

**GUIDELINES FOR COMMISSIONING RULING ELDERS
TO PARTICULAR PASTORAL SERVICE AS COMMISSIONED PASTORS (CPs)
THE PRESBYTERY OF CHARLOTTE**

The purpose of these guidelines is to describe minimum requirements for commissioned pastors as well as the education and supervision of commissioned pastors (CPs) serving within the bounds of the Presbytery of Charlotte. The Committee on Ministry of Charlotte Presbytery shall administer the Commissioned Pastor program.

THE COMMISSIONED PASTORS (CP) PROGRAM

Purpose:

The Presbytery of Charlotte establishes the Commissioned Pastor Program as a further means of fulfilling its commitment to see that all churches within the bounds have the best possible leadership in the areas of worship and preaching. This leadership is best provided when pulpits are filled with Ministers. When this is not possible, one way of seeking to meet this need will be through the Commissioned Pastor Program. The BOOK OF ORDER (G-2.1001) establishes criteria for the equipping of elders for their commissioning to particular pastoral service and their ongoing accountability to a Presbytery.

Process for Commissioning:

A Ruling Elder wishing to be commissioned as a CP shall make application through his/her respective session to the COM of Charlotte Presbytery. The form for this application shall be provided by the Presbytery. The CP shall be supervised by the Presbytery through its COM. This supervision will include a Minister as the COM liaison to the Particular Pastoral Service. The COM, having satisfied itself regarding the validity of the request, shall supervise the preparation and examination of the Elder. Upon successful completion of the required courses and examination by COM, the individual will be recognized as a Qualified Elder eligible for commissioning. When the COM identifies a particular pastoral need which could be met by this Qualified Elder, the COM shall present the individual to the Presbytery for commissioning to a particular pastoral service as outlined in the 2017-2019 Book of Order. (G-2.1002)

Who May Be Commissioned:

Charlotte Presbytery will accept applications to participate in the Commissioned Pastor Program from elders of all churches within this Presbytery. Elders from another Presbytery may make application through their respective sessions and with the approval of the COM of their home Presbytery; and, with the approval of the COM of Charlotte Presbytery, may participate in the program with the goal of being commissioned in their home Presbytery.

Course Completions:

Preparation shall include the following courses:

- A. Bible
- B. Reformed theology and Sacraments
- C. Presbyterian polity
- D. Preaching and teaching
- E. Leading Worship
- F. Pastoral Care
- G. Boundary Training

Successful completion of course requirements listed above includes the following:

1. The instructor will provide the COM with a list of participants receiving credit for the subject area, along with the questions and answers used in the evaluation. These questions and answers may be used by the COM in the examination process necessary for commissioning.
2. Upon completion of the preparation course work requirements, the participant(s) shall be examined by a committee appointed by the COM in the areas of personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the subject areas covered in the course work.
3. The COM has the right not to proceed with the commissioning of a participant if the requirements are not met in a satisfactory manner. With the guidance of the COM, those not recommended for commissioning shall be asked to consider prayerfully his/her place in the program. She/He shall be asked to perform specific tasks and/or address specific areas of concern that need to be pursued, or fulfilled, prior to being re-examined.

Annual Review of Commissioned Pastors:

The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually as described below:

- A. The submission of an annual report via Annual CP Ministry Report
- B. The fulfillment of the continuing education requirement
- C. The approval by COM in report to Presbytery

Continuing Education:

One continuing education event shall be required per year. This continuing education event shall normally encompass ten (10) hours. All CPs are encouraged to participate in events, workshops, conferences, or courses that will enhance their pastoral development. The COM may also plan and implement educational events of appropriate nature.

General Information:

1. The service of the CP is a contractual relationship between the particular ministry, the Presbytery (through the COM) and the CP. The contract will utilize the form provided by the COM and will be valid for up to one year but may be renewed twice before the commission is reviewed by the Presbytery. The services the CP may provide can be done only at the ministry to which the CP is commissioned. CPs will be commissioned only to churches with a pastoral vacancy or a validated specialized ministry in accordance with 6-2.1001.
2. The COM will maintain a list of Elders that have completed the training and have been examined as ready to receive a commission. This list will be available to churches with a pastoral vacancy.
3. Elders that have completed the training and have been examined but not commissioned or whose commission has expired may request to be added to the Pulpit Supply list but are not approved to administer the sacraments or perform weddings.
4. Elders that have completed the training and have been examined whether they have been commissioned or not, must fulfill the continuing education requirement to remain eligible for consideration for a commission.
5. Any judicial case that might arise against a CP will be handled on the Presbytery level, by the appropriate person or committee, and should never be dealt with by the session of the church served or the session of the CP's home church.

6. During their service to a particular church the CP should continue participation in the life and work of his/her own church to the extent possible. The Session of the home church should find ways to support CPs as much as possible.

Structure:

COM recognizes and accepts online training through [Dubuque Theological Seminary](#)), any training offered by a neighboring Presbytery with prior approval from COM or through the Leadership Institute of Union Theological Seminary in the Pathways to Learning & Leadership courses.

Minister Mentors for Commissioned Pastors

A. What we ask Minister Mentors to do with CPs:

1. To become a prayer partner and friend to the CP
2. To be available by phone, text, email...to be a listening ear to the CP
3. To advise the CP, if the CP seeks such advice
4. To be willing to share experiences and resources with the CP
5. To encourage their own congregation to partner with the congregation served by the CP

B. What is expected of Minister by our CP team:

1. Meet together face-to-face with CP at least every 6 months and report to CP team
2. Help our COM sub-group identify areas for Continuing Education

COMMISSIONED PASTOR TRAINING PROGRAM
Application

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Email: _____

Telephone: Home () _____ Work () _____

Church Membership _____
(Name of Church) (City/State)

Year you joined this church _____

Describe your present activities in the life and mission of the church:

Present Employment (title, nature of work) _____

Educational background: School and Location /Year Graduated /Degree Major/Minor

Limits: What factors may place limits on your ability to receive training, and to serve as a commissioned local pastor (such as physical disability, family situation, employment status, etc.)?

Please attach to this form your statement on the subject: "WHY I WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE COMMISSIONED PASTOR PROGRAM"

NOTE: You should take this completed form, together with your "statement" (attached to this form) to your minister, or, if your church is without a minister, to the minister appointed by the Presbytery to moderate your church's session. The minister will talk with you about your interest in the Commissioned Pastor Program. The minister with the help of the Clerk of Session will schedule a time for you to present your request to and be examined by your Session. Following session approval, the minister will then forward your application form and statement, along with a letter of reference to the Committee on Ministry.

SESSIONAL RECOMMENDATION

We, the Session of the _____ Presbyterian Church, have examined, and approve, this applicant for the Commissioned Pastor Program of Charlotte Presbytery.

Date: _____

APPROVAL BY PRESBYTERY (IF OTHER THAN CHARLOTTE)

The Presbytery of _____ approves the participation of the applicant in Charlotte Presbytery's Program for Commissioned Pastors.

Signed: _____ Title: _____

Date: _____

SIGNATURE

I hereby apply for admission to the Commissioned Pastor Program of Charlotte Presbytery. I understand that successful completion of the program is a requirement for future commissioning as a Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service by Charlotte Presbytery.

Signed: _____

Date: _____