

# JOHN KNOX PRESBYTERY

## COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY POLICIES

### I. INTRODUCTION

The following policies have been adopted by the John Knox Presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry to guide its inquirers, candidates and churches as they work together to develop leaders to serve the church.

These policies are a supplement to those outlined in the *Book of Order*, Form of Government and by the Presbyterian Church (USA). Forms and additional resources are available on the General Assembly website.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (referred to throughout this document as “CPM”) is concerned with the discernment of an inquirer’s call to ministry and a candidate’s preparation to respond to the call within the Presbyterian Church (USA). Guidance and support for inquirers and candidates are shared by the committee with seminaries, sessions and the presbytery.

All papers and forms must be submitted to the Presbytery Office no later than two weeks before the meeting at which the inquirer/candidate is scheduled to appear (every consultation includes Forms #3 and #4). If materials are not timely filed, the consultation will be postponed to a future meeting of the Committee, even if it delays the process.

John Knox Presbytery will reimburse inquirers and candidates for travel to and from required consultations. It is the responsibility of the inquirer/candidate to submit an accounting of their expenses to the committee chair. The presbytery reserves the right to make alternative arrangements for regular consultations.

### II. SERVICE IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

During the phases of inquiry and candidacy the individual continues to be an active member of his or her congregation and subject to the concern and discipline of the session. In matters relating to preparation for ministry, the individual is under the oversight of the presbytery through the committee on preparation for ministry.

#### A. Consultation and Guidance

1. The presbytery shall require the inquirer or candidate to make an annual written report concerning progress in studies and service to the church, including a report from the individual's institution of learning.
2. The committee on preparation for ministry shall regularly consult with each person on the rolls of inquirers and candidates. The purpose of the consultation shall be for the evaluation and nurture of inquirers and candidates. At least annually the Committee shall determine whether to continue or terminate the period of inquiry or candidacy and report this decision to the presbytery.

3. There shall be a written report of each regular consultation, including a statement of the individual's strengths and areas of needed growth, prepared jointly by the committee or its representative and the inquirer or candidate.
4. The content of these regular consultations shall include, but need not be limited to, assessment of the inquirer's or candidate's development in terms of the outcomes for the appropriate phase.
5. The primary focus of the first consultation(s) shall not be one of formal examination but of guidance and counseling with the inquirer and candidate. Succeeding consultation(s) shall include a discussion with the individual on requirements and progress in preparation for ordination.

### III. INQUIRY

#### A. Inquiry Defined

The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to the ordered ministry of teaching elder to explore that call together in such a way that the decision regarding the inquirer's suitability to progress to candidacy is made.

#### B. Process and Requirements

The process and requirement of the inquiry phase shall be as follows:

1. A person who has been an active member of a particular church for at least six months and desires to become an inquirer shall submit an application form to the Presbytery Office.
2. The person shall indicate to the session of the particular church a desire to explore the personal implications of becoming a teaching elder.
3. The session shall contact the committee on preparation for ministry (CPM) for orientation to the process used in JKP, and consult with the individual requesting to be enrolled as an inquirer. The session of the inquirer's or candidate's home church will designate a liaison for the inquirer. Inquirers, candidates, and liaisons shall be in regular contact during the year. The liaison will periodically inform the session of the inquirer's progress and/or needs.
4. John Knox Presbytery conducts background and ethics checks on all persons applying to come under care of the Presbytery. These checks must be completed before the status of Inquirer is considered.
5. Upon receipt of the endorsement of the session, CPM will interview the applicant. The CPM may then recommend that the presbytery enroll the person as an inquirer. A CPM member will be assigned to serve as a liaison with each inquirer and candidate and with his or her session. Inquirers and liaisons shall be in regular contact. The date of the presbytery's action to enroll shall be the beginning of the covenant

relationship. This period shall be at least two years, at least one year of which shall be as a candidate.

6. All persons who have met with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and who have been formally enrolled as an Inquirer by John Knox Presbytery must complete a career assessment and counseling evaluation. No inquirer will be advanced to candidacy phase without this assessment being completed. Inquirers are responsible for signing the necessary releases so that the results of their career consultation will be sent to the staff person for CPM. Copies of the career assessment report will be shared with the committee.

The fees for the career center assessment will be paid by the Presbytery. Career assessments are normally done through the North Central Career Center in Minneapolis. Inquirers make their own arrangements with the Career Center. Appointments must be booked well in advance.

7. The phase of inquiry shall be of sufficient length for the inquirer, the session, and the committee on preparation for ministry to decide whether the inquirer should apply to become a candidate. By the end of the inquiry phase, and in order to become a candidate, each inquirer shall demonstrate adequate promise for ministry by presenting
  - (1) a statement of his or her understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to his or her sense of call;
  - (2) a statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition;
  - (3) an analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationships;
  - (4) a statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
  - (5) a statement of self-understanding which reflects the inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
  - (6) a statement of his or her understanding of the task Teaching Elders perform, including an awareness of his or her specific gifts for Teaching Elders and of areas in which growth is needed.
  - (7) an application (form 5A) to enroll as a candidate, with session endorsement. The session will designate a liaison for the candidate phase of the process. Candidates and liaisons shall be in regular contact during the year. The liaison will periodically inform the session of the inquirer/candidate's progress and/ or needs.

#### IV. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

CPM encourages seminary studies at a Presbyterian Church (USA) affiliated seminary so that the inquirer/candidate will be well-acquainted with the life, mission and ethos of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

- A. General Course Requirements  
The CPM will determine that the following subject areas are represented on the seminary transcripts of candidates under their care:  
Hebrew  
Old Testament Exegesis  
Greek  
New Testament Exegesis  
Church History  
Reformed Theology  
Preaching  
Pastoral Care and Counseling  
Christian Education  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Polity

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry reserves the right to require additional courses, in order to best prepare the inquirer or candidate for ministry.

- B. Clinical Pastoral Education  
As of January 2001, incoming inquirers and candidates shall complete a basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at an accredited site. Students taking CPE are required to send a copy of their final CPE evaluation to the chair of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Copies of this evaluation will be shared with the committee.

- C. Supervised Practice of Ministry/Field Education  
Inquirers and candidates shall complete the equivalent of four semesters of one-day-per-week supervised field education as a part of their seminary education. At least two semesters of field education must be in a parish setting. Service in the inquirer's/ candidate's home church is not acceptable, regardless of whether or not the seminary accepts such experience for credit.

Students are also encouraged to consider a full-year internship, either as part of their seminary field education or following graduation. The CPM reserves the right to require a full-year internship.

Students shall be in consultation with CPM as they are planning their Supervised Practice of Ministry/Field Education. Students must arrange to have copies of all evaluations of their supervised practice of ministry experiences sent to the Presbytery Office. Copies will be shared with the committee.

- D. Transcripts  
At the conclusion of each year of seminary study, students are required to send a copy of their seminary transcript to the Presbytery Office. An unofficial transcript ("student copy" or photocopy) is acceptable for this purpose, with the exception of the final transcript - which must be an official transcript indicating the receipt of the M.Div. degree. The final transcript must include the seminary's official raised seal, and must be mailed directly from the seminary registrar to the Presbytery Office.

## V. CANDIDACY

### A. Candidacy Defined

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. This shall be accomplished through the guidance and evaluation of candidates, using learning contacts within the context of supportive relationships.

### B. Process and Requirements

1. The committee on preparation for ministry shall confer with the inquirer and review the evidence which indicates whether the inquirer is ready to proceed to candidacy. A CPM member will be assigned to serve as a liaison with each inquirer and candidate and with his or her session. Inquirers/candidates and liaisons shall be in regular contact.
2. The committee on preparation for ministry shall make a definite recommendation to the presbytery with respect to whether the inquirer should be received as a candidate. Presbytery shall act on every committee recommendation regarding application for candidacy.
3. The presbytery shall receive the report and recommendation of its committee and shall examine the inquirer in person with respect to his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry.
4. If the examination is approved, the presbytery shall receive the inquirer as a candidate after the following manner. The moderator shall propose the following questions to the inquirer:
  - (1) Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament?
  - (2) Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
  - (3) Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
  - (4) Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a candidate for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?
5. If these questions are answered in the affirmative the proceedings shall close with prayer.
6. The phase of candidacy lasts until the candidate receives an approved call and is examined and ordained, or until the candidate's name is removed from the roll of candidates in accord with G-2.0609.
7. By the end of the candidacy phase, each candidate to be ordained shall demonstrate readiness to begin as a Teaching Elder by

- (1) completion of the requirements of G-2.0607;
- (2) expressing theological views compatible with the confessional documents of the church;
- (3) revealing commitment to the ministry as a Teaching Elder within the discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with personal maturity, spiritual depth, and a capacity to respond to the needs of others, including colleagues in ministry;
- (4) presenting a written sermon, together with a description of the contemporary need to which it was addressed and an exegetical interpretation of the biblical material out of which the sermon arose. This sermon shall be preached before the CPM.

C. Ordination Examinations

Inquirers are strongly encouraged to take the Bible Content Examination as soon as possible after enrolling in seminary. It is the inquirer's responsibility to apply to take this exam, to pay for any fees and to see that the results are sent to the Presbytery Office. The committee may use the exam results to guide inquirers and candidates in their course work selections.

Inquirers/candidates shall obtain approval of the CPM before they can take the standard ordination exams approved by the General Assembly. Permission to take these examinations will ordinarily be given at the time of the annual consultation.

It is the candidate's responsibility to apply to take these exams, to pay any fees and to see that the results are sent to the Presbytery Office.

D. Dossier Circulation

Candidates shall not circulate a Dossier until the candidate has been assessed by CPM as ready to receive a call.

E. Final Assessment/Examination For Ordination

Candidates under the care of John Knox Presbytery will have a final assessment with the CPM. Final assessments are done at regularly scheduled CPM meetings. Scheduling of a final assessment will be done after all the requirements have been met. All materials will be submitted to the Presbytery office at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

*Statement of Faith*

The statement of faith submitted at the end of the candidacy phase must be typed, and no longer than one side of an 8½ X 11-inch sheet of paper. It should be single spaced, and double spaced between paragraphs and should be sensitive to the use of inclusive language. The candidate is responsible for getting a copy of the final version to the presbytery office for distribution to CPM for final assessment, and to any calling presbytery examining the candidate.

The statement of faith should be a personal expression of the candidate's beliefs concerning:

God  
Jesus Christ  
The Holy Spirit  
The Sacraments  
The authority of Scripture  
The nature and mission of the Church  
Discipleship

*Sermon*

The Candidate will lead the committee in a 20-30-minute service of worship, which will include a sermon. A copy of the service and of the sermon manuscript or outline needs to be sent to the Presbytery Office two weeks prior to the committee meeting at which it will be preached.

*Written Exegesis*

The written Bible exegesis submitted with the sermon should not be longer than 5 pages and will be submitted with the sermon manuscript/outline.

*Examination*

The Committee shall prepare and administer an oral examination for each candidate covering any aspect of his or her training, education, and understanding of ministry in order to assess the candidate's readiness to enter into ministry.

*Certification of Readiness*

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry is authorized to certify candidates ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. Such action shall be reported to the next stated meeting of presbytery. (Book of Order G-2.0607)

F. Policies For Ordination/Installation Of Candidates (COM-42)

VI. EXCEPTIONS

The CPM will consider exceptions to the above policies only under exceptional or unforeseen circumstances. Exceptions are not a means of relaxing requirements, but rather of declaring that requirements have already been met in alternative ways.

VII. EMERGENCY CARE FUND (CECF)

John Knox Presbytery has established an emergency assistance fund for inquirers/candidates under its care. The amount of assistance available each year will be determined by Presbytery. Application forms are available from the Presbytery Office.