

Commissioned Lay Pastor Program of the Presbytery of Western New York

Book Of Order Authorization

The Book of Order (G-14.0801) provides for the training, examination and authorization of persons to exercise a public ministry of the Church as Commissioned Lay Pastors (CLPs).

Personal Characteristics

To those called to exercise special functions in the Church, God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian Gospel in the Church and in the world. They must have the approval of God's people and the concurring judgment of governing bodies in the Church [G-6.0106].

Those desiring to serve as Commissioned Lay Pastors should recognize the importance of receiving thorough preparation for their tasks. Applicants must be willing to accept the care and guidance of the Presbytery in their course of study and practical education in preparation for commissioning. Applicants should be willing to 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 their special ministry. [G-14.0801]

It is necessary to the integrity and health of the Church that the persons who serve shall adhere to the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity, as expressed in the Book of Confessions and the Form of Government. So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the Church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained. [G-6.0108]

It is to be recognized, however, that in becoming a candidate or officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek or hold office in that body. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the governing body in which he or she serves. [G-6.0108b]

Applicants should be persons of faith, dedication and good judgment. They should be persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, and warm sympathies. [G-6.0303, G-6.0401]

Professional Characteristics

A. Standards

1. Faith, as expressed by trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and belief in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve; acceptance of the Old and New Testaments as the authoritative witness to that faith; receiving and adopting the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of the Church.
2. Maturity as expressed by membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and faithful, regular participation in its worship and service; demonstrated leadership in the Church; ability to develop facility in the craft of preaching; demonstrated pastoral ability.
3. Christian life expressed by moral standards acceptable to the Christian community; commitment to personal spiritual growth through prayer, Bible reading and devotions.
4. Constitutional as expressed by affirmative answers to the nine Constitutional questions in G-14.0801g.

B. Qualifications

1. High School diploma
2. Currently an Active Member for at least 2 years in the sponsoring PC(USA) congregation
3. Ordained as an elder
4. Endorsement by the local session where membership is held and by the pastor/moderator of the endorsing session
5. Three personal references
6. A demonstrated basic knowledge of the content of Scripture
7. Ability to communicate clearly
8. Demonstrated leadership in the church
9. Reliability
10. Compassion
11. Skills in personal relationships such as: well-developed listening skills, ability to relate to various age groups
12. Ability to keep confidentiality
13. Willingness to sign the Sexual Misconduct Disclaimer as worded in the Personal Information Form when commissioned as a Commissioned Lay Pastor

C. Covenant with the Presbytery

1. Complete education requirements, adhering to schedules and deadlines before being qualified to serve as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.
2. Continue active participation in the life and mission of the current local church.
3. Participate responsibly with the local Session, mentor and the CLP program administrators in the goal setting, evaluation and decision-making processes related to preparation for service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.
4. Take initiative in maintaining regular communication with mentor and the ALP/CLP Subcommittee regarding experiences, progress, and other issues pertaining to educational, spiritual, and personal development.
5. Respond promptly and responsibly to all communications, correspondence, requests for information, consultations and reports.
6. Understand that completion of education does not guarantee being qualified to preach or commissioning as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.
7. Understand that qualification as a Commissioned Lay Pastor does not guarantee placement as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.
8. Agree to regular continuing education such as a parish-based Clinical Pastoral Education program, an ethics course, a preaching course, etc.

Guidelines for Becoming a Commissioned Lay Pastor

The Book of Order (G. 14. 0801g) provides for the functional position of Commissioned Lay Pastor. The Commissioned Lay Pastor is not to be regarded as a replacement for the ordained clergy.

The Commission

1. Is granted by the Presbytery to lead worship, preach the gospel and perform other duties as granted to individual Commissioned Lay Pastors by the Presbytery.
2. Is valid in one or more congregations designated by the Presbytery.
3. Is valid for a period of up to three years as determined by the Presbytery.
4. The Commission may be renewed at expiration or terminated at any time at the discretion of the Presbytery.
5. There will be an annual report from the Committee on Ministry of the status of those serving in this capacity to the Presbytery.

Instruction

1. The person shall be an elder endorsed by the session of their local church and the pastor/moderator of that church.
2. The person shall make application to the Stated Clerk. If the application is accepted, the person shall participate in an education program as outlined in this policy.
3. The person shall receive instruction in Old Testament, New Testament, Reformed Theology (including Confessions), Worship and Sacraments, Preaching, Education, Ministry, PC(USA) Polity/ Program and Mission, Pastoral Care, and Spiritual Formation.
3. The person shall be examined by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry on personal faith motives for seeking commission, and suitability for ministry (including vocational counseling and evaluation by a career counseling center approved by the CPM, to be paid for according to current CPM practice.) The ALP/CLP Subcommittee will examine the person to evaluate competency in the areas of instruction outlined above.

The Commissioning

Commissioning of Lay Pastors will be done by the Presbytery at a regular meeting following approval of the Committee on Ministry, upon recommendation by the ALP/CLP Subcommittee.

The Responsibilities Of The Commissioned Lay Pastor

3. To lead worship, preach the Gospel and perform other duties as granted to individual Commissioned Lay Pastors by the Presbytery.

A. Moderate Session

A CLP may moderate the session of a particular congregation under the supervision and invitation of the Presbytery-appointed Moderator (G-14.0801.c.3). (As used in this policy, the phrase "Presbytery-appointed Moderator" refers to the minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by COM to be Interim Moderator of the Session.) This invitation shall only be extended to a CLP who has successfully completed instruction in moderation of Sessions by an ALP/CLP Subcommittee approved mentor. The following rules apply to moderation of sessions by a CLP:

- a. When a Session extends a covenant agreement for services to a CLP with the approval of the COM, the Session may also request that the CLP be allowed to moderate meetings of their session.
- b. The COM may recommend that the Presbytery-appointed Moderator extend an invitation to the CLP to moderate meetings of the session. This invitation shall only be extended after determining that the CLP has received further education from Presbytery on this subject.

- c. After accepting the invitation to moderate the session, the CLP may proceed to moderate all stated and special meetings of the session. The CLP may lead the session through the functions defined in G-10.0102.
- d. The Clerk of Session shall send a copy of the draft minutes of each session meeting to the Presbytery-appointed Moderator at the same time they are sent to the members of Session.
- e. The CLP shall not moderate meetings of the congregation. That task shall fall to the Presbytery-appointed Moderator. Any other provisions are to be made in accordance with G-7.0306.
- f. Recognizing that newly elected deacons and elders normally are ordained and/or installed during a Sunday morning worship service, every effort should be made by the session to invite a minister of the Word and Sacrament to lead in this joyous event.
- g. The CLP shall not moderate a session meeting during which the CLP's performance is being evaluated or the covenant agreement is being considered. That task shall fall to the Presbytery-appointed Moderator.

B. Administer Sacraments

"The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are God's acts of sealing the promises of faith within the community of faith as the congregation worships, and include the responses of the faithful to the Word proclaimed and enacted in the Sacraments." (W-3.3601)

Referring to G-14.0801.c.1&2, the CLP may be approved to administer the Sacraments, but only within these limits:

- a. A CLP shall receive instruction in both sacraments from a Presbytery-approved source prior to administering either sacrament. The requirement is fulfilled through successful completion of the Worship and Sacraments course.
- b. An authorized CLP is restricted to administering Sacraments within the Congregation which the CLP serves. The permissible area for administering the sacraments includes the local church, homebound parishioners of the local church and parishioners in a hospital or nursing home.

C. Perform Christian Marriages

"Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and man to each other; publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith" (W-4.9001).

Within this theology, a CLP may be granted the authority by the COM to perform Christian marriage (G-14.0801-C.6), but only within these limits:

- a. A CLP may be approved by the COM to perform Christian marriage when requested by the Session of the congregation served by the CLP. This approval shall be preceded by instruction in the fundamentals of pre-marital counseling and issues related to weddings by an ALP/CLP Subcommittee approved mentor.
- b. The CLP is restricted by the Presbytery to performing Christian marriages only within the local congregation currently served. Violation of this requirement can result in the CLP losing his or her commission and cessation of function as a CLP.
- c. The CLP may only marry a couple when at least one of the couple is a member of the congregation to which the CLP has been commissioned. Otherwise, as in the case of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, the CLP shall have the discretion of whom to marry within the local congregation.
- d. The CLP is responsible for completing all civil requirements so as to make the marriage official and recognized by the state.

D. Relationship to Presbytery (Voice and Vote)

The Book of Order states that "...a presbytery may authorize a commissioned lay pastor to Have a voice in meetings of presbytery. ...Have a vote in meetings of presbytery...." (G-14.0801.c.4&5).

Each CLP, while commissioned to serve in a particular congregation or actively serving in a validated ministry, shall have the privileges of voice and vote at meetings of Presbytery within the following limits:

- a. For purposes of parity, each CLP shall be counted an elder commissioner of Presbytery.
 - b. A CLP will maintain membership in the local congregation of which the CLP is a member. A CLP shall not serve as a lay pastor of a congregation in which the CLP maintains membership.
 - c. Voice and voting privileges in the Presbytery shall be for the term of commission only. They shall be renewed if and when the commission is renewed.
 - d. During the term of the CLP's commission, each CLP is expected to attend meetings of Presbytery or to request an excused absence.
 - e. When a CLP serves on a committee of Presbytery, the CLP will be counted as an elder for representation purposes.
4. May be assigned pastoral oversight of a local church.
 5. To serve on a Committee of Presbytery if requested to do so.
 6. As duties allow, continue active participation in the life and mission of the church of membership
 7. Understand that qualification as a Supply Preacher or Commissioning as a Commissioned Lay Pastor does not guarantee preaching assignments or placement as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.
 8. Agree to regular continuing education.

Financial and Other Compensation for CLPs

1. CLP compensation requirements shall be dealt with annually by the COM when it deals with compensation for clergy and Christian Educators.
2. CLPs who serve congregations or are employed in validated ministries in the Presbytery of Western New York are, by definition, exempt lay employees of the employing entity. They are not to be considered independent contractors. As lay employees, CLPs and those who employ them are required to comply with all the applicable local, state and federal laws relating to employment.
3. Benefits which lay employees may receive, may include but are not limited to, Social Security, Workers Compensation and Unemployment Compensation unless the employing agency is specifically exempt from participation in any particular program.
4. CLPs, if they comply with specific requirements laid out by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and set forth in the Benefits Plan of the Church, may be eligible to participate in provisions of, and receive benefits from the Plan, including participation in the medical and pension portion of the Plan. The specific provisions of the Plan apply in all cases. Generally speaking, CLPs have to be employed for 20 or more hours of service per week to be eligible for the plan.
5. In employing CLPs, the session of the congregation to be served will engage in an employment process, which will include disclosure of the rights and responsibilities of each of the parties in a covenant agreement. The Presbytery of Western New York, through action of the COM, must approve all provisions of the covenant agreement.
6. The covenant agreement between the CLP and the session of the church being served or other employing agency will include, in writing, all matters relating to employment, including salary, other allowances (such as travel, continuing education, participation in the Benefits Plan and all other pension plans) and any other items which are considered terms of employment. Sessions shall annually review the salary and other terms of employment of the CLP. The covenant agreement shall make provision for an annual two-week paid study leave.

In all cases the session and the CLP have the right to determine employment hours that may be translated into compensation. Travel expenses shall be reimbursed at the business rate allowed by the IRS and continuing education expenses shall be reimbursed as expended. A CLP's salary shall be contingent upon hours worked per week.

9. The covenant agreement shall provide for termination thereof on thirty days written notice by either party to the other party. A copy of such notice must be sent to the Stated Clerk who shall transmit it to the ALP/CLP Subcommittee.

Supervision and Continuing Education of Commissioned Lay Pastors

A CLP "...shall work under the supervision of the Presbytery through the moderator of the session of the church being served or through the Committee on Ministry. A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor" (G-14.0801d).

1. The ALP/CLP Subcommittee, with the approval of COM, shall assign a mentor to each CLP who serves a local congregation. This mentor shall have monthly contact with the CLP and guide the CLP in pastoral issues.
2. The Presbytery-assigned moderator shall supervise a CLP's work with a session.
3. General supervision shall be the responsibility of Committee on Ministry. This will include such things as helping the session and CLP work through annual employment issues and coordinating the CLP's annual continuing education. To that end, each CLP shall attend a mandatory annual meeting with the Committee on Ministry to discuss these and other relevant issues. A newly placed CLP shall also attend a mandatory meeting with the Subcommittee at or near the sixth month anniversary of placement to review the performance of the CLP to that date.

The Education Program

Courses required for preparation of CLPs will be offered through the Lay Academy under the auspices of the Presbytery's Education Committee. The courses will require outside reading, study and written assignments in addition to class participation. Two of the required courses will be offered each year following a regular rotation. The cost of each course will be approximately \$60 -\$100. Seminary courses in the required areas may be accepted for credit toward requirements with the prior approval of the Christian Education Committee.

Guidelines for Mentors

1. Mentors provide a vital link for Candidates in the Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program between the academic classroom setting and the "real life" of service in local churches. The role of the Mentor is to provide an objective "listening ear," to act as a source of information and encouragement, to provide professional and spiritual nurture, and to function as part of the education team.
2. Mentors should be minister members of the Presbytery of Western New York. Mentors for participants in the education program will be assigned by the ALP/CLP Subcommittee and report to the Committee on Ministry.
3. Mentors will be assigned for a period of one year. If it is mutually agreeable to both Mentor and participant in the education program the assignment may be renewed annually.

Characteristics of Mentors

1. The Mentor is a good Role Model. The way the Mentor relates to the Candidate should demonstrate the same kind of openness and caring which Commissioned Lay Pastors should develop. The Mentor should be committed to his or her own professional, personal, and spiritual growth and should encourage the Candidate to be committed as well.
2. The Mentor is Approachable and Non-Judgmental. The Mentor should seek to listen empathetically to the concerns of the Candidate before giving advice and to present critiques in a positive manner.
3. The Mentor is Accessible. It is desirable that the Mentor and Candidate be geographically accessible. The Mentor should be willing to make time available for phone conversations and meetings.

The Covenant Process

The Candidate in the Commissioned Lay Pastor Program is responsible to initiate and maintain contact with the Mentor as outlined below.

The Candidate/Mentor Covenant for Reflection Upon Coursework

1. Candidates will confer with their mentors within two weeks following each course. The conversation include brief reflections on:
 - a. How am I growing spiritually/moving on my faith journey because of this course?
 - b. What content/information am I learning?
 - c. What am I learning about doing ministry in this area?
 - d. What more do I need/want to know about this subject?
 - e. Any assigned reflections by the instructor.
2. Candidates will arrange periodic conversations with their mentors to discuss their progress.
3. Mentors will submit a brief written evaluation of the Candidate's progress to the ALP/CLP Subcommittee following the conclusion of each year. Particular attention should be paid to whether the Candidate addressed the issues posed by each of the questions above, and whether the Candidate has been faithful in maintaining contact. Mentors will share these evaluations with Candidates.

The Mentor/Candidate Covenant for Education in Preaching

1. Candidates will submit one exegetical paper and one sermon (and sermon tape as available) upon the completion of the Preaching Course to the Mentor for feedback and discussion.
2. The Mentor should provide honest, loving, helpful critiques of exegesis and sermons.
3. The Mentor should urge the Candidate to give high priority to sermon preparation. Mentors should share their experience of preparing and preaching sermons. Candidates should be encouraged to study tapes and read sermons of outstanding preachers.
4. When the Candidate begins to preach in the churches, the Candidate and Mentor should review sermon feedback forms together during their meetings following course work

The Candidate/Mentor Covenant for Spiritual Formation

1. The Mentor should seek to be a source of support, encouragement, and enthusiasm for the Candidate, both within scheduled reflection sessions and in other interactions. Mentors and Candidates should pray for one another between meetings.
2. Mentors should be prepared to share Candidates' challenges, growth, concerns, and joys.
3. Mentors should regard their role as one of "equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for the up-building of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 12).

The Mentor/Candidate Covenant to Report upon Preparation for Service as Commissioned Lay Pastor

1. The Candidate is responsible to schedule all meetings.
2. The Mentor is responsible to submit a brief evaluation after each year to Candidate and ALP/CLP Subcommittee.
3. The ALP/CLP Subcommittee may seek additional input for evaluative purposes from Candidates or Mentors at any point in the education process.

Necessary Outcomes To Be Commissioned As A Commissioned Lay Pastor

Commissioning as a Commissioned Lay Pastor requires completion of the following:

1. Completion of all Coursework and Assignments. The Candidate shall attend a minimum of 3/4 of all class sessions. Missed coursework must be made up to the satisfaction of the instructor.
2. Responsibility in fulfilling the Candidate/Mentor Covenant.
3. Prompt submission of all required reports and evaluations to the ALP/CLP Subcommittee.
4. The submission of a final comprehensive reflection paper.
5. The submission of a faith statement.
6. The submission of an exegetical paper, written sermon prepared upon that exegesis, sermon tape of same sermon, and full order of worship (including all prayers and hymn selections) in which sermon was actually preached.
7. Observation of conduct of Service of Worship (including Preaching) by an evaluator designated by ALP/CLP Subcommittee.
8. Successful completion of written and/or oral examination in the knowledge of basic Bible Content and understanding of Reformed Theology, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, and the Book of Confessions and relating this knowledge and understanding to situations likely to be encountered in ministry in the local church.
9. Demonstrated responsible participation in life of church of membership during education process.
10. The ALP/CLP Subcommittee should assess the candidate's probability for success, including an oral reflective interview.

Candidacy for Commissioned Lay Pastor

Before being commissioned to serve a congregation or in a validated ministry, a person shall have been a CLP candidate for at least one year under the supervision of the ALP/CLP Subcommittee.

1. In order to begin CLP candidacy, a person must submit completed "Commissioned Lay Pastor Candidacy Application" and a written Statement of Faith to the Session of the congregation of which the person is a member. If the Session approves the request, it shall forward these documents to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, along with the completed "Session Endorsement" and "Pastor/Moderator's Endorsement" documents. The person applying for CLP candidacy shall also ask three (3) persons to provide personal references, to be mailed directly to the Stated Clerk using the forms provided. The Stated Clerk shall forward all these documents to the ALP/CLP Subcommittee and to the CPM.
2. The CPM will assess the candidate's suitability as a CLP, and recommend whether to enroll the person as a candidate to the ALP/CLP subcommittee. The CPM assessment for CLP candidates shall be based in part on professional vocational counseling and evaluation at an approved vocational counseling center, paid for by the Presbytery.
3. The ALP/CLP Subcommittee, with COM approval, shall assign a mentor to work with the candidate.
4. The Christian Education Committee shall, with the approval of the ALP/CLP Subcommittee, determine the basic education courses to be completed by each candidate and certify the same in writing to the ALP/CLP Subcommittee. In doing so, the Christian Education Committee may take into account Lay Academy or seminary work satisfactorily completed previously by the candidate. The Christian Education Committee will oversee the candidate's progress toward satisfactory completion of all the required basic courses. No course taken over 10 years ago will be accepted. When they have been satisfactorily completed, the Christian Education Committee shall certify that fact in writing to the ALP/CLP Subcommittee.
5. "Upon receipt of certification of completed course work by the Christian Education Committee, the ALP/CLP Subcommittee shall do a final assessment of the candidate including, but not limited to:
 - a. review of all evaluations and reports of the mentoring process by the candidate and mentor, as delineated under "MENTORING PROCESS"
 - b. oral and written examinations of competency in areas of instruction as delineated under "NECESSARY OUTCOMES"
 - c. evaluation of successful fulfillment of all other requirements listed under "NECESSARY OUTCOMES"
6. The ALP/CLP Subcommittee shall, upon completion of its final assessment, attest to the COM in writing the candidate's readiness to receive a commission as a CLP. Satisfactory completion of the candidacy process does not guarantee authorization or commissioning, but it is a precondition thereto.
7. The ALP/CLP Subcommittee shall maintain a roll of CLP candidates who have satisfactorily completed all basic education courses and who, in the judgment of the Subcommittee, are suitable for placement in a congregation or in a validated ministry following the successful completion of the required course work. When the COM determines that there is a validated ministry or a congregation that may best be served for the time being by a CLP and that congregation's session requests the services of a CLP, the ALP/CLP Subcommittee shall determine if there is a CLP candidate on its roll who would be suitable for the requested ministry. In doing so, the Subcommittee shall adhere to the Presbytery's AA/EEO Guidelines. If there is such a CLP candidate, the candidate may be recommended to Presbytery by the COM for commissioning to the specified ministry for a term not to exceed three years, which may be renewed by the COM if so requested by the session or employing agency.
8. Before the commissioning takes place, the Presbytery shall have the opportunity to question the CLP candidate on the candidate's faith journey. The questioning shall be consistent with the fact that the candidate does not have seminary theological education. The commissioning ceremony may take place at the Presbytery.

9. The renewal or termination of a CLP's commission must be preceded by the written request of the employing session or other employing agency to the Stated Clerk for that renewal or termination. The Stated Clerk shall transmit the report to the COM. The COM may, on its own initiative, terminate a CLP's commission when the COM judges that to be in the best interest of the Presbytery.

Authorization For CLP Moderating Session, Administering the Sacraments, and/or Performing Marriages.

Special authorization by Presbytery is required for a CLP to moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, and/or perform marriages. This authorization may be granted only upon request of the Session of the congregation served by the CLP, and after the CLP has taken the required education in these areas. Before or after commissioning, a CLP or CLP candidate may take the required education for moderating session or performing marriages under the tutelage of the ALP/CLP approved mentor or through a seminary. The mentor or seminary must attest to the successful completion of this education in writing to the ALP/CLP Subcommittee, which will forward it to the COM. The education required for special authorization to administer the sacraments is covered in the Worship and Sacraments course, a prerequisite for commissioning.

Commissioned Lay Pastor Candidacy Application

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:

Mailing Address:

City, Zip:

Home Phone:

Work Phone (If you can receive calls):

Occupation/Place of Employment:

EDUCATION BACKGROUND

Formal Education:

List academic institutions attended and degrees obtained, beginning with High School

School/Location	Years Attended/Degree Date	Diploma or Degree	Area of Study or Major/Minor

CHURCH BACKGROUND

Year of Baptism:

Year of Confirmation/Public Profession of Faith:

Name of Church where you are an active member:

Date you were received as active member in current local congregation:

Other churches where you have been a member:

I am a Deacon. Date of Ordination to Office:

I am an Elder. Date of Ordination to Office:

List below your areas of involvement in the life and mission of the church, both as a participant and as a leader.

Area of Involvement	Check Here if currently involved	Participant	Leader

Please answer the following questions. Feel free to adjust spacing or use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

What informal learning experiences will help you in this program? (Travel, conferences, seminars, etc.)?

Why are you interested in this program? What motivates you to apply?

What aspects of your present church life do you enjoy the most?

What aspects are the most frustrating?

What does it mean to you to be a Presbyterian?

What gifts and skills do you bring to this program?

In what areas of your life would you like to grow?

What are your current spiritual practices and disciplines?

What are some of your interests/hobbies?

In what community or volunteer service have you been involved?

FAITH STATEMENT

Please attach a brief statement of your personal faith. Describe what you believe about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and your relationship to them. Include a brief summary of your understanding of the role of Scripture, the Church, and the Sacraments in your life. (Suggested length: one-half to one page – single spaced typed.)

PASTOR/MODERATOR'S ENDORSEMENT

You should take your completed form and your faith statement to your pastor, or, if your church is without a pastor, to the moderator of your church's Session. The minister will talk with you about your interest in the Commissioned Lay Pastor program. Your minister will take your application to the Session, along with a reference, which she or he will complete. No application may be considered without the pastor/moderator's and the Session's endorsement.

SESSION ENDORSEMENT

After you have met with the pastor/moderator, request a meeting with the Session of your particular church. They will review your application with you before filling out their endorsement form.

REFERENCES

In addition to the minister and the Session, please list 3 additional persons who know you well in a variety of relationships (e.g. another church member, a colleague at work, a teacher, a friend) who will serve as Individual References. Duplicate and pass along an Individual Reference Form to each, asking that the form be completed and mailed directly to the Presbytery Office. Please list below the persons who will be your Individual References.

Name	Address	City/State	Phone

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I am applying for admission to the Commissioned Lay Pastor Program of the Presbytery of Western New York. If accepted, I hereby commit myself to participate fully in the scheduled activities and assignments to the best of my ability. I understand that successful completion of the Authorized Lay Preacher education course is necessary before I may be considered for admission to the Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program.

Signature:

Date:

Session Endorsement Form

Instructions: You may import this form into your word processor, then email it as a file attachment (we can open .wpd, .doc, .rtf, txt, and .htm files), or print it and "snail" mail or fax it to the Presbytery with attention to the Stated Clerk. (BronwenB@pbywny.org; 2450 Main St, Buffalo, NY 14214; Fax – 835-8072)

Primary attention should be given at this time to evaluating the applicant's natural gifts, quality of commitment, strength of motivation, and potential for growth. Each of these issues should be pursued at greater depth on a continuing basis. The Session should note the Committee on Preparation for Ministry must rely upon the Session, the Moderator, and the Applicant to exercise good judgment in discerning whether this individual seems to be called by God to consider service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.

Name of Applicant:

Please respond candidly to the following questions. Adjust or use extra space as needed.

1. What personal qualities are evidence of a vital faith in God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?
2. How is that faith currently being expressed through the individual's participation in the worship, ministry and mission of this congregation?
3. What evidence do you see of a sense of call?
4. What actual and potential talents for ministry as a Commissioned Lay Pastor are evident in this individual?
5. Describe a few situations in the life of your church in which the applicant has demonstrated leadership capacity.
6. How would you rate the applicant's physical health/stamina, emotional well-being, and maturity?
7. Service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor requires great maturity of character, self-discipline, reliability, and commitment to the polity of the PC(USA). Please comment upon the applicant's attributes in these areas.
8. Describe the applicant's capacities for effective public speaking and demonstration of pastoral care.

9. The following qualities are especially important in a Commissioned Lay Pastor. Please check all which you think are demonstrated by this applicant in the life of your church:

- Ability to speak publicly, with a clear voice and in good English
- A demonstrated basic knowledge of the content of Scripture
- Reliability
- Leader in the church
- Compassion
- Skills in personal relationships
- Well-developed listening skills
- Ability to relate to various age groups
- Able to keep confidentiality

10. Describe any reservations you might have in endorsing this candidate. (Note: a reservation does not disqualify an individual or indicate they are unsuitable for service. The CPM, however, must rely upon your honest and candid evaluation.)

Check one:

The Session of the _____ Church

- DOES endorse this application for admission to the Authorized Lay Preacher/Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program.
- DOES NOT endorse this application for admission to the Authorized Lay Preacher/Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program.
- DOES endorse, WITH RESERVATIONS, this application for admission to the Authorized Lay Preacher/Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program (List specific qualifications here).

Signature of Clerk of Session:

Date:

Pastor/Moderator Endorsement Form

Instructions: You may import this form into your word processor, then email it as a file attachment (we can open .wpd, .doc, .rtf, txt, and .htm files), or print it and "snail" mail or fax it to the Presbytery with attention to the Stated Clerk. (BronwenB@pbywny.org; 2450 Main St, Buffalo, NY 14214; Fax – 835-8072)

Primary attention should be given at this time to evaluating the applicant's natural gifts, quality of commitment, strength of motivation, and potential for growth. Each of these issues should be pursued at greater depth on a continuing basis. The Pastor/Moderator should note, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry must rely upon the Session, the Moderator, and the Applicant to exercise good judgment in discerning whether this individual seems to be called by God to consider service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor.

Name of Applicant:

Please respond candidly to the following questions. Adjust or use extra space as needed.

10. What personal qualities are evidence of a vital faith in God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?

11. How is that faith currently being expressed through the individual's participation in the worship, ministry and mission of this congregation?

12. What evidence do you see of a sense of call?

13. What actual and potential talents for ministry as a Commissioned Lay Pastor are evident in this individual?

14. Describe a few situations in the life of your church in which the applicant has demonstrated leadership capacity.

15. How would you rate the applicant's physical health/stamina, emotional well-being, and maturity?

16. Service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor requires great maturity of character, self-discipline, reliability, and commitment to the polity of the PC(USA). Please comment upon the applicant's attributes in these areas.

17. Describe the applicant's capacities for effective public speaking and demonstration of pastoral care.

18. The following qualities are especially important in a Commissioned Lay Pastor. Please check all which you think are demonstrated by this applicant in the life of your church:

- Ability to speak publicly, with a clear voice and in good English
- A demonstrated basic knowledge of the content of Scripture
- Reliability
- Leader in the church
- Compassion
- Skills in personal relationships
- Well-developed listening skills
- Ability to relate to various age groups
- Able to keep confidentiality

10. Describe any reservations you might have in endorsing this candidate. (Note: a reservation does not disqualify an individual or indicate they are unsuitable for service. The ALP/CLP Subcommittee, however, must rely upon your honest and candid evaluation.)

11. How long have you known the applicant?

Check one:

I, the Pastor/Moderator of the _____ Church

- DO endorse this application for admission to the Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program.
- DO NOT endorse this application for admission to the Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program.
- DO endorse, WITH RESERVATIONS, this application for admission to the Commissioned Lay Pastor Education Program (List specific qualifications here).

Signature:

Date:

Personal Reference Form

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Name of Applicant:

Your Name:

Your Phone Number:

Your Address (Include town and zip):

Your email address:

Please describe Your Relationship to Applicant:

Family Member Friend Colleague Teacher/Professor Member of Church Other

Please answer the following questions. Adjust space in your word processor or use additional paper as needed.

1. What are the greatest strengths of the applicant?
2. Please describe specific ways in which the applicant demonstrates capacity for leadership.
3. Service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor requires maturity of character, self-discipline, emotional stability, reliability, and commitment to the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Please comment upon the applicant's attributes in these areas.

4. Everyone has ways in which they need to grow personally and professionally. Please comment on the applicant's growth areas.
5. Service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor often involves preaching 2 Services of Worship on Sunday mornings, with travel over country roads. Are there any factors, which would affect the applicant's ability to fulfill these requirements?

6. The following personal and professional characteristics are important for Commissioned Lay Pastors. Please check all those, which you believe, apply to the applicant.
1. Ability to speak publicly, with a clear voice and in good English
 2. A demonstrated basic knowledge of the content of Scripture
 3. Reliability
 4. Leadership
 5. Compassion
 6. Skills in personal relationships
 7. Well-developed listening skills
 8. Ability to relate to various age groups
 9. Able to keep confidentiality
7. Describe any reservations you might have in endorsing this candidate. (Note: reservations do not disqualify an individual or indicate they are unsuitable for service. We must, however, rely upon your honest and candid evaluation.)

Your Signature:

Date:

Mentor End of Year Report

Name of Candidate:

Name of Mentor:

Your Phone Number:

Your Address (Include town and zip):

Mentor E-Mail:

1. How many times did you meet this year?
2. How would you rate the candidate's:

	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Some Concerns	Unsatisfactory
Initiative in making appointments				
Reliability in keeping appointments				
Timeliness in submission of reflection papers and other assignments				
Commitment to the reflective process, as evidenced by thoughtfulness and care in written work				

3. Please explain any concerns or unsatisfactory ratings above
4. What do you affirm about the person's work?
5. What suggestions for continued growth would you make?
6. Is there anything else the ALP/CLP Subcommittee should know?

Any Questions?

Commissioned Lay Pastor Candidate Checklist:

Criteria/Requirements	Date completed	Date documentation submitted	Date approved/accepted
High School Diploma			
2 years Active Membership in sponsoring congregation			
Ordained Elder in sponsoring congregation			
Complete CLP Candidacy Application (Including Faith Statement)			
Endorsed by the Pastor/ Moderator of sponsoring congregation			
Endorsed by the Session of sponsoring congregation			
Three (3) Personal References			
Application submitted to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery			
Examination by the CLP/ ALP Subcommittee			
Examination by CPM			
Mentor Appointed			
Coursework Approved by the Christian Education Committee *OLD TESTAMENT *NEW TESTAMENT *REFORMEDTHEOLOGY *WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS *PREACHING *EDUCA TION MINISTRY *PCUSA POLITY/PROGRAM AND MISSION *PASTORAL CARE *SPIRITUAL FORMATION			
Vocational and Career Counseling			
Exegetical Paper, Sermon, and Full Order of Worship Submitted			
Conducted a Service of Worship Observed by an appointed Evaluator			

Examination on basic Bible Content, understanding of Reformed Theology, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, and the Book of Confessions ORAL exam WRITTEN exam			
Reassessment by CLP/ ALP Subcommittee			
Reassessment Reports Forwarded to COM for Authorization			
Presentation to Presbytery			
Receives Commission to a Church			

ALP/CLP Subcommittee, February 18, 2003

Potential Examination Questions for Commissioned Lay Pastors
Presbytery of Western New York

Personal Faith and Motives:

Write a brief statement (1-2 pages) giving your personal faith beliefs, and a paragraph commenting on your sense of call to this ministry.

Theology: I

List and briefly explain five major tenets of Reformed Theology. In addition, choose one and write at least one paragraph explaining it, and then comment on how this doctrine works in your personal life and in the life of the church.

History:

Pick one of the creeds or confession of the church:

Name some of the issues that led to the original writing of the creed/confession.

How does this creed/confession speak to issues in the church today?

What are four major messages of the Old Testament?

What are four major themes found in the New Testament?

Write briefly on one theme each from the Old and New Testaments, telling how this theme has been evident in your life.

Teaching:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Presbyterian Curriculum?

What other Resources might you suggest for a study group?

What events in Presbytery will help strengthen your Christian Education efforts?

Design an outline for a confirmation class: include length of class and what would be covered in each class/retreat/event.

Polity:

What are the parts of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

What are the three major sections of the Book of Order – what does each section address?

Name the 4 governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church. List some responsibilities of each.

Boundary Issues:

There is great concern in our Church regarding boundary issues. Write a paragraph to reflect on each of the following boundary issues:

1. Power/Relationships: what is the Commissioned Lay Pastor's role in dealing with the congregation, the Session, and leaders of the church? How might serving as a Commissioned Lay Pastor in your home congregation affect your position in the congregation?
2. Reflect on a responsible use of time as a Commissioned Lay Pastor: What is a responsible use of your time as you balance work, family, leisure and other commitments? Availability is often a question pastors must deal with in seeking a balanced life – will you need to set limits on your availability?
3. What is your understanding of some of the issues involved in the Presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy? How will this affect your work in the church? Your pastoral care?
4. Reflect on some of the jurisdictional issues involved in being a Commissioned Lay Pastor: Commissioning is for a specific place and for a period of time (which can be renewed upon review). Reflect on the role/relationship of a Commissioned Lay Pastor in a congregational (or other setting) when the commissioned term is over.

Worship:

What is the purpose of the Sunday morning Worship Service?

How do the various parts of the Sunday service carry out that purpose?

Develop and outline a possible Sunday Morning Worship Service, including what you consider the essential elements. Indicate time allotments for each part of the service.

Preaching:

Choose a lectionary passage from one of the Sundays in the month of _____ on the basis of which you will preach an 8-12 minute sermon. Outline your steps of preparation for this sermon, citing the resources you used. Write a brief introduction for your sermon. Outline the main points of the sermon and write a brief conclusion for your sermon. Be prepared to preach your sermon to the group assembled for your examination.

Sacraments:

What is the meaning of each of the sacraments?

What is a person's identity in light of these sacraments?

What do the sacraments say about who you are and your relationship to others?

Additional questions

Give a brief statement of what you believe about God

What do Christians mean by "The Trinity"?

What does "Justification by Faith" mean?

State some of your beliefs about Resurrection and Eternal Life.

How does the Book of Order describe a faithful member?

Who may receive the sacraments?

If the session of a church wants to call a congregational meeting, what are the steps to be taken?

What can be discussed?

How are Elders elected to office?

What are some of the responsibilities of the session?

Who decides how often the Lord's Supper will be celebrated in a local congregation?

What book of the Bible tells about the beginning of the Church and tells of its extension by missionary activity?

What Bible passage might you use to preach on the following subjects?

A Godly leader

Stewardship

The need for Christian growth

Salvation

The Holy Spirit

Forgiveness of sins

How God calls a person

Temptation

The last judgment

Interview Questions

- a. How have you grown spiritually or moved along on your faith journey since the beginning of this Education Program?
- b. How has your understanding of God changed?
- c. How has your understanding of yourself changed?
- d. How have these changes or new understandings influenced your daily life?
- e. What do you regard as your strengths and weaknesses?
- f. What has it meant to be part of this covenant community?
- g. What is your theology of Baptism, Communion?
- h. What are some unique circumstances you will face as a Commissioned Lay Pastor?
- i. Why do you wish to be a Commissioned Lay Pastor?

Academy for Lay Ministries and Personal Growth

Education for preparation of Commissioned Lay Pastors, Authorized Lay Preachers and
Certified Christian Educators
Presbytery of Western New York
Western Area, United Church of Christ

Course Descriptions

Old Testament

This introduction to the literary, historical, cultural and theological significance of God's word to us will teach how to interpret scripture using accepted exegetical processes and resource. Students will learn to apply scripture in preaching and teaching. (20 hrs)

Needed for CCE, CLP, ALP

New Testament

This introduction to the historical, literary, cultural, theological significance of God's word to us in the life and teaching of Jesus and the early church, will give students an understanding of the significant themes in the New Testament, their relationship to the Old Testament, and their importance for contemporary faith. (20 hrs)

Needed for CCE, CLP, ALP

Reformed Theology

This course will acquaint students with Reformed theology from an historical perspective and as it is understood in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and UCC. It will include a Reformed understanding of worship and the sacraments with comparison to other Christian understandings. (20 hrs)

Needed for CCE, CLP, ALP

Religious Education Theory and Teaching

In a study of human development relating to faith development, this course will give students practical application of teaching as a ministry of the church. The course will include an introduction to resources, styles of learning and age-appropriate education. This course will give the student the ability to integrate religious education theory and practice in the church's education ministries. (20 hrs)

Needed for CCE, CLP, ALP

Preaching

How to develop a sermon from exegesis to delivery will be the focus of this practical course. It will cover styles of proclaiming the Word and practice in preaching. (20 hrs)

Needed for CLP, ALP

Worship and Sacraments

Planning worship services, using the liturgical calendar, lectionary, and selecting music will be included in this course. It will include a review of basic understandings of Reformed worship and sacraments. (20 hrs)

Needed for CCE, CLP, ALP

Pastoral Care

This course will emphasize the assessment and referral process for individuals in need of pastoral care. It will discuss pastoral care of the connectional church: local congregation, presbytery, synod, General Assembly, and ecumenical and interfaith communities. It will cover the care and help available to an educator or lay pastor. (20 hrs)

Needed for CLP

Presbyterian Polity

This will cover working knowledge of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the relationship of the Commissioned Lay Minister to the presbytery, including professional ethics and conduct. It will discuss the connectional church and the place of the local congregation in the mission of the whole church. (15 hrs)

Needed for CCE, CLP, ALP

Program and Mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

This course will introduce students to the program and mission of the PC(USA) and give them the ability to interpret that program and mission in the education and preaching ministries of the church. (15 hrs)

Needed for CCE, CLP, ALP

Spiritual Formation

This course is designed to introduce students to the history and richness of Christian spirituality while teaching the many formative practices that shape our personal and communal life. Students will not only learn about spiritual formation, but they will also have time to apply what they learned in their daily as well as church life.

Needed for CLP, ALP

Cost per course \$45 - \$75

These course requirements may be met by taking courses at seminaries or through other education experiences. However, one must have the approval of the Education Committee in order to have them credited to the Commissioning or Certifying process.

Proposed Course Sequence

Spiritual Formation	April – June 2003
Old Testament	September – November 2003
Religion Ed Theory & Teaching	April – June 2004
New Testament.....	September – December 2004
Pastoral Care	April – June 2005
Reformed Theology	September – November 2005
Preaching, Worship.....	April – June 2006
Polity, Program and Mission	September – December 2006
Worship & Sacraments	April – June 2007

Continuing Education

Once the cycle of courses is complete, it will begin again in roughly the same order creating a five-year cycle for the education programs.

Additional one-day seminars and education programs offered by the Education Committee will be held throughout the year for continuing education.

For Further Information call:

Mary Mohlke

631-0979 (Resource Center), 688-8699 (H), 835-8056 (O)

Presbytery e-mail: marym@pbywny.org

Rev. Howard Boswell, Chair, Presbytery of WNY Education Committee

836-6297 (H), 875-7600 (O)

Rev. Kay Woike, Western Area, United Church of Christ

875-3365