

Commissioned Pastor



Program Manual

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Prior to inviting you into the thorough process of becoming a Commissioned Pastor described by this manual, let us begin with a hearty welcome: We thank God that you are interested in exploring this new step in your ministry to the Church of Jesus Christ. We are all being called by the Spirit to respond faithfully to the needs of God's Kingdom, and perhaps the call laid on you at this time is to serve as a Commissioned Pastor. We are delighted that we will get to explore this invitation from God with you.

Much like the training and education that the PC(USA) asks of its Ministers of Word and Sacrament, the process of becoming a Commissioned Pastor is no mere formality. This process will stretch and strengthen your faith; however, you will not be alone in this process. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), The Committee on Ministry (COM), the other Commissioned Pastors (CPs) of this Presbytery, and Mentors are all eager to partner with you in this exploration of how you might further serve the Church in the local context of the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks.

Who knows — where two or three walk together, Christ may suddenly be identified in our midst (Lk. 24:13ff.).

Godspeed on your journey!

Commissioned Pastor Program Manual

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Commissioned Pastor Program of the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks is to provide Commissioned Pastor-trained Elders in order to:

1. provide leadership for our churches, who for a variety of reasons (including but not limited to financial considerations) are unable to call a Minister of Word and Sacrament;
2. supply leadership to validated ministries designated by the Presbytery;
3. serve other ministries as deemed appropriate by the Presbytery and as proposed by Committee on Ministry (COM).

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

The constitutional authority for the CP Program is found in the Form of Government, section G-2.10 of the Book of Order.

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY (CPM) AND COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY (COM) RESPONSIBILITIES

CPM is charged with the training and examination of each of its CP Learners. Its members shall carry out the following functions:

1. review applications and meet with those seeking to enroll in the Program as Learners;
2. establish a Training Program for all Learners;

3. appoint Mentors for all Learners and ensure each has a Mentor Handbook (Appendix B);
4. examine Learners at the end of each trimester and upon completion of the initial training, and forward the names of those whose examinations are sustained to the Committee on Ministry (COM);
5. conduct an annual review of each CP Learner.

COM is charged with the yearly review of each of its CPs and those trained without a current commission. Its members shall carry out the following functions:

1. work with Presbytery on a continuing education program for Commissioned Pastors/Learners;
2. appoint Mentors for all CPs and ensure each has a Mentor Handbook;
3. conduct an annual review of those commissioned and those awaiting commission;
4. at a date prior to the end of a CPs commission period, conduct a review prior to proposing a recommendation for recommissioning.

CP CALENDAR

It is suggested that the CP Calendar be developed on a three-year basis, so that all CPs will know when the times of their reviews are coming, as well as proposed dates for the seminars. The Calendar is sent to all CPs and Learners in the Program, Mentors, CPM, members, COM members, as well as the Presbytery office so that seminars can be on the Master Presbytery Calendar. Places of meetings should be included wherever possible. Other dates of interest to participants, such as Presbytery meetings, and special education events are also listed, including locations wherever possible.

ENTRY INTO THE PROGRAM

Persons interested in the CP Program must be Ruling Elders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and must have served in that position for at least one year. An application form (**Appendix A: CP Learner Application Packet**) is obtained from the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks office and returned there after completion. The applicant must obtain three references and have a recommendation from his/her current Pastor and from the Session of the church of which he/she is a member.

When the Presbytery office receives the completed application, copies will be forwarded to the members of CPM. In addition, evidence of the completion of a criminal background check shall be submitted to CPM by either the applicant's home church or the Presbytery. CPM shall then invite the applicant for an interview, at which time the applicant will have the opportunity to expand on his/her statement of faith and the reasons for wishing to be a part of the Program. CPM shall stress to the applicant that there is no guarantee that the person will be commissioned upon completion of the six-trimester course of study.

CPM will arrange with the applicant a time and place for psychological testing to ascertain the applicant's suitability for a CP position. The testing is to be undergone by review time at the end of the first year of study in the Program. **The cost of this testing shall be borne by the Learner, his/her Session, and CPM in equal shares. Findings of the psychological testing shall be shared by CPM with the Learner no later than at the review time at the end of the first year of study.**

CPM and the applicant will then select a mutually-agreed-upon Mentor who must be a Minister of Word and Sacrament within the Presbytery **and not a present member CPM or COM**. The Presbytery is then informed of the entry of the applicant as a Learner in the program.

Participation in Presbytery activities – attending meetings and educational/other events, serving on committees when possible – is expected of CP learners and CP's.

THE MENTOR

The heart of the Commissioned Pastor Program for the Presbytery is the Mentor/Learner/CP relationship. The relationship between Mentors and CPs and/or Learners is essential to the effective development of CPs. **For a current list of Program participants, contact the Presbytery Office.**

Each Mentor is assigned to a person entering the Program or to a CP by CPM or COM in consultation with both the Learner/CP and the Mentor to assure a good fit. **It is important that the Mentor undergo training by COM so that she/he fully understands the responsibilities of her/his role in relationship to both the Learner/CP, CPM, and COM.** A Mentor who does not understand or carry out the mentoring role can unwittingly compromise the entire program for the participant.

Mentor assignments shall be made by the CPM for a three-year term. A Mentor is eligible for one succeeding term with his/her CP/Learner, but not to exceed six years without a year's sabbatical. However, the relationship between a Mentor and a Learner/CP can be terminated by CPM or COM, or at the request of either party, without prejudice. Following termination of a mentoring relationship, a new Mentor must be appointed as soon as possible.

Mentors serve as **Advisors, Teachers** and **Evaluators** for Learners, for those awaiting commissions, and those who have been commissioned. The Mentor is the primary contact to CPM regarding a Learner's preparation for ministry and a CP's practice of ministry. Please see **Appendix B: Handbook for Mentors** for guidelines on the mentoring process with both Learner and CP.

LEARNER TRAINING

CPM develops and maintains a Core Curriculum of six trimesters (two years), covering six subjects, which is the basis of the study program. Learners are encouraged to take on-line courses from Dubuque Seminary, to work individually with their Mentors, take other available courses, and to attend educational events provided by the Presbytery, presented by third parties, or offered online. CPs and those awaiting commission are also urged to attend these seminars as part of their continuing education.

It is strongly suggested that the Learner begin his/her study following the curriculum laid out in Appendix C (Core Curriculum Syllabus), starting with Bible and proceeding through the three years of coursework. However, this is not a requirement. The program for training Commissioned Pastors is dynamic and changing as additional resources are made available to meet the expectations established by the Presbytery (**Appendix D: Learner Examination Guidelines**). Training consists of academic and experiential learning. **Academic learning** consists of on-line courses, independent study, and seminars. **Experiential learning** includes shadowing, participation in "teaching churches," and a period of **Residency**.

Academic Learning

The six required areas of study are:

- Bible
- Reformed Theology and Church History

- Worship, Sacraments, and Preaching
- Practical Ministry and Pastoral Care
- Christian Education
- Polity and Parish Administration

All areas shall be covered through on-line courses, and/or approved supervised individual and group studies. A **Core Curriculum Syllabus** is attached as **Appendix C**.

Experiential Learning

At their discretion, CPM and COM will assist in placing the Learner with an experienced CP or tentmaker to address time management, pastoral care, and other issues that arise in bi-vocational situations.

Shadowing: CPM shall establish a “shadowing” program whereby a Learner shadows an installed Minister of Word and Sacrament or CP in active service for a set period of time to observe how the pastor conducts the many parts of his/her ministry in the parish. The Learner will then debrief with a group of peers and Mentors to share insights as to what each has experienced.

Teaching Churches: CPM will set up learning situations with individual clergy or “teaching churches” (a Learner's home church should **not** be the teaching church he/she works within) to give Learners experience in the following areas:

- pastoral care and calling;
- sermon preparation and presentation, the integration of preaching into worship, and the planning of worship services (including the Lord's Supper);
- assistance in services of baptism, weddings, funerals, and the counseling required for each;
- General administration, including forms and written reports used in a solo pastorate.

Residency

At their discretion, CPM and COM will assist in placing the Learner for a six-month period in a supporting role in a congregation served by a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a CP.

LEARNER REVIEW PROCESS

At the end of each trimester of study, CPM conducts an examination of the Learner's knowledge of that topic. Upon receipt of notice by the Mentor of the Learner that the Learner is ready, he/she shall be examined by **at least three members of CPM**. At least one of the examining team shall be a Minister of Word and Sacrament. Questions for this examination may be found in **Appendixes D and E: Learner Examination Guidelines and Examination Rating Sheet**.

If the Learner has achieved a passing grade in any of the subject areas tested, the Learner does not have to repeat the exam on that subject. If the Learner receives a grade smaller than three, she/he must repeat the exam after further study of the subject until she/he passes the exam with a three or greater.

At the end of the six trimesters of study and six examinations of the six subjects, **CPM as a whole** conducts a final examination of the Learner to ascertain his/her overall knowledge of the six subjects. A passing grade of three out of a possible five is required. A record of each Learner's progress will be maintained using the **CP/Learner Record Form (Appendix F)**.

Before the Learner's final review by CPM, she/he will be asked to compose a statement of faith to be examined by the committee.

At the end of the successful examination, COM is notified that the Learner is prepared and could receive a commission if COM feels that is appropriate, and one is available.

COMMISSIONING

With the Learner's successful passage of the final examination, the CPM shall notify COM that the Learner is ready for commission. COM shall then exercise its authority for appointment placement, powers granted, and responsibilities. The commissions are appointed for up to three years and may be renewed. Ordinarily, no CP shall be commissioned to his/her congregation of membership. A CP may be commissioned to carry out a specific function within the Presbytery, such as moderate sessions and administer Sacraments to congregations without pastoral leadership. Ordinarily a Commissioned Pastor's first commission would not be to at-large service to the Presbytery.

When the Learner has been successfully placed, COM shall recommend a commissioning to the Presbytery at its next meeting. At that meeting of Presbytery, the Learner will be introduced, and the terms of the commission reviewed with him/her. Ordinarily, the constitution questions are asked of him/her at this time.

The commencing or renewal of the commission may then be celebrated in a service of worship at the place of commission. Members of the CP's home church may be invited to participate.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Once commissioned, CPs are expected to continue their education in the same way that Minister of Word and Sacraments are expected to do. This is done partially through seminars designed to deal with issues raised from the annual reviews and round-table discussions. (See next section.)

Training and continuing education are also accomplished through individualized study, the annual joint Presbytery of Plains and Peaks/Denver Presbytery education event in November, and ongoing continuing education events for pastors. CPs are encouraged to consider taking the on-line courses that fit their individual needs.

Learners and CPs are urged to attend seminars approved by the Presbytery, similar third-party events, or through independent study under the supervision of their Mentors. ***Mentors are also invited to attend.***

The Presbytery and the CP/Learners may organize an annual retreat to center on the spiritual, pastoral care, theological, and/or mental/physical needs of the CPs and Learners. ***Mentors are encouraged to be part of this retreat.***

SEMINARS

The Presbytery will regularly provide educational/training opportunities which cover the six areas of study required for CPs. The seminars are not designed to give the Learner or the CP all the information needed, but to enhance the studies, either by individual study or on-line course, in which the person is participating.

Seminars will often serve to: 1) to give the Learner(s) added information toward their examination and 2) to provide a continuing education source for those who have completed the program and passed the examination.

These seminars provide the resources (in the form of leaders/speakers) that would otherwise not be available to persons in the program.

Planning for the seminar is done by the Presbytery, usually with enough lead time that the Presbytery as a whole can be informed of it at the meeting prior to the holding of the seminar itself. Brochures may be produced by the Presbytery office and e-mailed to all within the Program: Learners, CPs, those awaiting commissioning, Mentors, and CPM/COM members. Brochures may also be sent to all pastors in the Presbytery and all Clerks of Session depending upon the breadth of interest in the subject matter. This is done approximately six weeks before the event.

Learners and CPs are expected to participate in at least two educational events a year, whether they are put on by the Presbytery or some other body.

Churches being served by a CP are encouraged to provide continuing education funding to equip their CP in further ministerial training.

ONGOING REVIEW PROCESS FOR LEARNERS, CPs AND THOSE AWAITING COMMISSION

Throughout the year, COM conducts a review of each CP at a time closest to the date he/she was commissioned, and also of those trained without a current commission at a time closest to the date they completed the training. Each Learner is also reviewed annually by CPM at their meeting closest to the date the Learner entered the Program.

The review includes a self-evaluation on the part of the CP/Learner and an evaluation from his/her Mentor. In the case of a CP serving a church, a request will be sent to that congregation's Session. If a CP is serving in a validated ministry of the Presbytery, such as in a chaplaincy, the evaluation will come from the Supervisor of that ministry as well as an evaluation from the session of their sponsoring church. Commissioned eligible ruling elder evaluations will come from the session of their sponsoring church. Guidelines and sample copies of letters requesting such evaluations are found in **Appendix H-2: Annual Review Letters**.

Notification of a review of any who are commissioned will be sent by COM.

At a date prior to the end of a commission period, a subsection of COM shall conduct the review. In the evaluations from Mentor, Session and Supervisor, the following question is included: "Do you recommend that _____'s commission be renewed?" The results of the review are forwarded to COM with the recommendation of the examining team that the commission be renewed or not. That then is brought by COM to the next meeting of Presbytery.

CPs TRAINED IN OTHER PRESBYTERIES

When an Elder previously trained as a CP in another presbytery wishes to become eligible to receive a commission in the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks, the following shall be required:

1. COM and criminal background checks of the applicant shall be conducted.
2. The applicant shall provide a recommendation from the committee of oversight of CPs in the previous Presbytery.
3. The applicant shall be required to participate actively within a congregation within the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks for one year, and submit a recommendation from that Session.
4. CPM shall examine the applicant as any Learner in the program is examined. This shall include a review of the applicant's statement of faith.
5. The applicant shall satisfy the requirements of the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks, including the sexual misconduct policy, on-line at the Presbytery website.

APPENDIX A: CP LEARNER APPLICATION PACKET

Instructions

A Commissioned Pastor (CP) is a full-time or part-time, salaried or volunteer person called by God, affirmed by his/her Session, and trained and commissioned by Presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service within a particular congregation or congregations, *or to serve in another Presbytery-validated ministry [G-2.1001].*

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks has adopted a program for training, supporting, and certifying persons to be Commissioned Pastors. Those interested in the program should request a full copy of the CP Program Manual from the Presbytery Office:

***Presbytery of Plains and Peaks
7257 W. 4th St. - Unit 4
Greeley, CO 80634
(970) 352-6496, (800) 257-4583***

Application process: Complete the enclosed application form

Narrative Statements: prepare the following two:

1. A 300-600-word story of your faith, including what you believe about God, Jesus Christ, the church, Sacraments, Scripture, and how your faith has influenced your life.
2. A 300-600-word paper that addresses the statement, "Why I Would Like to be Involved in the Commissioned Pastor Program." Your paper should include information about the gifts and talents you bring, and how you see yourself as called to participate in this training program.

Read, complete and sign the Sexual Misconduct Policy adopted by the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks. (To be found online on the Presbytery website: www.plainsandpeaks.org)

Take your completed application form, including your narrative statements, to your pastor, or to the minister that Presbytery has appointed to moderate your church's Session. Ask the minister to complete the Pastor's Statement and to schedule a time for the Session to meet with you and take action on its recommendation. The minister will then forward your application form and statements, along with the Session's recommendation and the form she/he will complete, to the Presbytery Office. (see address above.)

Note: Both the applicant and the session should remember that Commissioned Pastors are neither inquirers nor candidates for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The ministry they perform is a validated ministry in and of itself. Practical skills and experiential competencies rather than academic sophistication are the primary basis for commissioning.

**APPLICATION FOR CP LEARNER PROGRAM
PRESBYTERY OF PLAINS AND PEAKS**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (Home): _____ (Work): _____

E-mail: _____

Member of church: _____
(Name) (City, State)

Year you joined this church: _____

Year you were ordained an elder: _____

Describe your present activities in the life and mission of the church: _____

Present employment (title, nature of work): _____

Educational Background			
School & Location	Year Graduated	Degree	Major/Minor

Limits: What factors may place limits on your ability to receive training and to serve as a Commissioned Pastor (e.g., physical disability, family situation, employment, etc.): _____

References: Please list at least three references whom we can contact regarding your life in the church, your character and commitment to this program.

Name	Email Address	Phone	Relationship

Narrative Statements: Please attach to this form the two statements described in the instructions.

Sexual Misconduct Policy: Please read the Presbytery’s Sexual Misconduct Policy (enclosed), check the appropriate spaces, and sign the Acknowledgment Paper (enclosed).

Signature: I hereby apply for admission to the Commissioned Pastor Program of Plains and Peaks Presbytery. If accepted, I commit myself to participate fully in the training program to the best of my ability. I understand that successful completion of the program is a requirement for, but not a guarantee of, future commissioning by this Presbytery.

Signature Date

Session Recommendation

We, the Session of the _____ Presbyterian Church in _____

have examined _____ regarding his/her sense of call to CP ministry, his/her statement of faith, and commitment to the requirement of the program. We hereby approve him/her for the Commissioned Pastor Training Program of the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks.

Signature

Date

Pastor’s Statement

(To be completed by the applicant’s pastor, or Presbytery-appointed moderator of Session, if the applicant’s church is without a pastor.)

Please furnish your comments pertaining to the areas listed below. Attach additional pages if more space is needed. Your responses will be confidential and will be used only by COM in considering this person’s application for enrollment in the Commissioned Pastor Training Program.

Applicant’s name: _____

Christian commitment and maturity: _____

Leadership ability: _____

Ability to work with people: _____

Openness to ideas and learning: _____

Your assessment of this person’s suitability to serve this way: _____

Other comments you wish to add: _____

Pastor’s Signature

Date

Appendix B Handbook for Mentors

The Mentor is a key person in the Commissioned Pastor Program of the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks, serving as an Advisor, Teacher, and Evaluator for the Learner, the commission-ready Ruling Elder and the CP. The Mentor is the primary contact to CPM regarding a Learner's preparation for ministry and a CP's practice of ministry.

General Guidelines

As Advisor:

The Mentor shall be accessible for meetings and phone conversations with the CP/Learner and be willing to make time available for consultation. The Mentor will be approachable and non-judgmental. The Mentor shall counsel the CP/Learner on all aspects of ministry, so as to be a friend in Christ.

As Teacher:

The Mentor shall be a positive role model for the CP/Learner. The way the Mentor relates to the CP/Learner should demonstrate the kind of openness and caring the CP/Learner should develop as a Commissioned Pastor. The Mentor will share his/her experiences in ministry to enrich the CP/Learner's efforts toward achieving ministry skills.

As Evaluator:

The Mentor will be a part of the ongoing evaluation process for both Learner and CP. Prior to the time of the annual review, he/she shall review the Learner's/CP's/commission-ready pastor's performance and share with CPM or COM the areas in which the individual might benefit from additional training. This information will be used in the development of future seminars.

Specific Responsibilities of Mentors of CP Learners

Most of the time, CP Learners will be engaged in either "independent study," or "directed study." Consequently, the degree of "hands-on" mentoring the Mentor has with the Learner will vary from Learner to Learner. The following responsibilities thus constitute the minimum engagement between the Mentor and Learner during the learning stage of the CP Program. It should be noted that the goal of the CP Program is not to produce seminary students or PhD candidates; the goal is to produce Commissioned Pastors who have demonstrated competencies in the required areas of study.

The Mentor as Advisor

As an advisor, the Mentor will draw upon his/her own experience in ministry, both in terms of seminary education and practice of ministry. CPM recommends that Learners, to as great a degree as feasible, take online courses in the required areas for commissioning through an approved program. However, as timing of courses and the individual Learner's time allowance and needs don't always coincide with the offering of these online courses, the Mentor will work with the Learner, following the trimester model for the CP Program, in determining how the Learner can best meet the requirements for commissioning.

The Mentor should serve as a resource to the Learner, providing direction in establishing criteria for the Learner's individual study program, but also suggesting means of applying what is learned in CP/Learner/commission-ready Ruling Elder ministry settings. The Mentor can suggest reading materials to the Learner apart from the bibliography recommended in the CP Learner guidelines. The Mentor can pass on to the Learner opportunities for

continuing education in the form of seminars and other programs which come to his/her attention. The Mentor can suggest to the Learner specific opportunities for engaging in ministry within the church that augment what the Learner is studying.

The Mentor should be an ongoing “sounding board” for the Learner, providing a sympathetic ear, encouragement, and advice when needed, apart from regular consultations about the Learner’s development and preparation.

The Mentor as Teacher

Again, depending on whether the Learner is taking courses in a specific area of study online, the Mentor’s role as teacher will vary. If the Learner is taking courses online, the Mentor may find his/her teaching role as that of answering questions the Learner has about some aspect of the course, discussing theoretical situations raised by the course of study, and helping the Learner identify specific areas of ministry and/or service to the church which complement the course of study. The Mentor should make it a point to review and offer critique of any written materials the Learner has prepared for the Seminary, prior to those materials being submitted for evaluation.

Should the Learner not be taking a course in a specific area online, the Mentor will then help the Learner define learning objectives for a specific area of study and develop a model for the Learner to achieve those objectives. Ongoing instruction may take the form of meetings with the Learner to discuss particular topics, with the Mentor providing supplemental materials for the Learner to read, and/or the Mentor giving the Learner specific assignments.

The Mentor shall meet monthly with the Learner to review material currently being studied, evaluate completed work, advise regarding ministry matters, and plan for future study and preparation.

The Mentor as Evaluator

The Mentor should work with the Learner to determine what will be evaluated to ascertain the Learner’s competency in the given area of study. Things to be evaluated may take the form of written materials such as essays, Christian Education curricula, reports on books read, long-range plans for specific ministry areas, etc. It may be that the material to be evaluated consists of the Learner’s own evaluation of some aspect of ministry that he/she has been engaged in, coupled with the Mentor’s assessment of the ministry. Particular Learners and Mentors may decide to engage in an oral examination regarding what the Learner has been studying. This evaluation should occur periodically during a given area of study.

When the Mentor is satisfied that the Learner has completed the work required for a particular area, the Mentor will notify CPM that the Learner is ready for examination by CPM on that subject. This shall be noted on the CP Record Form (**Appendix H.**) by CPM and then filed in the Presbytery Office. The Learner will then proceed to the next area of study. After the Learner has completed the six areas of study, the Mentor shall review with the Learner all material studied to determine if the Learner is ready for the final examination by CPM. If the Mentor determines that the Learner is ready, the Mentor shall notify CPM who shall schedule the final examination. If the Mentor believes the Learner is unprepared for the examination, the Mentor and CPM will together ascertain what specific areas of study need further work in order for the Learner to complete the learning requirement.

Specific Responsibilities for the Mentor of a Commissioned Pastor

The Mentor for a CP or one awaiting commission shall plan to meet with him/her quarterly to discuss how the ministry is progressing, provide support and resources, discuss whatever problems that may have arisen, and determine future study needs.

Appendix C

Core Curriculum Syllabus

Note: The goal of the CP training program is, ideally, for the following areas of study to be completed over a period of two years, broken down into six trimesters. It is expected that CP Learners will also attend the CP seminars, when offered.

- 1) First Year, First Trimester – Focus: Bible
 - a) Old Testament
 - i) Primary Text
 - (1) *People of the Covenant: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* by Henry Jackson Flanders, Robert W. Crapps, David Anthony Smith
 - ii) Suggested Reading
 - (1) *Understanding the Old Testament* (Abridged 4th Edition) by Bernhard W. Anderson, Katheryn Pfisterer Darr
 - (2) *The Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* by Stephen Harris, Robert Platzner
 - (3) *Understanding the Bible* by Stephen L. Harris
 - (4) *An Introduction to the Bible: A Journey Into Three Worlds* (5th Edition) by Christian E. Hauer, William A. Young
 - b) New Testament
 - i) Primary Text – Chose one (1)
 - (1) *Introduction to the New Testament* (Anchor Bible Reference Library) by Raymond E. Brown
 - (2) *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* by Bart D. Ehrman
 - (3) *Engaging the New Testament* by Russell Pregeant
 - ii) Suggested Reading
 - (1) *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction* by Stephen Harris
 - (2) *Introduction to the New Testament* by Raymond Collins
 - (3) *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament* by Bart D. Ehrman
- 2) First Year, Second Trimester - Focus: Reformed Theology & Church History
 - a) Primary Text
 - i) *Introducing the Reformed Faith: Biblical Revelation, Christian Tradition, Contemporary Significance* by Donald K. McKim
 - ii) *Calvin for Armchair Theologians* (Armchair Theologians) by Christopher Elwood, Ron Hill
 - iii) *Book of Confessions: Study Edition* by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 - iv) *Christian Doctrine* by Shirley C. Guthrie
 - v) *A Brief History of the Presbyterians* by James H. Smylie
 - b) Suggested Reading
 - i) *Presbyterian CPeds: A Guide to the Book of Confessions* by Jack Bartlett Rogers, Jack Rogers
 - ii) *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* by Daniel L. Migliore
 - iii) *Always Being Reformed: Faith for a Fragmented World* by Shirley C. Guthrie
 - iv) *Christian History Made Easy* (13 Weeks to a Better Understanding of Church History--Made Easy) by Timothy Paul Jones
 - v) *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* by Mark A. Noll
- 3) First Year, Third Trimester - Focus: Worship, Sacraments, and Preaching
 - a) Worship and Sacraments
 - i) Primary Text

- (1) *Book of Common Worship* by Theology and Worship Ministry Unit for the Presbyterian Church
- (2) *The Companion to the Book of Common Worship* by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Common Worship (1993), Peter C. Bower (Editor)
- (3) *Christian Worship: Glorifying and Enjoying God* (Foundations of Christian Faith) by Ronald P. Byars
- (4) *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, Part II “The Directory for Worship”* by Westminster John Knox
- ii) Suggested Reading
 - (1) *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and order paper)
 - (2) *Introduction to Christian Worship* by James F. White
- b) Preaching
 - i) Primary Text
 - (1) *The Preaching Life* by Barbara Brown Taylor
 - (2) *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* by Paul Scott Wilson
 - ii) Suggested Reading
 - (1) *Witness of Preaching* by Thomas G. Long
 - (2) *Preaching* by Fred B. Craddock
 - (3) *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching, Augustine to the Present* by Richard Lischer (Editor)
 - (4) *Best Advice for Preaching* by John S. McClure (Editor)
- 4) Second Year, First Trimester - Focus: Practical Ministry & Pastoral Care
 - a) Primary Text
 - i) *Companions in Hope: The Art of Christian Caring* by Robert J. Wicks, Thomas E. Rodgeron
 - ii) *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry Without All the Answers* by David Hansen
 - iii) *The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier* by Loren B. Mead
 - b) Suggested Reading
 - i) *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* by Thomas C. Oden
 - ii) *The Wounded Healer* by Henri Nouwen
 - iii) *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* by Eugene H. Peterson
 - iv) *Transforming Congregations for the Future* (Once and Future Church Series) by Loren B. Mead
 - v) *Transforming the Mainline Church: Lessons in Change from Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Hope* by Robert A. Chesnut
 - vi) *Imagining a Church in the Spirit: A Task for Mainline Congregations* by Ben Campbell Johnson, Glenn McDonald
- 5) Second Year, Second Trimester - Focus: Christian Education
 - a) Primary Text
 - i) *The Bible Tutor CDROM* by Craig R. Koester
 - ii) *The Craft of Christian Teaching: Essentials for Becoming a Very Good Teacher* by Israel Galindo
 - b) Suggested Reading
 - i) *Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything at Church: And How to Fix It* (10th Anniversary Edition!) by Thom Schultz, Joani Schultz
 - ii) *Educating Congregations: The Future of Christian Education* by Charles R. Foster
 - iii) *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future* by Robert E. Clark
 - iv) *Christian Education in the Small Church* (Small Church in Action) by Donald L. Griggs
 - v) *Basics of Christian Education* by Karen B. Tye

- vi) *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development* by James W. Fowler
- vii) *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith* by James W. Fowler
- viii) *Childhood Education in the Church* by Robert E. Clark, Joanne Brubaker, Roy B. Zuck

6) Second Year, Third Trimester - Focus: Polity and Parish Administration

a) Primary Text

- i) *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, Part I "The Form of Government"* by Westminster John Knox
- ii) *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers* by Joan S. Gray, Joyce C. Tucker
- iii) *Presbyterians: People of the Middle Way--For Adult Inquirers and New Members* by Harry S. Hassall, Pat McGeachy

b) Suggested Reading

- i) *Decent and in Order: Conflict, Christianity, and Polity in a Presbyterian Congregation (Religion in the Age of Transformation)* by Ronald R. Stockton
- ii) *History and Theology in the Book of Order: Blood on Every Page: Leader's Guide* by William E. Chapman
- iii) *Robert's Rules in Plain English* by Doris P. Zimmerman
- iv) *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised, 10th Edition)* by Henry M. Robert III, William J. Evans, Daniel H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch (Editor)
- v) *Parliamentary Procedures in the Presbyterian Church (USA)* by Marianne Wolfe PDS OGA-00-002
- vi) *Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry* by Charles A. Tidwell
- vii) *Church Administration Handbook* by Bruce P. Powers (Editor)
- viii) *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders* by Charles M. Olsen
- ix) *The Church Office Handbook: A Basic Guide to Keeping Order* by Carol R. Shearn
- x) *Accountable Leadership: A Resource Guide for Sustaining Legal, Financial, and Ethical Integrity in Today's Congregations (Jossey-Bass Religion-in-Practice Series)* by Paul Chaffee
- xi) *The Servant-Leader Within: A Transformative Path* by Robert K. Greenleaf, Hamilton Beazley (Editor)
- xii) *Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership* by Laurie Beth Jones

Note: We will make our best attempt to coordinate our primary texts with the required readings in the corresponding online courses offered by the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. However, the Seminary may change their requirements from year to year.

Appendix D

Learner Examination Guidelines

Appendix D – passed by Presbytery February 2006

- 1) When the Learner and the Mentor determine that the Learner has completed the work of the current trimester and is ready for examination in the area of academic competency in the subject matter of that trimester, the Mentor shall report this to CPM. Likewise, when the Learner has completed all six of the trimesters and is ready for final examination this, too, shall be reported to CPM.
- 2) Areas of Examination:
 - a) Bible
 - b) Reformed Theology and Church History
 - c) Worship, Sacraments, and Preaching
 - d) Practical Ministry and Pastoral Care
 - e) Christian Education
 - f) Polity and Parish Administration
- 3) Procedures for examination:
 - a) The Learner can choose to be examined either orally or by submitting responses to questions in writing in a monitored situation.
 - b) After the completion of a trimester of study and upon notification by the Learner's Mentor of his/her readiness, the Learner shall be examined on that trimester's study by at least three members of CPM, one of whom shall be a Teaching Elder.
 - c) At the end of the six trimesters, and again upon notification of the Learner's Mentor of his/her readiness, the Learner shall be examined **by CPM as a whole** at a regular meeting. The examination shall consist of two questions from each of the six categories.
 - d) Each member of the examining team and of CPM at the final examination shall rate the Learner's response to each question asked using the following scale:
 - An excellent response (5)
 - A good response (4)
 - An adequate response (3)
 - Showing some understanding, but less than adequate (2)
 - Indicating little or no understanding (1)
 - e) If a member of the Learner's home congregation is a member of the examining team, that person shall be excused from ranking the Learner's responses.
 - f) The responses to each question in the area of the examination will be noted by each team member, and those numbers added to the numbers of all. These then shall be averaged for each particular area. An average of 3.0 shall be considered as passing. The Learner must achieve a passing grade for each area of the examination before academic competency for commissioning can be considered sustained.
 - g) If the Learner should fail to pass an area of the examination, CPM shall recommend to the Learner and his/her Mentor direction for further study in the area in question.

Appendix E
Examination Rating Sheet

Removed for public viewing of the manual

Appendix F CP/Learner Record Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (Home): _____ (Work): _____

Email: _____

Date of Application: _____ Date Admitted to Program: _____

Mentor: _____

Mentor Address: _____

Mentor Email: _____

Mentor Phone: _____

Subject Areas Examined	Date
Bible	
Reformed Theology & History	
Worship, Sacraments, and Preaching	
Practical Ministry and Pastoral Care	
Christian Education	
Polity and Parish Administration	

Final Examination Results	Pass/Fail
Bible	
Reformed Theology & History	
Worship, Sacraments, and Preaching	
Practical Ministry and Pastoral Care	
Christian Education	
Polity and Parish Administration	

Date of Final Examination: _____

If failed, area(s) for further study: _____

Date of Re-exam: _____ Result: _____

CP Assignment: _____

Date: _____ Date Approved by COM: _____

Date of Commissioning: _____

Dates of Annual Review(s): _____

Seminars Attended: _____

Appendix G Evaluations – Presbytery Seminar

“ _____ ”

Date: _____

I am:

Ruling Elder: _____ Deacon: _____ Teaching Elder: _____ Other lay person: _____

CP Learner: _____ CP: _____ Christian Ed. Director: _____

I come from a church that has:

Under 50 in worship _____ 50-150 in worship _____ 151-300 in worship _____

301+ in worship _____

Please evaluate the following:

Basic Content of Seminar: _____

Presentation of Content: _____

Presentation long enough? Too short? Just right?: _____

Presenter pointed to further helpful resources? _____

What was most helpful in this Seminar? _____

What was least helpful?: _____

Did it meet your expectations?: _____

How might this Seminar be improved?: _____

Overall rating of this Seminar: (circle one) Excellent Good Fair Poor

Thank you for your help!!

If there is anything else you would like to add: _____

Appendix H-1

CP SELF-EVALUATION FORM

(Revised 12/13)

- 1) List the top priorities of your ministry as you understand them:
- 2) List what you consider to be your greatest strengths:
- 3) What were your greatest accomplishments this year?
- 4) Identify factors that impacted your ministry this year, negative and positive:
- 5) What were your most important efforts this year within and outside of your (church, hospital, other)?
- 6) Complete this sentence. "I believe I make the greatest contribution to the (church's/hospital's/other's) mission by...."
- 7) What could your Mentor/Supervisor/Session and co-workers in ministry do to help you in your ministry?
- 8) What was your relationship with your Mentor this past year?
- 9) How could you have performed your assigned tasks in ministry more efficiently this past year?
- 10) From what experiences have you learned the most this past year?
- 11) In what areas would you like to gain more experience, training, or education?
- 12) What have you participated in this year to gain professional development?
- 13) What are your needs for continuing education?
- 14) Please complete the following sentence: "If the opportunity arises, in the upcoming year I would like to work in the following areas of ministry, or on the following projects or tasks...":
- 15) I believe my goals and objectives for the coming year should be:
- 16) Other suggestions, concerns or comments:

Appendix H-2 Annual Review Letters

- 1) A letter should be sent to each **CP or Learner** approximately six weeks before the scheduled review and contain a request for the following information:
 - a summary of the activities as a CP or Learner over the last year
 - a self-evaluation
 - plans for continuing education
 - specific areas of further training which he/she might find helpful
 - a copy of the current job description (contract) and remuneration noting any changes.

- 2) A letter should be sent to each **Mentor** six weeks before the scheduled review and contain a request for the following information:
 - a) an evaluation of the CP or Learner's work over the last year
 - b) _____'s areas of greatest strength
 - c) any areas of continuing education that you see are needed or would benefit the CP or Learner
 - d) *If it is the year for renewal of commission for the CP*, add the following question: "Do you recommend that the commission be continued?"
 - e) For learners, do you recommend that the education process be continued?
 - f) Any further comments that would be helpful in the review process.

- 3) If the CP is serving in a situation with a **Supervising Pastor, or Designated Supervisor**, a letter should be sent to the Supervisor six weeks before the scheduled review and contain a request for the following information:
 - a) an evaluation of the CP's work in the parish or validated ministry
 - b) a copy of the job description and remuneration (if any) if they have changed since the last review
 - c) the CP's greatest strengths
 - d) any continuing education needed or that would be beneficial
 - e) how would you rate the CP's performance (excellent, very good, good, fair, unsatisfactory)
 - f) *If it is the year for renewal of the commission*, add the following question: "Do you recommend that the commission be continued?"
 - g) any further comments that would be helpful in the review process

- 4) If the CP is serving in a **Validated Ministry**, a letter should be sent to the session of his/her sponsoring church six weeks before the scheduled review and contain a request for the following information:
 - a) an evaluation of the CP's work in the parish or validated ministry
 - b) a copy of the job description and remuneration (if any) if they have changed since the last review
 - c) the CP's greatest strengths
 - d) any continuing education needed or that would be beneficial
 - e) how would you rate the CP's performance (excellent, very good, good, fair, unsatisfactory)
 - f) *If it is the year for renewal of the commission*, add the following question: "Do you recommend that the commission be continued?"
 - g) any further comments that would be helpful in the review process

- 5) If the CP is serving in a congregation without a supervising pastor, a letter should be sent to the **Session of the church** six weeks before the scheduled review and contain a request for the following information:
 - a) an evaluation of the CP's work in the parish

- b) a copy of the job description and remuneration (if any) if they have changed since the last review
 - c) the CP's greatest strengths
 - d) any continuing education needed or that would be beneficial
 - e) how would you rate the CP' performance (excellent, very good, good, fair, unsatisfactory)
 - f) *If it is the year for renewal of the commission*, include the following question: "Do you recommend that the commission be continued?"
 - g) any further comments that would be helpful in the review process
6. If a ruling elder is commissioned ready, a letter should be sent to the session of his/her sponsoring church and mentor six weeks before the scheduled review and contain a request for the following information:
- a) an evaluation of the CP's work in the parish or validated ministry.
 - b) the CP's greatest strengths
 - c) any continuing education needed or that would be beneficial
 - d) how would you rate the CP's performance (excellent, very good, good, fair, unsatisfactory)
 - e) any further comments that would be helpful in the review process.

An alternative form that may be used with the Session is found in **H-3**.

Note: We recommend using email to facilitate sharing and disseminating information.

Appendix H-3
SESSION ASSESSMENT OF MINISTRY SKILLS
(Alternative form for CP review)

Name of CP: _____

Church: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Please fill in a rating response to the question, and write comments and suggestions for improvements as noted. 4=outstanding; 3=good; 2=developing; 1=unable to perform

A. Preaching the word of God
Strengths:

Rating: _____

Suggestions for improvement:

B. Ability to work with youth
Strengths:

Rating: _____

Suggestions for improvement:

C. Leading Worship
Strengths:

Rating: _____

Suggestions for improvement:

D. Conducting Sacraments

Rating: _____

Strengths:

Suggestions for improvement:

E. Provides Leadership to Session

Rating: _____

Strengths:

Suggestions for improvement:

F. Pastoral Care

Rating: _____

Strengths:

Suggestions for improvement:

G. Provides Counsel for Standing Committees

Rating: _____

Strengths:

Suggestions for improvement:

H. Provides Leadership to Elders and Deacons

Rating: _____

Strengths:

Suggestions for improvement:

Other Comments