

Guidelines and Criteria for Commissioned Lay Pastors

Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Language

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

Eligible Lay Pastor – a person who has completed all requirements for commissioning and is waiting for an appointment.

Commissioned Lay Pastor – a person who is appointed and commissioned to work within the bounds of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill on a one year, renewable basis.

Oversight

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill will provide oversight for applicants for Lay Pastor, under the provisions of the Book of Order, G-14.0801.

- I. The CPM will process all applications from persons desiring to seek commissioning as a lay pastor.
- II. The CPM will meet with each applicant prior to admission.
- III. The CPM will select/approve a mentor for each Applicant Lay Pastor.
 - A. The Mentor shall not be the applicant's pastor.
 - B. The Mentor must be an Ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA.
 - C. The Mentor shall be from inside the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.
- IV. The CPM will assign a committee member to be a liaison with the Applicant Lay Pastor.
- V. The CPM will meet with each Applicant Lay Pastor at least annually during his or her training to assist them in discerning their call.
- VI. The CPM will meet with each Applicant Lay Pastor prior to commissioning to affirm his or her readiness.

Admission

- I. The Applicant Lay Pastor will be an elder in good standing of the PCUSA for two years with faithful, regular, participation in worship and the life of the church prior to admission.
- II. The Applicant Lay Pastor will have a written recommendation from his or her pastor.
- III. The Applicant Lay pastor will have two additional written recommendations from nonfamily persons who can attest to the applicant's faith journey and sense of call.
- IV. The Applicant Lay Pastor will complete an application to include statements on:
 - A. Sense of call;
 - B. Personal faith;
 - C. What it means to be a Presbyterian; and
 - D. What gifts and skills they bring to the lay pastorate which reflect on the reformed tradition.
- V. The Applicant Lay Pastor will obtain his or her Session's approval.
- VI. The Applicant Lay Pastor will meet with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

- VII. The Applicant Lay Pastor will come before Presbytery to affirm his or her desire to enter into this process by the guidelines set forth by this Presbytery.

Applicant and Eligible Lay Pastors

Applicant Lay Pastors and Eligible Lay Pastors shall not preside over communion, baptism, moderate Session meetings, or perform weddings unless and until commissioned. Eligible Lay Pastors will come under the supervision of the Committee on Ministry.

Course of Study

- I. The Applicant Lay Pastor will satisfactorily complete the course of study outlined in the Lay Pastor Academy by the Presbytery of Prospect Hill, or the approved equivalent (See G-14.0801).
- II. Course work must 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. If an Applicant Lay Pastor has completed documented course work or has extensive experience, the applicant may request an equivalency for all or part of the Lay Pastor Academy. The following equivalencies will be considered:
 - A. Certified Lay Preacher Training (PCUSA)
 - B. Seminary courses for which credit was received with satisfactory performance (e.g., pass/satisfactory grade; grade C or better).
 - C. All other requests will be considered on a case-by case basis. The burden of proof will be the responsibility of the Applicant Lay Pastor.
- IV. If the Applicant Lay Pastor should miss part of the Lay Pastor Academy, the following options are available:
 - A. The Applicant Lay Pastor can wait for the next cycle of the Lay Academy and complete the course at that time.
 - B. The Applicant Lay Pastor can take a seminary course for credit and pass the course at a satisfactory level.
 - C. The Applicant Lay Pastor can attend Synod School or some other form of training with prior approval of the CPM. Documentation of attendance and participation will be required.
 - D. The Applicant Lay Pastor can arrange for a mentor to provide the training with prior approval of the CPM. Documentation will be required.
- V. Applicants for Lay Pastor will meet with the CPM at the end of the first year and prior to the beginning of the second year of training.
- VI. Applicants for Lay Pastor will participate in an individual/group session sponsored by CPM to evaluate psychological and leadership issues associated with pastoral roles before consideration by CPM for Eligible Lay Pastor. Presbytery will cover the cost of this evaluation.

Criteria for Commissioning

- I. Eligible Lay Pastors will have completed the Lay Pastor Academy or approved equivalencies.
- II. Eligible Lay Pastors will have completed 2 years as an Applicant Lay Pastor. Waivers of this criterion may be given to persons who completed Lay Preacher training prior to enrolling in the Lay Pastor Academy.

- III. Eligible Lay Pastors will be ordained Elders in the PCUSA.
- IV. Eligible Lay Pastors will meet with the CPM for the purpose of a final theological and readiness examination. Prior to this meeting the Applicant Lay Pastor will write/preach a sermon and provide a one-page Statement of Faith.
- IV. Eligible Lay Pastors will meet with the COM to present their statement of faith and be examined for eligibility. Eligible Lay Pastors will meet with the CPM for the purpose of a final theological and readiness examination. Prior to this meeting the Applicant Lay Pastor will write/preach a sermon and provide a one-page Statement of Faith. The Statement of faith should be an exposition of what the candidate believes, incorporating aspects of their faith experience, as well as reflecting their understanding of the Reformed Tradition. The following areas should be included but not limited to in the statement.
- God
 - Jesus Christ
 - The Holy Spirit
 - Atonement
 - The Sacraments
 - The authority of Scripture
 - The nature and mission of the Church
 - Discipleship
- V. The Committee on Ministry will meet with Eligible Lay Pastors to determine an appropriate appointment for Commissioning. After their first commissioning, Lay Pastors are, and will continue to be, under the oversight of the Committee on Ministry.
- (The Committee on Preparation for Ministry has the authority to make exceptions to these rules.)*
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Approved by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry of Prospect Hill Presbytery on March 31, 2007. Updated by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry of Prospect Hill Presbytery on April 20, 2010. Revised by the Presbytery of Prospect Hill on May 11, 2010. Revised by the Presbytery of Prospect Hill on November 9, 2010.