

Coming Under the Care of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry of the Presbytery of Charlotte

Introduction to the Care Process

The first two steps are distinct phases in which you grow in listening to and responding to God's potential call for you to ministry. The Book of Order requires that Inquiry and Candidacy together last at least two years, one year of which must consist of Candidacy (G-2.0602). The last two steps are procedural in nature and serve to certify you for a call in the Presbyterian Church (USA) as discussed below. In addition to this letter, you will want to become familiar with section G-2.06, "Preparation for Ministry," in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the resources on Preparation for Ministry provided on our denomination's webpage. Links to both are included here...*Handbook* at [<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/preparation-ministry-handbook>] and *Book of Order* at http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/book-of-order2017-electronic.pdf

Pre-Inquiry

To begin the process of Inquiry, you will need to be a member of a church in the Presbytery of Charlotte and active in that church for 6 months. You will also need to complete [1A-D](#) as well as [2B](#). These forms require that you be endorsed by the Session of the congregation of which you are a member. (You can also find these forms and all necessary forms for the ordination process on our Presbytery's [webpage](#)). It cannot be overemphasized that strong communication between you and your Session is important during the whole ordination process.

After your Session endorsement and after completing the required paperwork, you will appear before CPM. If you are approved by the CPM, the Presbytery will officially vote to enroll you as an Inquirer at its next stated meeting. (Please note that you do not need to attend that meeting.)

Inquiry

The purpose of the inquiry phase for you, who believe God is calling you to serve as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, is first, to explore your sense of call with others (discernment), and second, so that the Presbytery can help discern your suitability for ordered ministry.

Once you become an Inquirer, the CPM will appoint a liaison to assist you. The liaison's responsibility is to be a guide, coach, and helpful resource for you throughout the ordination process.

You should feel comfortable going to your liaison should you need answers to specific questions, general advice in the ordination process, or someone to be a sounding board for any issue you encounter as a part of the care process. They will be praying for you throughout this process, so feel free to share specific prayer requests.

During Inquiry, you will also need to:

- 1) immediately provide transcripts showing graduation from a regionally accredited college or university and any other graduate course work;
- 2) within the first six months of becoming an Inquirer, complete a psychological evaluation through the Ministry Development Services or an approved counseling center (The Presbytery will pay for your assessment. When you make your appointment request that the counseling center bill the Presbytery of Charlotte);
- 3) upon completion of Old and New Testament introductory classes, take the Bible Content Exam.

Candidacy

When should you apply to move from Inquiry to Candidacy? The short answer is when you have had enough course work and experiences in church and church-related settings to have refined your sense of call, been validated by others for your gifts for ministry, and concluded that you believe that in order to respond to God's call to service, you need to be ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament. Many people may help you discern when you are ready to become a Candidate – your pastor and other ordained clergy, your seminary professors, internship supervisors, friends, family, and your liaison, to name a few.

The purpose of the Candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation necessary to be a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, and for the Presbytery to assess your fitness for ordered ministry. While the Inquiry phase was a time for exploring many possibilities and directions (while evaluating your strengths and growth areas), the move to Candidacy reflects a clarifying of focus, more certainty about purpose, direction, and self-awareness. In fact, the move calls for a recommitment with your partners in the covenant: your congregation and the CPM.

When you feel ready to move to Candidacy, you will need to:

- 1.) arrange for an appointment with the CPM [here](#);
- 2.) complete forms [5A-D](#), which again require Session endorsement;
- 3.) submit a brief Statement of Faith (no more than one typed page). Students should treat this as their "Apostles' Creed" type statement. It should address the Trinity (God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the authority of Scripture, both sacraments, and the significance of the church. It should demonstrate an understanding of the Reformed Tradition, highlighting such things as the incarnation, the sovereignty of God, and justification by grace through faith;
- 4.) and submit a current, official copy of your academic transcript to the Presbytery Office.

Upon Session endorsement and completing the required paperwork, you will appear before the CPM.

In addition to the forms above, you will also need to provide thoughtful, written responses to the following questions. Your responses should articulate a clear understanding of Reformed Theology.

- 1.) Articulate an understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed Tradition and how it relates to your own personal sense of call.
- 2.) Express your personal faith in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of the Reformed Tradition.
- 3.) Expound upon at least one concept from your personal faith statement (Question #2) at greater depth, explaining what your faith means about God, humanity, and their interrelationships.
- 4.) Explain what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church.
- 5.) Discuss your personal and cultural background as it relates to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, including concern for maintaining your own spiritual, physical, and mental health.
- 6.) Express your understanding of the tasks that Ministers of the Word and Sacrament perform, including expression both of your specific gifts for this particular ministry and areas in which further growth is needed.

Please remember that all required paperwork, including that from third parties, should be in the hands of the Coordinator for CPM by 5:00 pm one week before the monthly meeting of CPM. You can email her at Lisa.Dillard@presbyofcharlotte.org. The CPM meets on the 2nd Thursday of every month.

If you are endorsed by both your Session and the CPM, the Presbytery will vote to enroll you as a Candidate at its next stated meeting. You must present a written statement of faith to the Presbytery and an oral statement of call. The moderator will then open the floor for questions, which will be related to your sense of call. Since you must be physically present at the Presbytery meeting, please plan on coordinating your appearances before your church's Session, CPM, and the next stated meeting of the Presbytery of Charlotte.

Dates of Presbytery meetings are on the Presbytery of Charlotte [webpage](#), or your Session liaison can share those dates with you.

Once you become a Candidate, you will need to pass the standard ordination exams (Theology, Polity, Worship and Sacraments, and Exegesis). In this Presbytery, we do require students to become a Candidate before taking these ordinations exams. You are responsible for paying the fees for these exams. If the fees pose a financial hardship for you, please let your liaison know, so that we may help you explore other options to cover these costs. [Register here](#) and one of the Co-Moderators of CPM will be notified in order to grant permission for you to take the exams.

Required Courses

You must graduate from and provide a final, official transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Your classes must include:

- 1.) Greek and Hebrew Languages
- 2.) Exegesis in Greek and Hebrew
- 3.) Introductions to the Old and New Testaments
- 4.) Reformed Theology
- 5.) Worship and Sacraments
- 6.) Preaching
- 7.) Polity

If you are not attending a seminary of the PC (USA), you may be required to take Reformed Theology, Polity, Worship and Sacraments, and Preaching at a seminary of the PC (USA). You will also need to provide the CPM with copies of all supervised ministry (parish and/or non-parish) assessments. These are the core requirements. In some cases, based on the individual, CPM might require additional classes or experiences.

Annual Consultations

In addition to meeting with the CPM for approval as an Inquirer and a Candidate, you will also need to meet with the CPM for annual consultations. You will need to complete [Form 3](#) for this consultation and submit a current, non-official copy of your academic transcript to the Presbytery Office. These meetings do not require Session endorsement, but they are required to remain under care. If scheduling and travel are an issue, these consultations may be done online through a program such as Skype. Arrange for an appointment with the CPM [here](#).

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training - (Developing Healthy Boundaries Training)

At the 104th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Charlotte, it was moved and approved that all active ministers, Commissioned Local Pastors (CLPs), certified educators, Candidates/Inquirers under our care, Committee on Ministry (COM), CPM, and Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) members be required to attend sexual misconduct training. To insure participation, COM will not attest or re-attest Personal Information Forms (PIFs), CLPs will not be commissioned nor will qualified Candidates/Inquirers be allowed to serve congregations. Training sessions are offered periodically by COM. The most current information on training sessions can be found on our Presbytery's [webpage](#). Many of the seminaries also offer this training. Certification as to the date, location, and time that you took the training should be given to the Coordinator for CPM for inclusion in your file.

Financial Planning Workshop

Knowing that students are often entering their first call in ministry with substantial amounts of debt and that the current tax laws provide some unique provision to ordained clergy, the CPM also requires every person take the financial planning workshop, *"Get in Shape Fiscally"*, while under care of the Presbytery. This is a one-day workshop offered by the Board of Pensions. Dates and times can be found [here](#). Certification as to the date, location and time that you took it should be given to the Coordinator for CPM for inclusion in your file. As of March 9, 2017, if you have less than one year until completing the under-care process, you will be exempt from the requirement. However, we strongly suggest you enroll in this free workshop as it gives information on how to structure a call.

The CPM offers need-based financial assistance on an annual basis through an application process. The application is distributed to students each summer.

Seeking Any Position in a Church or Non-parish Setting as an Inquirer or Candidate

While the CPM believes that service in a local church or non-parish setting can be a valuable experience, it is required that students under the care of this Presbytery inform their CPM Liaison of such conversations before negotiating and accepting a position. Members of the CPM are here to guide you in these opportunities for your own protection and for the good of the church or agency you are seeking to serve.

Final Assessment

After you have been a Candidate for at least one year, passed the standard ordination exams, and have completed all other requirements for ordination, you will once again meet with the CPM for a final assessment during which you will be certified ready to receive a call. This meeting with the CPM does not require Session endorsement. No paperwork is required unless it has been over a year since the Candidate met with the Committee. If it has been over a year, the Final Assessment will be combined with an Annual Consultation and [Form 3](#) will be required. It is essentially a review to ensure that you have completed (with the exception of your theological degree) and have submitted all requirements for certification as ready to receive a call. Only after you are certified ready to receive a call may you distribute your Personal Information Form (PIF), enter into formal conversations, and accept a call from a church or validated ministry (G-2.0503a; G-3.0306). http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/book-of-order2017-electronic.pdf

Ordination Examination

There are two parts to the Ordination Examination. The first occurs with the CPM after you have received a call. You will meet with the CPM for a final examination. This is an oral exam that covers Theology, Worship and Sacraments, Polity, and Biblical Knowledge. It does not require paperwork or Session endorsement. Depending on the location of your call, this examination may be conducted by another Presbytery's CPM. In addition to this final exam, you will also need to be approved by your calling Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM). Contact the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the calling Presbytery, so that they too may interview you regarding the call and approve the terms of call prior to the Presbytery meeting at which you will be examined. The Presbytery placing the call to the candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain, and install the candidate.

After you have met these requirements, you will preach a sermon, 10 minutes in length, before the Presbytery in which you are receiving your call and be further examined on your sermon and Statement of Faith on the floor of that Presbytery meeting. The CPM's part of your journey ends, and you will arrange with the Committee on Ministry the details for your ordination and installation.

Important Additional Information

As we partner together in support of students and for the good of the church as a whole, it is expected that a student under care of the CPM complete the pathway to ordination in no more than a 10 year time span. Please also be aware that the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations advises presbyteries that ordination exams cannot provide meaningful information about an individual's current "readiness to begin ministry" for a period of more than five years. Consequently, it may be advisable to have candidates repeat ordination examinations in order to ascertain their current "readiness to begin ministry." Those taking longer than 10 years to complete the care process and those who passed ordination exams more than 5 years ago may be asked to partner with the pastor and Session of their home church, their CPM liaison, and the CPM as a whole to engage in an intentional time of discernment to gain a clearer understanding of God's calling to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. If a student chooses to withdraw from the care process and reengage at a later time, the student may be required to start the care process over beginning with the Inquirer phase.

In order to fully support, care for, and pray for one another, students are expected to stay in regular contact with the CPM through their assigned liaison. A failure to stay in regular communication with the CPM at a minimum of a yearly basis may result in that student being removed from the care process.

RESOURCE LINKS

Presbytery of Charlotte:

<http://www.presbyofcharlotte.org>

CPM Interview Request:

<http://www.presbyofcharlotte.org/program-areas/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-interview-requests/>

Coordinator for CPM, Lisa Dillard:

lisa.dillard@presbyofcharlotte.org; work: 980-207-5211; cell: 704-502-6267

Book of Order:

http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/book-of-order2017-electronic.pdf

Preparation for Ministry Handbook:

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/preparation-ministry-handbook>

Application Forms to Enroll as an Inquirer (Forms 1A-D and 2B):

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/application-forms/>
http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mid_council_ministries/form2b.pdf

Forms for Candidacy (Forms 5A-D):

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-advancing-candidacy/>

Forms for Annual Consultation (Form 3):

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-annual-consultations/>

Register for Ordination Exams:

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/standard-ordination-exams/>

Presbytery Meeting Dates:

<http://www.presbyofcharlotte.org/presbytery-meetings-2/>

Register for Getting in Shape Financially:

<http://www.pensions.org/MembersAndEmployers/BoardUniversity/ForMembers/Seminars/pages/getting-in-shape-fiscally.aspx>