

Commission on Preparation For Ministry Handbook
(Approved by CPM 10/17/19; approved by Presbytery 11/7/2019)

Table of Contents

Introduction, Mission, and Glossary of Acronyms.....	3
How This Handbook is Organized.....	4
<u>Information for Everyone</u>	
Discerning the Call.....	6
Marks of the Call.....	7
<u>Information for Members of CPM</u>	
Leadership Roles and Responsibilities.....	8
CPM Member Responsibilities and Expectations.....	9
Meetings.....	9
Governed by PTB Bylaws.....	9
<u>Information for Applicants to Inquiry</u>	
More on Discerning Your Call.....	10
Inquiry and Candidacy Phases.....	10
Covenant Agreement.....	11
How to Apply for Inquiry.....	11
Your Liaisons.....	12
Applying to Move to Candidacy.....	13
Information for Church Pastors.....	15
<u>Information for Sessions</u>	
What Sessions Need to Know.....	17
Church Membership Requirements for Applicants to Inquiry.....	18
How to Interview an Applicant to Inquiry.....	18
How to Interview an Applicant to Candidacy.....	18
Information for Church Liaisons.....	19
Information for CPM Liaisons.....	21
<u>Information for Inquirers and Candidates</u>	
Educational Requirements.....	23
Transcripts.....	23
Approved Seminaries.....	23

Presbytery of Tampa Bay Requirements.....	24
Supervised Field Education.....	24
Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).....	24
Sermon Requirement.....	25
Annual Consultation with CPM.....	25
Travel Cost Policy.....	25
Working with Your Liaisons.....	25

PC(USA) Ordination Examinations

Bible Content Exam	27
Senior Ordination Exams	27
Study Resources for Exam Takers	27
Learning Disabilities/Difficulties and Exams	27
Assessment by Alternate Means.....	27
Policy on Multiple Examination Failures.....	28

Removal From Relationship	30
---------------------------------	----

Financial Resources for Students Under Care.....	31
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Approval to Circulate a Personal Information Form (PIF).....	32
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<u>Appendix</u>	34
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Appendix A: PC(USA) Forms - Applications, Consultations, Advancement to Candidacy, Covenant Agreements, Reporting Actions to Others

Appendix B: Financial Resources and Scholarship Applications

Appendix C: Field Education Evaluation Guidelines

INTRODUCTION & MISSION

Introduction

Foundational to our identity as “Presbyterian” is a commitment to well thought-out procedures that provide an appropriate and helpful framework for faith and practice. But process is nothing without living faith. The Commission on Preparation for Ministry understands that this journey toward ordination can only be initiated, sustained, and brought to fullness by the grace of God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit.

This handbook is designed to facilitate the process of shepherding people who feel called to ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA) within the Presbytery of Tampa Bay. It’s a collection of details, signposts and mile-markers on the journey, from the initial sense of God’s call, to discernment on whether or not to move forward, to confirmation of that call, to ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

Mission of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

It is the mission of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to be a well-informed resource for potential candidates for ministry, and to encourage, support, and pray for those under CPM care as they navigate the particular requirements of the PC(USA) Book of Order and the Presbytery of Tampa Bay. CPM and its’ inquirers and candidates are on a shared journey as followers of God’s call and the way of Jesus, attending to the movement of the Spirit in the process.

Glossary of Acronyms

PC(USA) – Presbyterian Church (USA)

CPM – Commission on Preparation for Ministry

PTB – Presbytery of Tampa Bay

CPE – Clinical Pastoral Education

PIF – Pastoral Information Form filed with the PCUSA when seeking a call to ministry

G-x.xxxx – a reference to a particular paragraph in the Form of Government in the Book of Order, which is Part II of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

HOW THIS HANDBOOK IS ORGANIZED

This handbook is designed for all involved in the preparation for ministry process – applicants to the process, church pastors, sessions and liaisons, inquirers, candidates, and members of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry. It is organized for you to be able to quickly and easily find the information for your particular role in the preparation process. If you are:

A **Pastor** for someone who feels they may have a call to ministry of Word and Sacrament, please read these sections...

- Information for Everyone, pages 6-7
- Information for Church Pastors, page 15-16
- Information for Sessions, pages 17-18
- Information for Church Liaisons, pages 19-20
- Removal from Relationship, page 30

A **Session member** of a church where someone feels they may have a call to ministry of Word and Sacrament, please read these sections...

- Information for Everyone, pages 6-7
- Information for Sessions, pages 17-18

A **Session Liaison**, accompanying an inquirer or candidate in their journey to ministry of Word and Sacrament, please read these sections...

- Information for Everyone, pages 6-7
- Information for Church Liaisons, pages 19-20
- Information for Applicants to Inquiry, pages 10-12
- Removal from Relationship, page 30

An **Applicant** desiring to begin the process of preparation for ministry of Word and Sacrament, please read these sections...

- Information for Everyone, pages 6-7
- Information for Applicants to Inquiry, pages 10-12
- Information for Inquirers and Candidates, pages 23-25
- Financial Resources for Students Under Care, page 31

An **Inquirer** enrolled in the process for preparation for ministry of Word and Sacrament, please read these sections...

- Information for Everyone, pages 6-7
- Information for Inquirers and Candidates, pages 23-25
- Applying to Move to Candidacy, pages 13-14
- PC(USA) Ordination Examinations, pages 27-28
- Removal from Relationship, page 30
- Financial Resources for Students Under Care, page 31

A **Candidate** for ministry of Word and Sacrament, please read these sections...

Information for Inquirers and Candidates, pages 23-25

PC(USA) Ordination Examinations, pages 27-28

Financial Resources for Students Under Care, page 31

Approval to Circulate a Personal Information Form (PIF), page 32

A **member of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)**...please read and become familiar with...

ALL sections of this handbook, paying particular attention to the section for CPM members. Liaisons should pay special attention to page 21.

INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

Discerning the Call

All ministry starts with a call, yet all calls are different. Furthermore, the process of discerning one's call is not an easy one. Frederick Buechner offers some help in discerning the call to a particular vocation:

There are all kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than of society, say, or the Superego, or Self-Interest.

By and large a good rule for finding out is this. The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you really get a kick out of your work, you've presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing TV deodorant commercials, the chances are you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time you're bored and depressed by it, the chances are you have not only bypassed (a) but probably aren't helping your patients much either.

*Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.
(Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC, 1973, Harper & Row, p.95)*

The process for the discernment of a call to ordered ministry in the PC(USA) reflects certain theological assumptions. Among these are:

- God is present and active in our daily lives
- Our own fulfillment and greatest joy will be found when our choices are congruent with God's will for us
- Discernment uses all of our capacities for knowing
- The Holy Spirit guides by the principle of attracting and drawing toward the good
- Evidence of a call to ministry is seen together by the community.

It should be obvious from the above that discernment is counter-cultural. It is often slow, usually requires significant personal discipline, and calls for thoughtful risk-taking. Discernment seeks wisdom, self-knowledge, personal growth, emotional maturity and spiritual development.

God's call is not confined exclusively to likely candidates. There are many biblical examples of people called by God to perform God-ordained tasks:

- Moses: killed a man yet God called him to free an oppressed people and lead a new nation
- David: killed Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, yet God had called David to be a king of Israel

- Deborah: a prophet and judge of Israel
- Simon/Peter, Andrew, James, John: fishermen who became Jesus' disciples
- Lydia: who after baptism, became Paul's first convert in Europe, and showed hospitality to missionaries

Those who feel a call to ordered ministry are diverse in religious and racial/cultural backgrounds, socio-economic status, and gender identity. Those who feel a call to ordered ministry have had all types of life experiences. They may have been "straight A" students or struggled in school, be in recovery from addictions or not, feel pained by family of origin problems or were raised in a healthy and loving family.

Marks of the Call

God does not have a standardized procedure, making each person's call different from everyone else's. However, there are some shared marks:

- A quiet but persistent beckoning that will not go away
 - A sense of urgency
 - A searching for God in the every day
 - A sense of awe and wonder
 - A call story
 - Others' recognition that you may have gifts for ordered ministry
 - A feeling of being energized when participating in the life of your church
- (From *"Is it I, Lord"*, James O. Chattem)

This is not a checklist nor is it a complete list, but it does provide examples of some experiences common to many who feel God's call to ordered ministry.

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF CPM

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. 1 Timothy 6:18-19

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is a standing administrative commission (G-3.0109b) of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay. The Presbytery elects members to CPM to carry out the responsibility of guiding those people preparing for the ministry of Word and Sacrament according to the Book of Order. The Commission consists of 18 members, approximately half ministers and half elders, who are elected for three-year terms. CPM members are eligible for reelection to one additional term, or two additional terms if their first term was a partial term of less than one and a half years.

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

CPM Chair: The presbytery elects the CPM chair. The chair may sit for two three-year terms plus one year, a seven-year maximum. Responsibilities include:

- Serves as a conduit of information, advice and counsel related to the CPM process for the presbytery
- Leads the members of CPM, including drafting a meeting agenda
- Reports to the presbytery Coordinating Team, of which the chair is a participating member. The chair's report includes items for action by the presbytery as a whole
- Makes the presbytery aware of actions CPM has taken on behalf of the presbytery as authorized in the presbytery bylaws and brings recommended actions to the presbytery on behalf of CPM if a presbytery-wide vote is needed
- Arranges for orientation of sessions regarding applicants to inquiry
- Keeps progress records of all inquirers and candidates under care of the presbytery. Evaluative material, including the Vocational Assessment report, the CPE evaluation report, and the field education evaluation reports are maintained and housed by the CPM chair.

CPM Vice-Chair: Selected by the members of the CPM. Presides at meetings in the absence of the chair or as needed during meetings when the chair requests.

CPM Recording Clerk: Selected by the members of the CPM. Keeps minutes of the meetings. Works with the chair in preparing reports to the presbytery Coordinating Team and presbytery of items needing time on the presbytery agenda. This includes recommendations for changes to policy for the work of the CPM, and informational items such as acceptance of an inquirer, consultations, movement to candidacy, and permission to circulate a PIF (Personal Information Form).

Presbytery Office and Staff: The Presbytery Coach/Coordinator and the Stated Clerk are available to offer advice and/or counsel to those interested in the preparation process, to individuals under care, and for administrative assistance to the commission.

The relationship between those under care and their CPM liaison is crucial and the most important link in the care process; however, the presbytery staff is available to assist in that ongoing relationship in any way possible.

All permanent records of previous candidates are maintained by the presbytery office.

CPM Member Responsibilities and Expectations

Members of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry play an important role in the functioning of the commission. They have a number of responsibilities:

- Attend CPM meetings monthly
- Participate prayerfully
- Be willing to be a liaison for shepherding inquirers, candidates, and future commissioned pastors under our care
- Provide session orientation before the session recommends that a church member become an inquirer
- Participate in projects of the CPM as needed (these vary)
- Nominate readers for the standard ordination exams to be elected by the presbytery
- Read and maintain familiarity with the CPM handbook
- Maintain confidentiality, keeping discussion of all inquirers and candidates within the commission and presbytery staff

Meetings

CPM usually meets the third Thursday, monthly, from 9:30 – noon. CPM normally will not meet in July or December. Members of CPM are expected to attend all meetings and training opportunities, and to notify the chair of anticipated absences in advance of meetings. Occasionally, meetings may last beyond noon.

PTB Bylaws

The CPM is a standing administrative commission and is governed by the bylaws of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay. The CPM is empowered to act for the Presbytery to accomplish certain responsibilities consistent with the Book of Order. The CPM's responsibilities are to:

- guide sessions in the support of persons seeking to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament
- approve applicants to become inquirers and candidates and guide them in the process toward ordination as fully described in the CPM Handbook
- nominate ministers and elders to serve as readers of the PC(USA) standard ordination examinations
- examine Commissioned Pastors seeking approval to find a first commission as to their personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery
- approve candidates and inquirers for transfer of care between Presbyteries.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS TO INQUIRY

More on Discerning Your Call

Discerning your call, be it to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament, teaching, business, or any professional life, is the first step in laying a foundation for a life of authentic spiritual, personal, and professional growth and development. As you work with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to consider your call, the process of discernment will require you to place personal awareness of your strengths and weaknesses within the context of relationships with others and with God. While we know this process will at times be challenging, we pray you will also find it to be fulfilling. Through this process you will gather the information and guidance needed to make thoughtful, holistic, God-centered decisions, not only about the possibility of seeking ordination, but about all of life in general.

As you enter into this process of discernment, we pray you will allow God to enter into decisions about your life in ways that set aside ego and reconcile personal needs and wants. We pray you are open to God's presence and voice in the process, as quiet and mysterious as that voice can be. Discernment is about the discipline of asking questions of God and others. It is about disciplined listening for answers, trusting that the Holy Spirit is speaking, however unexpected that voice may be. Discernment is about surrendering to the voice of the Spirit and trusting that the path ahead is God's path for you. Discernment is about risk, risking your life with the Holy Spirit.

Careful discernment by those who feel called to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament is critically important for the minister of the future. The traditional church of the middle and late 20th century is fast fading. While islands of the familiar will continue to exist for years to come, many of the familiar structures will be gone within the next ten to twenty years. What will be in a place of the familiar structures many have grown up with, come to know and love? While this is a difficult question to answer because our culture is rapidly changing, it also presents an opportunity for new and visionary leaders who feel called to ministries that are unique and prophetic.

Those discerning a call to ministry may find it helpful to work with a spiritual director, a person trained in the process of discernment and the many ways the Holy speaks to us in the everyday living of our lives. There is a list of local spiritual directors on the Presbytery of Tampa Bay website. Spiritual directors may also be found through Spiritual Directors International (<https://sdiworld.org/>)

Inquiry and Candidacy Phases of Preparation

The preparation for ministry process is divided into two phases: **inquiry** and **candidacy**.

The inquiry phase provides an opportunity for the church and all who believe they may have a call to ministry of Word and Sacrament to discern and explore ones gifts for ministry, and to test that call together. This allows the inquirer and the presbytery to make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry (G-2.0603).

In the candidacy phase the primary focus shifts to providing for the candidate's full preparation and conducting a formal assessment of their fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination as a minister of Word and Sacrament (G-2.0604). Candidates are expected to follow the presbytery's guidance as to how they should be preparing for a potential call as a minister of Word and Sacrament, through developing their gifts for ministry and evaluating the progress of their development with the CPM.

The inquiry and candidacy phases continue for a period of no fewer than two years, including at least one year as a candidate (G-2.0602).

Covenant Agreement

All inquirers and candidates are required to be in a covenant agreement with their home church and the Presbytery of Tampa Bay through the CPM. This is a written agreement requiring signatures of the three parties: you, the moderator of session of your home church, and the CPM chair.

You will sign the "Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release" (Form 2B) upon entering inquiry. Upon entering candidacy, you will sign the "Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release" (Form 5D). A copy will be given to you, to your home church moderator, and kept on file by the CPM chair.

Please note that by signing the covenant agreement(s) you give your permission for the Presbytery of Tampa Bay, through the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, to contact persons listed by you as a reference, or any other person not listed, to discuss your suitability, fitness and/or readiness for ordered ministry.

How to Apply for Inquiry

Prior to applying to enter the preparation for ministry process as an inquirer, applicants must be an active member of the work and worship of their congregation for at least six months (G-2.0602).

All applicants to the inquiry phase are responsible for the following:

1. **Meet with your pastor:** Your pastor is the first point of contact when considering a call to ordered ministry. Together you can discuss how you are feeling drawn to ordered ministry, your discernment process, and giftedness for ministry of Word and Sacrament.
2. **Meet with your session:** The session is the body endorsing an applicant's entry into the inquiry phase of preparation for ministry. Talk to your pastor about when to come to your session. Upon session endorsement to enter inquiry, your church clerk of session will complete and submit Form 1D ("Session Evaluation and Recommendation") to the chair of the CPM.
3. **Complete required forms and submit them to the CPM Chair:** Complete Forms 1A, 1B, and 1C, keeping a copy for yourself. All forms must be filled-out completely. Use a separate piece of paper if you need more room. Submit these forms to the CPM

chair. Check the Presbytery of Tampa Bay web site for contact information (www.presbyteryoftampabay.com) or call the Presbytery office at (813) 868-4800.

4. **Background Check:** All applicants to inquiry must submit to a background check. There is no fee to the applicant for this. To complete the background check, please contact the stated clerk of the presbytery at 813-868-4800 or statedclerk@pbty.com.

5. **Vocational/Psychological Assessment:** All applicants for inquiry must participate in a vocational and psychological assessment. Assessments are primarily conducted online, with one component being a proctored exam at one of our church locations. The cost of the exam is divided equally among the applicant, their sponsoring church, and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry.
**Please note that, for HIPAA purposes, the Presbytery of Tampa Bay is the “client” for the assessment, and the applicant is the “subject” of the assessment. Ordinarily, the CPM Chair receives and reads the full assessment, and the assessment is kept confidential within the membership of the CPM. Refusal to give permission for the vocational and psychological assessment to be received by the CPM precludes moving forward in the process. To initiate the vocational and psychological assessment please contact the CPM Chair.*

6. **Meet with the CPM:** After all forms, background checks, and assessments are completed and received by the CPM chair, it is time to meet with the CPM. The CPM chair will contact you to arrange a date and time for this meeting. The CPM meets the third Thursday, most months, from 9:30 – noon. When you meet with the CPM, you may choose to make them aware of any documented learning disabilities or difficulties that may present a challenge in passing timed, multiple choice, or essay examinations. If you have a documented learning disability or difficulty and choose not to disclose it, the CPM may not be able to offer appropriate test-taking accommodations. Disclosed information will remain confidential within the CPM.

Your Liaisons

All inquirers will have two liaisons: one from your sponsoring church and one from the CPM. The purpose of these liaisons is to be a support to you as we journey together with you during your time of discernment and preparation.

Your church will assign your liaison upon your session’s recommendation of approval to become an inquirer. The CPM will assign your liaison when you are approved to enter inquiry, typically the first time we meet with you.

Your liaisons are your main points of contact during inquiry and candidacy. They are supports and guides, praying for you as they walk alongside you. Any questions about the process of moving toward ordination as minister of Word and Sacrament should be directed to your liaisons. On occasion it may be necessary to change liaisons, especially as CPM members complete the term of their membership on CPM.

APPLYING TO MOVE TO CANDIDACY

Prior to applying for candidacy, applicants must have been an inquirer for a period of not less than one year.

All applicants to the candidacy phase are responsible for the following:

1. Contacting your pastor: Your pastor, as moderator of session, must arrange for you to come to a session meeting and discuss your desire to move to the candidacy phase.
2. Completing Form 5A (Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate): Complete this document and send to the CPM chair (See Appendix ___ for form 5A)
3. Meeting with your sponsoring session: Be prepared to answer questions about your sense of call and desire to move to the candidacy phase. Once your session acts to endorse your move to candidacy, the clerk of session will prepare Form 5B (Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as a Candidate) and send it to the CPM chair along with a letter signed by the Clerk of Session offering the rationale for the session's action in light of the inquirer's 'suitability for ordered ministry' (G-2.0603) as described on the form.
4. Meeting with CPM: Once your sponsoring session has endorsed your move to candidacy and all forms have been received, the CPM chair will contact you to arrange a date and time to meet with you.
5. Presentation of Candidates to the Presbytery: Ordinarily, CPM requires each new candidate to be introduced at a meeting of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay. As part of this introduction, CPM asks candidates to offer a 5-7 minute statement responding to the following:
 - Statement of understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to your sense of call.
 - Statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition.

Members of the presbytery will then be invited to ask questions of you. This is not an interrogation or examination. Members will normally ask about your sense of call, and to share your story with them. Members of the presbytery want to get a sense of who you are, so be yourself because you are who God called.

After the time for questions, the Moderator of the Presbytery will ask the new candidate(s) the following questions:

- Do you believe yourself to be called by God to ministry as a minister of word and sacrament in the PCUSA?

- Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
- Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
- Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a candidate for ministry as a minister of word & sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

Appropriate prayer will be offered for the candidate by a person appointed by the CPM chair, usually the candidate's liaison.

INFORMATION FOR CHURCH PASTORS

You may be the first contact for someone seeking to discern and answer a call from God (see 1 Sam. 3:1-10). This section will help you understand the process and facilitate the journey, but please feel free to contact the CPM chair early in the process with any questions. Contact information for the CPM chair is available on the Presbytery of Tampa Bay web site, or by calling the presbytery office at 813-868-4800. Contacting the chair of CPM sooner rather than later can help avoid future misunderstandings among the inquirer/candidate, session, church, or pastor and CPM.

The following is an outline of your responsibilities in the steps for mentoring a person discerning a call to ordered ministry in the PC(USA):

1. Meet with the person who feels they may have a call. Discussion topics may include family history, experiences in church, "God sightings," types of ministry activities an applicant has enjoyed most and least, seminary education, and sense of call.
2. Direct the pre-inquirer to the PCUSA web site (pcusa.org) to complete mandatory forms. Preparation for Ministry information and forms may be found by scrolling to the bottom of the main web page for the link to "Preparation for Ministry" under the "Mid Councils" heading. All applicants must complete and submit these forms to the CPM chair (keeping a copy for their own files):
 - Form 1A: Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer
 - Form 1B: Questions for Reflection
 - Form 1C: Financial Planning for Theological Education
3. Contact the CPM chair to arrange for a member of the CPM to orient the session to the process of interviewing applicants to inquiry, on the process an inquirer preparing for ministry goes through, and the session's responsibilities in approving and supporting those who prepare for ministry.
4. Through the pastor, the session must invite the pre-inquirer to meet with it *after* a member of CPM has given an orientation session. Session should not automatically endorse pre-inquirers. The elders should pray and consider the gifts and the call presented. If the session endorses the pre-inquirer, it then selects an elder to be a liaison for the pre-inquirer.
5. As moderator of the session, assist the clerk of session, in preparing and forwarding Form 1D: "Session Evaluation and Recommendation," to the CPM Chair. After session approval, all applicants to inquiry will undergo a background check and a vocational/psychological assessment. Your church is responsible for paying for one-third of the assessment fee. Contact the CPM Chair for information on how to initiate the vocational assessment/psychological assessment. The Presbytery of Tampa Bay will arrange for the background check at no charge. Your church may incur additional financial responsibilities in support of an inquirer or candidate. This may include such things as travel from school to meet with the CPM and additional vocational assessment

requirements closer to the end of the preparation process. Your church will be responsible for paying one-third of these expenses, with the inquirer/candidate and the presbytery each paying one-third as well.

INFORMATION FOR SESSIONS

The local church faces a challenge and an opportunity when a member of the congregation approaches the pastor and session to express the possibility that she or he has been called to ordered ministry. It is the session's responsibility to provide a supportive relationship in which to explore with the individual the personal implications and suitability of a church, chaplaincy, or other approved ministerial vocation.

Such awareness emerges through prayerful examination of the individual's faith, his/her motivation, and experience within the congregation, and through a shared assessment of all the responsibilities and gifts that will be needed for ministry. These are important first steps in discerning whether the individual is called by the Holy Spirit to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

The session is an essential link in the covenant relationship between those under care and the Presbytery of Tampa Bay. The pastor and session communicate with, and support, this individual throughout the entire period of preparation. This can be a deeply meaningful experience for all involved. In all matters relating to preparation, the individual will be under the oversight (care) of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay.

What Sessions Need to Know About the Preparation for Ministry Process

- Those preparing for Ministry of Word and Sacrament must pass through two phases of preparation: Inquiry and Candidacy. (G-2.0601)
- The personal journey of call to Inquiry, then to Candidacy, and then to ordination is not always linear. Each phase requires serious discernment, and sometimes that discernment leads away from ordination as a minister of word and sacrament.
- The presbytery, through the CPM, will instruct the session and oversee a wide variety of preparation processes with Inquirers and Candidates.
- The session's endorsement of a church member's application for inquiry, and candidacy later, should follow prayerful consideration.
- The session must appoint a liaison to facilitate ongoing communication between the session and the candidate/inquirer. The CPM will also appoint a liaison to facilitate ongoing communication between the CPM and the session and between the CPM and the inquirer or candidate. Regular communication needs to take place between the session and session liaison and between CPM and the CPM liaison. Both session and CPM liaisons are encouraged to contact each other with updates of the Inquirer/Candidate.
- In addition, the inquirer/candidate is responsible for maintaining regular contact with both the session and the CPM through the appointed liaisons.
- Throughout the process, the session has ongoing responsibility for concern and discipline as it does for any active church member (G- 2.0605).
- Applicants admitted to Inquiry must meet with their church session again before applying to the Candidacy phase of preparation in order to gain session endorsement for candidacy.

Church Membership Requirements of Applicants Seeking to Enter Inquiry

To be eligible to be considered for enrollment as an inquirer, the applicant must be a member of the sponsoring congregation with at least six months' activity in the work and worship of that church (G-2.0602)

How to Interview an Applicant for Inquiry

Here are some suggested topics to discuss with anyone applying to inquiry.

- Tell us about yourself, your family, and your church and ministry experience.
- Tell us about your personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- Why do you want to become a Minister of Word and Sacrament?
- What is your understanding of what it means to be an Inquirer?
- What type of ministry activities have you enjoyed most? Least?
- How can we help you explore those aspects of ministry you haven't tried yet?
- What are your plans for seminary?
- What's one thing your references will tell us about you?

Applicants ready to move from inquiry to candidacy must meet with the session again.

Please note that, after session approval, all applicants to inquiry will undergo a background check and a vocational/psychological assessment. Your church is responsible for paying for one-third of the assessment fee. Your church may incur additional financial commitments in support of an inquirer or candidate. This may include airfare from school to meet with the CPM, and additional vocational assessment requirements ordinarily after field education and towards the end of the preparation process. Your church will be responsible for paying one-third of these expenses, with the inquirer/candidate and the presbytery each paying one-third as well.

How to Interview an Applicant for Candidacy

Here are some suggested topics to discuss with Inquirers who wish to move to candidacy.

- How have you grown in your faith and in your sense of call as a result of your time in seminary and your field experience?
- What have you found to be disappointing?
- What type of ministry activities have you enjoyed most? Least?
- What is happening in your relationship with Jesus Christ?
- In what areas do you feel you still need to grow? How do you plan to pursue growth in those areas?
- How can the session help you prepare for your ministry?
- Have you explored the new forms of ministry offered by the PCUSA through its "1001 New Worshipping Communities" initiative?

Those under care will undergo a second vocational/psychological assessment sometime during the candidacy phase. The sponsoring church is responsible for paying one-third of the fee, the candidate is responsible for one-third of the fee, and the Presbytery of Tampa Bay is responsible for paying the remaining third.

INFORMATION FOR CHURCH LIAISONS

A church liaison is a ruling elder the session appoints to walk alongside the inquirer/candidate as they explore and evaluate that person's progress in preparing for ministry.

Some of the ways in which liaisons may be of assistance to inquirers and candidates:

- Learn the background of your inquirer or candidate if you do not already know it: parents, siblings, school, college, hobbies and abilities, birthday, name of spouse (if married), name(s) of child(ren) (if any), (proposed) seminary, progress toward ordination, financial needs, etc.
- Initially, meet personally with your inquirer/candidate, then keep in touch by phone or email. Spend time with the inquirer/candidate periodically, especially at times just prior to transitions to seminary, moving to candidacy, seminary graduation, during or after their CPE experience, or moving toward completion of all CPM requirements
- Take an interest in the inquirer/candidate's academics, field education, consultations, and other activities related to preparation for the ministry of teaching elders.
- Share with CPM, especially at the time of consultations, any areas of particular need for the inquirer/candidate—whether financial or personal.
- Become aware of when the inquirer/candidate will be available and try to visit with them personally. The ability to maintain professional and personal boundaries is enhanced by meeting with an inquirer or candidate in a public place.
- Identify ways to keep the congregation aware of the names of its inquirers/candidates (away at seminary or at home) who have entered a covenant relationship with the presbytery and are preparing to become ministers.
- Initiate conversation with your session on the possibility of providing financial assistance or other tangible support to your inquirer/candidates.
- Review, as necessary, your session's responsibility for assisting in the payment of necessary expenses incurred in relation to visits for consultation with the CPM.
- At the presbytery meeting at which the candidate is examined for ordination, make sure someone has been appointed (check with your pastor or the CPM chair) to go outside the meeting to be with the candidate, and/or their spouse/significant other and family when the calling presbytery is making its decision. **If you cannot be present, this may be your opportunity for contacting the calling church or agency to*

*ask that they have someone to perform this ministry on behalf of you and the candidate's home church.**

- Be present, if at all possible, at the service of ordination and/or installation.
- Remember your inquirer/candidate in prayer.
- Write your inquirer/candidate on special occasions (e.g., birthdays or anniversaries).
- Become acquainted with the CPM handbook so that you are aware of requirements and procedures and can provide timely support (e.g., appearances before PTB, consultations, ordination examinations, final assessment, etc.).
- Discuss with your session the progress the inquirer/candidate is making, as reflected in consultation reports prepared by CPM and sent to the sponsoring session.
- The role of the spouse/significant other of the inquirer/candidate is particularly important. Try to be as supportive, sensitive and understanding as you can of the spouse. Let the CPM know if there are ways the Commission may better assist the spouse of the inquirer/candidate who is preparing for a new role.
- In a word, be a friend and lend a sense of your personal, moral, and spiritual interest in, and support of inquirers/candidates in training to become a teaching elder.

In addition to keeping in touch with your inquirer/candidate, periodically contact their CPM liaison to be sure the person under care has whatever support they need. If you do not know who that is, ask your person under care or contact the CPM chair.

Being a liaison is a great gift to the inquirer/candidate, and to you. In performing your tasks, you will also grow in grace and faith.

INFORMATION FOR CPM LIAISONS

As a CPM liaison, you will play an important part in an inquirer's or candidate's movement toward the ministry God is calling this person to. As such, you are responsible for:

- Reading and knowing what is in the CPM Handbook and section G-2.06, Preparation for Ministry, in the Form of Government. These are the primary guiding and implementing documents for all things related to preparing for ministry.
- Establishing and maintaining a close working relationship with the inquirer/candidate (i.e., remembering birthdays and other special events, meet with the inquirer/candidate from time-to-time, etc.).
- Let your inquirer(s) or candidate(s) know in advance when they are scheduled to come to CPM.
- Include the inquirer/candidate in your prayer life.
- Keep the CPM current about the status of the assigned inquirer/candidate.
- Keep the inquirer/candidate current on the actions of the CPM that might have an impact on the status of their covenant with the presbytery.
- Be in communication with the session's liaison periodically (at least annually if not more often) about the inquirer/candidate and be an advocate for the inquirer/candidate with session if necessary.
- Establish, and keep current, a file on your inquirer/candidate. Include contact information, meeting dates and notes of their experiences, growth and challenges, and how you and the CPM can be of assistance. Bear in mind that the privacy of the person whom you are serving is potentially affected by this file if it were shared inadvertently with anyone else. Any electronic files related to your inquirer/candidate should be deleted after your liaison responsibilities are concluded. Written files may be given to the CPM chair for inclusion in an inquirer's/candidate's file or for shredding.
- When needed, be a channel of communication among the inquirer/candidate, the CPM chair, and the session liaison.

What CPM Liaisons should NOT do:

- Work harder than the inquirer/candidate in your care.
- Be "on top" of your inquirer/candidate by contacting them too frequently. Touching base quarterly will give your inquirer/candidate space while knowing you and the CPM cares about them.

- Take it personally if your inquirer/candidate does not reach out to you on a regular basis. At the same time, it is expected that anyone under care will respond in a timely manner when contacted by their liaison or CPM chair.
- Use your position on CPM to conduct independent assessments or interventions on the behalf of the Commission without prior authorization or permission of the Commission.

INFORMATION FOR INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES

The Book of Order and the Presbytery of Tampa Bay have requirements for all inquirers and candidates pursuing ordination to ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Educational Requirements

Degree Requirements

- Undergraduate degree, with a transcript showing satisfactory grades, from a regionally accredited college or university (G-2.0607b)
- Master of Divinity degree, with satisfactory grades in all areas of study, from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and the Presbytery of Tampa Bay (G-2.0607c) (please see “Approved Seminaries” below). Your degree transcript must show the following (or their equivalents):
 - Studies in Hebrew and Greek
 - Old and New Testament exegesis using Hebrew and Greek (G-2.0607c)
 - Field education (G-2.0606). The CPM requires a minimum of 2 semesters.

CPM strongly recommends that all inquirers/candidates take the following classes while in seminary:

- Reformed Theology
- Presbyterian Worship & Sacraments
- PC(USA) Polity

Failure to take these specific classes will likely adversely impact an inquirer’s/ candidate’s ability to successfully pass the Senior Ordination Examinations and may also add challenges for future ministry within the PCUSA.

Transcripts

Inquirers and candidates must send copies of their transcripts annually to the CPM chair. These may be sent electronically. A final, sealed, transcript must be sent from the registrar’s office via U.S. Mail to the CPM chair upon graduation.

Approved Seminaries with Master of Divinity Programs

In order that the inquirer/candidate prepare for ministry in an environment that equips them to explore and articulate their identity as a PC(USA) minister and leader, the Presbytery of Tampa Bay recommends enrollment in a PC(USA) seminary.

- Austin Theological Seminary (Austin, TX)
- Columbia Theological Seminary (Decatur, GA)
- University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (Dubuque, IA)
- Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY)
- McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago, IL)
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Princeton Theological Seminary (Princeton, NJ)
- San Francisco Theological Seminary (San Anselmo, CA)

- Union Presbyterian Seminary (Richmond, VA)
- Union Presbyterian Seminary (Charlotte, NC)
- Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (San Juan, PR)

There may be other seminaries, such as Asbury Theological Seminary (in Orlando) that are approved seminaries. Please consult the CPM Chair prior to enrolling in a seminary not on the approved list. You may also consult the Association of Theological Schools website for accredited seminaries: <https://www.ats.edu>.

Presbytery of Tampa Bay Requirements

In addition to academic and exam requirements outlined in the Book of Order, the Presbytery of Tampa Bay has the following additional requirements of all inquirers and candidates:

Supervised Field Education

Sometimes called “field work” or “supervised ministry,” at least two semesters shall be completed in a church or other approved site. It is highly recommended that this field education requirement be completed while in seminary. At the end of the experience, the supervisor should provide a written evaluation for the CPM. The person under care shall also submit a self-evaluation of the experience. PC(USA) seminaries are normally aware of this requirement and send these reports to the CPM chair. Non-PC(USA) seminaries may not be aware of this requirement, but *you are still responsible to submit a written field education report from your field education supervisor.* (See Appendix C for field education report guidelines.)

In some cases, inquirers/candidates under care are already working full or part-time in the church that supports them in their journey to ministry of Word and Sacrament. In those cases, one unit of field education can be at their home church, and one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) may count as one semester of field education. A written evaluation of the final CPE report and a field education report from your supervisor must be sent to the CPM chair.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

The Presbytery of Tampa Bay requires the completion of one unit of CPE, at a location accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). One unit is 400 hours. This must be completed before approval will be given to circulate a PIF. This requirement may rarely be waived for unusual circumstances by a two-thirds vote of CPM at the request of the candidate. Local ACPE approved CPE programs are:

- 1) Advent Health: <https://www.adventhealth.com/spiritual/adventhealth-clinical-pastoral-education-florida>
- 2) Baycare: <https://baycare.org/en/hospitals/morton-plant-hospital/patients-and-visitors/pastoral-care/clinical-pastoral-education-program>

3) Tampa General Hospital: <https://www.tgh.org/health-professionals/clinical-pastoral-education>

4) The James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
https://www.patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/CPE/CPE_Frequently_Asked_Questions_and_Additional_Information.asp

Other CPE locations, especially those suggested by PC(USA) theological schools, are acceptable as long as they are accredited by ACPE and one unit is 400 hours.

Sermon Requirement

The CPM requires each candidate to preach a sermon to the commission as part of their final meeting with CPM before being authorized ready for examination pending a call. This can be a sermon already written or something new. Time: not to exceed 15 minutes.

Annual Consultation with CPM

The CPM meets with each inquirer and candidate annually. Either your CPM liaison or the CPM chair will contact you with the date and time. Prior to the meeting, inquirers/candidates must complete Form 3 (Pre-consultation report on development areas) and mail to the CPM chair at least two weeks prior to your meeting date. Annual meetings can be either in person or via video-conferencing for inquirers/ candidates away at school or other valid reasons as determined by the CPM.

Travel Cost Policy

Reimbursement will be made for inquirers/candidates coming from beyond presbytery bounds for: 1) initial consultation or, 2) attendance at a presbytery meeting to meet the requirement, upon moving to candidacy, to be presented to the presbytery. One-third will be paid by the Presbytery of Tampa Bay, one-third by the sponsoring church, and one-third is paid by the inquirer/candidate. Appropriate receipts, ticket charges, and documentation or copies of same must be submitted to the CPM chair with a request for reimbursement.

Working With Your Liaisons

You have two liaisons – one from your church, and one from the CPM. The goal of having liaisons is so they can support and nurture you in your preparation and discernment. To that end:

- It is your responsibility to be in contact with both your liaisons at least quarterly, particularly when you have questions, needs, or concerns, and at times of transition. You may want to meet in person, chat by phone or meet via videoconference.
- Always show a human face to your liaisons. They are genuinely interested in you. Inform your liaisons of major life events or other changes, such as marriage, divorce, deaths, change of schools, change of postal or email address, etc.

- If you feel there is a communication problem, say so. If you are struggling with something, it is hoped you will be able to discuss whatever it is with one or both of your liaisons.
- Always respond promptly to communication from your liaisons, the CPM chair, and the presbytery staff
- You can also contact the CPM Chair at any time with any concerns.

PC(USA) Ordination Examinations

In accordance with the Book of Order, all those preparing for ministry must take five standard ordination examinations. (G-2.0607d)

Bible Content Exam

- The first exam taken
- A proctored, timed exam ordinarily offered the Friday before Labor Day and the first Friday in February.
- No other exams may be attempted without first attempting the Bible Content Exam.
- Inquirers/candidates are not required to pass this exam prior to taking the senior ordination exams.
- Study resources for the Bible Content Exam can be found on the PC(USA) web site.

Senior Ordination Exams (aka “The ORDS”)

- Offered three times a year (check the PCUSA Ordination Exam Calendar)
- An online, timed exam format you can do at home using resources as indicated by the exam instructions.
- 4 Topics: PC(USA) Polity, Reformed Theology, PC(USA) Worship and Sacraments, Biblical Exegesis
- Study resources for writing the ORDS can be found on the PC(USA) web site

Study Resources for Exam Takers

Students at PC(USA) seminaries can take advantage of study resources available at those institutions. In addition, the PC(USA) has resources for exam takers on its website (www.pcusa.org). These may be found by searching for “Preparation for Ministry” for all resources.

Learning Disabilities/Difficulties and Exams

If an inquirer/candidate has any prior diagnosed and documented history of a specific learning disability or other condition that could interfere with taking a timed, multiple choice format test, or an essay format test, the exam taker shall contact their liaison and/or chair of the CPM. This is to inform them of the learning disability or other condition so that a planning process for how the inquirer/candidate will address examinations and what accommodations might be available can be discussed and/or arranged. The inquirer/candidate shall present documentation of the learning disability or other condition to the CPM chair, who will place this documentation in the individual’s file.

Assessment by Alternate Means

On occasion, inquirers/candidates may be granted approval to take one or more of the standard ordination examinations by an alternate means. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis by the CPM and the inquirer/candidate making the request. The Book of Order states:

Any accommodation to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking to have their readiness for ministry ascertained by some alternate means other than the standard ordination examinations described in G-2.0607d. must be approved by a three-fourths vote of

the presbytery at a duly called meeting and a “full account of the reasons for . . . alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.” (G-2.0610).

For candidates who were assessed by alternate means, a copy of the minutes of the presbytery action approving the alternate means will be placed in the candidate’s file along with the report of the body completing the assessment by alternate means. and the minutes of the presbytery meeting where those results were reported back to the presbytery. That documentation will be communicated to any presbytery to which the inquirer or candidate might be transferred or along with the standard exams transcript in cases where the candidate is subsequently considered for a call. (See G-2.0610 and the discussion of alternate means of assessment in the Advisory Handbook on Preparing for Ministry in the PC(USA).)

Multiple Failures of Examinations

Just as inquiry leads to “an informed decision about the inquirer’s suitability for ordered ministry” (G-2.0603), candidacy leads to an evaluation of “fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination” (G-2.0604). In that light, repeated failure to pass any of the five standard ordination exams suggests there may be a need for serious conversation and prayerful discernment with trusted friends, mentors, advisors, and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry about whether to continue in the process within the PC(USA), or if the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination exams should be ascertained by some other means. (See G-20610).

The following provisions offer guidelines for addressing multiple failures of any of the standard ordination exams in the context of evaluating fitness and readiness for ordination in the PC(USA).

a. The Bible Content Exam

The Bible Content Exam may be attempted *four times*. If the four attempts have been exhausted in the context of utilization of all appropriate resources and the issue is discerned to be related to test taking per se, and not the inquirer/candidate’s grasp of the scriptures, there is the possibility of applying to the Presbytery for an alternate form of examination. If approved by a three-fourths vote of the Presbytery, the inquirer/candidate may take the exam orally with a committee of three ministers and/or ruling elders well versed in scripture that are appointed by the CPM. This committee shall report the outcome of this oral exam in writing to the chair of the CPM. The CPM chair will let the exam taker know the results.

b. Senior Ordination Exams

Ordinarily, three failures of any of the four senior ordination exams will mean termination of the preparation process and removal from the roll of inquirers and candidates. If the three attempts have been exhausted in the context of utilization of all appropriate resources and the issue is discerned to be related to test taking per se, and not the inquirer/candidate’s grasp of the content area, permission to make a fourth and final attempt to pass may be granted by the CPM if all the following requirements are met:

- CPM determines that the inquirer/candidate shows very high potential for ministry;
- The inquirer/candidate has passed three of the four exams; and
- The inquirer/candidate can clearly demonstrate that he or she has taken advantage of all appropriate study resources

Inquirers/candidates may also request assessment by an alternative means prior to meeting the exam attempts limit. This request should be made to the CPM chair through the liaison.

In striving to be fair to all inquirers and candidates, an attempt to determine test-taking impediments will be made:

- In cases of a documented learning disability/difficulty (see “Learning Disabilities/Difficulties and Exams”, above)
- In instances of English as a second language, determination will be made in the Inquiry review about the possibility of the need to write exams in another language (as available).

Inquirers and candidates who have concerns regarding their exam performance should be proactive in inquiring with CPM and the Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Exams for appropriate and allowable accommodations that are available.

Removal From Relationship

An inquirer or candidate may, after consultation with the session and the presbytery, withdraw from covenant relationship. The Presbytery of Tampa Bay may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an individual's name from the roll of inquirers and candidates, reporting this action and the reasons to the session, to the individual, and, if appropriate, to the educational institution in which the individual is enrolled. Prior to taking such action, the presbytery or the CPM shall make a reasonable attempt to give the candidate or inquirer an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal. (G-2.0609)

Financial Resources for Students Under Care

There are a number of financial resources available to inquirers and candidates under care of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay.

CPM Scholarships

The CPM of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay administers scholarship money available for inquirers and candidates from both the Presbytery and the Synod of South Atlantic. These funds may be used for seminary tuition and associated educational expenses (books, paper, etc.), as well as living expenses while away at seminary. CPM accepts applications for scholarships between April 1 – June 1 annually. The deadline is June 1. The CPM scholarship application form is found in Appendix B of this handbook. Applicants will be notified of awards between July 1 – 15.

Your Sponsoring Church

Churches sponsoring inquirers and candidates preparing for ministry may have some funds available to help students with the many expenses affiliated with ministry preparation. Check with your home church pastor on availability of funds.

Other Sources of Financial Aid

Those immersed in theological education have many sources of financial and other types of aid. Most seminaries have financial aid in the form of tuition grants and merit scholarships. Various PC(USA) agencies also provide financial aid, medical insurance, and financial planning services for seminary students and candidates for ministry. Seminary debt assistance is also available for newly ordained pastors. Please see Appendix B for a complete list of the many available resources.

APPROVAL TO CIRCULATE A PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM (PIF)

A candidate may be certified as ready to seek a call (G-2.0607) and circulate a Personal Information Form (PIF) after at least one year as a candidate and fulfillment of the following requirements:

- a. Presented transcripts from an accredited college showing graduation, and from a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), showing graduation or proximity to graduation, including a course of study in the Old and New Testaments that includes Greek and Hebrew exegesis, and satisfactory grades in all areas of study.
- b. Passed all of the standard ordination exams of the PC(USA), either as administered by the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Exams or through an approved alternate means.
- c. Exhibited wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment.
- d. Completed at least one field study course in a PCUSA setting as a part of the seminary course of study.
- e. Completed at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (exception noted in the CPE section on page 22-23).
- f. Presented a brief sermon (no more than fifteen minutes) with information as to the circumstances for the sermon.

CPM acts on this assessment on behalf of the presbytery and certifies a candidate's readiness to receive a call using Form 6, signed by the CPM chair and recorded by the stated clerk of PTB.

The chair of the CPM certifies this action electronically to the Vocations Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Records of meetings and progress of those under care will be kept in a secure file by the CPM chair. The inactive files of those who have completed their studies, are no longer under care, or have received a call will be kept in a secure file in the PTB office.

The responsibility for the final examination for ordination rests with the calling council of the church.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: PC(USA) Forms

Application Forms

There are four separate forms to apply for enrollment as an inquirer. All forms must be completed and sent to the CPM Chair before an applicant can meet with CPM.

Form 1A: Application to be enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer

To be completed initially by the applicant seeking to be enrolled.

Form 1B: Questions for Reflection

To be completed by the applicant as a basis for direct discussion first with the session of the applicant's home church and later with the presbytery's Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

Form 1C: Financial Planning for Theological Education

To be completed by the applicant. This spreadsheet generates a projection of the applicant's financial resources and needs relative to the required seminary training.

Form 1D: Session Evaluation and Recommendation

This form is completed by the applicant's session. The questions on this form may guide the session's discussion with the applicant and provide support for its recommendation to the CPM.

Forms 1A-1D may be found here:

<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/application-forms/>

Forms for Annual Consultations

These forms are used to prepare for and report the outcomes of consultation, evaluating progress and accomplishing previously agreed-upon goals and objectives.

Form 3: Pre-consultation Report on Development areas

This report, completed by the inquirer/candidate before each consultation, evaluates progress in accomplishing previously agreed upon goals and objectives.

Form 4: Report on Consultation

A summary report of the consultation, completed by the CPM and the inquirer/candidate, that indicates developmental progress in the five key areas along with growth objectives agreed to for the next year.

Forms 3 and 4 may be found here:

<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-annual-consultations/>

Appendix A: PC(USA) Forms (continued)

Forms for Advancing to Candidacy

These forms are used by inquirers, their session, and their CPM when a decision has been made to recommend the inquirer be advanced to candidate status.

Form 5A: Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate

To be completed initially by the inquirer seeking to be advanced to candidacy.

Form 5B: Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as a Candidate

This form is completed by the inquirer's session and forwarded to the Chair of CPM. The session shall attach a letter explaining rationale for the session's action in light of the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.

Form 5C: Report of Consultation Regarding Application to become a Candidate

A signed acknowledgement of the new covenant relationship entered into by the candidate and the CPM. This form also establishes growth areas for the candidate.

Form 5D: Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release

A signed acknowledgement of the new covenant relationship entered into by the candidate, the session and the CPM. The candidate release sets in motion an understanding that permits the CPM to secure information necessary to make responsible decisions and recommendations.

Forms 5A-5D may be found here:

<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-advancing-candidacy/>

Forms Reporting Actions to Others

Form 6: Summary Report of Final Assessment

This form is completed by the CPM Chair and acknowledges that the CPM has conducted a final assessment of the candidate's preparation and readiness to begin ministry. It certifies that the candidate has successfully completed all requirements of the denomination and the CPM. It should be accompanied by supporting documentation that is identified on the form.

Form 6 may be found here:

<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-complete-cpm/>

Appendix B: Financial Resources For Inquirers and Candidates

Sources of Financial Aid for Persons Seeking Theological Education Through the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Please note: This list is maintained by the Commission on the Preparation of Ministers (CPM) of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay, Florida. Latest update is noted below.* The list is intended to help inquirers and candidates for ministry who are under our care. We do our best to search sources of aid regularly and to update this list, but we also advise everyone who is pursuing theological education to conduct their own research—especially among sponsoring congregations and by inquiring about *specifically designated scholarships* at your seminary and about *interest-free loan funds* available from congregations and special-interest groups, foundations, and individuals.

To help ensure fairness, CPM follows our **Presbytery Candidate Indebtedness Policy**, available from the CPM chairperson.

Everyone’s search for aid should explore as broadly as possible, with written requests for assistance sent to the director(s) of financial aid at YOUR school. Conduct your search through internet searches beyond the links here, and explore your personal contacts, your sponsoring congregation’s session members, and your family.

Be certain to avail yourself of the financial aid, medical insurance, and financial planning services of the PC(USA). Primary website: <http://www.pensions.org/for-seminarians-and-candidates>. Latest additions: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/category/grants-scholarships/>.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s **Office of Financial Aid for Service** awards more than one million dollars annually to students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees. See <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/financialaid/>.

BOP Presbyterian Study Grants Up to \$5000 annually, need-based.
<<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/financialaid/graduatetheological-programs/presbyterian-study-grant/>>

Help with **insurance cost**: Once you are a seminary student preparing for a vocation with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), you may be eligible to purchase [comprehensive healthcare coverage](#) through the Board of Pensions at a **significantly reduced cost**. <<http://www.pensions.org/our-role-and-purpose/the-connectional-church/seminary-relationships/seminarian-healthcare-coverage>>

Helpful ongoing learning: The **Board of Pensions** sponsors a seminar called “Getting in Shape Fiscally” at PC(USA) seminaries and a few other locations throughout each school year. [Some](#)

PCUSA seminaries may require persons under care to attend one of these seminars in order to be eligible for named grants or local financial aid. Be sure to check with each school's financial aid advisor for 2019-2020 policies. An upcoming schedule for this seminar may be found here: <http://www.pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/lifelong-learning-through-board-university/seminars/getting-in-shape-fiscally>>. For example, the next seminar is at Columbia Seminary, Decatur, GA, October 2019.

*Latest update: June 2019

PC(USA): Main PC(USA) Seminary Link

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/theologicaleducation/presbyterian-theological-seminaries-glance/>

For PC(USA) students who require a small loan, the Office of Financial Aid for Studies of the PC(USA) also offers assistance.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/financialaid/graduatetheological-programs/>

An excellent database of scholarships for seminarians is <http://scholarships.gtu.edu>, a database maintained by the Graduate Theological Union, a consortium of eight private independent American theological schools and eleven centers and affiliates; San Francisco Theological Seminary is the PC(USA) member.

Consider church policy on fair compensation and expectations of all stakeholders:

http://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/fairness_in_ministerial_compensation.pdf

Consider the many innovative missions of the church (for example):

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/1001-2/>
and be inspired: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/1001-2/about-1001/videos/>
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/a-pastor-by-any-other-name/>

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Austin, Texas [see online handbook; policies significantly revised 2017-18]

Aid for 2019-20 (latest policy on site) <https://www.austinseminary.edu/page.cfm?p=1266>

Austin uses a budget tool which can be helpful to anyone: **Steward's Resource Navigator:**

https://www.austinseminary.edu/uploaded/admissions/pdf/Financial_Aid_Information/Stewards_Resource_Navigator_Guide_2019-20.pdf.

For students enrolled in the Master of Arts (Theological Studies), Master of Arts in Ministry Practice, and Master of Divinity degree programs, [we] offer need-based Seminary Tuition Grants, on-campus employment, child care assistance grants, and scholarships to defray the cost of cross-cultural or international travel. (Also the Federal Direct Student Loan Program.)

- Need-based Seminary Tuition Grants of up to 85% of the cost of tuition are awarded to MATS, MAMP and MDiv students with documented need.
- Merit-based Fellowships and Scholarships at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary are awarded annually to entering Master of Divinity students who demonstrate exceptional academic achievement, leadership ability, and interest in and strong promise vocationally for ministry in the church. Each of the fellowships cover full tuition, a

stipend to cover on-campus housing, and an additional stipend of \$5,000 per year for other educational costs (for a total current estimated annual award value of \$22,000). Scholarships cover the full cost of tuition (estimated annual value of the award is \$13,200).

- Elma Gunther Scholarship for International Study: Each Master of Arts (Theological Studies), Master of Arts in Ministry Practice and Master of Divinity degree student at Austin Seminary is eligible for a one-time subsidy or grant for participation in an international or cross-cultural educational program approved by the faculty.

Columbia Theological Seminary

Decatur, Georgia 404-687-4516 or email Lucy Strong: StrongL@CTSnet.edu.

Site: <http://www.ctsnet.edu/admissions/financial-aid/>

Columbia Theological Seminary offers generous need-based financial aid which is comprised of institutional grants, scholarships, and work-study. With many students receive support for the majority of their tuition cost.

- Students receiving institutional aid usually receive at least 84% of tuition in grant and aid money (or \$9,980). There is subsidized on-campus housing for full-time students.
- you can expect an institutional aid package which covers at least 84% of your tuition expense. This award will include both grants and seminary service wages. Your Seminary Service will happen in an on-campus office for approx. 5 hours per week.
- Columbia Friendship Circle Awards support candidates with dependent children.
- A Spring 2019 endowment has established the Walker Presidential Scholarship. The Rev. Dr. Thomas W. and Jan C. Walker Presidential Scholarship will be awarded for the full cost of of a three-year Master of Divinity degree with a living stipend for students from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who show outstanding promise for pastoral ministry (with a preference for recent college graduates).

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Dubuque, Iowa <http://www.dbq.edu> Teresa Brahm Director of Student **Financial Planning** 563 589 3125 TBrahm@dbq.edu. [contact the director to *start* your search; financial aid policies and costs differ between distance learners and residential students]

<http://udts.dbq.edu/admissions/admissioninformation/residentialprogram/tuitionfeesandfinancialaid/>

All residential students who demonstrate financial need are eligible for substantial grant and loan assistance. A personal consultation with the Dean of Financial Planning is required. The office of student financial planning is able to provide individual counseling to determine your needs and help create a realistic budget. It is the University's desire to minimize the student debt load upon graduation.

- Presidential Scholarship
- Wendt Character Scholarship-awarded annually to full-time residential students based on the Wendt Character Initiatives guidelines.
- Distance Master of Divinity Scholarship
- Presbyterian Study Grant

News: <<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/university-of-dubuque-theological-seminary-receives-nearly-1-million-grant/>>

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Louisville, Kentucky

<http://www.lpts.edu/admissions/financial-matters>

At Louisville Seminary, we are pleased to have funds available to offer generous financial aid packages to students. The Seminary has several kinds of financial aid available.

- Tuition Grants, Scholarships for Excellence and Educational Loans.
- Scholarships for Excellence are awarded based on academic achievement and/or a promise for ministry. Current scholarships are for \$20,000 a year. There are additionally six named “Presidential Scholarships for Excellence” see <http://www.lpts.edu/admissions/financial-matters/scholarships-for-excellence/presidential-merit-scholarships-for-excellence> and three “Promise for Ministry” named scholarships (all named awards have particular application requirements) see <http://www.lpts.edu/admissions/financial-matters/scholarships-for-excellence/promise-for-ministry-scholarships-for-excellence>.
- Scholarships and Tuition Grants are funds that do not need to be paid back.
- All admitted master’s-level students who do not receive a Scholarship for Excellence will receive a 100% Tuition Grant.
- Student INCOME opportunities include stipends for field education and for supply pastor service (advanced level).

McCormick Theological Seminary

Chicago, IL - Note: not yet updated for 2019-20.

<<https://www.mccormick.edu/content/financial-aid-and-scholarships>>

Current Director of Admissions and enrollment: Rev. Veronica Johnson 773.947.6319

To be eligible for most types of financial aid, a student must: (1) be accepted into a degree program; (2) demonstrate financial need (as defined by McCormick, federal, or other financial aid program criteria); (3) be enrolled in six or more course for the academic year; and (4) maintain good standing and make satisfactory progress in fulfilling degree requirements. Further information concerning the Financial Aid Program at McCormick is available from the Student Financial Planning Office.

- McCormick’s need-based tuition grant program represents the largest amount of aid given to students. These grants are made possible by the generosity of many individuals and organizations [31 named scholarships] awarded to students of all denominations on the basis of financial need.
- Applicants completing the McCormick admission application by March 1 will be considered for merit scholarships (4 at up to \$21,500/year, renewable; 7 at \$13,000/year; 2 at \$2,500 annually.).

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Note: not yet updated for 2019-20.

http://www.pts.edu/Financial_Aid

PTS subsidizes the tuition rate so students can earn a degree at a reasonable cost: \$456/Master’s credit and \$358/Doctor of Ministry credit. (2018-2019). 55 percent of the 2017 Master’s class graduated debt-free of seminary education loans. The average amount of seminary indebtedness for the 2017 graduating class was \$22,347.

The average need-based package is \$12,715 for full-time master’s-level students who receive tuition grants, housing grants, and/or work opportunity.

- Master’s Merit Scholarships range from \$1,000-\$25,000. The average Merit Scholarship for full-time enrollment was \$6,833 last year (2017-2018). Merit Scholarships for half-time master’s level enrollment are \$1,500.
- There are 7 kinds of aid; including work and service opportunities. Emergency loans are also provided.

Princeton Theological Seminary

Princeton, New Jersey Note: not yet updated for 2019-20.

<http://www.ptsem.edu/admissions/financial-aid/overview>

Princeton commands some extraordinary resources for full-time students in residence. Need-based

grants, fellowships, work opportunities, and loans to our eligible degree candidates (93%). The majority of the generous financial aid offered by Princeton Seminary is need-based. This approach sets us apart from some of our peers, who concentrate their financial aid in a merit-based scholarship system that focuses on a relatively small portion of their applicants. We do offer merit-based scholarships to a small portion of our admitted applicants, but as a matter of the theological conviction we try to cover as many educational costs as we can for the greatest number of students.

- Cost Calculator link: <http://www.ptsem.edu/admissions/cost-calculator>
- Gillespie Grants (\$4,000 married; \$2,000 single) in addition to several other programs of aid.
- See this “Outside Resources” link with hundreds of little-known sources, many from particular denominations (6 Presbyterian): <<http://s3.amazonaws.com/ptsem/pdfs/2017-18-Guide-to-Outside-Sources-of-Financial-Aid.pdf>>

San Francisco Theological Seminary

San Anselmo and Pasadena, California — member, Graduate Theological Union. current to 2019.

<http://sfts.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/>

San Francisco Theological Seminary provides financial aid assistance to approximately 85% of our M.Div. and Graduate Theological Union MA students. We offer a variety of ways to assist you with graduate school costs, through theology scholarships and grants, and the federal student loan program.

Contact Enrollment Advisor Isai Garcia at 415-451-2831 or admissions@sfts.edu.

- Recipients of the Presidential Scholarship receive 100% tuition coverage for the three years of their studies at SFTS.
- Alumni Scholarship recipients receive between 70-80% of tuition for each year of their program.

Union Presbyterian Seminary

Richmond, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina

<https://www.upsem.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/> Deadline March 1.

Rev. Mairi Renwick (M.Div.'11) Director of Admissions, Richmond, VA 804-278-4222 office 804-291-8314 cell mrenwick@upsem.edu

80% of Union Presbyterian Seminary students receive financial aid.

Beginning with the 2017-18 academic year, all scholarships will include 100% tuition aid. For scholarship consideration for 2018-2019, submit your application for admission by March 1, 2018..

- MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS - Union Presbyterian Seminary offers a number of scholarship opportunities for outstanding students in the M.Div., M.A.C.E., and Dual programs. These awards are made to students who show genuine promise for exceptional leadership in the life of the church, demonstrated by excellent academic achievement and participation in the common life of their churches and/or communities. Scholarships are for 100% of tuition and may include an additional grant.
- PROMISE FOR PARISH MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIPS These awards are made to students who show genuine promise for leadership in the life of the church, demonstrated by their participation in the common life of their churches and communities, and academic readiness for graduate study.
- Union Presbyterian Seminary is pleased to offer scholarships equal to full tuition for students in the Master of Theology program.

PRESBYTERY OF TAMPA BAY FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Presbytery of Tampa Bay offers educational scholarships to those under care. Applications are due June 1 and awards are made in July. Scholarship funds may be available at other times of the year as well. Those needing scholarship aid at other times of the year are encouraged to contact their CPM Liaison.

The CPM Scholarship Application may be found at the Presbytery of Tampa Bay web site.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES

Apollos Scholarships from the Omaha Presbyterian Foundation

Deadline: Completed applications due around April 15 each year.

ANY member of a PC(USA) congregation, nationwide, is eligible to apply.

The Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation accepts applications for Apollos Scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 or \$3,000 per semester for up to 3 years of study. Please arrange for references and transcripts to be received in the Foundation office by April 15 as well. All completed applications will be forwarded to the selection committee following verification of status as Inquirer or Candidate with the CPM of their Presbytery, and as a full-time student making progress toward an MDiv degree. Announcement of scholarship recipients is made on or about August 1 each year. In the 60 years since the Foundation began financial support for seminarians, about 70 students from Columbia Theological Seminary have benefited from loans (early years) and scholarships (since 1992).

<https://omahapresbyterianseminaryfoundation.org/opportunities-financial-support/apollos-seminary-scholarships/>

Synod of South Atlantic

Robert Olan Spencer Memorial Fund. Presbytery Commissions identify Inquirers or Candidates currently in seminary M.Div programs to receive \$500. Contact CPM for current information.

<<http://synodofsouthatlantic.org/available-grants/>>

The Spencer Grant deadline is December 3, 2019. The grant deadline for all others is November 19, 2019.

SEE WEBSITE for newly announced programs.

Theological Education Fund (PCUSA Presbyterian Foundation)

The Theological Education Fund is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s best hope of ensuring the church of Christ is prepared to serve long into the future. The fund is housed at the Presbyterian Foundation and is the sole source of denomination-wide funding for seminaries from the PC(USA).

Website: <<https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/tef/>>

The Eugene Carson Blake Scholarship

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been invited to nominate a PCUSA student for the Scholarship (note: this is based at Boston University School of Theology of The United Methodist Church). Priority will be given to students under 40 who have at least an undergraduate degree in theology or two years of a Master of Divinity/Theology. Download application instructions to be nominated for the Scholarship and submit materials to Melissa in the Office of Ecumenical Relations to be considered. For more information contact Melissa Davis at Melissa.Davis@pcusa.org or 502-569-5037. Deadline is November 30.

See also:

<https://www.history.pcusa.org/blog/eugene-carson-blake-arrested-July-4-1963>

and

<https://www.pcusa.org/news/2016/5/27/new-life-breathed-eugene-carson-blake-scholarship/>

Fund for Theological Education *Fund Finder*

The Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) is a leadership incubator that inspires young people to make a difference in the world through Christian communities. See <http://fteleaders.org/about>. They maintain the list: [Fund for Theological Education Fund Finder](http://www.thefund.org/fundfinder). Also linked as [<http://www.thefund.org/fundfinder>](http://www.thefund.org/fundfinder)

Finaid, the smart student guide to financial aid

[Finaid](http://www.finaid.org) is a general financial aid information page that contains a comprehensive guide about types of financial aid. See [<http://www.finaid.org>](http://www.finaid.org).

Military Veterans

There are many types of education grants available, including the “Forever G. I. Bill” awards; See: [<https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>](https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/).

When seminary studies are concluded

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has recently secured and organized financial resources for helping Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and other staff leaders such as Certified Christian Educators, so that post-seminary debt can be reduced or eliminated.

The program is expanding nationwide following a pilot in North Carolina in 2016-2017.

See the December, 2018 press release:

[<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/bop-receives-lilly-grant-to-expand-healthy-pastors-healthy-congregations/>](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/bop-receives-lilly-grant-to-expand-healthy-pastors-healthy-congregations/)

PC(USA) Seminary Debt Assistance Program

The Seminary Debt Assistance Program was established to relieve some of the financial pressures of newly ordained pastors as they enter the ministry. As you will see from the attached program description, the program’s guidelines restrict the grants to pastors who are members of the Board’s Benefit Plan and serving small congregations as full time installed pastors. Please note that while the name of the program is the Seminary Debt Assistance Program, we do consider the educational debt acquired while attending an undergraduate college as eligible for consideration under this program. So, the program can address more than educational debt acquired while in seminary. Website: [<http://www.pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/give-and-receive/assistance-program/minister-educational-debt-assistance-grants>](http://www.pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/give-and-receive/assistance-program/minister-educational-debt-assistance-grants)

Description:

http://www.ctsnet.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Seminary_Debt_Asst_0416.pdf

Transformational Leadership Debt Assistance (post-seminary)

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/financialaid/loans/transformational-leadership-debt-assistance/>

CAREER-LONG FINANCIAL WELLNESS

There are especially valuable resources from the Board of Pensions, PC(USA), that people considering a calling in the church should have in mind from the very start of their studies, and right on through all of the stages of discernment, call, service, and retirement:

<http://www.pensions.org/for-seminarians-and-candidates>

<http://www.pensions.org/for-ministers>

*Latest update: June 2019

Appendix C: Field Education Evaluations for Non-PC(USA) Seminaries

A written field education evaluation shall be submitted to the CPM chair for each unit of field education completed. Both students and the student's field education supervisor at each field education site are asked to complete this written evaluation. It is the student's responsibility to ask their supervisor to complete this, using the guidelines on the following pages. If an inquirer/candidate is using CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) as a unit of field education, please submit the CPE Final Evaluation to the CPM Chair.

Field education evaluation guidelines are found on the following pages.

Student's Evaluation: Field Education (approximately 3 – 5 pages)

To complete the field education requirement, the CPM requests an evaluation of your experience. A field education student evaluation should include:

“The stats” (how many times you had an opportunity to preach, which church activities you have led or been involved in, etc),

In addition, please rank how effective you feel you have been (not effective, somewhat effective, effective, exceptionally effective) in the following areas. Please offer examples.

- How do you feel you have functioned as a pastoral caregiver (such as listening without personal agenda, accepting differences, ease in one-on-one relationships and group relationships, responding with empathy, showing appropriate initiative in responding to pastoral needs)?
- How do you feel you have functioned as a worship leader and preacher (such as worship planning, leading public prayer, appropriate use of grammar, inclusive language, voice quality in leading worship and preaching, faithful interpretation of texts, sermon organization and clarity, sermon relevance)? Have you functioned as a worship leader/preacher in other locations? Please describe this.
- How do you feel you have functioned as a teacher (such as clarity of goals and objectives, selecting age-appropriate materials, concepts, and teaching methods, leading group discussions in a purposeful way)?
- How have you identified social and community issues and related these to biblical and theological insights, identified with caring for needy persons in the community, and enabled the church community to participate in the ministry of the community and the world?
- How have you functioned as a leader and administrator (such as empowering lay leadership, accepting and learning from critique, exercising authority in appropriate ways, making positive contributions with groups and committees? Can you demonstrate awareness of an understanding of the institutional structure?
- Please discuss your personal work habits (being prepared, dependability, punctuality, completing tasks). In addition, discuss how you have allowed time for: development of a disciplined spiritual growth, study, family and friends, time for yourself. Can you identify the institutional structure and who holds what authority?

Finally, please share what you learned about yourself in terms of strengths and growing edges as a result of this field education experience.

9/2019

Supervisor’s Evaluation: Field Education (2-5 pages)

To complete the field education requirement, the CPM requests the following from you, as a field education supervisor for: _____

A field ed supervisory evaluation should include:

“The stats” (how many times the student had an opportunity to preach, which church activities they have led or been involved in, etc),

Also, could you please rank the student (not effective, somewhat effective, effective, exceptionally effective) and give a few examples for the following:

- How the student has functioned as a pastoral care-giver (such as listening without personal agenda, accepting differences, ease in one-on-one relationships and group relationships, responding with empathy, showing appropriate initiative in responding to pastoral needs).
- How the student has functioned as a worship leader and preacher (such as worship planning, leading public prayer, appropriate use of grammar, inclusive language, voice quality in leading worship and preaching, faithful interpretation of texts, sermon organization and clarity, sermon relevance).
- How the student has functioned as a teacher (such as clarity of goals and objectives, selecting age-appropriate materials, concepts, and teaching methods, leading group discussions in a purposeful way, etc).
- How the student identifies social and community issues and relates these to biblical and theological insights, identifies with caring for needy persons in the community, enables church community to participate in the ministry of the community and the world, etc.
- How the student has functioned as a leader and administrator (such as empowering lay leadership, accepting and learning from critique, exercising authority in appropriate ways, making positive contributions with groups and committees, etc.) Can the student demonstrate awareness of an understanding of the institutional structure?
- How you see the students personal work habits (development of a disciplined spiritual growth, managing time for work, study, family/friends, and self, being prepared, being dependable, completing tasks, being punctual, etc.)

Finally, please share what you see as the student’s strengths and growing edges, and the gains you have seen the student make since beginning their field education at your church. The CPM is looking at how the student’s experience has been part of their formation and what has been learned, and revealed.

9/2019