

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. An active elder on the Session will act as your Session Liaison to be a connector for communicating with you and where you are in the process and to communicate updates to your Session. You are free to invite your pastor and/or your Session liaison to all interviews with the CPM.

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, as you are discerning God's call to serve as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, includes exploring your sense of call in community in service to the church. The Presbytery in process with the Committee on Preparation for ministry joins you as together we discern your suitability and, finally, your readiness for ordered ministry.

Once you become an Inquirer, the CPM will appoint a CPM 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 for 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) schedule your psychological evaluation and assessment. Within the first month of becoming an Inquirer, CPM will refer you to LeaderWise, who will contact you to schedule you for your on-line psychological evaluation and assessment. LeaderWise will bill the Presbytery of Charlotte;

Candidacy

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 for all interviews through the process, 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.

When 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 be printed in the packet for the Presbytery and deliver an oral statement of call before the Presbytery. The oral statement of call should be limited to two minutes. The moderator will then open the floor for questions, which will be related to your Statement of Faith and 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 CPM 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 are required to meet with the CPM for annual consultations. 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](#).

Required 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.

Required 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, "*First Call, First Steps*", while under care of the Presbytery. This is a one-day workshop offered by the Board of Pensions. Dates and times can be found through your seminary. 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. If you have trouble finding a class, you can contact the CPM Coordinator, Lisa Dillard.

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. In preparation for the Final Assessment interview, the Candidate will engage with and write a personal critical reflection on each of the Ordination Vows (found in W-4.0404). These responses should demonstrate a thorough understanding of each vow and demonstrate an understanding of how taking each vow would shape the candidate's practice of ministry. Each answer is limited to one paragraph. This reflection paper will be the basis for the Final Assessment. It is recommended that during the last six months of the preparation process the Candidate begins to write. The meeting will also 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. During the first hour of the two-hour examination, you will lead worship, which includes preaching a 10-minute sermon, and presenting your written Statement of Faith. The participatory order of worship should include the Call to Worship, Prayer, Scripture, Sermon, Prayer and Benediction. The sermon and Statement of Faith will be the basis for discussion in the first hour. In the second hour, you will be examined in the areas of Theology, Worship and Sacraments, Polity, and Biblical Knowledge. Paperwork required for your examination for ordination requires providing an abbreviated order of worship and your Statement of Faith. Depending on the location of your call this examination may be conducted by another Presbytery's CPM and may be handled differently. In addition to this final exam you will also need to be approved by your calling Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM). Meeting with COM is the second part of the Ordination Examination. 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.

Presbytery Meeting

When the Candidate has successfully completed the CPM Ordination Examination he or she will be presented on the floor of Presbytery at the next regularly scheduled meeting. For Candidates joining the Presbytery of Charlotte, the Candidate will be introduced and asked to speak to their call with a prepared 250 word statement answering the question "What led you to accept this call?" The Candidate's Statement of Faith will be published in the Presbytery Packet. The Presbytery will have an opportunity to ask questions related to their new colleague's call and ask questions related to the Statement of Faith. This is a time of introduction and to affirm God's blessing and to celebrate!

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 CPMs on an annual 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/>

Ordination Vows:

<https://www.presbyofcharlotte.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ConstitutionalQuestionsForOrdination.pdf>

Presbytery Meeting Dates:

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