

Guidelines and Criteria for Applicant Lay Pastors

Presbytery of North Central Iowa • Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Language

Applicant Lay Pastor (ALP) a person who is admitted into the lay pastor academy and is actively participating in the preparation process.

Eligible Lay Pastor (ELP) a person who has completed all requirements for commissioning and is waiting for a call.

Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) a person who is called and commissioned to work within the bounds of the presbytery of North Central Iowa or Presbytery of Prospect Hill on a one-three year renewable basis.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Committee on Ministry (COM)

Oversight

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) of North Central Iowa Presbytery (NCI) or Presbytery of Prospect Hill (PPH) will provide oversight for applicants for Lay Pastors.

- I. CPM will process all applications from persons desiring to seek commissioning as lay pastor.
- II. CPM will meet with each applicant prior to admission.
- III. CPM will select/approve a mentor for each ALP (See *Guidelines for Mentors*)
- IV. CPM will assign a committee member to be a liaison with the ALP.
- V. CPM will meet each ALP at an annual consultation.
- VI. CPM will meet with each ALP prior to commissioning to affirm readiness.

Admission

- I. ALP will be an Elder in good standing in the PCUSA with faithful, regular, participation in worship and the life of the church prior to admission.
- II. ALP will have a written recommendation from his/her pastor.
- III. ALP will have two additional written recommendations from non-family person who can attest to the applicant's faith journey and sense of call.
- IV. ALP will complete an application to include statements on:
 - a. Sense of call;
 - b. Personal faith;
 - c. What it means to be a Presbyterian;
 - d. What gifts and skills candidates bring to ministry that reflect the reformed tradition.
- V. ALP will obtain session approval.
- VI. ALP will meet with CPM.
- VII. ALP will come before Presbytery prior to acceptance to affirm his/her desire to enter into this process and abide by guidelines set forth by this Presbytery.
- VIII. ALP will participate in career assessment examinations to affirm call to ministry as soon as possible after acceptance into the program and prior to their final year of classes.
- IX. ALP will be declared eligible (ELP) after satisfactory completion of all of the requirements of the Lay Academy and examination by the Presbytery.

ALPs and ELPs

ALPs shall not preside over communion, baptism, moderate Session meetings, nor perform weddings. ELPs shall not preside over communion, baptism, nor moderate meetings without the approval of the Committee on Ministry (COM) of NCI or PPH. ELPs shall not perform weddings.

Course of Study

- I. ALPs will satisfactorily complete the course of study outlined by the Lay Academy of NCI.
- II. Course work is to be submitted within one month following the class. Requests for extensions will be made to the Director of the Lay Academy. A record will be kept of each request.
- III. Within six months of the end of a course, all written work must be completed including requests from instructors for material to be rewritten or the student will not receive credit for the course.
- IV. If ALP has completed documented course work or has extensive experience in a certain area, the ALP may request an equivalency from CPM of their Presbytery.
- V. Students who have applied or will apply to become ALPs are required to attend classes on “campus” except in case of emergency. Students will be permitted to miss two classes during their enrollment in the Lay Academy.
- VI. If the ALP should miss a class of the Lay Academy, the following options are available with the prior permission of CPM and the director:
 - a. ALP may wait for the next cycle of the Lay Academy and complete courses at that time.
 - b. ALP can take a seminary course for credit and pass the course at a satisfactory level.
 - c. ALP can arrange with the Director of the Lay Academy and CPM for courses to be completed using an independent study method with an approved instructor and syllabus.

CLP Requirements

- I. Students will meet with CPM prior to acceptance as ALP.
- II. ALPs will meet with the CPM at the end of the first year and prior to the beginning of the second year of training and at other times as required by the CPM.
- III. ALPs will participate in individual/group sessions sponsored by CPM to evaluate psychological and leadership issues associated with pastoral roles before consideration by CPM for ELP. Presbytery will cover some of the cost of this evaluation.

Criteria for Commissioning

- I. ELPs will have completed the Lay Academy or approved equivalencies.
- II. ELPs will have completed at least one year as an ALP.
- III. ELPs will be ordained Elders in the PCUSA.
- IV. ELPs will meet with the CPM for the purpose of a final theological and readiness examination. Prior to this meeting the ALP will write and preach a sermon observed by the CPM and provide a one-page Statement of Faith.
- V. ELPs will appear before Presbytery to present their statement of faith and be examined for eligibility.
- VI. The COM will meet with ELPs to determine an appropriate appointment for Commissioning. After their first commissioning, Lay Pastors will be under care of the COM.