



**A HANDBOOK FOR  
CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY'S  
COMMITTEE ON  
PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY  
Including Policies and Forms**

With gratitude to the  
Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
for the materials used throughout this document from the  
*Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the PC(USA)*

Revised: November 8, 2022

## Table of Contents

<b>Foundation for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Presbytery's Responsibility for Preparation for Ministry.....	3
Presbytery's Administration of these Responsibilities.....	3
Confidentiality.....	3
Significant Relationships .....	4
Structure.....	4
Expectations of CPM Members.....	4
 <b>Preparation for Ministry Process to be a Minister of Word and Sacrament .....</b>	 <b>6</b>
Constitutional Requirements .....	6
Goals and Requirements.....	7
Additional Requirements and Procedures of Central Florida Presbytery.....	10
Pre-Inquiry Phase.....	10
Inquiry Phase.....	11
Candidacy Phase .....	12
 <b>Preparation for Ministry Process in Certified Church Service .....</b>	 <b>13</b>
Constitutional Requirements .....	13
 <b>Preparation for Ministry Process to be a Certified Educator.....</b>	 <b>14</b>
Constitutional Requirements .....	14
Procedure for Educators Seeking Certification .....	14
 <b>Policy and Procedure Documents.....</b>	 <b>15</b>
Recommended Duties of the CPM Liaison.....	15
Christian Educators Seeking Certification Policy.....	17
Career Counseling Information.....	18
Clergy Sexual Misconduct Policy.....	19
Policy for Background Checks for Inquirers and Candidates .....	26
Disclosure and Authorization for Background Checks .....	27
Attending a Non-PC(USA) Seminary Policy .....	30
Presbyterian Church (USA) Seminary Summary .....	32
Statements for Candidacy.....	33
Candidacy Statement of Faith Journey .....	34
Statement of Faith Format.....	35
Consent of Release.....	36
Travel Reimbursement Policy Memo.....	37
Offering for the Scholarship Fund for Church Vocations.....	38
Financial Support for Persons Under Care Policy.....	39
Policy Regarding Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).....	40
Alternative Means of Examination Policy .....	41
Circulation of PIFs by Candidates Policy .....	42
Pulpit Supply List Policy.....	44

## **Foundation for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry**

### **What is the Presbytery's Responsibility for Preparation for Ministry?**

The presbytery has power to and a responsibility for "guiding the preparation of those preparing to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament" (G-3.0301.a.) and "shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture and oversee the process of preparing to become a minister of the Word and Sacrament. To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of inquirers and candidates... it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. Such entities shall be composed of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting." (G-3.0307)

The presbytery is also responsible for encouraging individuals called to certified church service to "to be prepared to meet, the certification requirements of a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly (G-2.1101).

### **How Does the Presbytery Administer these Responsibilities?**

The Central Florida Presbytery manual states that the "Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) shall be responsible for the care and supervision of all inquirers and candidates under the care of Presbytery and those preparing to serve as certified or endorsed Christian Educators. It shall maintain a handbook of processes to guide, nurture and oversee the process of preparing to become a minister of the Word and Sacrament."

The presbytery shall exercise responsibility for the spiritual growth of inquirers, candidates, and those preparing for certified or endorsed church service, to support them with an understanding and sympathetic interest, and to give guidance in regard to courses of study, familiarity with the Bible and with the confessions, practical training and plans for education including the choice of institutions, field education, and his or her financial need. The presbytery shall also seek to give guidance and instruction in the faith and polity of the church.

During preparation for ministry, the individual continues to be an active member of his or her particular church and subject to the concern and discipline of the session. In matters relating to preparation for ministry, the individual is under the oversight of the presbytery through the committee on preparation for ministry.

### **How does the CPM deal with confidentiality?**

Confidentiality about the work of the CPM is crucial to the integrity of the committee and the level of trust the members of a presbytery will place in it. Matters before the CPM are sensitive and should be held in confidence unless the welfare of a congregation or the safety of an individual is in question. Even then, the CPM must be extremely cautious about sharing information except with those who have a clearly identified need to know. Information learned through the CPM should never, under any circumstances, be the subject of casual conversation, especially not with persons who are unaffiliated with the CPM.

The committee has established a procedure for sending confidential information to other presbyteries when requested by requiring candidates to provide a Consent of Release form.

**What are significant relationships for the CPM?**

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry's responsibility means that members focus on building relationships of mutual trust and care within the committee, with sessions, with inquirers and candidates, with Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders, and with those preparing to be endorsed or certified Christian Educators. Those relationships become the foundation on which all the other work of the committee is built.

The committee members rely on each other as colleagues and partners in ministry. Their relationships with one another are characterized by the same mutual trust and care that is the goal of their work with individuals and congregations.

The committee on preparation for ministry will work closely with a number of other people and committees in the presbytery and in the larger church. Those relationships include:

- Associate Executive Presbyter of the Central Florida Presbytery to advise, assist, and help coordinate the work of the CPM
- Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk, to advise and to respond to emerging needs
- The nominating committee of the presbytery in finding new members of CPM
- Counseling Centers which administer counseling assessments of and services to individuals entering the preparation for ministry process
- Seminary staff and professors who are nurturing and educating inquirers and candidates
- Certified Pastoral Counselors who train and supervise inquirers and candidates in Clinical Pastoral Education
- The moderator of the committee on ministry, especially in matters related to the ordination of candidates for ministry
- Other presbyteries, especially in calling, ordaining, and ordaining candidates certified ready to be examined
- General Assembly staff who relate to presbyteries in their work in preparation of individuals for ministry
- Congregation pastors and sessions which provide sites for Supervised Ministry contexts.

**How is the CPM Structured?**

The committee is composed of up to 12 members, four to each yearly class, serving three-year terms. Committee members are eligible to serve two consecutive terms of no more than six years.

The committee generally meets monthly except in July and December and normally on the fourth Tuesday of each month, to make recommendations to the presbytery and to make decisions on behalf of the presbytery in those areas assigned to the committee by presbytery policy and in accordance with the CFP Manual and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

**What Does it Mean to be a Member of CPM?**

To be a member of the Committee on Ministry means to accept the call to serve this presbytery by:

- Maintaining confidentiality and wise counsel to provide guidance and nurture to individuals in preparation for ministry.
- Regular attendance at meetings of the committee.
- Serving as liaison to inquirers, candidates, and educators, as assigned (see Recommended Duties of a CPM Liaison below)

- Have the opportunity to serve as an ordination exam reader as an appointee of Central Florida Presbytery

## **Preparation for Ministry as a Minister of Word and Sacrament**

### **What are the Constitutional Requirements for Preparation for Ministry?**

#### **Nature and Purpose of Preparation (G-2.0601)**

It is important that those who are to be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the presbytery. For this purpose, a presbytery shall enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament and with their sessions and Congregations. This relationship shall be divided into the two phases of inquiry and candidacy.

#### **Time Requirements (G-2.0602)**

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.

#### **Purpose of Inquiry (G-2.0603)**

The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as ministers of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.

#### **Purpose of Candidacy (G-2.0604)**

The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as ministers of the Word and Sacrament. 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.

#### **Oversight (G-2.0605)**

During the phases of inquiry and candidacy the individual continues to be an active member of his or her congregation and subject to the concern and discipline of the session. In matters relating to preparation for ministry, the individual is subject to the oversight of the presbytery within the context of their covenant relationship.

#### **Service in Covenant Relationship (G-2.0606)**

Inquirers and candidates shall, with the permission of the presbytery of care, engage in some form of supervised service to the church. No inquirer or candidate who has not been previously ordained as a ruling elder may serve as moderator of a session, administer the Sacraments, or perform a marriage service. An inquirer or candidate previously ordained as a ruling elder may be authorized by the presbytery to preside at the Lord's Supper when invited by a session.

#### **Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service (G-2.0607)**

A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a minister of the Word and Sacrament without approval of the presbytery of care. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a minister of the Word and Sacrament 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 examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.

#### **Transfer of Relationship (G-2.0608)**

At the request of the inquirer or candidate and with the approval of the sessions and presbyteries involved, a presbytery may transfer the covenant relationship of an inquirer or candidate.

#### **Removal from Relationship (G-2.0609)**

An inquirer or candidate may, after consultation with the session and the presbytery, withdraw from covenant relationship. A presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an individual's name from the roll of inquirers and candidates, reporting this action and the reasons to the session, to the individual, and, if appropriate, to the educational institution in which the individual is enrolled. Prior to taking such action, the presbytery or its designated entity shall make a reasonable attempt to give the candidate or inquirer an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal.

#### **Exceptions (G-2.0610)**

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. A full account of the reasons for any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

#### **What are the Goals and Requirements?**

While both the inquiry and candidacy phases of the process have their particular purposes defined by the *Book of Order* (G-2.0603 and 2.0604), they accomplish those purposes by promotion and assessment of the individual's development in five key areas:

1. *Education for Ministry*, which includes evaluation of the individual's academic potential and progress, and reflection on their educational experiences in relation to their preparation for ordered ministry as a teaching elder.
2. *Spiritual Development*, which provides a framework in which individuals can reflect on their personal faith journey and their spiritual practices to discern the will of God in their lives.

3. *Interpersonal Relations*, which provide opportunities to reflect on how one relates to others, one's leadership style, and what they mean in terms of the functions and responsibilities of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
4. *Personal Growth*, through which persons reflect on who they are, what areas they need to develop, how to understand their call, and how to develop personal stewardship.
5. *Professional Development*, to help persons develop specific skills that will enhance their effectiveness as teaching elders and as presbyters, especially in the areas of understanding one's ministry context and the ability to deal with conflict that may emerge in ministry settings where one serves.



## Preparation for Ministry: Goals & Requirements for Each Phase

Phase	Education for Ministry	Spiritual Development	Interpersonal Relationships	Personal Growth	Professional Development
Pre-Inquiry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Bachelor's Degree</li> <li>2. Successful Passage of GRE</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Active Member for six months of a Presbyterian Church</li> <li>2. Sense of Call to Ordained Ministry</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Career Counseling</li> <li>2. Support of Session CPM Liaison Appointed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Openness to Enter into the Preparation for Ministry Process</li> </ol>	
Inquiry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aptitude for Graduate Work (M Div.)</li> <li>2. Begin Seminary</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Active Member of a Presbyterian Church</li> <li>2. Love of God &amp; Desire to Serve</li> <li>3. Discerning God's Call</li> <li>4. Able to Articulate Faith Journey</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>2. Continued Support of Session</li> <li>3. Regular Contact with CPM Liaison</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Openness to Engage the Inquiry Process</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness of the work of Ministry Through Interviews with Pastors</li> <li>2. Evidence of Leadership in the Church as a Teacher, Worker or Ordained Leader</li> </ol>
Candidacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress toward graduation from seminary (including educational requirements for Supervised Ministry and Clinical Pastoral Education)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Spiritual Practices</li> <li>3. Affirming God's Call</li> <li>4. Claiming What Ministry Is</li> <li>5. Ability to Articulate a Statement of Faith</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to Take Direction</li> <li>2. Relationships for Support and Nurture</li> <li>3. Accountability Group</li> <li>4. Ability to be Vulnerable</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acceptance of the Commitment Ministry Requires</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan for Fulfilling Requirements for Supervised Ministry and CPE</li> <li>2. Engaged in Ministry of Some Kind</li> </ol>
Final Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seminary Degree</li> <li>2. Successful Passage Of Ordination Exams</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of Mature Faith</li> <li>2. Affirmation of call through CPE and Supervised Ministry</li> <li>3. Statement of Faith Reflects Spiritual Development Adequate for Ministry</li> <li>4. Spiritual Health Reflected in Spiritual Practice and Direction</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive Reports from Peers</li> <li>2. Support Structures</li> <li>3. Family Support for Ministry</li> <li>4. CPE &amp; Supervised Ministry Indicates Positive Relationship</li> <li>5. Skills</li> <li>6. Ability to Deal with Conflict</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self Awareness</li> <li>2. Personal Presence</li> <li>3. Confidence</li> <li>4. Integration of Own Identity with the Call to Ministry</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Readiness to Perform Tasks of Ministry Shown in Exegesis and Sermon</li> <li>2. Readiness for Ministry Expressed in Reports from Supervised Ministry &amp; CPE</li> <li>3. Readiness to be a Lifelong Learner</li> <li>4. Plans for Continuing Education</li> <li>5. Time Management Skills</li> </ol>

## **What are the Additional Requirements and Procedures of the Central Florida Presbytery?**

### **What Occurs During the Pre-Inquiry Phase?**

1. A person experiences the call of God to the ordained ministry and shares this information with his/her pastor.
2. The pastor contacts the Chairperson of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) and shares the above information. The Chairperson/Central Florida Presbytery (CFP) Staff to CPM shares information with the pastor and prospective inquirer about the steps in the preparation for ministry process.
3. The necessary application forms are sent for the prospective inquirer to complete. These will later be forwarded to the Session and CPM for action.
4. The CPM Chair or CFP staff person encourages the session to have a representative of the CPM speak to the church session to share information and resources about the preparation for ministry process, and about the session's and congregation's roles in the process. When the session identifies the date of the meeting, the CPM Chair assigns a committee member and/or CFP staff to meet with the church session.
5. The CPM Chair or CFP staff person sends a packet of materials to the prospective inquirer for review and/or completion. These documents may include:
  - a. Steps in the Preparation for Ministry Process
  - b. Procedure for Career Counseling Services
  - c. Presbytery Policy on Non-PC(USA) Seminaries
  - d. PC(USA) Seminary Summary
  - e. Areas of Preparation for Ministry Chart
  - f. PC(USA) Forms 1A – 1C, to be completed prior to session meeting.
  - g. Sexual Misconduct Policy to be completed prior to CPM meeting.
  - h. Background Check disclosure and authorization documentation
  - i. Immigration documents, if a prospective inquirer is not a citizen of the United States. It is imperative that both the session and the presbytery be aware of his/her immigration status and ability to work in the U.S.
6. The CPM Chair or CFP staff person sends a packet of materials to the pastor for review and/or completion. These documents may include:
  - a. Steps in the Preparation for Ministry Process
  - b. Procedure for Career Counseling Services
  - c. Presbytery Policy on Non-PC(USA) Seminaries
  - d. PC(USA) Seminary Summary
  - e. Areas of Preparation for Ministry Chart
  - f. Goals & Responsibilities for Session
  - g. PC(USA) Forms 1D and Form 2B to be completed following the session meeting and before the CPM meeting.
7. The CPM representative's meeting with the session includes:
  - a. reviewing the steps in the process,
  - b. the role of the session,
  - c. the financing of the required career counseling
  - d. instruction about the session's meeting with the prospective inquirer and endorsing him/her as an inquirer.
8. The potential inquirer submits PC(USA) Forms 1A –1C to the session for review. The session will review forms and meet with prospective inquirer to determine endorsement. If the session chooses to endorse the prospective inquirer, it appoints an elder liaison to give support to him/her and to be the connecting link between the session and the CPM. The session is also encouraged to

make a plan to give financial support to the prospective inquirer upon his/her entrance into seminary.

9. Following the session meeting, the clerk will prepare PC(USA) Forms 1D and 2B and submit it to the CFP Staff person to be made available to the CPM when it meets with the prospective inquirer.
10. The prospective inquirer must also submit PC(USA) Forms 1A –1C to the CFP Staff person for distribution to the CPM.
11. Following the session meeting and prior to the meeting with the CPM, the prospective inquirer is required by Presbytery Policy to participate in a career counseling program approved by the CPM. See the document, "Procedure for Career Counseling Services." The report is provided to the potential inquirer and the CPM for review.
12. Per presbytery policy the prospective inquirer must have a background check performed at no cost to the prospective inquirer. CFP Staff will provide the necessary forms for the prospective inquirer's signature and will process the background check through the presbytery's background check provider.
13. The prospective inquirer arranges to meet with the CPM at one of its monthly meetings (the fourth Tuesday of each month except possibly July and December).
14. The prospective inquirer meets with CPM, accompanied by the pastor, session liaison, and spouse/fiancée (if applicable). The CPM votes whether or not to enroll the person as an Inquirer. A CPM liaison to the inquirer is also appointed at this meeting. The action to enroll the person as an inquirer is reported to the Presbytery at its next meeting.

#### **What Occurs During the Inquiry Phase?**

1. The period of inquiry, which must be for at least one year, is a time for the inquirer to explore and test her/his call to the ministry through reading, consultation, work in the church, etc. The Inquirer ordinarily begins her/his seminary education during this period.
2. Each year following the inquirer's initial meeting with the CPM, she/he is required by presbytery policy to meet with the CPM for an annual consultation to review the experiences in the previous year and to set goals for the upcoming year. Form 3 must be completed by the Inquirer and submitted to the CFP Staff person two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting with CPM.
3. This phase ends when the Inquirer decides not to pursue the call or requests that her/his session recommend her/him to be enrolled as a candidate under care of the Presbytery.
4. In preparation for the meeting with session, the inquirer prepares and submits Form 5a; the "Statements for Candidacy" document which includes a series of six questions to which the inquirer must respond; and a "Statement of Faith Journey and Sense of Call." Form 5b must also be submitted to the session for completion by the Clerk following the meeting.
5. The session will review the forms and meet with potential inquirer to determine endorsement.
6. If the session endorses the inquirer, he/she then contacts the CFP Staff person to arrange to meet with the CPM. He/she submits Form 5a, the "Statement of Faith Journey and Sense of Call," and the responses to the "Statements for Candidacy" questions to the CFP Staff Person for distribution to the CPM. The Clerk of Session of the inquirer's church will submit Form 5b and an accompanying letter expressing the session's reasons for endorsement of the inquirer for candidacy.
7. After reviewing the documentation, the CPM meets with the Inquirer and decides whether or not to recommend the inquirer be enrolled as a candidate.
8. The committee will review the forms and meet with potential Candidate to determine endorsement. If the committee chooses to endorse, the person will appear at the next Presbytery meeting, share his/her "Statement of Faith Journey and Sense of Call" and answer any questions posed by presbyters regarding the statement. Then the Presbytery votes whether or not to enroll the person as a candidate under its care. A brief service is held with commitment questions, a charge to the candidate and a prayer.

**What Occurs During the Candidacy Phase?**

1. The candidacy phase must be at least one year. During this time, the candidate will complete or will have completed seminary; meets at least yearly with the CPM during an annual consultation; completes Supervised Ministry (required by presbytery policy and approved by CPM); completes a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (required by presbytery policy and approved by CPM); and fulfills the growth goals agreed to with the CPM during the annual consultations.
2. Normally the Candidate successfully completes the written ordination exams required by the Book of Order. If the candidate does not successfully complete an exam after two attempts, the committee per presbytery policy can offer the candidate an alternative means of examination.
3. After completing the requirements which indicate readiness to begin ordered ministry as a minister of the Word and Sacrament, the candidate meets with the CPM for a final assessment of readiness to be examined for ordination. In preparation for this meeting, the candidate will prepare a draft of his/her Personal Information Form (PIF) used to seek a call. He/she will also prepare Form 3; a one-page Statement of Faith; an exegesis based on the format used for the exegesis ordination exam (often the Candidate uses the exam exegesis); and a sermon based on the exegesis scripture passage.
4. The candidate schedules a time to meet with the committee for a final assessment, to be Certified Ready for examination by the presbytery for ordination, pending a ~~for~~ call. When the Candidate meets with the CPM, the sermon which was prepared will be preached to the committee. If the candidate has completed all of the ordination requirements, the CPM may vote to certify him/her ready for examination by the presbytery for ordination, pending a call. This action is reported to the Presbytery at its next meeting. The committee may also give permission to the Candidate to begin circulating his or her PIF.
5. When a call is received, the responsibility of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry ends. The candidate is normally examined for ordination by the Presbytery of call and approved to be ordained and installed in the ministry position. The candidate may request to be ordained in his or her home church in the presbytery of care or may be both ordained and installed by the presbytery of call. (G-2.0702)

## **Preparation for Ministry in Certified Church Service**

### **What are the Constitutional Requirements for Preparation for Ministry?**

#### **Forms of Certified Church Service (G-2.1101)**

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements of a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.

#### **Presbytery and Certified Church Service (G-2.1102)**

The presbytery shall encourage sessions to make continuing education funds and time available to those seeking certification, and shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing a service of recognition at the time of certification. The presbytery may grant the privilege of voice at all its meetings to persons in certified church service.

## **Preparation for Ministry as a Certified Christian Educator**

### **What are the Constitutional Requirements for Preparation for Ministry?**

#### **Christian Educators (G-2.1103)**

##### **a. Skills and Training**

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

### **Procedure for Educators Seeking PC(USA) Certification through the Central Florida Presbytery**

The CPM undertakes the responsibility of the care of educators seeking certification in the following ways:

- Upon the Education Certification Advisor for the presbytery receiving the enrollment of an educator seeking to become a Certified Christian Educator, the committee will meet with the educator for an initial consultation.
- At the initial consultation, the CPM will appoint a committee liaison for the educator. The liaison will maintain contact with the educator and will report to the committee on the educator's progress in the process which includes taking Master's degree level courses approved by the Educator Certification Committee (ECC) in the six content areas identified in G-2.1103.
- The educator will meet with the CPM for a consultation annually to review progress, and for the committee to provide support, advice and encouragement.
- Upon notification by the Education Certification Advisor that the educator has completed her or his coursework and is preparing to enter the exam phase, a representative from the CPM, usually the CPM liaison, will be appointed to serve on the Reference Group (see responsibilities in attached information).
- Upon successfully completing the exam and being approved for certification by the ECC, the the PC(USA)'s Assistant Stated Clerk for Ministry Education and Support will provide the certificate to the Executive Presbyter and a Service of Recognition will be held at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

### **Procedure for Educators Seeking PC(USA) Endorsement through the Central Florida Presbytery**

The CPM undertakes the responsibility of the care of educators seeking endorsement as a Christian Education Associate (CEA) in the following ways:

- Upon the Education Certification Advisor for the presbytery receiving the enrollment of an educator seeking to become a Christian Education Associate, the committee will meet with the educator for an initial consultation.
- At the initial consultation, the CPM will appoint a committee liaison for the educator. The liaison will maintain contact with the educator and will report to the committee on the educator's progress in the process which includes taking initial assessments in each of the content areas listed above, completing a plan of study in each area developed in coordination with the presbytery's certification advisor, and successful completion of final assessments in each of the content areas.
- The educator will meet with the CPM for a consultation annually to review progress, and for the committee to provide support, advice and encouragement.
- Upon successfully completing all final assessments and being approved for endorsement by the ECC, the PC(USA)'s Assistant Stated Clerk for Ministry Education and Support will provide the certificate to the Executive Presbyter and a Service of Recognition will be held at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

## **RECOMMENDED DUTIES OF THE CPM LIAISON**

- A. Learn the background of your inquirer or candidate if you do not already know it. This includes family, school, college, avocational interests and abilities, birthday, name of spouse (if married), name(s) of child(ren) (if any), (proposed) seminary, progress toward ordination, financial needs, and so forth.
- B. Visit, phone, or write to introduce yourself, if you do not know your inquirer/candidate.
- C. Review inquirer/candidate CPM file when it exists for additional background on your person and where they are in the process, and make a copy for your own records.
- D. For a new inquirer, open a file on your inquirer, and maintain the file with all CPM forms, academic transcripts, counseling center report, CPE information, and correspondence. Copy correspondence for CPM file maintained by the Presbytery. Also, maintain the check list for their file.
- E. Maintain monthly correspondence and contact with your inquirer/candidate, and encourage your inquirer/candidate to share concerns and questions about their candidacy process, financial needs, academic work and plans, field study, annual consultation, and other activities related to preparation for the ministry as a Teaching Elder. Provide monthly updates to CPM on your candidates/inquirers.
- F. Contact your inquirer/candidate's pastor when you become that person's liaison to open the door for conversation about him or her.
- G. Contact the pastor when your inquirer is ready to become a candidate and offer to come (or to arrange for someone on the committee to come) when the person meets with the Session to receive their endorsement as a candidate to educate them on the continued process. At the least, have a conversation with the pastor to remind him or her about the continued process.
- H. Take an interest in your inquirer/candidate's personal life, and remember them on birthdays, anniversaries, other special occasions as able.
- I. Be your inquirer/candidate's advocate on the CPM.
- J. With the CPM Moderator, monitor and communicate with your inquirer/candidate to set up Annual Meetings with the CPM, ordination exams, and other steps in the inquiry/candidacy process.
- K. Remember your inquirer/candidate (and family) in prayer.
  - L. Be present when your person comes before the committee for their Annual Review, and at Presbytery when they are examined, as possible.

M. Offer your congratulations, blessing when your person receives a call and prepares to be ordained!



**Central Florida Presbytery  
Committee on Preparation for Ministry  
Policy for Christian Educators Seeking Certification  
Approved 12-06-2011**

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends that the Committee on Preparation for Ministry take under its care those educators in Central Florida Presbytery who are seeking certification as Christian Educators. The care provided will include: providing a committee liaison; conducting annual consultations; and appointing a CPM representative to serve on the educator's Reference Group.

## **COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY CAREER COUNSELING INFORMATION**

People who want to become Inquirers can arrange to go through the career counseling program at any time after they or their pastor have contacted the CPM chairperson or Presbytery staff resource person. This can be either before or after they have appeared before the session for endorsement. They must, however, complete the career counseling program before they meet with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

The counseling centers will provide materials giving details about their counseling programs. It is usually a multi-day experience including time to explore the results of career and personality tests, life experiences and issues, and any concerns related to life changes for individuals and families that are part of any decision to explore or be educated for the ministry. The program includes several hours of counseling, including time with a psychologist.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry also believes that it is helpful for the spouse or fiancé (if applicable) of the potential inquirer to share in this career counseling experience if it is possible. The ministry has a definite effect on marriages and families, and these issues can be discussed during the counseling time. It is also very helpful for the spouse or fiancé to know what their partner is experiencing.

The CPM has approved one location for career counseling. It is:

Lutheran Counseling Services  
1505 Orchid Avenue  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
Counselor: Mel Jacob, DMin, LMFT  
(407) 644-4692  
Website: [www.LCSFL.com](http://www.LCSFL.com)

The current cost of the career counseling program at both locations is \$1275. The CPM's policy is that the cost of the career program be shared by the potential inquirer, the sponsoring church, and the Presbytery—with each paying 1/3 (or \$425 each). If an inquirer would like to use a different center in some other part of the country, the CPM Chairperson or Presbytery staff person must approve this alternative. However, the Presbytery will still pay only \$425 of the cost.

**CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY**  
**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY**  
(Adopted 12-06-05)

**INTRODUCTION**

In an effort to further the peace, unity and purity of the church through the prevention and remediation of sexual misconduct within the church, Central Florida Presbytery has developed the following policy. In preparing the document, attention was given to setting and providing for enforcement of standards of ethical behavior consistent with Reformed tradition and secular law. Requirements and protections guaranteed under the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline were particularly noted. This policy document should help in assuring consistency of practice and action within the Presbytery, provide an information base for educating both minister members of Presbytery and lay persons, and serve as a model for local congregations in their development of personnel policies.

**PART I**

**PURPOSE:** To define ministerial sexual misconduct and to outline procedures for reporting such misconduct to the Presbytery.

**A. Definition of Sexual Misconduct**

- a) Sexual misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include sexual abuse of children or adults, rape or sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of authority and power. It breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantage over another for personal gratification in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. Ministers are always responsible for considering the impact of their words and actions, and must refrain from actions that create the appearance of an inappropriate relationship.

Categories of sexual misconduct are described below.

- 1. Sexual abuse occurs whenever a person in a position of trust engages in a sexual act or sexual contact with another person to whom he or she owes a professional responsibility. Such abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a) Sexual acts or sexual contact with a minor.
  - b) Sexual acts or sexual contact involving inducement, threat, coercion, force, violence, or intimidation of another person.
  - c) Sexual acts or contact between ministers, laity, or staff to whom they are

not married and with whom they have a professional relationship. Such relationships are not acceptable even when consensual, and regardless of whether pastoral care is involved. The inherent imbalance of power between ministers and lay people or staff undermines the validity of such consent.

- d) Sexual acts outside the bounds of marriage.
  - e) Video voyeurism as defined by the Florida Statutes (810.145, et seq. and 847) and obscenity as defined by the Florida Statutes (chapter 47).
2. Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching and includes the display or use of sexually suggestive materials, objects, or pictures. Child sexual abuse between an adult and a child is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. Child sexual abuse is a crime in all states and must be reported to civil authorities and to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.
  3. Rape or sexual assault is a crime in every state and should be reported to civil authorities and to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.
  4. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexually offensive nature when any of the following circumstances prevail:
    - a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or their continued status in an institution.
    - b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual.
    - c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or multiple persistent or pervasive acts. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to the following:

- sexually oriented jokes or humor;
- sexually demeaning comments;
- verbal suggestions of sexual involvement or sexual activity;
- questions or comments about sexual behavior;
- unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact;
- graphic or degrading comments about an individual's physical

- appearance;
- express or implied sexual advances or propositions;
- display or use of sexually suggestive materials, objects or pictures;
- repeated requests for social engagements after an individual refuses.

## **B. Policy on Sexual Misconduct**

1. Sexual misconduct is never permissible. It is a violation of the principles set forth in Scripture as well as of ministerial, pastoral, employment, and professional relationships. Sexual misconduct by a minister violates the ordination vows of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
2. All ministers shall be required to attend a seminar offered by the Presbytery on the issues of sexual misconduct and to sign a statement agreeing to comply with the policy. Failure to comply may result in investigation and discipline. Inquirers and candidates will sign the same statement.
3. Whereas this policy addresses sexual misconduct by ministers, each congregation and organization in Central Florida Presbytery is responsible for developing a policy for church professionals, officers, members, non-member employees, and volunteers which is consistent with this document.

## **PART II**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES OF CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **A. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

1. All ministers shall be given copies of the policy and are required to sign an acknowledgment of receipt and agreement to comply.
2. Those being examined for membership in presbytery shall be furnished with a copy of this policy prior to the Committee on Ministry examination. They must sign the policy and be required to sign an acknowledgement of receipt and agreement to comply prior to being received.
3. This document shall also be available to all sessions and church members and to the public.
4. Presbytery employees shall receive this document as a supplement to the employee handbook.

## **B. MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT BY MINISTERS**

### **1. Resource Documents**

The responsibilities, structures, and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct are mandated in part by the Book of Order, such as the roles of the Committee on Ministry and an Investigating Committee (see G-11.0502 and D- 10.0200).

### **2. Liability and Insurance**

The Presbytery and its congregations shall periodically obtain from their insurance agents, confirmation that their liability insurance policy covers sexual misconduct liability for their programs and activities.

### **3. Record Keeping**

Central Florida Presbytery will include in every employee's personnel file, including files for ministers, the application for employment, any employment questionnaires, reference responses, and other documents related to this policy including a signed receipt for receiving the sexual misconduct policy and agreement to comply.

## **C. PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING FOR PROSPECTIVE INCOMING CLERGY**

### **1. Reference Checks**

Pre-employment screening includes specific questions related to previous complaints of sexual misconduct. The Presbytery reviews Sexual Misconduct Information of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Personal Information Form when interviewing persons seeking ministerial calls.

The Office of the Executive Presbyter is responsible for making reference checks through the appropriate Presbytery Executive, or other authorized persons to ascertain whether incoming clergy have any history of sexual misconduct. The Executive Presbyter reports to the Committee on Ministry either that there was no reported sexual misconduct, or that the committee should inquire into reported sexual misconduct. A written record of conversations and correspondence with references will be kept in the minister's/employee's personnel file.

The person within the Presbytery authorized to give a reference is obligated to give truthful information regarding complaints, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct by the applicant.

Applicants shall be given an opportunity to correct or respond to information regarding sexual misconduct obtained from a reference check.

2. Background Checks

Pre-employment screening for prospective incoming clergy also includes a mandatory National Criminal History Background Check, requested and paid for by Presbytery. This should take place prior to the candidate being examined by the Committee on Ministry.

**D. MAINTENANCE OF A SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TEAM**

The Response Team is responsible for providing ongoing education and resources for all of the presbytery's ministers, and for coordinating support and when needed professional care for all involved in an allegation of sexual misconduct. The Response Team will not investigate an allegation or in any way usurp the role of the investigating team.

**PART III**  
**POLICY ON RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT BY MINISTERS**

Presbytery Stated Clerk per D-10.0103.

2. In addition to the above, known or suspected sexual misconduct involving children shall be reported to civil authorities.
3. A written complaint to the Stated Clerk alleging sexual misconduct by a minister member of the Presbytery subjects that minister to any Committee on Ministry policy on administrative leave in effect. (A recommended policy will be provided by the Committee on Ministry.)

**I have read the above policy and agree to abide by it.  
Please sign and return to the Presbytery Office.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print your name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX**

### **Glossary of Terms**

**ACCUSED** - The person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is being made.

**ACCUSER** - The person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy or a person claiming to have been the subject of sexual misconduct by a person covered under this policy.

**ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE** - The temporary removal from office of an accused individual, during which period the person is entitled to personal compensation but not continuing education or professional benefits.

**ADVOCATE** - A person trained by the Response Team in the issues of sexual misconduct and qualified to provide support and emotional and physical presence, to the alleged victim(s) and their family, the accused, family members of the accused, or the congregation involved in a sexual misconduct case. The advocate also provides clarification of the investigative process of the church and the judicial process of the church to the person(s) with whom he or she works. The role of an advocate is not to speak for the party for whom he or she is advocating but to inform that party of his or her rights within the investigative process. The advocate shall not give advice regarding civil remedies. When requested by the party for whom she or he is advocating, the advocate may accompany that person to meetings of Presbytery entities when that party is testifying.

**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE** - Includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a person under 18 years of age (a minor) and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. Such behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** - The withholding of information from all those except those who need to know as determined by the Sexual Misconduct Response Team.

**MANDATED REPORTER** - A person who is required to report any and all suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, that come to their attention. State laws vary from defining mandated reporters as "all persons having knowledge" to specifying a very limited list of professions whose members are required to report child abuse.

**RESPONSE** - The action taken by the governing body or entity when an accusation of sexual misconduct is received. The intent of this policy is to assure a swift and pastoral response for all persons affected by accusations of sexual misconduct.



**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TEAM** - The body constituted by Presbytery to facilitate and oversee the process of providing guidance, support, and pastoral care to individuals and groups affected by allegations of sexual misconduct.

**POLICY FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES**  
**Revision Approved 11-8-2022**

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry requires background checks on all candidates and inquirers and that the checks from now forward be done as persons enter the process and every five years, as needed. The committee has deemed it important to do so especially as all inquirers and candidates are required to serve approximately 400 hours in supervised ministries, often within congregational settings where the church should have assurance that they have had background checks.

The cost of the background checks will be covered by the presbytery through the CPM.

## **DISCLOSURE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION**

**Central Florida Presbytery** (“the Company”) may obtain information about you from a third party consumer reporting agency for employment purposes. Thus, you may be the subject of a “consumer report” and/or an “investigative consumer report” which may include information about your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and/or mode of living and which can involve personal interviews with sources such as your neighbors, friends, or associates. These reports may contain information regarding your credit history, criminal history, social security verification, motor vehicle records (“driving records”), verification of your education or employment history, or other background checks. Credit history will only be requested where such information is substantially related to the duties and responsibilities of the position for which you are applying.

You have the right, upon written request made within a reasonable time, to request whether a consumer report has been run about you, and disclosure of the nature and scope of any investigative consumer report and to request a copy of your report. Please be advised that the nature and scope of the most common form of investigative consumer report is an employment history or verification. These searches will be conducted by Edge Information Management, Incorporated, 1682 W. Hibiscus Blvd., Melbourne, Florida 32901, 1-800-725-3343, [www.edgeinformation.com](http://www.edgeinformation.com). The scope of this disclosure is all-encompassing, however, allowing the Company to obtain from any outside organization all manner of consumer reports throughout the course of your employment to the extent permitted by law.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK**

I acknowledge receipt of the separate document entitled DISCLOSURE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION and A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT and certify that I have read and understand both of those documents. I hereby authorize the obtaining of “consumer reports” and/or “investigative consumer reports” by the Employer at any time after receipt of this authorization and throughout my employment, if applicable. To this end, I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, administrator, state or federal agency, institution, school or university (public or private), information service bureau, employer, or insurance company to furnish any and all background information requested by Edge Information Management, Incorporated, 1682 W. Hibiscus Blvd., Melbourne, Florida 32901, 1-800-725-3343, [www.edgeinformation.com](http://www.edgeinformation.com), and/or Employer itself. I agree that a

facsimile ("fax"), electronic or photographic copy of this Authorization shall be as valid as the original.

**New York applicants only:** Upon request, you will be informed whether or not a consumer report was requested by the Company, and if such report was requested, informed of the name and address of the consumer reporting agency that furnished the report. You have the right to inspect and receive a copy of any investigative consumer report requested by the Company by contacting the consumer reporting agency identified above directly. By signing below, you acknowledge receipt of Article 23-A of the New York Correction Law

**Washington State applicants only:** You also have the right to request from the consumer reporting agency a written summary of your rights and remedies under the Washington Fair Credit Reporting Act.

**Minnesota and Oklahoma applicants only:** Please check this box if you would like to receive a copy of a consumer report if one is obtained by the Company. ☐

**California applicants only:** Under California Civil Code section 1786.22, you are entitled to find out what is in the CRA's file on you with proper identification, as follows:

- In person, by visual inspection of your file during normal business hours and on reasonable notice. You also may request a copy of the information in person. The CRA may not charge you more than the actual copying costs for providing you with a copy of your file.
- A summary of all information contained in the CRA file on you that is required to be provided by the California Civil Code will be provided to you via telephone, if you have made a written request, with proper identification, for telephone disclosure, and the toll charge, if any, for the telephone call is prepaid by or charged directly to you.
- By requesting a copy be sent to a specified addressee by certified mail. CRAs complying with requests for certified mailings shall not be liable for disclosures to third parties caused by mishandling of mail after such mailings leave the CRAs.

"Proper Identification" includes documents such as a valid driver's license, social security account number, military identification card, and credit cards. Only if you cannot identify yourself with such information may the CRA require additional information concerning your employment and personal or family history in order to verify your identity. The CRA will provide trained personnel to explain any information furnished to you and will provide a written explanation of any coded information contained in files maintained on you. This written explanation will be provided whenever a file is provided to you for visual inspection. You may be accompanied by one other person of your choosing, who must furnish reasonable identification. A CRA may require you to furnish a written statement granting permission to the CRA to discuss your file in such person's presence.

Please check this box if you would like to receive a copy of an investigative consumer report or consumer credit report at no charge if one is obtained by the Company whenever you have a right to receive such a copy under California law. ☐

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Other Names/Alias \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security\* # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth\* \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License # \_\_\_\_\_ State of Driver's License\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Former Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

\*This information will be used for background screening purposes only and will not be used as hiring criteria

***Policy Regarding CFP Inquirers and Candidates  
Attending non-PC(USA) Seminaries***

Central Florida Presbytery  
Revised September 27, 2022

***Policy***

The preparation for ministry is far more than earning a degree and completing a checklist of requirements. It is a journey of discernment as well as preparation. Each journey will be unique even as those whom God calls are unique. It is not a solitary journey but a journey in community. It is the process of the body of Christ identifying people with the gifts and calling to ordained ministry, nurturing, guiding, encouraging, preparing and supporting them as they prepare, and celebrating their ordination to this ministry. The local church through the session and the presbytery through the CPM are vital partners in this journey.

The Book of Order gives the Committee on Preparation for Ministry many important responsibilities in this process. Among them are assessing familiarity with the Bible and the confessions, giving guidance in regard to courses of study, practical training and plans for education, including the choice of an accredited theological institution acceptable to the presbytery (G-2.0607c), field education and service in internships (G-2.0606), and the inquirer's or candidate's financial need.

In fulfillment of this duty, in the knowledge that ministry within the PC(USA) is a distinctive context, and in the belief that preparation for ministry in a PC(USA) seminary is the best preparation for a lifetime of fruitful ministry in this denomination, it is Central Florida Presbytery's policy that all persons preparing for ordained ministry under the care of this presbytery ordinarily will attend and graduate from a PC(USA) seminary.

Many students have reasons or interests that make the consideration of a local or other non-PC(USA) seminary appear interesting, convenient, or necessary. While relocation for study is always a challenge it is the normal expectation of those under care of this presbytery.

For this, and many other important reasons, it is critical that churches ensure that those experiencing a call to ordained ministry meet with their session and the CPM at the earliest possible opportunity. Delaying or postponing becoming an inquirer and receiving the CPM's guidance is likely to result in significant delays, expense and hardship.

***Exceptions to the Policy***

The journey of preparing for ministry is often an important opportunity for future ministers to discern their call to this particular denomination. The Presbyterian process is one of community, oversight, and accountability rather than independence and individuality. While the CPM will support inquirers and candidates with an "understanding and sympathetic interest," the committee's guidance may not always coincide with the inquirer or candidate's personal desires. Those that struggle with receiving guidance from governing bodies and resist mutual accountability will likely experience the same difficulties in their later ministry within the PC(USA).

At its discretion and discernment, the CPM may grant individual students an exception to this policy. Because the CPM must treat each inquirer and candidate's situation individually any exceptions that are granted do not create precedents that others can expect or demand for themselves.

Some criteria that the CPM may consider when deciding whether or not to grant an exception:

- Previous experience in ministry and leadership within the PC(USA)

- Extraordinary family responsibilities within Central Florida
- Extreme hardship caused by relocation.

The CPM will generally require those granted an exception to complete educational and ministry experience requirements above and beyond those required by a non-PC(USA) seminary. These additional requirements are likely to increase the financial cost and time required to complete the preparation for ministry process. Inquirers and candidates may minimize these costs by working closely with the CPM to identify opportunities to complete these requirements within their degree program.

Some of these additional requirements may include:

- Attending degree program courses through a PC(USA) campus especially classes in Reformed Theology, Reformed Worship & Sacraments and Presbyterian Polity.
- On-line courses through PC(USA) seminaries
- Extended, specific, or additional field study requirements
- An approved course of study with a mentor

### ***Some Strengths of a PC(USA) Seminary Education***

- Inclusion of *The Book of Confessions* and *The Book of Order* in many courses and in the seminary community's overall theological discourse
- A breadth of reformed theology permeates the seminary curriculum.
- An environment that supports and demonstrates the belief that both women and men are called by God to all offices of the church
- Women on the faculty act as role models for both male and female students
- Semester-long polity courses offered on a regular basis
- Building relationships with others of our denomination establishing lifelong connections
- Strong supervised ministry programs preparing students to minister in PC(USA) congregations
- Established relationships with PC(USA) congregations for internships
- Organized ordination examination preparation
- People, relationships, and resources to help with the call process
- Seminars for graduating seniors regarding The Board of Pensions and the call process
- Exposure to a far greater breadth of the latest theological thought throughout the seminary experience than some proposed non-PC(USA) seminaries.
- A wide variety of financial support is available for students attending PC(USA) seminaries that is not otherwise available.
- Many PC(USA) congregations are more likely to consider calling those who graduated from a PC(USA) seminary.

## **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) SEMINARY SUMMARY**

The PC(USA) Office of Theological Education website provides overviews of each of the denomination's seminaries. You can view those by going to:  
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/seminaries/presbyterian-theological-seminaries-glance/>

**Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary**  
Austin, Texas  
<http://www.austinseminary.edu/>

**Columbia Theological Seminary**  
Decatur, Georgia  
<http://www.ctsnet.edu/>

**University of Dubuque Theological Seminary**  
Dubuque, Iowa  
<http://udts.dbq.edu/>

**McCormick Theological Seminary**  
<http://mccormick.edu/>  
Chicago, Illinois

**Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary**  
Louisville, Kentucky  
<http://www.lpts.edu/>

**Pittsburgh Theological Seminary**  
<http://www.pts.edu/>  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**Princeton Theological Seminary**  
<http://www.ptsem.edu/>  
Princeton, New Jersey

**San Francisco Theological Seminary**  
<http://www.sfts.edu/>  
San Anselmo and Pasadena, California

**Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary**  
<http://www.smithseminary.org/>  
Atlanta, Georgia

**Union Presbyterian Seminary**  
<http://www.upsem.edu/>  
Richmond, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina

### **Seminaries Related to the PC(USA) by Covenant Agreement**

**Auburn Theological Seminary**  
<http://www.auburnseminary.org/>  
New York, New York

**Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico**  
<http://www.se-pr.edu/portal/>  
San Juan, Puerto Rico



## STATEMENTS FOR CANDIDACY

Please write 1/2 - 2/3 page responses (single spaced) to each of these statements. Your Statement of Faith (#2) may be up to 1 page and should include the items identified in the attached "Statement of Faith Format" document.

BY THE END OF THE INQUIRY PHASE EACH INQUIRER SHALL DEMONSTRATE ADEQUATE PROMISE FOR MINISTRY BY PRESENTING:

- 1) A STATEMENT OF HIS OR HER UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION IN THE REFORMED TRADITION AND HOW IT RELATES TO HIS OR HER SENSE OF CALL;
- 2) A STATEMENT OF PERSONAL FAITH WHICH INCORPORATES AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE REFORMED TRADITION;
- 3) AN ANALYSIS OF AT LEAST ONE CONCEPT FROM THE PERSONAL FAITH STATEMENT REGARDING WHAT IT SUGGESTS ABOUT GOD, HUMANITY, AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIPS;
- 4) A STATEMENT OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE PRESBYTERIAN, INDICATING HOW THAT AWARENESS GROWS OUT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF A PARTICULAR CHURCH;
- 5) A STATEMENT OF SELF-UNDERSTANDING WHICH REFLECTS THE INQUIRER'S PERSONAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND INCLUDES A CONCERN FOR MAINTAINING SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH;
- 6) A STATEMENT OF HIS OR HER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TASK MINISTRIES OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT PERFORM, INCLUDING AN AWARENESS OF HIS OR HER SPECIFIC GIFTS FOR MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT AND OF AREAS IN WHICH GROWTH IS NEEDED.

## **CANDIDACY STATEMENT OF FAITH JOURNEY**

To become a Candidate under care of Central Florida Presbytery, an Inquirer must appear in person at a meeting of the Presbytery after the Committee on Preparation for Ministry has met with him/her and voted to recommend he/she move from inquirer to candidate. The presbytery will examine the inquirer with respect to his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and sense of call to the ministry of Teaching Elder.

The CPM will ask the inquirer to prepare a one-page Statement of Faith Journey which includes ways she/he has served the church and her/his sense of call to be a Teaching Elder. This statement will be provided to the CPM for review prior to the inquirer appearing before the CPM to request the move to candidacy. Then, if the CPM approves the move to candidacy, the Statement of Faith Journey will be included in the presbytery packet for the meeting at which the inquirer appears.

STATEMENT OF FAITH  
Suggested Format and Content

One of the final requirements for ordination at the end of the Preparation for Ministry Process is the writing of a one page Statement of Faith. It should be typed single spaced on one page only, with adequate margins. These are suggestions of topics to be mentioned in the statement. These are also topics about which a candidate might expect to be examined by the Committee on Ministry (or CPM) and Presbytery.

- The Nature of God
- The Experience of God
- Sin and Evil
- The Life and Work of Jesus
- Jesus' Humanity and Divinity
- Christology and Atonement
- The Holy Spirit
- The Bible
- The Sacraments
- The Nature of the Church
- The Ministry and Mission of the Church in the world

The prepared statement will be used by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at the final assessment time with the Candidate and used again by any Committee on Ministry (or CPM) and Presbytery as a basis for their oral exam of the Candidate prior to ordination. The Candidate will have the opportunity to discuss it, defend it, explain it and perhaps even to change it.

Because this Statement of Faith is very important, it is helpful for the inquirer/candidate to be working on a statement of what he or she believes from the very beginning of the Preparation for Ministry process. In some way a preliminary statement is part of every annual consultation with the CPM. It can be discussed with a professor, a pastor, an advisor or with other significant people in the candidate's life. It should be "a work in progress" that is changed from time to time to reflect growth in faith and understanding. The statement should truly reflect a candidate's beliefs and commitment. It is hoped that the statement will reveal some of the person of the candidate and not just be quotes from scripture or theological books. We encourage you not to rely heavily on only one historic statement of faith.

The final Statement of Faith will be reproduced as submitted, so poor typing, spelling and grammatical errors, and cliches which can distract a reader should be avoided. It will be read by lay people and ministers, so language should be chosen accordingly. Remember, language that is popular in seminary circles may be inappropriate and misunderstood by others.

APPENDIX A  
CONSENT OF RELEASE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Candidate Certified Ready for Call by and under care of Central Florida Presbytery, give my consent and permission for the following documents to be given to the Committee on Ministry of a calling presbytery when requested.

1. Annual consultation documents or minutes of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry meetings related to annual consultations.
2. Transcript of satisfactory grades at any regionally accredited college and theological institution.
3. Official transcript showing evaluations in the five examination areas covered by the General Assembly along with copies of examination papers and evaluations.
4. Exceptions and or waivers (if any) approved by the presbytery for the candidate (G-2.0610).

I acknowledge that while the reports listed above are to be kept confidential and to be used for the sole purpose of understanding my readiness for ordained ministry as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Central Florida Presbytery cannot assure that the calling presbytery will do so.

I understand that it is my responsibility to determine whether or not to provide copies of psychological tests and career counseling observations conducted during the preparation for ministry process. The Central Florida Presbytery Committee on Preparation for Ministry will not be responsible for releasing the findings of those documents to a requesting presbytery of call.

I understand that if I have any questions regarding this process that I can discuss my concerns with either or both sending and receiving presbyteries.

This consent will expire upon the candidate's ordination and installation into the ordered ministry of teaching elder or withdrawal or removal from the preparation for ministry process.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate for Ministry

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this day \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_,

By \_\_\_\_\_ personally known to me or has produced  
\_\_\_\_\_ as identification and who did/did not take an oath.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC – State of Florida

My Commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**  
**Travel Reimbursement Policy Memo**  
**Revised August 23, 2022**

Inquirers and Candidates may be involved in traveling back to Central Florida Presbytery for Annual Consultations and to appear at the Presbytery meeting when they are taken under care as inquirers and candidates. As much as possible, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry will reimburse travel to return to Central Florida Presbytery.

The current reimbursement policy is to reimburse for expenses not to exceed \$400. Receipts will need to be provided for expenses incurred and expenses will not normally be paid in advance of the consultation except for the possibility of airfare.

Expenses incurred during the inquirer's or candidate's visit in Central Florida are assumed to be the responsibility of the inquirer or candidate and his/her home church. It continues to be the understanding that the preparation for ministry process is a covenant relationship between the inquirer or candidate, his/her home church, and the Central Florida Presbytery.

**OFFERING FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
FOR CHURCH VOCATIONS**  
**Revised August 23, 2022**

At every ordination or installation in Central Florida Presbytery, an offering will be received for the Scholarship Fund for Church Vocations. This money will be used to provide scholarships to inquirers and candidates to assist in their expenses while attending seminary and to support educators in seminary or taking courses in the process of becoming certified. Many men and women who sense a call to ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA) must make significant sacrifices to complete their preparation. This includes finding ways to pay for the additional expense of seminary tuition and books while, in many cases, continuing to provide for their family's basic needs. In addition, requirements of Clinical Pastoral Education and Supervised Ministry add to the educator's, candidate's or inquirer's workload, often with little or no compensation. Through this Scholarship Fund, Central Florida Presbytery assists students with tuition scholarships, full payment of CPE tuition, and personal counseling and other special emergency needs.

**Committee on Preparation for Ministry  
Central Florida Presbytery  
Revised August 23, 2022**

**Financial Support Policy for Persons Under Care**

It is the policy of Central Florida Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to provide financial support to inquirers and candidates according to the availability of resources in the CPM's operating budget, the Scholarship Fund for Church Vocations (into which is deposited the offerings from services of ordination and/or installation for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament held within the bounds of Central Florida Presbytery (CFP)), and any other designated scholarship funds that may be established in the future and placed under the purview of the CPM by CFP.

Financial support from the CPM is not intended to defray a major portion of the educational or living expenses associated with attending seminary; rather, these funds are intended to "fill a gap" when there is financial need. A grant for an inquirer or candidate has typically been in the \$500-\$2000 range. At any given time, requests for support from inquirers and candidates may exceed the CPM's available resources; therefore, the committee has established the following guidelines for the allocation of monies:

- 1) Consideration for support is normally limited to inquirers and candidates who are full-time students in seminary.
- 2) Once the CPM has determined that there is financial need, the committee decides on a specific dollar amount to be granted, based on the inquirer or candidate's degree of need. Funds are normally made available in the form of a check from CFP, payable to the inquirer or candidate for educational expenses.
- 3) Inquirers and candidates with continuing need may be awarded a subsequent grant by the CPM, provided that the person under care submits an updated statement of financial need for the committee's consideration.
- 4) At the end of a fiscal year, when there are sufficient funds in the budget, the CPM normally sends a small Christmas gift check to all inquirers and candidates who are full-time students in seminary under care of CFP (no special request or demonstration of financial need is necessary).
- 5) Because of its importance in the preparation for ministry process, the CPM will pay the Clinical Pastoral Education site fee of up to \$750 for each inquirer/candidate.

**Central Florida Presbytery**  
**Policy Regarding Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)**  
**Approved 9-27-2022**

Because it deems Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) to be important in the process for candidates preparing for ministry, Central Florida Presbytery requires a minimum of one unit (400 hours) of CPE from an Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) approved site.

CPE is professional education for ministry that brings students into supervised encounters with people in crisis and other pastoral care settings. This learning experience develops student awareness of themselves and the needs of those around them. The framework is based on ACPE standards and program objectives, as well as the individual interests and gifts of students. Role playing, group participation, mid unit evaluations, self-evaluations, verbatim, and independent study are all utilized in meeting the CPE objectives.

CPE is unique in that it focuses on three areas; *pastoral reflection*, which is reflection on one's self and on the relationship to the person in crisis. *pastoral formation*, which focuses on personal and pastoral identity issues in ministry, and *pastoral competence*, which focuses on clear objectives that deepening an understanding of pastoral skills and objectives.

The CPM believes that CPE provides a high standard of accountability and hands on experience in a multi faith setting. It provides a real world setting of people in crisis while supervising the development of clear CPE objectives and pastoral competencies and provides important feedback to the CPM in the end of unit evaluations.

In the event a candidate has equivalent experience, the CPM may, at its discretion, grant an exception.



**CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY  
PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY  
PROCESS FOR ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF EXAMINATION  
Revised 11-8-2022**

The provisions of the Book of Order G-2.0610 allows for accommodations in particular circumstances for the ordination examination requirements including use of an alternate examination process for a candidate when the candidate has failed on two attempts to receive a satisfactory grade or if the candidate has a documented disability which affects the individual's test taking ability. In 2001, the Presbytery approved an alternative process, and it has been used 2 or 3 times since then. The Book of Order requires that an alternative process be reviewed and re-approved every three years by both Presbytery and Synod.

Central Florida Presbytery approved the following as the process to use as an alternative means of examination when needed during the next three years:

- a. If the examination failure is Polity, Theology, or Worship and Sacraments, the candidate would be given a written examination with requirements similar to the normal standardized exam. A reading group of 3-4 CPM members and/or experienced exam readers would read the examination and then meet with the candidate for further oral examination to determine competence in the subject area.
- b. If the examination failure is Biblical Exegesis, the candidate would be given a biblical passage and would have a week to prepare both an exegesis and a written manuscript sermon based on the exegesis. A reading group of 3-4 CPM members and/or experienced exam readers would read the exegesis and sermon and would hear the candidate preach the sermon. The purpose of this examination procedure would be to ensure that the candidate had the ability to move from original biblical text to a meaningful sermon. The reading group would determine whether the candidate had demonstrated a mastery of this skill.

**CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY**  
**POLICY FOR CIRCULATION OF PIFS BY CANDIDATES**  
**Revised 11-8-2022**

The Book of Order is clear that candidates “may not enter into negotiation for ... service as a teaching elder without approval of the presbytery of care” (G--2.0607). “An “authoritative interpretation” issued by the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010), and reaffirmed by action of the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2012), clarified that under specific conditions a presbytery could approve a candidate to “negotiate for service” even before it had “certified [that] candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call.” The full text of that authoritative interpretation, edited to reference the current paragraphs in the *Book of Order*, is as follows:

Section [G-2.0607] allows a candidate to enter into negotiation for his or her ministerial service, even if the candidate has not had his or her final assessment from the presbytery’s committee on preparation for ministry, provided the candidate

- ☐ has completed two full years of theological education (or the equivalent thereof),
- ☐ has had an annual consultation within the last year,
- ☐ has satisfactorily completed all the standard ordination exams or received certification of readiness under [G-2.0610],
- ☐ has received the approval of the candidate’s committee on preparation for ministry.

If the committee on preparation for ministry has approved a particular candidate who meets all the aforementioned requirements to enter into negotiation for his or her ministerial service, that candidate may circulate a Personal Information Form or other biographical information. (Minutes, 2010, Part 1, page 60)

Because the Assembly in 2012 reaffirmed the full text of its authoritative interpretation in applying it to the current language of G-2.0607, each of the provisions set forth in the bulleted list remains binding upon presbyteries in making decisions as to whether or not to approve a particular candidate to enter into “negotiation for his or her service as a teaching elder” prior to “certification [of that candidate’s] readiness for examination for ordination, pending a call.”

Presbyteries may well want to consider including in their “mechanisms and processes” (G-3.0307) any other specific requirements they will consider when approving a candidate to “negotiate for service” prior to “certification of readiness for examination.” The key principles would include that such approvals should not be a usual practice of presbyteries and should be reserved for those who are

clearly nearing the time for their “final assessment” and are fully expected to be “certified ready for examination” when the assessment is conducted. Neither candidates nor the congregations or agencies that may wish to call them will be well served by extended delays caused by failure to meet requirements of “final assessment.”” (from Preparation for Ministry Advisory Handbook, 2015)

It is the policy of Central Florida Presbytery, however, to allow a candidate, under certain circumstances, to circulate his/her Personal Information Form (PIF) prior to the completion of some ordination requirements. In the CPM’s effort to shepherd candidates through the often-stressful final stages of preparation for ministry, the committee has determined that it can place undue hardship on a candidate to be excluded from beginning the search process until all GLC denominational and presbytery preparation criteria are met.

Therefore, the CPM may consider approval for a candidate to begin searching for a call if:

- 1) the candidate has completed all other denominational and presbytery ordination requirements and is entering his/her last term in seminary.
- 2) the candidate has completed all other denominational and presbytery ordination requirements and is in the process of completing her/his unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), a presbytery requirement.
- 3) The candidate has had his/her Final Assessment and has been Certified by the CPM Ready to be Examined for a Call pending graduation from seminary or completion of CPE
- 4) The candidate circulates her/his PIF with a cover letter clearly explaining that he/she can meet with a(n) (Associate) Pastor Nominating Committee to discuss a ministerial position, but cannot negotiate terms of call until the ordination requirements are satisfied according to the Book of Order and presbytery policy.

**CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY**  
**How Inquirers and Candidates Can Get on the Pulpit Supply List**  
**Revised 11-8-2022**

The Pulpit Supply List is offered by the Committee on Ministry as a resource for Central Florida Presbytery churches that need supply preachers to preach and lead worship when the pastor is not available. It is available by request from the Presbytery Office or through the email link on the presbytery's homepage.

The Committee on Ministry will add the names of interested candidates to the Pulpit Supply list when the person is recommended by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The CPM has established a list of criteria to be met before it will approve the request of an inquirer or candidate to be recommended to the Committee on Ministry for the list. These are the criteria:

- Available
- Willing
- Located in or near the Central Florida area
- Requests to be placed on the list
- Has previous preaching experience, with recommendation
- Has completed a homiletics course or equivalent
- Is currently enrolled in or has completed seminary education
- Or is otherwise exceptionally qualified

If a candidate has also completed the Reformed Worship and Sacraments course and is a Ruling Elder, the CPM may also recommend to the COM that the candidate be authorized to preside at the Table for the Lord's Supper.

A written request to be placed on the Pulpit Supply list should be emailed or sent to the current Chairperson of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.