

THE COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

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THE COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

I. PART I: ADVISORY HANDBOOK

- A. The primary resource and guide for the work of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall be the current Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), hereafter referred to as the Advisory Handbook, that is prepared and published by Office of the General Assembly.
- B. The Committee will ensure that all committee members and all those under care have received either an electronic or hard copy of the Advisory Handbook and any subsequent revisions as they are made available.
- C. It is noted that the Advisory Handbook exists as a separate publication and is not part of this specific manual.

II. ORGANIZATION

- A. **Membership** - The Committee on Preparation for Ministry, an ecclesiastical committee, shall be composed of a moderator and twelve (12) members representing the various geographical regions of the Presbytery (one (1) from each region and six (6) at-large members) so that the total membership of the committee shall be evenly divided, except one, between ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament. The Presbyter for Congregational Care is a member ex-officio without vote.
- B. **Moderator** - The moderator shall be elected by the Presbytery.
- C. **Secretary** - A secretary shall be elected annually by the committee from its members.
- D. **Meetings** - The committee shall ordinarily meet on a date at least one month before Presbytery meetings at a mutually convenient location. It shall hold special meetings as needed.
- E. **Quorum** - Any four (4) committee members shall constitute a quorum.
- F. **Accountability** - The committee actions are affirmed by the Presbytery and reported to the General Council.
- G. **Oversight** - The committee's primary duty is the care and nurture of Inquirers and Candidates, which includes oversight of their preparation for ministry. The committee shall provide oversight for any Task Force or Subcommittee appointed by the committee.
- H. **Orientation & Evaluation** - The committee shall provide orientation for new members to the committee and shall annually conduct a committee self-evaluation.

III. PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

- A. To counsel with each person seeking to become an Inquirer and to recommend to the Presbytery whether that person should be enrolled as an Inquirer.
- B. To counsel with each applicant to be taken under care as a Candidate and evaluate the applicant's qualifications and to recommend to the Presbytery whether the applicant should be received as a

Candidate.

- C. To advise, supervise, support, and care for Inquirers and Candidates for ministry on behalf of the Presbytery.
- D. To guide Inquirers and Candidates through the constitutional and Presbytery requirements for ordination, so that they will be as well prepared as possible.
- E. To ordinarily examine for ordination any Candidate being called by a church in this Presbytery, and to recommend to the Presbytery whether each should be ordained.
- F. To guide those under care through the process and requirements for commissioning as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.
- G. To administer the Presbytery's Financial Aid to Individuals Under Care Program (See Section X).
- H. To counsel each person seeking Certification as a Certified Christian Educator or an Associate Christian Educator and to supervise, support and care for such persons during the certification process.

III IV. MODERATOR: RESPONSIBILITIES

The Moderator of the Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- A. Moderate committee meetings.
- B. Arrange for the place of meeting.
- C. Prepare the docket for meetings and the materials needed by the committee to conduct business.
- D. Keep the official file for each individual under care stored on the Presbytery cloud. This file shall contain: Forms 1A, 1B, 4 and 5A, a statement of call to ministry, transcripts, LeaderWise report (or its equivalent), reports of annual consultations, all papers written for the committee, supervisors' reports for field education and/or CPE, self-evaluation reports, copies of each standard ordination examination taken, and any pertinent correspondence. A copy of the file shall be sent to the calling Presbytery when a Candidate is transferred to another Presbytery. The copy will include the summary report (Form 6) and contain only those items required by the summary report unless otherwise requested by the calling Presbytery. A backup, hard copy file shall also be kept and maintained.
- E. Grant individuals under care permission to take the standard ordination examinations, and to circulate their Personal Information Form (PIF).
- F. Keep other information that the committee may need, such as standard ordination exams, official forms, committee minutes, an updated roster of those under care and their status, and Seminary catalogues.
- G. Present reports to Presbytery and the General Council.
- H. Communicate with other Committees on Preparation for Ministry concerning the transfer of Candidates.
- I. Serve as a reader for the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Exams Standard Ordination Exams or appoint other committee members to so serve.
- J. Regularly review and update this manual in editorial and/or other non-substantive ways to ensure

accuracy in terminology, citation, etc. Any routine changes will be reported to the committee and noted in the minutes.

- K. To report on the status of those under care to the presbytery at least once per year.

V. SECRETARY: RESPONSIBILITIES

The Secretary of the committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- A. Prepare and store on the Presbytery cloud minutes of all meetings of the committee which shall also be sent to the moderator of the committee at least one month before each scheduled meeting. Update minutes, as necessary, when amended.
- B. Record committee discussion and information about those under care of the committee for committee use only.
- C. Serve as contact person for the committee in the moderator's absence.

VI. SUMMARY

- A. Process Summary
The preparation for ministry process involves two phases: inquiry and candidacy. These two phases are designed to explore the call, evaluate the gifts, and support the preparation of individuals who feel called to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, Commissioning as a Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service, or Certification as a Christian Educator. Both the inquiry phase and the candidacy phase of the process nurture, assess, and assist the individual's discernment and development in multiple areas.
- B. A Covenant Relationship
The process of inquiry and candidacy is most effective when it reflects the biblical theme of the covenant relationship. Covenant agreements, involving the Inquirer/Candidate, the Session, and the Committee, affirm the mutual responsibility in exploring God's call. Throughout the entire process, all who are involved in the covenant relationship shall approach their tasks with seriousness and diligence, communicating openly and intentionally with each other. With a clear understanding of expectations, the care and nurture of Inquirers/Candidates can be most effective. This covenantal relationship shall apply to all individuals under care, regardless of the type of ministry for which they are preparing. While the details of the covenantal relationship may differ depending on the type of ministry, this model will serve to guide and bind all parties involved in the preparation process.

VII. PHASE I: INQUIRY

- A. The purpose of inquiry is to provide opportunities for the church and for those who believe they may be called to ministry to explore, assess, and discern that call together so that the Presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry (see G-2.0603).

- B. Admission to Inquiry

1. A person seeking to be an "Inquirer," having been an active member of their church for at least

six months, shall contact their Session through the pastor, moderator, or a ruling elder. The Clerk of Session shall then contact the committee and the moderator of the committee shall talk with the Inquirer. The applicant shall complete and submit forms 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D, including any required signatures, to the committee moderator at least one week prior to meeting with the committee.

2. The Moderator shall arrange with the pastor for a representative from the Committee to meet with the Session early in the process, preferably prior to the Session interview with the individual to answer questions and explain the process, procedures and goals. At this meeting the clerk shall distribute the applicant's completed forms to Session members for review. Two liaisons shall be appointed, one from the Session and one from the committee.
3. The Session shall consult with the applicant and make its recommendation to the Presbytery through the committee. The applicant and clerk shall ensure all required forms are complete and submitted to the committee moderator including the assignment of a session liaison and all required signatures.
4. The committee shall interview the applicant. The committee shall recommend to the Presbytery for its vote whether or not the applicant shall be enrolled as an Inquirer. If recommended to become an Inquirer, the individual will be assigned a committee liaison from amongst its current membership. The applicant need not appear before the Presbytery. The date of enrollment as Inquirer shall be the beginning date of the two-year period of preparation for ministry, at least one year of which shall be as a Candidate. The date of enrollment shall ordinarily be the same date that the individual meets with the committee.

C. During Inquiry

1. The committee shall look into the Inquirer's personal references through the committee liaison, completed forms, and information from Session.
2. The length of inquiry shall be determined by the Inquirer and the committee. The Inquirer status shall be examined no less than annually.
3. When the Inquirer discerns it is time to apply to become a Candidate, it is the Session which must determine whether or not to recommend the individual to the committee. This process of becoming a Candidate shall require at least one meeting between the Inquirer and the Session, and at least one meeting between the Inquirer and the committee. The Inquirer and the Clerk of Session shall ensure all required forms are complete and submitted to the committee moderator including all required signatures.

D. Considerations of Support and Nurture

1. Selection of a Seminary:
 - a. The committee shall approve the Inquirer's selection of a seminary.
 - b. Any approved seminary must be accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).
 - c. Any approved seminary not affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) or within the Reformed Theological Tradition shall have their curriculum reviewed by the committee to ensure compliance with the standards in the current edition of the Book of Order. In the event such a curriculum does not meet the constitutionally required standards or an individual's educational needs, additional coursework may be required.
2. Process Ownership and Accountability
The Inquirer shall take the initiative to correspond/communicate with the committee; the committee (or its representative) shall seek to encourage and respond in a pastoral manner.

3. Correspondence:
An active, one-to-one correspondence with a personal liaison shall be maintained between the Inquirer and an approved member of the committee. These communications shall include discussion of academic and practicum achievements, personal finance, physical/emotional health, and personal experiences, as well as the sharing of problems.

E. Financing the Process of “Candidate Assessment” and Review of Report Summary

1. The committee will cover all expenses related to career counseling with LeaderWise for “Candidate Assessment” or another approved assessment service. Spouses, Partner or prospective spouses or partner shall be urged to participate in the assessment. As LeaderWise provides assessment through an online connection, the Inquirer shall ordinarily complete the assessment from home and not require any travel or lodging accommodations. In a particular circumstance where an in-person assessment is requested or required, the committee may reimburse any and all travel and lodging expenses on a case-by-case basis. All requests for travel and lodging reimbursement must be approved in advance of any travel or assessment.
2. The individual shall permit the release of the assessment report to the committee.
3. A committee review of the report summary shall take place after the career counseling report is received during a regularly scheduled meeting of the committee.
4. The committee may take further action in consultation with the individual based upon the report’s recommendations.
5. The contents of the report, in its entirety, shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality that allows for the committee to complete its due diligence. Ordinarily only the contents of the report summary will be shared beyond the individual and the moderator.

F. Completion of Inquiry

1. Before applying to be enrolled as a Candidate, the Inquirer shall be required to submit a statement of up to one pages on each of the following:
 - a. A statement of the Inquirer's understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to their sense of call;
 - b. A statement of personal faith which demonstrates an understanding of the Reformed tradition;
 - c. An analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their inter-relationship;
 - d. A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness has grown out of participation in the life of a particular church;
 - e. A statement of self-understanding which reflects the Inquirer’s personal and cultural background and includes a plan for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
 - f. A statement of the Inquirer's understanding of the tasks related to the form of ordered ministry they are called to, including an awareness of their specific gifts for ministry and of areas in which growth is needed.
2. When the committee presents an inquirer to the presbytery to be examined for enrollment as a Candidate, the answer to item 1a in the previous paragraph will be provided for inclusion in the meeting packet.

3. The Inquirer shall be questioned in all of these areas and any others deemed necessary by the committee when interviewed by the committee.
4. The Inquirer will be responsible for ensuring the completion of all required forms for applying to be enrolled as a Candidate and ensuring that they are submitted to the committee moderator at least one week prior to the committee interview.
5. All Inquirers must register and attempt to pass the Bible Content Exam offered by the Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Exams before applying to be enrolled as a Candidate.
6. A copy of all post-secondary transcripts shall be submitted for the Inquirer's official file.

VIII. PHASE II: CANDIDACY

- A. The purpose of this phase shall be to provide opportunities for the church to direct and nurture persons received as Candidates in their preparation for ministry.
- B. Admission to Candidacy
 1. An Inquirer becomes a Candidate upon the recommendation of the Inquirer's session, by recommendation of the committee, and by the action of the Presbytery. The Committee shall present the Inquirer in person at a stated meeting of the Presbytery. The Inquirer shall give reason to the Presbytery for seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament. The Presbytery's examination shall be concerned with the following areas: Christian faith (Inquirer's personal journey); forms of Christian service undertaken; motives for seeking Ordination.
 2. During the phase of candidacy, the Candidate shall consult annually with their liaison and/or members of the Committee to assess personal growth and discuss progress toward preparation for ordination. The summary of this assessment(s) may be reported to the Presbytery and/or to the Session of the Candidate. Said summaries shall be forwarded to the calling Presbytery upon their request.
 3. The candidacy phase lasts until the Candidate receives an approved call and is examined and ordained or until the Candidate withdraws or is removed.
 4. The period of candidacy cannot be less than one full calendar year (G-2.0602).
- C. Completion of Candidacy and Certification Ready to Receive a Call

By the end of this phase and to be certified ready to receive a call, each Candidate shall demonstrate readiness to begin in ministry by:

 1. presenting evidence of readiness to participate in a calling Presbytery's life and ministry and of plans for continuing study and growth;
 2. expressing theological views compatible with the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed within the confessional documents of the church;
 3. expressing understanding of the meaning of the questions required for ordination informed by knowledge of the church in diverse settings;
 4. revealing commitment to the ministry within the discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with personal maturity, spiritual depth, and a capacity to respond to the needs of others, including colleagues in ministry;
 5. preparing and delivering a written sermon, together with a description of the contemporary

- need to which it was addressed and an exegetical interpretation of the biblical material out of which the sermon arose. This sermon shall be preached before the presbytery or a Special Administrative Commission to Examine Candidates;
6. completion of one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at an accredited institution unless specifically excused. Candidates shall be strongly encouraged to complete this requirement while enrolled in seminary as part of their course of study. Candidates seeking certification as a Christian Educator shall ordinarily be exempt from this requirement.
 7. Demonstration of readiness to begin in ministry by completion of candidacy phase.
 8. Presentation of a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades at a regionally accredited college or university (G-2.0607b);
 9. Presentation of a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, the transcript showing satisfactory grades, and presentation of a plan to complete an appropriate graduate level degree or training program. For Minister of Word and Sacrament candidates this is ordinarily the Master of Divinity (M.Div), including exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts (G-2.0607c).
 10. Presentation of a satisfactory grade in the Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Exams Bible Content Exam.
 11. Presentation of satisfactory grades together with the examination papers in any areas covered by any standard examination approved by the General Assembly (G-2.0607d).
 12. Requirements 10 and 11 may not be waived under any circumstances for any individual under care (G-2.0610).
 13. **(For Minister of Word and Sacrament Candidates):** presenting evidence of competence in the fields of theology, Bible, Biblical languages, polity, and worship and Sacraments, ordinarily attested by completion of the requirements to be certified ready for a call, and evidence of ministerial skill attested in the supervised practice of ministry;
 14. **(For Certified Christian Educator Candidates):** presenting evidence of competence in fields of study and practice, ordinarily attested by completion of the requirements for these particular forms of service, along with evidence of ministerial skill attested in the supervised practice of ministry;

IX. COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS TO PARTICULAR PASTORAL SERVICE

Process of Care for Commissioned Ruling Elders

1. Those seeking commission shall begin the care process by:
 - a - having been an active member of their church for at least six months, shall be an ordained Ruling Elder and shall contact their Session through the pastor or Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session shall then contact the committee and the moderator of the committee shall talk with the individual;

- b – The application forms shall be submitted through the applicant’s session who will meet with them for consideration of endorsement as an individual under care.
2. Upon receiving endorsement by his or her Session, an interview shall be scheduled with the committee. If the committee concurs, they will recommend to presbytery that the individual be taken under care of the presbytery with the effective beginning date being the date of his or her interview with the committee.
3. Steps as an Individual Under Care:
- a - Apply and be enrolled in one of the three CPM currently committee approved CRE training programs – Synod of Lincoln Trails, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, or University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.
 - b - Begin pursuing committee approved field education that applies materials learned in required course modules.
 - c - Complete vocational counseling with LeaderWise or another committee approved counseling center.
 - d - Individuals under care are eligible to have their registration for career counseling paid for by the committee. The individual shall be responsible to coordinate the payment of fees with their liaison and the committee moderator.
 - e - The individual shall permit the release of the career counseling report to the committee.
 - f - If an approved program has tested the candidate on Old and New Testament exegesis with Preaching, Polity, Theology, and Worship and Sacraments; a passing grade shall satisfy the testing requirements upon receipt and acceptance of the transcripts. If the Candidate has not taken and passed these core tests, the Candidate shall need to pass an exam or exams acceptable to the presbytery.
 - g - All individuals under care must demonstrate Biblical competence by passing the Bible Content Exam offered by the Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Exams or successfully completing classes in both Old and New Testament.
 - h - During the care process, annual consultations will be required with the committee through the individual’s liaison.
 - i – The individual under care shall complete two calendar years under care of the committee before being certified ready to receive a commission.

4. Final Assessment and Recommendation for Commissioning:

When the committee discerns with the individual under care that the time is appropriate and all requirements have been met a final assessment and recommendation can be made. The request for final assessment begins with an endorsement by the Session of the individual’s home church that the individual be commissioned.

Upon completion of all requirements for preparation the committee in consultation with the individual under care shall schedule a date and time for a final assessment of the individual’s progress. At that time, the individual under care will present or have previously presented to the committee moderator:

- a - Transcripts of all classes taken and all test results;
- b - Notes of assessment from Field Ed supervisor, and/or a CPE supervisor and one instructor from their course of study;
- c - A statement of faith compatible with the essential tenets of the Reformed Tradition which will be read and discussed;
- d - A brief statement of understanding of what it means to be commissioned to specific service;
- e - Prepare and deliver a sermon to the committee or a committee approved by the presbytery for the examination of individuals under care;
- f - Engage in conversation with the committee concerning the sermon and areas of growth and challenge in all aspects of ministry.

Upon the successful completion of all steps related to their preparation, other areas and a

successful final assessment, and upon the approval of the Committee on Ministry (COM), and upon the offer of a commission, the individual will be recommended for commissioning to particular service by the presbytery. Ordinarily the individual shall not be commissioned to serve their congregation of membership. The individual will provide a brief statement of their experience of Christian grace and their motives for seeking commissioning as the basis of their examination by the presbytery.

X. FINANCIAL AID TO INDIVIDUALS UNDER CARE

The presbytery provides some financial assistance to individuals under care in the form of grants and/or reimbursements, which need not be repaid. The committee administers the grants on behalf of the presbytery. The awarding of any and all aid is at the discretion of the committee within the constraints of the committee's annual budget.

The presbytery should not be considered the individual's primary benefactor. The committee may award financial aid to an individual under care after inquiring if other possible sources of aid have been explored.

Unless specifically requested by the individual under care the grants shall typically be paid at year's end. Ordinarily a portion of the remaining committee budget is distributed equally to all individuals under care.

The committee reserves the right to assess each individual's need in consideration of actual costs.

The committee shall report disbursements to individuals under care to the presbytery.

In extraordinary cases, individuals under care may request additional financial assistance by written request. Each request will be reviewed by the committee on a case-by-case basis. The committee shall have the right to request additional documentation that demonstrates the need and/or require additional financial education or counseling.

XI. TRANSFER OF MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT CANDIDATES

Before the committee shall recommend the transfer of a Candidate (who has received a qualified call to service in another presbytery), he or she must satisfactorily complete all the requirements for ordination, except the examination before the presbytery.

Before the committee recommends the transfer of a Candidate to another presbytery, the committee, or one or more of its members, whenever possible, shall conduct a final or exit consultation with the Candidate. This consultation may be conducted at the Candidate's final annual consultation, usually during the senior year at seminary. It shall focus on the quality of the Candidate's preparation to date, his or her readiness to undergo the final steps towards ordination and on the adequacy of the committee's care. This final consultation shall not be construed as examination for ordination, a prerogative which resides with the calling presbytery.

Though ordinarily administered by the calling presbytery, in certain circumstances, the calling presbytery may request that the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois conduct the examination of the Candidate for Ordination. Such examination shall be conducted at the next stated presbytery meeting or by a Special Administrative Commission to Examine Candidates. The results of the examination shall be reported to the calling presbytery. Also, the calling presbytery typically will provide for the service of ordination for the candidate, but upon request of the calling presbytery, the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois may make appropriate arrangements for the appropriate service for a given Candidate. The date, time, location

and other pertinent information shall be communicated to the calling presbytery in a timely manner by the Stated Clerk of the presbytery.

XII. THE EXAMINATION OF A CANDIDATE FROM ANOTHER PRESBYTERY

All Candidates under care of other presbyteries who are extended a call to a church in the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois shall be ordained prior to being received into membership of this Presbytery. The Presbytery of Care shall ordinarily be requested by the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois to do the examination and ordination. A candidate from another Presbytery shall only be examined for ordination in the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois upon the recommendation of that Candidate's Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

Assessment for Ordination

1. A Candidate shall have been enrolled by a presbytery for at least two years prior to examination for ordination, including at least one year as a Candidate.
2. The Candidate shall have a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university. Any exemption to this will be evaluated by the committee on a case-by-case basis and approved by the Presbytery.
3. The Candidate shall present a transcript showing they have graduated or to be in proximity to graduation from an ATS accredited theological institution acceptable to the presbytery. A course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, and satisfactory grades in all areas of study shall be included on the transcript (G-2.0607c).
4. The Candidate shall have been extended a call acceptable to her or him and to the presbytery.
5. The Candidate's file shall have been transferred to the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois from the presbytery of care, and it shall include a report from an approved career counseling center or an explanation for the absence of such a report. It shall be received by the committee moderator at least ten days prior to the meeting between the Committee and the Candidate.
6. The following forms shall also be submitted to the committee Moderator at least ten days prior to the meeting of the Candidate with the committee:
 - a. copies of all standardized exams taken by the candidate including any alternative means of assessment for any area covered by G-2.0607d. Any alternative means of assessment must also be accompanied by a statement of rationale for the alternative means and a copy of the minutes of the Presbytery meeting in which the alternative means of assessment were approved (G-2.0610);
 - b. A statement of personal faith in the Reformed Tradition;
 - c. all forms related to Inquiry and Candidacy as well as any pertinent correspondence between the previous committee and the Candidate;
 - d. a copy of the Candidate's Personal Information Form (PIF).

XIII. THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

There are two forms of Certified Christian Education recognized in the Book of Order: Certified Christian Educator or Certified Associate Christian Educator (G-2.1103). There are certain qualifications for education and experience which must be met by the candidate for Certified Christian Educator and/or Certified Associate Christian Educator. Generally, the care and preparation of an individual will follow the two phases of Inquiry and Candidacy. Additional and specific qualifications may be established and required by the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE). The committee will provide care and supervision for those persons seeking certification during each of the two phases and ensure that current and required standards for preparation and certification are met.