

**NORMAL OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**For**

**COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

**PRESBYTERY OF SHEPPARDS AND LAPSLEY  
SYNOD OF LIVING WATERS  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)**

Designed to Assist

Pre-Inquirers,  
Inquirers,  
Candidates  
and

Those Who Assist Them  
in Preparation for Ministry of Word  
and Sacrament

Updated January 2010

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

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

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

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

Peace,

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

## PREFACE

As Reformed Christians, Presbyterians affirm the church to be a community called into being by Jesus Christ. Christ gives the church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances. Christ is its head in all things. *Book of Order* G-1 .0100.

Presbyterians believe in the priesthood of all believers and that all church members, regardless of their occupational choice, are engaged in ministry. It is their Christian vocation. Some among them may be called out by the Holy Spirit, through the church, to the ministry of 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 into the ministry is approached through a careful process of exploring gifts and motivations within the community of faith. During this exploration period, candidates are also evaluated in light of the needs of the church and of the world.

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

- ordained ministry is a gift of God to the church;
- ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament equip church members for their ministry by proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, caring for people and, along with elders, ensuring that the church's life is governed in an orderly way;
- a man or woman experiences God's call to ministry privately as an inner urgency; however, the church experiences that call publicly as it affirms an individual's gifts for ministry and confirms God's call through the acts of ordination and installation;
- the church actively seeks and ordains persons whose gifts and abilities equip them for the ministry of 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.

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## **PURPOSE OF THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS**

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

## **DEFINING THE PREPARATION PROCESS**

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

The purpose of the 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 will be based on full knowledge and experience of one another. *Book of Order* G-1 4.0302.

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

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

This process begins on the date Presbytery enrolls the applicant as an inquirer. At least one year of the process must be spent in the candidacy phase. Presbytery is represented in this process by a CPM, made up of clergy and elders, some of whom serve as liaisons for one or more inquirers or candidates.

Annual reviews are mandated by the *Book of Order*. Included as part of the annual review will be a decision as to whether to continue or terminate the period of inquiry or candidacy. The final assessment includes preaching a sermon. A vote of preparedness will be taken, and if affirmative, the candidate will be declared ready to circulate his/her Personal Information Form (PIF), and the action will be reported to Presbytery at its next meeting.

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

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

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

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

A person is ready for inquiry if it seems likely that he or she has the gifts and skills for ministry. Only in cases in which it is unlikely or highly ill advised should a person be turned away from inquiry. An inquirer is ready for candidacy if it is highly probable that he or she will finish developing the skills and gifts for ministry. A candidate will be declared ready for ordination to ministry of the Word and Sacrament when he or she is fully prepared and has sufficiently developed his/her gifts and skills.

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

## **AUTHORITY OF THE BOOK OF ORDER**

The current *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the authority under which the CPM functions. All requirements and procedures of the current *Book of Order* must be followed in the inquiry and candidacy process (G-14.0300-.0406).

## **PRESBYTERY OF SHEPPARDS AND LAPSLEY REQUIREMENTS**

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley has determined that some additional steps will enrich and enhance the preparation process, and therefore requires some experiences such as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Graduates of or students attending non-Presbyterian seminaries may be required to take some courses in a Presbyterian seminary. See Appendix 5.

### **AN OVERVIEW OF THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS**

#### **Pre-Inquiry Phase (Preliminary):**

A person who is interested in becoming an inquirer should first have a conversation with his or her pastor about the call to ministry. Ideally, this should be done prior to seminary enrollment. Membership in a local congregation for at least six months is required before beginning the preparation process. A brief biography and statement of call may be sent to the CPM along with the request for inquiry application forms. The CPM may then designate one of its members to meet with the session to explain the inquiry/candidate process. The applicant will meet with the home church session to seek endorsement to enter into a covenant relationship for preparation for ministry of the Word and Sacrament. If endorsement is granted, a meeting with the CPM will be scheduled to review the application and supporting documents. The CPM may then advise the Presbytery that the individual has been enrolled as an inquirer.

#### **Inquiry Phase:**

This begins with the date of Presbytery enrollment and shall be of sufficient length, to determine whether the inquirer should apply to become a candidate. *Book of Order G-14.0303a-g*. It is a time for exploring issues of ministry, questioning, testing and growth and during which a number of the requirements for preparation are to be completed. These are as follows:

- career counseling;
- begin or continue course work toward a Master of Divinity degree at an accredited seminary;
- begin or continue additional course work that may be recommended by the CPM
- complete an approved field education experience **or** complete an approved accredited unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. The CPM may require both;
- prepare for and take the Bible Content Examination (ordination requirement);
- complete the six "Inquirers' Statements" that are part of the candidacy application;
- meet with session to review the six statements and request endorsement of application for candidacy (Forms 5A and B);
- meet with the CPM for review of status and to seek endorsement for advancement to candidacy;
- appear before Presbytery with Statement of Call to be examined and approved as a candidate by responding to the constitutional questions;
- always stay in touch with Session and CPM liaisons for advice and counsel

regarding progress through requirements and for friendly chats;

### **Candidacy Phase:**

This begins with the date of Presbytery enrollment and requires at least one year as a candidate to complete. *Book of Order* G-14.0305a-j. Candidacy is the time for completing the preparation requirements along with the finishing touches of readiness for ministry. Specific requirements are as follows:

- annual reviews with CPM
- complete field education and submit supervisor's evaluation, if required
- complete M. Div. degree and have final transcript sent to the CPM
- pass ordination and Bible Content examinations
- finalize Statement of Faith, exegesis and sermon text
- meet with CPM for a final assessment (Form 4A)
- preach sermon and review exegesis and Statement of Faith (G-14.0310a-e) (Form 6)

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

## **DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROCESS**

### **Application to Become an Inquirer**

A completed application includes Forms 1 and 2 with appropriate signatures, a final transcript that shows the undergraduate degree, and a transcript of any graduate and/or seminary study and degrees. The first visit with the CPM will be accomplished as soon as possible after the application and supporting documents are received by the CPM from the session.

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

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

### **General Expectations During The Inquiry Period**

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

- **Career Counseling**

Inquirers will immediately arrange for a career counseling session with an appropriate professional approved by the CPM. The cost of the career counseling

session is allocated among the inquirer, the inquirer's church and Presbytery. The inquirer should arrange for the CPM to receive a copy of the career counseling assessment. Upon receipt of the career counseling assessment, the CPM will schedule another meeting with the inquirer to review the assessment. This should take place before the inquirer's advancement to candidacy.

- **Field Education and Clinical Pastoral Education (certified unit)**

While the CPM requires both field education and CPE for all candidates prior to final assessment, it may require that field education, CPE or both be completed before advancement to candidacy. Supervisor evaluations must be submitted to the CPM as part of the evaluative material collected during the preparation process.

- **Annual Reviews**

The CPM is required by the *Book of Order* (G-14.0309) to hold an annual review with all inquirers/candidates during the time they are under care of the Presbytery. Forms 3 and 4 are used to compile information for this review. Scheduling the review is the joint responsibility of the CPM and the inquirer/candidate. The inquirer/candidate is responsible for submitting Form 3 to the CPM Moderator at least ten days prior to the annual review. Failure to meet the deadline may result in the annual review being delayed or rescheduled.

- **Seminary Education**

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

The seminary course of study must meet all requirements of the *Book of Order*, and additional requirements established by the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. Non-Presbyterian seminary graduates and students probably will be required to take specified courses at a Presbyterian seminary (see Appendix 5).

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

- **Bible Content Examination**

The Bible Content Examination is one of the five examinations required for ordination in the PC(USA) (*Book of Order* G-14.0310c). It is offered once a year and inquirers are encouraged to take it during the inquiry phase.

- **Clinical Pastoral Education**

Ordinarily at least one unit of certified CPE in a hospital or other setting is required (See Appendix 7). The CPM must pre-approve the proposed location. A copy of the supervisor's evaluation must be submitted to CPM.

- **Inquirer's Pre-candidacy Statements**

Inquirers are required to complete six statements on specified topics (*Book of Order* G-14.0303g) that are a major part of the application for candidacy. These statements will be submitted along with the session for its review and consideration. The Statement of Faith will be considered as the first draft of the final statement. (See Appendix 8).

- **Requests for Exceptions**

If for some reason an inquirer cannot meet all requirements, a request for an exception may be considered by the CPM. Such a request must be made in writing to the CPM at least two weeks prior to the next meeting. All requests for exceptions must meet the requirements of the *Book of Order* G-14.031 3 and some may require approval by the Presbytery.

## **Transition to the Candidacy Phase**

Acceptance into the candidacy phase indicates a high probability of ordination to ministry of the Word and Sacrament. During candidacy, full and final preparations of an individual for ministry will be completed and the candidate will be declared ready to receive a call.

- **Application for Candidacy**

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

- at least one annual review
- field education, CPE or both if required by the CPM with evaluations on file
- passing of the Bible Content Examination (expected but not required)
- career counseling assessment and report submitted to CPM
- official transcripts on file
- six inquirer's statements (G-14.0303g)

- **Procedure for Application**

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

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

- **Meeting with the CPM**

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

- **Appearance before Presbytery**

Advancement to candidacy is a step that must be approved by Presbytery after recommendations by the session and CPM. It is the time when the Presbytery affirms the gifts and skills of a person under care and pledges its support in the final stages of preparation. Prior to the Presbytery meeting, the inquirer will prepare a brief biographical summary and a statement describing his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken and motives for seeking the ministry of Word and Sacrament. These two documents are to be submitted to the CPM Moderator well in advance of the Presbytery meeting so as to be included in the packet of materials mailed to the Presbyters prior to the meeting.

The inquirer will be presented to Presbytery and may be given an opportunity to make a brief introductory statement before being examined about his or her Christian Faith, forms of Christian Service undertaken and motives for seeking the Ministry. Following the examination, a motion "to sustain the examination" will be made. If the vote is affirmative, the Presbytery Moderator will invite family, pastor and liaisons to be present with the inquirer when the constitutional questions are asked (G-14.0305f). There will be a laying on of hands while the Moderator or someone else chosen by the Inquirer offers a prayer and presents a charge to the candidate.

If the vote is negative, Presbytery will return the applicant to CPM to continue as an inquirer. A prayer will be offered.

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

## **The Candidacy Phase**

The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide a time for further development toward full readiness for ministry of the Word and Sacrament, and to provide an opportunity for both CPM and the candidate to address issues of experience, integration, competency

and theological maturity. At least one year is required in the candidacy phase (*Book of Order* G-14.0303e and G-14.0401).

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

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

In addition to preparing and presenting various written reports, evaluations and assessments, the candidate should take the four required ordination examinations at the earliest possible time (a person does not have to be a candidate to take the examinations, but must have completed at least two years of seminary to be eligible). Permission to write the examinations must be granted by the CPM Moderator who is required to certify on the application that the applicant has completed two years of theological education.

### **Completion Of The Candidacy Phase And Circulation Of The PIF**

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

The candidate's file should contain:

- Forms 1A and B, 2A and B, 3, 4, 5A and B
- Career Counseling Report
- CPE supervisor's evaluation
- field education supervisor's evaluation
- six inquirer's statements
- current official transcripts and evidence of anticipated or past seminary graduation with completion of all CPM's required courses
- all (five) ordination examinations successfully completed and submitted to the CPM Moderator by the Candidate
- Statement of Faith
- exegesis and sermon

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

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

meeting will be closed with prayer and care and support will be offered to the candidate.

The PIF form is accessed in the Church Leadership Connection of the PC(USA),  
<http://www.pcusa.org/clc/whatis.htm>.

### **Leaving The Preparation For Ministry Process (G-1 4.031 2)**

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

If the Inquirer/Candidate decides to leave the process, the pastor and session should be informed of the decision. A request to be removed from the Presbytery roll of inquirers and candidates should be presented in writing to the CPM Moderator. The CPM will submit the request and the reason to Presbytery for a vote. If affirmed, the Inquirer/Candidate's name will be removed and Form 7 will be signed by the Stated Clerk and sent to the Denomination's Office of Resourcing CPMs.

The CPM may decide that it is not in the best interest of all that an inquirer or candidate continue in the process. This would ordinarily take place within the context of an annual review and would be recorded on Form 4. The CPM moderator will inform the pastor and session liaison of the recommendation. Presbytery will vote on the recommendation at its next meeting. If Presbytery votes to remove the name from the roll, Form 7 will be signed by the Stated Clerk and sent to Louisville.

A session may also determine that the preparation process of an inquirer or candidate is not proceeding appropriately and may discontinue the covenant relationship and remove the person from the care of the session. The recommendation of the session must be sent to Presbytery through the Stated Clerk. An opportunity for the Inquirer/Candidate or the members of the session to meet with the CPM may be granted (*Book of Order G-1 4.0305b, c*).

### **Expectations: Criteria For Evaluation**

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

Acceptance into Inquiry indicates a POSSIBILITY for ministry. (*Book of Order G-14.0300-.0303*)

The goals of the application period are to:

- determine whether the person has at least basic potential for ministry of the Word and Sacrament;
- begin to question the nature of call;
- begin to discern the nature of the applicant's vocation, whether to ministry of the Word and Sacrament or to another calling;
- prepare the applicant for the highly evaluative period of inquiry and candidacy; and
- offer suggestions for further exploration of vocation and development in the event the applicant is not accepted.

Expectations during the time of application include:

evidence of spiritual development

- through vital, searching faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ;
- commitment to biblical faith;
- exploration of personal spirituality and disciplines; and
- active participation in a congregation of the PC(USA).

readiness for education toward ministry

- with intellectual ability for ministry;
- academic interest, motivation and proficiency;
- capacity to deal with abstract ideas and symbols; and
- understanding of the dynamics of a worshipping community, particularly in the context of a PC(USA) congregation

healthy interpersonal relations

- exhibited by positive qualities of compassion, listening skills and caring
- realistic sense of self
- sensitivity to one's environment (roles and culture)
- ability to communicate with and listen to others
- ability to maintain relationships

personal readiness

- as shown through a reasonable level of emotional health and self-awareness
- commitment to personal growth, including knowledge and use of tools for self-assessment
- accord between understanding of self and others' perceptions of self
- appropriate openness to counsel
- strong sense of personal integrity
- flexibility
- awareness of personal limits
- ability to finance theological education without inordinate debt

professional readiness

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

**Means of assessment**

- written information provided by the applicant and church (Forms 1 and 2)
- conversations with the pastor/clerk of the home church

- endorsement by the session of the home congregation
- interviews with CPM
- interviews with personal references in a variety of appropriate contexts (college/seminary, family, friends, employers, and church)
- academic transcripts (college and seminary, other)

**Goals of the inquiry period are to:**

- determine whether the Inquirer is highly likely to finish developing the skills and gifts for ministry of the Word and Sacrament
- assess the Inquirer's skills, gifts and development (strengths and weaknesses)
- determine whether those gifts, skills and abilities best suit the ministry of the Word and Sacrament or another calling
- decide whether to proceed to candidacy, continue in the inquiry phase, or leave the process and explore a more suitable calling

**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING APPLICANTS FOR CANDIDACY: Acceptance into Candidacy indicates HIGH PROBABILITY for ministry**

**Expectations**

education for ministry

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

spiritual development will be shown by:

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

interpersonal relationships

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

personal growth will be evidenced by

- good mental health, including emotional stability, authenticity, a sense of humor, energy, motivation, comfort with self and others, appropriateness, and an adequately low level of anxiety
- openness to learning, self-exploration, and counsel
- a fairly high degree of coincidence between one's self-image and others' perceptions
- commitment to continued personal growth, knowledge of and appropriate use of tools for growth (e.g. counseling, reading, mentors, spiritual advisors, prayer etc.)
- ability to set priorities (pursue challenging goals, acknowledge realistic limits, and manage time effectively)

professional development is evidenced by:

- an understanding of the larger church (presbytery, synod, general assembly) and its mission, polity and theology, and a commitment to participate in the PC(USA)
- commitment to the covenantal relationship and mutual accountability in the PC(USA)
- demonstrated leadership (initiative, self-confidence, organizational and communication skills) and ability to motivate others and cultivate leadership
- clear sense of call and appropriateness of vocational choice, which includes compatibility of interests and gifts with those, required for ministry of the Word and Sacrament
- basic ability to think objectively about the church in specific settings such as the home church, field education, the seminary community
- experience in and understanding of the practice of worship in the Reformed tradition

**The Means of Assessing Readiness for Candidacy will be:**

- academic transcripts (college, seminary, other), enrollment in a Presbyterian seminary or, with CPM approval, a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS)
- six inquirer's statements prepared as part of the candidacy application (*Book or Order G-1 4.0303g 1-6*)
- seminary field education supervisor's evaluation and CPE supervisor's

evaluation

- interviews by CPM
- endorsement by the session (Forms 5A and B)
- conversations with or recommendations of the seminary
- conversations with the pastor/clerk of the home church
- interviews with personal references (persons in a variety of appropriate contexts such as college/seminary, field education supervisors, family, friends, employers, and/or home church)
- written information provided by the applicant and home church (including annual growth goals, Forms 3 and 4)
- interview with the CPM
- usually successful completion of the Bible Content Examination (required for Readiness for Ministry)

Examination of the Inquirer with respect to his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken and motives for seeking the ministry.

- affirmative answers to the constitutional questions (G-14.0305) asked at the time of presentation to Presbytery

### **Goals of the Candidacy Period are to:**

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

### **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING READINESS FOR MINISTRY: Approval for readiness for ministry certifies FULL PREPARATION for ministry of the Word and Sacrament**

#### **Expectations for certification of readiness are:**

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

spiritual development will be evidenced by:

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

interpersonal relations

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

#### personal growth

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

#### professional development

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

#### **The means of assessing readiness for ministry will be:**

- successful completion of the five standard ordination examinations (Bible Content, Polity, Theology, Worship and Sacraments, and Biblical Exegesis and Sermon) *Book of Order* G-14.031 b-d
- Statement of Faith (one page)
- exegesis, bibliography and sermon text
- transcripts from college and seminary showing satisfactory grades and

successful completion of a MDiv degree from a Presbyterian seminary or an accredited theological institution approved by the CPM

- career counseling report
- evaluations from field education and CPE supervisors
- interviews and conversations with the CPM liaison
- conversations with the home pastor
- interviews with personal references
- written information provided by the candidate including annual review consultation goals (Forms 3 and 4)
- Review by the CPM, which will certify readiness to receive a call and be ordained as Minister of the Word and Sacrament

## APPENDIX 1

### THE TASKS OF AN ADVISEE: A Covenant

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

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

Suggestions to the Inquirer/Candidate:

- Always show a human face to your liaison. He or she is genuinely interested in you. Inform your liaison promptly of major events in your life, such as marriage, divorce, deaths, change of schools, etc. If you feel there is a communication problem, say so. If you are struggling with something, it is hoped that you will be able to discuss whatever it is with your liaison.
- Make sure your Session Liaison is informed of your planned meetings with the CPM and Presbytery so that he or she may attend with you.
- Ask questions! Ask them early! Ask them frequently!
- Send originals of transcripts, ordination examinations, all reports, and other materials relating to preparation for ministry to the CPM Moderator.
- Stay in touch with your liaison. Always make sure your liaison has your current address, phone number and e-mail address if you have one.
- Initiate communication with your liaison at least twice each year; monthly contact is not too frequent. Meet face-to-face whenever possible.
- Be considerate of your CPM's limitations and deadlines by:
  - submitting all required forms and reports in a timely manner; and
  - communicating your questions and concerns to your CPM Liaison (not the CPM Moderator).
- Give advance notice to your Session Liaison and your Pastor of the time and place of each of your meetings with the CPM.

## APPENDIX 2

### THE TASKS OF LIAISON: A Covenant

The CPM liaison is the key to the effective work of the CPM and is the continuing liaison with individual inquirers and candidates. Liaisons should see their task as both shepherding and gate-keeping. The primary tasks of the liaison are to: act as a contact person, serve as an advocate for the Inquirer/Candidate and explain the process. The liaison will also communicate the CPM's concerns to the Inquirer/Candidate, and when appropriate, to the home church pastor and the session liaison. The CPM liaison will lead the discussion when his/her adviser meets with the CPM.

#### Suggestions:

- Explain the process and functioning of the CPM to your Inquirer/Candidate. Include what is expected of him or her and what he or she can expect of the CPM.
- Put a human face on the process. The liaison is the primary person to communicate the care and concern of Presbytery.
- Help Inquirer/Candidates get in touch with their strengths and weaknesses. Be honest and kind.
- Initiate communication with Inquirer/Candidates at least twice a year and meet face-to-face whenever possible. Always respond to communications from an Inquirer/Candidate.
- Initiate communication between the CPM and the Inquirer/Candidate
- Have conversations with the Inquirer/Candidate prior to each of his or her meetings with the CPM in order to be able to inform the CPM of the Inquirer/Candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and inform the Inquirer/Candidate of possible concerns of the CPM. Make sure the Inquirer/Candidate knows the time and place of his or her next meeting with the CPM, what documents are required for the meeting and when these documents are to be submitted to the CPM
- Be the Inquirer/Candidate's advocate at points of tension with the CPM. Interpret whenever necessary.
- Remind the Inquirer/Candidate periodically of growth goals, requirements for ordination, including required course work, field education, CPE, Bible Content and other Standard Ordination Examinations, as well as papers that are due.
- Work with Inquirer/Candidates in preparing the Statement of Call, inquirer's statements, Statement of Faith, exegesis and sermon.
- Discuss the Inquirer/Candidate's developing faith and sources of spiritual growth.
- Follow-up each meeting with a conversation. At times, there may be personal

matters that the liaison may choose not to share; however, matters relevant to the Inquirer/Candidate's future ministry must be shared.

- If requested, the liaison may also assist the candidate in preparing a PIF.
- Pray for your Inquirer/Candidate.

Inquirer/Candidate will appear, including the service of ordination and/or installation when a call is received. Make sure the pastor is informed of the time, place and subject of each such meeting.

- The role of the spouse of the Inquirer/Candidate is particularly important. Be supportive, sensitive and understanding of the spouse and family. Inform the session and/or CPM of better ways to assist spouses in preparing for their new roles.
- In a word, be a friend who offers a sense of personal, moral and spiritual interest in and support of the Inquirer/Candidate in all aspects of training for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In so doing, you will also grow in faith and grace.

## APPENDIX 4

### CAREER COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley requires all inquirers to participate in a comprehensive career counseling and psychological assessment to help the participant understand how his/her values, interests, personality, potential and learned capabilities all fit into an occupational choice of ministry and give the inquirer opportunity to gain deeper appreciation of his/her own strengths, commitment and growing edges. The cost of the career counseling is shared by the inquirer, the inquirer's church and the CPM.

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

Career counseling should be completed as soon as possible after the person becomes an inquirer, and must be completed before candidacy is approved.

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

Some criteria to be explored include:

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

## APPENDIX 5

### REQUIREMENTS FOR SEMINARY COURSE WORK

Amendment to the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley Manual of Administrative Operations MAO-4.0805b:

The chief task of the CPM shall be to guide and assist persons toward becoming ministers for service in Christ's Church through the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. To this end, the CPM shall have the authority to perform the functions delineated by the above referenced sections of the Book of Order, specifically G-14.0300 and others as may be assigned by Presbytery. The following functions are not all-inclusive:

1. Assisting Inquirers and Candidates for the ministry through procedures outlined in the above sections of the *Book of Order* and *Manual for Candidates Committee of the Presbyterian Church (USA)*, meeting with those who seek to become Inquirers to search the basis of their call.

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

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

- (1). Presbyterian Polity
- (2). Sacraments
- (3). Reformed Worship
- (4). Reformed theology/history
- (5). Old Testament exegesis
- (6). New Testament exegesis

c. Factors to be considered in granting exceptions may include:

- (1). The student's prior theological training and denominational background
- (2). The seminary's theological perspective and denominational affiliation.

d. Late entry into the candidacy process shall not diminish the CPM's responsibility to prepare persons for ministry in the Presbyterian Church

## APPENDIX 6

### FIELD EDUCATION

The *Book of Order* encourages those in the care process “to engage in some form of service to the church with the approval of and under the guidance of the inquirer’s candidate’s CPM” (G-14.0307). In the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, this is a required part of the care process, generally fulfilled in seminary. The following guidelines apply:

Requirements for a Field Education Site are as follows:

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

Recommendations:

- Ordinarily, field education will be completed under the supervision of the student’s seminary.
- experience should be sought which will expand the student’s knowledge and experience of the life of the church. The ideal situation is one that is significantly different from the student’s previous church experience — in size, type of ministry, culture, etc.
- opportunity to engage in ministry beyond minimum requirements is strongly encouraged. Inquirers/candidates should consider extended internships, additional ministry in agencies, additional congregational placements and international opportunities.

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION**

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

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

## APPENDIX 8

### GUIDELINES FOR INQUIRERS' (PRE-CANDIDACY) STATEMENTS

To fulfill G-14.0303 in the *Book of Order*, inquirers are to submit the following six one-page statements to the CPM for its review and approval as part of the process of advancing from inquiry to candidacy. This is to help clarify the inquirer's understanding of call and suitability for Ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The requirement will be met when the CPM is satisfied with the form and content of the statements.

- **Statement of Call**  
A statement of the inquirer's understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to his or her sense of call. This statement will be the basis of Presbytery's examination at the time the inquirer is presented to Presbytery for candidacy.
- **Statement of Faith**  
A statement of personal faith that incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition. This should be considered the initial draft of the Statement of Faith that will be presented to Presbytery at the time of presentation for ordination examination.
- **Concept Paper**  
An analysis of at least one concept from the Statement of Faith regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationship.
- **Statement of Being Presbyterian**  
A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular congregation.
- **Statement of Self-Understanding**  
A statement of self-understanding that reflects the ways the inquirer has been shaped by his/her personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical and mental health.
- **Statement of the Tasks of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament**  
A statement of the inquirer's understanding of the tasks performed by ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Also included should be his or her specific gifts for this ministry and awareness of the areas in which growth is needed.

## APPENDIX 9

### GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

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

Writing a Statement of Faith should begin early in the preparation process. The Inquirer/Candidate is urged to discuss it with the CPM liaison, a professor, pastor, or other significant persons in his/her life. The statement should also reveal something of the personhood of the individual so clear personal manifestations such as “When I receive communion the church becomes....” will be included.

When a liaison assists an Inquirer/Candidate in the preparation of a Statement of Faith, it will be helpful to ask some personal questions, such as: “Where are you in terms of Jesus, the cross, your faith, the Holy Spirit?” and “How do you live out your faith?”

The liaison will discuss general areas with the Inquirer/Candidate. To provide an outline of topics for such a statement could, in itself, color the theological assumptions of the statement, therefore the following are only suggestions:

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

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

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

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

## APPENDIX 10

### GUIDELINES FOR EXEGESIS AND SERMON

The exegesis and written sermon are major parts of the final assessment. This brief guide lists the requirements and recommendations for these important documents. Generally the exegesis and sermon prepared for the ordination examination are used, thereby eliminating duplicate work.

Requirements for the exegesis:

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

Recommendations for the exegesis

- Good exegesis means knowing what questions to ask of a particular text. Thus, it is impossible to list all the ingredients necessary in every exegesis. You are encouraged to be creative in the development of your exegetical method. However, it is recommended that the following categories of questions be represented in any exegesis for preaching:
  - Textual - Are there particular difficulties in translation? Are there concerns about the Hebrew or Greek text? Are there key words that need to be studied to understand this text? Include the Biblical text in English and identify the version used or whether it is your own translation
  - Literary - What are the boundaries of this passage? What is the relation of the passage to its larger literary context? What is its literary genre, and what is the significance of this genre?
  - Historical - Author? Date? Original audience? What are the historical, sociological and theological circumstances that formed the original context of this text? What is the significance of this genre?
  - Theological - What did this text mean in its original context? How has the community of faith interpreted this passage? What does it mean for us today?
- Sources in the bibliography should include standard reference works, recent commentaries, and other recently published books and pertinent articles.

Requirements for the written sermon

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

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

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

## APPENDIX 11

### SESSION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Providing financial assistance is another very tangible expression of support. The Session should consider budgeting to assist with the member's seminary tuition, room and board and books and supplies. The session is also asked to pay part of the fee for the required career counseling and part of the member's travel expenses incurred in meeting with the CPM. See Appendix 16.

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

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

The session or pastor should contact the CPM Moderator when a church member indicates a desire to pursue his/her sense of call to the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament. A session meeting for orientation to the preparation process will be

scheduled and a representative from the CPM will participate. The session will interview the applicant and hear his/her request to become enrolled as an inquirer and will make a recommendation to the CPM regarding this request (Forms 1 and 2A and B). If the recommendation is positive, the session should then consider what assistance it will provide to the member during the inquirer and candidacy phases. As part of the covenant between the member and the session, the session and the member should have clear understandings of the financial, spiritual and other support the session will provide to the member as part of its covenant to be a faithful partner to the member and to care for and nurture the member with love as the member pursues the call to ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The CPM recommends that these understandings be communicated to the CPM during the member's first meeting with the CPM.

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

### **The Candidacy Phase**

When the inquirer is ready for admission to candidacy, the session will provide a report and the pastor will make a statement, if requested, when the inquirer is examined by the CPM. After the inquirer is received by Presbytery as a candidate, the session will continue to provide support to the candidate and his/her family, and maintain the liaison relationship with both the candidate and the CPM.

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

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

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

Possible Issues for Attention and Evaluation by the Session:

- What personal qualities show clear evidence of a healthy and vital faith in God through Jesus Christ?
- How are faith and spirituality currently being expressed through participation in the life, mission and worship of the congregation?
- What motivations impel the sense of call? Are they healthy and positive?
- What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this individual (e.g., the ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, compassion, leadership, administrative abilities)?

- What is the level of his/her academic interest, ability and motivation?
- What is the level of his/her physical health and stamina?
- What is the evidence of his/her emotional stability and well being?
- What is the evidence of his/her self-discipline?

For constitutional procedures relating to ordination requirements, inquiry, candidacy, and presenting and receiving a call, see *Book of Order* G-14.0300 to G-14.0517.

## APPENDIX 12

### QUESTIONS OF COMMITMENT: THE MODERATOR OF PRESBYTERY

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

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.)?" *Book of Order*, G-1305f)

**APPENDIX 3**

**ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS**

Deleted April 2008.

## APPENDIX 14

### FORMS

(All available at <http://www.pcusa.org/prep4min/>)

**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 CPM, 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 and that of Presbytery are recorded on this form. Upon completion, the stated clerk of Presbytery sends the form to the Office of Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry, 100 Witherspoon Street, Room M04 1, Louisville, KY 40202-1396.

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

A signed acknowledgment of the new covenant relationship entered into by the inquirer, the session and Presbytery. The agreement/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.

**Form 4: Report of Annual Consultation**

A summary report of the annual consultation, completed by the CPM and 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 5A: Application to Be Received by Presbytery as a Candidate**

Upon completion, this form is sent by the stated clerk of Presbytery to the Office of Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry, 100 Witherspoon Street, Room M04 1, Louisville, KY 40202-1396.

**Form 5B: Covenant Agreement Between Candidate, Session, and CPM; and Candidate Release**

A signed acknowledgment of the new covenant relationship entered into by the candidate, the session, and Presbytery.

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

This form, completed by CPM, acknowledges that the CPM has conducted a final assessment of the candidate's preparation and readiness for ministry; and that he/she has successfully completed all of Presbytery'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 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 Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry, 100 Witherspoon Street, Room M04 I, Louisville, KY 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 Resourcing Committees on Preparation for Ministry particular action of the CPM relative to the withdrawal, removal or ordination of enrolled persons.

## APPENDIX 15

### STEPS IN THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS

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

1. Minimum of 6 months active membership in congregation
2. Applicant contacts Session
3. Session notifies CPM of applicant
4. CPM meets with Session
5. Session interviews applicant, recommends to CPM
6. CPM interviews, enrolls applicant as inquirer
7. CPM reports enrollment to Presbytery **The**

#### Continuing Process:

8. Inquirer participates in Career Counseling
9. CPM reviews with Inquirer Career Counseling report
10. CPM conducts annual review and guides progress\*
11. After one year, inquirer may apply through Session for candidacy
12. Session interviews inquirer, recommends to CPM
13. CPM interviews, recommends candidacy status to Presbytery
14. Presbytery examines inquirer, enrolls as candidate
15. CPM conducts annual review and guides progress\*
16. Candidate takes Ordination Examinations
  - Bible Content
  - Biblical Exegesis
  - Theological Competence
  - Worship and Sacraments
  - Church Polity
17. CPM conducts final assessment of readiness for call
18. CPM authorizes circulation of PIF
19. CPM certifies readiness, reports to Presbytery
20. Candidate negotiates for call and service
21. Examination of candidate by calling Presbytery for ordination

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

## **APPENDIX 16**

### **SHARING TRAVEL EXPENSES**

Inquirers and candidates may incur travel expenses in connection with their meetings with the CPM and their career counseling. As part of the covenant relationship, these expenses should be shared among the inquirer or candidate, his or her home church and the CPM. Inquirers and candidates traveling in their privately owned vehicles may submit a travel voucher to the CPM. In that event, the CPM will pay its share of the travel expense by reimbursing the inquirer or candidate at 50 percent of the Internal Revenue Service optional standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business purposes. The CPM will consider reimbursement of inquirers and candidates traveling by common carrier on a case-by-case basis.

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

## APPENDIX 17

### **The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley INQUIRER / CANDIDATE INDEBTEDNESS POLICY**

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

- Every inquirer and candidate annually completes the Estimated Financial Resources form (attached).
- Every inquirer and candidate creates and follows a plan for financing the cost of seminary.
- Every inquirer and candidate participates in the Board of Pensions “Fiscal Fitness” workshop offered at Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) seminaries.
- The presbytery will share, with the inquirer or candidate and their church of care, the cost of attending a CPM-approved Career and Counseling Center for career guidance in pursuit of ordination in the PCUSA.
- The CPM will counsel with every inquirer and candidate regarding her or his level of indebtedness in relationship to the salary that can be expected based on the current median income for the denomination reported by the Board of Pensions and based on the minimum effective salaries established by the presbyteries.
- The CPM will encourage each candidate and inquirer to pursue financing options including grants, interest-free loans, and funding that may be available through the Financial Aid for Studies Office of the PCUSA and PCUSA seminaries.
- The CPM will advocate with the congregation of care, and with other congregations of the presbytery as appropriate in order to generate financial support for each candidate and inquirer in the form of grants. (See also Appendix 11 of the Normal Operating Guidelines for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry which can be found online at the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley website.)

**Revised October 2009**

A-17-1

**APPENDIX 18**

**Presbytery of Sheppards & Lapsley  
Committee on Preparation for Ministry**

**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 jobs while you are enrolled in seminary, please list your current salaries. If you are ending employment to begin seminary, estimate what you may earn during the academic year.**

**Income**

	<b>Total for Academic Year</b>
<b>Student Earnings</b>	\$
<b>Spouse Earnings</b>	\$
<b>Social Security, Disability, VA, etc.</b>	\$
<b>Child Support</b>	\$
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$-

**2. Other Resources for Education**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>		<b>Total for Academic Year</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> [ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Institutions Grant</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> [ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Federal Pell Grant</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> [ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>State Grants/Scholarships</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> [ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other Grants/Scholarships</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>PCUSA Grants</b>	\$

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Savings</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Home Church/Congregational Support</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Presbytery Support</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Family/Friends Support</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Foundation or Corporations Support</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Federal Loans</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>PCUSA Loans</b>	\$
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other Outside Loans</b>	\$
		<b>Total</b>	\$-

### 3. Assets

	<b>Current Total</b>
<b>Cash and Savings</b>	\$
<b>Investments (CDs, Stocks, Bonds, etc.)</b>	\$
<b>Retirement Savings (IRAs, 401(k)s, 403(b)s, etc.)</b>	\$
<b>Real Estate Equity</b>	\$
<b>Business Net Value</b>	\$
<b>Automobiles</b>	\$
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$-

## Expenses for Academic Year

### 1. Educational Expense

	Academic Year 20__ to 20__
Annual Tuition (_____ courses x tuition rate)	\$
Special Academic Programs of Study (please explain)	\$
Fees	\$
Books	\$
Travel	\$
Other Expenses (please specify)	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$-

### 2. Living Expenses

	Monthly Total	Annual Total
Rent/Mortgage	\$	\$
Utilities	\$	\$
Food and Household Supplies	\$	\$
Clothing/Laundry/Dry Cleaning	\$	\$
Health/Dental Expenses	\$	\$
Transportation	\$	\$
Child Care	\$	\$
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"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Perkins	\$	\$	%
	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCUSA	\$	\$	%
	<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	\$	\$	%
			\$	\$	%
		<b>TOTAL</b>	\$-	\$-	

**2. Student's (and Spouse's) Non-Educational Indebtedness (Mortgage, Revolving Credit, Credit Card, 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.**

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**Signature**

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**Date**