

Commissioned Ruling Elders Frequently Asked Questions

I'm considering becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder. What are the qualifications?

Foremost is a sense of God's call to this kind of service. In addition, as the name implies, you must be an ordained Ruling Elder and endorsed by your Session to enter this time of preparation.

What do I do first?

Review the material on the Presbytery of Carlisle web site under Committee on Preparation for Ministry/Commissioned Ruling Elder Training. Complete an application ([CRET-1A](#)) along with Session Endorsement ([CRET-1B](#)) and three references ([CRET-1C](#)) and submit them to the Presbytery office or [Kristal Smith](#), Presbytery Leader for Governance and Congregational Leadership.

What happens next?

The Chair of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) will contact you for an initial interview to talk about your sense of call, how you envision it at this beginning stage, and what sort of preparation would be most helpful to you.

What does "preparation" include?

- Courses on New Testament, Old Testament, Reformed Theology, Preaching, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, Christian Education, Presbyterian Polity, and Pastoral Care
- Field Education experience
- Pulpit supply experience
- Psychological assessment
- Regular communication with your CPM liaison

How long does the preparation process take?

As little as 6 months to 3 years or more! The answer to this question depends on your background, education, and life circumstances. For instance, someone who has already completed some seminary coursework and only needs some guided practical experience will be on the low end of that range while someone with limited education and time to engage the preparation due to work or family considerations may take 3 years to complete the preparation. The length of time for field education and pulpit supply (part of the 6 month to 3 year estimate) will be dependent on your level of experience and learning goals.

What will I be preparing for?

When you've completed the training, you will be ready to be commissioned by the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry to serve a church within Carlisle Presbytery. As with pastoral calls, this would be mutually discerned between yourself, a congregation, and the Presbytery.

When will I know I'm ready?

Among other things, we Presbyterians emphasize lifelong learning, trusting the Holy Spirit is always present to guide and teach. With that in mind, you will not be “fully formed” before you begin serving, but the work will teach you and you will have a mentor to accompany you when you're commissioned.

I have other questions or just want to discuss this possibility with someone before I commit – what do I do?

Feel free to reach out to Kristal Smith, Presbytery Leader for Governance and Congregational Leadership. She will listen to your questions and connect you with helpful people and resources as appropriate.