

Presbytery of Lake Erie
Committee on Preparation for Ministry
Policy for Working with Those Under Care of the Presbytery
in Preparation for Ordered Ministry as a Teaching Elder

Adopted 04.16.2013

Introduction & Purpose

Greetings to all in the community of faith through which God calls, prepares and empowers women and men for ministry!

Your participation in this process

- as Inquirers and Candidates;
- as pastors, members of sessions and congregations;
- as college chaplains, campus ministers, career/vocational counselors,
- as theological institution staffs and faculties;
- as members of the Presbytery of Lake Erie Committee on Preparation for Ministry;
- as presbytery, synod and General Assembly staffs

Involves awesome, demanding and rewarding opportunities.

The purpose of the Presbytery's preparation for ministry process is to provide that those who seek to be ordained as teaching elders have the necessary gifts and abilities for effective ministry within the Presbyterian Church (USA) and receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the Presbytery (G-2.0601). This process relies upon the denomination's Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry, which may be updated from time to time.

Theological Background

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is firmly grounded in the Reformed tradition in its relationships with men and women who feel themselves called by God to be teaching elders serving in the ministries of the Word and Sacrament. Both in exploring with these persons their sense of vocation and in all subsequent procedures leading to ordination, the Reformed understanding of the church underlies what the Book of Order calls "full preparation" for ministry (G-2.0601)

As Reformed Christians, Presbyterians understand the church as a community called into being by Jesus Christ. It is Christ who gives the church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its offices and ordinances, and Christ who is its head in all things (F-1.02)

Presbyterians believe in the priesthood of all believers---one aspect of which is that all church members, regardless of occupation, are engaged in ministry (G-1.0304; G-2.0101). Some among them may be called by the Holy Spirit, through the church, to the ordered ministry of teaching elder fulfilling the functions of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. That ministry, then, is one among many occupations through which men and women express their God-given interests and abilities in life and daily work. Response to this calling, as to every other, is approached

through a careful process of exploration and testing carried on within the community of faith during which gifts and motivations are evaluated in light of the needs of the church and the world.

The essential role of teaching elders is set forth in both the Bible and in the church's constitutional documents. Among its key concepts which have been proven valid by the church's experience through the years are the following:

- Ordered ministry is a gift of God to the church so that all God's people may be equipped for ministry;
- Teaching elders equip church members for their ministry by proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, modeling faithfulness, joining with deacons in care for people, and together with ruling elders ensuring that the church's life is governed in an orderly way (cf. G-2.0501).
- The church actively seeks and ordains persons whose gifts and abilities and manner of life equip them for the ordered ministry of teaching elder. If a person ordained to this ministry is later called by God to other work, the church can release him or her from ordained office (G-2.0507);
- A woman or man experiences God's call to ministry privately as an inner urging. The church, however, validates that call publicly as it affirms that individual's gifts for ministry and confirms God's call through the acts of ordination and installation.

Seen from this theological vantage point, the preparation for ministry process is an intentional engagement between the individual and the church for the purposes of discerning whether a particular person has both the call and the gifts to perform the functions of ministry of Word and Sacrament on behalf of the church as a teaching elder, and, ensuring that the person receives full preparation to serve Christ's church in this way.

The relationship between the church and those who feel called to be teaching elders carries important responsibilities for all involved.

Key Concepts

The process of Inquiry and Candidacy is most effective when it reflects the biblical theme of the covenant relationship. That is, when it is both a response to God's faithfulness and an expression of the concern people have for one another. The process further affirms that all aspects of the church's life are based upon God's gracious promises and on the belief that God's self-giving love undergirds all that the church is and does. Throughout the entire process, all who are involved in the covenant relationship need to approach their tasks with seriousness and diligence, communicating openly and intentionally with each other.

The preparation for ministry process is grounded in an understanding of **Christian vocation** as a response to God's grace which calls all Christians to ministry. Some are called by the Holy Spirit, through the church, to the ordered ministry of teaching elder.

The Christian community's primary commitment is to God. In the context of this **covenant relationship** with God, the Inquirer or Candidate and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry

negotiate between themselves additional covenantal agreements. These agreements affirm their mutual responsibility and provide the means for planning and evaluating the Inquirer's or Candidate's progress in preparing for the ordered ministry of teaching elder.

The resulting ongoing relationships take seriously the unique background, experience and personal attributes that each person brings to the process. They enable the sharing of deep convictions, an enhanced understanding of the demands of ministry, and the self-evaluation that are essential to the process. Professional and spiritual guidance and personal support develop naturally within the context of such relationships.

Consultations with the Inquirer or Candidate are based on specific goals in five areas of growth development (see section VI, Preparation for Ministry Process) and on specific "expected outcomes" for both the Inquiry and Candidacy Phases. The purpose of consultations is to help a Committee on Preparation for Ministry work with each individual at her or his current level of achievement and, through guided conversations and the mutual negotiation of new learning contracts, to stimulate further growth in specific areas.

The process of examination and ordination is shared by both the Candidate's Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the presbytery of call. Having guided and evaluated the Candidate's progress through the cumulative series of consultations, the Candidate's presbytery through its CPM meets with the Candidate for a final assessment to evaluate her or his readiness to receive a call. When a call is extended by a church in another presbytery, the presbytery of call ordinarily has the responsibility of examining Candidates for ordination and of providing for the ordination of the Candidates.

Mutual accountability characterizes the preparation for ministry process. **The Inquirer or Candidate** shares responsibility for her or his movement through the process and for planning for evaluating her or his growth.

The pastor and session are responsible for helping members of the congregation understand what Christian vocation means. This is the critical foundational step in the preparation for ministry process. The pastor and session are expected to provide the context within which individuals can begin to discern the call to the ordered ministry of teaching elder and understand the nature of this ministry. They help Inquirers evaluate the suitability of their gifts and provide pastoral care and support during the preparation for ministry process. Acting as advocate for the Inquirer or Candidate, the session, through its moderator and presbytery commissioner(s), can call the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to accountability in fulfilling its responsibilities.

The presbytery, through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), provides pastoral care, guidance, support and evaluation of Inquirers and Candidates.

The theological institution provides academic, field education and professional resources in the guidance and evaluation of Inquirers or Candidates.

The preparation for ministry process is one of continuing development. By providing a supportive community in which the Inquirers or Candidates assume increasing responsibility for decisions made throughout the process, it introduces them to skills for self-development, goal-setting and self-evaluation. Those under care are encouraged to develop these skills into conscious, disciplined planning for personal and professional growth which should continue throughout their ministry.

Forms

At each stage of the Preparation for Ministry process, there are forms to guide the person under care, the session, and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The forms may be downloaded from the PC(USA)'s Office of Vocations Preparation for Ministry website. Each participant in the process is expected to become familiar with these forms.

Preparation for Ministry Process

The preparation for ministry process involves two phases: Inquiry and Candidacy, which together shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate (G-2.0602; see G-2.0610 for exception). 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, the presbytery enters into covenant relationship with those preparing to become teaching elders, and with their sessions and congregations (G-2.0601).

The Presbytery of Lake Erie charges the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to work closely with those persons who have been recommended by their sessions for the ordered ministry of teaching elder. Since the model for all ordered ministries is the ministry of Jesus Christ, it is the CPM's particular responsibility to help these individuals grow toward maturity in Christ.

Key Growth Areas

Both the Inquiry Phase and the Candidacy Phase of the process nurture and assess the development of those in the preparation process in five key growth areas:

- a. Education for Ministry, which includes evaluation of academic potential and progress and reflection on the purpose of educational experiences in their relation to preparation for the ordered ministry of teaching elder;
- b. Spiritual Development, which provides a framework in which individuals can reflect on their personal faith journeys and their spiritual practices to discern the will of God in their lives;
- c. Interpersonal Relations which provide opportunities to reflect on how one relates to others, on one's own leadership style, and on what this means for a future as a teaching elder;
- d. Personal Growth, through which persons reflect on who they are, what areas they need to develop, how to understand their call, and how to develop personal stewardship; and

- e. Professional Development, to help persons develop specific skills that will enhance their effectiveness as teaching elders and presbyters. Learning how to understand one's ministry context and developing the ability to deal with conflict that may emerge in the community one serves are two important skills.

During both the Inquiry Phase and the Candidacy Phase, the individual's progress is measured by specific expected outcomes formulated in light of these five growth areas. These expected outcomes serve as the focus of ongoing consultations between the Inquirer or Candidate and the session and the presbytery's CPM.

Academic Preparation

Seminary: Preparation for ordained ministry as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA) involves rigorous academic preparation through graduate level studies at a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (G-2.0607c). The Presbytery of Lake Erie requires that at least one year of this study be at a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminary. The CPM may waive this requirement if the following conditions are met:

- The student is already well-acquainted with the life, mission and ethos of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and
- the non-Presbyterian seminary offers a strong program of Presbyterian studies, including both academic courses and individual advising; and
- the student is pursuing a special educational emphasis that is not available at a Presbyterian seminary, or, if family, time or financial pressures make attendance at a Presbyterian seminary prohibitively inconvenient.

Exceptions will be made on the basis of the student, not the seminary. That is, approval of attendance at a particular seminary for one Inquirer will not serve as precedent or assurance of similar approval for another Inquirer. Each individual's situation will be evaluated separately by the CPM.

In applications for waiver of the one-year requirement, the burden of proof is on the Individual. Applications for waiver must be made in writing, far enough in advance of the start of seminary for a determination to be made without undue haste by the CPM. A record of the committee's action on the waiver request will be kept in the Inquirer's file.

Biblical Languages: Coursework in study of biblical Hebrew and Greek, including exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek (G-2.0607b);

Specific Classwork: In addition to the Biblical Languages requirement, the Presbytery of Lake Erie has established the following required subjects, verified by transcripts, catalogs, course syllabi, field education supervisors' reports and/or other documents requested by the CPM:

- 1) General Biblical Overview - courses in Old and New Testaments
- 2) General Study in Theology

- 3) General Study in Reformed Theology, including the Confessions of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- 4) General Study of Christian Ethics, such as introductory course
- 5) General Study in Church History, which includes the early, medieval, reformation and modern periods
- 6) Study in Practical Theology: Worship in Reformed Tradition, Homiletics, Christian Education, Pastoral Care
- 7) At least two semesters or three trimesters of Supervised Field Education
- 8) Presbyterian Church (USA) Polity
- 9) One Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (400 hours)

This list does not limit CPM from suggesting or even requiring that an Inquirer/Candidate take additional specific courses to help her or him meet individual goals established during the regular consultation process.

Phase One: Inquiry

The purpose of Inquiry is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ministry as teaching elders to explore that call together so the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry (G-2.0603).

To make this exploration as effective as possible, a network of caring, supportive relationships is initiated—first, between the Inquirer and the church session, then with the Presbytery of Lake Erie through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), and with the theological institution. In regular consultation with the CPM, the Inquirer evaluates the personal implications and the suitability of a vocation as a teaching elder engaged in ministry of the Word and Sacrament, is guided in prayerful examination of his or her motivation, personal faith and experience in the congregation, and makes a serious assessment of the gifts and skills needed by teaching elders comparing them with his or her own gifts and skills. This phase also provides the church with opportunities to respond directly to the Inquirer's questions and concerns.

Becoming an Inquirer

A member of a congregation is considered for enrollment as an Inquirer when he or she approaches the session about the possibility of becoming a teaching elder and formally agrees with the session and with the Presbytery of Lake Erie's CPM to explore the implications of this quest. Enrollment is intended to be a thoughtful and deliberate step; people are encouraged to take this formal action soon after they have made their personal decision to explore this ministry so that the CPM can provide them with support and counsel as early as possible.

Before applying to enter the preparation for ministry process, the person

- Shall be a member of the sponsoring PC(USA) congregation;
- Shall have been actively engaged in the worship and work of that congregation for at least six months. (G-2.0602)

- Engages in discussion about his/her sense of call with their pastor, college chaplain or other spiritual advisor, and other persons whose opinions one respects. It would be helpful for the pastor to arrange for a period of “shadowing” during which the person can observe typical pastoral tasks and workload.

The steps to becoming an Inquirer:

- a. A person who feels led to explore the personal implications of serving in ordered ministry as a teaching elder should indicate this interest to the session of the congregation of which he/she is a member.
- b. The session shall contact the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) who will send someone to orient them to the process used in the presbytery, the purpose of each phase of preparation, and some of the time and financial commitments involved. The session should not interview the prospective applicant until after this meeting with the CPM.
- c. The individual desiring to become an inquirer submits a formal application to the Session, using current application forms (see section IV, above).
- d. The session interviews the prospective inquirer, using information on the application forms to help guide the discussion. If the individual requests to be enrolled as an Inquirer, the session shall forward the application materials to the Presbytery of Lake Erie CPM, together with their recommendation concerning the request.
- e. Following receipt of the session’s recommendation, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall interview the applicant as to his/her background and reasons for seeking to become an inquirer. CPM shall ensure the applicant has a basic understanding of the preparation for ministry process, and is aware that completing all the steps in the process does not guarantee that he/she will receive a call. The CPM shall, if the way be clear, present the person to the presbytery along with the committee’s recommendation to enroll the person as an Inquirer.
- f. The date of the presbytery’s action to enroll shall be the beginning of the covenant relationship.

During Inquiry

Duration: The inquiry phase shall be of sufficient length for the Inquirer, the session, and the CPM to make a mutual discernment of whether the person appears to possess the gifts, interests, temperament and spiritual qualities necessary for effective and fulfilling service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The inquiry phase will normally last at least through the first full year of seminary education.

Liaisons: The session and CPM shall each appoint a liaison for the inquirer. The liaisons will maintain regular contact with the individual for support and encouragement, to pray for the person, and to be a point of contact for any questions or needs that may arise during the preparation for ministry process.

Seminary: The Presbytery of Lake Erie requires at least one year attendance at a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminary. The CPM may waive this requirement but only if the following conditions are met:

- The student is already well-acquainted with the life, mission and ethos of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and
- the non-Presbyterian seminary offers a strong program of Presbyterian studies, including both academic courses and individual advising; and
- the student is pursuing a special educational emphasis that is not available at a Presbyterian seminary, or, if family, time or financial pressures make attendance at a Presbyterian seminary prohibitively inconvenient.

Exceptions will be made on the basis of the student, not the seminary. That is, approval of attendance at a particular seminary for one Inquirer will not serve as precedent or assurance of similar approval for another Inquirer. Each individual's situation will be evaluated separately by the CPM.

In applications for waiver of the one-year requirement, the burden of proof is on the Inquirer. Applications for waiver must be made in writing, far enough in advance of the start of seminary for a determination to be made without undue haste by the CPM. A record of the committee's action on the waiver request will be kept in the Inquirer's file.

Transcripts: The inquirer shall provide the CPM with an official transcript showing his/her graduation from a regionally-accredited college or university (G-2.0607b), and shall ensure that his/her seminary sends an official transcript to the CPM Moderator, in care of the Presbytery office, at the end of each term.

Psychological/Vocational Evaluation: The Presbytery of Lake Erie requires a vocational/psychological evaluation during the first year of seminary education or the first year of inquiry, whichever is later. All vocational assessments will be arranged for by the CPM. The cost of the evaluation will be split three ways; one-third by the person, one-third by the person's home church, and one-third by the Presbytery of Lake Erie CPM.

Consultations: The CPM shall hold regular consultations with each person under care, to assess progress in the five key growth areas (listed above), set new goals, discuss financial planning, the relationship of the inquirer to the church, and address other topics that may be beneficial in the inquiry and preparation process.

Consultations shall be held at least once annually. Session liaisons are encouraged to attend. At its discretion, CPM may schedule consultations either in person or electronically via Skype or a similar program allowing both aural and visual contact. The presbytery, together with the inquirer and session, bears the expenses of the annual consultation, but transportation and housing are the responsibility of the inquirer and/or his/her congregation.

At the annual consultation following the end of the second full year of theological education, and each consultation thereafter, the inquirer/candidate shall provide (in addition to other materials requested by the CPM) a personal statement of faith. The CPM will review the statement and identify points for discussion and clarification as part of an ongoing development of the statement of faith.

Conclusion of the Inquiry Phase

The Inquiry Phase continues until the CPM knows the inquirer well enough to make an informed decision whether or not to recommend that the presbytery receive him or her as a candidate.

The goal of inquiry is to mutually discern whether the person appears to possess the gifts, interests, temperament and Christian character suitable for effective service as a teaching elder engaged in ministry of the Word and Sacrament or if, instead, the person's gifts and other qualities suggest that he/she is better suited to a different form of service.

The inquiry phase is successful when it results in discerning the area(s) of ministry for which the inquirer is best suited, whether or not that means continuing further preparation as a candidate for ordered ministry as a teaching elder.

If there is still uncertainty about whether an inquirer is well suited for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, or if the individual feels considerable doubt about his/her calling to this occupation, the individual needs to continue in the inquiry phase rather than prematurely transitioning to the candidacy phase.

The Inquiry phase normally concludes when the individual has been enrolled by the Presbytery as a Candidate ("advances to candidate status"). A person may, in consultation with the Session and CPM, withdraw from covenant relationship. The presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove an individual's name from the roll of inquirers in accordance with G-2.0609.

Expected Outcomes of Inquiry / Advancing to Candidacy

An inquirer becomes a candidate by an action of the presbytery. A sense that "the time has come" for an inquirer to apply for candidacy usually emerges naturally through conversations between the inquirer, his/her pastor, Session liaison and the CPM liaison. When the CPM becomes aware the inquirer plans to advance to candidacy, the CPM Moderator shall notify the General Presbyter who will make arrangements for criminal history check and/or other background check(s) to be conducted in accordance with then-current presbytery policies.

Inquirer: To apply to advance to candidacy, the inquirer submits an application form (see section IV above) to his/her sponsoring Session accompanied by essays in the following six areas, which have traditionally been called "Expected Outcomes of Inquiry" :

- (1) A statement of their understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to their own personal sense of call;

- (2) A statement of personal faith which demonstrates an understanding of the Reformed tradition;
- (3) An analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement, expounding at greater depth on what that concept suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationships;
- (4) A personal statement expressing what it means to them to be Presbyterian, indicating how their awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
- (5) A statement of self-understanding reflecting their personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
- (6) A statement of their understanding of the tasks teaching elders perform, including an expression both of their specific gifts for that particular ministry and of areas in which further growth is needed.

Session: The session reviews the application forms, essays and other evidence of the inquiry phase, and interviews the Inquirer before deciding whether to endorse his/her application to be enrolled as a candidate. This decision is not to be made lightly or based on sentimental affection for the applicant, but must be based on a prayerful evaluation of the person's suitability for ordained ministry. After making a definite decision (either to endorse, or not endorse, the application), the session forwards the application materials to the CPM together with a letter explaining the rationale for their decision.

CPM: Reviews the application and materials received from the Session, together with transcripts and other evidence of suitability, and interviews the Inquirer. The CPM shall make a definite recommendation to the presbytery with respect to whether the inquirer should be received as a candidate.

Presbytery: The presbytery shall receive the report and recommendation of its CPM and shall examine the Inquirer in person with respect to his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry.

If the examination is approved, the presbytery shall receive the Inquirer as a Candidate after the following manner. The moderator shall pose the following questions to the inquirer:

- (1) Do you believe yourself to be called by God to become a teaching elder?
- (2) Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
- (3) Do you accept the proper supervision and guidance of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
- (4) Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a Candidate for the ordered ministry of teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

If these questions are answered in the affirmative, a brief charge shall be given, the Candidate's name shall be recorded on the presbytery's roll of Candidates, and the proceedings shall close with prayer. The Stated Clerk shall send notification to the Office of Vocations, that the Presbytery has enrolled the individual as a Candidate.

Phase Two: Candidacy

The process of advancing to candidacy is described in Section V-C-4 (above). The inquiry phase is the time for discerning *whether* an individual possesses the gifts and other qualities needed for effective and fulfilling service as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA). During the candidacy phase, the focus shifts to providing for the candidate's full preparation and conducting a formal assessment of his/her "fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination" as a teaching elder (G-2.0604).

While the covenant relationship between candidate, session and presbytery continues, during candidacy it is the presbytery's particular responsibility to provide each candidate with "support, *guidance*, and *evaluation*" (G-2.0604, emphases added). The CPM shall work with each person as a unique individual, and each candidate is responsible for following the CPM's guidance regarding academic courses, supervised ministry experiences and other preparation.

Candidates will have to discern during their candidacy whether they are willing and able to fulfill all the requirements found in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation found in the Directory for Worship (W-4.4003).

During Candidacy

The covenant relationship between the Candidate and the presbytery is expressed through the negotiation and review of a series of learning contracts based on the expected outcomes for this phase. In consultations that occur at least once a year, both the Committee and the Candidate assess her or his progress toward completion of previously established goals, negotiate appropriate new goals, and review together the candidate's ongoing development of a statement of faith. It is essential that during each consultation the decision be made as to whether Candidacy should be continued, especially if it becomes clear that adequate growth is not taking place.

Inquirers and candidates shall, with the permission of the presbytery of care, engage in some form of supervised service to the church within the provisions of G-2.0606. It is highly recommended that some of the supervised service be in a context notably different from the individual's home congregation.

No candidate may "enter into negotiation for his or her service as a teaching elder without approval of the presbytery." (G-2.0607) The Lake Erie Presbytery CPM requires candidates to submit their PIFs to the CPM for approval to circulate.

Expected Outcomes of Candidacy / Final Assessment

By the end of the candidacy phase, each candidate seeking to be ordained shall have demonstrated readiness to begin an ordered ministry as teaching elder. Section G-2.0607 of the Form of Government specifies that 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. satisfactory grades, together with the examinations 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.
 - i. The four "senior" exams may be taken at any time after the candidate has completed two full years (two-thirds) of his/her seminary education.
 - ii. When the CPM deems it to be appropriate for a particular candidate, it shall recommend that the Presbytery approve, for "good and sufficient reasons," an alternate examination method by which to ascertain the individual's readiness for ministry in the area(s) covered by the standard examination(s) not passed by that candidate. The alternate method proposed is to be consistent with recommendations of the Office of Vocations and with general practice for such alternate examinations in surrounding presbyteries. See G-2.0610.

In addition, the Presbytery of Lake Erie CPM will require the following of a candidate nearing completion of seminary studies and requesting to be certified as ready to accept a call:

- A one page Statement of Faith, which is a culmination of the work on that personal faith statement throughout the candidacy;
- A theological reflection paper exploring one or more elements from the candidate's Statement of Faith as assigned by the CPM; and
- An exegetical paper on a passage or passages of the candidate's choice that will be used for a sermon to be preached for the committee.

When conducting final assessment and certifying candidates ready to seek a call, it is important for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to give attention to, and prepare the candidates for, some of the first-call issues which include:

- self-understanding of their role as teaching elder
- help for understanding the congregation they will serve
- assistance in establishing an appropriate pastoral relationship style

- support in dealing with conflict that may emerge in the congregation

The candidates are to be reminded of the resources and programs available to them as newly ordained pastors, such as: New Pastors Seminars, Seminary Debt Program, presbytery mentor programs and pastor support groups.

Exceptions

Exceptions may be granted, on a case-by-case and individual basis, by three-fourths vote of the Presbytery in accordance with the provisions of G-2.0610 of the Form of Government.

Completion of Candidacy

Candidacy continues until the presbytery acts in one of three ways to remove the Candidate's name from the Roll of Candidates:

a. Completion of the preparation for ministry process with a call to the ordered ministry of teaching elder. In this case, the following steps are involved:

- (1) The Committee on Preparation for Ministry has certified that the Candidate is ready to be examined for ordination;
- (2) The Candidate receives a call;
- (3) The Candidate is examined and approved for ordination by the presbytery of call, and,
- (4) The Candidate is ordained.

The presbytery of call may, at its discretion, invite the presbytery of care to conduct the ordination on its behalf. However, the presbytery of call is responsible for discerning, at the time of examination, guided by the Scripture and the confessions, whether the candidate is called, prepared and has gifts suitable for the responsibilities of ordered ministry, and, whether he/she is able and willing to fulfill all the requirements found in the constitutional questions for ordination found in the Directory for Worship (W.4-4003).

** this is in accordance with Authoritative Interpretations from the 212th GA **

b. Withdrawal by the Candidate, after consultation with the session and CPM; (G-2-0609), or

c. Removal by the presbytery for sufficient reasons after making a reasonable attempt to give the candidate an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal; (G-2-0609).

The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery shall notify the Office of Vocations in writing that the relationship of care has ended, giving the date and circumstances.