

Guide to the Preparation for Ministry Process in the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

Welcome!

This guide explains the process of preparation for ministry in the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina.

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I: Important Things to Know as You Begin

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:4-8)

These verses from Paul form the basis of much of the work you will be doing as you explore your own particular call to ministry and the gifts God has given you. The role of the Commission for Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is to partner with you in the discernment process. As a commission, we honor your desire and your sense of call. At the same time, not all have been called to be prophets, counselors, teachers, or Ministers of the Word and Sacrament/ Teaching Elder. You may find yourself called to a different form of ministry than you first expected.

This is a time of exploration as well as preparation. You will be challenged in unexpected ways intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Some of what you thought you knew as a certainty may change. New understandings of your particular call and new levels of your understanding of your faith will deepen your spiritual journey. (Please see Appendix B on the Discernment Process) During these times of challenge remember these words of the Lord from Joshua 1:9 and hold them in your heart. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” We are here to help you through this, to support you and at times to challenge you.

You will be assigned a personal liaison who will keep in touch with you, help you find the resources you need throughout this process, and most

importantly pray for you. Use them. When they contact you, you must reply as soon as possible. Your liaison is there to help you and maintain contact with the commission . He/she will inform you as to certain deadlines and requirements, but this ultimate responsibility lies with you. Your liaison also reports to the full commission on your progress, your questions, and your requests. Your liaison will also communicate to you regarding discussions in the commission on your progress and discernment process along with any concerns, suggestions, recommendations, and requirements.

Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to make sure deadlines are met, course requirements are fulfilled, forms are filled out, ordination exams are taken in a timely manner and passed, and other requirements of the commission are met.

Familiarize yourself with the General Assembly requirements for ordination in the denomination's "A Seminarian's Guide to Entering PC(USA) Ministry" <https://equip.pcusa.org/course/view.php?id=524> The CPM of the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina has limited leeway within the denomination's national requirements. We have developed this handbook for the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina (PCC) with additional requirements that you must meet (for instance, PCC requires a floor examination prior to its vote on a move from the inquiry phase to candidacy)

There may be requirements that are individualized to help you in your journey toward ordination. For instance we may require additional course work or tutoring on a particular subject to help you pass a particular ordination exam.

Finally, we give you this advice from Paul to Timothy (I Timothy 4:12-15): "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body

of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.”

II. General Requirements

Annual Consultation

All inquirers and candidates are required to have an annual consultation with CPM every year until they are, in fact, ordained.

Deadline for Documents and Updates

When you interview with CPM, all necessary documents must be received by the CPM chairperson(s) a minimum of one month before the stated meeting in which you will appear. If you have updates or requests for CPM to consider, they must be put in writing to your liaison a minimum of one week before the stated meeting in which you would like it discussed.

Choosing a Seminary

Your Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree must be from a theological institution that is “accredited by the Association of Theological Schools” and “acceptable to the presbytery.” (G -2.0607c) CPM strongly recommends that you enroll in a PC(USA) seminary, because the goal of the preparation process is ministry in the PC(USA). If you enroll in a non-PC(USA) seminary, additional coursework or an extra year spent doing theological education at a PC(USA) seminary may be required by the committee to ensure that you are prepared for ministry in the PC(USA). All students, in either a PC(USA) or non-PC(USA) seminary, may be required to fulfill additional requirements at the direction of CPM.

Acceptable Grades

Grades must be satisfactory. Less than average academic performance will be subject to special scrutiny by CPM. An unofficial copy of your most recent transcript must be sent to CPM at the end of every academic period. Prior to your final assessment, your transcript must be an official transcript. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable for all other academic periods.

Internships

In the course of your preparation, you are required to complete field education internships. (You must complete the sexual misconduct prevention training approved by the presbytery prior to doing CPE or a church internship.) CPM wants your practical experience of ministry to be broad and varied. The commission might require that your parish internship take place in a church that is different in size, setting and/or ethnic background from your home church. CPM also might require that you complete a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). At any point throughout your process, CPM may require field education work beyond what the theological institution requires. At any point in the process, CPM may also require additional internship experiences.

Supplemental Requirements

CPM sometimes requires work above and beyond your seminary's M.Div. curriculum. This may include, but is not limited to:

- additional academic course work, tutoring, supervised independent study for remediation or added competence, in subjects such as Polity and Reformed Theology;
- working with a counselor, therapist, or spiritual director;
- participation in a group for support, spiritual growth, or recovery;
- pulpit supply for experience in preaching and leading worship;
- additional internship/field education experiences.

Transcripts and Internship Evaluations

At the end of each academic period, arrange and ensure that all transcripts and internship evaluations are sent to CPM through your liaison. Prior to your final assessment, your transcript must be an official transcript sent to the Presbytery's office. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable for all other academic periods.

Psychological Evaluation

You will be required to undergo psychological testing of career and personal issues at an approved testing center early in the Inquiry Phase.

This psychological testing will be paid 1/3 by the candidate, 1/3 by the candidate's home congregation (The congregation may include all or part of the travel expenses), and 1/3 by the PCC upon receiving a validated receipt. Travel expenses are not reimbursed by the PCC.

“To be enrolled as an inquirer, the applicant shall be a member of the sponsoring congregation, shall have been active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least six months, and shall have received the endorsement of the session of the sponsoring congregation. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.” (G-2.0602)

Communication With Your CPM Liaison

Your assigned CPM liaison is your primary link to CPM and also a resource for you on CPM. The liaison can only function in this role if you keep in touch with her or him. You are required to stay in contact with your liaison! Initiate communication with your liaison prior to CPM's regular meeting and promptly respond to any contact from your liaison. Your liaison is there to field your questions about the preparation process, receive your requests to CPM, and collect any changes in your contact information. They also want to frequently hear of your plans and hopes as you journey through this process. In addition, always be sure to keep your session liaison informed of your process. Your liaison is a part of your discernment process as well as CPM.

Waiving Requirements

If you find that you need a waiver from any of the requirements, discuss the matter as soon as possible with your CPM liaison, as any CPM-approved waiver must also be brought before Presbytery at a stated meeting. While it is exceedingly rare, and only granted in the most extraordinary of circumstances,

according to G-2.0610, the Presbytery may waive requirements for ordination, if three-fourths of the members present vote to do so.

III. Other Helpful Information

Pulpit Supply List and Service to the Church

CPM will create, monitor, and distribute to COM a list of candidates available to supply pulpits in the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina (PCC). For our candidates, seeking and receiving CPM's permission to be added to PCC's pulpit supply list is CPM's endorsement of you to accept occasional invitations to preach at any of PCC's congregations. However, COM must also approve a request for you to be added to the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina's Pulpit Supply List.

For our Inquirers, any service to the Church, such as filling a pulpit, must be approved by CPM prior to accepting any invitation. CPM will do its best to be responsive to any such request in a timely manner.

IV. Application for Inquiry

To Begin the Preparation Process

1. You must be an active member of a PC(USA) congregation. You must have been active in the work and worship of that same congregation for at least six months (prior to or including your time of membership) before you can be enrolled as an inquirer. (G-2.0602)
2. Speak to the pastor of your church about your desire to explore your call to ministry.
3. Read the Book of Order (G-2.06) about the preparation process. Remember that the Book of Order contains only the requirements that apply everywhere in the PC(USA). The guide that you are now reading contains the basic framework that applies to inquirers and candidates specifically within the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina.
4. Contact the chairperson(s) of CPM and ask to begin the inquiry process. Once CPM is aware of your interest, it will send one of its members to the

session of your church to explain to your session the process of preparation and their obligations.

5. Request or download the forms relevant to the application for inquiry. These forms, and all subsequent forms you will need from the PCUSA Preparation for Ministry website over the course of your journey, can be found at: <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process/>

Complete the Inquiry Application & Request to Meet with Session

1. Print and Complete Forms 1A, 1B, and 1C.
2. Print Form 1D, but do not fill it out. The session will complete it after interviewing you.
3. Read Form 2A before your interview. CPM will complete this after interviewing you.
4. Print Form 2B and enter your name in the first blank.

Ask your clerk of session to arrange for you to meet with the session to gain its endorsement of your application for inquiry. Submit to the clerk of session the following:

1. A copy of forms 1A, 1B, and 1C.
2. The original forms 1D and 2B.
3. Undergraduate and any graduate school transcripts.

Meet with the Session of your Church

Your church's session will use the questions from Form 1D to guide its discussion with you. They will record their actions on Form 1D, and if they endorse you, they will appoint a session liaison for you. Your session liaison will record his or her contact information on Form 1D.

The moderator of session, you, and a witness will sign Form 2B. After the clerk makes copies of Form 1D and 2B to add to their copies of 1A, 1B, and 1C that they will keep on file at the church, the clerk of session will give you back the original Form 2B and the completed original Form 1D.

Give your Application to the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina % CPM

Send your original application, including forms 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, and 2B, to the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina c/o CPM a minimum of one month prior to your scheduled meeting with CPM.

Send school transcripts in their original, hard-copy form, or have your school send them directly to the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina c/o CPM. If the school is sending the transcript directly, it is your responsibility to make sure that CPM has received it a minimum of one month prior to your scheduled meeting.

V. CPM Inquiry Interview

Verify when you would like to meet CPM by contacting the chairperson(s) of CPM. Initial interviews are ordinarily conducted in person. You are welcome to invite your session liaison and/or pastor to be present to support you.

Preparing for the Interview

1. Create a hard copy or electronic file for yourself in which you will keep all of your application materials, transcripts, internship evaluations, correspondence from CPM, and any other material pertaining to your preparation for ministry. Use this for your own reference, and please bring it to all CPM interviews. For the CPM Inquiry Interview, your file should contain copies of all of your application materials and transcripts plus any correspondence you have from CPM.
2. Re-read all of your application materials, and study the covenant agreement on Form 2B.

Focus of the Inquiry Interview

In this interview, the question in CPM's mind is: "Is the applicant willing to be guided by CPM in exploring whether God is calling her or him to ministry as a teaching elder?"

If you are enrolled as an Inquirer

If CPM enrolls you as an inquirer, the following things will happen:

1. The moderator/s of CPM will explain briefly what you are expected to do next.

2. CPM will appoint a CPM liaison for you.
3. The CPM moderator/s and a witness will sign the covenant agreement on Form 2B.

On the date presbytery enrolls you as an inquirer, the period of preparation officially begins. You will receive a follow-up letter following the CPM meeting. The letter will state CPM's decision about your application and any particular instructions that CPM has given to you. With this letter, you will receive a copy of Forms 2A and 2B for your records. Your original application will be kept in a file at the Presbytery office.

VI. Inquiry Phase

“The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as teaching elders to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.” (G -2.0603)

Early in your inquiry phase, you will be asked to complete the required psychological evaluation. The cost of the evaluation, not living expenses, will be paid for 1/3 by PCC not including travel expenses, 1/3 by your home congregation (who may contribute to travel expenses), and 1/3 by yourself. You are required to undergo psychological evaluation of career and personal issues. Authorize the counseling service to mail the final report to the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina c/o CPM. CPM prefers that you use the following counseling center:

Ministry Development Services, Presbyterian Psychological Services 5203
Sharon Rd, Charlotte, NC 28210

704-554-9222

mds@presbypsych.org

www.presbypsych.org

If you want to use another counseling center (because, for instance, you are in seminary far from Charlotte), please discuss the matter with your CPM liaison.

After completing the psychological evaluation, and prior to the end of your first year as an inquirer, you will need to have an annual consultation with CPM. Stay in touch with your home church and your session liaison. You might send a letter that can be published in your church's newsletter to keep everyone informed. Stay in touch with your CPM liaison! When you correspond with your CPM liaison, you may wish to copy your correspondence to your session liaison, in order to keep your session informed of what is going on in your preparation process.

Your seminary and CPM will require you to do internships. Before you choose an internship, you must discuss your options with your CPM liaison and seek CPM approval. Before beginning the internship, sexual misconduct prevention training approved by the presbytery shall be completed and documentation of completed training shall be added to your file. You are strongly encouraged, but not required, to take the Bible Content Ordination Examination following introductory courses in the Hebrew and New Testament scriptures. This should be done in your first year of seminary.

VII. Annual Consultation

Each year, every inquirer and candidate must complete Form 3, which is a written progress report. The report serves as the basis for an in-depth consultation with CPM, the results of which are recorded on Form 4. The report and the consultation are required.

The first consultation will normally occur approximately one year after you are received as an inquirer. Others will follow on a yearly basis. As timely completion of these consultations is necessary for the evaluation and nurture of the inquirer or candidate, the CPM expects them to be completed without unnecessary delay.

Before you have your Annual Consultation with CPM

1. Download Form 3 and Form 4 for the annual consultation.
2. Complete Form 3 and send it to chairperson(s) of CPM.

3. Make sure CPM has received your most recent transcript and evaluations for any internships you have completed.
4. CPM must have all of the above documentation a minimum of one month before you are scheduled for your annual consultation. If you miss the deadline, you will be required to reschedule your consultation at a time convenient to CPM.
5. Your liaison will check the references that you list on Form 3.

During your Annual Consultation

CPM will use Forms 3 and 4 to guide their conversation with you. When the conversation is over, you will be asked to leave the room while the commission discusses the conversation and votes on whether you should continue in the process. After the vote, you will be brought back into the room, and the CPM moderator/s will let you know how the commission voted and provide you with feedback and any additional requirements that may need to be added at that time.

After your Annual Consultation

Your conversation with CPM will form the basis of Form 4, which will be completed by your CPM liaison. When it is complete, your CPM liaison will send it to you for your review and signature. Promptly send the form back to your CPM liaison, who will sign the form and pass it along to the CPM chairperson(s) who will sign it. It will then be placed with your other materials in a file in the Presbytery office. CPM will report its action on your annual consultation at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

VIII. Application for Candidacy

The process of applying for candidacy tests whether your sense of your call and suitability for ordered ministry of the Word and Sacrament is confirmed by the church. (G-2.0603) Because you must be a candidate for a minimum of one year, it is crucial to become a candidate before your second year of seminary ends if you want to be eligible to receive a call upon seminary

graduation (or before your third year ends if you are a dual degree student). Your candidacy begins the date that Presbytery votes for you to begin your candidacy at a Presbytery meeting in which you appear before the body. However, note that there are a number of steps that you must take before you appear before the Presbytery.

To Begin Your Application

1. Make sure CPM has received your most recent transcript and evaluations for any internships you have completed.
2. Download the application for candidacy. Complete Form 5A and read Form 5B and 5C. On Form 5D enter your name in the first blank.
3. Write a one-page statement of faith.
4. Write a one-page summary of your call to the ministry and your motives for seeking the ministry.
5. Write a one-page summary of the ways in which you have served the church, and the ways in which you have served that affirm your call.
6. If you have not already, complete the PCC's approved sexual misconduct prevention training.
7. CPM may also require supplemental materials that you will be expected to complete with your application. If this is the case, CPM will provide these to you when your request to meet with the commission is granted.

Meeting with the Session of your Church

Ask your church's clerk of session to arrange for you to meet with the session to gain its endorsement of your application for candidacy. Submit to the clerk the following:

1. A copy of your completed Form 5A.
2. Original copies of Forms 5B and 5D.
3. Your one page statement of faith
4. Your one-page summary of your call to the ministry and your motives for seeking the ministry.

5. Your one-page summary of the ways in which you have served the church, and the ways in which you have served that affirm that call.
6. Your personal summaries of the internships you have completed to date.

Your session will use the above materials to guide their conversation with you. Upon the completion of their conversation:

1. The session will vote about whether or not to endorse you for candidacy, and will record its decision and put your session liaison's information on Form 5B.
2. The session moderator, you, and a witness sign Form 5D.
3. The clerk of session will make a copy of 5B and 5D to add to their copy of 5A to put in your file at the church, and will return to you the original completed 5B and the original signed and dated Form 5D.

In Preparation for your Interview with CPM

1. Send your original application and supplemental materials to the chairperson(s) of CPM, keeping copies for yourself.
2. Send or have your seminary or place of internship send the evaluations of all internships that you have done.
3. Send your transcripts or have your seminary send your transcript in its original form to the CPM chairperson(s). (This can be an unofficial transcript.)
4. All original application materials, transcripts, evaluations of internships, and any other supplemental materials as required by CPM must be received by the chairperson(s) no later than one month prior to your candidacy interview date with CPM.
5. Prepare a sermon which you will give to CPM.

IX. CPM Candidacy Interview

Verify when you will meet with CPM by contacting your CPM liaison. Remember, the candidacy interview ordinarily takes place at an in-person commission meeting. You are welcome to invite your session liaison and/or pastor and/or others who might be of support to you.

Focus of the Candidacy Interview

In this interview CPM wants to answer the question, "Are you called to ministry as a teaching elder in the PC(USA)?" More specifically, the commission wants to discern whether that call (1) is clear in your own heart and mind, and (2) has been confirmed in your practical experience of ministry. You will give a prepared sermon to the CPM.

The commission reviews the evidence gained during the inquiry phase and determines whether the evidence demonstrates suitability for ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament. CPM is not expecting you to have all the knowledge and skills of a minister at this point, but it does want to see that your beliefs, gifts, and traits indicate a good fit between you and ministry as a teaching elder in the PC(USA).

Preparing for your Interview

1. Review all of the materials in the file that you have been keeping, being especially certain to review your most recent copies of Form 3 and Form 4 and the recent form 5A and the three supplemental one-page summaries that you have completed, as well as any other supplemental materials that CPM may have required you to prepare. Re-read the covenant agreement on Form 5D and be sure that you understand it.
2. Bring your file with you to the interview so that you may refer to it.

If CPM Recommends that Presbytery Receives You as a Candidate

If CPM recommends that the Presbytery receive you as a candidate, the following things will happen:

- a) The CPM chairperson will explain briefly what you are expected to do next.
- b) The CPM chairperson and a witness will sign the covenant on Form 5D.

You will receive a letter following the CPM meeting that will state CPM's decision about your application and any particular instructions that CPM has given to you. With this letter, you will receive a copy of Forms 5C and 5D for your file.

Remember that if CPM recommends that the Presbytery receive you as a candidate, that does not make you a candidate. Only the Presbytery can do that at one of their meetings.

X. Candidacy Examination by Presbytery

If CPM has recommended that you be enrolled as a candidate, you will need to be present to be examined on the floor of Presbytery. To find the dates of Presbytery meetings, please refer to the calendar on the Presbytery's webpage. About 10 days before the Presbytery meeting in which you will be examined, you can go to the Presbytery's website and find the agenda. Your examination will happen during the CPM report.

Coming to the Presbytery Meeting

Becoming a candidate is an important step in your preparation process, and you are encouraged to invite your church, family, and friends to join you at the meeting for this special day. Plan to arrive before the meeting starts, so that you can be present for the opening worship and see how presbytery conducts its business. (Remember that you are preparing to become a teaching elder, and that for teaching elders, participation in presbytery is required!) During the CPM report, you will stand in front of the Presbytery and make a statement (5 minutes max) speaking to three topics:

1. Your personal faith and experience of God's grace;
2. Your call to the ministry and motives for seeking the ministry;
3. The ways in which you have served the church, and the ways in which you have served that affirm your call.

The members of the Presbytery will be free to ask you questions about the same topics. The Chairperson(s) of CPM will begin the questioning. After the examination, the Presbytery will vote on whether to receive you as a candidate. If you are successful in the Presbytery's examination, you will be asked these questions:

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 ministry as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

Someone will then give a brief charge to the candidate/s and conclude this time with prayer. The day that Presbytery votes to accept you as a candidate is the official start date of the candidacy phase of your preparation.

XI. The Candidacy Phase

“The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as teaching elders. This shall be accomplished through the presbytery’s support, guidance, and evaluation of a candidate’s fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination.” (G -2.0604) At the end of this period, you should be able to demonstrate “readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder.” (G-2.0607)

During the candidacy phase, you will need to:

1. Complete both your seminary coursework and your internships.
2. Pass your ordination exams.
3. Complete all additional requirements as set out by CPM.
4. Have an annual consultation with CPM every year until you are ordained
5. Continue to stay in touch with your home church and session liaison. You might send a letter that can be published in your church's newsletter to keep everyone informed.
6. Continue to stay in touch with your CPM liaison as laid out earlier in this guide.

Pulpit Supply List

After the presbytery has received you as a candidate, you are eligible to ask the Committee on Ministry (COM) to add your name to the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina's Pulpit Supply List.

XII. Ordination Examinations

Currently, there are five ordination examinations: Bible Content, Biblical Exegesis, Theological Competence, Worship & Sacraments, and Church Polity. You may go to the following website to learn about the exams, including when they are administered and how to register for them: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/standard-ordination-exams/> There are also resources relating to the preparation of the Bible Content Exam and the other ordination exams available in "A Seminarian's Guide to Entering PC(USA) Ministry" <https://equip.pcusa.org/course/view.php?id=524>

Bible Content Exam

You may apply to take the Bible Content Exam without getting approval from CPM. You are encouraged, I required, to take the Bible Content Exam after you have taken introductory courses in the Hebrew and New Testament scriptures in your first year of seminary.

Senior Ordination Exams

The senior ordination exams are Bible Exegesis, Theological Competence, Worship & Sacraments, and Church Polity. You may take these exams as an inquirer or candidate, but it is best to take these exams after you have completed the necessary coursework in each of these areas. After you register for the exam(s), the CPM chairperson(s) will grant authorization for you to take the exam.

Special Accommodations

If you have a disability that affects your test-taking ability that is documented by a person or persons acceptable to CPM, then CPM may approve accommodations when you take these exams.

Alternate Means of Ascertaining Readiness

In an extremely rare case, presbytery (by a three-fourth's majority) may approve a means other than the standard ordination examinations “to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations.” (G -2.0610)

XIII. Application for the Final Assessment of Readiness to Begin Ministry as a Teaching Elder

The final step in the preparation process is the final assessment of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder. G-2.0607 states:

“Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder shall include:

- a) a candidate’s wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;
- b) a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;
- c) a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and
- d) examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination exam covered by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.”

To have your final assessment, you must be able to show these signs of readiness, have completed an annual consultation within the previous 12 months of your final assessment, have passed all ordination exams, and have completed any other requirements that CPM has asked of you.

Preparing your Application for the Final Assessment

Send the following documents to the CPM chairperson(s):

1. Official transcripts of all academic work completed after high school.
2. An official transcript from a theological institution showing “a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation.” (G- 2.0607c)
3. If you are still in seminary when you apply for the final assessment, submit a schedule for completing your educational requirements.
4. All internship evaluations completed by you and your supervisors since your last annual consultation.
5. A one-page single-spaced statement of faith. Your statement of faith must express theological views compatible with the confessional documents of the church. Topics to address include, but are not limited to, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, human nature and sin, grace, justification, sacraments, church, Scripture, and the mission of the church.
6. The current requirement for PDPs (Personal Discernment Profile) is that this statement of faith be no more than 3000 characters including spaces. You may wish to start working toward that limitation in the statement of faith that you submit to CPM.
7. All materials, transcripts, evaluations of internships, and any other supplemental materials as required by CPM must be received no later than one month prior to your final assessment date with CPM.

XIV. Final Assessment of Readiness to Begin Ordained Ministry

Verify when you will meet with CPM by contacting your CPM liaison. You may invite your session liaison, pastor, and any others that you choose to be present, if you think their presence will be an encouragement to you. CPM welcomes them, but does not require them to be present for the final

assessment. The final assessment interview focuses on the entirety of your preparation. In the final assessment, CPM is looking for evidence of your:

1. readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder as defined in G-2.0607 (see Section XIII for the full text);
2. understanding of the ordination questions (W-4.4003), informed by knowledge of the church in diverse settings;
3. commitment to ministry as a teaching elder in the PC(USA), and a capacity to respond to the needs of others, including colleagues in ministry;
4. ability to carry out the practical ministry to which you are called; and
5. willingness to continue studying and growing throughout your ministry.

Preparing for your Final Assessment with CPM

Read carefully the ordination questions as set out in W-4.4003. Do you understand the commitment a person makes who answers the questions affirmatively? Are you ready to answer them affirmatively? You are not expected to answer the questions in this interview, but this would be a good time to discuss any hesitation you feel about answering them.

Bring to the final assessment your binder with all of your CPM materials, including a copy of your application, so that you can refer to it if you need to.

If CPM recommends you to PCC as certified ready to receive a call you will appear before presbytery, give a sermon, and read your statement of Faith. The Presbytery will then question you from the floor and they may ask questions regarding your understanding of theology at this point. Presbytery will then vote as to whether you shall be certified as ready to receive a call. Then the following things will happen:

1. The CPM chairperson(s) will authorize you and Church Leadership Connection (CLC) to circulate your PDP.
2. You are free to negotiate terms of a call.

If CPM or the PCC Certifies You Ready to be Examined for Ordination, Upon Completion of One or More Requirements

If CPM or the Presbytery decides to certify you ready to be examined for ordination, upon condition that you complete one or more requirements, then the following must happen in this order:

1. You complete the unfulfilled requirements.
2. You send to the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina c/o CPM documentation that all remaining requirements are met to the satisfaction of CPM.
3. CPM chairperson(s) authorize(s) you and Church Leadership Connection (CLC) to circulate your PDP
4. You may negotiate terms of call.

Following the Final Assessment

You will receive a letter following the CPM interview recommending you to PCC for certification that will state CPM's decision regarding your final assessment and any particular instructions that CPM has given you.. Only presbytery can certify you as ready to receive a call. It will also enclose a Form 6.

Preparing for Your Ordination Examination with a Calling Presbytery

The final assessment prepares you for later examinations that you will undergo before presbytery and before the Committee on Ministry's examination subcommittee. Even if CPM recommends you be certified as ready to receive a call, it may require you to get some coaching in certain areas, so that you will be better prepared to succeed in subsequent examinations.

Annual Consultations Following Your Final Assessment

Even if CPM has recommended you to be certified for a call, pending a call you must continue to have an annual consultation with CPM at the appropriate time of the year with the annual consultation forms completed. This requirement continues until you are ordained or otherwise exit the process of preparation.

XV. Seeking a Call

When the presbytery certifies that you are ready to be examined for ordination, pending a call, and there are no outstanding requirements from CPM or the presbytery, you may seek a call, circulate your Personal Discernment Profile (PDP), and negotiate for your service as a teaching elder. Look over the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) webpage on the PC(USA) site for seeking a call: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/>

Preparing Your Personal Discernment Profile (PDP)

A PDP is the resume for people seeking a call to ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA). To create your PDP, go to the Church Leadership Connection section of the PC(USA) website and follow the instructions on that page.

It is a good idea to ask your CPM liaison to review your PDP as you write it. We also recommend that you ask trusted pastors and lay members to read your PDP and make comments.

XVI. Presbytery and CPM Contact Information

Committee on Preparation for Ministry Presbytery of Coastal Carolina 807 W. King Street Elizabethtown, NC 28337 Phone 910-862-8300 email: presbycc.org

Your CPM Co-Chairs: Rev. Barrett Ingram ingrajb2gmail.com

Rev. Dr. Patricia Ramsden p.ramsden269@gmail.com

Your CPM Liaison:

Appendix A Acronyms and Roles

Candidate This phase of the ordination process is for at least one year and lasts until you have been ordained. Candidates must continue their relationship with CPM until ordination, including an annual consultation with the appropriate forms completed and on file.

COM (Commission on Ministry). The COM is the primary committee for Pastors, Christian Educators and congregations within a presbytery's bounds. Once you receive a call the COM in your calling presbytery will examine you both for ordination and to discern if the call is a "match made in heaven". If the way be clear they will recommend you and the call to the calling presbytery where you will again be examined for ordination on the floor of that presbytery. The calling presbytery will vote to affirm your ordination and call. The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina's COM may include you on our presbytery's pulpit supply list after you reach the candidacy phase and upon your request.

CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) This is an intensive pastoral care internship usually associated with hospital chaplaincy. This may be required by your seminary or by CPM.

CPM (Commission on Preparation for Ministry) This commission will partner with you as together CPM and you discern your call to ministry. The workings of the commission are outlined in this handbook. CPM will also pay for 1/3 of the psychological evaluation (not including travel expenses)

Inquirer This is the first phase of the discernment process as to who God is calling you to be and whether that call is to ordained ministry as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. It lasts for at least two years - generally the first two years of theological education.

Liaison is the person on CPM assigned to help shepherd you through the discernment and ordination process and he/she will serve as your primary go between with CPM. It is essential that you maintain contact with your liaison.

Minister of Word and Sacrament/Teaching Elder These two terms are interchangeable. Both are used throughout the handbook.

PCC (Presbytery of Coastal Carolina) CPM is a commission of the presbytery but the presbytery itself must approve enrolling inquirers, the move to candidacy, and the certification that you are ready to receive a call. The calling

presbytery has the responsibility of examining candidates for ordination and installation.

PDP (Personal Discernment Profile) This form is provided by the denomination as a part of the call process. It must be completed and put on file in the denomination's offices in Louisville, KY at the beginning of the call process. Your PDP is used to help match you with congregations seeking a pastor.

Session The session of your home congregation is the first to affirm your call to ministry and will support you throughout your journey. You must keep them informed as to your journey and your needs. They are to contribute 1/3 of the cost of your psychological evaluation and may contribute additional financial help during your seminary studies. They must also recommend your move to candidacy.

Seminary The function of seminary is to provide a theological understanding of the faith and includes courses on practicing the faith as an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament sometimes called a Teaching Elder. Courses you will take include courses such as reformed theology, Hebrew, Greek, preaching and worship. Your time in seminary will also include supervised internships that must be approved by CPM whether your seminary requires it or not. Seminary is an essential partner in the faith development of candidates and plays a crucial role in the discernment process of a call, however the ordination process is a process of the denomination and not of the seminary.

Statement of Faith This is your personal statement of faith on God the creator, God our Savior and God the Holy Spirit., as well as the Trinity's relationship with humankind, sin, grace, and redemption. It also contains your views on the sacraments and the role of the Church. It will change and develop throughout the ordination process.

Statement On Faith Journey This statement describes your personal journey of faith and faith experiences.

Statement on Church Service This statement describes your involvement in and contributions to the organized Church and related institutions (for instance chaplaincy internships in a hospital setting; mission work at home or abroad; specialized ministry work)

Appendix B The Discernment Process

The purpose of discernment is described in Proverbs 1:2-6. It is “for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young. Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.”

Discernment in the call process is, simply put, the coming to the best decision as to what form your call from God shall take. This will involve seeking the will of God using prayer, listening to the Word of God (using both the head and heart), and taking sufficient time when making decisions as to the path you should follow. (Philippians 1: 9-10)

Discernment is a decision-making process that honors the place of God's will in all our lives rather than following only what we want. It is an interior search that seeks to align our own will with the will of God in order to learn what God is calling us to do. We all must listen, wait, and pray to discern our true gifts and call.

This is an intensely personal process that also involves the honest input of others as they journey with you. It includes prayer and sacred silence, listening to God speaking through scripture or that still quiet voice that is so often the answer to prayer, but it also must include the honest voices of others: friends, colleagues, the members of this committee, professors, intern supervisors, the list continues of voices that God can and will use.

These times of contemplation, listening, discerning talents and gifts should lead to a clarity about who we are and, maybe even more, who we are not. This second revelation is just as important as the first and should not be neglected in the discernment process.

The members of this commission stand ready to help you in this discernment process. It is CPM's primary reason for being. Please use the members of this commission and in particular your liaison. Tell the commission what they need to be praying about for you. Ask questions. Allow the members of the commission the

privilege of listening to you and your inner wrestlings. The work you and members of CPM will do together is much more than checking off of a list of forms and tests passed. It is a sacred journey of faith.

Appendix C

Preparing Financially For Your Theological Education

Financing your education and personal needs is a significant part of your discernment process. Like the other areas, it is also a place where there is an abundance of resources should you choose to use them. The financial aid officer along with your CPM Liaison may be helpful conversation partners along with others in your family and church communities.

Please collaborate with the person responsible for financial aid at any seminary you are considering for assistance and worksheets on budget planning. They will point you to resources that may include some from the Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers Project of the Association of Theological Schools. If not, please peruse what is offered here: <https://www.ats.edu/Resources-to-Teach-Financial-Literacy-and-Leadership>

- A. **Draft an annual Budget** and review it with those you trust who are financially savvy. Remember the “cost of attendance” is more than tuition. Make sure to include the cost for healthcare starting with our <https://www.pensions.org/For-seminarians-and-candidates> (You must be classified as an Inquirer or Candidate to participate). Here is a helpful online budgeting tool: <https://www.mappingyourfuture.org/money/budgetcalculator.cfm> The Board of Pensions of the PC(USA) also offers free tools for budgeting, cashflow, getting out of debt, finding a financial planner and more here: <https://www.pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/lifelong-learning-through-board-university/education-resource-center/financial-and-retirement-planning>
- B. Become familiar with all areas of **Financing a Theological Education** Including:
 1. **School and Denominational support:** Theological schools underwrite a significant portion of a theological education using their annual budget and endowments. Some of that annual support at PC(USA) seminaries is from the Theological Education Fund but the majority is from donors over decades. Financial aid offices often have persons able and equipped to help you understand what is available. Be sure to ask about application fees, withdrawal policies and other refund policies.
 2. **Personal and family support.**

3. **Grants and Scholarships** are offered by schools, congregations, civic organizations as well as the PC(USA). It is your responsibility to look for any of these following where you have connections.
 4. **Jobs and internships in seminary can supply support for expenses.**
 5. There are **government loans** for theological degrees with lower interest. You will need to complete a FAFSA application. Start by understanding federal financial aid here. <https://nsldsfa.ed.gov/login>
- C. **Consider what might be your future compensation and support for ministers should you be ordained as a teaching elder.** An annual report by the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA) is a helpful and comprehensive place to start. <https://www.pensions.org/our-role-and-purpose/the-connectional-church/living-by-the-gospel>

This guide is just that, a guide not an exhaustive list of resources, but a good place to get started with your financial literacy for theological education. Use financial planners, financial aid officers as well as your CPM and Session Liaison and Pastor as resources and conversation partners.