

Theological Competence, Worship and Sacraments, and Church Polity.

As a student a Candidate will also be required to have Field education, which includes active participation in a ministry at a local congregation or institution.

Annual Consultation

Each year the candidate meets with other candidates within the Presbytery and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Currently this meeting is in a retreat format. The covenant made in the previous year is reviewed and a new covenant for the coming year is developed. This process helps candidates clarify their goals. It also gives supportive accountability to help candidates track their progress toward actualizing their goals.

A Call and Ordination

After passing the Bible Content and ordination exams, the Candidate meets with the CPM. If the CPM certifies a candidate as “ready pending a call to be examined for ordination,” candidates can then circulate their Personal Information Form (PIF), which describes the type of ministry the candidate is interested in securing. This is a national computerized system that matches candidates with congregations so they can begin to discern and

negotiate a possible call to a congregation.

Upon successfully negotiating a call, the Presbytery in which the call resides is responsible for examining and ordaining the candidate and installing the pastor-elect in the congregation.

Resources

Web-sites re process:

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/prep4min/>

Advisory Handbook of the Process:

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

Forms to be completed during process:

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process>

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Discerning a Call and The Process for Ordination



Presbytery of Carlisle
Committee on Preparation for Ministry
(CPM)

Have you ever thought that a particular person would make a good pastor? Here is a guide to help you respond to that thought.

What does it mean to be called?

The reformed tradition has always understood that “being called” is two-fold. First, we usually think that a person receives a call from God and desires to serve in ordained ministry in one of its many forms. The second and often neglected part is the congregation’s role of identifying people they believe have gifts for ministry, or validating the person’s initiative.

What is the process?

All Christians are trying to discern their God given gifts and roles within the Body of Christ. For those who want to explore becoming a Teaching Elder (pastor or specialized ministry), the process is more formal. It begins when the congregation and a member discern that a person may be called by God. The Session or its representatives meets with that person to begin a more intentional discernment process. The Session may assign a person to be a Liaison who will continue to help the person in the discernment process. Also the Session should consult with the Presbytery’s Committee on Preparation for Ministry. This

committee can be supportive and encouraging and can familiarize the Session with the more formal parts of the process, such as the forms required. It is best if the process begins before the person is considering attending seminary.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

If both Session and the person wish to continue, the next step is to contact the presbytery’s CPM. CPM’s role is to serve as a guide in the discernment process and help an individual develop a strong foundation of skills, attitudes and behaviors for ministry. The CPM will meet with the person, and if the committee concurs with the Session, the person will become an Inquirer. A CPM committee member will be assigned to the Inquirer as an Advocate, who will develop a supportive relationship that will guide the Inquirer through the process. The Advocate’s role is similar to that of the Liaison from the congregation/Session.

Inquirer

The time as an Inquirer is designed to help the person continue to explore the discernment of their call. The CPM will inform the inquirer of the requirements for ministry and encourage broader exposure to the

wide variety of roles and work of the clergy.

Candidacy

After at least a year, if the Inquirer wishes to continue toward ordained ministry, the Inquirer will be encouraged to become a Candidate. The Inquirer will be asked to take a variety of tests as a further step in the discernment process. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will help the Inquirer explore options for seminary education and financial planning. This is done formally through a “Covenant” between the Inquirer and CPM Committee. The Inquirer will be examined by Presbytery in order to grant status as a Candidate. The local congregation can continue to offer opportunities to “try on” the role of pastor by encouraging participation in worship, teaching opportunities, attending Session meetings as an observer, mission trips, etc.

Seminary

Typically seminary is a three year process, during which the Candidate will be guided by the CPM in taking the courses required by the Presbyterian Church for ordination as a Teaching Elder. The Candidate will also take Presbyterian sponsored exams on Bible Content, and four Ordination Examinations: Biblical Exegesis,