

# **Policies and Procedures for New Hope Presbytery Commission on Preparation for Ministry**

**Presbytery of New Hope**

**2022 McDonald Lane, Raleigh, NC 27608**

(Revised by the CPM May 2024)

(Approved by the Presbytery of New Hope, July 2022)

This policies and procedures manual outlines the practices and requirements in the preparation for ministry process of New Hope Presbytery's Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). It has been informed and shaped by the *Book of Order* and by many years of practice and refinement by members of the CPM.

This manual refers to the following resources:

- The *Book of Order*. All practices and requirements of the CPM must adhere to the requirements of the *Book of Order*.
- The *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. All practices and requirements of the CPM have been informed by the *Advisory Handbook*. The CPM, however, has some requirements above and beyond those outlined in the *Advisory Handbook*.

Much of the information pertaining to the preparation for ministry process resides in the *Advisory Handbook*. See <https://pcusa.org/resource/advisory-handbook-preparation-ministry-church-usa> . This manual, *Policies and Procedures for New Hope Presbytery Commission on Preparation for Ministry*, seeks to provide clarity about the specific practices and requirements of the CPM in New Hope Presbytery and to outline the preparation for ministry process as defined by the New Hope Presbytery CPM.

***A glossary of terms used in this document appears on the final page.***

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1 Handbook for the Commission on Preparation for Ministry .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Statement Of Purpose .....	4
Adopting and amending this manual .....	5
Structure of the commission .....	5
Meeting dates and places .....	5
Record keeping and confidentiality.....	5
Caring for Inquirers and Candidates.....	6
Caring for Various student Situations .....	9
Seminary Debt.....	10
Training for sessions .....	10
<b>2 Handbook for Sessions.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Session’s role in the preparation process .....	11
Inquiry.....	14
Candidacy .....	16
<b>3 Handbook for Inquirers and Candidates .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Overview and timing .....	18
Planning your seminary education.....	19
Inquiry.....	21
Candidacy .....	24
Final assessment.....	25
Financial Aid .....	27
Annual Consultations .....	29
<b>4 Appendices.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Interview Questions for Inquirers .....	32
Examining Inquirers for Candidacy.....	35
For those under care of New Hope Presbytery.....	37
Description of forms used in the process.....	39
New Hope Presbytery candidate indebtedness policy.....	42
Participant contribution and coaching.....	43
<b>5 Glossary .....</b>	<b>44</b>

# 1 HANDBOOK FOR THE COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

## Statement Of Purpose

---

This policies and procedures manual is intended for use by members of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) of New Hope Presbytery to:

- provide continuity in the inquiry and candidacy process and
- give guidance when the commission must make decisions about exceptional cases.

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry exists by mandate of the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): "... guiding the preparation of those preparing to become teaching elders..." (G-3.0301).

The purpose of the CPM is defined in section G-2.0601 of the *Book of Order*:

*It is important that those who are to be ordained as teaching elders receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the presbytery. For this purpose, a presbytery shall enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become teaching elders and with their sessions and congregations. This relationship shall be divided into the two phases of inquiry and candidacy.*

In directing inquirers and candidates through the process of preparing for the ministry, the Commission on Preparation for Ministry has the following goals and responsibilities:<sup>1</sup>

- Supporting and guiding inquirers and candidates with understanding and sympathetic interest.
- Providing regular, open, candid, and sensitive communication and evaluation of inquirers' and candidates' progress in preparation for ministry as teaching elder, and expecting the same from inquirers and candidates.
- Providing specific written descriptions of requirements and a timeline for meeting inquirers' and candidates' responsibilities to this particular presbytery.
- Giving guidance to inquirers and candidates regarding: course of study, familiarity with the Bible and with the confessions, practical training and plans for education including the choice of institutions, field education, the inquirer's financial needs, and service to the church. Giving guidance and instruction in the faith and polity of the church.
- Receiving from inquirers and candidates regular reports concerning progress in studies and service to the church.
- Scheduling annual consultations<sup>2</sup> and other meetings with the commission with appropriate consideration of inquirers' and candidates' schedules and responsibilities and providing adequate lead time to effectively complete and return preliminary reports.
- Conducting annual consultations and preparing jointly with inquirer and candidates a written report of each consultation with copies for the Commission and the inquirers and candidates.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adopted from "Reflections on the Matter of Commission Development", January 31, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> The new Form Of Government does not require an annual consultation. New Hope Presbytery continues its policy of having annual consultations for Inquirers and Candidates.

- Examining inquirers and candidates on behalf of the Presbytery for suitability and readiness for ministry.
- Maintaining an accurate and appropriately comprehensive file of inquirers' and candidates' records and information regarding progress in preparation for ministry.
- Promptly processing requests for exceptions, transfers, and transfers of credentials as agreed to by the Commission and the inquirer or candidate.
- Providing training to and partnering with sessions to provide guidance, nurture, structure, and care of applicants, candidates, and inquirers.
- Administering financial aid available to the CPM.

## ADOPTING AND AMENDING THIS MANUAL

---

This policies and procedures manual shall be adopted and amended only by a majority vote of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

## STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION

---

The commission shall consist of three classes of ruling and teaching elders who are elected to serve three-year terms. Ruling and teaching elders shall be given equal representation on the commission.

Officers of the commission shall include: moderator (may be two co-moderators), vice-moderator, clerk, and treasurer. The Executive Presbyter shall serve as the staff resource for the commission.

Eight members present will constitute a quorum.

As CPM is a Commission of Presbytery, rather than a Committee (as it was until 2024), the CPM examines and enrolls inquirers and candidates on behalf of Presbytery, thus the dates of each transition in the process are when the Commission meets, rather than on the Presbytery dates.

## MEETING DATES AND PLACES

---

The regular meeting date of the CPM is typically the **first Thursday of each month**. The CPM ordinarily meets at the White Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1704 Oberlin Road, Raleigh, NC 27608. When appropriate, the some or all of the commission and attendees may meet using videoconferencing technology. An orientation meeting is held in January, usually on the second Thursday in January. Regular stated meetings of New Hope Presbytery are typically held during February, July, and October. Please check the presbytery website for dates, times and locations of meetings.

## RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

---

Conversations between applicants, enrollees, inquirers, candidates and the CPM are understood to be confidential. It is also understood that information shared with a shepherd will be considered information to be shared with the entire CPM.

Psychological assessments/evaluations are necessary to a complete and helpful file. Members of the CPM will treat these reports with extreme care.

In general, CPM members should retain only the files that pertain to candidates and inquirers for whom they serve as shepherd. CPM members will dispose of files, or return them to the presbytery office, when any of the following take place:

- The CPM member rotates off of the commission.
- The candidate or inquirer to whom the files pertain is no longer under care.
- The CPM member is not the shepherd of the candidate or inquirer to whom the files pertain.

## CARING FOR INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES

---

The CPM takes under its care persons who apply to become inquirers and candidates for the office of teaching elder. In caring for inquirers and candidates, the CPM assumes three major roles:

- To interview persons who apply to be enrolled as inquirers and candidates to assess their suitability and readiness for ministry.
- To conduct annual consultations with all inquirers and candidates under care of the CPM.
- To assign to each applicant, inquirer, and candidate under care of the CPM shepherds who provide individual nurture and guidance and accountability.

### 1..1 INTERVIEWS

Individuals under care of the CPM will normally have three interviews with the commission, not including annual consultations:

- To be enrolled as an inquirer.
- To be enrolled as a candidate.
- To be certified ready to receive a call (ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call.)

Persons seeking an interview with the CPM will be required to complete the necessary forms (listed in Appendix 4.5) and supply the CPM with their responses in advance of their desired appointment. Once all requirements and forms have been received by the Presbytery Office, then CPM will schedule the interview date. Interviews will not be scheduled until the required paperwork is received by CPM. Interviews are set for applicants who have their paperwork in order first. All original documentation must be typed in a minimum of 12-point font.

At each interview with the CPM, inquirers and candidates need to be assessed as to their progress in preparation for the office of teaching elder. Appendix 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 provide tools that may be used to make such assessments.

#### 1..1.1 Inquiry

The *Book of Order* defines the inquiry phase of the preparation for ministry process as follows (G-2.0603):

*The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as teaching elders to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.*

The CPM understands the inquiry phase of the preparation for ministry process to be a wide gate, a time for an individual, in concert with the session of his or her church and the presbytery, to explore the possibility that he or she may be called to serve the church as a teaching elder. The purpose of an inquiry interview is to help the CPM become acquainted with the prospective inquirer and to assess if he or she is suitable for ministry and advancement to the Candidacy phase.

At this stage in the preparation for ministry process, questions asked of inquirers focus on getting to know the inquirer better and understanding how an inquirer's emerging sense of call has grown out of his or her life of faith. Members of the commission focus especially on formulating questions from the written reports the inquirer has submitted and the psychological evaluation of the Ministry Development Services.

### **1..1.2 Candidacy**

The *Book of Order* defines the candidacy phase of this process as follows (G-2.0604):

*The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as teaching elders. This shall be accomplished through the presbytery's support, guidance, and evaluation of a candidate's fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination.*

The CPM understands the candidacy phase of the preparation for ministry process to be a much more narrow gate than the inquiry phase, a time for an individual, in concert with the session of his or her church and the presbytery, to examine the results of the inquiry phase, to consider more closely the implications for the inquirer's life of continuing to prepare for the office of teaching elder, and to begin final preparations for serving the church as a teaching elder.

### **1..1.3 Final assessment**

Becoming certified ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call is the final phase in the process of preparing for ministry of teaching elder. The *Book of Order* defines this phase in G-2.0607:

*A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a teaching elder without approval of the presbytery of care. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder shall include:*

- a. a candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;*
- b. a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;*
- c. a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and*

- d. *examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.*

In addition to the requirements outlined in the *Book of Order*, the *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, and the candidate's responses to questions on the standard PC(USA) forms, the CPM may use the following documents and evidence in making a final assessment:

- Pre-interview report (Form 3) for senior year identifying covenant agreements and responses
- Previous Annual Consultation Reports
- Inquiry, Candidacy and Final Assessment application documentation
- Field education reports
- Clinical Pastoral Education reports
- Seminary Transcripts
- Psychological assessment/evaluation report
- Ordination exams

#### 1..1.4 PROCESSING TRANSFERS

A fuller explanation on processing transfers from another presbytery of care to New Hope can be found on pages 36-37 in the Mid-Council's *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry*. In brief, the process consists of the following:

1. When an inquirer/candidate (re)locates within the bounds of New Hope Presbytery, they should look for a congregation within presbytery bounds. Before joining the congregation, they should discuss with both the session of the new congregation and CPM whether the new congregation is willing to accept the responsibility of the inquirer/candidate's care for the remainder of the process. While there is no minimum time requirement, sufficient time for the inquirer/candidate and the new congregation to build a relationship should pass so a well-considered opinion about the advisability of assuming the responsibilities for care can be considered.
2. Item 1 above should prompt discussion between New Hope's CPM and the original CPM of care, including sharing a copy of the inquirer/candidate's file (the original presbytery should maintain its originals as a permanent record of their time under care in that presbytery).
3. When all five parties (the inquirer/candidate, the two sessions, and the two presbyteries) have concurred that a transfer is in the best interest of all parties, the inquirer/candidate will first transfer congregational membership. Once the original presbytery of care is notified that the individual is no longer a member of said congregation, then the original presbytery of care will transfer the inquirer/candidate to the receiving presbytery of care.

\*Note: There is no requirement to accept an inquirer/candidate just because they are under care of another presbytery.

#### 1..2 ANNUAL CONSULTATION

In the past, the *Book of Order* mandated an annual consultation for inquirers and candidates. This is not ordered in the current Form of Government, but the New Hope Presbytery believes this is wise practice to continue.



### 1..2.1 *Schedule, location, and attendance*

Annual consultations consist of an inquirer or candidate meeting with his/her shepherd each year. The consultation may be done individually at a time and place agreeable to both the inquirer or candidate and their shepherd. Some years, the CPM may schedule a full day consultation that will include educational seminars as well as personal interviews. The CPM will make this decision early each year and will communicate how annual consultations will be conducted and the timeframe to every inquirer and candidate.

### 1.3 SHEPHERD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon first contact with an applicant for inquiry, the CPM appoints one member to be the applicant's shepherd. A shepherd's role is to encourage inquirers and candidates, to help nurture their growing sense of call, and provide prayer and support as inquirers and candidates navigate the process of preparation for ministry. Shepherds have the following responsibilities:

- To make a quarterly contact (at least) with the inquirer or candidate.
- If the candidate is taking ordination exams, to make contact with the candidate one month prior to ordination exams.
- To arrange and complete the annual consultation.
- To make a report to the inquirer's or candidate's session liaison after the inquirer or candidate has met with the CPM, including reminding the inquirer or candidate of their need to complete the Safe Gatherings training, as required by the *Book of Order*.
- As appropriate, may communicate with the session liaison on behalf of the inquirer or candidate.

## CARING FOR VARIOUS STUDENT SITUATIONS

---

### 1.4 STUDENTS PURSUING A DEGREE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In recognition of the important ministry of Christian Education, the CPM will enter into a covenant with a student who is pursuing a Master's degree in Christian Education. However, that student will not be considered an inquirer. Such a student shall be called an "enrollee." If the student determines that he or she is being called to seek ordination to the ministry, he or she is encouraged to make an application to his or her local session and to the CPM.

Enrollees are eligible for financial aid from the CPM (see section 3.6), and their names shall be kept separate from the listing of inquirers and candidates.

### 1.5 SECOND CAREER STUDENTS

The CPM is interviewing an increasing number of persons who are investigating a second career in ministry as a teaching elder. It is important that the CPM provide input and guidance for this important decision as early as possible. While many of the dynamics and implications of responding to God's call will be the same for first-career and second-career students, there are certain issues that may be of more concern to second-career students (e.g., realities about the job market, income expectations, validity of the call, etc.).

The CPM should concentrate on identifying, at the earliest possible moment, people who are considering ministry as a teaching elder, so the CPM can help them understand the realities and implications of the call

to ministry. For students still employed full time, the CPM can help the student navigate the demands that the process requirements place on them.

## SEMINARY DEBT

---

At its October 2004 meeting, New Hope Presbytery adopted a candidate indebtedness policy. This policy is included in Appendix 4.6 PCUSA Minister Educational Debt Assistance Program and at

<https://newhopepres.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/CandidateIndebtednessPolicy.pdf>

## TRAINING FOR SESSIONS

---

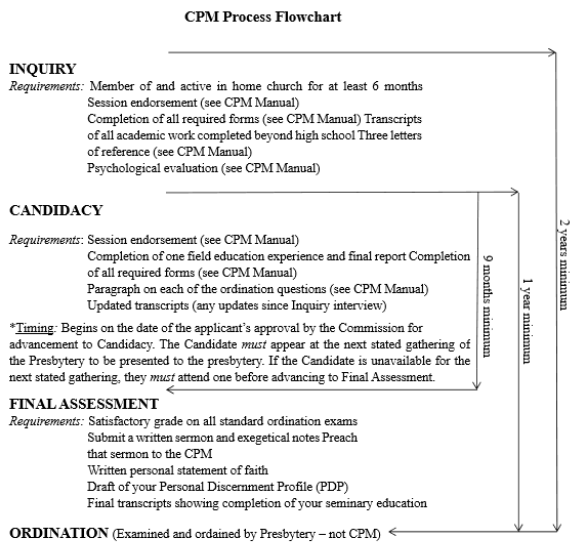
The CPM is responsible for ensuring that sessions and session liaisons are knowledgeable about the process of preparation for ministry. The CPM provides training for sessions and session liaisons in the following formats:

- By meeting with sessions and session liaisons at the request of session or when the CPM receives an inquirer or candidate.
- By providing written guidelines for session liaisons outlining what the CPM expects of inquirers and candidates. These guidelines are available in Section 2: Handbook for Sessions.

## 2 HANDBOOK FOR SESSIONS

### SESSION’S ROLE IN THE PREPARATION PROCESS

By the time you receive and read this handbook, you have already played a foundational role in the preparation for ministry process by nurturing in your congregation an understanding of God’s love and call to discipleship and by inspiring your applicant to consider that God may be calling him or her to the ministry as a teaching elder. Now that you have a member who has asked to come under care of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, you have several specific roles and responsibilities. This handbook describes the preparation for ministry process and session’s role in it. The full-sized version of this useful graphic shown below can be found at <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/qob2lm87y3r959cvg96sh/CPM-Process-Flowchart.pdf?rlkey=zu4ybljcr244ifkr0s1c3fu6g&dl=0>



**Annual Consultation** – Every Inquirer and Candidate must meet with a representative of the CPM once every year to complete an annual consultation.

- Other Requirements**
- All documentation **MUST** be complete and received by the presbytery office **NO LATER** than **ONE MONTH** prior to meeting with the CPM
  - All documentation **MUST** be in 12 point font or larger

\* Candidacy begins on the date of the Commission’s meeting at which you are received as a candidate.  
 \* All Inquirers and Candidates are required to receive Safe Gathering training every 36 months.

#### 2..1 PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS

The preparation for ministry process includes the following steps. This process is required to take at least two years, at least one of which is spent in the candidacy phase. *Note that throughout the process, by Book of Order requirement, Inquirers and Candidates shall receive Safe Gatherings training every 36 months.* It is the Shepherd’s responsibility to remind each person of their need.

- 1) Beginning the process
  - a) A member of your church who begins to sense that he or she is called to ministry as a teaching elder approaches his or her pastor for discussion, clarity, and guidance.
  - b) If your church has not had an orientation to the preparation for ministry process within one year, the CPM can meet with session for an overview of the preparation for ministry process.
- 2) Session endorsement
  - a) The applicant completes Form 1A – *Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer*, Form 1B – *Questions for Reflection* and Form 1C – *Financial Planning for Theological Education*, obtains three letters of recommendation based on *Reference Guide, Commission On Preparation For Ministry New Hope Presbytery*, and signs the *Agreement for Inquirers and Candidates Under Care of New Hope Presbytery* (see description of the forms in the appendix). The documents are submitted to session which meets with applicant to help him or her discern a call to ministry.
  - b) Session either recommends the applicant for inquiry or redirects him or her to another vocation and ministry.
  - c) If session recommends the applicant’s inquiry, it assigns one person to be a liaison between the applicant and the session. The session liaison’s role is described in section 2.2.4.
  - d) The session completes Form 1D – *Session Evaluation and Recommendation* and the applicant and the moderator of session sign New Hope Presbytery Form 2B-*Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release*.
- 3) Enrolling as an inquirer
  - a) The applicant participates in a psychological assessment to further explore his or her sense of call and gifts for ministry (CPM covers ½ of the full cost of the assessment and sessions often cover all or a portion of the applicant’s ½ of the cost.)
  - b) The applicant submits Forms 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D, New Hope Presbytery 2B, three references based on *Reference Guide, Commission On Preparation For Ministry New Hope Presbytery*, and the signed *Agreement for Inquirers and Candidates Under Care of New Hope Presbytery* to the CPM; arranges for official post-secondary transcripts (not copies) and the results of the psychological assessment/evaluation to be sent to CPM and meets with the CPM, which decides whether to enroll the member as an inquirer. When all the forms have been received by the Presbytery Office, CPM will schedule the Inquirer interview.
  - c) If approved, the inquirer and the CPM complete Form 2A – *Report of Consultation Regarding Application* and New Hope Presbytery Form 2B – *Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release*.
  - d) During the inquiry phase, the inquirer begins his or her seminary education, and attends annual consultation(s) with the CPM.
- 4) Enrolling as a candidate
  - a) After discerning that he or she is ready to become a candidate for teaching elder, the inquirer completes Form 5A – *Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate* and prepares the following *Required Candidacy Application Documents*:
    - i) A statement of his or her understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed Tradition and how it relates to his or her sense of call;
    - ii) A statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed Tradition;
    - iii) An analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity and their interrelationships;

- iv) A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian in the PC(USA), indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
  - v) A statement of self-understanding which reflects the Inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical and mental health;
  - vi) A statement of his or her understanding of the tasks teaching elders perform, including an awareness of his or her specific gifts for pastoral ministry and areas in which growth is needed;
  - vii) A short paragraph on each of the nine ordination questions (W-4.4003) explaining what your assent to that specific question will mean to you as you daily serve God as a teaching elder.
- b) Meets with session to review his or her progress in preparation for ministry, discuss his or her seminary experience, and help further discern a call to ministry as a teaching elder.
  - c) The inquirer submits Form 5A and the *Required Candidacy Application Documents* to CPM.
  - d) The inquirer arranges to have the most recent official transcript sent to the CPM from the theological institution.
  - e) The inquirer meets with the CPM to review the results of inquiry.
  - f) If CPM discerns suitability, CPM enrolls him or her as candidate.
  - g) At the next possible Presbytery meeting, the Candidate shall present his or her statement of Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry. If the Candidate is unable to be present at the next possible Presbytery meeting, the Candidate shall attend a meeting before advancing to Final Assessment.
  - h) During the candidacy phase, the candidate completes his or her seminary education, completes ordination exams, and attends annual consultation(s) with the CPM.
- 5) Final assessment
- a) Near the end of the year of candidacy, and when the candidate has completed or is nearing completion of his or her seminary education, he or she can apply to the CPM to be certified ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. If certified, the candidate can begin circulating a Personal Discernment Profile (PDP) and can be examined for ordination upon receiving a call.

## 2..2 SESSION'S ROLE IN DISCERNING A CALL

The Session of the inquirer's home church is in the best position to help a member discern a call to ordained ministry. This church will continue to nurture the inquirer in the faith and help discern a sense of call through activity in the church's particular ministries. It is important to discern whether they seem to have the proper motivation and gifts for ministry.

A Session's first and greatest responsibility in the process of preparation for ministry is to take very seriously its role in recommending inquirers and candidates to the CPM. It is an awesome responsibility and can be filled with great joy or great disappointment. You need to be prepared to support both those whom you recommend and those whom you redirect with love, encouragement, and respect.

## 2..3 SPIRITUAL SUPPORT OF INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES

There are many ways you can support inquirers and candidates:

- Pray for them. List inquirers and candidates in your newsletter and worship bulletins and encourage your congregation to pray for them daily.

- Keep them in touch with the church. Be sure to send them church newsletters. Invite them regularly to participate in worship as liturgists and preachers. Invite them to session meetings and encourage them to share their seminary experience. Ask them to write to the church through the newsletter to update the congregation on their education and preparation.
- Recognize each milestone in the preparation process by offering a special prayer or liturgy of celebration in worship.
- Remember them when they are away. Send care packages, Christmas gifts, or birthday cards. Be mindful of mid-term and final exam schedules. Offer extra encouragement and support as they prepare for ordination exams.
- Support their families. If an inquirer or candidate has a spouse or children, remember them with cards and letters.

#### 2..4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES

Support your inquirers and candidates financially as much as possible. Most seminarians have incurred tremendous debt by the time they graduate. In many cases seminary debt is disproportionate to the income pastors can expect to earn in their first years of ministry. By supporting your inquirers and candidates generously, you can help to minimize the amount of debt with which they begin their ministries.

Some specific ways that you can provide financial support for inquirers and candidates include:

- Paying for the psychological assessment that is a required step in the preparation for ministry process.
- Providing tuition support. You can send this support to your inquirer or candidate or send it directly to the seminary.
- Helping to pay for books.
- Contributing to the 1% Theological Fund for PC(USA) seminaries.

## INQUIRY

---

#### 2..5 ELIGIBILITY

A person who requests session's recommendation for inquiry must have been a member of your church for at least six months (G-2.0602). If the person has never before been affiliated with a PC (USA) church, we recommend that membership in a PC (USA) congregation be at least two years before applying for inquiry.<sup>3</sup>

#### 2..6 SESSION ORIENTATION

On request from the session, or at the discretion of the CPM, the CPM will send a representative to orient session to the preparation for ministry process.

---

<sup>3</sup> 1994 Minutes of the Presbytery of New Hope.

## 2..7 INTERVIEWING AN APPLICANT FOR INQUIRY<sup>4</sup>

The session has the awesome responsibility of deciding whether or not to commend to Presbytery members of the congregation who seek to be ordained to the ministry as a teaching elder. While the session needs to remember that these people are in the first steps of preparation and not “finished products,” it is important to determine whether they seem to have the potential to fulfill this occupational pursuit. Some questions you can ask yourself to make this determination are:

- Does the person’s faith enlighten life or obscure it? (Does faith build bridges or walls?)
- Does the inner sense of call seem real to you, and healthy? (Is it a call to care for God’s people, as opposed to a sense of guilt or a magical mission that sets the person above all other people?) Is it consistent with the person’s external life?
- Does the person have the talents to be a teaching elder? For instance, a good speaking voice, a bright mind, a compassionate presence, a searching intellect, a genuine affection for people, a love for the church?
- Would you be pleased to have this person be your pastor? Granted, there is a long journey ahead for the applicant before ordination, but you ought to be able to assume that when the journey is completed, you could accept, with enthusiasm, this person as your pastor.

Session is requested to answer the following questions to submit to CPM on Form 1D – *Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as Inquirer*:

- What personal qualities are evidence of a healthy and vital faith in God through Jesus Christ?
- How is that faith currently being expressed through the individual’s participation in the worship, life, and mission of this congregation?
- What motivations, whether positive or negative, impel the sense of call? Service to God and the world? Compassion for God’s children? Guilt? A need for power and status?
- What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this individual (e.g., the ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, leadership or administrative abilities)?
- What is the level and adequacy of the individual’s academic interest, leadership skills, cross-cultural competencies, emotional intelligence, and motivations?
- What is the evidence of his or her physical health and stamina?
- What is this evidence of his or her emotional well-being?
- What is the evidence of his or her self-discipline?
- Does the individual have a reasonable plan to finance his or her theological education?

These questions are designed to assist the session both to dialogue with an applicant and to evaluate the person’s natural gifts for ministry, quality of commitment, strength of motivation, and potential for growth.

Since an applicant is a member of the church and known by the session there may be a tendency to approach the initial interview with a “d’jà vu” mindset. This attitude and approach should be avoided at all cost. The session interview is the most important first step in the denomination’s process for determining

---

<sup>4</sup> From “Guidelines For Session Interview With Applicant” by Rev. William King, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison, Wisconsin, 1989; rev. by Preparation for Ministry Office, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Jan. 2002

who is to enter into covenant relationship with God and the Church to prepare to become a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The session must decide whether to endorse or not endorse an applicant for enrolment as an inquirer. Elders must keep in mind the serious implications of their assessments and recommendations regarding enrollment as they are ultimately determining future Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) leadership to serve the whole denomination. Such assessments and recommendations should be undertaken with prayer, compassion, intelligence, faith, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

## 2.8 APPOINTING A SESSION LIAISON

Upon recommending a member to apply for inquiry, session is to appoint a session liaison, who will be the applicant's link to the session.

The session liaison must be:

- An elder.
- A person who knows the inquirer or candidate.
- Ideally, someone who will be able to see the inquirer through the entire process.
- Someone who will take his or her role seriously.

The session liaison is responsible for:

- Knowing the steps in the process of preparation for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (See G-2.06).
- Supporting the inquirer or candidate and ensuring care on a continuous basis.
  - Being proactive in their communications and relationships with inquirers and candidates; maintaining communication with the inquirer or candidate on a monthly basis while that individual is in seminary, including information about financial support.
  - Functioning as a contact person for the inquirer or candidate with the session.
  - Motivating the supporting congregation by highlighting significant academic and life achievements of the inquirer or candidate in the newsletter, bulletin, etc.
  - Providing special gifts for the inquirer or candidate and family.
  - Communicating concerns about the inquirer or candidate to the CPM.
- Advocating for the inquirer or candidate, being a friend in this shared ministry, as necessary with a spirit of openness to the CPM process.

## CANDIDACY

---

### 2.9 ELIGIBILITY

When an inquirer is ready to move to the candidacy phase (usually near the end of his or her second year of seminary), he or she contacts and meets with the session for its recommendation. The CPM of New Hope Presbytery requires that inquirers complete at least one field education experience (either Clinical Pastoral Education or a placement in a PC(USA) congregation) before applying for candidacy.



## 2..10 INTERVIEWING AN APPLICANT FOR CANDIDACY

An inquirer applies for candidacy by completing form 5A – *Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate* and prepares the following *Required Candidacy Application Documents*:

- A statement of his or her understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to his or her sense of call;
- A statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the reformed tradition;
- An analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationships;
- A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian in the PC (USA), indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
- A statement of self-understanding which reflects the inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
- A statement of his or her understanding of the task teaching elders perform, including an awareness of his or her specific gifts for ministry as a teaching elder and of areas in which growth is needed.
- A short paragraph on each of the nine ordination questions (W-4.4003) explaining what your assent to that specific question will mean to you as you daily serve God as a teaching elder.

Session should review these statements carefully with the inquirer. Some questions you might consider asking are listed in Appendix 4.2.

Session is to complete Form 5B-*Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as a Candidate* and attach a letter explaining rationale for the session's action in light of the inquirer's "suitability for ministry" (G-2.0603). The applicant and the Moderator of Session and witnesses sign New Hope Presbytery Form 5D – *Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release*.

## 3 HANDBOOK FOR INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES

### OVERVIEW AND TIMING

#### 3..1 OVERVIEW AND TIMING OF THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY PROCESS

The process of preparation for ministry is defined in the *Book of Order* and in the *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* (<https://pcusa.org/resource/advisory-handbook-preparation-ministry-church-usa> )

- Inquiry Phase (G-2.0603)
- Candidacy Phase (G-2.0604)
- Final Assessment (G-2.0607)

You need to read and understand these requirements as early as possible in your ordination process.

#### 3..2 TIMING YOUR APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

If you are in seminary and would like to be able to circulate your PDP by the time you graduate, you need to be mindful of the timing of this process. Because the candidacy phase of the preparation for ministry process is required to be one year, you need to carefully plan the date of your application for candidacy.

#### ***Interviews are scheduled in this way:***

- Paperwork must be received by the Presbytery office a minimum of one month in advance of the desired interview date
- Slots for interviews are first-come, first-served. Slots may be limited.
- Once all the paperwork is in order, the Presbytery office will communicate the date for the interview
- No interviews are conducted in January

#### 3..3 EXPECTATIONS OF THE CPM

##### 3..3.1 *Mutual professionalism*

Your paperwork, interviews, and annual consultations with the CPM are part of your professional development. When corresponding with the CPM or attending meetings and annual consultations, please remember to present yourself professionally. The CPM is committed to treating all inquirers and candidates with professionalism and respect and we expect the same from those who are under our care.

##### 3..3.2 *Confidentiality*

Conversations between applicants, enrollees, inquirers, candidates and the CPM are understood to be confidential. It is also understood that information shared with a shepherd will be considered information to be shared with the entire CPM.

Psychological assessments/evaluations are necessary to a complete and helpful file. Members of the CPM will treat these reports with extreme care and dispose of them appropriately when the process is terminated or completed.

### 3..3.3 Deadlines

An applicant, inquirer or candidate who desires to schedule an appointment or interview with CPM must submit all paperwork (forms, testing, information, recommendations, etc.) in order to schedule an appointment. Paperwork must be submitted at least one month before a desired interview date. Interview appointments are limited and are scheduled for applicants who submit completed paperwork first. All original documentation must be typed in a minimum of 12-point font. The CPM generally meets on the first Thursday of each month. Please contact the moderator of the CPM if you have any questions about when your paperwork is due.

## PLANNING YOUR SEMINARY EDUCATION

---

As an inquirer or candidate under care of New Hope Presbytery, you are subject to educational requirements of the PC(USA), your theological institution, and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry. These requirements may or may not coincide with each other. It is your responsibility to ensure that your education meets the requirements of:

- The PC(USA) *Book of Order* section G-2.0607c.
- The PC(USA) as defined in the *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* available at <https://pcusa.org/resource/advisory-handbook-preparation-ministry-church-usa>
- Your theological institution.
- The CPM of New Hope Presbytery.

### 3..4 REQUIREMENTS OF THE PC(USA)

The education requirements for preparation for the office teaching elder are described in the *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* and include courses in

- Greek
- Hebrew
- Old Testament exegesis
- New Testament exegesis

### 3..5 REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

All inquirers and candidates will typically be required to complete satisfactorily a minimum of one basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and a supervised internship in a PC(USA) congregation. One of these must be satisfactorily completed before an inquirer will be eligible to apply for candidacy. Waivers will be granted only at the discretion of the CPM.

All inquirers and candidates will be required to pass seminary courses in the following subjects through a PC (USA) seminary or, exceptionally, with a teacher approved by the CPM:

- PC (USA) polity
- Reformed theology
- Preaching/Homiletics
- All inquirers and candidates are also required to complete a seminary course or undertake intentional instruction in the area of Reformed worship and sacraments as approved by the CPM.

### 3..6 CPE AND SACRAMENTS

An issue that nearly all candidates and inquirers face during their unit of CPE is how to handle requests from patients for the administration of the sacraments. These requests can come during the ordinary process of caring for patients or during times of emergency and crisis.

Current PC(USA) polity and theology do not allow for chaplains who have not been ordained to administer the sacraments and you need to discuss strategies for arranging for the services of a teaching elder with your CPE supervisor. The CPM does not have the authority to authorize you to do so on behalf of presbytery. Any suggestion in the *Book of Order* that an elder might be authorized to preside at Lord's Supper is intended for use in a parish setting under supervision of a teaching elder.

Sometimes emergencies happen and there is no time to make any other arrangements. Situations like these call for a great deal of careful discernment and guidance from the Holy Spirit—again with help from your CPE supervisor. The CPM encourages you to discuss this issue with your supervisor early in your CPE unit so that should you find yourself the only chaplain available when an emergency happens and you are called upon to administer a sacrament, you will have reflected and prepared yourself so that you can use your best judgment. Times like these offer fertile ground for deep theological reflection on the nature of the sacraments, the nature of ordained and lay ministry, and the nature of grace in times of doubt and uncertainty.

### 3..7 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

In addition to the requirements of the PC(USA) and the CPM, outlined above, it is also strongly recommended that inquirers and candidates have course work or educational experiences in the following areas:

- Reformed creeds and confessions
- Ordination exam preparation in the form of a class, study group, or tutorial courses in these subjects may be beneficial for preparing for ordination exams.

The CPM does not have a policy prohibiting the use of pass/fail designation for classes taken as a part of the Master of Divinity program. However, it is expected that inquirers and candidates will use extreme discretion in this matter and use no more than three total. It is also expected that such choices be used for core courses (languages, theology, or biblical exegesis) only in consultation with the CPM.

### 3..8 NON-PC (USA) SEMINARIES

The clear desire of the denomination and New Hope Presbytery is for all those under care of the CPM complete their education at a PC (USA) seminary. In the past, the Presbytery has mandated at least half of one's seminary education be completed at a PC (USA) seminary. This is still the desire.

Recognizing that seminarians today have various constraints that cause this to be a hardship, and recognizing that online education at PC (USA) seminaries is available widely, the requirements are now summarized in this table:

### Summary of Requirements and Recommendations

Requirement	Origin	Primary Way to Satisfy**	Alternative Ways
Greek and Hebrew	PC (USA)	PC(USA) Seminary; Approved alternate seminary class	Other class approved by CPM
Old and New Testament Exegesis	PC (USA)	PC(USA) Seminary; Approved alternate seminary class	Other class approved by CPM
One Unit of CPE	Presbytery of New Hope CPM	Certified CPE program	Very exceptionally, an alternative approved by CPM
PC (USA) Polity	Presbytery of New Hope CPM	PC(USA) Seminary; Approved alternate seminary class	Independent study; Online from a PC (USA) Seminary
Reformed Theology	Presbytery of New Hope CPM	PC(USA) Seminary; Approved alternate seminary class	Online from a PC (USA) Seminary
Preaching / Homiletics	Presbytery of New Hope CPM	PC(USA) Seminary; Approved alternate seminary class	Online from a PC (USA) Seminary
Reformed Worship and Sacraments	Presbytery of New Hope CPM	PC(USA) Seminary; Approved alternate seminary class	Online from a PC (USA) Seminary
Reformed Creeds and Confessions (not required, but recommended)	Presbytery of New Hope CPM	PC(USA) Seminary; Approved alternate seminary class	Online from a PC (USA) Seminary
Ordination Exam Prep Class (not required, but recommended)	Recommended by the Presbytery of New Hope CPM	Any source	Independent study
<b>**For those <u>not</u> enrolled at a PC (USA) seminary, please consult with your shepherd immediately to line up the appropriate alternatives.</b>			

As with all requirements, exceptional cases must be approved by the CPM.

## INQUIRY

The process for applying for inquiry and the requirements of the inquiry stage of the preparation for ministry process are outlined in the *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. Please read and become thoroughly familiar with this process and these requirements. You also might want to begin familiarizing yourself with some of the terms involved in the preparation for ministry process.

### 3.9 APPLYING FOR INQUIRY

#### 3.9.1 Requirements for inquiry

Before you can apply to be an inquirer, you need to secure the recommendation of your church's session. You must have been a member of your church for 6 months prior to applying for inquiry status.

#### 3.9.2 Contact your pastor or session

The first step in the inquiry process is to contact your pastor and inform him or her of your intentions to apply for inquiry. Your pastor then needs to arrange for you to meet with session for their recommendation. See sections on Training for sessions and Handbook for Sessions, above, for information on Session orientation and responsibilities.

#### 3.9.3 Meeting with session

Before meeting with session, you need to complete Form 1A – *Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer*, Form 1B – *Questions for Reflection* and Form 1C – *Financial Planning for Theological Education*. Obtain three letters of reference, including someone from your church, a former employer, and a peer or former professor or school administrator. Read and sign the *Agreement for Inquirers and Candidates Under Care of New Hope Presbytery*. Make a copy of the forms and letters for your records, and submit the forms to your church's clerk of session. The session completes Form 1D – *Session Evaluation and Recommendation*. You, the moderator of session and witnesses sign New Hope Presbytery Form 2B – *Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release*. All materials should be in 12-point font.

#### 3.9.4 Your session liaison

During your interview with session, session is to appoint a liaison to represent you and your needs and concerns to the session during your inquiry and candidacy. Your session liaison may accompany you to your interview with the CPM. Your session liaison is your link to your church while you are attending seminary and preparing for ministry. Your session and your session liaison have been informed of their obligations to you while you are under care of New Hope Presbytery. Please rely on your session liaison and keep in close contact with him or her while you are preparing for ministry. Should you need financial support from your church, you might make this known to your session liaison.

### 3.10 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Before meeting with the CPM for your inquiry interview, you need to participate in a psychological assessment. To arrange for this assessment, contact Ministry Development Services at:

Ministry Development Services  
P.O. Box 2634  
Indian Trail, NC 28079-2634  
Tel: (704) 554-9222  
Website: [www.MinistryDS.org](http://www.MinistryDS.org)

Be aware that this report becomes part of your formal records. It is the basis for discussion at your Inquiry interview and may also be reviewed at your Candidacy interview.

There is a fee for this service, and you are responsible for one-half of it. One-half of the cost is billed directly to the CPM. It is recommended that your church help with paying for the other half.

This assessment/evaluation will not be received by the CPM if it is more than 2 years old at the time of your interview.<sup>5</sup>

### 3..11 MEETING WITH THE CPM

#### 3..11.1 Requirements of the CPM

You need to provide the CPM the following to schedule an interview. Paperwork must be submitted **at least one month** before your desired interview date:

- Forms 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D and New Hope Presbytery Form 2B.
- A signed *Agreement for Inquirers and Candidates Under Care of New Hope Presbytery*.
- Three letters of reference based on the *Reference Guide, Commission On Preparation For Ministry, New Hope Presbytery*, including someone from your church, a former employer, and a peer or former professor or school administrator.
- Official transcripts of all academic work completed beyond high school from the educational institution(s) (not copies).
- A psychological assessment/evaluation by Ministry Development Services (see Psychological Assessment/Evaluation, above).

These documents must be sent to the CPM by either email or by US postal service (please do not send multiple copies.) Email is to be sent to Christine Kelson in the Presbytery office at: [ckelson@nhpresbytery.org](mailto:ckelson@nhpresbytery.org). The mailing address is: Commission on Preparation for Ministry, Presbytery of New Hope, 2022 McDonald Lane, Raleigh, NC 27608.

When you meet with the CPM for your inquiry interview, our main goal will be to get to know you better and to help you discern and better understand your sense of call. Prior to your interview, members of the CPM will have read your paperwork. Many of our questions will be follow-ups to the paperwork you submit to the CPM.

In addition to answering the questions on the standard PC(USA) forms, you should also be prepared to answer questions like those listed in Interview Questions for Inquirers in the Appendix.

#### 3..11.2 Your CPM shepherd

Soon after you contact the CPM to apply for inquiry, you will be assigned a shepherd, a member of the CPM who will maintain regular contact with you, will pray for you during your preparation for ministry, and will be available to you to answer questions and help guide you through the process. Please do not hesitate to contact your shepherd whenever you have questions or need any particular guidance about the preparation for ministry process.

---

<sup>5</sup> Minutes, Commission on Preparation for Ministry, April 5, 2012.

### 3..11.3 *Safe Gatherings*

By requirement of the *Book of Order*, once you are enrolled as an Inquirer, you must receive Safe Gatherings training and renew your training every 36 months.

## CANDIDACY

---

### 3..12 APPLYING FOR CANDIDACY

#### 3..12.1 *Requirements for candidacy*

Before applying for candidacy you must successfully complete at least one field education placement (either CPE or a supervised placement in a PC(USA) congregation approved by your seminary or the CPM). Send the CPM a copy of your field education evaluation from this experience.

#### 3..12.2 *Meeting with session*

As with applying for inquiry, before you can apply to the CPM for candidacy, you need to meet with your church's session and obtain their recommendation. Complete Form 5A – *Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate* and prepare the following materials as *Required Candidacy Application Documents*:

- A statement of his or her understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to his or her sense of call;
- A statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the reformed tradition;
- An analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationships;
- A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian in the PC (USA), indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
- A statement of self-understanding which reflects the inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
- A statement of his or her understanding of the task teaching elders perform, including an awareness of his or her specific gifts for ministry as a teaching elder and of areas in which growth is needed.
- A short paragraph on each of the nine ordination questions (W-4.4003) explaining what your assent to that specific question will mean to you as you daily serve God as a teaching elder.

Session completes Form 5B – *Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as a Candidate* and submits Form 5B to the CPM. You, the moderator of session and witnesses sign New Hope Presbytery Form 5D – *Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release*.

Arrange to have your theological institution send your current official transcript to the CPM (not a copy).

#### 3..12.3 *Submitting candidacy papers*

Send forms 5A, 5B and New Hope Presbytery 5D, along with your written *Required Candidacy Application Documents* and a copy of your field education evaluation to the CPM at the Presbytery Office in Raleigh. When all the forms have been received by the Presbytery Office, CPM will schedule the Candidacy interview. Appointment times are limited and will be set for applicants who submit completed paperwork first.



When you meet with the CPM for your candidacy interview, we will be interested in exploring more deeply your understanding of your vocation, your gifts for ministry, the results of your preparation to this point, and your understanding of the Reformed tradition. Prior to your interview, members of the CPM will have read your paperwork. Many of our questions will be follow-ups to the paperwork you submit to the CPM.

In addition to answering the questions about the statements you submit with your application for candidacy, you should also be prepared to answer questions like those listed in Appendix 4.2.

### 3..13 PRESENTATION TO PRESBYTERY

If you are enrolled as a candidate, you will need to appear on the floor of presbytery to be introduced. This presentation consists of presbytery hearing you speak for three minutes on the following topics:

- Your Christian faith
- Your forms of Christian service undertaken
- Your motives for seeking the ministry

This statement must be limited to 3 minutes or less, so it is imperative that you write it down and practice saying it out loud. The fact that we are limiting you to 3 minutes does not mean that presbytery is not interested in your full faith story; it just means that presbytery trusts the CPM to have already worked through that with you.

The Presbytery will then offer you a blessing and charge. You may invite your pastor to deliver the charge to candidates, but it is usually done by the CPM Moderator. You will receive complete instructions for this meeting from the CPM moderator after the CPM has enrolled you as a candidate. If you are unable to attend the next Presbytery meeting, you need to alert the CPM (co)moderators. You must attend a Presbytery gathering before you advance to Final Assessment.

### 3..14 SAFE GATHERINGS

By requirement of the *Book of Order*, if a Candidate has not renewed their Safe Gatherings training within the last 36 months, they must renew their training.

## FINAL ASSESSMENT

---

Becoming certified ready to receive a call is the final phase in the process of preparing for ministry of teaching elder. The *Book of Order* defines this phase in G-2.0607:

*A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a teaching elder without approval of the presbytery of care. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder shall include:*

- a. *a candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;*
- b. *a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;*

- c. *a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and*
- d. *examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.*

### **3..14 APPLYING FOR FINAL ASSESSMENT**

#### **3..14.1 Requirements for final assessment**

Before applying for final assessment, you must have met the following requirements:

- Typically, been a candidate for at least nine months.
- Completed both CPE and one supervised internship in a PC(USA) congregation and submitted evaluations to the CPM.
- Passed all ordination exams. (Bible content, Exegesis, Theology, Polity, and Worship and Sacraments)
- Graduated from seminary or be nearing graduation, including having completed courses in PC (USA) polity, Reformed theology, preaching/homiletics and worship and sacraments.

#### **3..14.2 Submitting final assessment papers**

The following documents (typed, minimum 12-point font) are required for your final assessment application:

- Any required field education report that has not previously been submitted;
- Supervisor reports from any additional internship/ministry opportunities since the two required courses, if applicable;
- A sermon with three to six pages of exegetical notes of the biblical text and a description of the contemporary need that the sermon is addressing. The exegetical notes should show some study and use of the original language (either Hebrew or Greek) and should also include citations from commentaries and other works that the candidate has consulted;
- A one-page statement of faith including what you believe about God, the Trinity (including statements on each person), the concept of grace, Holy Scripture, the sacraments, and the church;
- A complete draft of your PDP;
- An official final transcript (not a copy) from your seminary (or your most recent transcript if you are in your last semester).
- A one-page explanation describing how the courses that you have taken during seminary have satisfied the required classes in PC (USA) polity, Reformed theology, preaching/homiletics and worship and sacraments, Hebrew, Greek, and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek.

After the completed paperwork is submitted, an appointment for your final assessment interview will be set. Appointments are limited and are scheduled for applicants who submit completed paperwork first. Application documents must be submitted at least one month prior to your desired interview date.

### 3..15 MEETING WITH THE CPM

When you meet with the CPM for final assessment you will be asked to preach the sermon you submitted in writing. You should prepare a brief service of worship including liturgy, prayer and possibly a hymn for the CPM meeting. In the course of the interview, the commission will review your sermon and the paperwork you submitted.

## FINANCIAL AID

---

### 3..16 FINANCIAL AID POLICY

Financial Aid through the Commission on Preparation for Ministry will be provided only to persons enrolled in New Hope Presbytery as an inquirer, candidate, or enrollee currently in a program toward a Master of Divinity degree or a Master's degree in Christian Education in a school of theological education acceptable to the CPM.

- These persons shall be enrolled as full-time students, although part-time students will be considered.
- Upon application (see below under Administrative Guidelines) funds are available for the first unit of a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program.
- Funding for exceptional circumstances may be available based on the detail in your application.

### 3..17 JESSE LEE THOMAS EDUCATIONAL FUND FOR CANDIDATES

In 1997, the Presbytery of New Hope received a bequest through the estate of the late Jesse Lee Thomas, a resident of Durham, NC and a member of Triangle Presbyterian Church. The gift was given for the purpose of establishing an educational trust for the benefit of candidates for ministry in New Hope Presbytery.

The donor's intention for this fund is stated as follows in Article VI of his will:

*"I further give and bequeath any and all assets as may remain after the above disposition, to the Presbytery of New Hope (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)) to be set up as an educational trust for the benefit and use of candidates for the ministry in the Presbyterian Church."*

#### 3..17.1 The Jesse Lee Thomas Educational Fund Use

The fund is not to be used to pay for tuition.

#### 3..17.2 Administrative Guidelines

The Presbytery of New Hope Foundation manages the investment of the funds, and the funds are currently lodged with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. You may apply for these funds using this application on the New Hope Presbytery web site:

<https://nhpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/DescriptionOfFundsAndApplicationCPM.pdf>

### 3..18 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM YOUR SESSION

The preparation for ministry process is a partnership among you, your home church, and the presbytery. The CPM encourages you to seek financial aid from the session of your home church. Your church's session has been informed of the nature of this partnership (see Training for sessions and Handbook for Sessions, above) and the CPM's hope that this partnership results in financial as well as spiritual support.

### **3..19 CPM GRANTS FOR INTERNSHIPS (FIELD EDUCATION) AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

CPM may provide a matching grant for up to \$4,000 to support your field education internship. The evaluation criteria will include existing funding available for the internship and whether you have previously completed a required field education course. Priority will be given to internships within New Hope Presbytery. You may be eligible for grants from CPM to support other non-traditional educational opportunities. Evaluation for such grants will include the opportunity for the individual requesting the grant and the impact the opportunity will have on the community served by the grant. Ordinarily, expenses associated with general seminary education will not be prioritized for grants.

### **3..20 STUDY TRIPS DURING SEMINARY (ESPECIALLY TRIPS OUTSIDE THE US)**

CPM does have access to monies from the Jesse Lee Thomas Fund to help you with special study trips as part of your seminary education. We approve financial help with such trips on a case-by-case basis. If you would like to be considered for financial aid for a specific trip, please contact the CPM treasurer. (Contact information for the treasurer is on the *Application for Presbytery of New Hope Preparation for Ministry Grants* form located on the New Hope Presbytery website.) The CPM treasurer will then send you an application on which you can explain the nature and amount of the expenses. During your time in seminary CPM will help pay for at least part of the expenses of an approved trip. Special exceptions will be made only at the discretion of CPM.

### **3..21 GIFTS TO SEMINARY STUDENTS**

If funds are available, CPM may provide an end-of-the-year gift to seminary students under care of the CPM.

### **3..22 OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID**

For other sources of financial aid, contact the Presbytery office or the financial aid office at the seminary.

### **3..23 EXPENSES**

#### ***3..23.1 Expenses for travel to your regular interviews (see below)***

Ordinarily an applicant will have three regular interviews with CPM:

- to become an inquirer;
- to be approved by CPM to become a candidate;
- for final assessment, which must take place before any candidate can circulate a Personal Discernment Profile (PDP) or have any official conversations with any PNC (Pastor Nominating Commissions) about seeking a call.

CPM will pay 1/2 of your travel expenses to these interviews on the following basis:

- If you drive, we will pay you at the current presbytery rate.
- If you are coming from a distance of more than 250 miles away, you may arrange a flight. A voucher with attached receipts must be completed on the day of your interview.

The CPM encourages candidates and inquirers to also seek travel assistance from your church's session.

#### ***3..23.2 Expenses for travel to your annual consultation (see below)***

CPM will pay 1/2 of your travel expenses (plane ticket and lodging). For reimbursement for travel expenses, a voucher with attached receipts must be completed on the day of the meeting.

### **3..23.3 Expenses for travel to a presbytery meeting to celebrate candidacy (see below)**

If you are approved by CPM to become a candidate, you will then be required to appear before presbytery at one of the three regular stated meetings. CPM will pay 1/2 of your travel expenses to the site of that meeting by car or plane, based on the criteria mentioned above. A voucher with attached receipts must be completed on the day of the meeting.

### **3..23.4 Expenses for Psychological Assessment/Evaluation (see below)**

Before meeting with the CPM for your inquiry interview, you need to participate in a psychological assessment with Ministry Development Services (see section 3.3.2.) CPM will cover ½ of the cost of the assessment. (Ministry Development Services will bill CPM for its portion and you are responsible for the remainder of the cost.)

### **3..23.5 Expenses for CPE (see below)**

As stated in section 3.2.2, you are required to complete one basic unit of CPE as part of your preparation for ministry. CPM will help you with CPE tuition expenses up to a total of \$1,500.

### **3..23.6 Expenses for Ordination Exams (see below)**

Upon application by a candidate, CPM will reimburse an Inquirer or Candidate for the first attempt at each of the 5 ordination exams.

### **3..23.7 General Expense Reimbursement Form**

<https://nhpresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/InquirerCandidateExpenseReimbursementVoucher.pdf>

## **ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS**

---

### **3..24 PURPOSE**

In the past, the *Book of Order* mandated an annual consultation for inquirers and candidates. This is not ordered in the current Form of Government, but the New Hope Presbytery believes this is wise practice to continue.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of the annual consultation of New Hope Presbytery's CPM is to assess progress towards preparation for ordered ministry, to nurture and support that inquirer/candidate, and to set goals and discuss resources for moving forward in their education and the process towards ordination.

Each year the CPM determines how the annual consultations will be conducted. They may be individual meetings between the inquirer/candidate and his/her shepherd, or a one day gathering for all inquirers and candidates that include worship and educational seminars.

---

<sup>6</sup> Language from the prior *Book of Order*: "The presbytery shall require the inquirer or candidate to submit an annual written report on progress in studies and service to the church. The seminary or institution of theological education shall make an annual report on the progress of the inquirer or candidate toward preparation for ministry. The presbytery shall conduct an annual consultation for the evaluation and nurture of the inquirer or candidate. In no case shall an inquirer or candidate be excused from these annual consultations." (G-14.0421)

### 3..25 PARTICIPATION

All persons enrolled (including certified candidates who have not yet received a call) are required to complete an annual consultation. An inquirer or candidate cannot proceed in the preparation process until an annual consultation has been completed and the CPM has voted to continue the period of inquiry or candidacy. If an annual consultation is not completed, the timing of the preparation process stops on January 1 and will not begin again until an annual consultation has been completed and the CPM has voted to continue the period of inquiry or candidacy. The annual consultation shall not be used in place of interviews for inquiry, candidacy, or final assessment.

### 3..26 EXPENSES

Presbytery, together with the session and the inquirer or candidate, shall bear the necessary expenses of the annual consultation. See Expenses for travel to your annual consultation, above.

### 3..27 REQUIREMENTS AND GOALS

The requirements and goals for annual consultations vary according to where you are in your preparation for ministry process and in your education. These requirements and goals are outlined in the *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*.

### 3..28 BIBLE CONTENT EXAM

Inquirers ordinarily take the Bible content exam during the first year of seminary. This exam is offered several times each year. Permission from the CPM is not required to take this exam. You can find more information at <https://www.pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/ministry-preparation-support/standard-ordination-exams>.

### 3..29 POLITY, WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS, THEOLOGY, AND EXEGESIS EXAMS

The remaining ordination exams are normally taken in your senior year in seminary. At the time of this writing, they are offered three times a year: winter, spring and fall. See <https://www.pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/ministry-preparation-support/standard-ordination-exams> for the current schedules. You need to obtain permission of the CPM to take these exams. When you register for the exams, a notification will be sent to the CPM moderator who will go on-line and approve the exam.

### 3..30 READING LIST FOR ORDINATION EXAMS

For candidates and prospective transfers who feel the need to review in one or more areas prior to their examination, the following is offered as a list of resources that members of the commission has found helpful. This list is presented for use on an “as needed” basis. It is not a required reading list, with the exception of the section, Reformed understandings of Worship and the Sacraments, below.

#### 3..30.1 Basic documents

Familiarity with these will be assumed:

- The *Bible*
- The *Book of Order* (most recent)
- The *Book of Confessions* (most recent)

**3..30.2 General works on the Reformed/PC (USA) tradition**

- *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, Donald McKim, ed.
- *The History and Character of Calvinism*, John T. McNeill
- *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, John H. Leith
- *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, Donald McKim, ed.
- *Presbyterian Creeds: A Guide to the Book of Confessions*, Jack Rogers

**3..30.3 Reformed understandings of Worship and the Sacraments**

- *Participation in Worship: History, Theology and Practice*, Craig D. Erikson
- *PC(USA) Book of Common Worship*
- *Table and Tradition*, Alasdair IC Heron
- *Worship*, Hughes Old

**3..30.4 Theology—foundational works and recent Reformed summaries**

- *Institutions of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin
- *Basic Christian Doctrine*, John H. Leith
- *Faith Seeking Understanding*, Daniel Migliore
- *Christian Doctrine*, Shirley Guthrie, (revised edition)
- *The Faith We Confess*, Jan Milic Lochman

**3..30.5 Biblical Theology**

- *The Kingdom of God*, John Bright
- *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, Brevard Childs
- *The Mighty Acts of God*, AB Rhodes

**3..30.6 Polity**

- *Presbyterian Polity for Church Leaders*, Joan Gray and Joyce Tucker
- *Companion to the Constitution*, Frank Beattie

## 4 APPENDICES

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INQUIRERS

---

#### Initial Questions

- Tell us about your family and your church and ministry experience.
- Tell us about your Christian faith journey.
- Why do you want to become a teaching elder?
- 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?

#### Relationship to God

- How do you identify God's presence in your life? In the world?
- How do you express your commitment to God?
- What have you been taught about God? How does this relate to your experience of God in your life?
- How do you use your work to express God's love in today's world?

#### Relationship with Others

- What kind of persons do you most enjoy? Most dislike? Why?
- How do others see you? Do you like or agree with their perceptions?
- How do you deal with persons who have authority over you, such as employers, group leaders, teachers, or governing authorities?
- What happens when other persons disappoint you? How do you react?
- Do you prefer being with people, or being alone? When?
- Do you feel that certain relatives or friends expect you to enter a particular career or do certain things? Is this encouraging or oppressive to you? If you could take three persons on a trip to Mars, who would they be? Why?

#### Motivations

- What gives you joy, encouragement, hope and confidence?
- When you must choose between two desirable tasks, which do you choose? Why?
- What rewards or results do you most want from your career?
- If you could shape a career to fit you, what would it be?
- How do you define success in a career? In life?
- What makes your life worthwhile? What keeps you going?
- What would you like to be doing five or ten years from now?

#### Interests

- What school subjects have you enjoyed most? Disliked most?
- When you have free time, what do you do?
- What is your pattern of interests? Do you balance active and quieter activities, or are you always active or always quiet?
- Do you enjoy being with a large group, with a few close friends, or being alone? When? How often do you enjoy each?



- What subjects do you read? Which parts of the newspaper or magazines do you read? Which do you ignore? What special topics do you try to learn about?
- What fields do you know most about? Which would you like to study?
- What kinds of people do you prefer if you have a choice?
- Do you like to be the leader, the follower, or a member of the team?
- What hobbies, sports, fine arts, etc., do you enjoy most? Which of these do you like least? Why?

### **Abilities**

- What do you feel good about doing, in the sense of knowing you can do it well? What strengths and resources do you have?
- Are you able to lead groups to complete a task? Can you keep harmony in a group while you accomplish the task?
- What awards have you earned? When? What are your talents?
- What have others told you about your abilities? Were they correct in their judgment?
- In which school subjects have you done your best work? Which subjects were unusually difficult. Why?
- What abilities could you develop if you decide to work at it?
- What are your limitations or deficiencies? How do you feel about them? Which ones do you need to overcome? Why?

### **Work Habits and Work Style**

- What work schedule do you prefer? How and when do you do your best work?
- Can you work independently, or do you need to have a supervisor to keep you working?
- Must you see immediate results of your work? Are you able to continue doing good work although results may be slow, delayed, or partial?
- Are you able to adjust to unexpected changes in your work plans? How?
- How do you resolve conflicts between important assignments or between competing authorities (managers, teachers, etc.)?
- How are work and recreation related for you?

### **Goals and Values**

- What are the three things you would most like to accomplish in the next year? In your lifetime?
- How does your commitment to Christ relate to other goals you intend? What secondary goals do you have?
- What values and considerations are important to you as you set goals for yourself?
- Can you set your own goals, or do others set goals for you? How do you relate these two sets of goals?
- How do you choose between competing claims on your time and resources?
- If you had only one week (or one year) to live, what would you do in that time?

### **Reactions and Feelings**

- How do you react and respond to the feelings that others express?
- Can you easily and appropriately express both positive and negative feelings, such as joy, sadness, appreciation, anger?
- What are the relationships between your feelings and your physical functioning? For example, does anxiety produce headaches, nausea, or other physical reactions?

- What are your feelings about [some specific event in the inquirer’s past]? Are you fully aware of all your reactions, both verbal and non-verbal?
- How do you cope with emotions relating to hunger, power, loneliness, frustration, or leadership?
- Are you afraid of any of your feelings? Of the feelings of others.

## EXAMINING INQUIRERS FOR CANDIDACY

---

Questions that are appropriate to ask at a candidacy interview include all of the questions previously listed for the inquiry phase and the following:

- How have you grown in your faith and in your sense of call as a result of your time in seminary? As a result of your field education 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 commission help you prepare for your ministry?
- What is distinctly Reformed or PC (USA) about your beliefs and practices?

During the Candidacy Examination, the CPM may only ask questions regarding the Inquirer's

- Christian faith
- Forms of Christian service undertaken
- Motives for seeking the ministry

### Ordination Exams and Statements of Faith

CPM is free to ask any questions as they relate to the topics listed below in the paragraph from the *Book of Order*. These sample questions are provided as examples that may help keep ordination exams on track. In addition, CPM is encouraged to frame their questions on these topics in the context of pastoral ministry, by, perhaps, giving a context or example that raises the issue, and are also encouraged to tailor their questions to points raised in the Candidate's Statement of Faith.

### Christian Faith

- What practices are most meaningful for you right now in staying connected with God?
- Why is it important to you to be part of the Reformed Tradition?
- Can you talk about what is meaningful for you personally in the Lord's Supper?
- How do you experience the Holy Spirit?

### Theology

- Do you think it is important to have a time of confession in worship each Sunday? Why or why not?
- What theological question are you currently wrestling with?
- What is the mission of the Church?
- "Jesus Christ was fully Human. Jesus Christ was fully Divine." Is it important that the church communicate both of these things? Why or why not?
- Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?
- What is the significance of, or what is added by, Jesus' resurrection?
- How do you understand the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, or how would you explain it to someone visiting you in your office?
- Many people wrestle with the presence of evil and suffering in the world and wonder how a good God could allow such things. What are a couple things you might mention in this regard?

### **The Bible**

- What does it mean to say that the Scriptures are authoritative?
- Can you give an example of how this looks in your own life?
- Of the roles attributed to the Holy Spirit in scripture, which are critical?

### **The Sacraments**

- How would you respond to a request for re-baptism from an individual who is returning to an active faith life after a long period of “dropping out?”
- The celebration of the Lord’s Supper seems to be increasing in importance in many church communities. Why do you think this is so?
- How do you understand Jesus as present in the elements at the Table?

### **Church Government**

- How would you answer a potential elder who was considering declining a nomination because they felt “inadequate?”
- How would you imagine providing leadership to a congregation in the area of social justice?

## FOR THOSE UNDER CARE OF NEW HOPE PRESBYTERY

---

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry of the Presbytery of New Hope emphasizes the following critical aspects of the preparation process:

1. The total preparation for ministry process will have a duration of at least two years, at least one year of which must be at the candidacy phase.
2. The start of the two-year preparation period begins when CPM enrolls the person as inquirer, and the required one-year of candidacy begins when the person is received and enrolled by the Commission. The Candidate is required to be present at a stated Presbytery gathering in order to be presented before the Presbytery before they can advance to Final Assessment.
3. **No guarantee is implied that enrollment into the inquiry phase will be followed automatically by admission to the candidacy phase. Admission to the inquiry phase can be considered to be a “wide gate.” Admission to the candidacy phase then, is considered to be a “narrow gate” wherein progress will be examined critically and the questioning will be of a more specific, theological nature.**
4. Inquirers should ordinarily successfully complete one field education unit before the CPM will approve them for Candidacy. By the end of Candidacy each person under care will complete the minimum field education requirements of (a) one quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and (b) a supervised internship in a PC(USA) church or institution. Waivers will be granted only at the discretion of the CPM.
5. The CPM exists to advise, support, and nurture those under care, but it is the inquirer’s/ candidate’s responsibility ultimately to be knowledgeable of and to adhere to the process outlined in the manual, including any special requirements of New Hope Presbytery or its CPM, and to meet all deadlines in a timely manner.
6. The inquirer/candidate is expected to be available for all subsequent meetings with the CPM or its designees, especially the annual consultation required each year while under care.
7. Inquirer/candidates are advised that the provisions of the *Book of Order* (G-2.06), among other applicable requirements of the *Book of Order*, will govern their eventual ordination to the ministry as a teaching elder.
8. **The CPM reserves the right and responsibility to place additional requirements as it sees it is necessary during periodic evaluations of the inquirer’s/candidate’s progress.**
9. Conversations between applicants, enrollees, inquirers and candidates and the CPM are understood to be confidential. It is also understood that information shared with a Shepherd will be considered information to be shared with the entire CPM. Psychological assessments/evaluations are necessary to complete and helpful file. Members on the CPM will treat these reports with extreme care and dispose of them appropriately when the process is terminated or completed. The original report will be retained in an inquirer’s/candidate’s permanent file.

10. While in the preparation for ministry process, the inquirer/candidate will be expected to adhere to New Hope Presbytery's policy against sexual misconduct.<sup>7</sup>
11. While in the preparation for ministry process, substantial debt may be incurred, only a portion of which will be defrayed by support from New Hope Presbytery. Limited financial support is available from New Hope Presbytery.
12. Inquirers and candidates should pay special attention to CPM's guidelines for expenses incurred by inquirers and candidates and comply with all guidelines for travel expense reimbursement.
13. Beyond the requirements stated in the *Book of Order* and *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, only those requirements placed by New Hope Presbytery and its CPM are in effect. The requirements of other presbyteries are neither pertinent nor applicable.
14. Inquirer/candidate will arrange for and sign appropriate releases of information with his/her seminary to allow CPM and seminary staff to communicate about the inquirer's/candidate's course work, performance and adjustment. .(New Hope Presbytery Form 2B - *Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release* and New Hope Presbytery Form 5D - *Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release* which are required by CPM may be sufficient.)

---

<sup>7</sup> You can obtain a copy of this policy through the presbytery office.

## DESCRIPTION OF FORMS USED IN THE PROCESS

---

New Hope Presbytery uses forms that are generated by the PC(USA) and are maintained on the PC(USA) website. The forms are available as fillable PDF documents at the following link: <https://pcusa.org/resource/advisory-handbook-preparation-ministry-church-usa> . Use the search function at the top right of the page to find the specific forms listed below. For forms other than forms particular to New Hope Presbytery, **you are urged to use the PDF, fillable versions of the PC(USA) forms.**

### 4..1.1 *Initial application forms*

There are five separate forms that make up the application for enrollment as an inquirer.

#### **Form 1A**      ***Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer***

To be completed initially by the applicant seeking to be enrolled. Both the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) and the presbytery's actions regarding the application are recorded on this form. It provides basic information regarding the applicant's background, identity, and interests. This form includes a list of personal references.

#### **Form 1B**      ***Questions for Reflection***

These questions are 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 CPM.

#### **Form 1C**      ***Financial Planning for Theological Education***

Using basic information provided 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 and forwarded along with the other application forms to the presbytery's CPM. The form includes questions that may guide the session's discussion with the applicant and provide support for its recommendation to the CPM.

#### **New Hope Presbytery**      ***Reference Guide, Commission On Preparation For Ministry, New Hope Presbytery***

The form provides guidance for people who provide a reference for an applicant. Applicants for inquiry are required to provide three references, including someone from the applicant's church, a former employer, and a peer or former professor or school administrator.

### 4..1.2 *Forms for enrolling an inquirer*

These forms are used by applicants and the CPM when a decision has been made to recommend the applicant be enrolled by the presbytery as an inquirer.

#### **Form 2A**      ***Report of Consultation Regarding Application***

In addition to formulating its recommendation to the presbytery to enroll the applicant as an inquirer, the CPM should also establish goals for the first year the new inquirer will be under care. This form records the growth objectives agreed to by the new Inquirer and the CPM. The inquirer and the CPM retain copies of this report.

**New Hope Presbytery Form 2B          *Covenant Agreement and Inquirer Release***

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

**New Hope Presbytery          *Agreement for Inquirers and Candidates Under Care of New Hope Presbytery***

This is an agreement specifically between New Hope Presbytery and the Inquirer that emphasizes the critical aspects of the preparation for ministry process in New Hope Presbytery.

**4..1.3    *Forms for consultations***

These forms are used to prepare for and report the outcomes of a consultation. The same forms are used in the inquiry and candidacy phases as well as for consultations once a candidate has been “certified to ready to be examined for ordination, pending a call.”

**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. The form requests a listing of completed courses, and includes specific questions to be addressed in each of the five growth areas.

**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. The inquirer/candidate and the CPM retain copies of this report.

**4..1.4    *Forms for advancing to candidacy***

Inquirers and the CPM use these forms when a decision has been made to apply for and recommend the presbytery advance an inquirer to candidate status.

**Form 5A          *Application to be Enrolled as a Candidate***

To be completed initially by the inquirer seeking to be advanced to candidacy. The recommendations of the session and the CPM along with the action taken by the presbytery are recorded on this form.

**New Hope Presbytery          *Required Candidacy Application Documents, Commission on Preparation for*  
*Ministry, New Hope Presbytery***

This form defines the statements and documents that the CPM of New Hope Presbytery requires the applicant for candidacy to prepare and submit prior to the interview for candidacy.

**Form 5B          *Session Evaluation and Recommendation for Candidate***

This form is completed by the inquirer’s session and forwarded to the CPM. The form includes questions that may guide the session’s discussion with the inquirer and provide support for its recommendation to the Commission/commission overseeing preparation for ministry. Attach a letter explaining rationale for the session’s action in light of inquirer’s suitability for ordered ministry.

**Form 5C          *Report of Consultation 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 candidate. The completed report is sent to the inquirer/candidate, theological institution, and sponsoring session.

**New Hope Presbytery 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.

***Church Leadership Connection Personal Discernment Profile (PDP)***

Format for applying for ordained positions in the PC(USA). The PDP is completed through an online system through Church Leadership Connection. A completed draft of the PDP is required by the CPM when a candidate applies to be certified ready to be examined by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call.

**4..1.5    *Reporting actions to others***

New Hope Presbytery will need to report certain actions to others across the church. When a candidate who has been “certified ready for examination for ordination, pending a call,” is being considered by any presbytery, the Form 6 along with its supporting documentation should be sent to that presbytery’s Commission or commission responsible for its teaching elder members. General reporting about a person’s status with their supervising CPM, transfer of care to another presbytery, withdrawal/removal from the process, certification of readiness to receive a call, and ordination to the role of teaching elder are reported to Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly through the preparation for ministry management portal (<http://p4m.pcusa.org>).

**Form 6                      *Summary Report of Final Assessment***

This form, completed by the CPM, acknowledges that the CPM of the candidate’s presbytery has conducted a final assessment of the candidate’s preparation and readiness to begin ministry. It certifies that she/he has successfully completed all the requirements of the denomination and the CPM and so is ready to be examined for ordination. It should be accompanied by supporting documentation that is identified on the form. (Since this report may need to be shared with another calling presbytery, all presbyteries should use this form as issued.)

## **NEW HOPE PRESBYTERY CANDIDATE INDEBTEDNESS POLICY<sup>8</sup>**

---

Persons under care who are serving a first call and applying for financial assistance under the Seminary Debt Assistance Program shall meet the following requirements;

### **When New Hope Presbytery is the Presbytery of Care**

1. Require an inquirer to complete all financial forms included in the inquiry application and to discuss with the CPM his or her plans to minimize seminary debt.
2. Strongly encourage the Inquirer, during the Inquiry year, to participate in a “Fiscal Fitness” workshop being sponsored by the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA). If this workshop is not offered at the inquirer’s seminary, the Inquirer is eligible to apply to the CPM for financial assistance for travel and accommodations. Because this workshop is required of all Seminary Debt Assistance Program applicants, the CPM encourages Inquirers to attend this workshop as soon as possible to avoid delays in processing any future seminary debt assistance application the Inquirer might make.
3. On behalf of the Presbytery, the CPM will inform all Inquirers of the prospective salary that can be expected based on the current median income for the denomination reported by the Board of Pensions, and based on the minimum effective salary established by the Presbytery and will caution all Inquirers to minimize their level of indebtedness accordingly.
4. The CPM will encourage each Inquirer and Candidate towards using his or her available assets to pay for the cost of seminary tuition and room and board rather than incurring indebtedness.
5. The CPM will make available on an annual basis to each Candidate or Inquirer a list of options for pursuing grants and interest-free loans and funding that may be available through the Financial Aid for Studies Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and PC(USA) seminaries.

The CPM will be an advocate with the congregation, of which the Candidate or Inquirer is a member, and with other congregations of the presbytery as appropriate, in order to generate financial support for the Candidate or Inquirer in the form of grants.

### **When New Hope Presbytery is the calling presbytery**

1. Any minister serving a first call following graduation from seminary, who comes with any educational indebtedness, shall be required to show evidence of having attended a financial planning workshop such as a Fiscal Fitness workshop sponsored by the Board of Pensions, or other Financial planning workshop. If the minister has not attended such a workshop, he/she shall be required to do so within twelve months of start-up, the cost of registration fee, accommodation and travel for such a workshop to be considered legitimate reimbursable expense from study leave allowance.

---

<sup>8</sup> Revised by Commission on Preparation for Ministry 11/5/2009; Approved by New Hope Presbytery 2/20/2010

2. The Commission on Ministry shall encourage calling congregations to utilize further educational debt reduction as a point in negotiating salary with a prospective pastor who is a recent seminary graduate.

#### 4..2 PCUSA MINISTER EDUCATIONAL DEBT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*Guidelines:*<sup>9</sup>

##### 4..2.1 Minister Educational Debt Assistance

To qualify, you must

- be a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister enrolled in Pastor's Participation or Minister's Choice;
- have completed a [CREDO conference](#) or the [Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations program](#)\*;
- have an effective salary below \$80,000 and a total household adjusted gross income\*\* of less than twice the national median for pastors (\$122,400 in 2021) as reported on the most recent income tax return;
- meet criteria established by the Board to ensure the need-based nature of the program;
- meet a student loan debt coaching requirement; and
- repay your documented, interest-bearing educational debt by a specified monthly amount based on your effective salary and the amount of debt (see Assistance recipient educational debt repayment commitment chart).

*\*If the minister also receives a grant through Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations, the combined grants may not exceed \$25,000. Participation in the two debt relief programs may not be concurrent within the same calendar year.*

*\*\*Adjusted gross income is the total income you and your spouse report on federal tax form 1040 that's subject to income tax. It may include earnings from your and your spouse's job, self-employment, alimony income, and interest from a bank account — minus specific deductions, such as housing allowance, or adjustments, you're eligible to take.*

#### Participant contribution and coaching

---

The Board's contribution of \$5,000 a year for five years or until your debt is eliminated, whichever comes first, is contingent upon you paying your loan servicer a specified amount monthly — and you receiving student loan debt coaching from PeopleJoy, a financial wellness/educational debt reduction firm with which the Board has partnered.

The amount you must commit to pay is based on your effective salary and the amount of your educational debt,

---

<sup>9</sup> Guidelines are cited here for ease of reference and are subject to change by the Board of Pensions. For current guidelines, refer to the Board of Pensions Financial Assistance Program description at <https://www.pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/assistance-program/receiving-assistance/minister-educational-debt-assistance-grants>.

## 5 GLOSSARY

Following are some commonly used terms and abbreviations:

<b>CANDIDATE</b>	The second phase of the path of preparing to be a minister.
<b>CERTIFIED READY TO RECEIVE A CALL</b>	Once the CPM has finally assessed a Candidate and that Candidate is approved, they are ready to circulate their PDP.
<b>CPE</b>	Clinical Pastoral Education. A program most often conducted in hospitals to develop skills for ministry.
<b>CPM</b>	Commission on Preparation for Ministry
<b>ENROLLEE</b>	A student pursuing a degree in Christian education who is in a relationship of oversight with CPM
<b>INQUIRER</b>	The first phase of the path of preparing to be a minister
<b>MODERATOR</b>	The leader of the CPM
<b>NHP</b>	New Hope Presbytery
<b>PC (USA) Seminaries</b>	For seminaries overseen by the Office of Theological Education of the PC (USA) see <a href="https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/theological-seminaries">https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/theological-seminaries</a>
<b>PDP</b>	Personal Discernment Profile. A form filed in the formal leadership repository for matching applicants with churches or other institutions
<b>SEIC</b>	PC(USA) Study to Enrich Inquirers and Candidates with its resource: Considering Ministry as a Vocation
<b>SESSION LIAISON</b>	A member of the inquirer's or candidate's Session who serves as that individual's contact with the Session
<b>SHEPHERD</b>	A CPM member assigned to be an inquirer's or candidate's contact with the CPM
<b>STATEMENT OF FAITH</b>	A section of the PDP that describes the Candidate's faith in personal terms. This is examined by many parties during the process