

**DISCERNING YOUR CALL
PREPARING FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD
AND SACRAMENT
A Resource of the Presbytery of Chicago
Presbyterian Church (USA)**

**Presbytery of Chicago
Presbyterian Church (USA)
100 South Morgan Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607
312 243 8300**

<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org>

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SECTION I: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

DISCERNING YOUR CALL

Discerning your call, be it to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament, teaching, business, or any professional life, is the first step in laying a foundation for a life of authentic spiritual, personal, and professional growth and development. As you work with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to consider your call, the process of discernment will require you to place personal awareness of your strengths and weaknesses within the context of relationships with others and with God. While we know this process will at times be challenging, we pray you will also find it to be fulfilling. Through this process you will gather the information and guidance needed to make thoughtful, holistic, God-centered decisions, not only about the possibility of seeking ordination, but about all of life in general.

As you enter into this process of discernment, we pray you will allow God to enter into decisions about your life in ways that set aside ego, personal needs and wants. We pray you are open to God's presence and voice in the process, as quiet and mysterious as that voice can be. Discernment is about the discipline of asking questions of God and others. It is about disciplined listening for answers, trusting that the Holy Spirit is speaking, however unexpected that voice may be. Discernment is about surrendering to the voice of the Spirit and trusting that the path ahead is God's path for you. Discernment is about risk, risking your life with the Holy Spirit.

The Reverend Kris Haig, a Presbyterian pastor in the Midwest, identified a set of theological assumptions about discernment, which she has made available to the whole church. They are:

- God is present and active in our daily lives.
- Our own fulfillment and greatest joy will be found when our choices are congruent with God's will for us.
- Discernment uses all of our capacities for knowing.
- The Holy Spirit guides by the principle of attraction and a drawing toward the good.

It is obvious from the above that discernment is counter-cultural. It is often slow, usually requires significant personal discipline, and calls for thoughtful risk-taking. Discernment seeks wisdom, self-knowledge, personal growth, emotional maturity, and spiritual development.

Careful discernment by those who feel called to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament is critically important for the future life of the church. The traditional church of the middle and latter 20th century is fast fading. While islands of the familiar will continue to exist for years to come, many of the familiar structures will be gone within the next ten to twenty years. What will be in place of the familiar structures many have grown up with, come to know and love? This is a difficult question to answer because our culture is rapidly changing and with such change comes the need for the church to adapt. What is certain is that the church will need leaders who have been willing to engage in the challenging and fulfilling process of discernment.

The Discipline of *Examen*

While there are many forms of discernment disciplines, ***examen***, described below, is very effective. It involves building a disciplined and recorded body of experience that, when viewed over time, can bring insight and wisdom to otherwise perplexing and mystifying situations. Described by St. Ignatius of Loyola in *The Spiritual Exercises*(2), and described in modern language in *Sleeping with Bread*(3), *examen* draws on daily experience for ongoing discernment. Reflecting on the experiences of the day is one form of God's ongoing revelation to us. *Examen*, carefully recorded, provides the raw material for recognizing the patterns of God's work in our lives, one day at a time.

The Process of *Examen*

After a time of quiet prayer asking for God's presence, reflect back on the day, the people, experiences, events, emotions, and thoughts. Ask God to bring to your awareness the experiences for which you are **most grateful**. Reflect on them, feeling gratitude and thanks for those experiences. When you are finished, record those experiences under the heading of "**Consolations**," in a diary or notebook, with the day's date.

After recording your consolations, engage in quiet prayer and ask God to bring to your awareness those experiences of the day for which you are **least grateful**. Take time to identify the actions, thoughts, and feelings that contributed to making the experience what it was. Record what you learned under the heading "**Desolations**."

When you are ready, give God thanks for all of the experiences of the day. And, if you are so moved, share what you learned with a trusted friend. Do this every day of your life. In this process you will create a diary of experiences that may provide guidance for many of your decisions and nurture your relationship with God.

To aid in the process, listed below are some of the characteristics of Consolations and Desolations.

Characteristics of Consolations

- * *Courage, deep strength*
- * *Delight, deep joy*
- * *Satisfaction, a sense of "rightness"*
- * *The feeling of freedom*
- * *Gratitude*
- * *Energy, vitality*
- * *Desires rooted deeply in the "true self"*
- * *Surrender to the Holy Spirit*
- * *The choices are life giving*

Characteristics of Desolations

- * *Discouragement*
- * *Sadness, not due to crisis or depression*
- * *Anxiety, worry*
- * *Feeling of being trapped, stuck*
- * *A sense of burden*
- * *Enervation, weakness, little or no energy*
- * *Desires rooted shallowly in the "false self"*
- * *Seeking to control others*
- * *Choices are life draining*

Examining Your Gifts for the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament

“Now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are a variety of services, but the same Lord: and there are a variety of activities, but the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” I Corinthians 12:4-6

What gifts are needed by God and the church for those entering the ministry of the Word and Sacrament? The following provides a partial list of gifts which are important in the work of a minister of the Word and Sacrament. Through self evaluation and consultation with your advisors and friends, develop your own list of the gifts for ministry God has given you.

- * Gift of language, both spoken and written
- * Gift of appreciation of tradition and the present
- * Gift of good stewardship of body, mind, spirit
- * Gift of creative vision and imagination
- * Gift of compassion
- * Gift of equipping the saints
- * Gift of listening
- * Gift of discerning gifts in others

The Necessity for the Community of Faith to Validate the Gifts for Ministry

Presbyterians believe God’s Spirit moves as the Church seeks to discern God’s will. For those sensing God’s call to ministry, discernment is not just between the individual and God. Discernment is also within the community of faith as the body seeks to discern with the individual. Your home congregation (especially the Session), the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), and the Presbytery are the bodies assigned to support you in the discernment process. Each of these bodies will assist you in clarifying your call and your gifts. There may be times when the questioning and exploring of one of these bodies may seem uncomfortable. It is important to keep in perspective that these bodies are your partners in clarifying and confirming your call. “Testing your call” requires not only support, but in-depth questioning and examination to clarify your call and assess your gifts for ministry.

Your Committee on Preparation for Ministry will assess your:

- 1) education for ministry which includes evaluation of academic potential and progress, reflection on the purpose of the educational experience, and specific preparation for ministry of the Word and Sacrament in a Presbytery approved seminary;
- 2) spiritual development which will provide a framework for reflection on your personal faith journey;
- 3) interpersonal relations which provide a framework for reflection on how you relate to others and what this means to your ministry;
- 4) personal growth which provides a framework for reflection on individual identity, areas for growth, understanding your call, and development of personal stewardship;
- 5) professional development which will focus on opportunities to develop specific skills that will enhance your effectiveness as a minister of the Word and Sacrament and as a presbyter.

Growth in each of these areas throughout the discernment process will be necessary for the CPM to validate your call. Occasionally the CPM will see that God is calling someone to a form of ministry other than the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. This should not be seen as a lesser calling.

H. Richard Niebuhr(4) has summarized four elements that together make up a call to all the baptized, including those discerning a call to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. It will be important for you to consider these as you work with your partners to clarify your call.

The Call to be a Christian -- the universal calling in our baptism to follow and serve Jesus Christ. Each Christian is called to determine his or her particular ministry and to live out that ministry.

The Secret Call – those inner urgings of the Spirit that lead a person to consider a specific vocation as a way of living out his or her call to ministry. For some the call comes as a life transforming event while for others it comes slowly and with great wrestling.

The Providential Call – emerges from considering one's God-given gifts and talents as well as life experiences. To discern this call requires an honest look at oneself and one's abilities as well as confirmation from the community of faith.

The Ecclesiastical Call – multiple bodies, such as your Session and Presbytery, are involved to affirm an ecclesial call. The community voice confirms and challenges the individual's understanding of his or her call. For ordination to occur, the final ecclesial voice is a call from a congregation or other validated ministry to the person to be a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

At all points in your journey of discernment remember you are not alone but are with God in the community of faith, a community that is called to challenge and affirm your gifts for ministry.(4)

Authority of the Book of Order

The current *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the authority under which the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) functions. All requirements and procedures of the current *Book of Order* must be followed at each step of the process (G-14.0400-.0485) (1).

Please note this document has been adopted by the Presbytery Assembly as the policy of the Presbytery of Chicago and includes steps and procedures which are no longer included in the *Book of Order* (1). Because of Presbytery approval, it carries the same authority as the *Book of Order* (1).

Presbytery of Chicago Requirements

In addition to the requirements of the *Book of Order* (1) there are certain opportunities which will enrich and enhance your preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Therefore the Presbytery requires at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in a setting certified by the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). A directory of CPE sites can be found at www.ACPE.edu. Your CPM Advisory Group must pre-approve the proposed location. Exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the full Committee. A copy of the supervisor's evaluation must be submitted to CPM.

A CPM approved Supervised Field Education must be completed in a PC (USA) congregation and not in a church setting similar to your home church.

A **summary of Presbytery of Chicago requirements** is provided below:

- A minimum of two years in the CPM care process, with at least one year in Candidacy status. The average time in the CPM process is 3 ½ - 4 years.
- Completion of the Midwest Ministry Development Service (MMDS) assessment
- Participation in a Boundaries seminar
- Participation in an Inquirer's retreat if offered
- A CPM approved supervised Field Education experience
- One unit of CPE approved by CPM
- Passing of the Bible Content exam
- Passing each of the four senior ordination exams
- Completion of an M.Div degree in a CPM approved seminary with certified transcripts
- Participation in the Financial Planning seminar
- Completion of all required forms which are found at <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/>

Commitment to the highest standards of integrity and honesty is expected in all areas of work with the CPM. This applies to interactions with your Advisors, Advisory Group, Session, and the full CPM. All written submissions are to provide any required citations. Whenever you are dependent on an idea or piece of information, a citation is required. These should be indicated as footnotes. While the footnotes may be of smaller font, they must fit within the required 1" margin allowed on all papers.

Those Attending Non Presbyterian Seminaries

Students attending non-Presbyterian seminaries, which are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (<http://www.ats.edu/Pages/default.aspx>), and approved by the CPM, will be required to take specific classes in a PC (USA) seminary. These include Reformed Theology (including that of Calvin); study of the *Book of Confessions*; Reformed Worship and Sacraments; and Presbyterian Church (USA) Polity.

Midwest Ministry Development Service (MMDS)

The Presbytery requires all Inquirers to participate in a group program of comprehensive career counseling and psychological assessment offered by MMDS (<http://www.midwestministry.org/>) in Chicago or one of the MMDS regional centers. This program helps you understand how your values, interests, personality, potential, and learning capabilities all fit into a vocational choice of ministry. The MMDS evaluation and career testing gives the opportunity to gain deeper appreciation of your own strengths, commitment, and growing edges.

The program utilizes various interest inventories, psychological tests, peer group interaction, an individual meeting with a psychologist, and reflection to help both you and the CPM assess your suitability for ministry. After you and a MMDS counselor discuss the results, a written report is sent to you with a release form for a copy to be sent to the CPM. Such reports include biographical information, interpretation of the results of the various inventories, assessment of your promise for ministry, and any recommendations for growth or future directions. These reports are considered highly confidential and are released only with your written permission. They are to be seen only by those CPM members who work most directly with you. Recommendations of the MMDS will be taken very seriously by your Advisory Group. The plan for following these recommendations may be an important component of the goals established in

your annual reviews. Information contained in the report may be brought to the attention of the full Committee if an Advisory Group deems it necessary. Occasionally the Committee asks an individual at some point in the preparation for ministry process to return for a follow-up visit with MMDS in response to changes in a person's situation, a candidacy of extended duration, or to explore a particular issue.

Some criteria to be explored with MMDS include:

- Openness to learning, self-exploration, and ability to do reality testing
- Emotional stability
- An effective style of relating interpersonally
- Adequate motivation as it pertains to a sense of call and value system
- Level of maturity and ability to adapt commensurate with age
- Level of autonomy and authenticity
- Leadership potential (initiative, self-confidence, enthusiasm)
- Compatibility of interests with elements involved in the exercise of ministry
- Chance for your needs as a person to find reasonable fulfillment in ministry
- Innate abilities commensurate with the demands of ministry and the capacity to develop new skills
- Academic ability to complete the rigorous demands of seminary education

Note: Costs of the Midwest assessment will normally be paid by your home church. When this is not possible, a sharing of costs between the home church, the Presbytery and you may be considered by the CPM. A return visit, whether recommended by MMDS, or required by CPM, will be paid for by CPM.

Presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy

In October 2007 the Presbytery adopted a Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures. All persons under care will receive a copy of the policy and will be required to sign a form acknowledging receipt. This signed form will be kept on file in the Presbytery office. It is expected that you will read it. **All persons under care will be required to participate once every three years in a boundaries seminar** such as may be required by a seminary prior to Field Education, or as offered by the Presbytery of Chicago.

Background Checks

As with its own employees and volunteers, the Presbytery requires Inquirers and Candidates to have a background check by a firm selected by the Presbytery. A release form for signature will be included in the Inquiry application packet. This is mandatory and applications for Inquiry will NOT be processed until this is completed. Reports will be received by the CPM staff person. The cost will be paid from the CPM budget. In the event negative information is revealed the applicant will be informed and, depending on the nature of the information, a possible course of action will be discussed. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible.

Financial Planning Seminar

In recent years the matter of educational indebtedness has become a grave concern within the church and the PC (USA) Board of Pensions. There is much concern that a person who completes seminary and is burdened with considerable educational debt, including undergraduate or personal debt, may find it difficult to carry out pastoral duties. The Presbytery requires persons under care to participate in a financial planning seminar. The Board of Pensions regularly holds such seminars on PC (USA) seminary campuses.

Process for Requesting an Exception for Requirements

The process of requesting an exception for any stated requirement begins in a conversation with your CPM Advisor. Your Advisor will review your request and outline any needed documentation. The Advisor will then present your request at the next available CPM meeting. You will be informed of the outcome, in writing, by your Advisor.

This process for requesting an exception is also followed if you wish to take any of your course requirements through on-line options.

SECTION II: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PROCESS

Presbytery Office Staff

The Associate Executive Presbyter for Ministry (AEP for Ministry) is the staff person assigned to work with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). All decisions related to the fulfillment of CPM requirements will be made by the Committee. Nevertheless, the staff person is available to offer advice and counsel to those interested in the preparation process, to individuals under care, and for administrative assistance to the committee.

The relationship between those under care and their Advisors remains the crucial and most important link in the care process; however, the AEP for Ministry is available to assist that relationship in any way possible.

All scheduled meetings of those under care will be coordinated through the Presbytery office and originals of all forms and supporting documents should be sent to the office with copies sent to the Advisor. The AEP for Ministry will distribute these materials to members of the CPM as appropriate.

All permanent records are maintained in the Presbytery office. Evaluative material, including the Midwest Ministry Development Service report, the CPE evaluation report, and the Field Education evaluation reports, will be copied and given only to the Advisor as working papers. Appropriate confidentiality within the committee will be maintained.

Our goals are to facilitate the care process for Pre-inquirers, Inquirers, and Candidates in the most caring and efficient manner possible, to be sensitive to the many issues confronting persons under care, and to provide continuity of service to members of the Committee and persons under care.

Structure and Process of the Chicago Presbytery CPM

The Presbytery averages sixty-five individuals under its care. The Committee normally has twenty-four members in equal number of elders and clergy, all of whom are elected by the Presbytery Assembly for a specific term. One member of the Committee is elected by the Presbytery Assembly to serve as Moderator. Each member serves as Advisor to several persons under care.

Because of the large number of individuals under care, the CPM is divided into multiple Advisory Groups. Much of the work of the CPM is allocated to these Advisory Groups, particularly the preparatory work toward major steps in advancement. It is the responsibility of the Advisors to maintain contact and communication with Advisees and to bring to the Advisory Group any issues or concerns that need resolution. The Advisory Groups are empowered to take certain actions on behalf of the full CPM, and the full Committee is empowered to take certain actions on behalf of the Presbytery.

The *Book of Order* mandates annual reviews which are conducted by the Advisory Groups (G-14.0421) (1). Included as part of the annual review will be a decision as to whether to continue or terminate the preparation process.

At any time Advisory Groups may bring concerns to the full CPM for discussion and resolution. Inquirers and Candidates may also request to meet with their Advisory Group and the full CPM if there is need for clarification or consultation at times other than scheduled annual reviews.

Documentation of Status in CPM Process

You will find the AEP for Ministry and your Advisory Group to be very helpful in guiding you to document your status in the CPM process. You, however, are responsible to be certain all needed paperwork is on file. The forms required at each stage in the process may be found at <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/>

Guidelines for You, the Advisee

The preparation for ministry process is a covenant relationship between an individual, his or her Session, and the Presbytery with the mutual task of nurturing the gifts of a particular person into his or her most appropriate ministry, and enhancing the welfare of both the Church and the individual.

The liaison between you and the Presbytery is the CPM Advisor. The goal is for the relationship with the Advisor and the CPM to be supportive, helpful, productive, and smooth. Every covenant entered into requires faith in God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a commitment by both the Advisor and the Advisee to work with one another openly and with constant concern for one another.

Specifics:

- Always show a human face to your Advisor who is genuinely interested in you. Inform your Advisor promptly of major events in your life, such as marriage, divorce, deaths, change of schools, etc. If you feel there is a communication problem, say so. If you are

struggling with something, it is hoped you will be able to discuss whatever it is with your Advisor.

- Ask questions! Ask them early! Ask them frequently! Stay in contact!
- Arrange through your Advisor and the AEP for Ministry to meet with your Advisory Group. All papers should be sent to the AEP for Ministry in the Presbytery office with a copy to your Advisor.
- Stay in touch with your Advisor. Always give your Advisor and the CPM staff person a current address, phone number, and e-mail address.
- Initiate communication with your Advisor at least twice each year; monthly contact is not too frequent. Meet face-to-face whenever possible.
- Always respond to communication from your Advisor, the CPM administrative assistant, and the AEP for Ministry.
- Be in regular communication with your Session Liaison and invite him/her to accompany you to CPM and Presbytery Assembly meetings.

Guidelines for Your Session

The local church is provided with a challenge and an opportunity when a member of the congregation approaches the pastor and Session to express the possibility that she or he has been called to ministry. It is the Session's responsibility to provide a supportive relationship in which to explore with the individual the personal implications and suitability of a full-time church vocation.

Such awareness emerges through prayerful examination of the individual's faith, his/her motivation, and experience within the congregation, and through a shared assessment of all the responsibilities and gifts that will be needed for ministry. These are important first steps in discerning whether the individual is called by the Holy Spirit to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

The Session is an essential link in the covenant relationship between those under care and the Chicago Presbytery. The pastor and Session communicate with, and support, this individual throughout the entire period of preparation. This can be a deeply meaningful experience for all involved. In all matters relating to preparation, the individual will be under the oversight (care) of the Presbytery of Chicago.

To facilitate this relationship, a member of the Session shall be appointed as Session's Liaison with the person under care and the CPM. Any written materials to be submitted to the Session will be sent to the Session Moderator and the Clerk of Session. If the CPM needs to contact the Session, apart from the annual consultation report, the Session Moderator will be contacted. The CPM Advisor and the Session Liaison may wish to be in contact when it would seem desirable and helpful. **Session Liaisons are encouraged to attend CPM reviews with the person under care.**

It is important that the Session Liaison contact the person under care at significant times during the preparation process, such as Inquirer and Candidacy reviews, annual and special consultations with CPM, appearances before Presbytery, academic examination periods, ordination examination periods, when a call is being negotiated, and when ordination takes place.

If the Session, CPM, or the Presbytery decides not to accept the individual for continuation in the process, the Session will continue to provide support, counsel, and guidance to the individual as he or she seeks to discover an appropriate occupational expression of Christian vocation.

Providing financial assistance is another very tangible expression of support. The Session is asked to pay the fee for the required assessment at Midwest Ministry Development Service. Other financial gifts, however small, are helpful and are a concrete way to show support (e.g., a gift for seminary books).

The CPM recognizes the confidential nature of its work with Inquirers and Candidates and, therefore, ordinarily relies on the Session Liaison and the Inquirer/Candidate to maintain contact and keep each other informed.

When notice is received of the Candidate's ordination, it is the Session's responsibility to remove the Candidate's name from the church roll.

Questions and Points of Evaluation by the Session

- Do the personal qualities show clear evidence of a healthy and vital faith in God through Jesus Christ?
- Would you follow this person?
- What do you see in this person that makes him/her someone who should be ordained to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament?
- How are faith and spirituality currently being expressed through participation in the life, mission and worship of the congregation?
- Is there understanding of the Reformed theology and tradition of the PC (USA)?
- What motivations impel the sense of call? Are they healthy and positive?
- What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this individual (e.g., the ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, compassion, leadership, administrative abilities)?
- What is the level of his/her academic interest, ability and motivation?
- What is the level of his/her physical health and stamina?
- What is the evidence of his/her emotional stability and well-being?
- What is the evidence of his/her self-discipline?
- Has the individual had a relationship with the church for a time sufficient for the Session to evaluate the above?

Guidelines for the Session Liaison

The Session Liaison has an active role. This elder will represent the Session and participate with the person under care alongside the Presbytery's CPM as they explore and evaluate his/her progress in the preparation for ministry. Following are some of the ways in which Session Liaisons may be helpful:

Specifics:

- Remember the person in prayer.
- Learn his or her background, resources, and challenges.
- Become acquainted in ways that seem natural to you and to the person under care. At other times, find ways to stay in touch.
- Take an interest in his or her particular activities related to preparation for ministry such as Field Education, course work, Committee on Preparation for the Ministry annual consultations, and the Ordination Exams.

- When possible, share with the CPM any areas of particular need about which you are aware whether they be financial or personal.
- Accompany him or her to any and all meetings with the CPM as schedule permits. You will be most welcome!
- Identify ways to keep the congregation aware of the names and needs of all of its persons under care who have entered into a covenant relationship with the Session and the Presbytery in preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- Initiate conversation with the Session on the possibility of providing financial assistance or other tangible support.
- Become familiar with the “Discerning Your Call: Preparing for the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament” manual of the Presbytery in order to be able to assist with requirements and procedures and to provide support at times such as appearances before Presbytery Assembly, annual consultations, ordination examinations, etc.
- Be present at any meeting of Presbytery Assembly at which the Inquirer/Candidate will appear, including the service of ordination and/or installation after a call is received.
- The role of the spouse of the person under care is particularly important. Be supportive, sensitive and understanding of the spouse and family. Inform the Session and/or CPM of better ways to assist spouses in preparing for their new roles.
- In a word, be a friend who offers a sense of personal, moral and spiritual interest in, and support of, the person under care in all aspects of training for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In so doing, you will also grow in faith and grace.
- Maintain contact with his or her CPM Advisor.
- Attend Inquirers’ Retreat if possible.

Guidelines for Advisors

Advisors must see their task as both shepherding and gate-keeping. The primary tasks of the Advisor are to be the CPM contact person, serve as an advocate for the Advisee, and explain the process. The Advisor will also communicate the CPM’s concerns to the Advisee, and when appropriate, to the home church pastor and/or the Session Liaison. Following are the roles and responsibilities of the Advisor.

Specifics:

- Remember your advisee in prayer.
- Put a human face on the process. The Advisor is the primary person to communicate the care and concern of the Presbytery.
- Ensure the process proceeds as smoothly as possible.
- Explain the process and functioning of the CPM. Include what is to be expected of the Advisee and what is to be expected of the CPM.
- Help Advisees get in touch with their strengths and weaknesses. Be honest and kind.
- Initiate communication with Advisees at least twice a year and meet face-to-face whenever possible.
- Always respond to communications from an Advisee and the AEP for Ministry.
- Set Advisee meeting dates with the Advisory Group at least annually, requesting agenda docket time as each Advisee requires. **NOTE: Along with the Advisee, the Advisors are responsible for following the docket and knowing when to request and schedule annual reviews and movement to the next phase, etc. If you are uncertain of the process ask Advisory Group Moderator or CPM Moderator for assistance.**

- Be the Advisee's advocate at points of tension with the Advisory Group or CPM, bearing in mind the gate-keeping responsibilities. Provide interpretation when necessary. At times, there may be personal matters that the Advisor may choose not to share; however, matters relevant to the Advisee's future ministry must be shared.
- Review the grades of all ordination exams for all assigned Advisees. In a case of any failed ordination exams, read the entire exam. Seek counsel, if needed, so that helpful comments may be offered in preparation for a retake. Assist in finding tutors for exams, if needed.
- Review the following documents for each advisee: Midwest Ministry Development report; transcripts; CPE evaluation; Field Education evaluation. These are all confidential and may be found in the advisee's CPM folder.
- Remind the Advisee periodically of requirements for each step of the process. Ensure all needed documents are received before the next step in the process.
- Keep careful records of all conversations and communications and note fulfillment of all requirements.
- Work with Advisees in preparing the Candidacy statements, exegesis, and sermon. Preview each statement before it is submitted to AEP and Advisory Group members. Ensure the Statement of Faith contains all required items as outlined in the CPM manual. The Advisory Group shall approve the Statement of Faith, exegesis, and sermon before scheduling a Final Assessment Part II.
- Discuss the Advisee's developing faith and sources of spiritual growth.
- Follow up each Advisee's CPM meeting with a conversation.
- Be in contact with the Inquirer's/Candidate's Session Liaison.
- Attend Chicago Presbytery Assembly meeting when your advisee is to be presented for move to candidacy or ordination. Be the calm and non-anxious presence assuring them they are ready for this move.
- Offer to assist the Candidate in preparing a Personal Information Form (PIF) after successful completion of the Final Assessment Part I.

SECTION III: PROCESS OVERVIEW

An Overview of the Preparation of the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament Process

The relationship between the Presbytery and a person preparing for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament comes in three phases: **Pre-inquiry**, **Inquiry**, and **Candidacy**. The process of preparation is most effective when it reflects the Biblical theme of covenant relationship. These covenants are made in light of God's faithfulness and love for all people. All who are involved in preparation should approach these tasks with diligence, openness, intentionality, and faith.

This entire preparation process requires **a minimum of two years**, which **begins with the date the Committee on Preparation for Ministry acts to enroll the applicant as an Inquirer**. At least one year of the process must be spent in each of the Inquiry and the Candidacy phases. The Candidacy date is the date you are approved by the Presbytery of Chicago for advancement to Candidacy.

Pre-Inquiry Phase

The purpose of the Pre-inquiry phase is to allow you to begin the reflection and information gathering needed to make a well informed decision whether to enter into relationship with your Session and Presbytery to consider the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. **Active membership in a local congregation for at least six months is required before beginning the preparation process** (*Book of Order G-14.0403*) (1). During this phase you will also become prepared for the highly evaluative nature of the inquiry and candidacy phases.

Inquiry Phase

"The purpose of the Inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together in such a way that a decision regarding the Inquirer's suitability for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament will be based on full knowledge and experience of one another (*Book of Order G-14.0404*)(1). Inquiry is appropriate for all who show possibility for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The phase of Inquiry lasts for a minimum of one year, until the Inquirer, the Session, and the Presbytery are able to determine whether the Inquirer has sufficient promise for ministry and whether it is highly probable that he or she will continue to develop the skills and gifts for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

Candidacy Phase The purpose of the Candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as ministers of the Word and Sacrament (*Book of Order G-14.0405*) (1).

Extraordinary Circumstances

All of the requirements of *Book of Order G-14.0450* (1) shall be met except in the following extraordinary circumstances:

Educational Requirements (G-14.0471) (1): "If the inquirer's or candidate's presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why certain of the educational requirements should not be met by an inquirer or candidate, it shall make an exception only by three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present. A full account of the reasons for such an exception shall be included in the minutes of presbytery and shall be communicated to the presbytery to which the inquirer or candidate may be transferred. The successful completion of the course of study

specified in such an exception shall fulfill the requirements for the final assessment of readiness to begin ministry.”

Examination Requirements (G-14.0472) (1): “The examination requirements of G-14.0431 shall not be waived until an inquirer or candidate has failed on two attempts to receive a satisfactory grade, unless the inquirer or candidate has a disability, documented by a person or persons of the presbytery’s choice, which disability affects the individual’s test-taking ability. If the presbytery believes that the person should be certified as ready for examination for ordination, pending a call, it shall authorize an exception only by a three-fourths vote of the members of the presbytery present, and must determine an alternate means whereby it will satisfy itself of competence in the area(s) of difficulty. When the individual successfully completes the alternate pattern, the presbytery may certify readiness in the usual manner. The minutes of presbytery shall contain a full record of the reasons for the exception and the alternate pattern for determining competence.”

Ordination Examinations (*Book of Order G-14.0430*)

Inquirers and Candidates are encouraged to take the Bible Content Examination in their first year of seminary. The other four examinations shall ordinarily be taken by Inquirers or Candidates only after completion of two full years of theological education, or its equivalent, and shall be taken only upon approval by the CPM of the Inquirer’s or Candidate’s Presbytery, which shall first attest that the Inquirer or Candidate has completed adequate academic preparation in each examination area and adequate supervised experience in the practice of pastoral ministry. The areas of examinations are:

I. Bible Content

II. Senior Ordination Exams

- Open Book Bible Exegesis
- Theological Competence
- Worship and Sacraments
- PC (USA) Polity

I. Bible Content Examination

The Presbyterian Church (USA) considers basic awareness of the content of the Bible to be an essential prerequisite for ministry. The Bible Content Examination seeks to determine the degree of a Candidate’s awareness. This exam should be taken in the first year of seminary (*Book of Order G-14.0431*) (1). The examination contains 100 multiple-choice questions about the Bible, using the New Revised Standard Version for all quotations. The examination is given twice each year. The questions vary in difficulty, but cover the entire Bible as required by the General Assembly in 1978. You may register for the exam at <https://www.faincompany.com/bce/>. Permission from the CPM to take the Bible Content exam is not required.

II: “SENIOR” ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS

The purpose of written ordination examinations is to assess readiness for entry-level ministry. A student should have both academic background and practical experience in order for the written examinations to be an effective tool for evaluation of readiness for ministry. Questions on the

exams intentionally focus on the integration of theological education and practical experience in ministry.

Candidates or Inquirers are expected to take all four "senior" ordination examinations at the first examination date of the final year of seminary (see *Book of Order* G-14.0431) (1). CPM has the responsibility to determine whether a student is deemed ready to take these exams. Permission will be granted during an annual consultation. The AEP for Ministry will sign the exam application form after receiving approval from your Advisory Group.

If a Candidate is no longer in seminary or is not living near a seminary campus, arrangements for a Special Proctor may be made by the Candidate and the CPM when registering. If a Candidate is in a remote area, arrangements should be made well in advance for timely mailing and shipping to ensure that the exam materials will arrive on time.

CHICAGO CPM PROCEDURES REGARDING MULTIPLE FAILURES OF ORDINATION EXAMS

What follows are requirements adopted by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry related to retaking ordination examinations (not including the Bible Content Exam).

Ordinarily, three failures of any exam will mean termination of the preparation process and removal from the roll of Inquirers and Candidates.

Permission to make a fourth and final attempt to pass may be granted by the CPM if:

- it is determined that the Inquirer/Candidate shows very high potential for ministry,
- the Inquirer/Candidate has passed three of the four exams, and
- the Inquirer/Candidate can clearly demonstrate that he or she has taken advantage of all appropriate study resources and reviewed these options with the CPM Advisor.

In order to be fair to all Inquirers and Candidates, an attempt to determine test-taking impediments will be made:

- At the time of the Inquiry review with the Advisory Group, determination will be made and recorded as to whether the person has ever been diagnosed and/or treated for a learning disability.
- In cases where there has been such a diagnosis, documentation must be presented to the CPM and placed in the individual's file.
- A request will be made to the Midwest Ministry Development Service to include in the report any indications of a possible learning disability they may observe in their assessment process. **It must be understood that this will not be a diagnosis and will not constitute documentation.**
- In instances of English as a second language, determination will be made in the Inquiry review about the possibility of the need to write exams in another language.

Leaving the Preparation for Ministry Process
(Book of Order G-14.0463) (1)

At any time during the process it may be determined that a person under care will not continue.

If you decide to leave the process, your pastor and Session shall be informed of the decision. A request to be removed from the Presbytery roll of persons under care shall be presented in writing to the CPM Moderator. The CPM will take the request and the reason to the Presbytery Assembly for a vote. If affirmed, your name will be removed and the required form will be signed by the stated clerk and sent to the General Assembly Office of Resourcing CPMs.

An Advisor or Advisory Group may recommend that it is not in the best interest of all that a person continue in the process. This would ordinarily take place within the context of an annual consultation, recorded on the report of the annual consultation and noted to the full CPM. A report will be sent as part of the annual consultation materials to the Session Moderator. You shall inform your Session Moderator that this recommendation will come to the full CPM at its next meeting. This report shall include some notation about the reason(s) for the recommendation.

If the CPM votes to concur with the Advisory Group's recommendation, the Advisor will inform you about the decision. The CPM moderator or staff person will inform the Session Moderator of the recommendation. You may request a hearing with the full CPM (*Book of Order G-14.0463*) (1) and may be accompanied by your Session Liaison or pastor. It should be understood that this is not an appeal. The recommendation will be presented to the Presbytery Assembly as soon as possible. If Presbytery votes to remove the name from the roll, the required forms will be signed by the Stated Clerk and sent to the General Assembly Office of Resourcing CPMs .

A Session may also determine that the preparation process of an Inquirer or Candidate is not proceeding as expected and may discontinue the covenant relationship and remove the person from the care of the Session. The recommendation of the Session shall be sent to the Presbytery through the CPM. The CPM will request that the name of the Inquirer/Candidate be removed from the Presbytery roll of Inquirers and Candidates.

In the event a Session does not endorse an Inquirer for Candidacy, the Inquirer should understand that the preparation process will be terminated and removal from the Presbytery roll of Inquirers and Candidates will be requested by the CPM.

If the Session, CPM, or the Presbytery decides not to continue you in the process, the Session will continue to provide support, counsel, and guidance as you seek to discover an appropriate occupational expression of Christian vocation.

SECTION IV

Instructions for Each Phase in the Process

Instructions for the Pre-Inquiry Phase

- Participate in active membership in a local congregation for at least six months.
- Meet with your local pastor to ask for support in the discernment process and express interest in beginning the preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament process.
- Meet with the AEP for Ministry to ask for support in the discernment process and receive instruction about beginning the preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament process.
- After completing required Presbytery forms, schedule a meeting time with your Session.
- Submit a complete application to the CPM office. This includes signed Forms 1A/B and 2A/B, Nine Statements for Reflection, Background Check Release Form, a date for meeting with Midwest Ministry Development Service, a signed Sexual Misconduct Policy form, a final transcript of undergraduate coursework which shows the degrees completed as well as a transcript of any graduate school or seminary study. (Visit <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-steps-to-becoming-an-inquirer/> to obtain required forms).
- The AEP for Ministry will assign an Advisor who will contact you before your first meeting with the Advisory Group.
- Submit in advance of your scheduled Session meeting, the Nine Statements for Reflection. After the Session members have reviewed the statements join them in meeting to discuss your statements and engage in mutual discernment.
- Receive your Session endorsement for the Inquiry phase.
- Meet with CPM Advisor before the first scheduled CPM meeting.

In the Pre-Inquiry meeting with your Advisory Group of CPM, you will explore together your vision for ministry and progress in the process of discernment. The Advisory Group will vote whether to recommend you be enrolled as an Inquirer. If the vote is positive, then your goals for the year will be discussed. If the vote is not positive, the discussion will focus on additional steps you might take to prepare for Inquiry or to consider other options for ministry.

The date CPM enrolls you as an Inquirer is the official starting date. Your enrollment as an Inquirer will be reported at the next meeting of the Presbytery Assembly.

Instructions for the Inquiry Phase

- After receiving support of your CPM Advisory Group, meet with the full CPM for review of your completed application.
- Complete the Midwest Ministry Development Services assessment.
- Continue study in an approved seminary curriculum. If you are not attending a Presbyterian seminary, you must receive approval from the CPM for the courses you will be allowed to use from that program and those which will be required in a Presbyterian seminary.
- Complete either an approved Field Education experience or an accredited CPE before requesting approval for the Candidacy phase.
- Attend the annual Chicago Presbytery Inquirer's Retreat, if offered.
- Prepare the six pre-candidacy statements to be submitted with Form #5A/B. (see guidelines below).

- Participate in at least one annual consultation with CPM. Submission of Form #3 is required in preparation for these consultations. (Visit <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-steps-to-becoming-an-inquirer/> to obtain required forms). All annual consultation forms should also be sent to your Session Moderator.

Reflection and growth in each of the following areas is expected during the Inquiry Phase:

- evidence of spiritual development through vital, searching faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ; commitment to biblical faith; exploration of personal spirituality and disciplines;
- readiness for education toward ministry with intellectual ability for ministry; academic interest, motivation, and proficiency; capacity to deal with abstract ideas and symbols; understanding of the dynamics of a worshiping community, particularly in the context of a PC (USA) congregation;
- healthy interpersonal relations exhibited by positive qualities of compassion, listening skills, and caring; realistic sense of self; sensitivity to one's environment (roles and culture); ability to communicate with and listen to others; ability to maintain relationships;
- personal readiness as shown through a reasonable level of emotional health and self-awareness; commitment to personal growth, including knowledge and use of tools for self-assessment; accord between understanding of self and others' perceptions of self; appropriate openness to counsel; strong sense of personal integrity; flexibility; awareness of personal limits;
- professional readiness through a sense of call to serve God as a minister of the Word and Sacrament; awareness of the larger church (Presbytery, synod, General Assembly) and its mission; commitment to participation in the PC (USA); awareness of the covenantal relationship and mutual accountability that Presbyterians have to one another; sense of vocation of all Christians; sense of the importance of equipping the saints and ability to motivate others; beginning awareness of the tasks of, and one's suitability for, ministry of the Word and Sacrament; awareness of one's own gifts, skills and areas where growth is needed.

GUIDELINES FOR INQUIRERS' (PRE-CANDIDACY) STATEMENTS

Inquirers will write six one page statements that will be submitted to the Session and CPM for its review and approval as part of the process of advancing from Inquiry to Candidacy. This process of writing and discernment will assist you in understanding your call and suitability for ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the PC (USA).

Please refer to the *Book of Order W-1.2006 (1)* for guidance in the use of inclusive and diverse language. "Inclusive Language a. Since the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a family of peoples united in Jesus Christ, appropriate language for its worship should display the rich variety of these peoples. To the extent that forms, actions, languages, or settings of worship exclude the expression of diverse cultures represented in the church

or deny emerging needs and identities of believers, that worship is not faithful to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Diverse Language b. The church shall strive in its worship to use language about God which is intentionally as diverse and varied as the Bible and theological traditions. The church is committed to using language in such a way that all members of the community of faith may recognize themselves to be included, addressed, and equally cherished before God. Seeking to bear witness to the whole world, the church struggles to use language which is faithful to biblical truth and which neither purposely nor inadvertently excludes people because of gender, color, or other circumstance in life” (1).

Please limit each statement to **one page, single-spaced. Number the lines, use size 11 Arial font, use 1” margins**, and be certain **your name** appears on each page. All statements will be reproduced as submitted, so please pay careful attention to typing, spelling and grammar.

- **Statement of Understanding of Christian Vocation in the Reformed Tradition and How it Relates to Your Sense of Call**
The CPM will look for inclusion of your faith journey. This statement will be the basis of the Presbytery examination for Candidacy.
- **Statement of Personal Faith Which Incorporates an Understanding of the Reformed Tradition**
This will be considered the initial draft of the statement of faith that will be presented to the Presbytery at the time of examination for ordination. In your Statement of Faith discussion of the following is expected:
 - *the nature of God;
 - *the experience of God, sin and evil;
 - *life and work of Jesus;
 - *Jesus’ humanity and divinity;
 - *Christology and atonement;
 - *the Holy Spirit;
 - *the Church and its ministry;
 - *the sacraments;
 - *the Bible;
 - *the ministry and mission of the Church in the world;
 - *eschatology
- **Concept Paper**
An analysis of at least one concept from the statement of faith regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationship.
- **Statement of Being Presbyterian**
A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular congregation.
- **Statement of Self-Understanding**
A statement of self-understanding that reflects the ways you have been shaped by your personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical and mental health.

- **Statement of the Tasks of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament**

A statement of your understanding of the tasks performed by ministers of the Word and Sacrament, which should include your specific gifts for this ministry and awareness of the areas in which growth is needed.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOVING FROM INQUIRY TO CANDIDACY PHASE

- After you have completed at least one annual review, completed **FORM 3**, and either a CPM approved Field Education experience or one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, your Advisory Group, at your request, may grant you permission to begin the process of application to become a Candidate.
- Complete **Form 5A**, “Application to be Enrolled as a Candidate,” including the six Candidacy statements outlined above. (To obtain required form visit <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-steps-for-moving-from-inquirer-to-candidate/>) This form must be signed by your Session after they have met with you to review your six Candidacy statements.
- Please read and keep the background information, “Goals and Responsibilities of the Candidates” and “Goals and Responsibilities of Committee on Preparation for Ministry for the Candidate”.
- Order transcripts for any seminary work you have completed since becoming an Inquirer to be sent to the Presbytery office, Attn: CPM.
- Have evaluations from completed CPM approved Field Education experience, internships and/or CPE sent to the Presbytery office, Attn: CPM, AEP for Ministry.
- Schedule a time to meet with your Session.
- The Session will need a copy of **Form 5A and Form 5B**, Application to Be Enrolled as a Candidate”, including the six statements, and “Goals and Responsibilities of Sessions for Candidates” to review. These statements must be submitted in advance of your meeting to allow for Session members review. During the meeting you will discuss your statements and engage in mutual discernment. If the Session approves your application for Candidacy, the clerk of Session will sign **Form 5B** “Session Recommendation for Candidacy”. These forms will be mailed to the Presbytery office, Attn: CPM, AEP for Ministry.
- Send Form 5A, if possible, electronically, with the six statements to the Presbytery office, Attn: CPM, AEP for Ministry.
- When all forms and information have been received in the Presbytery office, you will be scheduled to meet with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry for your Candidacy review. You will first meet with your Advisory Group and, when they approve, you will meet with the CPM. If approved, the CPM will recommend to the Presbytery that you be examined by the Presbytery on your Statement of Understanding of Christian Vocation in the Reformed Tradition and its relationship to your sense of call for enrollment as a Candidate.

Instructions for the Candidacy Phase

- Meet with the CPM Advisory Group for at least one annual review.
- Complete a CPM approved Field Education experience or one unit of CPE and submit supervisor's evaluations to the CPM office. **The preparation process requires completion of both CPE and Field Ed.**
- Complete M.Div. degree and have final, official transcript sent to the CPM office.
- Pass the Bible Content exam and each of the four ordination exams. Please see pages 14 of this manual for more detailed instruction concerning the ordination exams.
- Finalize your Statement of Faith, exegesis and sermon manuscript. The guidelines for the Statement of Faith are found on page 18 of this manual. The guidelines for your exegesis and sermon are below. Meet with CPM Advisory Group for a **FINAL ASSESSMENT PART I**. Your Advisory Group will review your Statement of Faith, exegesis, and sermon for readiness to preach to the full CPM.
- After Advisory Group approval, meet with the CPM in a **FINAL ASSESSMENT PART II** to read the scripture which is the basis of your sermon, preach your sermon, and be examined on your exegesis and Statement of Faith.

In an annual review your Advisory Group will deem you ready for a **FINAL ASSESSMENT PART I**. During that review your readiness in the following areas will be evaluated:

Evidence of full education for ministry with sufficient fluency in the Christian and Reformed traditions, including Scripture, history, theology, church history, and polity of the PC (USA); awareness of the scope and tasks of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament; completion of seminary training, required course work and receipt of an M.Div degree (or its equivalent as approved by the CPM and the Presbytery) before the final examination for ordination by a Presbytery takes place; continuing growth in personal spiritual disciplines and mission; authentic faith (beliefs and commitments practiced, coherence between theology and life, and ability to interpret life through the lens of theology).

Interpersonal relations must show evidence of increasing depth of sensitivity, compassion and empathy; ability to evaluate and articulate one's own values, gifts and priorities and to identify and appreciate those of others; healthy interdependence with maturing balance between self, family, friends, and community, especially in the areas of authority, responsibility and needs; ability to analyze one's setting including history, location/culture, personalities, dynamics/conflicts, spiritual and emotional health; well-developed communication skills, oral and written, for a variety of settings (counseling, preaching, teaching, writing, and administration); ability to deal productively with conflict, failure and pain (one's own and others'); ability to maintain appropriate relationships, acknowledge limits and set boundaries.

Personal growth will be shown by maturity and integrity demonstrated by trustworthiness, openness, flexibility, healthy level of self-esteem, sufficiently low levels of defensiveness and anxiety, and an appreciation of one's role, expectations and context; commitment to the life-long pursuit of growth and self-discipline; balance in life with a commitment to work and play, and activities beyond the work place; self-motivation and ability to set priorities to pursue challenging goals, acknowledge realistic limits, and manage one's time effectively; ability to assume responsibility for physical, emotional, spiritual and financial health.

Professional development will show a commitment to the church, its people, mission, theology and polity, and to ministry of the Word and Sacrament; commitment to being an active

presbyter, with some ideas about how to be involved in the life of the Presbytery; ability and commitment to communicate the mission of the church and inspire faithful discipleship in others; ability to articulate and share the faith in the practice of ministry of the Word and Sacrament and the ability to discern and discuss theological issues in the life of the church and the world; effective skills for ministry of the Word and Sacrament which include preaching, worship planning and leadership, teaching, counseling, administration, polity, etc.; ability and commitment to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

Spiritual development will be evidenced by an articulate expression of personal faith which is compatible with the Reformed tradition, especially as seen in the confessional documents of the church; a responsible, continuing struggle with difficult areas of faith such as sin, evil, the sovereignty of God, individual freedom, corporate responsibility, atonement, etc.

***Requirements for the exegesis**

- typed, double spaced; include name and date on cover, name on all other pages; all pages and lines must be numbered; use size 11 Arial font and 1" margins;
- include the scriptural text and indicate the Bible version or your own translation;
- include an outline or description of the exegetical method used;
- include use of the original language (Hebrew or Greek);
- sources must be referenced using footnotes, end notes, or notes within the body of the paper;
- include a bibliography of all sources used (the majority of sources should be current)

***Requirements for the written sermon**

- typed, double spaced; include name and date on cover, name on all other pages; all pages and lines must be numbered; use size 11 Arial font and 1" margins;
- include a description of the context in which the sermon was or possibly will be preached and the particular needs to which the sermon speaks;
- must be based on the written exegesis;
- the exegesis and sermon prepared for the ordination exam may be used if the sermon outline is expanded into a full manuscript;
- Please refer to the *Book of Order* W-1.2006 (1) for guidance in the use of inclusive and diverse language. **For additional information on this topic we encourage you to read "A Report to the Church on Issues of Language and Gender" at <http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/worship/language.htm>**
- when preached, it should be approximately fifteen minutes in length.

After a successful FINAL ASSESSMENT PART II you will receive permission to prepare and circulate the Personal Information Form (PIF)

Instructions for Ordination Phase

- When you receive permission from the CPM to circulate your PIF and are deemed prepared to seek a call, you will go to the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) PC (U.S.A.) website: www.pcusa.org There you will be able to download a PIF and begin drafting your responses. You will be able to enter the information on line after completing your draft.
- When completed, submit the PIF online to the CLC. They will contact your AEP for Ministry who will go online and attest you have received permission to circulate your PIF. You are now able to begin your interview process.
- When you receive a call either to a church or a validated ministry, you will work with your Committee on Ministry (COM) in both your presbytery of call and your presbytery of care.
- When you are offered a call you negotiate your terms of call with the search committee, following the policies of the presbytery to which you have been called. When all is in order, the congregation will vote on your nomination and your terms of call.
- When you are elected by the congregation you will ordinarily be examined on your statement of faith by the presbytery of the call, following the processes and procedures in that presbytery.
- If you receive a call outside of a congregation your call must be validated by the presbytery within whose bounds you will be serving. Be in touch with the COM moderator of that presbytery to understand the process they will follow to validate your call. Once your call is validated you can be ordained.
- Ordinarily, you will be ordained by your presbytery of care, the Chicago Presbytery.
- The AEP for Ministry will work with you to establish your ordination commission and give you all necessary materials for your service of ordination.

CHECKLIST FOR PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATION PROCESS

INQUIRY PHASE

Presbytery Enrollment Date _____
Midwest assessment date completed _____
Midwest report on file _____
Inquirers' Retreat, if offered _____
Sexual Misconduct/Boundaries Seminar _____
Field Education (middler seminary year) _____
 CPM approved site – PC (USA) congregation _____
 evaluation submitted _____
Bible Content Examination – date passed _____
Annual review(s) _____
Advisory Group permission to apply for candidacy _____
Application for candidacy _____
 Session meeting date _____
 Advisory Group date/approval _____
 Full committee date/approval _____
 Presbytery examination/approval _____
Seminary transcript to date _____

CANDIDACY PHASE

CPE – approved location _____
 evaluation submitted _____
Ordination exams – dates passed _____
 Theology _____ Worship & Sacraments _____
 Polity _____ Biblical Exegesis _____
Seminary transcript to date _____
Annual review(s) _____
Seminary transcript _____
Financial Planning Seminar _____

SEMINARY COURSES REQUIREMENTS (*PC (USA) SEMINARY Required)

* PC(USA) Polity _____
*Reformed Theology(incl Book of Confessions & Calvin) _____
* Reformed Worship and Sacraments _____
Greek & exegesis _____ Hebrew & exegesis _____
Preaching _____ Pastoral care _____
Ethics _____ Church History _____
Christian Education _____

FINAL STEPS

Final Assessment Part I (Advisory Group) statement of faith _____
 sermon manuscript _____
Final Assessment Part II (full CPM) statement of faith revised _____
 Sermon manuscript revised _____
Final transcript showing degree _____

PREPARE PIF AND SUBMIT ON LINE

HALLELUJAH!!

SOME FORMS REQUIRED DURING THE PREPARATION PROCESS

Pre Inquirer and Inquirer Phase

<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-steps-to-becoming-an-inquirer/>

Candidacy Phase

<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-steps-for-moving-from-inquirer-to-candidate/>

Annual Reviews

<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/committee-on-preparation-for-ministry-annual-consultation/>

Bible Content Exam

<https://exams.pcusa.org/bce/>

Ordination Exams

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/prep4min/standard-ordination-exams/>

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5. Preparation for Ministry Office, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). "Discovering Your Call and Your Gifts for Ministry of Word and Sacrament". www.pcusa.org/prep4min

Approved by Presbytery Assembly
on December 14, 2010