

**National Capital Presbytery
Commission on Preparation for Ministry
Periodic Report to Leadership Council
June 1, 2021**

How does CPM support the presbytery mission?

- G-2.06 provides the basic mission of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) in and for the presbytery. Our primary work is nurturing potential Church leaders who are pastoral and prophetic. We also support COM with ministers from other churches.
- A secondary missional task is development of our current 17 CPM members from at least 14 congregations into enriched service of God's mission. CPM work enriches members' embrace of Presbyterian polity, reformed theology and the evolving mission of the Church in changing times. While there are "truths and forms with respect to which [persons] of good character" disagree¹, we work with a healthy space to lovingly "reason and remonstrate" together.²

What were the significant events (positive or negative) for CPM in 2020-21?

- Technology has been used for most meetings offering both blessings and problems.
- Six excellent candidates will be Certified Ready to Receive a Call (Certified) by July 1. This requires a candidate demonstrate comprehensive readiness for ministry.
- Each of our 4 Liaison Groups is currently processing one to three new candidates.
- CPM adopted an Interim Policy on Expedited Process for saints who completed seminary before starting toward ordination. There was great concern to maintain our traditional high standards without petty legalism. Each case will require an action sustained by a ¾ vote of the Presbytery.
- The Executive Committee of CPM has spent this program year revising our Manual, a task last visited about 8 years ago. Approval should be at our July meeting.
- Jan Moody's, and now Dina Bickel's service as staff is a great gift to CPM and NCP.
- Steps taken in tracking CPM's work comprehensively were interrupted by the pandemic. Development of an effective, user-friendly database network is needed.

What issues are most pressing on CPM's docket right now?

- Our primary focus must always be our routine work of care and development.
- As noted above, approval of a new Manual is pending; approval and emotional adoption of the resource are not necessarily the same thing.
- Ordination examinations for English Second Language (ESL) candidates has presented difficulty for candidates and CPM recently. The Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee (PCC) is not yet sensitive to the mission opportunities and limits inclusive language to pronouns.
- CPM needs to revisit the evolving blessings and liabilities of on-line seminary training.

¹ F-3.0105

² Footnote to G-2.0105

What direction do you see your committee's work going over the next three-five years?

- Employment of our Expedited Process under G-2.0610, which requires a ¾ majority approval by the presbytery will need to be handled in a disciplined manner.
- The tension of traditional models and evolving understandings of how we “do” Church will be challenging CPM’s work, whether we acknowledge or ignore them.
- While ministry is not a 40-hour week or part-time job, candidates need institutional support with boundaries and self-stewardship to avoid burnout.
- The evolving challenges of non-traditional students and seminary models have been met to date. CPM must embrace both tradition and missional needs.
- Opportunities beyond an academic degree continue to be a problem for various reasons. When Certified candidates remain uncalled for extended periods, the Church may need to revisit historic paradigms for funding ordered ministry.

How can the Leadership Council be of help to your committee?

- Vigilantly seek out opportunities where candidates might be useful in the work of NCP.
- CPM needs a consistent, full complement of diverse Elders. For 2 years vacancies were unfilled. During the pandemic we have been able to adapt. At the end of this term, half the leadership team rotates off, and several others are expected to step away. Our mission efficiency is compromised when our membership is less than the number of applicants, Inquirers and Candidates on the role. Recommend Elders identified with experience, wisdom and passion for our mission to Nominations.
- Keep CPM in your prayers. CPM molds the future character of the Church and denomination through decisions large and small that we make in fulfilling this calling.

Remembering Leadership Council's past concern let me include these demographics:

- Status: 6 Inquirers (3-5 applicants pending); 10 Candidates; 7 Certified Ready to Receive a Call (3 Candidates face Final Assessment this month); 2 Ordained in last year.
- Gender: 12 Males; 11 Females.
- Ethnicity: 17 Caucasians; 5 African/African American; 1 Asian.
- 18 NCP congregations have members under care: Arlington, Annandale, Bethesda, Bradley Hills, Christ the King, Church of the Pilgrims, Dale City, Darnestown, Ebenezer, Falls Church, Geneva, Immanuel, Kirkwood, Laurel, Potomac, Saint Mark, Vienna, Westminster (DC),
- Seminaries where our Candidates study/studied are: Austin, Claremont, Columbia, Dubuque, Duke, McCormick, Pittsburgh, Princeton, Union/Richmond, Union/New York, Wake Forest and Wesley.
- Current CPM membership is 20, (including 2 who were elected but have not participated and 1 with a health condition).

C. F. Van Gorder

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