

Commissioned Ruling Elder Program

PRESBYTERY OF SHEPPARDS AND LAPSLEY

What is a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) and what can they do?

G-2.1001 “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 too 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.”

G-2.1002 “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 the 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 “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-4.4000.

G-2.1004 “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 teaching elder shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.”

SR-6.0402k of the Standing Rules of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley provides that one of the functions of the Commission on Ministry (COM) is to “Provide care and oversight to the presbytery’s commissioned ruling elder program, including recommendation for commissioning.”

Approval has been given by the Presbytery to the Executive Presbytery or the Moderator of COM to give a ruling elder who has completed all the requirements for commissioning permission to officiate at the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper if requested by the session of a particular Church. Permission has not been given by Presbytery to officiate at the Sacrament of Baptism.

I _____ agree to function within the requirements so stated above and further understand and agree to:

1. There is no guarantee that I will be commissioned to a particular church or other mission once all training and other requirements have been met.
2. I am expected to participate in the 10- hour annual continuing education required and sponsored by the Presbytery and that I must pay a minimum tuition for this training. If I cannot attend the Presbytery sponsored training, I am responsible for securing other training which must be approved by the Dean of Training or the Moderator of COM. I further understand that I must pay my own tuition and if I fail to meet this requirement, the COM may remove me from the Presbytery Supply list and I am no longer available for commissioning.
3. I am expected to provide a written annual report to the COM in December of each year detailing my preaching activity and other missional service and my annual continuing education.
4. If I am commissioned, I will attend presbytery or otherwise seek an excuse from the Stated Clerk. I understand that **only if I am commissioned** to a particular church or other validated ministry that I am given presbytery vote in accordance with SR-3.0103d3. However, I will have vote if I am my home church's commissioner for that particular presbytery meeting.
5. I understand that if I am commissioned to a particular church or ministry, I can perform the functions listed in G-2.1001 for **only** that particular congregation or ministry in accordance with G-2.1002. I agree not to overstep the authority granted to me by my commissioning.
6. I understand that I have no standing beyond the boundaries of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.

A Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is an elder who is trained and commissioned by the presbytery to provide pastoral services to a particular church or churches (G-2.1001). 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 and will be allowed to perform the following functions (moderate the session, administer the Sacraments and officiate at marriages where permitted by state law) for that particular congregation, renewable at the request of the session and upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministry on an annual basis. Remember that upon completion of the CRE program, candidates are not automatically authorized to perform the above pastoral duties. Each presbytery authorizes specific duties for the CRE in each specific commission.

What does the process look like?

Here is the outline of the process:

1. A CRE candidate must be an ordained elder in good standing in his/her member church.
2. Seek an application from Beverly Dodson, Dean of Training (contact info below).
3. Within that packet a candidate must complete, in detail, the application and return to the Dean of Training.
4. Each candidate must be endorsed by the Session of his/her church.
5. After examination of all application materials, candidacy will be determined by the COM
6. 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 the Dean of Training may monitor the applicant's studies.
7. A mentor from the COM will be identified and approved for each candidate. A candidate may request his/her mentor
8. Completion of training schedule including at least 2 progress reports to the Dean of Training.
9. Upon superior completion of the course work, candidate will be examined by COM.
10. All successful candidates will be placed on the Presbytery Supply list and will be available for commissioning when requested.
11. Failure to participate in the required ten hour Continuing Education and/or provide the required Annual Report to the COM each December, will result in the candidate being removed from the Supply List for preaching assignments and/or commissioning as requested.

Direct inquiries and questions to:

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