



Presbytery of Missouri River Valley

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**Presbytery of Missouri River Valley
Commission on Preparation for Ministry**

MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

Revised 2/9/2023

Acronyms

ACPE	Association of Clinical Pastoral Education Accreditation organization for Clinical Pastoral Education
ATS	Association of Theological Schools Accreditation organization for theological degrees
BCE	Bible Content Exam
BOP	Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
CLC	Church Leadership Connection Online matching and referral system within the PC(USA)
COM	Commission on Ministry The Presbytery commission providing care for pastoral and congregational relationships with the Presbytery
CPE	Clinical Pastoral Education Interfaith supervised education for ministry
CPM	Commission on Preparation for ministry The Presbytery commission providing care for individuals discerning calls to the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament or as a Commissioned Pastor.
CP	Commissioned Pastor, also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) or Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) A Ruling Elder commissioned to pastoral service within the Presbytery
PC(USA)	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America
PIF	Personal Information Form A form submitted by candidates through the CLC for circulation within the PC(USA)
PMRV	Presbytery of Missouri River Valley PC(CUSA) congregations and worshipping communities in Omaha, Nebraska metro area and Southwest Iowa.

Mission, Purpose, and Structure

From the Manual of Administrative Operations

1. Mission and Procedures

- a. The mission of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is to develop and promote a process to encourage qualified and capable individuals to consider ordained ministry; to enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament; to assist individuals and supporting congregations as they proceed to Inquiry, Candidacy, and Ordination; to recommend for Presbytery's election minister and ruling elder readers of examinations for candidates for ordination; and to provide for the training, testing and preparation of ruling elders called to be commissioned to specific ministries.
- b. The Commission shall adopt a manual of operations, consistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and these bylaws, to guide its work.

2. Membership

- a. The Commission has six members: three ministers of the Word and Sacrament and three ruling elders. No two ruling elders may be from the same congregation.
- b. The membership is divided into three classes of two.
- c. Term of service is three years; a member may be reelected once. Members may fill a partial term of two years or less, and then may be elected in their own right to serve two consecutive terms. Total consecutive service is not to exceed eight years.

3. Officers

- a. The Commission shall have a Chair and Clerk.
- b. The Commission elects these officers annually.

4. Meetings

- a. The Commission shall meet at a time and place of its choosing.
- b. A quorum of the Commission shall be a majority of its members.

5. The Presbytery delegates to the Commission the following powers; each such action is to be reported to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting:

- a. to receive inquirers and candidates from other presbyteries and, upon the presbyteries' request, to dismiss them to other presbyteries
- b. to appoint administrative commissions to ordain
- c. to certify ruling elders as ready to be commissioned to particular service

Administration

The Commission shall follow the guidelines provided by

- The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),
- The Advisory Handbook for Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- The Manual for Administrative Operations of the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley.

The Officers of the Commission shall perform the tasks assigned by the Commission.

Tasks of the commission include:

- Chair
 - Prepare meeting agendas and moderate meeting
 - Correspondence representing the CPM
 - Present reports and recommendations to Presbytery
 - Attest PIFs and Ordination Exams online
 - Submit to the Stated Clerk the status of persons under care of the presbytery annually
 - Maintain forms
 - Assure that files of those no longer under care are securely stored with the Presbytery
- Clerk
 - Record and maintain CPM minutes of meetings
- Representative to Leadership Team
 - Provide communication between the CPM and the Leadership Team
- Liaison
 - Maintain regular communication with Inquirer/Candidates/Commissioned Elders in Training under care of the Presbytery
 - Provide support for the person under care
 - Report to the CPM the person under care's progress and issues or concerns
- Other tasks that may be assigned among members
 - Create work groups as needed
 - Assign CPM Liaisons for Inquirer/Candidates/Commissioned Elders in Training
 - Train new members of the CPM
 - Train Sessions taking persons under care
 - Obtain readers for ordination exams
- Stated Clerk
 - Work with CPM and Chair to fill all PC(USA) forms

- Serve as staff resource
- Assist with questions of polity
- Presbytery Administrative Staff
 - Assist the chair with correspondence
 - Assist the CPM with website and communication
 - Maintain permanent files of all Inquirers and Candidates at the Presbytery office. All files remain permanent property of the Presbytery regardless of withdrawal, removal, transfer, or ordination.
 - Dispense funds at the CPM request

Responsibilities of Session of Congregations

- Assist all members in their unique call to vocational ministry
- Seek out those called to specific service in the Church
 - As Ministers of the Word and Sacrament
 - As elders commissioned to pastoral service
- Prayerfully examine persons discerning a call to specific service in the church regarding their faith, motivation, and experience.
- Recommend persons to the CPM as Inquirers/Candidates/Commission Elders in Training
- Provide a liaison from the Session or congregation to assist and care for those under care of the Presbytery
- Provide financial assistance, if needed

Other Administrative Activities

- Provide 1/3 costs for LeaderWise Career Assessment, with the assumption that the congregation and person under care will each share 1/3 costs.
- Run background checks of all persons under care.

**Presbytery of Missouri River Valley
Requirements and Expectations of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry
Of its Inquirers and Candidates**

An Overview

This is an overview of the requirements and expectations of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) of the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley (PMRV) for individuals who are under our care. It is understood that these policies are in addition to the requirements set for in the *Form of Government* of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Annual and ongoing expectations

- Communication with the CPM, primarily through your CPM liaison.
- Communication with your Session, primarily through your liaison and/or Pastor.
- Regular Consultations with the CPM, at least annually.
- Make plans for Field Education/Supervised Pastoral Ministry through your Seminary, keeping the CPM informed as plans progress.
- Attend a Boundary Training program approved by the CPM during first year of care.

As an Inquirer:

- Begin studies at an ATS and CPM approved Seminary.
- Arrange for Career Assessment through LeaderWise.
- Take the Bible Content Exam.
- Plan the place and times to do Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

After the first year:

- CPE is either scheduled or completed.
- Write a one-page Statement of Faith to present to the CPM.
- Write a one-page Statement of Call to present to the CPM.
- Arrange to meet with your Session and with the CPM, to present Statements of Faith and Call and to be examined to move from Inquirer to Candidate.
- Attend Presbytery and be examined on your Statement of Call and to be received as a Candidate.

As a Candidate:

- Take the four Standard Ordination Exams (Biblical Exegesis, Reformed Theology, Worship and Sacraments, and Polity)
- Present Statement of Faith to the CPM.
- After successfully completing the Standard Ordination Exams, schedule your final assessment with the CPM.
- Meet with CPM for final assessment prepared to present your Statement of Faith, a sermon, and your exegetical work for the sermon.
- Complete your Personal Information Form (PIF) online, and after CPM approval, circulate it to the Church.
- Attend the Presbytery meeting where you will be examined for ordination, ordinarily the presbytery of call.

Presbytery of Missouri River Valley
Requirements and Expectations of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry
Of Commissioned Pastors in Training
An Overview

This is an overview of the requirements and expectations of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) of the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley (PMRV) for individuals who are under our care. It is understood that these policies are in addition to the requirements set for in the *Form of Government* of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Annual and ongoing expectations

- Communication with the CPM, primarily through your CPM liaison.
- Communication with your Session
- Regular Consultations with the CPM, at least annually.
- Continued discernment regarding a possible commission
- Attend a Boundary Training program approved by the CPM during first year of care.

As a Commissioned Pastor in Training:

- Begin studies at The Academy.
- Arrange for Career Assessment through LeaderWise.

After the first year of training

- Write a one-page Statement of Faith to present to the CPM.
- Write a one-page Statement of Call to present to the CPM.

After completing your training:

- Present Statement of Faith to the CPM.
- Schedule your final assessment with the CPM.
- Meet with CPM for final assessment prepared to present your Statement of Faith, a sermon, and your exegetical work for the sermon.
- Receive referral to COM as ready to receive a commission.

Attend the Presbytery meeting where you will be examined for commissioning and be commissioned by the Presbytery.

Final Assessment of Candidates

1. The Chair opens the Assessment with prayer.
2. The Candidate introduces the sermon or lesson plan by describing the exegetical process, the development of the sermon or lesson plan theme(s), and the context in which this sermon or lesson plan might be presented.
3. The Candidate reads the Scripture upon which the sermon or lesson plan is based.
4. The Candidate preaches the sermon or teaches the lesson to the CPM.
5. The CPM may discuss delivery and content, seek clarification, or offer opinions as to the strengths and/or weaknesses of the sermon or lesson plan.
6. The CPM discusses the Statement of Faith with the Candidate.
7. The CPM discusses the PDP.
8. The CPM discusses other questions they may have.
9. The Candidate is excused and the CPM deliberates and votes whether or not to sustain the assessment and to certify the candidate ready to receive a call.
10. The Candidate is invited back and CPM shares its decision with the Candidate.
11. The Assessment closes with prayer.

Final Assessment of CRE/CP in Training

1. The Chair opens the Assessment with prayer.
2. The CRE/CP introduces a sermon by describing the exegetical process, the development of the sermon theme(s), and the context in which this sermon might be presented.
3. The CRE/CP reads the Scripture upon which the sermon is based.
4. The CRE/CP preaches the sermon to the CPM.
5. The CPM may discuss delivery and content, seek clarification, or offer opinions as to the strengths and/or weaknesses of the sermon.
6. The CPM discusses the Statement of Faith with the CRE/CP.
7. The CPM discusses other questions they may have.
8. The CRE/CP is excused and the CPM deliberates and votes whether or not to sustain the assessment and to certify the candidate ready to receive a call.
9. The CRE/CP is invited back and CPM shares its decision with the CRE/CP.
10. The Assessment closes with prayer.

Relevant Passages from the Form of Government for CPM

G-2.06 PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

G-2.0601 Nature and Purpose of Preparation

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 presbytery. For this purpose, a presbytery shall enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament and with their sessions and congregations. This relationship shall be divided into the two phases of inquiry and candidacy.

G-2.0602 Time Requirements

To be enrolled as an inquirer, the applicant shall be a member of the sponsoring congregation, shall have been active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least six months, and shall have received the endorsement of the session of the sponsoring congregation. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.

G-2.0603 Purpose of Inquiry

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

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Ordered Ministry, Commissioning, and Certification **G-2.06** G-2.0604–G-2.0608

G-2.0604 Purpose of Candidacy

The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as ministers of the Word and Sacrament. This shall be accomplished through the presbytery's support, guidance, and evaluation of a candidate's fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination].

G-2.0605 Oversight

During the phases of inquiry and candidacy the individual continues to be an active member of his or her congregation and subject to the concern and discipline of the session. In matters relating to preparation for ministry, the individual is subject to the over- sight of the presbytery within the context of their covenant relationship.

G-2.0606 Service in Covenant Relationship

Inquirers and candidates shall, with the permission of the presbytery of care, engage in some form of supervised service to the church. No inquirer or candidate who has not been previously ordained as a ruling elder may serve as moderator of a session, administer the Sacraments, or perform a marriage service. An inquirer or candidate previously ordained as a ruling elder may be authorized by the presbytery to preside at the Lord's Supper when invited by a session.

G-2.0607 Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service

A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a minister of the Word and Sacrament without approval of the presbytery of care. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a minister of the Word and Sacrament shall include:

a. a candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;

b. a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;

c. a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and

d. examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.

G-2.0608 Transfer of Relationship

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

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G-2.06–G-2.07 Form of Government G-2.0609–G-2.0704

G-2.0609 Removal from Relationship

An inquirer or candidate may, after consultation with the session and the presbytery, withdraw from covenant relationship. A presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an individual's name from the roll of inquirers and candidates, reporting this action

and the reasons to the session, to the individual, and, if appropriate, to the educational institution in which the individual is enrolled. Prior to taking such action, the presbytery or its designated entity shall make a reasonable attempt to give the candidate or inquirer an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal.

G-2.0610 Accommodations to Particular Circumstances

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall ap- prove by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. A full account of the reasons for any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

G-2.07 ORDINATION

G-2.0701 Ordination

Ordination to the ordered ministry of minister of the Word and Sacrament is an act of the whole church carried out by the presbytery, setting apart a person to ordered ministry. Such a person shall have fulfilled the ordination requirements of the presbytery of care and received the call of God to service to a congregation or other work in the mission of the church that is acceptable to the candidate and to the presbytery of call.

G-2.0702 Place of Ordination

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

G-2.0703 Service of Ordination

The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.04) shall be followed.

G-2.0704 Record of Ordination

The presbytery of call shall record the ordination and installation, along with written affirmation of the new minister of the Word and Sacrament to the obligations undertaken in the ordination questions, and enroll the minister of the Word and Sacrament as a member of the presbytery. The stated clerk of the presbytery shall report these actions to the General Assembly, the presbytery of care, and to the congregation of which the candidate was formerly a member.

G-2.10 COMMISSIONING RULING ELDERS TO PARTICULAR PASTORAL SERVICE

G-2.1001 Functions

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

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Ordered Ministry, Commissioning, and Certification **G-2.10–G-2.11** *G-2.1002–G-2.1102*

G-2.1002 Training, Examination and Commissioning

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

G-2.1003 Commissioning Service

When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of a ruling elder to serve a congregation providing the services described above, it shall commission the ruling elder to pastoral service as designated by the presbytery, employing the questions contained in W-4.04.

G-2.1004 Supervision

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