

Approved October 26, 2013

# **Presbytery of Long Island COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER (CRE) Preparation Process**

## **1. Constitutional Authorization**

### **G-2.10 COMMISSIONING RULING ELDERS TO PARTICULAR PASTORAL SERVICE**

#### *G-2.1001 Functions*

When the presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible task force, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.

#### *G-2.1002 Training, Examination and Commissioning*

A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.

#### *G-2.1003 Commissioning Service*

When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of a ruling elder to serve a congregation providing the services described above, it shall commission the ruling elder to pastoral service as designated by the presbytery, employing the questions contained in W-4.4000.

#### *G-2.1004 Supervision*

The ruling elder commissioned under the terms of G-2.1001 shall work under the supervision of the presbytery. The presbytery may at any time withdraw the commission for reasons it deems good and sufficient. A teaching elder shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

## **2. Application Process**

Only ruling elders in the PC(USA) are eligible to enter the CRE program. The application process includes an initial consultation with the CPM to explain the scope and purpose of the program. Interested, candidates may submit an application form (on line at [www.presbyteryofli.org](http://www.presbyteryofli.org) or contact the Long Island Presbytery office) which must be accompanied by endorsement from the elder's local session..

## **3. The Basic Program**

CPM shall be responsible for the preparation process for CREs

Under the supervision of CPM, ruling elders preparing to be commissioned may be required to:

- \* engage in basic and/or continuing theological learning
- \* engage in a period of supervised ministry experience
- \* undergo psychological testing

CPM will work with each elder participant to develop an individual education plan which may include classes at local seminaries or on line classes. Candidates are encouraged to look into the CRE program at the University of Dubuque. Completion of the program will be achieved by successfully demonstrating competency in those areas relevant to the particular ministry to which the candidate seeks to be commissioned.

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#### **4. The Knowledge Base for Ministry**

Depending on the kind of ministry for which they are preparing, candidates will have an individual education plan to develop basic theological and practical knowledge in one or more areas. Their learning goals may include:

- a) Biblical knowledge and understanding, including a general acquaintance with the Old and New Testament; an overview of Biblical history and sources of various texts; and a mastery of the basic skills of exegesis of English texts, including acquaintance with a range of secondary resources.
- b) Knowledge of major topics in Christian theology and understanding of key themes in Reformed theology.
- c) General knowledge of Christian history, including a basic knowledge of Presbyterian history and the content and significance of the Presbyterian confessions
- d) Fundamentals of preaching, worship leadership, pastoral care, organizational leadership, Presbyterian polity and Christian education.
- e) Training in Administering the Sacraments and Officiating at Weddings and Funerals

#### **5. Competency Demonstrations**

For each learning goal, the CPM will administer a competency assessment that evaluates the achievement of each goal. Candidates who do not perform adequately on the competency demonstrations may be required to undertake additional preparation and some may be counseled not to seek a commission. Successful candidates will demonstrate their competence in the areas in which they seek to do ministry, such as:

- The capacity regularly to preach clear, engaging sermons that are faithful to their biblical texts and theologically sound

*\*A candidate might be required to preach a sermon in front of CPM and/or COM*

- The ability to administer the sacraments and to plan and lead worship

*\*A candidate might be required to submit a church service bulletin that he or she designed as well as a discussion paper focusing on the flow of worship. Additionally the candidate may be asked by CPM and/or COM demonstrate competency in administering the sacraments.*

- The ability to function as an educator in the local church, organizing and overseeing a church school program, leading adult Bible study, and instructing members in the basics of Christian faith and Presbyterian and Reformed tradition.

*\*The candidate might be required to do one or more of the following:*

- Create leadership preparation curriculum for church officers, using Book of Order and ordination questions (including those for congregation)
- Design, with the church officers, above course for adult education, led by the officers
- Create a plan for teacher recruitment, preparation and support for one year of programming

- The skills of leadership and administration and the knowledge of Presbyterian polity and procedures needed to enable a local church to function smoothly and to make progress toward achieving its mission.

*\*The candidate might show that he or she took and passed a course on Presbyterian polity*

- The pastoral skill required to care for persons at critical points in their lives and the capacity to identify problems that require referral.

*\*The candidate might submit two verbatim of pastoral care encounters to the CPM.*

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## **6. Relationship to CPM**

All the functions of the current task force will become the responsibility of CPM, which will administer this policy in concert with their responsibilities to candidates for Teaching Elders. CPM's responsibility to the candidates in the CRE program include:

### **Liaisons:**

Each candidate shall have a liaison with CPM, either one teaching or one ruling elder, who will work with the candidate to propose to the whole committee the individual education plans and field education internships.

The Whole Committee will be responsible for  
Approving individual education plans.

Overseeing the supervision and mentoring for candidates and CREs.

Ensuring adequate evaluation of the demonstrations of knowledge and competence that the program requires.

Conducting annual performance evaluation of candidates.

## **9. Relationship to COM**

CPM will maintain regular communication with COM regarding potential need for CREs, the continuing progress of current CREs participating in the program, and the education of congregations regarding the function of CREs. COM will determine whether a participant who has completed the program is suited for a particular assignment and will recommend to Presbytery any commissions to be conferred. COM is final determiner of which commissions shall be renewed, and oversees the supervision and mentoring of CREs as soon as they receive a commission.

## **10. Candidates from other Presbyteries or in process of CRE preparation before Presbytery passage of these requirements**

Any candidate from another Presbytery or in CRE preparation process before passage of these requirements by the Presbytery of Long Island must fulfill all of the requirements set forth above in #5.