

**PRESBYTERY OF CINCINNATI  
COMMITTEE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY  
AND COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

**CRE POLICY – Proposal**

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER (CRE)**

**Purpose and Goals**

The Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is one way the Presbytery seeks to serve congregations, and make certain that all congregations have experienced and trained leadership available to them. The purpose of the CRE program is to provide appropriately trained and consistently excellent lay ministry among Ruling Elders who discern a call to this form of ministry in the life of the Presbytery. The CRE is seen as a servant of the church who builds up the body of Christ, enhances the faithful vitality of congregations, and uses gifts and skills to serve fully in the life of the presbytery.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is responsible for the application and training components of the Commissioned Ruling Elder process.

The Committee on Ministry (COM) is responsible for discernment, oversight and administration of those Ruling Elders who fulfill the requirements of the CRE application and training process, and are appointed to congregations in the Presbytery of Cincinnati. The COM will present approved candidates to the Presbytery for commissioning, provide for and oversee a continuing education program for CREs, provide mentor support to CREs.

The role of the CRE in the Presbytery of Cincinnati is found in the *Book of Order* G-2.1001.

**Applicant Qualifications**

The CRE Applicant will:

- Be an ordained Ruling Elder in PC(USA) in good standing (Book of Order G-2.0301)
- Be faithful in spiritual discipline and practice spiritual maturity
- Have significant experience in committee and Session involvement
- Possess a college education (Associate Degree or Bachelor Degree) or equivalent, as determined by the CPM, with the concurrence of the COM

**Discerning the Call to CRE: The Role of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry**

The Applicant will:

- Submit to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) the following documents:
  - Written statement on personal faith journey, including a sense of call to the CRE ministry
  - The application to the process (form is available on the Presbytery of Cincinnati website)

- An endorsement of the Session of their home church (form is available on the Presbytery of Cincinnati website)
- Three references (form is available on the Presbytery of Cincinnati website)
- Diploma(s) from all post-baccalaureate educational institutions
- Sign and agree to abide by the Sexual Conduct and Child Protection Policies of the Presbytery of Cincinnati
- Contact the Chair of CPM to request a meeting with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to obtain the approval of the CPM to pursue the educational preparation requirement for CRE. The applicant will provide all required written documents in advance of their meeting with the CPM.

### **Educational Preparation Requirement for CRE Applicant (G-2.1002)**

- Courses for CRE Training: Once the Applicant has been approved by the CPM for progression, the Applicant must complete a series of courses. These can be completed through the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (Dubuque, Iowa; 8 core courses of the Christian Leadership Program plus one advanced course, selected in consultation with CPM) or the Union Theological Seminary (Richmond Virginia; nine courses of the Pathways to Learning and Leadership program). Training is provided online.  
Taking two courses at a time, the Applicant can reasonably expect to complete the required coursework within 18-24 months. The cost for the coursework (tuition, books and supplies) is the responsibility of the CRE Applicant, although the Applicant can petition their Session to help defray some of that cost. Initial registration fee to UDTS or Union for all CRE Applicants approved by CPM will be paid by CPM.
- Ruling Elder Preaching Institute: Training includes participation in and fulfillment of all requirements of the Ruling Elder Preaching Institute of the Presbytery of Cincinnati. This is part of the educational preparation requirement.
- Ministry Assessment: During the education preparation phase, the Applicant will meet with CPM representatives at least annually, and will undergo a psychological/career assessment with the MidWest Ministry Development Center (Columbus), with those costs shared by the CRE Applicant, their Session and the Presbytery. The assessment report must be completed prior to completion of coursework, to be released to the General Presbyter.
- Final grades and completion certificates must be submitted to CPM. Once all requirements have been satisfied, CPM will refer the CRE Applicant to the Presbytery of Cincinnati Committee on Ministry (COM).

### **CRE Candidate Qualifications for Commissioning through the Committee on Ministry**

The CRE Candidate will:

- Demonstrate successful completion of all requirements of the CRE educational preparation and training program
- Submit a written Statement of Faith and Personal Information Form (PIF)
- Be reviewed by the COM in the following two ways:
  - Preside at a Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and preach a sermon before the COM

- A vocational examination with the COM, which may include questions regarding Scripture, theological, polity, and practice, and other topics related to ministry and the congregational context.

When the COM is satisfied that the CRE Candidate can serve in a particular setting which satisfies the strategy for mission in the life of the Presbytery, the COM will allow the PIF of the candidate to circulate to churches that are seeking CRE leadership and recommend to the Presbytery of Cincinnati that the person be commissioned to a particular ministry site with specific authorizations, for a period of up to three years (with the possibility of renewal). The CRE will then undergo a Commissioning Service (G-2.1003, using the words contained in the service under W-4.04).

### **Ongoing Requirements for the CRE (G-2.1004)**

The CRE will:

- Be supervised by a Mentor assigned by COM
- Complete at least two continuing education courses (workshops, etc.) per year, in consultation with COM
- Attend quarterly meetings with other CREs in the Presbytery as convened by the COM Mentor Team (formed by COM) in collaboration with the General Presbyter
- Attend Stated Meetings of the Presbytery of Cincinnati
- Participate in annual ministry goal-setting and assessment with the COM liaison and Session being served.