



TO: Session

FROM: Commission on Preparation for Ministry

RE: Ordination Process

Greetings and welcome to the process of helping one of your members discern her/his call to the ministry of our Lord and Savior and specifically her/his call to the office of teaching elder. Our commission is charged with overseeing the process and guiding people who are seeking ordination through the process. The process is set up to help people to discern their call as well as test their readiness to take the next step. It assumes that some might realize along the way that their call is not necessarily to be ordained.

This is an arduous process. While the Book of Order says that 2 years is required, it generally takes longer as we deal with various time commitments so we rely on you to encourage your member who is interested in exploring her/his call to begin the process as soon as possible. There are handbooks, forms, on-line sites and, of course, CPM members who will be able to help you along the way in understanding next steps.

The purpose of this letter is also to review with you the unique role and responsibility you, the Session, will play in your prospective Inquirer's (usually referred to as Seeker) journey. At every step along the way, once you have committed to take this member under care and go on this journey with them, you will be asked to support, guide and finally recommend to National Capital Presbytery that the individual be moved forward to the next step in the process.

You are in a sense mentor, gatekeeper for the PCUSA and support. You therefore have a responsibility to get to know these individuals, to challenge their weaknesses, make suggestions and be in dialogue. While some of our roles are different, the CPM values your work with us a partner as much as possible.

So what are the initial steps YOU need to take?

You will invite the Seeker to attend a Session meeting and talk with her/him about her/his sense of Call, what has brought her/him to this decision and review the **Form 1**. (The packet of information provided to your Session includes a copy of all forms, as well as suggestions for questions to consider when interviewing. These forms are available in electronic format for purposes of completion and submission; go to: <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process/> . After the interview, you will excuse the Seeker and vote to take her/him under the care of Session. This means:

- Designating a church liaison to oversee the church's relationship with the inquirer. You will want to form a small group consisting of two or three others, who could be chosen by the pastor or one might be suggested by the Seeker.
- Meet with the Seeker/Inquirer on a regular basis

- Accept possible financial obligations-sharing the psychological assessment expense (currently \$1500—the CPM pays 40% and the individual and the congregation of care are each expected to pay 30%) and helping with seminary expense if necessary (some congregations establish a fund to pay for their seminarians' books, for example).

Once you have voted to take the Seeker under care, **Form 1(A-D)** with original transcripts need to be mailed/emailed to the attention of Jan Moody , Assistant to the Stated Clerk, at the National Capital Presbytery office, jmoody@thepresbytery.org. Please sign the appropriate sections on **Form 2B**; the seeker will take the completed **Forms 2A and 2B** with her/him to the initial meeting with the CPM.

After the psychological assessment is completed, the Seeker will meet with the CPM who will recommend s/he be moved to the Inquiry Phase. This will happen by action of the CPM on behalf of the presbytery.

The steps outlined above are only the beginning of a covenant relationship between you, the Session, the CPM and the Seeker. It continues through the Inquiry Phase, the Candidacy Phase and until the Candidate receives a call or withdraws from the process. *Therefore*, we encourage the liaison you have designated or someone from the committee of persons supporting the Inquirer to attend the meetings the Inquirer has with the CPM. While you will not have a vote in the actions of the CPM, we will value your insight and perspective and it will be important for you to hear the way the CPM is experiencing the Inquirer. There is further detail about the process on NCP web site under Commission on Preparation for Ministry/Documents/ Overview of the Process.

We will look forward to working together. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or would like to convey pertinent information to us. The first point of contact can be our Assistant in the Stated Clerk's office, Jan Moody, jmoody@thepresbytery.org. If she cannot answer a question, she will know to whom to direct you.

It is recommended that Session receive a short orientation to the ordination process by way of a visit from a CPM representative. This orientation takes about 15-20 minutes, can be done at a Session meeting, and facilitates a beginning relationship among those who will guide a person in their ordination process. The CPM chair will contact the Session moderator to arrange a time for orientation.