a students must meet the following criteria:

- Be under the care of a presbytery either as an inquirer or candidate;
- Must have completed the equivalent of two full-time years of theological education (G-14-.0431);
- Have written authorization from his/her Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

### Authorization to Take Examinations

Inquirers/candidates are to submit an authorization form when registering to take written exams. The signature of the CPM Moderator, or his/her designee verifies that the student has the permission to take exams as indicated on the form.

In order to keep records current, **inquirers/candidates are to submit a signed authorization form, along with appropriate fees, each time exams are to be taken.**

Ministers of other denominations who wish to have their membership moved to the Presbyterian Church (USA) must also have permission from the appropriate committee of the presbytery (Committee on Ministry or Committee on Preparation for Ministry) in order to sit for the written examinations.

### Taking Exams for the First Time

Inquirers/candidates are encouraged to write all four exams on the first attempt, as there is much overlap in the preparation for the exams.

### Special Needs

Reasonable accommodations may be made for students who have special needs, such as physical or learning disabilities. If there is a question about special needs (e.g. additional time, medical needs, etc.), please contact the Office of Examination Services for assistance (888-728-7228, ext. 5746). Requests to meet special needs are to be submitted in writing by the CPM or COM Moderator and mailed with the authorization forms.

### CPMs Review and File Examinations

After each exam sitting, inquirers/candidates are requested to make copies of their exams and comment sheets, and to forward the original exam materials to the Moderators of their CPMs within two weeks of receipt.

It is important for the CPM to review the exam materials for each inquirer/candidate, both to acknowledge work well done, and to find ways to assist those who have not been successful in passing one or more of the exams. Inquirers/ candidates should not be authorized to re-take any exams until the CPM has reviewed their exam materials and consulted with the student. After exams have been reviewed by the CPM, they are to be placed in each student's personal file.

## 4. When and Where Exams are Administered

### Schedule for Examinations

The Bible Content Examination is offered once a year on the first Friday in February, from 10 A.M. until 12:00 Noon.

Final year Ordination Examinations are administered twice a year in August and January as follows:

- The last full weekend in August **BEFORE** Labor Day weekend;
- The fourth full weekend in January.

### Testing Sites

Examinations are administered on many seminary campuses nationwide. The full listing of seminary testing sites can be found on our website at [www.pcusa.org/exams](http://www.pcusa.org/exams) .

Individuals who take exams are encouraged to do so at one of the established testing sites.

### Special Proctors

If an inquirer/candidate is not able to travel to one of the testing sites within a reasonable amount of time (two to three hours of travel time), s/he can request a Special Proctor. If a student requires special accommodations that cannot easily be met at a seminary testing site (e.g. more than one additional hour per sitting examination, assistance with physical disabilities) it wise to have a Special Proctor. A Special Proctor must be a person who is reliable, responsible, and who will return exam materials to the Office of Examination Services promptly after exams are administered. The Special Proctor can be a pastor, CPM member, Elder, or other person agreeable to the CPM.

## 5. Registration for Examinations

### Application/Authorization Forms

Copies of application forms (for the Bible Content Exam) and authorization forms (for written examinations) are sent to CPM Moderators each spring. These forms are also available on the Ordination Examinations website at [www.psuca.org/exams](http://www.psuca.org/exams). Students can secure application/authorization forms for examinations from their CPM Moderators or from the website.

### Fees and Deadlines

The fee for the each examination is \$85. ***Fees must accompany the application/ authorization form or the registration cannot be processed.*** If examination fees pose an undue financial hardship on students, please contact Lesley Davies at the Office for Examination Services (888-728-7228, ext. 5746) to discuss options for payment.

Deadlines for registration are posted on the Ordinations Examinations' website and are also printed on the application/authorization form. ***In most cases, the deadlines for registration are July 15 for exams offered in August, and December 15 for exams offered in January and February.*** These dates may vary slightly if the normal deadline falls on a Saturday or Sunday, so please check the forms or the website for exact dates.

### Early Registration Discount

**For PCUSA inquirers and candidates ONLY**, there is an early registration discount of \$ 15 per exam if registration materials are postmarked at least one month before the deadline. ***The “early-bird” early registration deadlines are normally June 15 for August exams, and November 15 for January /February exams.*** Again, please check the forms or the website for exact dates.

### Minister of Other Denominations

Ministers of other denominations who are authorized to take written ordination examinations use the same authorization form as inquirers/candidates. The fee per exam is \$85.00.

Registration materials must be postmarked on or before the deadlines or application/ authorization forms cannot be processed.

**All registration materials are to be mailed to the following address in Pittsburgh.** *Payment cannot be processed through the Office for Examination Services.*

Presbyterian Church (USA) – Exam Processing  
P. O. Box 643647  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3647

### Confirmation of Registration

Written confirmation is sent to each student after application/authorization materials have been processed by the Office of Examination Services. The confirmation letter for the written exams includes the ID number for the inquirer/candidate and copies of the instructions for each exam to be taken.

### Cancellation Policy

After registrations have been confirmed, students must have the permission of their CPMs in order to cancel one or more exams. A cancellation fee of 50% will be assessed up until three weeks before the administration of the exam(s). If an exam is cancelled less than three weeks before the exam is to be administered, the fee will be forfeited. In case of illness or emergency, please contact the Office of Examination Service as

soon as possible; under such circumstances a fee may be credited or refunded at the discretion of the Associate for Examination Services.

## 6. Special Needs

### Accommodations for Special Needs

Some inquirers/candidates may need special accommodations for physical or learning disabilities. Examples of such accommodations include additional time to complete an exam or transcription of an exam into Braille.

Please contact the Office for Examination Services for assistance in working with inquirers/candidates who may need special accommodations when taking exams.

### Guidelines for Working with Candidates Who Have Disabilities

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has developed helpful guidelines for Committees on Preparation for Ministry who are working with inquirers/candidates with disabilities. These guidelines are available on the PCUSA website at

<http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/networks/pdc/pdf/candidates-disabilities-accommodating-ordination-exams.pdf>

## 7. Election of Readers to Grade Examinations

### Participation of Whole Church through Presbyteries

The Presbyterian Church (USA) as a whole participates in the grading of written ordination by providing readers to grade exams.

Each year, presbyteries are requested to elect ministers and elders to serve as readers for the written ordination exams. The number of readers per presbytery is based on the number of resident clergy members in that presbytery

### Guidelines for Electing Readers

It is important for readers to have the following qualities:

- Be ordained as an Elder or Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA;
- Mental and physical stamina to work long hours;
- Familiarity with the Scriptures, *The Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*, as well as reformed theology, worship and polity;
- Ability to read someone else's work with an open mind and without imposing one's personal theological positions;
- Ability to write clear and helpful comments on exams.

It is also important for presbyteries to elect readers who represent the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the PCUSA, as well as readers who are fluent in Korean/English and Spanish/English.

A complete set of guidelines for electing readers are sent to presbyteries each year.

### Schedule for Electing Readers

Invitations to elect readers are sent to presbyteries each spring. Copies of the invitation materials are sent to CPM Moderators, Stated Clerks and Executives of presbyteries, as well as Stated Clerks and Executives of Synods.

Approximately two-thirds of the presbyteries elect readers for the October Reading Groups. Contact information and terms for those readers are to be sent to the Office of Examination Services by June 30. The balance of the presbyteries send readers to the March Reading Groups, and are to submit readers information to the Office of Examination Services by November 30.

Please ensure that information about readers (names, contact information and terms of service) are sent to the Office of Examination Services in a timely manner.

## 8. Grading Examinations

### Reading Groups

Readers for exams are divided into six Reading Groups that meet in different geographical areas of the United States. Four of these Reading Groups meet in October; the other two groups meet in March. Training is provided for readers before they arrive at the group and during the meeting.

## Grading Process

The identities of inquirers/candidates who write exams are unknown to the readers during the grading process. Exams are identified only by a random number assigned by the Office of Examination Services.

Every effort is made to ensure that an individual's examinations will not be sent to a Reading Group where his/her seminary or presbytery is represented.

Exams are graded on a scale of 0 (zero) to 5. A zero indicates that no response was written. Exams that receive scores of 3 and higher are deemed successful. Exams that receive grades of less than 3 are considered unsuccessful.

At least two readers grade each examination. If the readers agree that an exam is successful or unsuccessful, the reading of the exam is complete. If the two readers do not agree on the success of an exam, the exam is sent to a third reader, and the grades that agree are attached to the exam. Readers do not know if they are reading an exam for the first, second or third time.

## Release of Grades

All grades, exam materials and post-exam correspondence are released to inquirers/candidates through their proctors. Summaries of grades are also faxed to presbytery offices as soon as they become available. Full reports of grades are sent in writing to CPM Moderators as soon as possible after the grading process is completed.

Grades are not released to individual students by the Office of Examination Services.

## 9. Appeals

It is possible for an appeal to be submitted to overturn an unsatisfactory grade on an examination.

An Inquirer or Candidate cannot appeal a grade directly to the Office of Examination Services. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (or, in the case of ministers from other denominations, the Committee on Ministry) is to review the exam to determine whether or not an appeal is warranted. If the Committee agrees that a mistake was made in the grading of an exam, or that the grade given did not accurately reflect the quality of the work in the exam, the Committee may then initiate an appeal.

Requests for an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Office of Examination Services, along with a copy of the exam and the comments from the readers (grade sheets).

Exams that are submitted for an appeal will be reviewed by a member of the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates. If the appeal is sustained, the unsatisfactory grade will be overturned, and a satisfactory grade will be assigned to the exam. If the appeal is not sustained, the original grade(s) assigned to the exam will stand. The decision of the member of the PCC grading an exam is final.

Requests for an appeal must reach the Office for Examination Services by:

**December 15** for **August** exams  
**June 1** for **January** exams.

## 10. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious abuse of the examination process. If plagiarism or cheating is suspected, the exam(s) in question will be returned un-graded. The proctor and the presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry will be notified and supplied with supporting documentation. Final disposition of the exam will be determined by the CPM in consultation with the Office of Examination Services. To avoid even the appearance of plagiarism, inquirers/candidates are expected to cite all appropriate references and quotations on their exam papers.

## 11. ALTERNATIVE EXAMINATIONS

### Examination Requirements

An inquirer/candidate must demonstrate competence in all areas of examination in order to complete the requirements for ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. It is expected that inquirers/candidates will attempt the standard written examinations at least twice, unless the individual has a documented disability that interferes with test-taking (G-14.0472).

If an inquirer/candidate has difficulty completing examinations successfully, it is important for the CPM to determine the reasons for difficulty. The exams are intended to be assessment tools in determining readiness for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Difficulty in passing the exams may indicate that the inquirer/ candidate is

not yet ready to move forward, or perhaps even that his/her gifts for ministry lie somewhere other than in the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

### Extraordinary Circumstances

The standard written examinations process may not allow students with physical or learning disabilities to demonstrate competence well in a given area. In such cases, the CPM may consider an alternative way for the person to demonstrate his/her competence in the area of examination without expecting him/her to take the exams in standard written form.

The Office of Examination Services stands ready to assist presbyteries in assessing the need for and developing an alternative exam process. Counselors and experts in disabilities may be able to offer advice in developing fair alternative exams as well.

### When to Consider Alternative Means of Demonstrating Competence

There may occasions where the CPM is convinced that an individual has gifts and graces for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, but the person has difficulty passing one or more of the standard exams. If coaching and additional preparation have not proved successful, the CPM would do well to engage the student in a process of discernment of his/her call to ministry before moving to an alternative examination. If, after a period of discernment and assessment, the student and CPM remain convinced of the individual's call to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, an alternative examination may be in order.

A resource for considering alternative examinations is available on the PCUSA website at

<http://www.pcusa.org/prep4min/pdf/altexamproc.pdf> .

### Approval by Presbytery

The presbytery must approve any alternative means of administering an examination by a three-fourths vote, and the result of the exam and the reasons for the alternate method must be recorded in the minutes of the presbytery (G-14.0472).

### Report Results of Alternative Exams

Please report results of alternative examinations to the Office of Examinations as soon as possible after the exam is completed.

## 12. HOW TO OBTAIN COPIES OF PAST ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS

Copies of previous examinations in English are available online through the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary website ([www.LPTS.edu](http://www.LPTS.edu)). Go to the "Quick Links" section on the home page and then click on "ordination exams").

Copies of previous exams are available in Korean and Spanish through the Office of Examination Services.

## 13. OFFICE OF EXAMINATION SERVICES

*If you have questions or need more information about the ordination exam process, please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Examination services.*

Office for Examination Services  
100 Witherspoon Street, Rm. 4621  
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

(888) 728-7228 ext. 5746

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**WEBSITE:**     [www.pcusa.org/exams](http://www.pcusa.org/exams)

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