

**Preparation for Commissioning to Pastoral Service  
Presbytery of Cincinnati  
Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)**

**Discernment Process**

1. As part of a candidate's discernment process, the candidate shall have conversation with the Committee on Ministry (COM) about the need for ruling elders commissioned for pastoral service within the presbytery. This provides information about future calls.
2. A candidate shall have had extended conversation with her/his pastor about the sense of call and the gifts and tasks of ministry.
3. A candidate shall fill out the Presbytery application to become a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service candidate.
4. A candidate shall meet with the session of her/his church and obtain their endorsement for this process.
5. A candidate shall provide three references – forms are provided and are to be mailed directly back to the committee by the references.
6. A candidate shall meet with the CPM and receive its endorsement to become a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service candidate.

**Entrance Requirements**

In order to be considered for candidacy, an individual must meet the following requirements:

- Be a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for at least two years
- Be a member of his/her current congregation for at least six months
- Be a ruling elder
- Be regular in attendance and active in the life of the congregation
- Have demonstrated leadership ability
- Have demonstrated pastoral concern and ability
- Have a Bachelor of Arts degree, or the equivalent

**Educational Requirements**

The Presbytery of Cincinnati requires education for ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service in the following areas:

Bible and exegesis	Pastoral care
Reformed theology and sacraments	Education
Presbyterian polity	Reformed church history
Preaching	Small church dynamics
Worship	

These requirements can be met with seminary programs or the Presbytery of Cincinnati/SONKA Lay School. The Committee on Preparation can assist a candidate in obtaining information about these programs. All coursework must be approved by the Committee on Preparation.

To supplement these educational programs, CPM requires that candidates have:

- a preaching practicum in addition to any coursework.
- a teaching elder appointed by CPM (but not on CPM) who will serve as mentor throughout the educational process. The candidate will meet regularly with the mentor
- participate in a peer/mentor group within the presbytery (if there are no other candidates, CPM will make alternate arrangements to meet this requirement)
- successfully complete a six month internship in a congregation other than the candidate's home congregation
- pass an examination in polity and in worship and sacraments
- complete annual consultations with CPM
- upon successful completion of all requirements, the candidate will present to CPM a personal statement of faith and be examined by CPM towards recommending the candidate as ready to be commissioned.

#### **The Committee on Preparation for Ministry will**

- provide care, oversight and guidance to the candidate throughout the process
- provide an advisor from the committee to support the candidate and provide a means of communication with CPM
- appoint the candidate's mentor and prepare that person to be a mentor
- meet with the CRE candidate's session to help them understand their role in the preparation process
- arrange for internship opportunities
- proctor/ grade examinations required by the presbytery
- maintain documentation for each candidate with all appropriate records of coursework, progress through the process, etc. This will be kept by the Moderator of CPM
- coordinate with COM when candidates are ready for placement.

#### **The Candidate's Session and Congregation will**

- pray in an ongoing way for the candidate
- provide care and support to the candidate
- provide a session liaison to the candidate
- if possible, provide some financial support toward tuition costs.