

Congratulations on becoming an inquirer in Foothills Presbytery. We are blessed to have you under our care as the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). We look forward to partnering with you as we discern what God is calling us to be and to do. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the general steps and responsibilities of the ordination process.

The first two steps are distinct phases where you progress in listening to and responding to God's potential call for you to ministry. **The *Book of Order* requires that Inquiry and Candidacy together last at least two years, one year of which must consist of candidacy, (G- 2.0601).** The last two steps are procedural in nature and serve to certify you for a call in the Presbyterian Church (USA) as discussed below.

1. Inquiry

The purpose of the inquiry phase is for you and your Church to explore various aspects of the ordered ministry of Teaching Elder. You will need to fill out Forms 1A-D as well as 2B. These forms require that you be endorsed by the session of the congregation of which you are a member. (You can find this form and all necessary forms for the ordination process at the following link:

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process>).

It cannot be overemphasized that strong communication between you and your session is important during the whole ordination process.

After your session endorsement and after completing the required paperwork, you will appear before CPM. If you are approved by the CPM, the presbytery will officially vote to enroll you as an inquirer at its next stated meeting.

Once you become an inquirer, the CPM will appoint a liaison to assist you. The liaison's responsibility is to be a helpful resource for you throughout the ordination process. You should feel comfortable going to your liaison should you need advice in the ordination process or someone to be a sounding board to any issue you encounter as a part of the care process.

Before inquiry, you will also need to: 1) complete a psychological evaluation through the Ministry Development Services <http://www.ministryds.org> or an approved counseling center 2) provide transcripts showing graduation at a regionally accredited college or university and seminary; and 3) take the Bible Content Exam.

2. Candidacy

The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation necessary to be a Teaching Elder. In order to become a candidate, you will need to fill out forms 5A-D, which again require session endorsement. Upon session endorsement and completing the required paperwork, you will appear before the CPM.

In addition to the forms, you will also need to provide written responses to the following questions. Your responses should articulate a clear understanding of Reformed theology.

- Articulate an understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to your own personal sense of call.
- Express your personal faith in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of the Reformed Tradition.

- Expound upon at least one concept from your personal faith statement (Question #2) at greater depth, explaining what your faith means about God, humanity, and their interrelationships.
- Explain what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church.
- Discuss your personal and cultural background as it relates to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, including concern for maintaining your own spiritual, physical, and mental health.
- Express your understanding of the tasks that teaching elders perform, including expression both of your specific gifts for this particular ministry and areas in which further growth is needed.

If you are endorsed by both your session and the CPM, the presbytery will vote to enroll you as a candidate at its next stated meeting. You must present a written statement of faith to the presbytery and an oral statement of call. The moderator will then open the floor for questions, which will be related to your sense of call.

Once you become a candidate, you will need to pass the standard ordination exams (Theology, Polity, Worship & Sacraments, and Exegesis), and graduate from and provide a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Your classes must include Greek & Hebrew, exegesis in Greek & Hebrew, field education, Reformed Theology, Worship & Sacraments, and Polity. In addition, Foothills Presbytery requires a unit of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education). If you are not attending a seminary of the PC(USA), you may be required to take Reformed theology, worship & sacraments, polity, and homiletics at a seminary of the PC(USA).

Annual Consultations

In addition to meeting with the CPM for approval as an inquirer and a candidate, you will also need to meet with CPM for annual consultations. You will need to complete Form 3 for this consultation. These meetings do not require session endorsement, but they are required to remain under care.

Final Assessment

After you have been a candidate for at least one year, passed the standard ordination exams, and have completed all other requirements for ordination, you will once again meet with CPM for a final assessment during which you will be certified ready to receive a call. Only after you are certified ready to receive a call may you distribute your personal information form (PIF), enter into formal conversations, and accept a call from a church or validated ministry.

We realize that the ordination process in the PC (USA) is rigorous. We hope to be an advocate for you throughout the process. Please do not hesitate to contact your liaison, CPM Co-chairs or tour Presbytery Associate Pastor should you have questions. We are here for you and desire to walk with you, support you, and pray for you as you discern God's call on your life. We firmly believe that God has started a good work in you and that God will be faithful to complete it.