

**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 (COM) 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.

A. Who May Be Commissioned:

Charlotte Presbytery will accept applications to participate in the Commissioned Pastor Program from elders of all churches within this Presbytery.

B. Step by Step Process for Becoming a Commissioned Pastor:

1. 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 is found on pages 4 & 5 of this document.
2. Once the application is approved, the Ruling Elder will be supervised by the Presbytery through its COM-CP subgroup. Each individual will be assigned a Minister Mentor. Responsibilities of the Minister Mentor are included in Section G at the end of this document.
3. The Ruling Elder must complete the following **Course Requirements:**
 - A. Bible
 - B. Reformed Theology and Sacraments
 - C. Presbyterian Polity
 - D. Preaching and Teaching
 - E. Leading Worship
 - F. Pastoral Care
 - G. Boundary Training (through Charlotte Presbytery)
 - H. Anti-racism Training (through Charlotte Presbytery)

COM recognizes and accepts online training through Dubuque Theological Seminary's Christian Leadership Program (<https://udts.dbq.edu/admissions/applychristianleadershipprogram/>), any training offered by a neighboring Presbytery with prior approval from COM or through the Leadership Institute of Union Presbyterian Seminary in the Pathways to Learning & Leadership Courses (<https://www.upsem.edu/leadership-institute/pathways-learning-leadership-2>).

4. Upon completion of the preparation coursework requirements, the Ruling Elder will compose a one-page Faith Statement and review it with the Pastor of their home church or the Moderator of their home church's session. Then, the Ruling Elder will be examined by the COM-CP subgroup in the areas of personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the subject areas covered in the course work, specifically Bible, Theology, Polity, and Worship & Sacraments. A discussion of the Ruling Elder's Faith Statement will also be part of the examination.
5. 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-CP subgroup, those not recommended for commissioning will be asked to consider prayerfully his/her place in the program. She/He will 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.
6. Upon successful completion of the required courses and examination by COM-CP subgroup, the individual will be recognized as a Qualified Elder eligible for commissioning.
7. When the COM identifies a particular pastoral need that could be met by this Qualified Elder, the COM will present the individual to the Presbytery for commissioning to a particular pastoral service as outlined in the Book of Order. (G-2.1002)

C. 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. Attendance of at least one CP meeting per year

D. Continuing Education:

Ten hours of continuing education of the CP's choosing are required each year. Conferences, workshops and courses should enhance pastoral development. Continuing education events are offered through PCUSA seminaries, Montreat, and other organizations highlighted in the Presbytery's weekly e-news blasts. Grants to fund continuing education may be available through the Presbytery Office.

E. CP Gatherings

Two CP meetings will be scheduled per year. At least one of the meetings will be held via ZOOM. Each CP in order to remain in good standing with the Presbytery of Charlotte will be required to attend at least one CP meeting per year.

F. General Information:

1. The Coordinator for COM, Lisa Dillard, will manage the process along with the COM, CP subgroup. All paperwork and questions should be directed to her. Her email is lisa.dillard@presbyofcharlotte.org and her cell number is 704-502-6267.
2. 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. 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 G-2.1001.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Elders that have completed the training and have been examined whether they have been commissioned or not, must fulfill the continuing education and CP Gathering attendance 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 participating 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.

G. Minister Mentors for Commissioned Pastors

Responsibilities of the Minister Mentors:

1. Meet together face-to-face with CP at least every 6 months and report to COM-CP subgroup.
2. Become a prayer partner and friend to the CP
3. Be available by phone, text, email...to be a listening ear to the CP
4. Advise the CP, if the CP seeks such advice
5. Be willing to share experiences and resources with the CP

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 you 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: _____