

Discerning Your Call:
Preparing for the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament

A Resource of the Presbytery of Chicago
Presbyterian Church (USA)



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Section I: Getting Started

Welcome to the Discernment Process

Welcome! This process is about what kind of ministry God wants you to pursue. It's not a matter of "if" you are called to serve; it's "how" you are called to serve. While you may or may not eventually be ordained to be a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, you have been called to ministry since your baptism.

The call to ministry is different from any other calling. There are qualities and characteristics you will need which cannot be taught in seminary. Excellence in academic training is not always indicative of pastoral readiness or fitness.

The CPM process is not about certification, involving a list of requirements to check off culminating in ordination. It's possible that you could fulfill all requirements and not be called to this ministry of word and sacrament.

Everyone's process is different. Your seminary colleagues and friends might be asked to fulfill requirements that are slightly different from what you are asked to fulfill. This is based on individual life experiences, gifts, and growing edges.

This process is about individual self-development and discernment. Both Teresa of Avila and John Calvin believed that finding oneself is crucial to understanding God.

Your understanding of your own call could change throughout this process of discernment. Be open to experiencing a variety of contexts so that your call can be clarified and affirmed.

The responsibility to progress in the process of ordination is in your hands. It will be your opportunity to display professionalism, initiative, and responsibility.

The process of ordination is not easy. You will be told information that will be difficult to hear and receive. But the CPM is charged with both supporting you and ensuring that you are as well prepared as possible for professional ministry.

You are moving from being cared for as a parishioner to caring for others, and you will need to find new ways to be supported.

Please call on your advisors and other mentors generously. You will have a Session liaison from your home congregation, a CPM advisor, professors, field education supervisors, and your home pastors all willing to offer support and accountability. We can also refer you to spiritual directors and counselors. Please use us!

Section I: Getting Started

Presbytery of Chicago Requirements for Ordination

In addition to the requirements of the *Book of Order* the Presbytery of Chicago requires some additional conditions for completing the ordination process.

The Presbytery of Chicago requirements are:

- A minimum of one year as Inquirer
- A minimum of one year as Candidate. (The average time in the CPM process is 3-4 years)
- Completion of the LeaderWise assessment
- Participation in a Boundary Training Seminar every three years
- Participation in an Inquirers/Candidates Retreat if offered by the CPM
- A CPM approved, supervised Field Education experience in a PC(USA) congregation in a setting unlike your home church, ordinarily supervised by a PC(USA) Minister of Word and Sacrament (pastor).
- One unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in a certified Association of Certified Pastoral Education site, approved by the CPM.
- Passing of Bible Content Exam
- Passing each of the four senior ordination exams
- Completion of a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree in an Association of Theological Schools approved seminary with certified transcripts
- Participation in the financial planning seminar
- Completion of all required forms which are found at:
<http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/our-work/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/>
- Classwork in Ancient Hebrew and exegesis, Koine Greek and exegesis, Christian Education, Ethics, Preaching, Pastoral Care, and Church History. Students will ordinarily be required to take specific course work in a PC(USA) seminary covering Reformed Theology (including Calvin), the Book of Confessions, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, and Presbyterian Church (USA) Polity with transcripts documenting this classwork sent to the Presbytery office. (khh@chicagopresbytery.org)

Section I: Getting Started

Phases of the Ordination Process

There are three phases in the ordination process toward becoming a Minister of the Word and Sacrament: Pre-Inquirer, Inquirer, and Candidate.

Pre-Inquirer Phase:

- In the beginning...
 - For a while now, it seems that there is a burning/wondering/tugging in your soul regarding the possibility of spending your life serving in professional ministry.
 - You talk with family, friends, professors, your pastor, your mentors, and of course, God, about these ponderings.
 - You consider applying to seminary, and after continued conversations and prayerful discernment, you decide to apply and take the leap.
- To become a Pre-Inquirer...
 - Contact the pastor of the church where you are currently a member (hereafter called “Home pastor”) so you can both speak about your intention to pursue seminary studies.
 - Enroll either full-time or part-time in a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools.
 - Contact either the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Chicago (Sue Krummel, skrummel@chicagopresbytery.org) or the moderator of the CPM (Lauren Cochran, lauren.cochran@chcpc.org) and ask for an ordination meeting.
 - You will receive information from Sue or CPM Moderator about required forms and activities to complete prior to meeting with the CPM. The forms can also be found here: <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/our-work/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-steps-to-becoming-an-inquirer/>
 - Complete the following forms and submit them to Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig (khh@chicagopresbytery.org) at the Presbytery office: Forms 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 2A, and 2B.
 - Contact your home pastor to arrange to meet with the Session to request their endorsement. You must be a member of your endorsing church for at least 6 months before asking the Session for their endorsement.
 - Give Form 1D to the Clerk of Session of your endorsing church before meeting with the Session. Session will ask you questions about your discernment and they will elect a Session Liaison for you who must be a Ruling Elder (not necessarily serving on Session at this time).

- Important to note: The Session Liaison should be someone available to attend CPM meeting with you the 1 to 2 times a year you will be attending CPM. CPM meetings are usually during the day on the 4th Monday of the month, at First United Church of Oak Park, 848 Lake Street, Oak Park, IL 60301.
- Schedule an online leadership and psychological assessment through the Presbytery Office with LeaderWise.
- Complete the Baker-Eubanks Background Check Authorization Form, which Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig will email you at your request. Once completed, returned the form to Kristene by scanning it and emailing it to her (khk@chicagopresbytery.org).
- You will be assigned a CPM Advisor with whom we hope you will meet prior to your first meeting with CPM.
- After all forms, papers, etc. have been received, you will be scheduled to meet with CPM. Invite your Session liaison and Home Pastor to attend that scheduled CPM meeting with you.
- At your first scheduled CPM meeting, there will actually be two meetings.
 - First, you will meet with your smaller Advisory Group to share your call story.
 - Dress as if this is a job interview. Be yourself. Recognize that, while this might seem terrifying, the CPM is your partner in this process along with your Session. You, your Session Liaison, and your Home Pastor will briefly leave after your conversation with the Advisory Group while they vote to recommend that you meet with the whole CPM.
 - The second meeting (on the same day) will be with the whole CPM and it will be just like the small group conversation. Share your call story. Don't feel like you need to convey that you have all the answers or know exactly what God is calling you to do. Be yourself. Again, you will leave that room and the CPM will vote on the motion to make you an Inquirer.
 - If the vote is positive, this is the day your Inquiry phase begins. It's an important date to remember because a year after that date is the first time you can request of your Advisory Group that you be considered for the Candidacy phase.
- Your enrollment as Inquirer will be reported at the next meeting of the Chicago Presbytery Assembly.

Inquiry Phase:

- Ask your Advisory Group to approve your Field Education site, and then take Field Education.
- Ask your Advisory Group to approve your Clinical Pastoral Education site, and then you can take CPE.
 - Note: you can take both Field Education and CPE during the Inquiry Phase, but you only have to take one of these during the Inquiry Phase.
- Remember all transcripts should be sent to the Presbytery Office: 815 West Van Buren Street, Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60607, Attn: Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig.

- Consider taking the Bible Content Ordination Examination as soon as you feel prepared.
 - Registration can be found here: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/bible-content-exam/>
- Consider taking the senior ordination exams either individually as you finish a particular class or all together at one time. **Permission is required from your CPM Advisory Group before registering.** Registration can be found here: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/senior-ordination-exams/>
- If you fail a senior ordination examination, you must ask permission to take the exam again.
- You may be invited to be introduced before the whole Presbytery Assembly, but this is not required.

To become a Candidate:

- After being an Inquirer for at least one year, you can ask your Advisory Group if they believe you are ready to begin the move on to Candidacy.
- Complete Form 5A: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-advancing-candidacy/>
- Begin working on the statements for Candidacy. They will be your baseline of personal and professional development.
 1. Statement of Understanding of Christian Vocation in the Reformed Tradition and how it Relates to your Sense of Call as a Minister of Word and Sacrament
 2. Statement of Personal Faith
 3. Statement of Being Presbyterian
 4. Statement of Self-Understanding
- Further information on completing these statements in Appendix B.
- Review your finished statements with your Session Liaison and your CPM Advisor (as well as professors and colleagues if you wish) to edit and revise.
- Order transcripts for any seminary work you have completed since becoming an Inquirer to be sent to the Presbytery office, attn: Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig.
- Submit evaluations from completed Field Education, internships, or CPE to the Presbytery office. Attn: Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig, or send to khh@chicagopresbytery.org
- Meet with your Session.
 - Contact your home pastor, the Moderator of the Session. Request time to meet with the Session so that they may enter into a discussion of mutual discernment with you on the candidacy statements. This will require at least 45 minutes on the Session docket.
 - Submit completed Form 5A, Application to Be Enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate and the candidacy statements, to the Clerk of Session and the Moderator of the Session at least two weeks prior to the Session meeting. Request that the Clerk of Session ensure that all members of Session receive the candidacy statements prior to the Session meeting so that the Elders may review your statements and be prepared for mutual discernment.
 - Provide Form 5B, Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release form to the Clerk of Session. If the session approves your application for Candidacy, the Clerk of

- Session and the moderator of Session will submit Form 5B, Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release to the Chicago Presbytery (khh@chicagopresbytery.org)
- Ask your Session to recommend you to CPM for Candidacy. This form must be completed and signed by your Session Liaison. <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-advancing-candidacy/>
 - Meet with your CPM Advisory Group to review your Statements. They will vote on approving your move to meet with the whole CPM.
 - Meet with the whole CPM to review your Statements. They will vote on moving you to Candidacy. Form 5C will be completed <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-advancing-candidacy/>
 - You may or may not come before the whole Presbytery Assembly as a new Candidate. It is not required to ask you questions in front of the Assembly, but we may want to introduce you and pray for you!
 - If you are approved to be a Candidate by the whole CPM, keep this day in mind. You must be a Candidate for one year before you can be approved ready to receive a call.

While You are a Candidate:

- Meet with CPM Advisory Group for at least one annual review
 - Throughout the whole process, even if you are not moving into a new phase of the process, you are required to meet annually with your Advisory Group.
 - When you prepare for your annual consultation, prepare and turn in Form 3 to the Chicago Presbytery (khh@chicagopresbytery.org)
 - If you must travel a great distance to meet with your Advisory Group, it's possible to connect via Skype or some other electronic option.
 - All persons in the care process must submit their paperwork (i.e. Form 3 for the Annual Review) **for each CPM meeting at least two weeks prior to the meeting for which they are scheduled to meet with the commission.** Please email all paperwork to khh@chicagopresbytery.org
 - Please note: the receipt of paperwork in a timely many allows each member of CPM to read your forms and be fully prepared to discern with you during the meeting. **If forms are not received by the due date, Inquirers/Candidates/Commissioned Pastors will be rescheduled to a future meeting.**
 - Form 3 can be found here: <http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/our-work/committees-and-commissions/preparation-for-ministry/cpm-annual-consultation/>
- Complete a CPM pre-approved Field Education experience and submit supervisor's evaluations to khh@chicagopresbytery.org if you did not do this during your Inquiry Phase.
- Complete one unit of a CPM pre-approved Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and submit supervisor's evaluations to khh@chicagopresbytery.org if you did not do this during your Inquiry Phase.
- Complete M.Div. degree and have final, official transcript sent to the CPM office.
- Pass the Bible Content Exam and each of the four Senior Ordination exams. See Appendix A for details.

To Become Certified Ready to Receive a Call

- There are two parts to Final Assessment. In an Annual Review, your Advisory Group will deem you ready for a Final Assessment Part 1. During that reviews, 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).
 - 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 that of others); ability to maintain appropriate relationships, and be able to 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, with 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; and have the 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 presbytery, 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; and have the 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.

- Finalize your Statement of Faith. The guidelines for the Statement of Faith are found in Appendix C of this manual.
- Prepare an exegesis and sermon to preach for the whole CPM. The guidelines for the exegesis and sermon are in Appendix D in this manual.
- Meet with CPM Advisory Group for Final Assessment Part 1. Your Advisory Group will review your Statement of Faith, exegesis, and sermon for the readiness to come before the full CPM. Your Advisory Group will watch the video of your sermon if available.
- After the Advisory Group approval, meet with the whole CPM in a Final Assessment Part 2 to discuss your sermon (either previously video online, or if this is not available, preached in person to the CPM) and be examined on your exegesis, Statement of Faith, sermon content, and sermon presentation.
- If the CPM approves you, on this day you become Certified Ready to Receive a call, which means that you can begin to circulate your Personal Information Form (PIF) on the PC(USA) Church Leadership Connection (CLC).
- As long as you are searching for an ordainable position, you remain under the care of the CPM, and must continue your Annual Reviews.

Instructions for the 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) on the PC(USA) website: www.pcusa.org There you will be able to download PIF instructions 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 Executive Presbyterian or the Moderator of the CPM 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 Commission 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 CPM 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 in and by your presbytery of call.
- The staff of your calling Presbytery will work with you to establish your ordination commission and give you all necessary materials for your service of ordination.
- If you will be ordained by Chicago Presbytery, because your first call is in Chicago Presbytery, contact the Commission on Ministry liaisons for the congregation or

validated ministry which has called you. Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig can connect you to these COM members. They will help you establish your ordination date and your ordination commission, and they will give you necessary materials for your service of ordination and (in the case of a congregational call) installation.

- If you have been called in a different Presbytery and you wish to be ordained in Chicago Presbytery on their behalf, you must be examined on the floor of the calling Presbytery and ask their permission for Chicago Presbytery to ordain you on their behalf. After the calling Presbytery's commission on Ministry has informed Chicago Presbytery that you may be ordained here, a staff member of the Presbytery will work with you to establish your ordination date and commission- which must be approved by the COM of Chicago Presbytery at least 2 weeks before your ordination date.

Leaving the Preparation for Ministry Process

- *All of us are called to ministry but not all of us are called to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.* Sometimes the most faithful choice is to leave the ordination process.
- If the Person under care chooses to leave the process, please consider that:
 - CPM will most likely recommend that you take time to discern this decision. Dropping out of the process requires *starting from the beginning* if you choose to return.
 - You should talk about this with your pastor, mentors, session liaison, and CPM advisor.
 - 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 vote on your request. 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.
- If the Advisory Group recommends that a person leave the process, the next steps include:
 - A conversation and vote taken within the context of an annual consultation, recorded on the report of the annual consultation and noted to the full CPM.
 - A report 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 decision.
 - A vote by the full CPM after which the Person Under Care will be informed of the voting results by the Advisor.
 - The CPM Moderator or staff person will inform the Session Moderator of the recommendation.
 - You may request a hearing with the full CPM 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.

- If a Session determines that the preparation process of an Inquirer or Candidate is not proceeding as expected:
 - Session may discontinue the covenant relationship and remove the person from the care of the Session.
 - The recommendations of the Session shall be sent to the Presbytery through the CPM. The CPM will request that the name of the person under care be removed from the Presbytery roll of inquirers/ candidates.
 - In the event a Session does not endorse an Inquirer for Candidacy, 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 to discontinue the ordination process with the Person under care, Session will continue to provide support, counsel and guidance as you seek to discover an appropriate occupational expression of Christian vocation.

Section II: Who Does What?

The Presbytery Office Staff will:

- CPM works with the Executive Presbyter (EP), currently Sue Krummel. Sue 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.
- CPM also works with the Ministry Coordinator, currently Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig. Send a copy of every form to her for your yellow file, and work with her to get on the schedule of the CPM.

The Session of the inquirer/candidate will:

- Prayerfully examine the individuals faith, his/her motivation, and experience within the congregation. They should consider questions like these:
 - Do the individual's person 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 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 Reformed theology and tradition of the PCUSA?
 - What motivations impel the sense of call? Are they healthy and positive?
 - What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this person?
 - What is the level of her/his academic interest, ability and motivation?
 - What is the level of her/his physical health and stamina?
 - What is the evidence of his/her emotional stability and well-being, self-discipline?
 - Has the individual had a relationship with the church for a time sufficient for the Session to evaluate the above?

- Provides a supportive relationship in which to explore with the individual the personal implications and suitability of a full-time church vocation.
- Invited the individual to participate in worship and other activities of the congregation occasionally (perhaps during breaks from seminary!).
- Offers financial assistance as needed, if possible. Shares in the cost of the required psychological evaluation with the individual (but if the church cannot pay, they should contact the Executive Presbyter). Other financial gifts, however small, are helpful and are a concrete way to show support (like a book for seminary).
- Continues to provide support, counsel, and guidance to the individual if the Session, CPM or the Presbytery decides not to accept the individual for continuation in the process.
- Remove the candidate's name from the church rolls upon her/his ordination to the office of Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The Session Liaison will:

- Facilitates the relationship between the Session, the person under care, and the CPM.
- Submits necessary forms to the Session via the Session moderator and the Clerk of the Session.
- Attends CPM meetings with the person under care if at all possible, and/or arranges for the home pastor to attend meetings as well.
- Contacts the person under care at significant times during the preparation process, such as Inquirer or 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.
- Keeps personal information confidential
- Remember the person in prayer. Find ways to stay in touch.
- Take an interest in his/her particular activities related to preparation for ministry such as Field Education, course work, CPM annual consultations, and ordination exams.
- When possible, share with the CPM any areas of particular need about which you are aware, whether personal, financial, or academic.
- Initiate conversation with the Session on providing possible financial support.
- Become familiar with the CPM manual in order to help the person under care navigate the process.
- Be present at any Presbytery Assembly at which the inquirer/candidate will appear, including the service of ordination or installation after a call is received.
- Be supportive, sensitive, and understanding of the inquirers/candidate's spouse and family/. Inform the session and/or CPM of better ways to assist spouses in preparing for their new roles.

The CPM Advisor will:

- Be the CPM contact person for the advisee. Serve as an advocate and explain the process.
- Balance the shepherding and gatekeeping roles. Communicate both concerns and encouragements to the person under care.

- Put a human face on the process. Remember your advisee in prayer. Initiate communication with Advisees at least twice a year and meet face to face whenever possible.
- Discuss the advisee's developing faith and sources of spiritual growth. Help him/her get in touch with their strengths and weaknesses.
- Review the following for each advisee: Leaderwise report, transcripts, CPE evaluation, Field Education evaluation, ordination exam grades. These are all confidential, but may be found in the yellow CPM folder in the Presbytery office.
- Keep advisees on track, remind them periodically of the requirements for each step, help advisees get the correct paperwork. Balance this with letting your advisee steer their own ship and show they are responsible.
- Help set advisee meetings dates with the small Advisory Group at least annually, requesting agenda time as required.
- Follow up with advisee after each CPM meeting.
- Keep careful records of all conversations and communications and note fulfillment of all requirements.
- Work with advisees in preparing candidacy statements, exegesis, and sermon. Preview each statement before it is submitted to advisory group members.
- Be in contact with the advisee's session liaison.
- Attend Chicago Presbytery Assembly meeting when your advisee is to be presented for more to candidacy or ordination. Be the calm non-anxious presence assuring them they are ready for this move.
- Offer to assist the candidate in preparing a Personal Information Form (PIF).

The Advisee/Person Under Care/Candidate/Inquirer will:

- You are responsible for initiating your own movement through the ordination process in every step. Remember that your primary contact is your CPM advisor.
- Always show a human face to your CPM 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, frequently! Stay in contact. Plan to talk with your advisor at least twice a year- face to face when you can- seek to meet your advisor when you are in town. When possible, schedule meetings with the CPM face to face as well.
- Make requests through your CPM advisor to have your CPE and Field Education sites approved, when are you ready to ask to be moved from Inquirer to Candidate, when you want to register for senior ordination exams.
- Send all forms to the Ministry Coordinator (currently Kris Hiepler-Hartwig, khh@chicagopresbytery.org) at the Presbytery Office with a copy to your advisor. Discuss papers and other statements with your session liaison and CPM advisor prior to sending them to the CPM.

Section III: Frequently Asked Questions

Who is currently under care of the Presbytery of Chicago?

- There is an average of 20 people under care each year.
- About 1/3 of those under care are multi-cultural, people of color, and/or racial-ethnic minorities.
- Our seminarians attend or have recently attended the following institutions: McCormick Theological Seminary, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Chicago Theological Seminary, Dubuque Theological Seminary, San Francisco Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, Columbia Theological Seminary, North Park Theological Seminary, University of Chicago School of Divinity, Trinity Theological Seminary, and Fuller Theological Seminary.
- Approximately half of those under care are second career students.
- Those under care generally divided evenly between male and female students.

Who is on the Commission for the Preparation for Ministry?

- There are about 18 members of the CPM and we are always interested in increasing our membership in terms of multi-cultural, people of color, and/or racial-ethnic minorities.
- The current moderator is Rev. Lauren Cochran, an associate pastor at Community Presbyterian Church in Clarendon Hills.
- Each Advisory group has a moderator, contact the CPM moderator to find out who the Advisory group moderators are.
- The Executive Presbytery staffs the CPM from the Presbytery of Chicago and serves without vote.
- The CPM strives for an equal amount of ruling elders and Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and is are elected by the Presbytery.
- Each person serving on the CPM serves about 1-2 persons under care.

When and where does the CPM meet?

- Ordinarily we meet on the 4th Monday of the month during the day (unless there is a federal holiday or other conflict) at First United Church of Oak Park, 848 Lake St., Oak Park, IL 60301. Please check with the Presbytery office if you are unclear about the date of your meeting.
- We do not meet with candidates during the month of January, July, or December.

What are Advisory Groups?

- Because of the number of people under care, the Presbytery of Chicago has two separate Advisory Groups (not-so-creatively) called Group 1 and Group 2. Your CPM Advisor is a member of one of these three groups.
- When you meet with CPM, you meet with the smaller advisory group (about 5-8 people) and then if necessary, when moving from one phase to another, you meet with the whole CPM (about 16 people.)

What are Background checks?

- As with its own employees and volunteers, the Presbytery requires Pre-Inquirers, 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.

Are there ever exceptions for ordination requirements? And if so, how do we ask for one?

- Yes, exceptions to certain requirements are occasionally granted on matters from taking a class online instead of in a classroom to the number of times one can take a senior ordination exam.
- Some exceptions can be granted by CPM and some require a vote of the whole Presbytery.
- First, talk with your CPM Advisor who 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.

What is the Financial Planning Seminar?

- Because educational indebtedness has become a grave concern within the church and the PC(USA) Board of Pensions, 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.

What are the different “phases” in the PC(USA) Ordination process?

- The phases are "Pre-Inquirer," "Inquirer," and "Candidate." You are a Pre-Inquirer before ever meeting with CPM. You become an Inquirer upon an introductory meeting and vote of the CPM after turning in all initial forms, receiving an endorsement from your Session, completing the LeaderWise evaluation, and having a background check done. You can request to become a Candidate after being an Inquirer for one year.
- CPM considers the Inquiry Phase to be a time of discernment. If CPM approves your movement to Candidacy, we are assuming that you are indeed called to professional ministry and Candidacy is a phase of bolstering your skills and completing required examinations toward ordination.

What is LeaderWise?

- LeaderWise is a comprehensive career counseling and psychological assessment service required by the Presbytery of Chicago for all Pre-inquirers. ***You cannot meet with CPM to become an Inquirer until CPM has a copy of your LeaderWise report.*** The 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.
- A written report is sent to you, as well as the moderator of the CPM. These reports are considered high confidential. They are to be seen only by those CPM members who work most directly with you. They are tools to help you with your ministry, and you will be asked to follow up on the recommendations that they offer.

What is the Presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy?

- The Presbytery's adopted Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures will be shared with all persons who will acknowledge receipt of the policy by signing a form to be kept in your file. 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.
- If you take boundary training through your seminary, please send verification to Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig at khh@chicagopresbytery.org.

What are the Ordination Exams “the Ords”, and how do I register to take them?

- There are five required ordination exams administer online by the denomination. You can find details on the exams and how to register in Appendix A of this manual.

What are the yellow files?

- Upon becoming a Pre-Inquirer, a yellow file is started for you which is kept at the Presbytery Office. Every person under care in the PC(USA) has one of these files which holds all your forms, transcripts, papers, a photo, and other records which will be seen by your CPM advisor and necessary Presbytery staff throughout your discernment and ordination process.

Appendix A: Required Ordination Examinations in the PC(USA)

1) Bible Content Exam (Called BCE by the General Assembly)

- Can be taken in the first year of seminary (recommended)
- The two-hour examination contains 100 questions in multiple-choice, matching, and ordering formats, about the contents of the Bible, using the New Revised Standard Version for all quotations.
- The exam is currently offered twice a year on the first Friday of February and the Friday before Labor Day. The questions vary in difficulty but cover the entire Bible as required by action of the General Assembly in 1978.
- The examination is available in English, Spanish and Korean.
- In order to satisfy this requirement in the preparation for ministry process, inquirers/candidates must correctly answer at least 70 of the 100 questions on the examination.
- The Bible Content Examination is given at proctored sites using an internet-based testing program. The proctors for each site can provide information about the specific equipment availability and requirements for their location. Inquirers and candidates should confirm these requirements with the proctor at the site *before* registering.
- No advance permission from CPM to register for this exam.
- Register here: <https://exams.pcusa.org/open/>

2) The Four Senior Ordination Exams (the “Ords”)

- The focus of the senior ordination examinations is to assess one’s entry-level readiness for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The exams present pastoral challenges whereby candidates can demonstrate how they integrate faith and theological education in practical ministry.
- Senior ordination exams are administered using an Internet-based testing system. A maximum of nine hours is permitted for completion of the Theology, Worship, and Polity examinations. The Exegesis exam is given over a period of roughly five days.
- All sections of the tests are open book. Candidates may use whatever resources they have available, but they must give credit for any resources used.
- Visit the exam schedule page: <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/exams-schedule/>
- Bible exegesis.
 - You are given an exam either involving Greek or Hebrew, the text will come from a specific book of the Bible which will announced before the exam begins.
- Worship and Sacraments
 - Situations will be presented about which you will write theologically and pastorally about the worship and sacramental issues involved.
- Theology
 - Situations will be presented about which you will answer the theological questions involved.
- PC(USA) Polity
 - Situations will be presented about which you will write theologically and pastorally about the polity issues involved.

- Permission must be given by the Advisory group before an inquirer/candidate registers for senior exams. Ordinarily, this happens during an annual consultation, so remember to ask about it.
- The Vocation Office of the PCUSA recommends that candidates take all four "senior" ordination examinations during the final year of seminary or after the equivalent of two full years of theological education, but our CPM is willing to approve both Inquirers and Candidates taking exams one-at-a-time after appropriate course completion if you wish.
- Statistics show that taking all four senior exams at once has a higher passing rate.
- Find the PC(USA) guideline for senior exams here:
<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/handbook-ordination-examinations/>
- You are responsible to register yourself and be aware of deadlines:
<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/registrationauthorization-take-senior-ordination-e/#seniorExams>
- After you register, the moderator of the CPM signs off on your registration, and you will receive electronic notification.
- If an Inquirer or 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.

3) Failure to pass Exams

- The Bible content exam may be taken an indefinite number of times without penalty.
- Ordinarily, three failures of any senior ordination exams will mean termination of the preparation process and removal from the roll of inquirer 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 four of the 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/pr 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 LeaderWise to include in their report any indications of a possible learning disability they may observe in their assessment progress. 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.

Appendix B: Guidelines for the Four Pre-Candidacy Statements

- Inquirers will write four, 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-1.0302 for guidance in the use of inclusive and diverse language.
- Limit each statement to one page, single spaced.
- Number the lines.
- Use size 11 point, Arial font.
- 1 inch margins
- Be certain your name appears on each page. All statements will be reproduced as submitted, so pay careful attention to typing, spelling, and grammar.
- Please order your papers in the order they are stated below:
 - **Statement of Understanding of Christian Vocation in the Reformed Tradition and how it relates to your sense of call as a Minister of Word and Sacrament**
 - CPM will look for inclusion of your faith journey.
 - **Statement of Personal Faith**
 - 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.
 - This statement should not have more than 3,000 characters total. This will help prepare you to transition this statement of faith to your PIF.
 - In your statement of faith, discussion of the following is encouraged:
 - 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
 - **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.

Appendix C – Guidelines for the Statement of Faith

All ministers who come into the Presbytery of Chicago whether through the ordination process, receiving a call to serve as pastor/associate pastor of a congregation, to serve in a validated ministry, or transfer from another denomination, will be expected to present a statement of faith when they are examined and received by the presbytery.

The purpose of the statement of faith is for the individual to reflect theologically on specific area and to state in concise form her/his faith related to those specific areas. A statement of faith must incorporate an understanding of the Reformed tradition.

Questions to be considered when writing a statement of faith might be: “Where are you in terms of Jesus, the cross, your faith, the Holy Spirit?” and “How do you live out your faith?”

Following is a list of suggested topics to be included:

- 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

The statement of faith will be the basis by which the presbytery conducts its oral examination. Clichés that might distract a reader should be avoided, and language should be chosen for clear understanding because the statement will be read by laity and clergy from diverse backgrounds. The use of gender inclusive language is expected.

When preparing a statement, please type it single-spaced, on one page, number the lines, maintain 1 inch margins, and be sure your name is added.

No more than 3000 characters total (including spaces and punctuation) may be used. (Difficult, but you will thank us later.)

The statement will be distributed as submitted. Typing, grammar, and spelling are important.

It is important, even with all these guidelines, that preparation of the statement encourages you to think and struggle with what you believe.

Appendix D – Guidelines for Final Assessment Exegesis and Sermon

Requirements for the exegesis:

- type and double space
- include your name and date on cover page, and your name on all pages.
- Number all pages and lines on each page.
- Use size 11 Arial font, and 1-inch margins.
- Include the scripture 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)
- Reference all sources using footnotes, end notes, or notes within the body of the paper.
- Include a bibliography of all sources used.
- Use a majority of current sources.

Requirements for sermon:

- The candidate must video tape themselves preaching their sermon in a worship context. If they are not serving as an intern, the candidate might consider their home congregation.
- The candidate must submit the video alongside the written text of the sermon to the CPM (just like all other paperwork) 2 weeks before they come before the CPM advisory group.
- For the manuscript of the sermon:
 - type and double space
 - include your name and date on cover page, and your name on all pages.
 - Number all pages and lines on each page.
 - Use size 11 Arial font, and 1-inch margins.
 - Include a description of the context in which the sermon was preached and the particular need to which the sermon speaks
- Base your sermon on the written exegesis.
- If for some reason you cannot video tape yourself preaching (a phone video will do, it does not need to be fancy), be in contact with your advisor for alternate planning.
- When preached, the sermon should be about 15 minutes in length.

The exegesis and sermon prepared for the ordination exam may be used if the sermon outline is expanded into a full manuscript.

Appendix E – Check List for progress in the discernment process

Pre-inquiry Phase

Check off & date:

Responsibility:

Met with home pastor to discuss your intention to pursue seminary studies.

Enrolled in a seminary accredited by the Associate of Theological Schools.

Had a conversation with the Moderator of the CPM, currently Lauren Cochran.
(lauren.cochran@chcpc.org)

Completed forms 1A, 1B, and 1C and send to Ministry Coordinator (currently Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig, khh@chicagopresbytery.org) at the Presbytery office.

Met with home session, asked them for their endorsement, and had the Clerk sign form 1D. Sent form to Ministry Coordinator (see above).

Scheduled and completed LeaderWise assessment, received report.

Signed authorization form for background check, and returned form to Ministry Coordinator (see above)

Connected with Session-appointed liaison, and CPM-appointed advisor.

Inquiry Phase

Check off & date:

Responsibility:

- _____ Met with CPM Advisory Group for the first time and then with whole CPM. Became Inquirer. Signed forms 2A and 2B and returned to CPM.
- _____ Took Sexual Misconduct/Boundaries Seminar & sent notification/certificate to Ministry Coordinator (currently Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig (khh@chicagopresbytery.org))
- _____ Participated in Inquirers/Candidates Retreat
- _____ Got approval from Advisory Group for CPE or Field Education site
- _____ Took CPE **or** Field Education and sent supervisor's evaluation to Ministry Coordinator (see above)
- _____ Took and passed Bible Content Exam
- _____ Complete Form 3 and send to Ministry Coordinator (see above) two weeks before meeting with CPM Advisory Group for Annual consultation.
- _____ Talked with CPM liaison about applying for candidacy after being inquirer for at least one year.
- _____ Met with Session to ask for their support to apply for candidacy.
- _____ Completed Form 5 and sent to Ministry Coordinator (see above).
- _____ Asked Advisory group for permission to apply for candidacy.
- _____ Wrote and review the 4 candidacy statements with Session at home church.
- _____ Four papers examined by CPM advisory group and they vote to approve that you meet with whole CPM
- _____ Four papers examined by whole CPM and they vote to move you to Candidacy.

Candidacy Phase

Check off & date:

Responsibility:

Got approval from Advisory Group for CPE or Field Education site (whichever you have not completed yet)

Took CPE **or** Field Education and sent supervisor's evaluation to Ministry Coordinator (currently Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig (khh@chicagopresbytery.org))

Requested permission to take Senior Ordination Exams:
_____ Theology _____ Worship and Sacraments
_____ Polity _____ Biblical Exegesis

Registered for Senior Ordination Exams:
_____ Theology _____ Worship and Sacraments
_____ Polity _____ Biblical Exegesis

Took and passed Senior Ordination Exams:
_____ Theology _____ Worship and Sacraments
_____ Polity _____ Biblical Exegesis

Sent seminary transcript to date to Ministry Coordinator (see above)

Completed Form 3 and send to Ministry Coordinator (see above) two weeks before meeting with CPM Advisory group for Annual consultation.

Took financial planning seminar.

Completed the following courses:
____ Greek & Exegesis ____ Hebrew & Exegesis
____ Preaching ____ Pastoral Care ____ Church History
____ Ethics ____ Christian Education
____ PC(USA) Polity ____ Reformed Worship and Sacraments
____ Reformed Theology (including Book of Confessions & Calvin)

Final Steps to become Certified Ready to Receive a Call

Check off & date:

Responsibility:

Completed Final assessment Part 1 (with Advisory group) by sending your statement of faith, exegesis, sending in recorded sermon, and sermon manuscript.

Completed Final assessment part 2 (with full CPM) sending your statement of faith, exegesis, sending in recorded sermon, and sermon manuscript.

Sent final transcript showing MDiv degree to Ministry Coordinator (currently Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig (khh@chicagopresbytery.org))

Prepare PIF and submit online! Thanks be to God.

Appendix F – Acronyms

- **ACPE- The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education:** the organization that accredits CPE sites throughout the United States.
- **ATS- the Association of Theological Schools:** The organization that accredits theological degrees.
- **CLC- Church Leadership Connection:** the internet-based matching and referral system of the PC(USA)
- **COM- Commission on Ministry:** The Commission on Ministry's purpose is to serve ministers and Certified Christian Educators; to facilitate relations between congregations, ministers, Certified Christian Educators and the Presbytery; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the Presbytery when possible and expedient.
- **CPE- Clinical Pastoral Education:** An interfaith method of theological education through which students exercise and learn pastoral skills under the direct supervision of a certified pastoral supervisor in the context of serving people in crisis.
- **CPM- Commission for Preparation for Ministry:** The purpose of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry is to help church members discern and fulfill their Christian vocation and to provide the best possible leadership for the church by assuring that persons who feel called to be Ministers of Word and Sacrament receive the fullest personal and professional preparation for this office.
- **CRE/CLP/CP- Commission Ruling Elder, Commission Local/Lay Pastor, Commissioned Pastor:** This one role has its name frequently changes. There is a separate process of commissioning verses ordination.
- **EP- Executive Presbyter:** (currently Sue Krummel). This person staffs both CPM and CPM in the POC. (so many acronyms.)
- **PC(USA)- Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.**
- **POC- The Presbytery of Chicago:** the body of 80+ worshipping communities of the PC(USA) in the city of Chicago and Chicagoland.