

Procedure for Applicant to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE)
Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley
Rev. 10-8-2012

1. Obtain the following documents from Presbytery website: Training Application, Statement of Consent Form, Pastor/Moderator and Session Endorsement Forms, three individual reference forms.
2. Send completed forms and a brief statement of faith to the Committee on Ministry (COM) designated person. The current COM Moderator will provide you the name of that person.
3. Applicant will interview with person designated by COM, who will make recommendation to COM on applicant's acceptance.
4. Enroll in CRE program studies through Dubuque University without assistance from COM or its designee, or any Presbytery staff. The Presbytery has no control over an applicant's acceptance. Pay fees directly to Dubuque University, and sign the release form provided by Dubuque stating that a COM designee may monitor an applicant's studies.
5. Select a teaching elder mentor to be approved by COM. The COM designee for CRE's will discuss mentor's role with both applicant and teaching elder.
6. When all CRE courses are completed to the COM's satisfaction, a recommendation will be made by the COM designee as to whether there is need for further study or work with the mentor.
7. After all study is completed; applicant will appear before COM for a final interview. Applicant will be examined on personal faith, motives, and areas of instruction. COM will determine whether to recommend to Presbytery that applicant is ready for graduation from the program. When certified all requirements completed, the applicant may then be placed on the Presbytery Supply list for filling pulpits as needed. The applicant is not commissioned until such time as a call is received and approved by the COM with recommendation to Presbytery. The Commissioning will take place at a Stated Meeting of Presbytery where the applicant will respond to the constitutional questions.
8. This role is reviewed annually. All CRE and all graduates of the program must submit an annual report to the COM and participate in the required ten-hour continuing education to be eligible to remain on the supply list or to retain his/her commission.
9. A CRE may serve in his/her own church based on particular criteria and on a case by case basis determined by the COM in consultation with those involved and where there is no one else available and when the responsibilities involved are not incumbent upon the session to perform.
10. A CRE shall sign a covenant agreement.

Responsibilities of Commissioned Ruling Elders - Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley (Rev. 10-8-2012)

A ruling elder may be granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service for a designated congregation will be allowed to perform the following functions for that particular congregation renewable at the request of the session and upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministry on an annual basis:

1. Moderate the session
2. Administer the Sacraments
3. Officiate at marriages where permitted by state law

The commission shall also specify the term of service, not to exceed three years and shall be reviewed annually. (G-2.1001)

A Commissioned Ruling Elder may be commissioned to particular service in his/her own church when there is no one else available and when the responsibility is not incumbent on the session to perform.

All Commissioned Ruling Elders are required to participate in the annual ten-hour training event provided by Presbytery, or an equivalent event as approved by the Committee on Ministry Chair, and to submit an annual report of his/her work and continuing education to the COM by January 1 of the year following the year of report. (G-2.1002)

The Committee on Ministry shall provide care and oversight of the Commissioned Ruling Elder program, including recommendation for commissioning. (G-2.1003 and G-2.1004) Prior to commissioning, COM shall examine CRE candidate as to personal faith, motives, and areas of instruction. (G-2.1002)

Guidelines recommended by Committee on Ministry and approved by Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley on 7/15/99:

1. Upon receiving a call or appointment, the applicant shall be commissioned by the presbytery as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in the PC(USA) for the functions specifically requested in the call or stated in the appointment, for a period of up to three years which shall be renewable upon request from the session or reappointment by the presbytery.
2. The designation Commissioned Ruling Elder shall be perpetual; however, the authority to perform one or more functions thereof shall be contingent upon the specific request for these functions in a call from or appointment by Presbytery to one or more particular congregations.
3. Those in the presbytery already designated Commissioned Ruling Elder shall retain such designation in perpetuity, but the authority to perform one or more functions thereof shall be contingent upon the specific request for these functions in a call from or appointment by Presbytery to one or more particular congregations.

Presbytery decides what to authorize for each commission; this authorization is only for the particular church or churches to which the ruling elder is commissioned.

Presbytery consults with the session of the church involved and considers whether the work to which the elder is commissioned requires such authorization and/or whether the particular Commissioned Ruling Elder is ready, able, and willing to take on these activities.