

MANUAL PRESBYTERY de Cristo  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)  
COMMISSIONING RULING ELDERS  
TO A  
PARTICULAR PASTORAL SERVICE

Committee on Preparation for Ministry  
April, 2014

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## INTRODUCTION

In speaking of the pastoral office, Calvin writes: "The pastoral office we have restored, both according to the apostolic rule and the practice of the early church, by insisting that everyone who rules in the Church shall also teach....Among us, even if some Ministers be found of no great learning, none is admitted who is not at least tolerably fit to teach."

"The Necessity of Reforming the Church" in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*. J.K.S.Reid, trs. & ed. Philadelphia:The Westminster Press, 1954, 206. LCC

"Professor Brian Blount recalls a line from the movie *A League of Our Own*. When one of the players complains that playing baseball is too hard, the coach played by Tom Hanks, answers her, 'It's baseball. It's supposed to be hard. If it weren't hard, then everyone would do it.' Adds Blount, Christian faith and the biblical interpretation that goes along with it are also hard. Not everyone can do it, not everyone wants to do it."

*Struggling with Scripture*. Walter Brueggemann, William C. Placher, and Brian K. Blount. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002, 1, 67.

The 208th (1996) General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved an amendment to the Constitution providing for pastoral services formerly reserved for those ordained as Ministers of Word and Sacrament, now, Teaching Elders. The change in Presbyterian practice came as a result of the great need for pastoral leadership in small congregations unable (for a variety of reasons) to call a teaching elder (ordained pastor) to provide these services. Those so empowered to provide pastoral service are Commissioned Ruling Elders (formerly, Commissioned Lay Pastors).

**BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES TO COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS**

All citations are from the 2013 through 2015 edition of the *Book of Order* and the *Directory for Worship*

**G-2.10 Commissioning Ruling Elders to Particular Pastoral Service**

**G-2.1001** *Functions*

When the presbytery in consultation with the session or other responsible committee determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.

**G-2.1002** *Training, Examination and Commissioning*

A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.

**G-2.1003** *Commissioning Service*

When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualification of a ruling elder to serve a congregation providing the services described above, it shall commission the ruling elder to pastoral service as designated by the presbytery, employing the questions contained in W-4.4000

**G-2.1004** *Supervision*

The ruling elder commissioned under the terms of G-2.1001 shall work under the supervision of the presbytery. The presbytery may at any time withdraw the commission for reasons it deems good and sufficient. A teaching elder shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

**G-4.0301** *Trust and Confidentiality*

In the exercise of pastoral care, teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) and ruling elders who have been commissioned by a presbytery to limited pastoral service (G-2.10), shall maintain a relationship of trust and confidentiality, and shall hold in confidence all information revealed to them in the course of providing care and all information relating to the exercise of such care.

When the person whose confidences are at issue gives express consent to reveal confidential information, then a teaching elder or a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service may, but cannot be compelled to, reveal confidential information.

A teaching elder or ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service may reveal confidential information when she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of imminent bodily harm to any person.

**G-4.0302** *Mandatory Reporting*

Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

## **II DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP ON COMMISSIONING**

### **W-2.3006**

Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God's redeeming grace offered to all people. Baptism is God's gift of grace and also God's summons to respond to that grace. Baptism calls to repentance, to faithfulness, and to discipleship. Baptism gives the church its identity and commissions the church for ministry to the world.

### **W-4.3000 3. Commissioning for Specific Acts of Discipleship**

#### **W-4.3001**

In the life of the Christian community God calls people to particular acts of discipleship to use their personal gifts for service in the church and in the world. These specific acts may be strengthened and confirmed by formal recognition in worship.

#### **W-4.3002**

Discipleship may be expressed

- a. in the local church through service such as teacher in the church school, trustee, member of the choir, officer in a church organization, or adviser or helper with various church groups;
- b. on behalf of the local church through its ministry in and to the community;
- c. in the larger church as people serve in the ministries of presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly, and of ecumenical agencies and councils;
- d. beyond the church cooperating with all who work for compassion and reconciliation.

#### **W-4.3003**

Recognition and commissioning of people called to such acts of discipleship may occur in the Service for the Lord's Day as a response to the proclamation of the Word (fYV-.3500) or as a bearing and following of the Word into the world. (fYV-3.3700) Recognizing and commissioning for specific acts of discipleship may also occur in services of worship provided for this purpose or in other appropriate services.

### **W-4.4000 4. Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning**

#### **W-4.4001**

- a. In ordination the church sets apart with prayer and the laying on of hands those who have been called through election by the church to serve as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders. (fYV-2.1005) In installation the church sets apart with prayer those previously ordained as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders, and called anew to service in that ministry.

b. The service of ordination and installation for ruling elders, deacons, or teaching elders, and for the commissioning of ruling elders to pastoral service, certified Christian educators, and other certified persons, shall focus upon Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church, and shall include a sermon appropriate to the occasion. The teaching elder presiding shall state briefly the nature of the ministry.

#### **W-4.4002**

The service of ordination and installation, or commissioning, may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day as a response to the proclamation of the Word. (W-3.3503) Ordination and installation or commissioning, may also take place in a special service that focuses upon Jesus Christ and the mission and ministry of the church and which includes the proclamation of the Word. The service of **ordination or** installation of a **teaching elder** shall be conducted at a convenient time to enable the substantial participation of the presbytery.

#### **W-4.4003**

The moderator of the council of those to be ordained, installed, or commissioned shall ask them to stand before the body of membership and to answer the following questions:

- a. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?
- c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?
- d. Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?
- e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline?  
Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?
- f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?
- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- h. Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

- i. (4) (For ruling elder commissioned to particular pastoral service)  
Will you be a faithful ruling elder in this commission, serving the people by proclaiming the good news, teaching faith and caring for people, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

[ALL MENTION OF COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS CEASES FOLLOWING THE ABOVE QUESTION, i 4. There is this additional comment.]

**W-4.4004**

- b. ...Those previously ordained ordinarily shall stand along with the congregation, if able, for the prayer of installation...[In this case, commissioning]



### III BECOMING A COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER

The Commissioned Ruling Elder is called as a baptized person, as a Ruling Elder, and authorized by a presbytery for limited pastoral service, or a validated ministry. Becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder is not an easy decision. When someone becomes aware of God and the Holy Spirit moving them toward such ministry they should turn to their congregation for help in discerning God's will. The Session should pray with and for the person in discerning this call. The Session should recommend them to the Commissioned Ruling Elder program if and when they believe that the person's sense of call is genuine and divinely initiated.

#### A. CHARACTERISTICS

The person feeling called to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder should possess the gifts, faith, dedication, and Christian lifestyle appropriate for one called to pastoral service. The person should evidence the following:

Commitment to Jesus Christ and the church in joy-full service and acceptance of God's grace and gifts made known in Jesus;

A sense of call from the Holy Spirit leading to this specific form of ministry;

Intelligence shown in the ability to think in abstract terms, and to examine and integrate information;

A desire and commitment to continuing personal and spiritual growth through study, reflection, and in relationship with others;

A love for all people shown in the ability to accept them, to work with them, and to be energetic, empathetic, imaginative, and patient in their shepherding and care.

A Session should recognize these qualities and notice the response to them of people in the congregation and in the larger community. It is often members of a congregation who first recognize the gifts for lay leadership, thus, they may suggest to the person or to a Session that the call to further and particular service should be explored.

A Commissioned Ruling Elder, like every Teaching Elder, has responsibilities to both the local congregation and the larger church. Therefore, those who seek to explore the possibilities of this ministry must be ordained Ruling Elders, willing to submit to the authority of Holy Scripture, the tenets of the Reformed faith, and the polity of the church as they enter the program of preparation for ministry as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

#### B. REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Be an ordained ruling elder in a congregation of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for at least two years.
- 2) Submit the following to the Commission on Preparation for Ministry:

- a. Application form. (Appendix A: p 1, 2)
- b. The forms from the Clerk of Session of the congregation of membership showing endorsement. (Appendix A: p 15)
- c. Three letters of personal reference.
- d. Official transcripts of classes taken in prior education. List honors achieved, experiences, certificates awarded, etc..

College work is desirable and helpful but is not required.

- e. Complete a Psychological Evaluation administered by a professional counselor approved by CPM. The report of the evaluation is to be submitted to CPM.

This shall take place after the applicant is accepted.

#### Psychological Evaluation

Each person under the care of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry is required to complete a psychological evaluation. A psychological assessment provides information not only about personal wholeness, but also about approaches and attitudes to leadership. As a Commission we understand the sensitive nature of this information and treat it with the confidentiality it re-quires sharing it only with those persons who have a need to know in order to fulfill their responsibilities within the process.

John Stapert, Ph.D.

tel: (480) 922 - 8693

Offices located at: 6232 N. 7th Street

Suite 206 B Phoenix, Arizona 85016

1166 E. Warner Road

Suite 101M

Gilbert, Arizona 85296

Friday afternoons only

The cost of the evaluation is \$306: one-third (\$102) is paid by the applicant; one-third (\$102) is paid by the sponsoring congregation; one-third (\$102) is paid by the Presbytery.

The applicant should send their \$102 and the sponsoring congregation's portion to:

Presbytery of Grand Canyon

4423 N. 24th Street

Phoenix, Arizona 85016

#### **IV WORK OF THE COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

When the required materials have been received by the Chair of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, the applicant will be invited to meet with the Commission.

The Commission will inquire concerning:

The applicant's personal faith journey, life circumstances as they relate to ministry, and relationship to church membership;

Motives for seeking commissioning;

Understanding of the Commissioned Ruling Elder's work and ministry;

Understanding of the commissioning process;

Values, ethics, language, customs, and culture as they have an effect on the applicant's training and ministry;

The content of the application and any guidance received in working with the sponsoring session and the session's liaison.

The Commission will vote on the acceptance of the applicant with a simple majority of members present required for an affirmative vote.

The Commission will appoint a liaison to the applicant.

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry shall hold all records for each applicant in confidentiality in the Presbytery's office until completion of the program

## V PREPARATION FOR COMMISSIONING

A. Following acceptance, the applicant shall pursue ongoing study in the following areas:

Bible...Old and New Testaments

Reformed Theology

Worship

Sacraments

Preaching and Teaching

Presbyterian polity

Pastoral care including counseling limitations

Cultural distinctions (awareness of the history and development of Christian faith in this denomination, evangelism and mission in the diverse racial-ethnic setting in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon)

Attend a boundary training workshop

The applicant is responsible for locating schools or institutions providing appropriate instruction.

B. The applicant shall meet annually with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry for a consultation concerning progress made in preparation for becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

C. During the period of study the applicant will benefit by participating in various field experiences and is encouraged to seek the following:

Attend worship at congregations other than one's own

Spend a day with a pastor other than one's own

Attend a session meeting at a PC(USA) congregation other than one's own

Make a hospital call with a pastor

Attend a counseling session with the pastor's and the person's permission

Explore community resources where parishioners might be referred, for example, food bank, crisis shelters, homeless programs, AA, NAA, Alanon, or Alateen

Attend Presbytery meetings

Observe or assist at a wedding, memorial service, baptism, and Lord's Supper

## VI WORK OF THE SPONSORING CONGREGATION AND SESSION

The sponsoring congregation is the congregation where the ruling elder is a member in good standing. The congregation and session serve as discerning bodies.

The sponsoring congregation:

Recognizes and encourages women and men with gifts for ministry to consider becoming a commissioned ruling elder.

The sponsoring session:

- A. Shall meet with the ruling elder seeking to enter the commissioned ruling elder program. They shall assess the qualities and commitment of the ruling elder in order to complete part 2 of the application form (Appendix A: 15, 16). Upon completion, the Session Endorsement form with the name of the liaison shall be forwarded to the Commission on Preparation for Ministry.
- B. Shall appoint a liaison to work with the applicant and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry. The liaison should communicate with the applicant regularly, reporting progress toward completion of preparation to the session.
- C. Supports and counsels commissioned ruling elder candidates as they complete preparation for commissioning including and not limited to financial assistance, prayer, and guidance. This includes providing one-third of the cost for the psychological assessment **(See p 8)**.
- D. Works in partnership with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry to determine suitability and readiness for ministry including an annual review.

The pastor of the sponsoring congregation may be asked to serve as a mentor to the elder. The session and congregation should support the pastor-as-mentor offering time, prayer, and encouragement during the ruling elder's preparation for commissioning.

When an applicant has been commissioned to serve a particular congregation, the sponsoring congregation shall continue to pray for the ruling elder and the congregation served. They may offer support as deemed appropriate. The commissioned ruling elder remains a member of the sponsoring congregation and is entitled to the privileges of membership. The commissioned ruling elder may be unable to perform all membership responsibilities due to demands in the congregation of service.

## VII READINESS FOR COMMISSIONING

When the sponsoring session, the applicant, the session's liaison, and the CPM liaison certify that the applicant has completed preparation they shall notify the Moderator of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

- A. The CPM shall appoint members of the Commission to hear the applicant preach and lead worship.
- B. The applicant shall provide for the Commission:
  - 1. A manuscript of the sermon preached, the applicant's exegesis, and the full order of worship from that service including prayers and hymn selections.
  - 2. A revised statement of faith.
  - 3. A transcript showing courses taken and certification of requirement completions (for example, a boundary workshop).
  - 4. Evidence of study completed with CPM's liaison, when required.
- C. An interview to affirm readiness will be scheduled with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry after all documents are received.
- D. There may be a recommendation by the Commission for additional study or skill development. The applicant may be asked to attend seminars, participate in further course work, extend the time of pastoral supervisory leadership, or other needed experience. It is the responsibility of the applicant to satisfy additional recommendations.

When the Commission on Preparation for Ministry has interviewed and affirmed by a majority vote that the applicant is ready, the applicant shall be recommended to the Commission on Ministry as prepared for commissioning when the appropriate pastoral setting is available.

Such a recommendation does not guarantee commissioning.

The Presbytery may designate the commissioning to take place during a Presbytery meeting or in a service with the congregation to be served. (G-2.1002, G-2.1003, W-4.3003, W-4.4002, *Book of Occasional Services*, p 123 -127.)

**APPENDIX A APPLICATION FORMS**

**Presbytery de Cristo**

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER APPLICATION FORM: PART 1 (2 pages)**

Part 1: (To be completed by Applicant)

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ CITY STATE ZIP

Telephone (Home): \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

(Cell): \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Church of present membership:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
City State ZIP

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

**Name of church where ordained as an elder and date of ordination**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
City State ZIP

**Describe your service to the church:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Present Employment** (Title, Nature of work) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Educational Background:**

<u>School/Location</u>	<u>Dates Attended</u>	<u>Grade Completed or Degree Earned</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Education Meeting Specific Requirements for Commissioned Ruling Elders**

Subject	Course Name	School/Location	Dates
Bible			
Reformed Theology			
Worship			
Sacraments			
Presbyterian Polity			
Preaching & Teaching			
Pastoral Care			
Other Conferences or Seminars Attended			

**Limitations:** What factors may place limits on your ability to receive training, or to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder (such as physical disability, family situation, employment status, etc?). \_\_\_\_\_

**ATIACHMENTS:** Please attach the following to this application:

1. **A Statement of Faith**
2. **A Statement of what has motivated you to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder**
3. **Three letters of recommendation**
4. **Official transcripts from schools attended**

Before returning this form (Part 1) and the attachments, you should meet with the session of your church and the pastor or moderator. Have the Session Endorsement completed and returned to Commission on Preparation for Ministry at the address below.

Return your application and your attachments to: Commission on Preparation for Ministry  
Presbytery de Cristo  
4141 E. Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85018



**Presbytery of Grand Canyon**

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER APPLICATION FORM: PART 2: Session Endorsement**

(This may be completed by the Clerk of Session or Moderator.)

The Session of \_\_\_\_\_ endorses \_\_\_\_\_ to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder. Please furnish comments pertaining to the areas listed below. Use the reverse side of this sheet, or attach additional pages if more space is needed. Your responses will be used by the Presbytery's Commission on Preparation for Ministry in considering this person's application for becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

Christian commitment and maturity

Leadership ability

Openness to ideas and to learning

Your assessment of this person's suitability to serve in this way

Other comments you wish to add

Liaison appointed by the Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information \_\_\_\_\_

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

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to: Commission on Preparation for Ministry  
Presbytery de Cristo  
4141 E. Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ. 85018

**APPENDIX B: EVALUATION OF COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER APPLICANT**

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<b>AREA OF STUDY</b>	<b>TEACHER/LIAISON COMMENTS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE</b>

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER APPLICANT : WORSHIP LEADERSHIP AND SERMON EVALUATION**

Name of Preacher \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
 where the sermon was preached \_\_\_\_\_ Name(s)  
 of observer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_ Bible Text  
 Date Preached \_\_\_\_\_

1. What came across as the primary message of the sermon?
  
2. What were some of the features of the content of the sermon which helped the message come across?
  
3. What suggestion(s) do you have for the preacher for ways in which the content of this sermon could be strengthened?
  
4. Were you able to follow the preacher's line of thought easily?
  
5. Was the sermon a faithful exposition of the chosen scripture? Please explain your answer.
  
6. How would you describe the strengths of the preacher's style of delivering the sermon?
  
7. What was it about the preacher's delivery that helped you listen and be a part of the sermon?

- 8. What suggestions do you have for this preacher that might strengthen delivery of sermons?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 9. Was the total worship service presented well? Any suggestions?

A copy of this completed form will be shared with the liaison, CRE Applicant and CPM. It is to be used to facilitate evaluation of the worship experience and to help the CRE Applicant grow in their work of leading worship.

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR A CERTIFYING INTERVIEW WITH CRE APPLICANT**

1. How would you prepare to serve as moderator of a session meeting?
2. What authority does the moderator of session have?
3. What is the relationship between the session and a CRE?
4. What is the relationship between a CRE and the presbytery?
5. How would you prepare for administering the sacraments?
6. Whom may you baptize?
7. What is your understanding of the Lord's Supper and Baptism?
8. How would you prepare a couple for marriage?
9. What is required for you to perform a service of Christian marriage?
10. What is the responsibility of the session for marriage performed in their church?

### **Bible Content**

Does the applicant have an understanding of the form and content of the Bible?

### **Theological Competence**

Is the applicant able to make effective use of the classical theological disciplines?

Is the applicant able to make effective use of our confessional documents in order to relate the Gospel to the faith of the Church in the present situation?

### **Worship and Sacraments**

Does the applicant understand the meaning and purpose of corporate worship?

Does the applicant understand the meaning and purpose of the sacraments?

Is the applicant familiar with the Directory for Worship and the Book of Confessions?

Is the applicant able to apply the two to the life of a worshipping community?

### **Polity**

Does the applicant have a working knowledge of the constitutional structure of the PC(USA)?

Does the applicant understand the method by which differences are resolved?

Does the applicant understand how programs to fulfill the mission of the Church are determined?

## Assessing the Statement of Faith

Does the statement of faith contain all of the categories of the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed?

Is it "systematic": does it have a particular order, and a beginning, middle, and an end?

Is it a confession?

[subjects]

God:

identity; creation.

Jesus:

identity; mission; death; resurrection; return.

Holy Spirit:

identity; mission.

Scripture

Church:

identity; form; mission

Sacraments:

Baptism      Lord's Supper

form; purpose.

**REPORT OF COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

(to be forwarded to the chair of the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

is, by vote of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, considered to be competent and ready for commissioning as a Commissioned Ruling Elder to a particular pastoral service or to a validated ministry.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry recommends \_\_\_\_\_

as a mentor for this candidate as they move into service as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

## APPENDIX C: ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE FOR THE APPLICANT

### Outline for a Biblical Exegesis

"When one allows the text to inform and call into question one's own self understanding and one's understanding of the world, theology is being done."

Hayes, John H., Carl R. Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982, 121.

Exegesis)...a leading out of meaning.

An exegesis should be the writer's study of the text. The assistance of "experts" (commentaries) is brought in to help writers say what they need to say.

Biblical exegesis...sees the connection between the realities of the lives of the people and the One whose message they carried.

Reality... social reality in the widest sense

- a) spiritual and religious history
- b) political and social history

The social and political situation of the exegete is also part of the exegesis...

- a) understanding my situation
- b) understand my exegesis in its own context

Context...

- 1) the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning
- 2) the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs

### Basic Exegetical Method/Form

#### Introduction to the text

What is the scope of the passage?  
 What is the immediate context?  
 What is the larger context?

#### Historical Setting

Author  
 Where written  
 When written  
 First hearers or readers  
 Cultural context  
 Geographic context  
 Tradition history and editing (redaction)

#### Text

Comparative English translations as well as translations in the applicant's native language

Genre (form)...parable, poetry, hymn, lament...

Mood... satire, irony, comedy, lament...



Comparison with similar passages

Where are these ideas repeated or found?

Where is this language repeated or found?

Syntax (grammar)

Keywords

Comparison with similar literature

Ancient

Modern

Meaning of the text/Relevance to the life of the body

Then

Now

Writer should demonstrate how they arrived at this meaning.

"Endnotes" or "Footnotes" should acknowledge the sources of the writer's information from lexicons, commentaries, theological works, etc..

A "Bibliography" or "Works Consulted" should be included.

It should show the following:

Commentaries

Including social science perspectives

Translations

Bible Dictionaries

Bible Encyclopedias

Geographies

Histories

Atlas if applicable

## **Sermon**

Is it directed to the place and situation noted?

Does the sermon use the text?

Is the relationship between the exegetical work and the sermon visible/audible?

If quotes are used in the sermon, are the sources noted at the end?

Gender inclusive language should be used in both documents.

Gender inclusive language for God should be employed.

### Statement of Faith: Basic Form

Does it contain all of the categories of the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed?

Is it "systematic": that is, does it have a particular order, and a beginning, middle, and an end?

Is it a statement of faith?

[subjects]

God:

identity; creation.

Jesus:

identity; mission; death; resurrection; return.

Holy Spirit:

identity; mission.

Church:

identity; form; mission.

Sacraments:

Baptism      Lord's Supper

form; purpose of each.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Series Abbreviations:

**FCF** Foundations of Christian Faith  
**LCC** Library of Christian Classics

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### *Interpretation*

A quarterly publication from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Virginia. There is often a theme for the year or for an issue as well as expository essays and book reviews. Subscribe through SAGE Publications. 2455 Teller Rd., Thousand Oaks, California 91320. 1-800-499-9774. [www.sagepub.com](http://www.sagepub.com) email: [journals@sagepub.com](mailto:journals@sagepub.com)

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Also needed: a concordance to the biblical translation used for preaching. Often a brief concordance may be found in English translations.